

**CAMBRIDGE AND ITS ECONOMIC REGION,
1450-1560**

**John Stephen Lee
Corpus Christi College, Cambridge**

This dissertation is submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

15 December 2000

I hereby certify that this dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration.

It does not exceed the word limit of 80,000 words, including appendices but excluding footnotes, references and bibliography, as stipulated by the Degree Committee of the Faculty of History, University of Cambridge.

This dissertation is approximately 79,600 words in length.

John S. Lee

SUMMARY

This thesis examines the relationship between a town and its region in the late medieval period. The population, wealth, trade, and markets of Cambridge and its region are studied, as are the nature and extent of changes which occurred between 1450 and 1560, a period traditionally viewed as one of economic and social transition.

Taxation records of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries are used to analyse the population and wealth of Cambridge and its region. Rates of growth varied noticeably between different towns, sub-regions and parishes within the county.

The trade of the town and its hinterland is shown through the purchases made by the Cambridge colleges and other institutions. The university expanded considerably during the fifteenth century and a number of new colleges were founded. Patterns of credit highlight the extent of London marketing networks, and demand from the capital appears to have stimulated the development of the malt barley and saffron trades in the region during the later fifteenth century.

The markets and fairs of Cambridge and its region are explored, including the location of surviving markets and the regulation of marketing activity. Stourbridge fair, a major trading event held on the outskirts of Cambridge, grew significantly in this period, and the buyers and sellers who used this fair are examined. The purchases of King's Hall and King's College show the supply of food and fuel to the town, revealing the area of supply, the status and wealth of suppliers, and the prices of wheat over the period. Finally, the land and labour markets in the town are explored briefly, focusing on the property owned by Cambridge Corporation, and the impact of college building projects.

This work concludes by highlighting particular factors which influenced the development of Cambridge and its region, including the university's expansion, Stourbridge fair, and London trading links, while pointing to the limited extent of economic development generally over the 1450-1560 period.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of figures		page v
List of tables		vi
Acknowledgements		viii
Abbreviations		ix
Chapter 1	Introduction	1
Chapter 2	Population and wealth	34
Chapter 3	Trade	83
Chapter 4	Markets	122
Chapter 5	Fairs	158
Chapter 6	Food and fuel supplies	198
Chapter 7	Property, labour and building projects	245
Chapter 8	Conclusion	285
Appendix 1	Parish totals of taxpayers and taxable wealth, 1334-1524	295
Appendix 2	Changes in ranking of parishes by wealth, 1334-1524	300
Appendix 3	Changes in ranking of parishes by population, 1377-1524	303
Bibliography		305

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 <i>Conceptual model of Cambridge and its region</i>	6
Figure 2.1: <i>Cambridgeshire parishes grouped by sub-region</i>	57
Figure 2.2: <i>Changes in the ranking of parishes by wealth, 1334-1524</i>	65
Figure 2.3: <i>Changes in ranking of parishes by number of taxpayers, 1377-1524</i>	65
Figure 2.4: <i>Reductions to the fifteenth and tenth, 1433, & small parishes, 1428</i>	71
Figure 2.5: <i>Reductions to the fifteenth and tenth by parish, 1490-1</i>	71
Figure 3.1: <i>Saffron cultivation in Cambridgeshire parishes</i>	112
Figure 4.1: <i>Markets of Cambridge and its region</i>	124
Figure 4.2: <i>Cambridge town pleas, 1389-90</i>	142
Figure 5.1: <i>Fairs of Cambridge and its region</i>	162
Figure 5.2: <i>Transfers of booths in Stourbridge fair held by Cambridge burgesses</i>	170
Figure 5.3: <i>Income from treasurers' booths in Stourbridge fair</i>	171
Figure 6.1: <i>King's Hall suppliers, 1451-1500</i>	210
Figure 6.2: <i>King's Hall suppliers, 1501-44</i>	210
Figure 6.3: <i>King's College purchases, 1450-80</i>	213
Figure 6.4: <i>King's College purchases, 1545-58</i>	213
Figure 6.5: <i>Trinity College fuel supplies, 1547-63</i>	217
Figure 6.6: <i>King's Hall wheat prices, 1450-1544</i>	232
Figure 6.7: <i>Average of King's Hall wheat prices, 1450-1544</i>	233
Figure 7.1: <i>Cambridge Corporation's property income</i>	251
Figure 7.2: <i>Decays of rent from Cambridge Corporation's property</i>	253

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: <i>Populations of major towns and regional centres within 50 miles of Cambridge, 1377 and 1524-5</i>	44
Table 2.2: <i>Taxable wealth of major towns and regional centres within 50 miles of Cambridge, 1334 and 1524-5</i>	45
Table 2.3: <i>Populations of small towns around Cambridge, 1377 and 1524-5</i>	47
Table 2.4: <i>Taxable wealth of small towns around Cambridge, 1334 and 1524-5</i>	47
Table 2.5: <i>Theoretical breaking points of urban hinterlands around Cambridge</i>	50
Table 2.6: <i>Comparative county lay wealth in £,000 per acre, 1334 and 1515</i>	52
Table 2.7: <i>Taxable wealth per acre, by sub-region</i>	60
Table 2.8: <i>Number of taxpayers per acre, by sub-region</i>	61
Table 2.9: <i>Wealth per capita, 1524, by sub-region</i>	62
Table 2.10: <i>Wealth and population within a ten-mile radius of Cambridge</i>	68
Table 2.11: <i>1433 tax reductions, by sub-region</i>	72
Table 2.12: <i>1490-1 tax reductions, by sub-region</i>	73
Table 2.13: <i>Contributors to 1522 loan, by sub-region</i>	77
Table 2.14: <i>Distribution of all taxpayers by wealth, in Cambridgeshire sub-regions, 1524</i>	78
Table 3.1: <i>Wealth and size of Cambridge colleges, 1546</i>	90
Table 3.2: <i>Most common residence of creditors, by county, making loans to Cambridgeshire men, 1450-1509</i>	104
Table 3.3: <i>Most common residence of Cambridgeshire debtors, 1450-1509</i>	105
Table 3.4: <i>Most common occupations of Cambridgeshire debtors, 1450-1509</i>	106
Table 3.5: <i>Most common occupations of creditors lending to Cambridgeshire men, 1450-1509</i>	107
Table 4.1: <i>Occupations of persons involved in Cambridge town pleas, 1389-90</i>	144
Table 4.2: <i>Bakers, brewers and butchers amerced at Foxton, Linton and Whittlesford</i>	150

Table 5.1: <i>Dates of fairs of Cambridge and its region</i>	163
Table 6.1: <i>King's Hall suppliers with largest number of contracts, 1450-1500</i>	222
Table 6.2: <i>King's Hall suppliers with largest number of contracts, 1501-43</i>	222
Table 6.3: <i>King's College wheat prices, 1536-62</i>	235
Table 6.4: <i>Cambridge prices, 1556-7</i>	236
Table 6.5: <i>Wheat supplied to King's College from corn rents and the market, 1557-62</i>	241
Table 7.1: <i>Property income of the Cambridge colleges, 1546</i>	247
Table 7.2: <i>Cambridge rents of Corpus Christi College, 1536/7-1551</i>	255
Table 7.3 <i>Distribution of reductions in Corpus Christi College's total declared rents by parish, 1536/7-1551</i>	256
Table 7.4: <i>Burgesses admitted to freedom of Cambridge, 1422/3-1560</i>	258
Table 7.5: <i>Nationality of aliens in Cambridgeshire, 1440</i>	262
Table 7.6: <i>Occupations of aliens in Cambridge, 1440</i>	263
Table 7.7: <i>Occupations of aliens in Cambridgeshire, 1463</i>	264
Table 7.8: <i>College building projects, 1450-1560</i>	268
Table 7.9: <i>Cambridge wage rates (accounts of Cambridge Corporation and churchwardens of Holy Trinity)</i>	282

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor John Hatcher for his guidance and encouragement, and the Economic and Social Research Council for funding my research.

Several members of the Department of History at the University of Durham first stimulated my interests in medieval and economic history, and have continued to offer advice and encouragement. Dr Mark Bailey conducted my first year registration and gave many useful suggestions in the early stages of my doctoral research at Cambridge. Dr Tessa Webber, Dr Stephen Alford and Dr Neil Wright provided helpful classes in palaeography and Latin in the Faculty of History.

Many archivists, librarians and staff have given detailed information relating to their collections. In particular, I wish to thank Dr Philip Saunders and Ms Sue Neville at Cambridge County Record Office; Ms Jacky Cox, Cambridge University Library; Mrs Catherine Hall, Corpus Christi College; Mr Andrew Johnson, Downing College; Dr Rosalind Moad, King's College; Dr Roger Lovatt, Peterhouse; Mr Jonathan Smith, Trinity College, and Mr Malcolm Underwood, St John's College.

I am grateful for the opportunities to discuss aspects of this work at seminars in Cambridge and elsewhere, and through teaching a course on Late Medieval and Tudor Cambridge for the University's Board of Continuing Education. James Davis kindly read through my text and provided helpful suggestions. Corinne and Stephen Roughley enabled me to use their colour printer. Lastly, I thank my family for their unfailing support.

ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Annals</i>	<i>Annals of Cambridge</i> , ed. C.H. Cooper, 5 vols. (Cambridge, 1842-1908)
BARSEH	British Academy, Records of Social and Economic History
CASLMS	Cambridge Antiquarian Society Luard Memorial Series
CASOS	Cambridge Antiquarian Society Octavo Series
<i>CBD</i>	<i>Cambridge Borough Documents</i> , ed. W.M. Palmer (Cambridge, 1931)
CCA	Cambridge Corporation Archives, Cambridge County Record Office
CCC	Corpus Christi College, Cambridge
<i>CCR</i>	<i>Calendar of Close Rolls</i> , HMSO, 46 vols. (London, 1892-1963)
CCRO	Cambridge County Record Office
CCTA	Downing College Cambridge, Bowtell MS 1-2, 'Liber Rationalis', Cambridge Corporation Treasurers' accounts, vol. i, 1515/16-1560/1, vol. ii, 1561/2-1588/9
<i>CPR</i>	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i> , HMSO, 54 vols. (London, 1891-1916)
<i>Documents</i>	<i>Documents relating to the university and colleges of Cambridge</i> , HMSO, 3 vols. (London, 1852)
<i>EcHR</i>	<i>Economic History Review</i>
KC	King's College, Cambridge
KCMB	King's College Mundum Books (where the books are foliated, references are given to folios, otherwise to the relevant year's account)
KH a/c	King's Hall accounts, Trinity College, Cambridge
<i>LP</i>	<i>Letters and papers, foreign and domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII</i> , ed. J.S. Brewer, J. Gairdner and R.H. Brodie, 23 vols. (London, 2 nd edn., 1862-1932)
<i>OED</i>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> , 20 vols. (Oxford, 2 nd edn., 1989)
<i>PCAS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Paston letters and papers of the fifteenth century</i> , ed. N. Davis, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1971)

QC	Queens' College archives, Cambridge University Library
RCHMC	Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, <i>An inventory of the historical monuments in the city of Cambridge</i> , 2 vols. (London, 1959)
RCHMNE	Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, <i>An inventory of the historical monuments in the county of Cambridge</i> , ii: <i>North-East Cambridgeshire</i> (London, 1972)
RCHMW	Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, <i>An inventory of the historical monuments in the county of Cambridge</i> , i: <i>West Cambridgeshire</i> (London, 1968)
St Radegund	<i>The priory of St Radegund Cambridge</i> , ed. A. Gray, CASOS, XXXI (Cambridge, 1898)
SJC	St John's College, Cambridge
SR	<i>Statutes of the Realm (1101-1713)</i> , Record Commission, 11 vols. (London, 1808-28)
TCJB a/c	Trinity College Junior Bursars' accounts, i, 1550/1-1563/4
TCSB a/c	Trinity College Senior Bursars' accounts, i, 1547/8-1563/4
Thetford	<i>The register of Thetford Priory</i> , ed. D. Dymond, BARSEH, new series, XXIV-XXV (Oxford, 1995)
UA	University Archives, Cambridge University Library
VCH	<i>The Victoria history of the counties of England</i> (London, 1900-in progress)
VCH Cambs.	<i>The Victoria history of Cambridgeshire</i> , 9 vols. (London, 1938-89)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study has two prime objectives. Firstly, it seeks to examine the relationship between a town and its region in the late medieval period, by analysing the population, wealth, trade, markets and workforce of Cambridge and its surrounding region. Secondly, it attempts to explore the nature and extent of any changes which took place in these various facets of Cambridge and its region between 1450 and 1560, a period traditionally seen as one of economic and social transition. In the main body of this work these two related themes will be examined together, but initially, it is helpful to look at each in turn.

Towns and their regions

The difficulty in defining exactly what constituted a town features prominently in the writings of historians on the urban sector of medieval England. English towns were small by modern standards and in comparison with those of medieval Flanders or Italy. Many urban settlements developed as boroughs where land was held by burgage tenure. The members of some boroughs received grants of customs and liberties, bestowing varying degrees of independent jurisdiction and trading privileges. But these chartered boroughs, although many formed the core of the urban sector, were not completely synonymous with medieval towns, as they excluded many large and thriving industrial centres, which never obtained these privileges, and included some settlements that never developed far beyond their agricultural base. The definition of a town adopted here is that of a dense and permanent concentration of people engaged in a variety of activities, many of which were not agricultural.¹ Cambridge was a borough by the time of Domesday Book and developed a wide range of

¹ P.T.H. Unwin, 'Towns and trade 1066-1500', in R.A. Dodgshon & R.A. Butlin, eds., *An historical geography of England & Wales* (London, 2nd edn., 1990), pp. 124-5; R. Holt & G. Rosser, 'Introduction: the English town in the Middle Ages', in R. Holt & G. Rosser, eds., *The medieval town: a reader in English urban history 1200-1540* (Harlow, 1990), pp. 1-4.

administrative, financial and judicial privileges during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Evidence of a wide range of non-agrarian occupations is found among the names of burgesses who witnessed deeds or served as town officials, and from the evidence of street names.²

By 1300 an urban network had developed in England, stretching from the capital, through major cities and provincial centres, down to small market towns: a network which still forms the core of the marketing and urban structure today. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, English society developed a high degree of market orientation, with substantial levels of market production and commercial activity, although often small-scale, among all social groups. This was facilitated by the growth of population, the foundation of new towns and the expansion of existing centres, the proliferation of new markets and fairs, the growth of market-dependent occupations, the development of record-keeping and official routine, and the increasingly sophisticated pattern of trade. Although the size of most towns and the number of markets contracted in the later middle ages along with the general fall in population, the urban system that had been created by 1300 remained largely intact. An increase in currency in circulation *per capita* between 1300 and 1500 and evidence of regional specialisation in agriculture argue against any significant reduction in the importance of market transactions.³ It is not inappropriate, therefore, to apply theories of urban hierarchy and central place, which were devised for the study of modern towns, to an examination of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century English towns.⁴

Geographers often rank towns within urban hierarchies, according to population size and wealth, assuming that larger and wealthier towns were able to support a greater

² *VCH Cambs.*, iii, pp. 31-3, 89-90; P.H. Reaney, ed., *The place-names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*, English Place-name Society, XIX (Cambridge, 1943), pp. 44-50.

³ R.H. Britnell, *The commercialisation of English society 1000-1500* (Manchester, 2nd edn., 1996), pp. 79-127, 184-5, 198-201, 228-34.

⁴ C. Dyer, 'Market towns and the countryside in late medieval England', *Canadian Journal of History*, 31 (1996), 35.

range of goods, services and administrative functions than smaller urban centres, and were therefore able to serve larger regions. The English towns of 1500 formed such a hierarchy and can be classified into four main groups. London, with a population of around 60,000, stood alone by virtue of its size and range of functions. Major towns and cities, such as Norwich, Bristol and York followed, with populations of 5,000 to 10,000. Cambridge was one of the next rank of regional centres, whose towns contained between 1,500 and 5,000 inhabitants. Finally, there were several hundred small towns, with populations of between 500 and 1,500, serving as local market centres and often lacking chartered borough status.⁵ There was a general relationship between the size of a town and the diversity of its crafts and occupations, although some towns, both large and small, specialised in particular trades.⁶ This urban hierarchy was not static, and chapter two examines how the population and wealth of Cambridge and its surrounding region changed over the period, both in absolute terms and in relation to other parts of the country.

The region of a town or city is the area around that centre, in which the town provides markets, employment, and professional services, and in turn, the region serves the town, by providing food, raw materials, and labour. Urban centres act like magnets, both attracting and repelling people and institutions, and the fields of these spatial forces are their regions.⁷ An urban region functions as an integrated whole, but its complexity makes its extent difficult to measure. In an attempt to do this, geographers studying modern towns usually select a number of indices which reflect both the town's level of specialisation and its various functions as a centre of marketing, employment, and administration. Measurements might include the delivery area of shops, the distance of journeys to work, the availability of public transport, and the

⁵ Unwin, 'Towns and trade', p. 139. For a more rigid, and arguably contrived attempt to fit English towns in 1377 into a hierarchy based on size, see J.C. Russell, 'The metropolitan city region of the middle ages', *Journal of Regional Science*, 2 (1960), 55-70.

⁶ Dyer, 'Market towns', 23, 32; W.G. Hoskins, 'English provincial towns in the early sixteenth century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 6 (1956), 13.

⁷ The terms hinterland, sphere of influence, catchment area and urban field are also used.

circulation area of newspapers.⁸ However, when mapped, these boundaries usually vary, and in part this reflects the different levels of specialisation for different functions within the same town.⁹

Attempts have been made to delimit urban fields theoretically. Christaller proposed that larger towns, with their wider fields of influence, encompass the fields of neighbouring smaller towns, for which the larger centres provide more specialised functions. His central place theory provided different spatial layouts of settlements and their regions on a idealised landscape where marketing, transportation, or administration, was the dominant factor.¹⁰ Von Thünen produced a model of the pattern of farming systems generated by a large central market, arguing that distance from the market determines the choice of crop and intensity of land use. He proposed a variety of concentric zones including intensive horticultural crops, forestry, intensive and extensive commercial grain production, and extensive stock rearing and wool production. Von Thünen's model illustrates the possible impact of concentrated urban demand on land use and farming systems in its region: the city can encourage investment in more intensive and productive farming methods, specialisation, and improved productivity.¹¹ But outside Christaller's isotropic landscape and Von Thünen's 'Isolated State', there are areas of overlap where neighbouring towns compete for trade. Working on the basis that the amount of competition between

⁸ For an example pertaining to Cambridge, see R. Hamid, 'A service centre hierarchy in Cambridgeshire' (unpublished dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Durham, 1965).

⁹ R. Knowles & J. Wareing, *Economic and social geography made simple* (London, 4th edn., 1981), pp. 249-50; A. Smailes, *The geography of towns* (London, 1953), pp. 129-49; R.E. Dickinson, *City and region. A geographical interpretation* (London, 1964), p. 19.

¹⁰ W. Christaller, *Central places in southern Germany*, trans. C.W. Baskin (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966); Dickinson, *City*, pp. 51-67. For studies applying central place theory to medieval towns, see C.J. Bond, 'Central place and medieval new town: the origins of Thame, Oxfordshire', in T.R. Slater, ed., *The built form of western cities. Essays for M.R.G. Conzen* (Leicester, 1990), pp. 83-106; J. Masschaele, *Peasants, merchants, and markets: inland trade in medieval England, 1150-1350* (Basingstoke, 1997), p. 6.

¹¹ P. Hall, *Von Thünen's isolated state* (Oxford, 1966). Von Thünen's model is applied to medieval London in B.M.S. Campbell, J.A. Galloway, D. Keene & M. Murphy, *A medieval capital and its grain supply: agrarian production and distribution in the London region c.1300*, Historical Geography Research Series, XXX (London, 1993), pp. 141-4.

different towns will be determined by the accessibility and comparability of their goods and services, models have attempted to calculate the breaking point at which people travel to one town rather than another for similar services, and the proportion of retail trade two towns will derive from a settlement lying between them.¹²

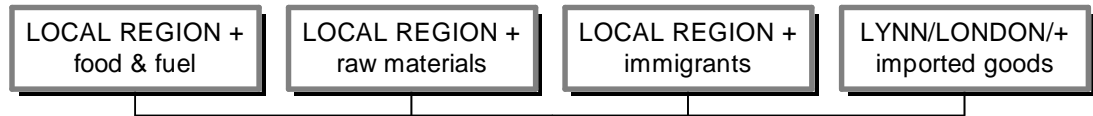
In practice, though, these models have significant drawbacks. In addition to specific criticisms of particular models, it can be argued more generally that individuals rarely conduct their business in the rational and logical manner that these models suggest, and often possess incomplete information and make distorted evaluations. The precise demarcation of a town's region is rarely possible, and is perhaps best conceived as a series of zones of declining urban influence.¹³ Regions of individual towns will be modified by a variety of local geographical factors, and may change in response to economic and social developments.

Models are perhaps more helpful not in measuring the extent of hinterlands, but in illustrating the relationships between towns and their regions. Figure 1.1 represents diagrammatically the principal links between Cambridge and its region.

¹² Knowles & Wareing, *Geography*, pp. 252-3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 226-30, 252-3.

Inputs:



Outputs:

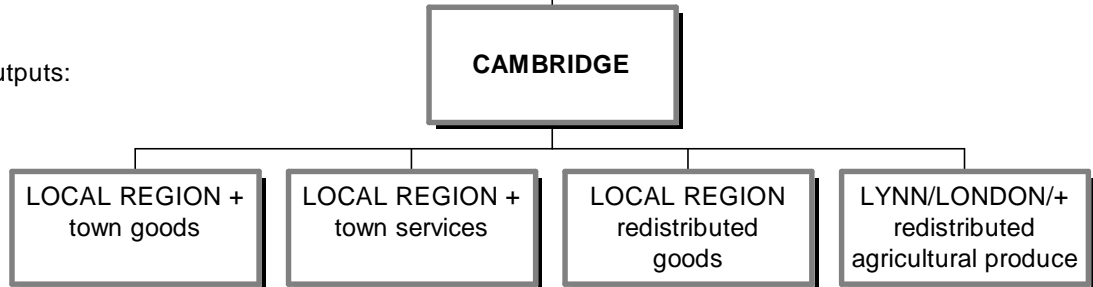


Figure 1.1: Conceptual model of Cambridge and its region

Cambridge's region, like that of any town, can be variously defined. The present-day university, for example, has a catchment area of more than national scope, and although generally more restricted in the middle ages, it did draw considerable numbers from across northern and eastern England.¹⁴ For many of the economic purposes outlined above in figure 1.1, the town was served by its local region of about 10 to 15 miles in radius, roughly running along the county border, comprising a range of different sub-regions for which Cambridge was a marketing centre. Agriculture predominated along the river valleys and chalk and clay uplands to the south-east and west of Cambridge, with a growing emphasis on barley cultivation and sheep farming. In the Fenland to the north, agriculture was supplemented by the products of the marsh (fish, reeds, birds, and turf), and in the Suffolk Breckland to the east by rabbit breeding, preparation of skins, flint mining and cloth manufacture.¹⁵ Further south-

¹⁴ T.H. Aston, G.D. Duncan & T.A.R. Evans, 'The medieval alumni of the University of Cambridge', *Past and Present*, 86 (1980), 28-36.

¹⁵ H.C. Darby, *The medieval Fenland* (Newton Abbot, 2nd edn., 1974), pp. 23-84; M. Bailey, *A marginal economy? East Anglian Breckland in the later Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 158-86.

east along the Suffolk/Essex border, a flourishing textile industry developed. By the early sixteenth century, the communities of Lavenham, Hadleigh and Long Melford had become as wealthy as many larger towns.¹⁶ Unlike many other towns that have been studied, the economy of Cambridge itself was unusual in not being dominated by cloth-making. It was essentially service-based, supplying the townspeople, surrounding countryside, and the particular demands of the university.

There were four principal flows into the town. Cambridge, like all urban centres, relied on supplies of food and fuel from the surrounding area. As will be shown in subsequent chapters, most food and fuel came from the immediate area of 10 to 15 miles around the town. Only a few items, including salt-water fish, imported spices, and coal, came from greater distances. Raw materials too generally came from the same local region as food and fuel, for processing by various urban industries such as mills, breweries and the leather trades. Some raw materials though, particularly those used by the various building craftsmen in the town, came from adjoining counties or further afield. The town also drew immigrants from its region. Information relating to migration is scarce, but rural migrants to medieval towns outnumbered those migrating out of towns, because of high urban mortality. Finally, trade with other urban centres brought goods into the town from other agricultural areas and towns, and from overseas. King's Lynn and London were Cambridge's two most prominent trading partners, although there were also important links with parts of Suffolk and the Midlands.

Outputs from the town can also be grouped into four categories. They included goods produced from raw materials by the town's crafts and industries, and a range of administrative, legal and religious services provided by the town's inhabitants. With the exception of the university, none of the town's goods or services appear to have enjoyed a national or international reputation in this period, and most were supplied to

¹⁶ A. Dyer, *Decline and growth in English towns 1400-1640* (Cambridge, 2nd edn., 1995), pp. 62-3.

customers within the local region. Cambridge, like most towns, also acted as an entrepôt. Some of the goods brought from Lynn, London, and elsewhere to Cambridge, were redistributed to traders and customers in the locality. Agricultural produce from the surrounding region was collected, marketed and distributed through the town's markets and fairs and by the town's merchants to other sources of demand, particularly to Lynn and London.

The university enlarged the spatial impact of these processes. The colleges required foodstuffs, fuel, and a wide range of basic and luxury goods. The building projects of the colleges necessitated large quantities of materials and highly skilled craftsmen that could not be obtained in the immediate area. Scholars migrated to the university from across the country, and some from overseas. The specialist academic trades that developed to serve the university, as well as the catchment area of the university, meant that Cambridge's region for services was more extensive than that of other towns of comparable size. As will be demonstrated subsequently, the impact of the university within the town appears to have grown significantly during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and by implication, caused the town's region to expand in this period.

Recent research has begun to illuminate the size of urban regions and the interaction between towns and their hinterlands in the medieval and early modern periods, and this helps to place the study of Cambridge and its region in a broader context. London, at the apex of the English urban hierarchy, had the largest region of influence. Around 1300, when London's population was around 80,000 or more, the city's demand influenced the pattern of land use and agricultural development in much of south-east England, and led to the emergence of specialised traders.¹⁷ London acted as 'an engine of growth' in the late sixteenth century, when its phenomenal expansion stimulated, through the demands of trade and consumption,

¹⁷ Campbell et al., *Medieval capital*.

new methods of production and changes in the wider economy.¹⁸ London was unable to exert the same scale of demand in the later middle ages, as its population declined substantially after 1300 and did not recover to its former size until around 1550. But the capital continued to increase its ascendancy over other English towns. Measured by its taxable capacity, London's share of the country's wealth rose from 2 per cent in 1334 to around 10 per cent in 1522; in the early fourteenth century it was five times as wealthy as the leading provincial town, but by the 1520s it had become ten times as wealthy.¹⁹ The capital's share of cloth exports rose from 50 per cent in 1450 to nearly 90 per cent by 1550. London merchants were increasingly dominating other distributive trades, and London drew sizeable numbers of merchants from the North and the Midlands.²⁰ The impact of London's growing ascendancy was felt to varying degrees across the country, although the effects were not always beneficial.

York was one of a handful of leading provincial centres that formed the second tier of the urban hierarchy in medieval England. The city, with over 10,000 people in 1377, served a region that covered much of its county and other parts of northern England. York fulfilled various functions for its region as a centre for religion, administration, gentry society, industrial production (notably cloth) and marketing, distributing continental imports and goods produced in the various local economies of the surrounding countryside. Most of York's administrative and social roles remained stable in the later middle ages: it was economic fluctuations, particularly the decline in overseas trade, and the loss of cloth-making to smaller centres in the West Riding, which determined the changing fortunes of the city. The city's merchants were also

¹⁸ F.J. Fisher, 'The development of London as a centre of conspicuous consumption in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' and 'London as an "engine of economic growth"' in P.J. Corfield & N.B. Harte, eds., *London and the English economy 1500-1700* (London, 1990), pp. 105-18, 185-98; E.A. Wrigley, 'A simple model of London's importance in changing English society and economy, 1650-1750', in P. Abrams & E.A. Wrigley, eds., *Towns in societies* (Cambridge, 1978), pp. 215-43.

¹⁹ D. Keene, 'Medieval London and its region', *London Journal*, 14 (1989), 99; D. Keene, 'Changes in London's economic hinterland as indicated by debt cases in the Court of Common Pleas', in J.A. Galloway, ed., *Trade, urban hinterlands and market integration c.1300-1600*, Centre for Metropolitan History Working Papers Series, 3 (London, 2000), pp. 60-1.

²⁰ E.M. Carus-Wilson & O. Coleman, *England's export trade, 1275-1547* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 97-119; S.L. Thrupp, *The merchant class of medieval London* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 208-19.

being undermined by the lead that London merchants took in arranging credit. In the Tudor period, some of York's other functions altered, with the Reformation, the establishment of the King's Council, and the growth of gentle pursuits in the city.²¹

Exeter was another major provincial city, which grew from about 3,000 to 7,000 inhabitants between 1377 and 1524-5, and served much of south-west England. Like York, the city acted as an administrative and ecclesiastical centre, but the most significant developments were in its marketing and manufacturing roles. Exeter benefited from the expansion of cloth production, both within the town, and in other centres in Devon and west Somerset. The town and its port of Topsham also served as a major marketing and distribution centre for fish from south Devon and Cornwall, livestock and tin mining on Dartmoor, and imports from Brittany, Gascony and Normandy. Although Exeter seems to have retained a degree of commercial independence from London, some Devon merchants became London citizens, and linen from Exeter was sent overland to the capital.²²

Medium-sized towns with growing cloth industries seem to have had varying impacts on their hinterlands. A second-ranking provincial town, Colchester, made little impact on its surrounding region, despite the substantial growth of its cloth industry in the late fourteenth century. Colchester had around 6,000 inhabitants in the 1370s, rising to 8,000 in the 1410s. The stimulus of the Colchester market was too small to prevent depopulation in surrounding villages and a contraction of arable cultivation, although urban development did perhaps delay the abandonment of direct demense management by landlords and stimulate demand for barley malt, meat and dairy products. Colchester in fact benefited from the rural depression by being able to

²¹ J.N. Bartlett, 'The expansion and decline of York in the later middle ages', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 12 (1959-60), 17-33; J. Kermode, *Medieval merchants: York, Beverley and Hull in the later middle ages* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 7-9, 188-9; D.M. Palliser, 'York under the Tudors: the trading life of the northern capital', in A. Everitt, ed., *Perspectives in English urban history* (London, 1973), pp. 39-59.

²² M. Kowaleski, *Local markets and regional trade in medieval Exeter* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 87-95, 222-324; Keene, 'Changes', p. 79.

obtain cheap wool supplies and prime sites for fulling mills.²³ But in Berkshire in the later fifteenth century, around the smaller cloth-producing town of Newbury, with about 2,600 inhabitants, Yates found evidence of an urban-rural symbiosis. At the manor of Shaw, less than two miles distant, Newbury was providing investment for mills and chalk pits, a market for products extracted or produced within the village, and additional employment prospects.²⁴

Small towns, with populations of up to 1,500 people, do not seem to have had a more restricted trading area than larger cities when it came to small retail purchases, mainly of food and drink, recorded in borough court records. In most cases, nearly 50 per cent of contacts came from within 10 km of the town. Like larger urban settlements, small towns often acted as centres of exchange for adjoining agricultural regions. But small towns generally lacked the trade on a large scale and over long distances, and their residents had to turn to larger market towns for higher-value goods and services. Traders from Banbury, Chipping Norton, Chipping Camden and Coventry supplied the small Warwickshire town of Shipston, and rented stalls in the market there. A few small market towns, however, developed specialist products that were distributed beyond their normal hinterland. In the later middle ages, Thaxted knives were distributed by London merchants, and Droitwich salt was supplied to Derby.²⁵

The role of towns within transition and modernisation

Towns are attributed varying degrees of influence in theories of economic development, and three distinct lines of argument are outlined below. Firstly, towns have been seen as alien to feudal society, playing an active part in the undermining of

²³ R.H. Britnell, *Growth and decline in Colchester, 1300-1525* (Cambridge, 1986) pp. 95, 141-60. See also J.A. Galloway, 'Colchester and its region, 1350-1560: wealth, industry and rural-urban mobility in a medieval society' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1986).

²⁴ M. Yates, 'Continuity and change in rural society c.1400-1600: West Hanney and Shaw (Berkshire) and their region' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1997), pp. 209-13; M. Yates, 'Change and continuities in rural society from the later middle ages to the sixteenth century: the contribution of west Berkshire', *EcHR*, 52 (1999), 627-36.

²⁵ Dyer, 'Market towns', 17-35.

the feudal economy and helping to transform it into a capitalist economy. Secondly, towns can be viewed as an integral part of the feudal system, playing no significant role in its demise. Thirdly, towns might be perceived as agents of modernisation, bringing the benefits of their specialisation and concentrated demand to the wider economy.

Many writers have presented towns as harbingers of capitalism, acting as a solvent on the bonds of feudal society. The dynamism of the town has been contrasted with the inertia of peasant society in the countryside, characterised by production for subsistence and limited development.²⁶ For Pirenne, the development of towns and trade released western Europe from 'the traditional immobility' of a social organisation based solely on 'the relations of man to the soil'. Peasants could now profit by marketing their surpluses, and were encouraged to increase their production. Towns caused the breakdown of serfdom, introduced a new social order - the middle class - and revealed the power of liquid capital.²⁷ Sweezy similarly argued that feudalism, founded on a 'system of production for use', was debilitated by the expansion of commerce and towns, based on a 'system of production for exchange'. Towns and trade offered attractive new goods to lords, but the inefficiency of the manorial system and the unsuitability of its production for sale could not provide the revenue to meet the lords' growing consumption demands. So lords were encouraged to innovate by dismantling the manorial and servile system and develop new types of productive relations, leading to more rationalised specialisation and the division of labour.²⁸

²⁶ J. Langton & G. Hoppe, *Town and country in the development of early modern western Europe*, Historical Geography Research Series, XI (Norwich, 1983), pp. 4-16.

²⁷ H. Pirenne, *Medieval cities: their origins and the revival of trade* (Princeton, N.J., 1952), pp. 101-3, 213-34.

²⁸ P. Sweezy, 'A critique', in R. Hilton, ed., *The transition from feudalism to capitalism* (London, 1976), pp. 33-56.

An alternative explanation, however, would claim that towns were part of the feudal system rather than inimical to it, and that they could not have brought about the transformation into a capitalist economy. For Brenner, building heavily on the work of Dobb, the primary factors in the decline of serfdom were property relations and class struggle, and the key changes occurred in the countryside rather than within the town. The decline of serfdom was attributed to the imbalance within medieval society, centred on the heavy surplus extracted by lords from the peasantry. The expansion of towns and trade merely increased the consumption demands of the ruling class, and these were met, not through dismantling the productive system, but by pushing it to its limits, as lords made increasing exactions from their peasants. By the fourteenth century, the pressures inherent in the feudal system had led to the intensification of class conflict, resulting in the decline of serfdom, and preparing the way in England for the development of agrarian capitalism.²⁹

Hilton also saw towns not as a development alien to feudalism, but as ‘one of its essential constitutive components’.³⁰ Many towns developed as trading centres where peasants could trade their surplus produce, in order to obtain basic commodities and to gain money to pay in rents and dues to their seigneurial lords. Lords spent much of their income on the luxury goods that larger towns produced or imported. Although a distinct urban identity arose from the concentration of population and diversity of occupations, towns had important structural analogies with rural society: the urban workshop was a small, family-run enterprise, like the peasant agricultural holding. The considerable number of market towns founded by lords, the large

²⁹ M. Dobb, *Studies in the development of capitalism* (London, 1946), pp. 33-122; R. Brenner, ‘Agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe’, and ‘Agrarian roots of European capitalism’, in T.H. Aston & C.H.E. Philpin, eds., *The Brenner debate: agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 10-63, 213-328.

³⁰ R.H. Hilton, *English and French towns in feudal society: a comparative study* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 18.

amount of urban property owned by the nobility, and the extensive urban rights held by ecclesiastical institutions, provided a strong feudal presence in medieval towns.³¹

Finally, a group of writers have looked at the role of towns not within the transition from feudalism to capitalism, but as agents of modernisation. Adam Smith outlined the benefits of the specialisation of production and the growing division of labour. Specialised producers, like the famous pin-makers, will become more dextrous in performing their tasks, reducing the times taken to complete them. Towns provide groups of specialists, which are more attractive to consumers and more convenient to suppliers than if the same specialists were dispersed throughout the countryside. The gains to both town and country are reciprocal. The country supplies the town with food and raw materials, and the town sends part of its manufactured produce back to the country.³²

Smith, however, also charted how four distinct socio-economic stages of society developed over time, and regarded towns as breaking down the feudal order, in a way not dissimilar to the hypotheses of Pirenne or Sweezy. The move from the third to fourth stages of society, from agriculture to commerce, was accomplished by the trade and manufactures of cities. Through foreign commerce and manufactures, lords were given new opportunities to expend their surpluses, previously used to maintain retainers and dependants. As a result, they improved their leases, and shed the greater part of their retainers and tenants, forfeiting the power they had once held. Smith also considered that urban merchants were more likely than country gentlemen to invest profitably in improving rural land, and that the commerce and manufactures of towns introduced order and good government.³³

³¹ Ibid.; R.H. Hilton, 'Towns in English medieval society', in Holt & Rosser, eds., *Medieval town*, pp. 19-28.

³² A. Smith, *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*, ed. R.H. Campbell, A.S. Skinner & W.B. Todd, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1976), i, pp. 13-20, 142-5, 376-8, 411; J. Hatcher & M. Bailey, *Modelling the middle ages: economic development in theory and practice* (forthcoming, Oxford, 2001), chpt. 4.

³³ Smith, *Wealth*, i, pp. 397-422.

The benefits that Smith outlined as accruing from specialisation, division of labour and concentrated demand in towns, have formed the focus of most subsequent research. Wrigley has outlined how early modern and eighteenth-century towns, by providing a substantial and dependable market, and acting as a focus for the transport network, encouraged the specialisation of production in the countryside. The 'Feeding the City' project has shown that London was generating this sort of impact by 1300.³⁴ From the thirteenth century, some Norfolk farmers altered the types of crops and livestock they produced, and the intensity of their production, to meet the changing provisioning requirements of Norwich and London. Under the stimulus of this urban demand, certain East Norfolk demesnes achieved high and constant yields by using large amounts of labour. The availability of urban markets was probably the dominant factor causing a rise in agricultural productivity in northern France in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Urban markets permitted farmers to grow more valuable crops and encouraged investment to raise yields. Campbell and Grantham see urbanisation acting as a forcing-house, generating technological improvements and innovations that are denied to other areas that lie beyond the hinterland of major markets.³⁵

Towns depended on the countryside for food and raw materials, but the countryside needed the town only for some services, being otherwise largely self-sufficient. Towns needed to stimulate rural interest in urban products to create an exchange of goods and generate growth.³⁶ Many urban centres, therefore, had a distinctive role in consumer behaviour: they were the places where new ideas were first introduced, and

³⁴ E.A. Wrigley, 'Parasite or stimulus: the town in a pre-industrial economy', in Abrams & Wrigley, eds., *Towns in societies*, pp. 295-309; Campbell et al., *Medieval capital*.

³⁵ B.M.S. Campbell & M. Overton, 'A new perspective of medieval and early modern agriculture: six centuries of Norfolk farming c.1250-c.1850', *Past and Present*, 141 (1993), 99-105; G. Grantham, 'Agricultural supply during the industrial revolution: French evidence and European implications', *Journal of Economic History*, 49 (1989), 43-72; G. Grantham, 'Privileged spaces: agricultural productivity and urban provisioning zones in pre-industrial Europe' (English summary), *Annales*, 52 (1997), 729.

³⁶ E.A. Wrigley, 'City and country in the past: a sharp divide or a continuum?', *Historical Research*, 64 (1991), 115-17.

urban life and culture focused on display. Probate inventories of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries show that decorative goods were commonly found first in towns, before appearing in the countryside.³⁷

Yet the scale of urban demand in the Middle Ages can easily be overstated. Even within the hinterlands of large towns, many demesne farms continued to supply households rather than the market. Substantial variations in grain prices between regions show that markets for basic foodstuffs remained local and poorly integrated. But even without the stimulus of a major urban market, farmers still had the incentive to work their land profitably. This could mean responding to conditions in local markets and changes in prices and yields of different produce. At the demesne manor of Hinderclay in Suffolk in the early fourteenth century, despite lying in a land-locked area outside the range of a major urban market, the farm was managed with a remarkable responsiveness to market prices.³⁸

There has also been a reaction in sociological work against regarding towns as separate variables, and a move towards examining them within the wider environment. Earlier writers had frequently found that it was not the town itself that created change, but larger systems of social relations, frequently concentrated and intensified within urban areas. Many now feel that towns should be examined in their historical context rather than as special entities, and that the integrated study of urban and rural changes is more clearly illuminated at a regional level.³⁹

³⁷ L. Weatherill, *Consumer behaviour and material culture in Britain, 1660-1760* (London, 1988).

³⁸ Hatcher & Bailey, *Modelling*, chpt. 5; D.J. Stone, 'The management of resources on the demesne farm of Wisbech Barton, 1314-1430' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1998), pp. 255-6.

³⁹ P. Abrams, 'Towns and economic growth: some theories and problems', in Abrams & Wrigley, eds., *Towns in societies*, pp. 9-33; Langton & Hoppe, *Town and country*, pp. 40-1.

The significance of the period, 1450-1560

Several of the models outlined above have identified the period between 1450 and 1560 as a transitional phase of economic development, either as part of a movement from feudalism to capitalism or as an era of economic modernisation. Dobb and Sweezy saw the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as a transitional phase, in which feudalism was in decline but capitalism had yet to emerge. Strong vestiges of serfdom remained, the beginnings of wage labour were apparent, and many small producers faced an unstable position when attempting to produce for the market. Sweezy described the period as one of 'pre-capitalist commodity production'.⁴⁰

For Brenner, this was the period in which agrarian capitalism began to emerge in England. Although by the mid-fifteenth century peasants were breaking feudal checks, landlords were able to prevent land being lost to peasant freehold by appropriating vacant holdings and charging entry fines. Through these mechanisms, landlords were 'able to engross, consolidate and enclose, to create large farms and lease them to capitalist tenants who could afford to make capital investments', thereby creating a system of capitalist class relations in the countryside. The first stage of this, the build-up of larger holdings at the expense of smaller ones, occurred in many areas from the second half of the fifteenth century.⁴¹

Marx also saw the last third of the fifteenth century and the greater part of the sixteenth century as an 'agricultural revolution': rising agricultural prices and lagging rents 'enriched the farmer as rapidly as it impoverished the mass of the rural population'.⁴² For Tawney too, this was an age of enclosure, land speculation, and rack rents, aggravated by the dissolution of the monasteries and chantries.⁴³

⁴⁰ Sweezy, 'Critique', pp. 50-1.

⁴¹ Brenner, 'Agrarian class structure', pp. 46-52; Brenner, 'Agrarian roots', pp. 305-6.

⁴² K. Marx, *Capital*, trans. E. & C. Paul, 2 vols. (London, 1930), ii, pp. 796-9, 812-13, 823-4.

⁴³ R.H. Tawney, *The agrarian problem in the sixteenth century* (London, 1912); R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the rise of capitalism* (London, 1922).

Hilton has highlighted the new opportunities that emerged during the late-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, predominantly within the countryside. With sufficiently low rents, and the inability of landowners to control the free movements of peasants and labourers, 'the feudal restrictions on simple commodity production virtually disappeared'. These changes gave free rein to agricultural and industrial commodity producers, and Hilton pointed to the employment of wage labour by yeomen farmers and the movement of craft production out of gild-dominated towns. Hilton believed that 'during the course of the relatively unfettered commodity production in the 15th century, the necessary pre-conditions were created for later capitalist production'.⁴⁴

Some of those who have stressed the benefits accruing from specialisation have also highlighted developments within this period. Although Adam Smith did not provide a detailed chronology of economic development, for a group of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century economic historians including Cunningham, Ashley and Lipson, who in the Smithian tradition stressed the growth of trade and a money economy, this was a era of economic modernisation. Cunningham regarded the fifteenth century and first half of the sixteenth century as 'a period of transition from medieval to modern society', in which a natural economy was superseded with the common use of money, and prices, wages and rents were calculated according to market demand, rather than using customary rates.⁴⁵

Recent research of the medieval economy has challenged many of theories that emphasise change in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, by showing that similar developments arose much earlier. The commercialisation of the economy, regarded as an important feature in the emergence of capitalism, was more rapid between 1000

⁴⁴ R. Hilton, 'Introduction', in R. Hilton, ed., *The transition from feudalism to capitalism* (London, 1976), pp. 25-7.

⁴⁵ S.H. Rigby, *English society in the later middle ages: class, status and gender* (London, 1995), pp. 61-3; R.H. Britnell, 'The English economy and the government, 1450-1550', in J.L. Watts, ed., *The end of the middle ages? England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 113-14; W. Cunningham, *The growth of English industry and commerce during the early and middle ages* (Cambridge, 5th edn., 1915), pp. 457-72.

and 1300 than between 1300 and 1500, and many developments such as increased market orientation, the growth of larger units of production, and dependence on wage labour, were more characteristic of the pre-Black Death period rather than the years that followed. During the later Middle Ages there were only two significant moves towards capitalism: rents and wages became more contractual, and some parts of the cloth industry became increasingly dependent on organisation by merchant clothiers.⁴⁶

Empirical studies of aspects of the late medieval economy have begun to question many of the generalisations that theories of the transition from feudalism to capitalism have been built upon. Recent studies have stressed the continuities, rather than the changes, within the land market.⁴⁷ Contrary to Brenner's claims, it is suggested that there was no precise relationship between landlord power, tenure, ownership, farm size and capitalist farming. Landlords were often unable to exercise arbitrary power over tenants, who were protected by their tenancies and the courts, and landlords showed little interest in agricultural innovation. The consolidation of land and the appearance of capitalist forms of agriculture could occur as a result of differentiation within the peasantry themselves, independent of lordly action.⁴⁸

The assumptions of economic modernisation that have dominated the historiography of this period form part of a wider tradition of viewing the end of the fifteenth century as a turning point. The significance of two other principal events in this perspective, the Renaissance, and in England, the 'New Monarchy' of the Tudor dynasty, have been challenged, and the continuities highlighted.⁴⁹ As Bridbury has stated, 'the idea

⁴⁶ Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 233-5; R.H. Britnell, 'Commerce and capitalism in late medieval England: problems of description and theory', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 6 (1993), 359-69.

⁴⁷ J. Whittle, 'The development of agrarian capitalism in England, c.1450-c.1580' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1995).

⁴⁸ R.W. Hoyle, 'Tenure and the land market in early modern England: or a late contribution to the Brenner debate', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 43 (1990), 1-20; P. Glennie, 'In search of agrarian capitalism: manorial land markets and the acquisition of land in the Lea Valley c.1450-c.1560', *Continuity and Change*, 3 (1998), 11-40; M. Mate, 'The East Sussex land market and agrarian class structure in the late middle ages', *Past and Present*, 139 (1993), 46-65.

⁴⁹ J.L. Watts, 'Introduction: history, the fifteenth century and the Renaissance', in Watts, ed., *End of the middle ages?*, pp. 1-22; Britnell, '1450-1550', pp. 113-15.

of a caesura in the succession of events, a breach of continuity marking the rapid emergence of a world which was modern instead of medieval', makes no more sense in economic history than in the history of political institutions.⁵⁰ The years between 1450 and 1560 seem to have been ones of very gradual, hesitant and interrupted economic development. It is helpful to briefly sketch the main economic developments of the period in order to illustrate this, and to enable developments within Cambridge and its region to be viewed within the national context.

The pattern of economic change, 1450-1560

The limits of this period were years of very different economic conditions. Population depression, static prices, monetary scarcity, an abundance of land, and a shortage of labour marked the English economy in the period around 1450. By 1560 the country was experiencing population growth and rising prices, which were beginning to drive up the price of land and drag down real wages. But the transition between these two dates was slow and varied between different sectors of the economy.

England's population, substantially reduced by the Black Death and subsequent outbreaks of plague and epidemic disease, probably reached its lowest point of 2 to 2.5 million in the mid-fifteenth century. The population may have recovered to between 2.25 and 2.75 million by 1522-5 and 3 million by the early 1560s, although another estimate places the English population at only 1.8 million in 1524, suggesting an even larger or more prolonged decline during the previous century.⁵¹ Whether the prolonged demographic recession of the fifteenth century was driven by continued high mortality from plague and epidemic disease, or by lower fertility, as labour shortages drew women into employment, is still debated. The date at which population began to grow again is also disputed, although any growth up to the 1520s

⁵⁰ A.R. Bridbury, 'Sixteenth-century farming', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 27 (1974), 555.

⁵¹ J. Hatcher, *Plague, population and the English economy 1348-1530* (London, 1977), pp. 68-9; E.A. Wrigley & R.S. Schofield, *The population history of England, 1541-1871: a reconstruction* (London, 1981), p. 531; B.M.S. Campbell, 'The population of early Tudor England: a re-evaluation of the 1522 muster returns and 1524 and 1525 lay subsidies', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 7 (1981), 145-54.

was probably small-scale and localised.⁵² Population growth from 1541 to 1556 was rapid, at 0.87 per cent per annum, and there may have been a similar rate of increase from the mid 1520s. Until the 1560s, when population growth increased to almost 1 per cent per annum, widespread outbreaks of epidemic disease continued to check the increase, with two particularly severe mortality crises in 1557/8 and 1558/9.⁵³ In summary, sustained population growth did not begin until the sixteenth century, possibly during the 1520s, and intensified further in the 1560s.

Agricultural commodity prices generally fell in the fifteenth century, although livestock and dairy prices showed greater resilience as consumption of these products increased with higher living standards. Prices were influenced not solely by population: an important factor was a severe and widespread recession affecting trade, industry, and agriculture, and which doubtless owed something to the shortage of coinage in circulation during the mid-fifteenth century. Output of coins from almost all European mints fell, the total stock of coinage declined, and credit appears to have contracted.⁵⁴ Prices began to rise substantially in the second decade of the sixteenth century. The general explanation seems to lie in the growing imbalance between population and agricultural output, although other factors were influential. The initial rise can be at least partially attributed to temporary climatic conditions, interruptions of grain supplies from abroad, and market conditions elsewhere in Europe. The most severe period of inflation was between 1540 and 1560, fuelled by the government's debasement of the currency. Inflation rates were 3.6 per cent per annum and prices for agricultural and industrial products more than doubled over the twenty-year period.⁵⁵

⁵² M. Bailey, 'Demographic decline in late medieval England: some thoughts on recent research', *EcHR*, 49 (1996), 1-19; R.H. Britnell, *The closing of the middle ages? England, 1471-1529* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 242-7.

⁵³ Wrigley & Schofield, *Population*, pp. 333, 566-9.

⁵⁴ J. Hatcher, 'The great slump of the mid-fifteenth century', in R. Britnell & J. Hatcher, eds., *Progress and problems in medieval England: essays in honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 244.

⁵⁵ R.B. Outhwaite, *Inflation in Tudor and early Stuart England*, (London, 2nd edn., 1982); Britnell, '1450-1550', pp. 107-8; R.A. Doughty, 'Industrial prices and inflation in southern England, 1401-1640', *Explorations in Economic History*, 12 (1975), 177-92; N.J. Mayhew, 'Population, money supply, and the velocity of circulation in England, 1300-1700', *EcHR*, 48 (1995), 238-57.

Wage rates rose as population fell in the fifteenth century, indicating a shortage of labour that was also reflected in official statutes and the complaints of individual employers. Day and piece rates for agricultural and building workers peaked between 1430 and 1460. As prices were low, real wages had risen considerably by the mid-fifteenth century, indicating a general rise in living standards: the period has been described as ‘the golden age of the English labourer’. As the population grew again in the sixteenth century, wages rose, but these increases lagged behind price rises, causing real wage rates to fall. But as many families depended on wages for only part of their income, their standard of living may not have fallen as considerably as the decline in real wages would suggest.⁵⁶

The Black Death and subsequent epidemics caused significant changes to occur in agriculture from the late fourteenth century. As already stated, land became relatively abundant and labour scarce. Landlords also leased out their former demesne lands, resulting in a transfer in decision-making from large landlords to smaller producers. The slack demand for land enabled tenants to gain concessions over land tenures. Various services were converted to alienable and hereditary copyhold tenures. But entry fines were not fixed and could be raised to excessive levels when the demand for land rose again in the sixteenth century.⁵⁷ A smaller population reduced the demand for cereals, but higher living standards resulted in the increasing consumption of livestock and dairy products, and cloth exports provided a continuing market for wool. High labour costs favoured animal husbandry, and pastoral farming therefore grew at the expense of arable cultivation, and some areas and individuals prospered in this sphere. However, few were able to maintain, let alone increase, their farming incomes during the prolonged recession of the mid-fifteenth century. Some recovery

⁵⁶ Hatcher, *Plague*, pp. 47-52; E.H. Phelps-Brown & S.V. Hopkins, *A perspective of wages and prices* (London, 1981), pp. 13-59; D. Woodward, ‘Wage rates and living standards in pre-industrial England’, *Past and Present*, 91 (1981), 28-46.

⁵⁷ M. Bailey, ‘Rural society’, in R. Horrox, ed., *Fifteenth-century attitudes: perceptions of society in late medieval England* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 150-9.

from this slump had occurred by the 1480s,⁵⁸ but there is no evidence in many parts of England for a long-term rise in rents before the 1520s - indeed there is still evidence of falling rents and entry fines, vacant and neglected holdings, and arable land reverting to waste. Even after the 1520s, there was no single pattern of growth, and the income of many landlords failed to rise as quickly as prices.⁵⁹ In the chalk area of Wiltshire, for example, rent rises varied considerably between different landowners and largely took the form of an increase in entry fines. Whittle has shown that on three north-east Norfolk manors, rents, fines and overall manorial revenues changed little between 1450 and 1575.⁶⁰

The most dynamic area of the later-fifteenth century economy was perhaps the cloth industry. Cloth exports almost quadrupled between 1450-4 and 1540-4, and domestic sales also probably increased in the fifteenth century to meet demand from rising real incomes. Initially this growth was merely recovery from the mid-century depression, and cloth exports did not consistently exceed the totals of the 1440s until the first decade of the sixteenth century. Production, concentrated in the late fourteenth century in towns such as Colchester, York, and Coventry, was by the fifteenth century rivalled by smaller centres of production in Suffolk, Essex, Devon, the Cotswolds, the West Riding of Yorkshire and the Lake District. Wealth generated in these areas was reflected in certain villages in the rebuilding of houses, guild halls and parish churches, the presence of wealthy clothiers, and the large amounts of taxation raised. Frequently, however, this localised economic development was at the expense of other areas of cloth production, and therefore seems to have been the consequence of entrepreneurial restructuring of trade and industry, rather than net economic growth. The greatest beneficiary of these developments was London. Exports were

⁵⁸ Hatcher, 'Slump', pp. 247-59, 271.

⁵⁹ I. Blanchard, 'Population change, enclosure, and the early Tudor economy', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 23 (1970), 433-42.

⁶⁰ E. Kerridge, 'The movement of rent, 1540-1640', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 6 (1953-4), 16-34; Whittle, 'Agrarian capitalism', pp. 73, 80.

increasingly concentrated on the London-Antwerp axis, although this meant that when these markets were disrupted in the 1550s, cloth exports fell sharply.⁶¹

The timing of recovery within the economy between 1450 and 1560 varied considerably between different sectors, and it is very difficult to pinpoint a general turning point. Population growth had begun by the 1520s, and intensified further in the 1560s. Prices began to rise in the 1510s, with the greatest increase between 1540 and 1560. Cloth exports grew during most of the period, with the most rapid rise in the early sixteenth century. There is no sign of a general agricultural recovery, measured by rising rents, until after the 1520s. William Harrison attributed the dramatic improvement in the livelihood of farmers to the later part of Henry VIII's reign.⁶² The years after 1570 saw a rapid expansion in the volume of agricultural trade in regional markets.⁶³ Estimates of national income (deflated) suggest the most rapid growth in our period occurred between 1526 and 1546.⁶⁴ The pace of change also varied regionally, with for example, some areas around London showing signs of recovery earlier than other parts of the country. Nor can the possibility of limited growth in the later fifteenth century, checked in the early sixteenth, be dismissed, particularly if much of this was recovery from the extremely severe economic conditions of the mid-century.

However, there was one area of the economy that was particularly slow in showing signs of recovery, and that was the urban sector. The extent of growth and decline of medieval towns became a subject of major debate in the 1970s and 1980s. The problems faced by late medieval towns included the expense of urban residence, the

⁶¹ Carus-Wilson & Coleman, *Export trade*, pp. 97-119; Britnell, '1450-1550', pp. 90, 95-7; F.J. Fisher, 'Commercial trends and policy in sixteenth-century England', in Corfield & Harte, eds., *London and the English economy*, pp. 81-103.

⁶² Hatcher, 'Slump', pp. 271-2.

⁶³ A. Everitt, 'The marketing of agricultural produce, 1500-1640', in J. Chartres, ed., *Chapters from the Agrarian History of England and Wales*, iv: *Agricultural markets and trade, 1500-1750* (Cambridge, 1990), p. 51.

⁶⁴ Britnell, '1450-1550', p. 100, from figures in Mayhew, 'Money supply', 244.

burden of civic office-holding, over-elaborate civic ceremony, and competition from rural manufacturers. Dobson suggested that recession hit many towns, particularly after 1450, with little reversal until after 1550; Phythian-Adams found depression and decay, which seemed to reach its nadir in the years between 1520 and 1570, while Clark and Slack extended the pessimistic assessment into the late seventeenth century.⁶⁵ Bridbury, however, claimed that the later middle ages was a period of widespread urban prosperity, pointing to the enduring ability of towns to attract substantial numbers of immigrants, their continuing importance as centres of cloth production, and their increasing share of the nation's taxable wealth.⁶⁶

Some aspects of this debate can be laid aside. Town populations contracted in the later middle ages as the total population fell, but the prosperity of individual townsmen often increased with greater resources per head. In making long-term comparisons of economic performance, we need to choose dates of comparison with care. It is surely not valid, for example, to compare certain towns like Coventry or York, which prospered in the cloth boom of the late fourteenth century, with the early sixteenth century, when their prosperity in the former period was exceptional and possibly short-term.⁶⁷

Perhaps the continuing prevalence of high mortality in towns, may have been at least partly responsible for a seemingly slower rate of economic recovery of towns *vis-à-vis* the countryside. Recent analyses of the urban monasteries of Canterbury, Westminster and Durham, have shown a huge decline in life expectancy during the mid to late

⁶⁵ R.B. Dobson, 'Urban decline in late medieval England', in Holt & Rosser, eds., *Medieval town*, pp. 265-86; C.V. Phythian-Adams, 'Urban decay in late medieval England', in Abrams & Wrigley, eds., *Towns in societies*, pp. 159-85; P. Clark & P. Slack, *English towns in transition 1500-1700* (Oxford, 1976).

⁶⁶ A.R. Bridbury, *Economic growth: England in the later middle ages* (London, 1962); A.R. Bridbury, 'English provincial towns in the later middle ages', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 34 (1981), 1-24.

⁶⁷ See also Dyer, *Decline and growth*; D.M. Palliser, 'Urban decay revisited', in J.A.F. Thomson, ed., *Towns and townspeople in the fifteenth century* (Gloucester, 1988), pp. 1-21.

fifteenth century, with recovery coming only after 1500.⁶⁸ Numbers of burials in the parish of St Margaret's, Westminster, reveal a comparable pattern of exceptionally high mortality at this time.⁶⁹ Mortality crises, particularly caused by plague, appear to have occurred more frequently in towns than in the countryside, and to have been more virulent. Parish register analysis has confirmed that urban areas displayed considerably higher burials than the countryside and small towns, necessitating a large degree of immigration to maintain population totals. This would have resulted in a shortage of labour, leading to high wage costs, making urban goods more expensive in comparison with rurally produced goods. This may partly account for the migration of cloth-making to rural areas.⁷⁰

Other factors may have added to the problems faced by the urban sector: towns were subject to particularly onerous series of taxation levies in the 1520s and 1540s, and London merchants were increasingly dominating provincial networks of trade and credit.⁷¹ But the general debate over urban decline appears to have reached something of a stalemate, and it is believed that more can now be gained by a close study of the region serving the town.

Cambridge in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

Cambridge had grown where a road running along a chalk and gravel ridge crossed the navigable River Cam, leading to the Fens and the coast: 'the one bridge that gives name to a county'.⁷² A castle that became the headquarters for the county's administration was constructed in the eleventh century. During the twelfth and

⁶⁸ J. Hatcher, 'Mortality in the fifteenth century: some new evidence', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 39 (1986), 19-38; B. Harvey, *Living and dying in medieval England, 1100-1540: the monastic experience* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 112-45; J. Hatcher, J. Oeppen, A. Piper & D. Stone, 'The mortality experience of monks of Durham Cathedral Priory in the later middle ages', unpublished paper presented at Medieval Economic and Social History seminar, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, December 1999.

⁶⁹ G. Rosser, *Medieval Westminster, 1200-1540* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 177-80.

⁷⁰ P. Slack, 'Mortality crises and epidemic disease in England, 1485-1610', in C. Webster, ed., *Health, medicine and mortality in the sixteenth century* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 17-19, 45, 57; Wrigley & Schofield, *Population*, pp. 48, 165; Dyer, *Decline and growth*, pp. 51-2.

⁷¹ R.W. Hoyle, 'Taxation and the mid-Tudor crisis', *EcHR*, 51 (1998), 649-75; Keene, 'Changes'.

⁷² F.W. Maitland, *Township and borough* (Cambridge, 1898), p. 37.

thirteenth centuries the townspeople acquired various governmental privileges. From the thirteenth century onwards, the town corporation faced the challenges presented by the establishment of a university in Cambridge and the creation of a rival port at Lynn.⁷³ Disputes between King's Lynn and Cambridge over rights to river trade continued into the sixteenth century. Conflicts with the university recurred over control of the market and the preservation of judicial privileges, and reached their most acrimonious during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, when the house of a university bedel and Corpus Christi College were attacked and the university's muniments chest raided.⁷⁴

Direct quantitative measures are frequently lacking, but a mass of anecdotal evidence would suggest the decline of Cambridge's economy in the later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and recovery by the mid-sixteenth century. The century after the Peasants' Revolt has been described as 'a period of retrogression and decay' in the town, with two severe fires, the continuing presence of plague, and the eviction of tenants and destruction of property to create the site for King's College. The corporation made pleas for the reduction of their fee farm in 1402, 1465, 1472 and 1489.⁷⁵ But by the mid-sixteenth century, it would seem that there had at least been a recovery of population, if not prosperity. A paving act of 1544 described the town as well-inhabited and replenished with people. By 1584 the hazards posed by the density of population in the town led the privy council to instruct the vice-chancellor and mayor to restrict builders and landlords who divided single houses into many small tenements, and complaints of such subdivisions continued into the seventeenth century.⁷⁶

⁷³ *VCH Cambs.*, iii, pp. 4-9; M.D. Lobel, 'Cambridge', in M.D. Lobel, ed., *The atlas of historic towns*, (London, 1975), ii, pp. 5-9.

⁷⁴ R.B. Dobson, *The Peasants' Revolt of 1381* (London, 2nd edn., 1983), pp. 234, 239-42; *VCH Cambs.*, iii, pp. 9-12. See Chapter 4 for marketing disputes in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

⁷⁵ *VCH Cambs.*, iii, pp. 12-14.

⁷⁶ *RCHMC*, p. xci.

The fifteenth century, however, also saw the development of the university. This became an increasing source of study and patronage, with its rival at Oxford tainted with Lollardy. Student numbers may have increased from between 400 and 700 scholars in the 1370s and 1380s to around 1,300 by the late fifteenth century, although in the absence of records of matriculation or graduation, such figures can be little more than intelligent guesses. During the fifteenth century, six new colleges were founded, including the royal foundations of King's and Queens', University schools and libraries for the higher faculties were constructed, and the complete rebuilding of Great St Mary's Church, largely at the cost of the university, was begun. Cambridge University became home to such distinguished patrons as John Fisher, Lady Margaret Beaufort, and a succession of monarchs. The university's alumni became more influential: in 1425, no Cambridge graduate sat on the bench of bishops, but a Cambridge graduate occupied every English see during some part of Henry VIII's reign. The century after 1450 saw the rise to ascendancy of the colleges, and the creation of an academic quarter between the High Street and the river.⁷⁷

During the sixteenth century the university's expansion continued despite several setbacks. Before the later fifteenth century, most students were housed in hostels, but thereafter these disappeared and colleges expanded to take in their numbers. This necessitated new buildings or extensions, like the insertion of garret rooms into the roofs of Corpus Christi's Old Court during Henry VIII's reign.⁷⁸ Student numbers fell from the late 1530s as the dissolution of the monasteries ended the entry of monks and friars, and for a while, there was despondency about the future of the colleges.⁷⁹ The religious changes of Mary's reign led to a large number of exiles to the continent, but many of these returned after her death. By the beginning of Elizabeth's reign,

⁷⁷ Aston, Duncan & Evans, 'Alumni', 11-28; A.B. Emden, *A biographical register of the university of Cambridge to 1500* (Cambridge, 1963), p. xxx; C. Brooke, R. Highfield & W. Swaan, *Oxford and Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 138-52.

⁷⁸ *RCHMC*, p. lxxxiii.

⁷⁹ P. Cunich, D. Hoyle, E. Duffy & R. Hyam, *A history of Magdalene College, Cambridge 1428-1988* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 48-9.

numbers had returned to pre-Reformation levels, and an increasing proportion of sons of the nobility began to join the university. University matriculations, which are recorded from 1544, show that numbers had almost doubled by 1570, from 150 to 300 per annum.⁸⁰

Historiography and sources

The town of Cambridge has received the attentions of a number of distinguished medieval historians.⁸¹ The principal works on the economy and society of Cambridge in the sixteenth century are the unpublished theses by Goose and Siraut.⁸² But these studies of the Tudor town rarely combine material from town, university and college archives, beyond the published collections compiled by Cooper in the mid-nineteenth century.⁸³ Shepard's recent thesis used the records of the university's courts to explore social relations in the early modern period, and the ways in which manhood was constructed and expressed.⁸⁴ Study of the university has not produced the volume of work undertaken at Oxford, but recent histories of the university have appeared, together with more specialised research.⁸⁵ The magnificent surviving architecture has inspired a number of studies, including the monumental survey by Willis and Clark.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ J.A. Venn, *Oxford and Cambridge matriculations 1544-1906 with a graphic chart illustrating the varying fortunes of the two universities* (Cambridge, 1908); J. A. Venn, *A statistical chart to illustrate the entries at the various colleges in the university of Cambridge, 1504-1907* (Cambridge, 1908).

⁸¹ Maitland, *Township; Charters of the borough of Cambridge*, ed. F.W. Maitland & M. Bateson (Cambridge, 1901); *VCH Cambs.*, iii.

⁸² M.C. Siraut, 'Some aspects of the economic and social history of Cambridge under Elizabeth I' (unpublished M.Litt. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1978); N.R. Goose, 'Economic and social aspects of provincial towns: a comparative study of Cambridge, Colchester and Reading c.1500-1700' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1984); N.R. Goose, 'In search of the urban variable: towns and the English economy, 1500-1650', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 39 (1986), 165-85.

⁸³ *Annals*, i-v.

⁸⁴ A.J. Shepard, 'Meanings of manhood in early modern England with special reference to Cambridge, c.1560-1640' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1998).

⁸⁵ D.R. Leader, *A history of the University of Cambridge*, i: *the university to 1546* (Cambridge, 1988); E. Leedham-Green, *A concise history of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1996); P. Zutshi, ed., *Medieval Cambridge: essays on the pre-Reformation university* (Woodbridge, 1993).

⁸⁶ R. Willis & J.W. Clark, *The architectural history of the University of Cambridge and of the colleges of Cambridge and Eton*, 4 vols., (Cambridge, 1886, vols. 1-3 reprinted, 1988); *RCHMC*; N. Pevsner, *The buildings of England. Cambridgeshire* (London, 2nd edn., 1970).

The county has been examined by the *Victoria County History*, of which only the final volume remains to be published, and partially in the surveys of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments.⁸⁷ Taylor and Darby have described the landscapes of the county and fenland.⁸⁸ Specific studies of communities like Landbeach and Chippenham in this period have become models for local history research in their own right,⁸⁹ while the estates of some landholders have also been analysed.⁹⁰ Recent archaeological work, both in the town and county, is readily accessible through introductory guides.⁹¹

The changing nature of the documentary sources is probably largely responsible for the lack of empirical work covering this period. Late medieval English scripts become increasingly irregular and informal with the mixing of cursive and *textualis* forms, evolving into the secretary hand of the early modern period. English gradually replaces Latin in many formal documents. The documents of neither central nor local government are particularly helpful for local studies in this period. Although the increasing activity of state government under the Tudors created new departments such as the Star Chamber, the Court of Wards and the Court of Augmentations, the amount of business relating to a single geographical area is usually small and difficult to locate.⁹² As the estates of large landowners changed from being cultivated directly to being leased, accounts which formally detailed cropping and livestock arrangements,⁹³ were replaced by terse entries recording rent payments. Many court

⁸⁷ *VCH Cambs.*, i-ix; *RCHMW*; *RCHMNE*.

⁸⁸ C. Taylor, *The Cambridgeshire landscape* (London, 1973); Darby, *Fenland*; H.C. Darby, *Medieval Cambridgeshire* (Cambridge, 1977).

⁸⁹ J.R. Ravensdale, *Liable to floods: village landscape on the edge of the Fens, A.D. 450-1850* (Cambridge, 1974); M. Spufford, *Contrasting communities: English villagers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Cambridge, 1974).

⁹⁰ F.M. Page, *The estates of Crowland Abbey* (Cambridge, 1934); E. Miller, *The abbey and bishopric of Ely* (Cambridge, 1951); J.A. Raftis, *The estates of Ramsey Abbey: a study in economic growth and organisation*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts, III (Toronto, 1957).

⁹¹ A. Taylor, *Archaeology of Cambridgeshire*, i-ii, (March, 1997-8); A. Taylor, *Cambridge. The hidden history* (Stroud, 1999).

⁹² P. Riden, *Record sources for local history* (London, 1987), pp. 51-80.

⁹³ See Stone, 'Management of resources', for an exceptionally detailed series of fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century accounts.

rolls became increasingly formalised and uninformative, reflecting the contracting business of many manorial courts following the disappearance of personal serfdom and the growth of royal justice.⁹⁴ Probate inventories detailing the possessions of the deceased only become widespread in the later sixteenth century. The parish registration of baptisms, marriage and burials, which allows detailed reconstitution of family relationships and population trends, did not begin until 1538.⁹⁵ The changing nature of the documentation invariably shapes the view we may obtain of the period.

However, it is hoped that by analysing a wide range of available sources, this study will be able to overcome some of these difficulties. As the records generated by individual groups are so often incomplete, no single series of documents will be viewed in isolation, but recourse will be made to the records of Cambridge colleges, the university and town government of Cambridge, central government, and local manors.

The college archives of Cambridge, which have been described as one of the greatest potential resources for future research by medievalists in this country, are especially informative. The secular colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, with the exception of the secular cathedrals, were among the few collegiate organisations that survived the Reformation.⁹⁶ The college accounts cover a crucial period of price inflation, at a time when the other major record-generating institutions, the monasteries, were being dissolved. Valuable price and wage data can be found in several accounts, most notably those of King's Hall and King's College, which were collected by Thorold Rogers in the nineteenth century and the Beveridge Price History group in the mid-twentieth century. The data recorded by these groups though, give only the prices and quantities of commodities bought, whereas the original documents often record in

⁹⁴ Whittle, 'Agrarian capitalism', pp. 44-63.

⁹⁵ Riden, *Record sources*, pp. 94-5, 106.

⁹⁶ Zutshi, ed., *Medieval Cambridge*, pp. 3-4.

addition the name of the seller and his place of residence.⁹⁷ College accounts will be used to show the trade of Cambridge and its region, to determine the area from which the town secured supplies of food and fuel, and to explore the labour market.

The borough records of Cambridge Corporation provide another important group of sources, although these are now very fragmentary compared to the collections from other medieval boroughs. Poor storage of the records over the centuries has undoubtedly led to the loss of many documents: the eighteenth-century antiquarian James Bowtell rescued the sixteenth-century treasurers' accounts, which were being offered for sale as waste paper. Although incomplete and now split between the County Record Office and Downing College, these accounts form an important series, detailing rents from property in the town and booths in Stourbridge Fair, fines from townsmen admitted to the freedom, and expenditure on fees, rewards and repairs.⁹⁸ The corporation accounts are used throughout this study, but particularly to examine the operation of the fairs and the demand for property in the town. Other documents include a range of correspondence, particularly concerning disputes with the university or the borough of Lynn, which can shed light on the economy of the town.

The archives of the university have also seen losses, although the Peasants' Revolt, when the university's muniments were allegedly burnt, was probably less significant than routine disposal and general negligence. The main documentation in this period is the series of Grace Books, the main administrative registers of the university, which have been published.⁹⁹ Additionally, many loose documents survive that were collected and bound together thematically by the nineteenth-century registry,

⁹⁷ J.E.T. Rogers, *A history of agriculture and prices in England*, 7 vols. (Oxford, 1866-1902); W. Beveridge, *Prices and wages in England, from the twelfth to the nineteenth century* (London, 1939).

⁹⁸ *CBD*, p. xxxvi; *CCA*, X/70/1-10, X71/1-10, X/71A, XVII/24A; *CCTA*, i-ii.

⁹⁹ *Grace Book A, containing the proctors' accounts and other records of the university of Cambridge, 1454-88*, ed. S.M. Leathes, *CASLMS*, I, (Cambridge, 1897); *Grace Book B...1488-1511*, ed. M. Bateson, *CASLMS*, II-III, (Cambridge, 1903-5); *Grace Book [...]1501-1542*, ed. W.G. Searle (Cambridge, 1908).

Luard.¹⁰⁰ The university archives have been used in this study mainly to detail the regulation of marketing in the town, which was under the control of the university after 1382.

Various central government and local records can supplement the archives of the colleges, university and borough government. Taxation records of 1334, 1377 and 1524, and deductions made during the fifteenth century, illustrate the changing population and wealth of the town and surrounding region, while the 1524 returns also supply information about the wealth of particular individuals. Early chancery proceedings include many disputes relating to trade in the region, particularly relating to malt barley and saffron. A bewildering array of manorial records survives, but many series are incomplete, and time has permitted only a few manors to be examined here. Using a range of documents, therefore, this study will examine the principal aspects of Cambridge and its region between 1450 and 1560: the population and wealth, trade, markets and fairs, food and fuel supplies, property and labour markets, and building projects of the town and hinterland.

¹⁰⁰ H.E. Peek & C. Hall, *The archives of the University of Cambridge. An historical introduction* (Cambridge, 1962); D.M. Owen, *Cambridge University archives. A classified list* (Cambridge, 1988); E. Leedham-Green, 'The University Archives (what are they, anyway?)', in P. Fox, ed., *Cambridge University Library. The great collections* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 197-210.

CHAPTER 2

POPULATION AND WEALTH

This chapter surveys the changes in population and wealth in Cambridge and its economic region. The region may be defined in various ways, but generally the area will be taken as coinciding with that of Cambridgeshire, as the arrangement of tax returns by county makes this the most convenient administrative unit for comparative purposes. Cambridge and Ely were the only major urban centres in this region, although smaller towns were located along the county borders. The region was predominantly agricultural, but comprised important sub-regional contrasts in types of farming, land holding, and settlement patterns. Comparisons will be made between Cambridge and neighbouring towns, Cambridgeshire and neighbouring counties, and the different sub-regions and settlements within the county, using estimates of wealth and population derived from the assessments of 1334, 1377, 1524-5, and 1563.

Using taxation records to show changes in population and wealth

In the absence of other widespread statistics relating to births, deaths, or incomes, historians rely heavily on taxation records to show changes in population and wealth between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. With recent publications, the numbers of taxpayers and the taxable wealth raised from settlements within Cambridgeshire from three major taxation assessments, the lay subsidy of 1334, the poll taxes of 1377-81, and the lay subsidies of 1524-5, have now been printed. Each of these taxes was assessed on a different basis, however, so the use of these documents for comparative purposes needs to be approached carefully.¹

¹ *The lay subsidy of 1334*, ed. R.E. Glasscock, BARSEH, new series, II (London, 1975), pp. 23-8; *The poll taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381*, Part 1, *Bedfordshire-Leicestershire*, ed. C.C. Fenwick, BARSEH, new series, XXVII (Oxford, 1998), pp. 68-79; J. Sheail, *The regional distribution of wealth in England as indicated in the 1524/5 lay subsidy returns*, ed. R.W. Hoyle, List & Index Society, special series, XXVIII, 2 vols. (Kew, 1998), ii, pp. 28-35.

The lay subsidy of 1334 was levied on the value of moveable goods of individuals at the rate of one tenth in boroughs and ancient demesne and one fifteenth elsewhere.² Most clerical property and probably those with goods worth less than 10s were exempt.³ Each community was given the responsibility for raising a specified sum and the taxation quotas for each town and village can be used to show the relative wealth of different communities. These quotas remained in place, with certain reductions, which will be examined below, throughout the fifteenth century.

The poll tax of 1377 required all lay people over 14 years of age to pay 4d each. Two subsequent poll taxes followed in 1379 and 1381, each assessed in a different way. Only true and genuine mendicants were exempt, although others may have evaded paying, especially those on the borderline of assessment. By 1381, there was intense opposition to the taxes, culminating in the Peasants' Revolt, and they were not continued. Although lists of individual taxpayers were compiled, none survive for Cambridgeshire. The receipts of 1377, however, record the total number of persons taxed in each vill in the county, and reveal the distribution of population.⁴

The Tudor lay subsidies were calculated on a different basis to previous taxes. Unlike the lay subsidy of 1334, there were no fixed quotas for each settlement, and all individuals who were within the thresholds and scales of the tax were liable to assessment. The two subsidies granted in 1523 and collected in 1524-5 had a particularly low tax threshold, assessing all those with more than £1 in lands, £2 in goods or £1 in wages, making them probably the most comprehensive assessments during the sixteenth century. Nominal returns survive for these subsidies, listing the contributions of individuals. Taxpayers paid on whichever category of wealth brought the greatest revenue to the crown, although this was complicated by differing rates of

² For the purposes of comparison, places with wealth taxed at one tenth have been converted to one fifteenth, unless stated otherwise.

³ *Lay subsidy*, pp. xv-xxxii.

⁴ *Poll taxes*, pp. xiii-xxvi, 68-79.

tax on goods, land and wages. Where taxpayers owned property or goods in more than one parish, the entire estate was assessed under their 'principal residence'.⁵ This can potentially inflate wealth in some areas and deflate wealth in others. The subsidies undervalue wealth in the Breckland, for example, because sheep ownership there was concentrated in the hands of a few, mainly non-resident and ecclesiastical landlords, who were not assessed in the county.⁶

A military survey of 1522 assessed the value of the lands and goods of all male inhabitants, and was subsequently used to take forced loans from the wealthiest.⁷ Sadly, no records for Cambridgeshire survive from the 1522 military survey, but a schedule of contributors to the first loan in 1522 lists those with lands or goods worth more than £20, highlighting the county's most prosperous inhabitants.⁸

Falls in individual assessments and total receipts between 1522 and 1524, and again between 1524 and 1525, have now been found across various parts of the country, although the reduction in yields varied between different income groups and different localities. This reflected the impact of repeated or compound taxation, on a dwindling tax base, as well as different local arrangements for assessment.⁹ The 1525 returns therefore, can arguably be used with less confidence than the earlier assessments. Over the whole of Cambridgeshire, the 1525 returns record 5 per cent less income than in 1524.¹⁰ Returns exist for every Cambridge hundred for 1524 except Staine. Whereas other historians have combined the 1524-5 returns in surveys of the county, generally taking figures from whichever year gave the highest yield, this study will

⁵ R. Hoyle, *Tudor taxation records: a guide for users*, PRO Readers' Guide No. 5 (London, 1994), pp. 3, 12-14; J. Sheail, 'The distribution of taxable population and wealth in England during the early sixteenth century', *Institute of British Geographers' Transactions*, 55 (1972), 111-13.

⁶ Bailey, *Marginal economy?*, pp. 315-16.

⁷ Hoyle, *Taxation records*, pp. 42-7, 51.

⁸ *LP*, iii (2), no. 2640, pp. 1116-19.

⁹ Hoyle, 'Taxation', pp. 662-9.

¹⁰ Sheail, *1524/5 lay subsidy*, i, pp. xiii-xvi, ii, p. 35.

use only the returns for 1524, except when comparing neighbouring towns.¹¹ The published totals of taxpayers and wealth will be used to compare the population and wealth across the region, and the subsidy returns to examine the social structure.

Finally, population figures can also be derived from the bishops' census of 1563.¹² This was produced when the Privy Council asked bishops to return a total of the number of families in each parish in their diocese. A multiplier of 4.5 has generally been used to derive population estimates from these figures. But Goose found that using the Cambridge returns in this way gave a total population of only 2,400 – too low in comparison with other estimates, and comparing the returns with appropriate parish registers showed that in certain parishes the bishops' census significantly understated the number of households.¹³ Although the use of a larger multiplier of 5.1 has been proposed, investigation of other returns has suggested large differences in accuracy between dioceses and raises the possibility of totals being rounded, rather than recorded precisely.¹⁴ In view of these considerable doubts surrounding the reliability of the 1563 census, it has been decided to limit its use to a comparison of population totals between sub-regions, rather than individual parishes, within Cambridgeshire.

The dates of the surviving tax returns present difficulties for an analysis of economic changes over the 1450-1560 period. To gain an impression of the population and wealth of the region around 1450, we are forced to look back to the fourteenth

¹¹ Spufford, *Contrasting communities*, pp. 10-17; C.T. Smith, 'Cambridge in its regional setting', in J.A. Steers, ed., *The Cambridge region 1965*, British Association for the Advancement of Science (London, 1965), pp. 143-50.

¹² BL, Harleian MS 594, fols. 198-200v. Several figures appear to differ from those printed in *Documents relating to Cambridgeshire villages*, ed. W.M. Palmer & H.W. Saunders, VI (Cambridge, 1926), pp. 101-6, and the MS totals have been used.

¹³ N. Goose, 'The ecclesiastical returns of 1563: a cautionary note', *Local Population Studies*, 34 (1985), 46-7.

¹⁴ A. Dyer, 'The bishops' census of 1563: its significance and accuracy', *Local Population Studies*, 49 (1992), 19-37; N. Goose, 'The bishops' census of 1563: a re-examination of its reliability', *Electronic Seminars in History*, Institute of Historical Research web site at <http://www.ihrinfo.ac.uk/ihr/esh/bishart2.html>

century. This is because the 1334 tax quotas remained in use, with some reductions allowed during the fifteenth century,¹⁵ while the poll taxes of 1377-81 were not repeated, because of their unpopularity. The 1334 tax quotas show the wealth of the country before the Black Death and the consequent economic upheaval: circumstances are therefore considerably different to those around 1450. Demographic trends in the fifteenth century are uncertain: population decline probably continued after 1377, with further decline or stagnation for much of the fifteenth century, and then growth, but with little impact until the early sixteenth century. But the population of the 1520s is unlikely to have been significantly larger than in 1377, and these figures can give the superficial impression that the population was almost stationary between the two dates.¹⁶ When analysing changes in wealth between 1334 and 1524/5, and population between 1377 and 1524/5, it is usually impossible to specify what occurred before and after 1450.

The different bases on which the taxes were levied present further difficulties. The fifteenth of 1334 was assessed on moveable goods alone, and the poll tax of 1377 was a flat charge per person, irrespective of wealth, whereas the sixteenth century subsidies assessed moveable goods, incomes and wages. Over time, the accuracy of the assessments may have varied, the nature of moveable wealth assessed could have differed, and prices changed. Absolute changes in wealth between the subsidies cannot, therefore, be measured accurately. With the exception of population estimates for towns derived from the numbers of taxpayers in 1377 and 1524-5, direct comparisons will not be made between the different records.

However, relative rates of growth can be shown. The number of taxpayers or amount of wealth in each locality is measured for each date, and fluctuations in rank orders are used to identify changes. This technique, which has been used to compare variations in the distribution of population and wealth between different counties,

¹⁵ See below, pp. 68-73.

¹⁶ J. Cornwall, 'English population in the early sixteenth century', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 23 (1970), 42.

towns, and sub-regions, between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, is the principle behind the comparisons made in this chapter.¹⁷ This overcomes the problems of using taxes that assess different types of wealth or categories of people. While levels of accuracy and evasion may have varied considerably between different records, it can be assumed that levels of accuracy and evasion did not generally vary dramatically within the same assessment.¹⁸

A further drawback with this group of tax returns is that, for the most part, wealth can only be measured in terms of wealth per acre, and not by wealth per capita. In many respects, the measure of individual wealth is a more useful measure than wealth per acre, which tends to present areas of sparser settlement as being less prosperous than more densely inhabited areas, when in fact in some regions like the Breckland, wealth per capita was higher than on many areas of better soil.¹⁹

Several studies have already used taxation records to explore the distribution of population and wealth in Cambridgeshire. Glasscock compared the distribution of wealth across different parts of East Anglia using the 1334 lay subsidy. Sheail mapped the distribution of wealth and taxpayers in the Cambridgeshire hundreds from the 1525 returns. Spufford plotted the density of population in Cambridgeshire in 1524-5 by parish, while Smith divided a larger region, including parts of adjoining counties, into 3 km squares and used these as mapping units to display the amount of wealth in 1334 and number of taxpayers in 1524-5.²⁰ For comparative purposes, however, it was decided to make new calculations of the distribution of population and wealth at a sub-regional and parish level, using the published returns for 1334, 1377, and 1524.

¹⁷ R.S. Schofield, 'The geographical distribution of wealth in England, 1334-1649', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 18 (1965), 508-9; Dyer, *Decline and growth*, pp. 62-3; Yates, 'Continuity and change', pp. 53-99.

¹⁸ The 1563 bishops' census was possibly an exception, as outlined above.

¹⁹ Bailey, *Marginal economy?*, pp. 191-8.

²⁰ R.E. Glasscock, 'The distribution of wealth in East Anglia in the early fourteenth century', *Institute of British Geographers' Transactions*, 32 (1963), 113-23; Sheail, *1524/5 lay subsidy*, i, pp. 70-3; Spufford, *Contrasting communities*, pp. 10-17; Smith, 'Regional setting', pp. 143-50.

Liability of the university and colleges to taxation

The university and colleges of Cambridge tried to secure various exemptions from taxation for their scholars, employees and tenants, and this could potentially exclude considerable parts of the town and region from assessments. The situation was complicated because the colleges could be subject to both lay and clerical taxation.²¹

Tax assessments for the town of Cambridge did not usually include the university. In 1377, all scholars at Cambridge were assessed separately from the townspeople, under the clerical poll tax as beneficed clergy: the university's size has been estimated at between 400-700 members, partly from these figures.²² In the lay subsidies of 1524-5, the university scholars were again exempt. University employees were listed separately in returns of 1524, but no scholars.²³ Unfortunately, there are no records of the size of the university at this time: a list of valuations and taxes levied on university members, compiled in 1522, suggests that college accounts underestimate the number of members, but contains too many illegible entries to use.²⁴ Given the expansion of the colleges, it is unlikely that the university in the 1520s was any smaller than in the mid-fifteenth century, when its size has been estimated at 1,300 members.²⁵ The estimates of population and wealth of the town of Cambridge based upon the tax returns of 1377 and 1524 used below are likely therefore, to be underestimates, as university scholars are not included. As the university grew substantially between the late fourteenth and late fifteenth centuries, this distorts the total for the 1520s more seriously than that for the late fourteenth century.

Taxation assessments in other parts of the county were not significantly affected by the exemptions that some colleges secured. The colleges were freed from liability to

²¹ T.A.R. Evans & R.J. Faith, 'College estates and university finances, 1350-1500', in J.I. Catto & R. Evans, eds., *The history of the University of Oxford*, ii: *late medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 641-2, 659-61.

²² Aston, Duncan & Evans, 'Alumni', 12-13 & n. 8.

²³ 14 & 15 Henry VIII, c. 16: *SR*, iii, p. 240; *PRO*, E 179/81/133, rot. 5.

²⁴ *LP*, Addenda 1, Part 1, no. 357, pp. 105-10; Leader, *University*, pp. 258-9.

²⁵ Aston, Duncan & Evans, 'Alumni', 19.

pay the fifteenths and tenths by statute in 1512, although prior to this, some colleges gained writs of exemption for their estates in Cambridgeshire.²⁶ The recorded quotas of 1334 though, were produced when only five colleges had been founded with limited endowments. Although the colleges were also exempt from all the Tudor lay subsidies up to 1527,²⁷ outside Cambridge this dispensation was not significant. In any case, tenants were not assessed on lands held by copyhold or leasehold in the subsidies and surveys of the 1520s;²⁸ tenants of college properties do not appear to have been exempt from assessments on other lands and goods. Dame Elizabeth Payton of Isleham, for example, who held a lease from King's College of all lands in the lordship of Isleham for 15 years from 1519, was assessed at £80 in goods in 1524.²⁹ In practice, therefore, the exemption of the colleges' lands and goods does not affect the use of the lay subsidies for Cambridgeshire, apart from within the town of Cambridge.

Comparisons of population and wealth

1) Cambridge and other urban centres

Figures of size and wealth derived from the records of 1334, 1377, 1524-5 and 1563 have been used to survey the relative growth and decline of towns across the country, and to support the arguments of both proponents and opponents of the 'urban decline' debate.³⁰ Rates of urban and rural growth between the subsidies of 1334 and 1524-5, for instance, have been used to argue that the urban sector's relative share of national taxation increased over the period. But despite prolonged discussion there remains the possibility that these figures are distorted by an undervaluation of urban wealth in 1334 and an overvaluation in 1524-5, and no such comparisons will be attempted

²⁶ R.S. Schofield, 'Parliamentary land taxation 1485-1547' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1963), p. 146; PRO, E 179/81/107, E 179/241/318.

²⁷ Schofield, 'Parliamentary land taxation', pp. 146, 253.

²⁸ Hoyle, *Taxation records*, p. 14; J.C.K. Cornwall, *Wealth and society in early sixteenth century England* (London, 1988), p. 107.

²⁹ KC, Ledger Book, i, fol. 248; PRO, E 179/81/137, rot. 2v.

³⁰ Bridbury, *Economic growth*, pp. 77-82; Phythian-Adams, 'Urban decay', pp. 170-3; Dyer, *Decline and growth*, pp. 29-32.

here.³¹ In this section, Cambridge is compared to other urban centres: to the leading provincial towns across the country, to the largest towns within a fifty-mile region, and to the smaller centres within 15 miles of the town. Such comparisons still risk many errors, caused by variations in assessments between towns, the extent to which suburban development was included, and the unreliability of certain returns,³² but are presented in the absence of better data.

Estimates of urban populations can vary widely, and Cambridge's perhaps more than most. Goose estimated that Cambridge's population was only 2,600 in 1524-5, arguing the use of a smaller multiplier to convert the number of taxpayers to total population on the basis that the lay subsidies generally were more inclusive than others have claimed. As such estimates would deflate the population totals of all towns, Cambridge's position in comparative terms would remain unchanged.³³ Adding estimates of the university's size to the town's population, though, would produce a total population of 4,875 persons in 1524-5, comparable with that of Colchester, and would make Cambridge the largest town in a region of at least 50 miles in radius. For the purposes of comparison here, however, the population of 3,575 in 1524-5, based on a multiplier of 6.5 to convert the number of taxpayers into total population, and excluding the university, will be used.³⁴

Among the ranks of the largest and wealthiest provincial towns in England, Cambridge rose in terms of size, but fell in terms of wealth, between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. With a population of 3,614 derived from the poll tax of 1377, Cambridge was the twentieth largest provincial town; by 1524-5 it had risen to the

³¹ Bridbury, *Economic growth*, appendices 2-3; S.H. Rigby, 'Urban decline in the later middle ages: some problems in interpreting the statistical data', *Urban History Yearbook* (1979), 46-60; J.F. Hadwin, 'The medieval lay subsidies and economic history', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 36 (1983), 210-13; S.H. Rigby, 'Late medieval urban prosperity: the evidence of the lay subsidies', and A.R. Bridbury, 'Dr Rigby's comment: a reply', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 39 (1986), 411-22.

³² Dobson, 'Urban decline', pp. 282-3.

³³ Goose, 'Economic and social aspects', pp. 242, 429-32.

³⁴ The estimate given in Dyer, *Decline and growth*, p. 65.

fourteenth largest town with 3,575 inhabitants. But in terms of ranking by urban taxable wealth, Cambridge fell from the nineteenth to thirtieth place between 1334 and 1524-5. The situation after the 1520s is far from clear, as the bishops' census of 1563 does not appear to be a reliable source for calculating the population totals of individual towns. Goose suggested that some degree of population growth occurred between the 1520s and 1570s, and by the late seventeenth century Cambridge had risen to the ninth largest provincial town.³⁵

Arguably more important than Cambridge's national standing, however, was the town's performance in relation to neighbouring towns, its potential competitors. The major towns and regional centres³⁶ within a radius of 50 miles from Cambridge included towns of varying size and function. There were the ports of Lynn and Ipswich, the centres of county administration at Colchester, Bury St Edmunds, Northampton and Huntingdon, the older textile centres of Stamford and Northampton, towns where cloth-making had developed more recently, as at Colchester, Bury and Hadleigh, and the smaller centres of Saffron Walden, Wisbech and Wymondham. Additionally, there were several major cities which lay just outside this fifty-mile radius, but with which Cambridge had important links: the regional capital of Norwich, the cloth-making city of Coventry, the university town of Oxford and London. Of course, these straight-line distances give no indication of travelling time, and it is likely that several of these major centres, particularly London and Norwich, were easier and quicker to reach than smaller centres which were closer in distance. Nonetheless, for convenience, the fifty-mile radius will be adopted here.

³⁵ Goose, 'Economic and social aspects', pp. 241-4; Dyer, *Decline and growth*, pp. 56-63.

³⁶ Defined as towns with over 250 taxpayers in 1524/5, equivalent to a minimum population of 1,625.

Table 2.1: *Populations of major towns and regional centres within 50 miles of Cambridge, 1377 and 1524-5*

	1377		1524/5		1377-1524/5	
	Population	Rank order	Population	Rank order	Change in population	% change in population
Cambridge	3,614	4	3,575	4	-39	-1.1
Bury St Edmunds	4,646	3	4,193	2	-453	-9.8
Colchester	5,615	2	4,557	1	-1,058	-18.8
Ely	3,367	5	1,950	11	-1,417	-42.1
Hadleigh	1,742	12	2,022	9	280	16.1
Huntingdon	1,870	11	2,815	7	945	50.5
Ipswich	2,863	6	3,146	5	283	9.9
Lynn	5,941	1	1,463	14	-4,478	-75.4
Northampton	2,806	7	3,101	6	295	10.5
Saffron Walden	1,976	10	2,470	8	494	25.0
St Albans	2,500	9	3,770	3	1,270	50.8
Stamford	2,546	8	2,002	10	-544	-21.4
Wisbech	1,638	13	1,638	13	0	0.0
Wymondham	1,493	14	1,866	12	373	25.0

Source: From the 57 largest provincial towns in 1377 and 1524-5, listed in Dyer, *Decline and growth*, pp. 64-6

Table 2.1 shows the estimated populations of the major towns and regional centres within 50 miles of Cambridge in 1377 and 1524-5. Cambridge remained the fourth largest town in this region over the period. Significant changes included the dramatic fall of population at Lynn, and large population increases at the smaller centres of St Albans, Huntingdon, Saffron Walden and Wymondham. Of the towns selected in table 2.1, five contained growing populations, four had declining populations, and five neither grew nor declined substantially. Within the fifty-mile region around Cambridge therefore, the period between 1377 and 1524-5 saw adjustment within the urban hierarchy, but not total urban decline, a trend that is mirrored by comparisons of the populations of provincial towns across the country. It was the case both within the region of 50 miles in radius from Cambridge and nationally though, that the sizes of the population losses were greater than those of the population increases, and that much of this loss was concentrated within a number of prominent provincial centres.³⁷

³⁷ Dyer, *Decline and growth*, pp. 31-2, 64-6.

Table 2.2: *Taxable wealth of major towns and regional centres within 50 miles of Cambridge, 1334 and 1524-5*

	1334		1524-5		1334- 1524-5
	Wealth £	Rank order	Wealth £	Rank order	Change in rank
Cambridge	31.07	3	96.53	7	-4
Bury St Edmunds	24.00	5	169.43	4	1
Colchester	17.43	10	215.90	3	7
Ely	23.84	7	69.23	10	-3
Hadleigh	8.50	12	108.52	5	7
Huntingdon	8.00	13	46.82	12	1
Ipswich	43.02	1	282.10	1	0
Lynn	33.33	2	267.55	2	0
Northampton	18.00	8	91.20	8	0
Saffron Walden	4.73	14	55.78	11	3
St Albans	17.70	9	104.13	6	3
Stamford	23.92	6	90.17	9	-3
Wisbech	27.30	4	44.16	14	-10
Wymondham	13.00	11	44.95	13	-2

Note: Figures are taxation assessments. Boroughs taxed at one tenth in 1334 have been converted to one fifteenth. The highest figure from the 1524 and 1525 assessments has been used.

Sources: 1334: *Lay subsidy of 1334*; 1524-5: Sheail, *1524/5 lay subsidy*, ii

Turning to comparisons of taxable wealth between the same group of towns in 1334 and 1524-5, shown in table 2.2, the pattern is somewhat different. Lynn and Ipswich retained their lead as the wealthiest towns, probably reflecting the continuing overseas trade handled by these ports, and despite the massive loss of population at Lynn. Hadleigh, Bury St Edmunds and Colchester increased substantially in wealth, which was largely generated by the cloth industries in these towns. By the 1460s, Hadleigh and Bury were among the leading cloth markets in Suffolk, and Colchester was the largest cloth market in Essex. The wealth generated by the Suffolk cloth industry gave Lavenham and Long Melford assessments of £180 and £65 respectively, larger than many established towns, even though these settlements had populations of less than

1,300 in 1524/5.³⁸ The slight increase in wealth of Saffron Walden may reflect in part the development of the town as the marketing centre for saffron, which was cultivated in the vicinity.³⁹

Cambridge, Ely, and Wisbech all declined in wealth between 1334 and 1524-5. To some extent, this may just reflect the concentration of wealth within the cloth-making regions. The substantial drop in relative wealth at Wisbech though, may partly be due to the effects of flooding, which the surveyors of Wisbech hundred drew attention to in 1524.⁴⁰ Ely's relative decline must have been largely the result of the reduction in population there. The cessation of major building projects by the monastery, the slump of trade at the ports of the Wash and the decline of Ely's trade in ale may also have affected the town's economy in the later middle ages.⁴¹ Cambridge's decline in the rank order of wealth may to some extent be illusory, merely reflecting the greater share of the town's wealth that was in the hands of the university and colleges by the early sixteenth century, and not included in the taxation assessments.

³⁸ Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 189, 191; G.A. Thornton, *A history of Clare, Suffolk* (Cambridge, 1928), pp. 150-3; Sheail, *1524/5 lay subsidy*, ii, p. 322.

³⁹ See below, Chapter 3.

⁴⁰ Sheail, *1524/5 lay subsidy*, i, p. 70.

⁴¹ A. Koren, 'Ely in the late middle ages' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Indiana University, 1977), pp. 343-5.

Table 2.3: *Populations of small towns around Cambridge, 1377 and 1524-5*

	1377	1524-5	1377-1524-5
	Population	Population	Change in population
Ashwell		832	
Gamlingay	416	683	266
Godmanchester		1,216	
Haverhill		442	
Linton	295	579	284
Mildenhall		884	
Newmarket	184 ¹	468 ²	284
Ramsey		1,359	
Royston	135 ¹	819 ³	684
St Ives		826	
St Neots		1,255	

Notes: Numbers of taxpayers converted to population estimates using multipliers of 1.9 for 1377 and 6.5 for 1524-5. The highest figure is used from 1524-5 returns.

¹ Includes only Cambridgeshire assessment. Probably an underestimate

² Includes Cambridgeshire and Suffolk assessments

³ Includes Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire assessments

Sources: 1377: *Poll taxes*; 1524-5: Sheail, *1524/5 lay subsidy*, ii

Table 2.4: *Taxable wealth of small towns around Cambridge, 1334 and 1524-5*

	1334		1524-5		1334-1524-5
	Wealth	Rank order	Wealth	Rank order	Change in rank
	£		£		
Ashwell	9.99	4	15.35	7	-3
Gamlingay	9.70	5	10.24	9	-4
Godmanchester	9.51 ¹	6	35.58	1	5
Haverhill	6.79	9	5.73	11	-2
Linton	8.50 ²	7	12.52	8	-1
Mildenhall	11.50	3	19.40	5	-2
Newmarket	7.00 ²	8	9.57 ³	10	-2
Ramsey	6.10	10	28.97	3	7
Royston	3.50 ⁴	11	15.64 ⁴	6	5
St Ives	16.23 ⁵	1	21.20	4	-3
St Neots	12.92 ²	2	34.42	2	0

Notes: Figures are taxation assessments. The highest figure is used from 1524-5 returns.

¹ Taxed at one tenth in 1334 and converted to one fifteenth.

² Includes totals of neighbouring villages.

³ Includes Cambridgeshire and Suffolk assessments

⁴ Includes Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire assessments

⁵ Includes St Ives with the soke of Slepe and the prior of St Ives' manor

Sources: 1334: *Lay subsidy of 1334*; 1524/5: Sheail, *1524/5 lay subsidy*, ii

Tables 2.3-2.4 show the size and wealth of the small towns that surrounded Cambridge. Defining which settlements were towns can be difficult. There were over 20 parishes in Cambridgeshire with more than 80 taxpayers, and therefore probably possessing at least 500 inhabitants, in 1524-5. Several of these settlements, along with smaller villages, possessed markets and fairs, and will be examined in subsequent chapters. But in most cases, the occupations of the inhabitants of these settlements were predominantly agricultural, and within a twenty-mile radius of Cambridge, there were around eleven small towns, home to a much wider range of crafts and trades, and with populations of about 500 to 1,500 inhabitants.

Many of the smaller urban centres which surrounded Cambridge were 'new towns' founded during the economic expansion of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Royston developed where a house of Austin Friars established a market and fair at the intersection of two major roads, and promoted the cult of St. Rohesia's shrine. The abbots of Ramsey built a new bridge, obtained the grant of a fair, and brought the bones of St Ivo to their new town of St Ives. St Neots probably developed in a similar way: adjacent to a priory, at the shrine of St Neot, and by a river crossing. By 1137, St Neots held three annual fairs, but these never rivalled the fair at St Ives which became an international trading event during the thirteenth century.⁴² According to local tradition, Newmarket was founded when the market was removed from nearby Exning on account of the plague: the Argentein family may have established it as a speculative market at the meeting-point of two important roads. At the ancient settlement of Linton, burgage tenements were laid out, and in the thirteenth century a diverse range of craft occupational names could be found among the burgage tenants.⁴³ Several of these towns were situated on important roads. Harrison classed Linton, Newmarket, Huntingdon, Royston and Saffron Walden as thoroughfare towns

⁴² M. Beresford, *New towns of the Middle Ages: town plantation in England, Wales and Gascony* (London, 1967), pp. 454, 456; *VCH Huntingdonshire*, ii, pp. 214-16.

⁴³ P. May, *Newmarket – medieval and Tudor* (Newmarket, 1982), pp. 1-4; J.H. Clapham, 'A thirteenth-century market town: Linton, Cambs.', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 4 (1933), 194-202.

in the late sixteenth century, as they each possessed several inns to accommodate passing travellers. In the mid-sixteenth century, Royston had at least 11 inns.⁴⁴

As these towns developed relatively late, their sites often crossed established boundaries. Newmarket and Royston both lay across county boundaries, with split administrations. This makes comparisons of population and wealth difficult, as parts of the towns were often assessed in different counties. Such towns, and others like Brandon and Thetford, by virtue of their positions on the borders of counties, were popular haunts for criminals, who in the Middle Ages were outlawed only in the county of their offence.⁴⁵ Many of these towns were also on the periphery of the 'cultural provinces' described by Phythian-Adams and examined below: these modest market centres, frequently on major transport routes, often assumed an economic role relatively late in the period of medieval expansion.⁴⁶

In terms of wealth, one of the most notable increases was at Royston, which can probably be attributed to the town's role in the malt barley trade, which developed during the fifteenth century.⁴⁷ The relative decline of Gamlingay may be due to competition from the neighbouring small town of Potton, to where Gamlingay's market was eventually transferred.⁴⁸ But the small towns generally were increasing in wealth fairly rapidly, certainly at a faster pace than most of the countryside in Cambridgeshire. As will be shown below, in comparison with other parishes in Cambridgeshire, Linton and Gamlingay both increased in rank order by wealth and number of taxpayers. Comparisons of population change in the small towns between 1377 and 1524-5 are difficult, because no poll tax schedules survive for Huntingdonshire, but all the small towns where data are available show population

⁴⁴ William Harrison, *The description of England*, ed. G. Edelen, Folger Shakespeare Library (Ithaca, New York, 1968), pp. 397, 399, 400, 403; *VCH Hertfordshire*, iii, p. 255.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 259; Bailey, *Marginal economy?*, pp. 169-70.

⁴⁶ C. Phythian-Adams, 'Local history and societal history', *Local Population Studies*, 51 (1993), 43.

⁴⁷ See below, Chapter 3.

⁴⁸ *VCH Cambs.*, v, pp. 78-9.

growth. Larger towns, experiencing restructuring of trade and industry, may have suffered more than some small towns in the late Middle Ages, which remained as centres of exchange for the local area.⁴⁹

The towns that lay around Cambridge were, of course, also its competitors, and their performance had an important impact on the town's hinterland. Geographers use a 'breaking point theory' to calculate the theoretical distance which divides people who travel to one town from those who travel to another for similar services. Table 2.5 calculates the breaking points in 1377 and 1524 of several towns around Cambridge. In most cases, the population growth of the smaller towns allowed them to increase the size of their theoretical hinterland at Cambridge's expense. The large decline in population at Lynn and Ely though, was theoretically at least, to Cambridge's advantage, allowing the town to expand its hinterland.

Table 2.5: *Theoretical breaking points of urban hinterlands around Cambridge*

	<i>Distance from Cambridge (miles)</i>	<i>Breaking point from other town</i>	
		<i>1377</i>	<i>1524</i>
Ely	14	6.9	5.9
Gamlingay	14	3.5	4.3
Huntingdon	15	6.3	7.1
Linton	10	2.2	2.9
Lynn	40	22.5	15.6
Newmarket	12	2.2	3.2
Royston	12	1.9	3.9
Saffron Walden	13	5.5	5.9

Source: Population figures from tables 2.1 and 2.3

Notes: All distances in miles. University excluded from Cambridge's population total.

Breaking point calculated using formula:⁵⁰

$$\text{distance of breaking point from smaller centre} = \frac{\text{distance between two centres}}{1 + \sqrt{\frac{\text{population of Cambridge}}{\text{population of smaller town}}}}$$

⁴⁹ D. Postles, 'An English small town in the later middle ages: Loughborough', *Urban History*, 20 (1993), 7-29.

⁵⁰ Knowles & Wareing, *Geography*, pp. 251-2.

Breaking points, however, only calculate the distance that divides people travelling to towns for similar services. Cambridge, by virtue of its size, could support a whole range of more sophisticated crafts, trades, and administrative functions, than those towns which were its immediate neighbours. Within a radius of 10-15 miles from Cambridge, only Ely and Saffron Walden had over 1,500 inhabitants, and were large enough to support a significant range of trades. To reach towns of comparable or larger size than Cambridge, one had to journey to Bury St Edmunds, Colchester or Northampton. Adding the university scholars to Cambridge's population total would make the town the largest in the region. The growth of towns around Cambridge may have encroached on Cambridge's hinterland for basic goods and services, but the town remained a regional centre for more specialised requirements.

2) Analysis by county

Schofield has compared the distribution of wealth per acre in England on a county basis between the lay subsidy of 1334 and an assessment of 1514-15. The later subsidy was levied on moveable goods, incomes and wages, like the taxes of 1524-5, but individual assessments for towns and villages do not survive. In 1334, Cambridgeshire ranked as the eleventh wealthiest county out of a total of 38. By 1515 it ranked twenty-first, below the average. The counties bordering Cambridgeshire generally grew much more in their amount of wealth per acre over the same period (see table 2.6), and by 1515 they all exceeded Cambridgeshire in rank, even though most had not been as wealthy as Cambridgeshire in 1334. Only Norfolk had a similar growth rate to Cambridgeshire and fell in ranking between the two dates.⁵¹ Such analysis masks, however, the increases in wealth in parts of Cambridgeshire, which were comparable with the areas of largest growth elsewhere.

⁵¹ Schofield, 'Geographical distribution', 504-5.

Table 2.6: *Comparative county lay wealth in £,000 per acre, 1334 and 1515*

	<i>1334 rank</i>	<i>1515 rank</i>	<i>Rate of growth of wealth per acre, 1515/1334</i>
Cambs.	11	21	2.44
Essex	25	3	5.51
Herts.	17	8	4.05
Hunts.	10	9	3.25
Norfolk	3	12	2.21
Suffolk	18	7	4.11

Note: Ranked in order of wealth, out of 38 English counties. Isle of Ely included with Cambs.

Source: Schofield, 'Geographical distribution', 504

Changes in wealth per acre between 1334 and 1524-5 have also been examined across the country on a more detailed scale than the county, in 610 units covering most of England. The 1524-5 tax was expressed as a percentage of the assessed wealth of 1334, in the form of quintiles. The highest quintile, indicating the largest increase in wealth, occurred in Cambridgeshire only in the north-west corner of the Isle of Ely, around Chatteris. There were two areas with the lowest quintile showing the least growth in the south-western and central southern part of the county. In the adjoining counties there were areas with the highest growth in the area around Huntingdon in Huntingdonshire, Saffron Walden and Thaxted in Essex, and Bury St Edmunds and the Stour Valley in Suffolk. Increases in wealth across the country were generated by a variety of local factors and two main stimuli – the cloth industry and London's demand for foodstuffs.⁵²

Comparisons of population levels in the 1377 poll tax and 1524-5 subsidies on a county basis, calculated as taxpayers per square mile, are similar to comparisons of wealth, with the East Midlands, including Cambridgeshire and Norfolk, revealing a lower rate of increase than Huntingdonshire, Hertfordshire, Essex, Suffolk and the south-east. In relation to 32 English counties, Cambridgeshire remained in the ranks of the upper half, with regard to the density of its population, but not in terms of

⁵² H.C. Darby, R.E. Glasscock, J. Sheail & G.R. Versey, 'The changing geographical distribution of wealth in England: 1086-1334-1525', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 5 (1979), 257-61.

population growth, between 1377 and 1524. Again, those counties experiencing growth often possessed expanding cloth industries or links with the London food market.⁵³

Thus Cambridgeshire did not grow significantly in wealth or population between the fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries: in comparison to the country as a whole, or in comparison with most of its neighbouring counties, rates of increase in the county were low. The more detailed comparison of wealth, however, shows that the pace of growth varied significantly in different parts of the county: some areas matched the highest national rate of increase, other areas experienced the lowest national rate of growth. Furthermore, the Cambridgeshire fenland, a large area of sparse settlement, tended to deflate the county's wealth and population when measured by area, in comparison with counties of denser settlement. Only analysis on a more detailed level can show the significant variations in population and wealth between different sub-regions and villages in Cambridgeshire.

3) Analysis by sub-region

Administrative boundaries of counties or hundreds often failed to reflect important differences in soil type, relief, natural resources and access to markets, which placed significant constraints on the economic activities that could be practised. The exchange of agrarian products between these differing agricultural regions was the basis upon which Cambridge, as most other market towns, operated. Recent historical studies are increasingly highlighting the importance of different regions, and the varying pace of economic development, particularly in the fifteenth century.⁵⁴

Regions and regional structures are effectively created by the historians. The region examined in this study is an economic region, that of Cambridge's hinterland. This is

⁵³ Dyer, *Decline and growth*, pp. 32-4.

⁵⁴ Bailey, *Marginal economy?*; J.N. Hare, 'Growth and recession in the fifteenth-century economy: the Wiltshire textile industry and the countryside', *EcHR*, 52 (1999), 1-26; Yates, 'Rural society'.

generally taken to be a radius of 10 to 15 miles around the town, but confined to the county for ease of analysing taxation records. But regions can also be formed on the basis of soil type, geology, relief, drainage, farming practice and cultural significance, as well as from patterns of marketing and economic interaction.⁵⁵ It is important to explore briefly some of the regional classifications that can be used to describe the area around Cambridge.

In terms of geology, the county of Cambridgeshire divides firstly between the fenland of the Isle of Ely, and uplands to the south. Secondly within the uplands, the heavier clay soils on the higher ground to the west and south-east of the county, are separated by a belt of chalk with lighter soils running from south-west to north-east, containing the tributaries of the River Cam. There is also an area of light, sandy soils in the east, part of the Breckland area.⁵⁶

The differences between the two main soil types form the basis of one method of describing early modern farming regions. Lighter soils, which are more easily worked, encourage arable farming, while heavier soils require more labour, and are often more conducive to pastoral farming. Two distinct types of farming practice developed: 'sheep-corn' on light soils where sheep maintained soil fertility for arable crops, and 'wood-pasture' with permanent pasture in recently cleared woodland. Such farming systems have also been attributed to other aspects of rural economy and culture: sheep-corn areas were categorised by commonfield farming, nucleated settlement, and strong manorial control, and wood-pasture by enclosed fields, dispersed settlement, the growth of non-agricultural by-employment, and an absence of social controls.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ R.A. Butlin, 'Regions in England and Wales c.1600-1914', in Dodgshon & Butlin, eds., *Historical geography*, pp. 223-35.

⁵⁶ M.R. Postgate, 'Field systems of East Anglia', in A.R.H. Baker & R.A. Butlin, eds., *Studies of field systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 283.

⁵⁷ M. Overton, *Agricultural revolution in England: the transformation of the agrarian economy 1500-1850* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 47-50.

The concept of *pays* is another method of identifying regional characteristics, referring to the distinctive countrysides that were a product of physical differences in geology, soil, topography and climate, combined with differences in settlement history. The Cambridge region incorporates wolds and downland to the central south, corresponding with the sheep-corn area, arable vale lands to the west and south-east on the area of heavier clay soils, and fenland to the north.⁵⁸ Again, such regions are seen as possessing distinctive economic and social characteristics. Wolds and downland areas, for example, produced some of the best grain, and agriculture was often the sole occupation in the region. Most parts had ready access to coastwise or river transport, allowing grain to be carried easily to markets, and a hierarchical social structure encouraged an increase in farm size and a widening disparity between farmers and labourers.⁵⁹

Phythian-Adams has introduced another system of *pays* based on the watersheds of major drainage systems. He argues that these drainage systems once reflected the extents of early territories, subsequently became parts of counties, and as such are of important cultural significance. Major river valleys were invariably the most densely populated areas, and often included important towns, which acted as the economic and cultural centres of the region. Cambridgeshire including the Isle of Ely, together with Huntingdonshire, Northamptonshire, and Bedfordshire, forms part of the Wash/Ouse 'cultural province', bordered by Norfolk and Suffolk in the 'Dutch' Sea province, Essex in the Thames estuary province, and Hertfordshire in another Thames province. There is some overlap along all these borders, but particularly with the 'Dutch' Sea province.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ A. Everitt, 'Country, county and town: patterns of regional evolution in England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 29 (1979), 79-88; Overton, *Agricultural revolution*, pp. 50-3.

⁵⁹ J. Thirsk, *England's agricultural regions and agrarian history, 1500-1750* (Basingstoke, 1987), pp. 40-1.

⁶⁰ Phythian-Adams, 'Local history'.

A different method of description, using a consistent set of criteria on a national scale, has been undertaken for the analysis of the demesne farming systems of post-Black Death England. This classifies farms based on their inherent properties, rather than farming regions, which are based on soil, climate, and distance from the market. The classification showed a fairly wide variety of farming types around Cambridge: mixed farming with sheep, arable husbandry with swine, and extensive arable husbandry, were practised in Cambridgeshire, and a further three of the total of seven different farming types could be found within 30-40 miles of the town.⁶¹

What emerges from these very varied approaches is that Cambridge lay within the range of a number of sub-regions of differing soil type, settlement pattern, and areas in which different techniques were used to cultivate different agricultural products. For the present purposes of comparing changes in the population and wealth of Cambridge's hinterland, the classification of sub-regions adopted here is that based on the physical landscape features of soils, geology, and relief. Such classifications form the basis of several studies of the county.⁶² Parishes in the county were grouped into the five sub-regions, listed below and mapped in figure 2.1:

Cambridgeshire sub-regions

1. fen
2. fen-edge
3. river valleys
4. western plateau
5. south-east upland

The allocation of parishes to sub-regions in figure 2.1 has had to be, in some cases, arbitrary. In practice many parishes straddle more than one type of land, but for the purposes of this study, each parish was placed within a single sub-region. The first

⁶¹ B.M.S. Campbell, K.C. Bartley & J.P. Power, 'The demesne-farming systems of post-Black Death England: a classification', *Agricultural History Review*, 44 (1996), 131-79, especially the map on 145.

⁶² J. Jones, *A human geography of Cambridgeshire* (Cambridge, 1924), pp. 27-68; J. Jones, 'Villages of Cambridgeshire', in H.C. Darby, ed., *The Cambridge region* (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 106-111; Smith, 'Regional setting', p. 135.

accurately drawn maps and acreages of the civil parishes do not appear until the nineteenth century.⁶³ These may have been different in outline from the taxation vills used in the medieval period, but must suffice in the absence of other information. The area examined is the whole of the county of Cambridgeshire, together with the southern part of the Isle of Ely, going as far north as the parishes of Sutton, Mepal, Witcham and Wentworth. The main urban centres of Cambridge, Ely, Newmarket and Royston and their parishes are excluded from this analysis. Primarily, the sub-regions reflect differences in physical geography, but this geography has in turn affected patterns of settlement and farming practice in the county.

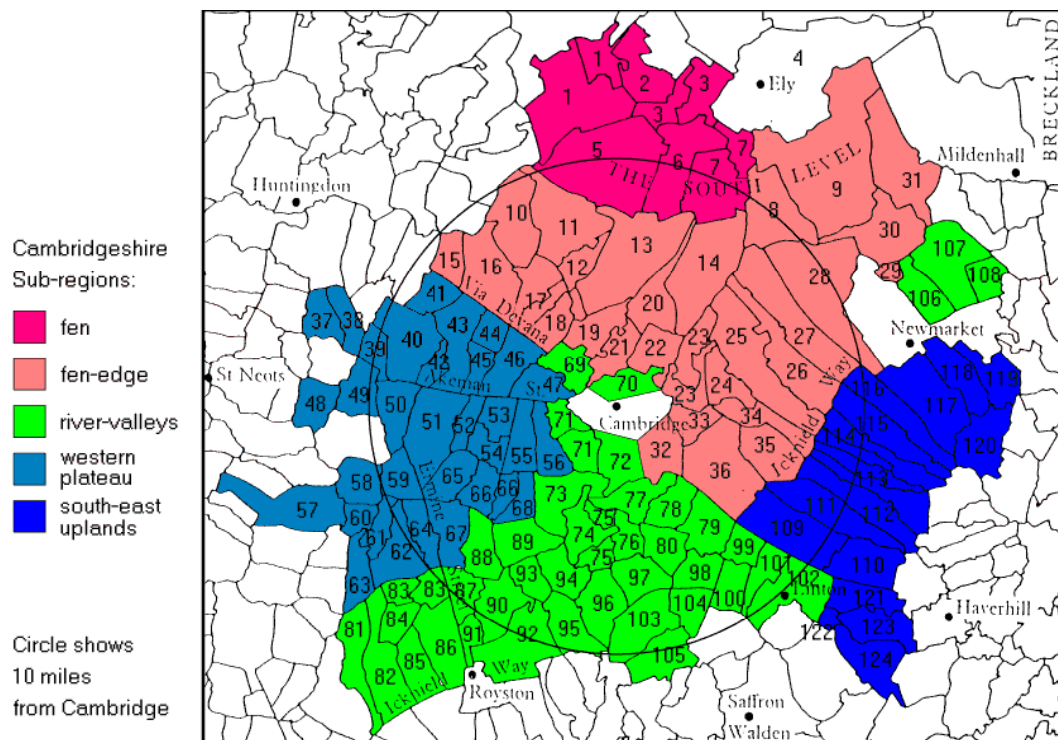


Figure 2.1: Cambridgeshire parishes grouped by sub-region

Note: Numbers refer to parishes in Appendix 1. *Source:* Map from Smith, 'Cambridge region', p. 136.

⁶³ Acreages are taken from *VCH Cambs.*, ii, pp. 136-40.

The fen sub-region comprises the peat fen; the more fertile silt fen lay further to the north east and outside the present area of study. Settlement in the peat fen was scattered, and the parishes were large, although local administration was concentrated under a single figure, the bishop of Ely. Pastoral farming predominated, while other resources, such as fish, fowl, reeds, sedge, turves and rushes, were easily exploited. The fens were always subject to flooding, but this appears to have increased in the later middle ages with changes in the natural environment and the relaxation of responsibility by landowners and local communities. The problem became particularly acute after the dissolution of the monasteries.⁶⁴

The fen-edge settlements formed a string across the county from Fen Drayton in the east to Isleham in the west, each with a share of fenland and chalkland. Open fields occupied a smaller proportion of land than in the upland and valley areas, parishes tended to be bigger, reflecting the difficulty of finding firm sites for building, and there were larger amounts of meadow and pasture. Numerous smallholders could support themselves from the resources of the fen, and dairy cattle were prominent by the sixteenth century.⁶⁵ The fen-edge area stretched down south of Cambridge on the eastern side of the county, although, after the eighteenth century, this area was drained.⁶⁶

The western plateau of boulder clay generally has villages set around its edges. Originally woodland, this was an area of later settlement, which had developed by the eleventh century. Despite the problems of drainage on the clay soils, agriculture predominated and barley was the main crop. From the fifteenth century, substantial areas in several parishes were enclosed into separate farms.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Darby, *Fenland*, pp. 23-84; H.C. Darby, *The draining of the fens* (Cambridge, 2nd edn., 1956), pp. 1-9.

⁶⁵ *VCH Cambs.*, ix, p. 1.

⁶⁶ cf. maps of soils of Cambridgeshire in 1794 and 1941: G.H.N. Pettit, *The land of Britain: report of the Land Utilisation Survey of Britain*, part 74, *Cambridgeshire* (London, 1941), pp. 395, 405.

⁶⁷ *VCH Cambs.*, v, p. 3; Taylor, *Cambridgeshire landscape*, pp. 24-5.

The south-eastern chalk escarpment has villages located along the 300ft contour, with thin, rectangular-shaped parishes which share the boulder clay above and chalk heath below. Settlement was much slower here than on the western plateau: there was still a considerable amount of woodland at the time of Domesday Book, and settlement continued until well into the medieval period.⁶⁸ South-east Cambridgeshire also contained the East Anglian pattern of field systems, with a large number of open fields, whereas in western and central Cambridgeshire the Midland pattern of two or three main fields was found.⁶⁹

The sub-region of the river valleys forms the central southern part of the county, around the four tributaries of the River Cam (Bourn Brook, the Ashwell Cam, the Saffron Walden Cam, and the Linton Cam) which join to form the main river south of Cambridge. Most parishes are carefully divided to provide a share of river frontage, alluvium, terrace and upland slope. Chalk soils stretch across from Guilden Morden in the west to Chippenham in the east. This was the 'sheep-corn' region, where barley was the main crop, large sheep flocks were kept, and a three-course field rotation generally practised. Water meadows along the river were used for dairy cattle. The river provided water-power, mainly for grinding corn, but also for fulling cloth in a few villages.⁷⁰

Table 2.7 provides an indication of the changing taxable wealth per acre of the sub-regions between 1334 and 1524. Variations in rank orders are used to identify changes in economic fortunes in data derived from different types of taxation assessment: the technique is based on that used by Yates.⁷¹ Although the amount of wealth in each region cannot be related directly between one subsidy and another, because different

⁶⁸ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, p. 126; Taylor, *Cambridgeshire landscape*, pp. 85-7.

⁶⁹ Postgate, 'Field systems', pp. 294-9.

⁷⁰ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, pp. 199-200, viii, pp. 3, 153.

⁷¹ Yates, 'Continuity and change', pp. 61-76.

taxes assessed wealth in different ways, the relative position of the sub-regions in order of wealth can be compared.

Table 2.7: *Taxable wealth per acre, by sub-region*

<i>1334</i>	<i>Tax (£)</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>d per acre</i>	<i>Rank</i>
fen-edge	242.25	108,025	0.54	3
fen	30.38	28,869	0.25	5
south-east uplands	70.58	42,932	0.39	4
river valleys	274.99	88,220	0.75	1
western plateau	184.78	60,703	0.73	2
Total	802.97	328,749	0.59	
<i>1524</i>				
fen-edge	166.50	86,181	0.46	4
fen	66.71	31,540	0.51	2
south-east uplands	57.49	37,581	0.37	5
river valleys	201.03	78,079	0.62	1
western plateau	98.96	48,566	0.49	3
Total	590.70	281,947	0.50	

Note: Acreage varies according to the total of parishes with surviving returns.

Source: appendix 1.

Although the river valleys region retained its primacy as the wealthiest area in terms of pence per acre throughout the period, there were other significant changes. The western plateau and south-east uplands, areas of heavier clay soils, both slipped in rank by 1524. The increase in wealth in the fenland might suggest that alternative sources of income, such as pastoral farming, fowling, and fishing, generated better returns during the recession of the fifteenth century than predominantly agricultural areas. But the fen-edge sub-region did not increase its relative wealth in this period, and the average wealth of the fen remained substantially below the average wealth of the river valleys, in per acre terms.

Table 2.8 shows the distribution of population in the sub-regions, as indicated by the number of taxpayers per acre. The relative ranking of the regions displays similar

trends to the distribution of wealth. The river valleys region remained the most densely populated region over the period. The relative size of the populations of the western plateau and south-east uplands declined after 1377. The fen and fen-edge do not show consistent trends. The fen rose considerably in rank between 1377 and 1524, but then slipped by 1563. The fen-edge initially fell in rank, but had risen by 1563. Generally though, these areas increased in wealth at the expense of the areas of heavier soils, but did not challenge the primacy of the river valleys.

Table 2.8: *Number of taxpayers per acre, by sub-region*

<i>1377</i>	<i>Taxpayers</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Taxpayers per 100 acres</i>	<i>Rank</i>
fen-edge	6,031	95,877	6.29	3
fen	1,389	31,540	4.40	5
south-east uplands	2,173	48,003	4.53	4
river valleys	5,116	64,295	7.96	1
western plateau	3,915	60,703	6.45	2
Total	18,624	300,418	6.20	
<i>1524</i>				
fen-edge	1,213	86,181	1.41	4
fen	662	31,540	2.10	2
south-east uplands	468	37,581	1.25	5
river valleys	1,660	74,066	2.24	1
western plateau	767	50,309	1.52	3
Total	4,770	279,677	1.71	
<i>1563</i>				
fen-edge	1,410	81,500	1.73	2
fen	525	31,540	1.66	3
south-east uplands	504	35,022	1.44	4
river valleys	1,611	79,457	2.03	1
western plateau	810	60,703	1.33	5
Total	4,860	288,222	1.69	

Note: Acreage varies according to the total of parishes with surviving returns.

Source: appendix 1.

Table 2.9 presents the 1524 data in terms of wealth per capita. This presents a somewhat different picture to measures of wealth by area, which tend to inflate areas

of dense settlement and deflate areas of sparse settlement. There was a broad similarity across the sub-regions. The fen-edge emerges as the most prosperous in per capita terms, reflecting the abundance of resources available and the relative sparsity of settlement. The fen-edge of the Breckland was also the most prosperous part of that region in the early fourteenth century.⁷² The river valleys area does not emerge as a prosperous sub-region by this measure, despite being the wealthiest and most populated region in per acre terms. This was because, as will be shown later, the sub-region contained the largest proportion of the poorest taxpayers in the county, which reduced the average wealth per head.

Table 2.9: *Wealth per capita, 1524, by sub-region*

	<i>d per taxpayer</i>
fen-edge	32.94
fen	24.19
south-east uplands	29.48
river valleys	28.60
western plateau	32.14
Total	29.74

Source: Appendix 1. Only parishes with totals of both taxpayers and wealth in 1524 are included.

The changes in the population and wealth of the sub-regions of Cambridgeshire between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries had many similarities with their development in other periods. The river valleys south of Cambridge, which retained their lead, in terms of both population and wealth per acre, during the later middle ages and sixteenth century, had been the most densely populated part of the county at the time of Domesday Book, and had grown considerably during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The rivers provided easy access and good quality arable and meadow land. The south-east uplands and western plateau, areas of later settlement, were less accessible and more difficult to cultivate. In the early fourteenth century, at a time of population pressure and low labour costs, these areas could be profitably

⁷² Bailey, *Marginal economy?*, p. 195.

cultivated. But by the fifteenth century, the rising cost of labour, and restricted market for agricultural produce, particularly cereals, meant that agricultural investment in these areas could no longer be justified. At times of agricultural depression, whether in the fifteenth century, or in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the heavy land of the western clay plateau in particular became uneconomical to cultivate, and farming in the sub-region became depressed.⁷³ But in per capita terms, these areas were slightly wealthier than the river valleys: resources were held in fewer hands, and there were opportunities to develop pastoral farming. The fen and fen-edge appear to have experienced some growth, particularly between 1524 and 1563. The individuals in the fen-edge, able to draw on fen and upland resources, were the most prosperous in the county in 1524, in terms of wealth per head. Fen and fen-edge areas grew most rapidly during periods of population expansion, notably the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and again between the later sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries, when the parishes became some of the most thickly settled parts of the county.⁷⁴

4) Analysis by parish

Although the comparisons of sub-regions can identify patterns of growth and decline, neighbouring settlements often varied considerably, as can be seen when densities of wealth and population are mapped by parish.⁷⁵ Figure 2.2 and appendix 2 show the changes in ranking of parishes by wealth between 1334 and 1524. The procedure was the same as that used to compare the sub-regions: all settlements were ranked in order of wealth per acre in 1334 and 1524, and the difference in rank order between the two dates was mapped. The greatest increases in wealth, where parishes increased fifty or more places in rank order between the two dates, occurred on the fringes of the area of study, and were not confined to any one sub-region. They included Haddenham and Wilburton on the fen, Soham and Burwell on the fen-edge, Ickleton and Guilden

⁷³ Pettit, *Cambridgeshire*, p. 406.

⁷⁴ Spufford, *Contrasting communities*, pp. 16, 18.

⁷⁵ Ibid., pp. 11, 15; Yates, 'Continuity and change', pp. 61a, 73a-74a; Galloway, 'Colchester', pp. 42-50; J. Cade & M. Brayshay, 'The taxable wealth and population of Devon parishes in 1524/5: an application of GIS and computer cartography', *History & Computing*, 8 (1996), 105-21.

Morden in the river valleys, and Burrough Green with Westley Waterless on the south-east uplands. Significantly, there were no places with the greatest increase in wealth located on the western plateau. Other areas with smaller increases in wealth were scattered, but included all the fen parishes surveyed, together with groups of parishes north of Cambridge, in the south-west near Royston and Gamlingay and in the south-east around Linton. A concentration of growth in parishes around towns might suggest an urban stimulus, but some areas of the greatest decrease, where parishes fell 50 or more places in rank order between 1334 and 1524, were also found near to towns, like Teversham and Milton adjoining Cambridge, and Great and Little Abington, and Pampisford near Linton. The proximity of even an expanding town did not guarantee prosperity for the surrounding villages in the later Middle Ages.⁷⁶

Figure 2.3 and appendix 3 illustrate the changes in the ranking of parishes by the number of taxpayers, and by implication the relative population densities of parishes, between 1377 and 1524. The pattern is similar, but not identical, to that of the changes in wealth. The greatest increases occurred in the fenland parishes of Wilburton and Haddenham, but small pockets of growth occurred in all the sub-regions. The largest decreases were again at Milton, Teversham and Papworth Everard, and also at Barton, Clopton and Lolworth on the western plateau.

⁷⁶ As found by Britnell in Essex (Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 141-58).

POPULATION AND WEALTH

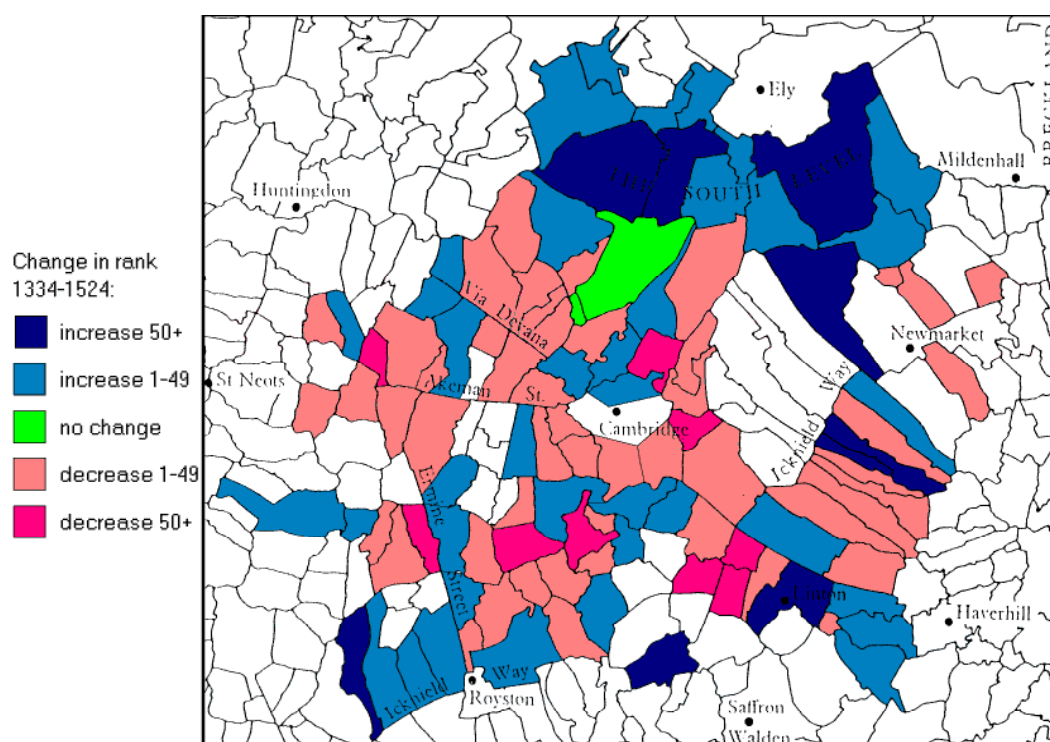


Fig 2.2: Changes in the ranking of parishes by wealth, 1334-1524 Source: Appendix 2.

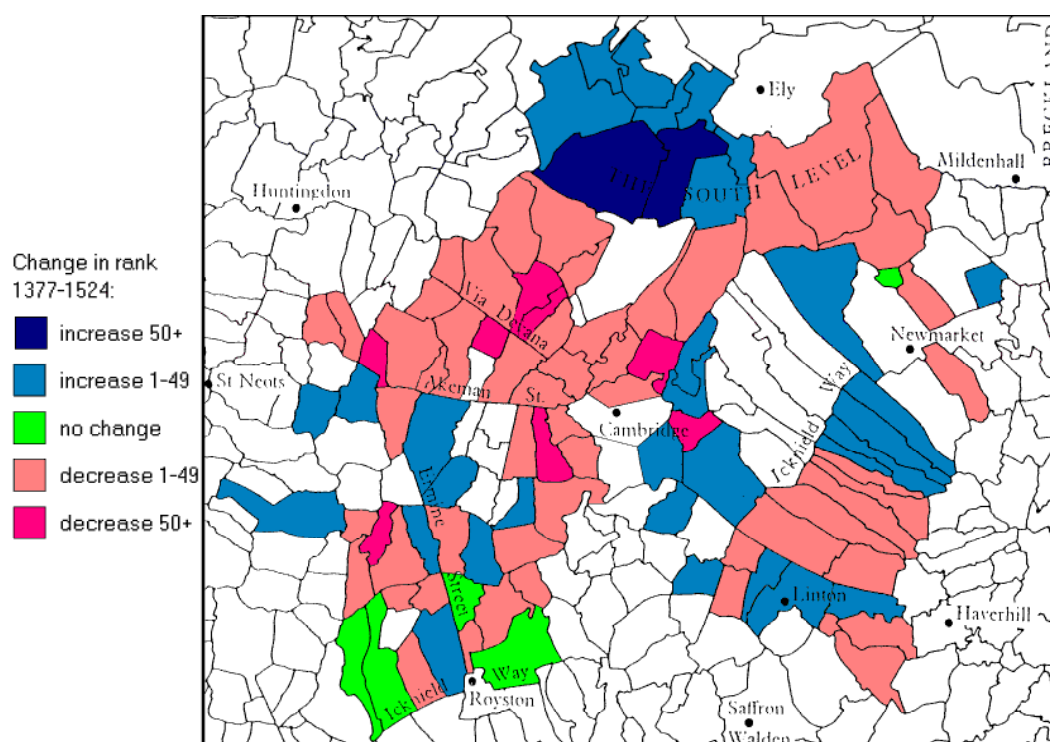


Fig 2.3: Changes in ranking of parishes by number of taxpayers, 1377-1524 Source: Appendix 3.

Attempting to explain these varying rates of change, and in particular, what caused the largest increases in population and wealth per acre, is far from easy. Yates suggested three principal elements in determining the local pattern of economic development in West Berkshire during the later middle ages: ecological factors, types of lordship, and proximity to an expanding urban centre.⁷⁷ As the analysis of sub-regions has shown, geological factors were of some importance, with the heavy clay soils of the western plateau and south-east uplands declining in wealth and population, and several river valley areas experiencing growth. With the possible exception of some growth in wealth occurring in parishes adjoining towns between 1334 and 1524, the urban centres of the region do not seem to have provided a stimulus for growth. The greatest contrast in lordship was between the largely unified lordship under the bishop and prior of Ely in the fenland and the fragmented manors owned by different lords in the uplands. Perhaps the fenland generally may have benefited from the inertia of institutional landlords more than the upland sub-regions, with a more diversified mix of lordship. At Wilburton, under the absentee bishop of Ely, tenants probably profited from the rents, which remained fixed: in 1609 the rents of assize and demesne land were at almost the same level as in 1507, and the farm of the manor remained at £8, the same sum as that received around 1426.⁷⁸

Additionally, there were a variety of more local influences, a combination of which may have accounted for large increases in wealth or population between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Some settlements on major roads expanded during the later middle ages, like the small towns examined above. Haddenham commanded the principal entrance by land to the Isle of Ely, via the causeway that crossed the Ouse at Aldreth. Ickleton lay where the southern branch of the Icknield Way crossed the Cam, and Linton was sited on the main road from Cambridge to Haverhill. Some of the growing settlements supported markets, fairs, and non-agricultural trades, like

⁷⁷ Yates, 'Rural society'.

⁷⁸ F.W. Maitland, 'The history of a Cambridgeshire manor', *English Historical Review*, 35 (1894), 432-9.

Linton, Ickleton, and Gamlingay.⁷⁹ There was no single pattern of development, but a variety of local experiences from which some trends can be identified.

5) Cambridge's demand within a ten-mile radius

Although Cambridge was one of the most important urban centres in its region, like most medieval towns its impact on the surrounding countryside was limited. Colchester, for example, with between 3,000 and 4,000 inhabitants in the early fourteenth century, drew its grain supplies from within a radius of 8-10 miles overland, but the borough contained around only one tenth of the total number of taxpayers in a ten-mile radius of the town. As there were a number of other significant centres of consumption within the region, Colchester could not have dominated supplies of grain even within the normal marketing region of the town.⁸⁰

The ten-mile radius around Cambridge, as shown in figure 2.1, includes most of the fen-edge, western plateau and river valleys sub-regions, and parts of the fen and south-east uplands. There were no other substantial towns within this region, although other towns lay close by, and were probably served by parts of the region. Table 2.10 provides some estimates of the size of Cambridge's demand within its ten-mile region. The proportion of Cambridge's demand, in terms of population and wealth, was significantly larger than the town's spatial area, as like all urban centres, it offered a concentrated centre of demand. Cambridge's total demand was perhaps slightly larger than that estimated for Colchester, but it was still very limited. By the early sixteenth century, Cambridge comprised about one fifth of the total wealth, and one seventh of the total population in a ten-mile radius. Even the addition of the university, which is not included in these figures and would probably have increased the town's population by another third, would not substantially increase the town's relatively restricted share of the wealth and population within its region.

⁷⁹ *VCH Cambs.*, iv, p. 141, v, p. 78, vi, pp. 80, 83, 231, 241.

⁸⁰ Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 16, 46-7; R. Britnell, 'Urban demand in the English economy, 1300-1600', in Galloway, ed., *Trade*, p. 7.

Table 2.10: *Wealth and population within a ten-mile radius of Cambridge*

	<i>Cambridge as proportion of total within ten-mile radius</i>
Acreage	1.6%
Taxpayers, 1377	14.7%
Taxpayers, 1524	15.9%
Taxable wealth, 1524	22.6%

Source: Appendix 1. Parishes numbered 1-4, 9, 29-31, 37-8, 48-9, 57-8, 60-3, 81-6, 91, 106-8, 110, 116-24 were excluded; all figures for parishes numbered 5-8, 28, 39, 87, 90, 92, 102, 105, 109, 111-15 were halved, as they straddle the ten-mile radius.

Reduced tax assessments

Although no new taxes were raised in the fifteenth century that can be readily compared with those of 1334, 1377 and 1524/5, various reductions were made, which may indicate the varying extent of the decline in wealth. A subsidy granted in 1428 lists parishes with less than ten households, while reductions to the fixed quotas of the fifteenth and tenth of 1334 were introduced in 1433 and 1446.

The parliament of 1428 granted a subsidy on ecclesiastical parishes, in proportion to sums at which churches were assessed for clerical taxation. Parishes with fewer than ten households were to be exempt.⁸¹ The ten parishes exempted from payment in Cambridgeshire are shown in figure 2.4: like the parishes in Suffolk which gained exemption,⁸² the Cambridgeshire parishes tended to have small acreages and to be located on heavy soils, with a concentration in the south-east uplands. The total of taxpayers in 1524 was usually larger than the number of households in 1428, but the numbers in many of the parishes remained low. The largest growth occurred at Burrough Green, which contained 42 taxpayers in 1524.⁸³ Sutton with Mepal,

⁸¹ *Inquisitions and assessments relating to feudal aids...1284-1431*, HMSO, 6 vols. (London, 1899-1920), i, pp. 192-3.

⁸² D. Dymond & R. Virgoe, 'The reduced population and wealth of early fifteenth-century Suffolk', *Proceedings of Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 36 (1985-8), 74.

⁸³ Sheail, *1524/5 lay subsidy*, ii, p. 32.

Witchford with Wentworth, and Burrough Green with Westley Waterless also increased their ranking in both the number of taxpayers and wealth between 1334 and 1524, suggesting that their local economies may have recovered in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.⁸⁴

In 1433 the total national yield from the fifteenth and tenth was cut by £4,000 and distributed among 'poor vills, cities and boroughs, desolate, wasted, destroyed or very impoverished, or otherwise too heavily burdened with tax'. Every county was granted a remission of 10.4 per cent of their quota. In 1446 the total sum remitted was increased to £6,000. Historians have not used these reductions as extensively as the assessments of 1334, 1377 and 1524/5, and further research is needed to show how the reductions were implemented in different counties.⁸⁵ Bridbury argued that the remissions were rarely granted to those areas in greatest need, and did not represent the impoverishment of the countryside. He saw the reductions as a measure of control over the Exchequer by parliament, which in the same year had obliged the new treasurer to investigate the crown's financial position.⁸⁶ The reductions should certainly be viewed within the context of economic discontent and the political weakness of Henry VI's government, which eased the securing of such concessions.⁸⁷

Within each county, the reductions were apportioned by local commissioners, comprising a lord and two knights of each shire.⁸⁸ Local reductions varied: in Essex, every village was given the same remission; in other counties, varying deductions were made. There is always the danger that personal interests and local pressures were more dominant than genuine need, and that some communities may have taken

⁸⁴ See appendices 2-3.

⁸⁵ W. Hudson, 'The assessment of the townships of the county of Norfolk...', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 12 (1895), 243-97; W.G. Hoskins & H.P.R. Finberg, *Devonshire Studies* (London, 1952), pp. 212-49; Dymond & Virgoe, 'Reduced population'; Bailey, *Marginal economy?*, pp. 314-15; M. Beresford, *The lost villages of England* (London, 1954), pp. 164-6.

⁸⁶ Bridbury, *Economic growth*, pp. 96-7.

⁸⁷ R.H. Britnell, 'The economic context', in A.J. Pollard, ed., *The Wars of the Roses* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 60-2.

⁸⁸ Schofield, 'Parliamentary land taxation', pp. 63-4.

advantage of this opportunity to reduce their tax burden even when they were still capable of paying. Salisbury received a greater remission when its overlord, the bishop, was on the local commission.⁸⁹ It seems likely, though, that the reductions were apportioned on the basis of need within at least some counties, including Cambridgeshire and Suffolk.⁹⁰ In these counties, the deductions seem to be an indicator, albeit imperfect, of the extent of relative decline of wealth in different communities.

Four assessments of reductions to the tenth and fifteenth survive for Cambridgeshire, for 1433, 1445, and two for 1490-1.⁹¹ The reductions made in 1433 and 1490-1 have been mapped in figures 2.4 and 2.5. The 1445 reductions were apportioned in almost exactly the same way as the 1433 reductions, though the figures need to be doubled as they were for the collection of just half of the fifteenth and tenth. In 1445, only nine villis were given reductions of different proportions to those in 1433: six gained increased relief,⁹² three had their relief cut.⁹³ For the reductions of 1490-1, two documents exist, with virtually identical reductions.⁹⁴ A few minor changes are apparent in a later particular of account of 1511-12.⁹⁵ These small differences may reflect confusion over the amounts to be collected: parliament claimed that some collectors refused to make allowances and had fraudulently retained sums of money.⁹⁶

⁸⁹ Bridbury, *Economic growth*, p. 97.

⁹⁰ Dymond & Virgoe, 'Reduced population'.

⁹¹ PRO, E 179/81/80, E 179/81/93, E 179/81/119-20.

⁹² Teversham, Cherry Hinton, Longstanton, Fen Ditton with Horningsea, Bottisham, and Witchford with Wentworth.

⁹³ Horseheath, Bourn, and Elsworth.

⁹⁴ PRO, E 179/81/119-20; Knapwell and Foxton had larger reductions in E 179/81/119.

⁹⁵ E 179/81/124, where subsidies for Foxton, Great Shelford, Kirtling were increased, and those for Eversden and Comberton reduced.

⁹⁶ Schofield, 'Parliamentary land taxation', p. 78.

POPULATION AND WEALTH

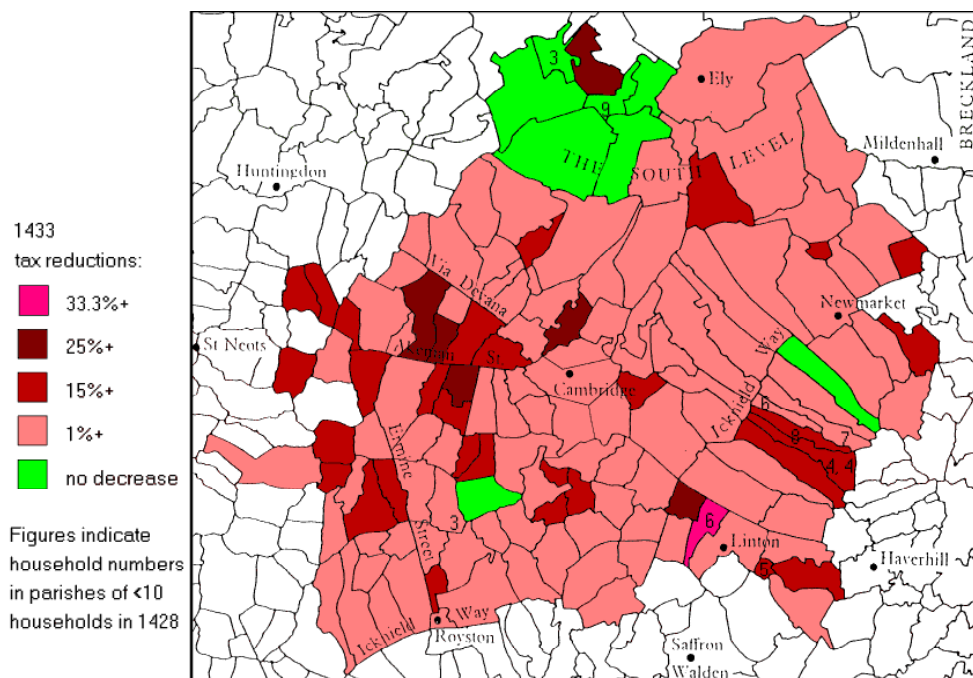


Figure 2.4: Reductions to the fifteenth and tenth, 1433, & small parishes, 1428

Note: 1433 reductions as a percentage of 1334 assessment. Sources: 1334: *Lay subsidy*, pp. 23-8; 1433: PRO, E 179/81/80; 1428: *Inquisitions and assessments*, i, pp. 192-3.

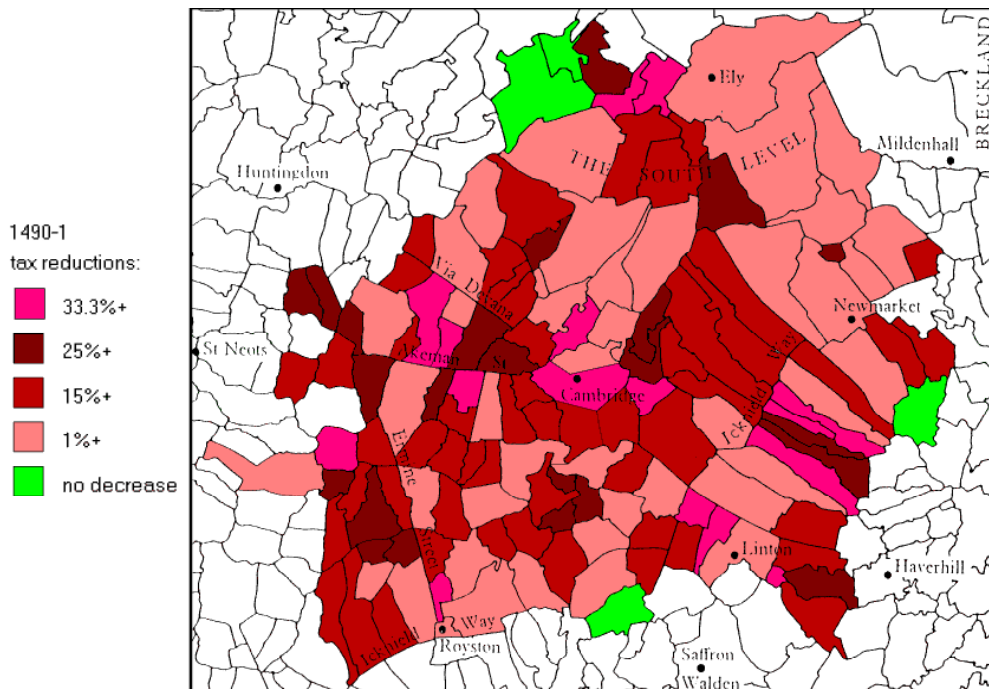


Figure 2.5: Reductions to the fifteenth and tenth by parish, 1490-1

Note: 1490-1 reductions as a percentage of 1334 assessment. Sources: 1334: *Lay subsidy*, pp. 23-8; 1490-1: PRO, E 179/81/120

The villis with the largest reductions were scattered across much of the county, though a few concentrations stand out. There were a number of villages on the boulder clay plateau to the west, adjoining Akeman Street, and in the south-east uplands, along the eastern edge of the Icknield Way. The general absence of large reductions in the fen-edge and fen is notable. Eight of the ten small parishes of 1428 gained substantial subsidy reductions of 25 per cent or more in 1490-1. There is also some correlation between those parishes granted the largest reductions in 1433 and 1490-1, and the parishes with the largest falls in rank by number of taxpayers and taxable wealth, although not in every case.

By analysing the tax reductions by sub-region, as in tables 2.11-2.12, it can be seen that in both 1433 and 1490-1, the western plateau and south-east uplands gained the largest reductions. This reinforces the evidence from the lay subsidies of the relative contraction in wealth and population in these sub-regions between the fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The fen and fen-edge received the smallest proportions of relief from taxation. The river-valley region, despite remaining the wealthiest and most populated sub-region, when measured by area, received a level of relief comparable to the county average.

Table 2.11: *1433 tax reductions, by sub-region*

	<i>1334 total</i>	<i>1433 total</i>	<i>% reduction</i>
	£	£	
fen-edge	234.35	21.70	9.26
fen	47.08	2.67	5.67
south-east uplands	70.58	8.33	11.81
river valleys	278.49	30.14	10.82
western plateau	184.78	28.35	15.34
Cambridge	46.61	2.00	4.29
County total ¹	894.98	95.66	10.69

Notes: Assessments at one-tenth included as one-tenth.

¹Also includes Ely, Newmarket, Royston (excluded from sub-regions)

Sources: 1334: *Lay subsidy*, pp. 23-8; 1433: PRO, E 179/81/80. Parishes grouped in sub-regions as in Appendix 1.

Table 2.12: *1490-1 tax reductions, by sub-region*

	<i>1334 total</i>	<i>1490-1 total</i>	<i>% reduction</i>
	£	£	
fen-edge	234.35	37.66	16.07
fen	47.08	7.30	15.51
south-east uplands	70.58	13.57	19.22
river valleys	278.49	45.75	16.43
western plateau	184.78	40.05	21.67
Cambridge	46.61	26.61	57.09
County total ¹	894.98	174.17	19.46

Notes: Assessments at one-tenth included as one-tenth.

¹Also includes Ely, Newmarket, Royston (excluded from sub-regions)

Sources: 1334: *Lay subsidy*, pp. 23-8; 1490-1: PRO, E 179/81/120. Parishes grouped in sub-regions as in Appendix 1.

Further evidence of the contraction of population and wealth in parts of Cambridgeshire between the early fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries can be found in the shrinkage and desertion of villages. Most examples of shrunken villages survive in the west and south-east, although pre-nineteenth century estate maps show that some larger modern villages in the main river valleys and fens also formerly had abandoned house sites.⁹⁷ Deserted villages also tended to be concentrated on the western plateau, with virtually no desertion in the fenland. The date of abandonment of these villages is not always clear, but mostly seems to have occurred during the population decline of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁹⁸

Low populations allowed ambitious landholders in these parishes to consolidate and enclose their holdings with little opposition. Although a marked change in land use from arable to pasture began in the mid-fourteenth century, most evidence dates from a new public concern over enclosures under the Tudors.⁹⁹ Returns of the inquisition into enclosures of 1517 survive for only five out of seventeen hundreds in

⁹⁷ Taylor, *Cambridgeshire landscape*, pp. 136-8.

⁹⁸ Beresford, *Lost villages*, pp. 343-5; M. Beresford & J.G. Hurst, eds., *Deserted medieval villages* (London, 1971), p. 184.

⁹⁹ Britnell, *Closing of middle ages?*, pp. 203-4.

Cambridgeshire. Several of the villages in which enclosure took place had received large taxation reductions and experienced a considerable decline of population and wealth, including Childerley, Clopton, East Hatley, Shingay, and Carlton cum Willingham. Fifteenth-century enclosures have also been correlated with areas of declining population and depressed economic conditions in Devon. Enclosures generally, however, were limited in Cambridgeshire, possibly because, as Cunningham claimed, the market for foodstuffs provided by the Cambridge colleges gave landowners less incentive to convert from arable to pasture.¹⁰⁰

The enclosures of the early sixteenth century and before, often accompanied by the conversion of arable to pasture, should be distinguished from the enclosure of common pasture land, occurring in highly-populated areas of the county during the mid-sixteenth century, where there was intense pressure on grazing land. On 10 July 1549, the day on which Kett's rebels reached Norwich, with enclosures among their grievances, protestors in Cambridge pulled up fences inclosing parts of the commons around the town. The town treasurers made payments for watchmen, carrying out the gallows, and mending the prison 'after the prisoners brake out', while a curious ballad attacked 'the false flattering freemen of Cambridge, the open and secret enemies of the poor'.¹⁰¹ At Landbeach, villagers appealed to Protector Somerset, alleging that Richard Kirby, lord of Brays manor, had overstocked the commons, impounded villagers' cattle, and demanded excessive fines to release them. Enclosures had also been made at Ely, Downham and Littleport, probably for dairy farming.¹⁰² In these cases, demand for meat and dairy produce, particularly around the towns, encouraged urban butchers and others to graze and sometimes to overstock animals on

¹⁰⁰ I.S. Leadam, 'The inquisition of 1517...Cambridgeshire', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new series, 8 (1894), 298-305; H.S.A. Fox, 'The chronology of enclosure and economic development in medieval Devon' *EcHR*, 2nd series, 28 (1975), 187-92, 197-9; W. Cunningham, 'The economic history of Cambridgeshire', *Ely Diocesan Remembrancer* (1909), 21-2.

¹⁰¹ CCC, MS 106, pp. 287-9, 312-15, 405-7; *Annals*, ii, pp. 38-44, v, pp. 286-7.

¹⁰² J.R. Ravensdale, 'Landbeach in 1549: Ket's rebellion in miniature', in L.M. Munby, ed., *East Anglian studies* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 94-116; *VCH Cambs.*, ix, p. 147; W.M. Palmer, 'Enclosures at Ely, Downham and Littleport A.D. 1548', *Transactions of the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Archaeological Society*, 5 (1937), 369-84.

neighbouring village commons.¹⁰³ Cambridge butchers, for example, used the commons at Barton and Grantchester. An agreement restricting the number of animals kept on the common pastures in Cambridge was ordained by the common assent of the 'butchers and other burgesses' in 1551.¹⁰⁴

The town of Cambridge petitioned for substantial reductions to its financial obligations to the crown during the fifteenth century. Cambridge received a reduction of only 40s, or 4 per cent of its total tax quota in 1433, but a much larger reduction of £26 12s 2½d was given in 1446 and confirmed in 1465. The burgesses had complained to parliament that a number of houses were standing empty and craftsmen were leaving, while the sites acquired for King's College and for students' lodgings were exempt from tax, unduly burdening the rest of the town.¹⁰⁵ Cambridge also petitioned for a reduction to its annual fee farm payment to the crown, stating in 1402 that the town was wasted and impoverished following the loss of franchises after the Peasants' Revolt, damage from fire, and the diminution of people in the town since Richard II's reign. It was not until 1483, however, that a reduction of £10 was granted, and this does not appear to have continued after Henry VII's accession.¹⁰⁶

Many towns secured remissions of taxation or fee farm payments to the exchequer during the fifteenth century. Whether these concessions represent a genuine decline in urban wealth or merely the strength of civic lobbying has been a central point of contention within the 'urban decline' debate.¹⁰⁷ Cambridge, like several other towns,¹⁰⁸ suffered a decline in the income which was allocated to pay the town's fee farm: as a punishment for their involvement in the Peasants' Revolt, the corporation's

¹⁰³ A similar situation occurred at York at the end of the fifteenth century: H. Swanson, *Medieval artisans: an urban class in late medieval England* (Oxford, 1989), p. 15.

¹⁰⁴ *VCH Cambs.*, v, pp. 168, 206; *Annals*, ii, pp. 54-5.

¹⁰⁵ *Annals*, i, pp. 197, 214; *Charters of the borough of Cambridge*, pp. xxvi, 54-61.

¹⁰⁶ *Annals*, i, pp. 148, 227; *VCH Cambs.*, iii, p. 35.

¹⁰⁷ Phythian-Adams, 'Urban decline', pp. 161-2; Bridbury, 'English provincial towns', 2-5; Dyer, *Decline and growth*, pp. 39-41.

¹⁰⁸ Dobson, 'Urban decline', p. 277.

profits from the regulation of foodstuffs and weights and measures were given to the university, and the town's fee farm was raised by just over £2 to £70 per year. The petitions for a reduction in taxation though, also reflected the corporation's resentment towards the university's exemption from civic dues. The statement in 1446 that craftsmen were allegedly leaving the town as the number of scholars increased must be counterbalanced with the tremendous demand generated by the new construction of new colleges like King's, whether in the form of building materials or consumer goods and services for college members. In the same period, Oxford put forward a contrary argument: a decline in artificers had resulted in students withdrawing from the town.¹⁰⁹

Distribution of wealth across society

Medieval and Tudor commentators had clear hierarchical perceptions of society. The structure of this society can be investigated through the 1524 tax returns, which are comprehensive enough to cover much of the country and most persons possessing some form of wealth or income. In addition, lists of those contributing to the forced loan of 1522 can be used to identify the most prosperous. Although the evidence presented here does not permit comparisons over time, comparisons can be made with other areas, while the breakdown of wealth by sub-region shows that there were clear differences within the county.

Goose has analysed in detail the social structure of Cambridge using the 1524-5 tax returns, in comparison with the towns of Reading and Colchester. In all three towns the social structure had a broad base with wealth more heavily concentrated towards the top, but this social pyramid peaked less sharply in Cambridge. Average wealth per head was also substantially below that of Reading or Colchester, suggesting that

¹⁰⁹ *VCH Cambs.*, iii, p. 12; *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, Record Commission, 6 vols. (London, 1783), v, pp. 337-8.

fortunes were made more readily within the cloth industry than among the inland trade and service functions that dominated Cambridge's economy.¹¹⁰

Within Cambridgeshire, the distribution of the wealthiest inhabitants is most clearly shown through the loan of 1522, levied on all those with more than £20 in goods and lands, and totals for the sub-regions are displayed in table 2.13. As no settlements in the Isle of Ely are recorded, it is probable that this area was assessed separately. In per acre terms, the river valleys sub-region contained the highest number of payers, and the greatest amount of wealth. The most numerous contributors were found at Soham (21), Chesterton (13), Fulbourn (12), and Bottisham and Swaffham Prior (10). The combined wealth of Cambridgeshire's richest inhabitants was not large in comparison with many other counties: the county's yield per thousand acres from the loan was just over £6, placing Cambridgeshire in twentieth place out of 32 counties. This sum was substantially lower than all the counties that bordered Cambridgeshire: a similar picture to that of 1515.¹¹¹ Cambridgeshire had very few resident gentry or noble families, and there were no wealthy merchant clothiers with large fortunes generated through the cloth trade.

Table 2.13: *Contributors to 1522 loan, by sub-region*

	<i>Payers</i>	<i>Assessed wealth £</i>	<i>Acreage</i>	<i>Payers per 1,000 acres</i>	<i>Wealth per 1,000 acres £</i>
fen-edge	115	4,145.64	108,025	1.06	38.38
south-east uplands	42	1,714.00	48,003	0.87	35.71
river valleys	104	3,996.99	88,220	1.18	45.31
western plateau	39	1,548.66	60,703	0.64	25.51
Total	300	11,405.29	336,491	0.89	33.89

Note: there are no entries for the Isle of Ely, so the fen sub-region is not recorded.

Source: *LP*, iii (2), no. 2640, pp. 1116-19

¹¹⁰ Goose, 'Economic and social aspects', pp. 55-91.

¹¹¹ W.G. Hoskins, *The age of plunder: the England of Henry VIII, 1500-1547* (London, 1976), p. 24.

Even fewer people were assessed at £20 or more in wealth in Cambridgeshire in the 1524 subsidies that have been examined: only 138 taxpayers, or 3 per cent of the total. The largest concentrations of these wealthy taxpayers were at Soham, with 8, at Chesterton, with 5, and at Burwell, Fordham and Ickleton, with 4 each. The subsidy of 1524 was preceded by an anticipation, whereby taxpayers worth £40 or more paid in advance of the subsidy being collected, and were not included in the lay subsidy returns.¹¹²

Table 2.14: *Distribution of all taxpayers by wealth in Cambridgeshire sub-regions, 1524*

	<£2 %	£2-4 %	£5-10 %	>£10 %
fen-edge	35.4	39.9	16.5	8.3
fen	48.3	34.4	11.3	6.0
south-east uplands	50.5	31.6	13.5	4.5
river valleys	59.4	22.1	10.9	7.6
western plateau	48.6	29.7	14.3	7.4
Total	49.0	30.7	13.2	7.1

Note: percentage of total number of taxpayers in each sub-region. All assessments, whether based on lands, goods, or wages, are used.

Sources: 1524 lay subsidy returns: PRO, E 179/81/126, E 179/81/129-130, E 179/81/132, E 179/81/134, E 179/81/136-7, E 179/81/161, E 179/82/220 part 2, E 179/82/224 part 2

The surviving 1524 tax returns for Cambridgeshire have been used to produce the totals of occupational wealth in table 2.14 for the sub-regions shown in figure 2.1. Categories of wealth follow those used by Spufford in her analysis of Cambridgeshire, and Wrightson and Levine in their study of Terling in Essex, which seem more appropriate than the occupational hierarchy put forward by Cornwall.¹¹³ Taxpayers assessed at under £2 were generally labourers and servants. Those assessed at £2-4 were perhaps holding tenements of up to a yardland (30-40 acres) and could

¹¹² Hoyle, *Taxation records*, pp. 31-2. An anticipation list is attached to the Cambridge returns of 1524: PRO, E 179/81/133.

¹¹³ Spufford, *Contrasting communities*, pp. 28-36; K. Wrightson & D. Levine, *Poverty and piety in an English village, Terling 1525-1700* (London, 1979), pp. 33-4. Cornwall, *Wealth and society*, pp. 14-30, uses higher bands of wealth for his categories.

be described as husbandmen or craftsmen; those assessed at £5-10 were substantial husbandmen, craftsmen, and yeomen, farming perhaps 50-60 acres, and often the most prosperous men in their village. Large farmers and the gentry had assessments of over £10. The county totals differ slightly from those produced by Spufford, who used both the 1524 and 1525 returns, and did not include any of the Isle of Ely.

It is generally accepted that in addition to those who were assessed on wages in the muster of 1522 and the subsidies of 1524-5, those who were assessed at below 40s on goods should also be classed as wage-earners. These men lacked the minimum amount of land from which a family could support itself without other employment – in Cambridgeshire perhaps half a yardland of 14 to 20 acres.¹¹⁴ Grouping those with assessments of less than 40s in goods with those charged on wages, the average percentage of wage-earners in a sample of six counties was 36 per cent, with Rutland having the highest proportion of 41 per cent.¹¹⁵ In three central Essex hundreds, this figure was 43 per cent of all taxpayers, and in West Berkshire, 43 per cent of all men.¹¹⁶ Goose calculated that 55 per cent of the Cambridge taxpayers in 1524-5 were assessed on wages, a figure slightly higher than 12 other towns that have been studied, and probably reflecting the importance of service occupations in Cambridge.¹¹⁷ In Cambridgeshire, 49 per cent of taxpayers were assessed on wages or less than 40s, well above the averages of the other counties stated above. Cambridgeshire, like Essex and other parts of south and eastern England, had a larger proportion of wage-earners than counties further north or west.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Spufford, *Contrasting communities*, pp. 34-5.

¹¹⁵ C. Dyer, *Standards of living in the later middle ages: social change in England, c. 1200-1520* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 214.

¹¹⁶ L.R. Poos, *A rural society after the Black Death: Essex, 1350-1525* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 28-31; Yates, 'Continuity and change', p. 94.

¹¹⁷ Goose, 'Economic and social aspects', p. 63.

¹¹⁸ Poos, *Rural society*, p. 30.

There were significant sub-regional variations in the distribution of different categories of taxpayer, too. As table 2.14 reveals, the fen and fen-edge were characterised by the smallest numbers of wage-earners and the largest numbers of smallholders, with between £2 and £4 in wealth. Such a trend tended to be found in regions where pastoral farming predominated.¹¹⁹ Assessments of less than £2 were most commonly found in the river valleys. This sub-region was the wealthiest and most densely populated, and had seen the greatest increases in relative population and wealth between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Regions where wealth was polarised included cloth-making districts like the Kennet Valley of Berkshire, Cranbrook hundred in Kent, and the Agbrigg and Morley wapentakes in the West Riding of Yorkshire.¹²⁰ Although the wealthiest taxpayers were relatively poorer, the major corn-growing regions displayed similar inequalities of wealth, where large numbers of poor labourers and wealthy yeomen could be found. Such areas included corn-producing parts of Norfolk and Berkshire, and the river-valleys of Cambridgeshire - all regions which could supply London with grain by boat.¹²¹

Conclusion

While the taxation records of the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries present many difficulties, they offer the opportunity to compare relative distributions of population and wealth across the region. Estimates of Cambridge's population in 1377 and 1524 suggest that the town was a similar size at both dates, while the addition of university scholars to the totals points to substantial growth over the period. Nonetheless, the burgesses of Cambridge petitioned for reductions to their subsidy quota and fee farm during the fifteenth century, although not all their complaints can be accepted at face value.

¹¹⁹ Cornwall, *Wealth and society*, pp. 35-42.

¹²⁰ Yates, 'Rural society', 624-6; M. Zell, *Industry in the countryside: Wealden society in the sixteenth century* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 144-5; R.B. Smith, *Land and politics in the England of Henry VIII. The West Riding of Yorkshire: 1530-1546* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 110-11, 119-20.

¹²¹ Cornwall, *Wealth and society*, pp. 32-3. The supply of grain to London from the Cambridge region is examined in Chapter 3, below.

Cambridgeshire was not a county that increased considerably in population or wealth in comparison to neighbouring counties, but there were important sub-regional variations in growth. With the falling demand for arable produce, the heavier soils of the western plateau and south-east uplands experienced a decline in settlement, and these sub-regions experienced the greatest falls in population and wealth per acre and the largest reductions in taxation. The large-scale consolidation of holdings by landowners, which Brenner suggested were a widespread feature of this period, tended to be found only in these areas where the decline in arable cultivation and depopulation were most severe.

The greater opportunities for pastoral farming and other activities allowed the fen and fen-edge regions to maintain, and in some places to increase, their shares of wealth and population over the period. Some parishes, particularly those near towns, may have responded to demand for meat and dairy products, and in some places, these pressures resulted in attempts to enclose common pastures. The sub-regions possessed a distinctive social structure with a smaller number of wage labourers and a larger proportion of smallholders and peasant farmers. Like the Breckland region of Suffolk, these sub-regions did not experience large-scale losses of population or wealth, despite the marginal quality of the land: much depended not on soil fertility, but on methods of cultivation, and employment available outside agriculture.¹²²

The river valley region remained the wealthiest region in per acre terms, and the most densely populated area of the county in 1524 as in 1334; wealth per head in 1524 was lower than in other sub-regions though, due to the large number of poorer taxpayers. This sub-region also contained the most ‘capitalist’ social structure, with the largest number of wealthiest taxpayers, and the greatest proportion of wage-earners. This seems to have been the result of the form of agriculture, and the market and

¹²² R.H. Britnell, ‘The occupation of the land – Eastern England’, in E. Miller, ed., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, iii: 1348-1500 (Cambridge, 1991), p. 56.

employment opportunities available, rather than through landlord initiative. A large number of poorer inhabitants, gaining income from wages rather than land, suggests a considerable demand for buying and selling basic foodstuffs and goods. This required markets for exchange, and many markets and fairs were found in this sub-region as will be shown in chapters four and five. The next chapter shows how some of the most notable developments in the trade of the Cambridge region, namely the growth of the malt barley and saffron trades, also tended to be concentrated within this sub-region during the 1450-1560 period.

CHAPTER 3

TRADE

The trade of Cambridge and its region was essentially a two-way process: demand within Cambridge was met by supplies of goods and services from the region and beyond, supplementing those produced within the town itself; demand from other urban centres and regions was met by supplies of goods from Cambridge and its region. This chapter explores these two processes. The nature and extent of demand within Cambridge is studied through the purchases of various institutions, particularly the colleges. The ways in which Cambridge and its hinterland supplied goods to other regions are illustrated through the malt barley and saffron trades. Patterns of credit also reveal channels of trade. The town's supply of basic food and fuel from within its hinterland, and the supply and demand for building materials and labour, will be examined in later chapters.

A variety of evidence strongly suggests that the overall volume of trade in England contracted during the fifteenth century: population and land values fell, the network of markets shrank, and the total value of coinage in circulation declined.¹ But the decline in the value of currency in circulation was not as severe as the fall in population: in *per capita* terms, therefore, the availability of coinage, and by implication, the volume of trade, actually rose. Many peasants, wage-earners and artisans benefited from more abundant land and rising real wages, and were able to improve their diet, housing and possessions, and to increase their spending on clothes, household textiles, pewter and wooden furniture. There is evidence of regional specialisation in agriculture, while cloth manufacturing flourished in a number of districts.² Drawing on examples of such vitality, the fifteenth century has been described as a period of 'economic growth'.³

¹ M.M. Postan, 'The fifteenth century', *EcHR*, 9 (1938-9), 161-3.

² Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 155-64, 179-85, 228, 230; Dyer, *Standards*, pp. 207, 210.

³ Bridbury, *Economic growth*.

But in an economy with very limited technological development, the reduced population of the fifteenth century meant a smaller workforce, which in most sectors led to reduced output. Areas of decline co-existed with areas of growth, just as periods of recession alternated with periods of recovery. Particularly severe and widespread, though, was the 'great depression' of the mid-fifteenth century, when overseas trade and agricultural commodity prices collapsed, and recovery thereafter was slow and hesitant.⁴ Indeed there appears to have been little long-term growth in the domestic market between 1450 and 1550, and much of the growth that did take place was often at the expense of other areas.⁵ A rise in the volume of trade during the mid- to late sixteenth century, indicated by an increase in traffic and the expansion of markets, is usually attributed to the recovery of population.⁶

Regional trade, also described as internal trade, consisting of transactions between different localities and regions, may have comprised one quarter or one third of the country's gross national product in the sixteenth century, but in the absence of recorded figures, such estimates are extremely difficult to support. Historians have tended to concentrate their attentions on exports, which can be measured using the customs accounts.⁷ But fluctuations in overseas trade were of limited significance to an inland town like Cambridge, which relied on demand from within the town and region, together with trade with neighbouring towns and regions. In the absence of statistics relating only to Cambridge and its region, it is impossible to quantify the volume or value of trade, and the surviving evidence only permits the description of general trends. In Cambridge and its region, the university and colleges had particular requirements for specialist goods and services, and these appear to have increased in this period, with the growing number of students and the expansion of the colleges.

⁴ Hatcher, 'Slump', pp. 237-72.

⁵ Britnell, '1450-1550', pp. 89-116.

⁶ Everitt, 'Marketing', p. 51.

⁷ J.A. Chartres, *Internal trade in England 1500-1700* (London, 1977), p. 10; Carus-Wilson & Coleman, *Export trade*.

The region also developed a significant trade in malt barley and saffron, stimulated and conducted principally through Lynn and London.

Lynn, readily accessible from Cambridge via the Cam and Great Ouse, served as the town's sea port, offering links with the Low Countries, Scotland, Iceland, the Baltic and France, as well as trade along the East Coast. The port served a wide hinterland, including local shipyards and the Norfolk textile industry, as well as Cambridge and its surrounding region: the counties of Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutland, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire were accessible by water from Lynn.⁸ Like Boston, the other major port of the Wash, trade at Lynn was hit during the fifteenth century through warfare, embargoes and sea level changes, which caused the silting of the haven, and the port lost trade to London.⁹ The principal foreign traders at Lynn were the Hansards, who imported cheap bulk commodities from the Baltic like timber, iron, flax and wax, and exported cloth, grain, cheese and wool. Despite interruptions to trade, most drastically during the Anglo-Hanseatic war of 1468-74, Hansard commercial links remained strong at the port during the later fifteenth century.¹⁰ After a temporary trade boom between 1490 and 1510, Lynn, like other East Coast ports, was overshadowed in foreign trade by London. But the growth of London's trade provided employment for coastal shipping, and the amount of shipping carried in English vessels increased substantially.¹¹

⁸ J.D. Fudge, *Cargoes, embargoes and emissaries. The commercial and political interaction of England and the German Hanse 1450-1510* (Toronto, 1995), pp. 147-9; L.F. Salzman, *English trade in the middle ages* (Oxford, 1931), p. 209.

⁹ E.M. Carus-Wilson, 'The medieval trade of the ports of the Wash', *Medieval Archaeology*, 6-7 (1962-3), 201; S.H. Rigby, "'Sore decay" and "fair dwellings": Boston and urban decline in the later middle ages', *Midland History*, 10 (1985), 47-61.

¹⁰ Fudge, *Cargoes*, pp. 31-35, 105-10, 145-9, 163-4.

¹¹ G.V. Scammell, 'English merchant shipping at the end of the middle ages: some East Coast evidence', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 13 (1961), 327-41.

London lay just over 50 miles distant from Cambridge, and in parliamentary writs was considered a day's journey.¹² Carriers linked the two centres by road, delivering goods such as pike and butts of malmsey.¹³ Goods could also be taken by river to Lynn, and then coastwise to the capital. London was not immune to the population decline of the fifteenth century, but was able to compensate by increasing involvement in the marketing and distribution of goods across the country. London created demands for produce but also supplied goods and services on a greater scale.

Sources

Unlike the customs accounts, which provide detailed evidence of the export trade, there are no sources directly recording the scale of internal trade. Three principal sources will be used to examine the trade of Cambridge and its region in this chapter: college accounts, debt litigation and proceedings in the Chancery court.

Accounts of colleges and other households can demonstrate what certain groups of consumers bought, and where their purchases were made.¹⁴ College accounts, like those of other noble and ecclesiastical households, generally record the provision of domestic services, although some deal more with the management of estates than internal organisation.¹⁵ Like all household accounts, college accounts need to be used with caution. Entries vary in coverage, often being brief and imprecise. When regular payments cease, it is unclear if the payment has stopped, or if it has been placed under another heading. Most accounts are summaries of records of expenditure which have not usually survived, as indicated by entries with phrases like 'at various times' and reference to bills, tallies and other accounts. The purpose of household accounts was

¹² *VCH Cambs.*, iii, p. 1.

¹³ PRO, Early Chancery Proceedings (C 1): C 1/19/469, C 1/232/32.

¹⁴ C. Dyer, 'The consumer and the market in the later middle ages', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 42 (1989), 305-27; B. Harvey, 'The aristocratic consumer in England in the long thirteenth century', in M. Prestwich, R.H. Britnell & R. Frame, eds., *Thirteenth century England*, vi: *Proceedings of the Durham conference 1995* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 17-37.

¹⁵ Dyer, *Standards*, pp. 50-3; A.B. Cobban, *The King's Hall within the University of Cambridge in the later middle ages* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 5-6.

not usually to draw a profit or loss balance at the end of each year, but to monitor and regulate income and expenditure. At Merton College, Oxford, for example, the policy appears to have been to record as many transactions as feasible, leaving the bursar owed or owing as small a sum as possible. Accounts were audited to detect and deter mismanagement and as an aid to future budgeting.¹⁶ Household accounts only cover the most wealthy and privileged groups in society. A similar problem of documentation is encountered in the study of medieval agriculture, where demesne accounts provide detailed evidence about the crops and practices of the great aristocratic and ecclesiastical estates, but not those of the peasantry on their own holdings.

College accounts vary considerably in their format and survival. Some are in book form, like those of King's Hall; others are in rolls, as at Peterhouse. Some are fair copies, while others are working accounts with numerous corrections and erasures. The neatly organised Mundum Books of King's College contain subheadings and subtotals for different categories of income and expenditure, whereas the accounts at Corpus Christi College, even after the mid-fifteenth century reforms of Master John Botwright, list the whole income and expenditure for the year together, regardless of category or price. With such differences, it has been necessary on many occasions to resort to selective quotation rather than systematic analysis.

Debt litigation reveals patterns of credit that promoted the flow of trade. Credit stretched throughout the medieval economy, from the small debts of peasants in manorial courts to the international transactions of leading merchants.¹⁷ Records of debts may only state the names of individuals involved and their place of residence,

¹⁶ *Thetford*, i, pp. 5-8; *Domestic accounts of Merton College Oxford*, ed. J.M. Fletcher & C.A. Upton, Oxford Historical Society, new series, XXXIV (Oxford, 1996), p. xv; *Household accounts from medieval England*, ed. C.M. Woolgar, 2 parts, British Academy Records of Social and Economic History, new series, XVII-XVIII (Oxford, 1992-3), part 1, pp. 3-65; Dyer, *Standards*, pp. 92-8.

¹⁷ E. Clark, 'Debt litigation in a late medieval English vill', in J.A. Raftis, ed., *Pathways to medieval peasants* (Toronto, 1981), pp. 247-79; Kermode, *Merchants*, pp. 226-30.

and not the reason for the debt, which might arise not only from sales, but from rents, services, loans, pledges, or damages. But even if these pleadings did not result from a sale, the social contact is still reflective of the town's sphere of influence. Debt litigation covers an unknown proportion of the total extent of credit agreements, although it is generally assumed that, unless practices in registering debts alter, this proportion will not change significantly over time. So an increase in indebtedness in late medieval Colchester has been seen as evidence of economic expansion, and a fall in debt litigation as reflecting the decline of the town.¹⁸ A sample of debt cases for the region from the Calendars of Patent Rolls are studied here, while pleas in the Cambridge borough court are examined subsequently with an analysis of local markets.¹⁹

The early Chancery proceedings have been used in several studies to illustrate patterns of trade.²⁰ These are petitions to the chancellor complaining of alleged wrongs and asking for the offender to be sent to answer, and for remedy to be provided, because the courts of common law are unable to give the suitors remedy. The dating is by the title of the chancellor addressed in each bill, and so can often be only approximate. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, there was a great increase in the work of Chancery as an equity court, and suits were heard concerning inheritance, landed property, and family business, as well as trade.²¹ Most of the cases relating to trade refer to private transactions, made outside formal market-places.

1. College consumption

Professor Christopher Dyer's research into medieval patterns of consumption and consumer purchases, using noble and ecclesiastical household accounts, has shown

¹⁸ Kowaleski, *Exeter*, pp. 202-8; Dyer, 'Market towns', 21-30; Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 100-1, 108-9, 208.

¹⁹ See Chapter 4, below.

²⁰ Salzman, *English trade, passim*; Everitt, 'Marketing', p. 93.

²¹ Riden, *Record sources*, pp. 73-4; *Select cases in Chancery 1364-1471*, ed. W.P. Baildon, Selden Society, X (London, 1896), pp. xii-xxix.

that just as towns were arranged in hierarchy of size and wealth, so consumers were ranged in a social hierarchy of status and spending power, and there were significant links between the two. Great aristocratic and ecclesiastical households, like that of the bishop of Salisbury, with incomes of over £400 per annum, bought luxury and imported goods at the largest towns, and particularly at London, where the widest range of commodities and services could be procured. Superior knightly families, like the Paston family in Norfolk, and middle-ranking institutions with yearly incomes of between £200 and £400 sometimes bought directly from London, but were more likely to buy the same types of goods from provincial towns and ports, and made greater use of smaller towns. The gentry and institutions with incomes of under £100 used local market towns and villages for the bulk of their purchases, and obtained small quantities of more specialised goods from more distant towns. Small market towns and villages served the minor gentry, clergy, peasants, and artisans.²² Dyer's work relied on surviving accounts scattered across the country, but the relative abundance and diversity of surviving accounts in Cambridge, particularly those from the colleges, means that such patterns can be demonstrated within a single region.

The colleges and other institutions in the town varied considerably in size and wealth. As not all the college accounts survive, these features are shown most clearly in a survey of 1546, produced at Henry VIII's request by three commissioners recruited from the university.²³ At a time when the colleges' chantry lands, if not the colleges themselves, were threatened with dissolution, there is no doubt that the colleges wished to underplay their incomes and overstate their expenses to show that their revenues were not worth seizing by the king. Indeed on seeing the figures, Henry VIII reportedly said that 'he thought he had not in his realme so many parsons so honestly mayntened in lyvyng bi so little lond and rent'.²⁴ But although the survey has been

²² Dyer, 'Consumer'.

²³ *LP*, xxi (1), no. 68, p. 28, no. 297, pp. 139-41; *Documents*, i, pp. 105-294.

²⁴ *A collection of charters, statutes and other documents from the MS library of Corpus Christi College*, ed. J. Lamb (London, 1838), p. 60

described as ‘a very long and creative piece of accounting’,²⁵ the range of incomes are not dissimilar to those in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535, while the totals for Queens’ closely resemble the college accounts.²⁶ There is no reason to suppose that the variations in wealth between the colleges are not accurate. Similar impressions of relative size can be gained from comparing the number of statutory fellowships in respective colleges, although these statutory limits did not always conform to the actual number of fellows.²⁷ Variations in wealth between colleges seem to have been even more marked at Oxford, and this was reflected in the extent and fashion by which these colleges commemorated their anniversaries.²⁸

Table 3.1: *Wealth and size of Cambridge colleges, 1546*

	<i>net income per annum £</i>	<i>no. of members</i>
King's College	1,011	120
St John's	537	152
Christ's	287	72
Queens'	273	39
King's Hall	214	50
Corpus Christi	171	17
Pembroke Hall	171	29
Michaelhouse	142	21
Peterhouse	138	36
Clare Hall	132	28
Jesus	130	31
Gonville Hall	120	31
Trinity Hall	119	26
St Catharine's Hall	56	13
Magdalene	44	11
Total	3,546	676

Note: members include all persons, scholars and servants, who received victuals, liveries, wages or fees
Source: *Documents*, i, pp. 290, 292.

²⁵ Leader, *University*, pp. 343-4.

²⁶ *Valor Ecclesiasticus*, ed. J. Caley & J. Hunter, Record Commission, 6 vols. (London, 1810-34), iii, pp. 505-6; Evans & Faith, ‘College estates’, p. 655, n. 68, p. 682.

²⁷ Emden, *Register*, p. xxix.

²⁸ Evans & Faith, ‘College estates’, pp. 654-5; J.M. Fletcher & C.A. Upton, ‘Feasting in an early Tudor college: the example of Merton College, Oxford’, in D. Williams, ed., *Early Tudor England. Proceedings of the 1987 Harlaxton symposium* (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 37-60.

Looking at the survey of Cambridge colleges in 1546, presented in table 3.1, a distinct hierarchy emerges. Generally, the wealthier the college, the greater the number of members. King's and St John's, with over 100 members and incomes in excess of £500, resembled the great aristocratic and ecclesiastical households, not only in their wealth, but also in the size of their households. Queens', Christ's and King's Hall were comparable with the more affluent knightly and gentry households, while most of the other colleges probably resembled, in wealth and in numbers, the lesser gentry, who usually had households of between 12 and 30 persons.²⁹ There was a distinct divide, therefore, between those colleges with royal foundations and endowments and the others.³⁰ No accounts from this period survive from the two poorest and smallest foundations, Magdalene and St Catharine's Hall, with incomes of less than £60 per annum, but there are accounts from St Radegund's Priory and St John's Hospital. These two Cambridge houses, dissolved to found the colleges of Jesus and St Johns', had incomes of between £70 and £80 in the later fifteenth century.

The purchases of King's College are among the best documented. Although the college's income fluctuated after the deposition of its founder, Henry VI,³¹ the purchases made by King's College throughout the second half of the fifteenth century were similar to those of the grandest aristocratic households. Large quantities of fish, spices and other goods were obtained from London suppliers. These included half a cask of salted eels, 200 warp of saltfish and one cask of red herrings in 1456/7, and 4½ lbs of sugar, 1 lb of pepper, 6 lbs of dates and some currants in 1468.³² It is not always clear though, whether these purchases were actually bought in London, or from London merchants attending Stourbridge fair in Cambridge.³³ The eels and 4 barrels of white herring purchased in 1508/9 and 8 barrels of herrings bought in

²⁹ Dyer, *Standards*, pp. 50-1.

³⁰ King's Hall had been founded by Edward II, King's College by Henry VI, Queens' by the patronage of Queen Margaret of Anjou and Queen Elizabeth Woodville, and Christ's and St John's by Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII: Leedham-Green, *Concise history*, pp. 22-4, 39-40.

³¹ *VCH Cambs.*, iii, p. 379.

³² KCMB, iii, fol. 36, v, fol. 97.

³³ Purchases at fairs are examined in Chapter 5.

1509/10, however, were definitely purchased in London, as separate payments for carriage were recorded: some of the fish was brought from Westminster and some from the Hanseatic traders' warehouses at the Steelyard. The Steelyard contained the trading warehouses and resident community of the Hanseatic merchants in London.³⁴ King's College carried church candlesticks and a great missal from the capital in 1447/8 and bought a latten candlestick for £8 there in 1448/9. The college used the services of Westminster and London pewterers in 1459 and a London brasier in 1468, although the latter had come to Stourbridge fair.³⁵

King's College, like many aristocratic families, owned two London mansion-houses, in Baynard Castle, between the Thames and Blackfriars, known as the Garderobe Duke Humphrey and King's College mansion. Such town houses were used as residences when noble households were in London. They also served as social centres, as sources of income when parts of the property were leased, and as purchasing bases and storage houses when lords bought goods in London.³⁶ The Garderobe Duke Humphrey, formerly the town house of the Prior of Ogbourn and later of Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, accommodated the provost on his visits to London, or while travelling to Eton College, and no doubt served as a depot for goods bought in the capital. The survey of 1546 recorded that King's College reserved the two *mansiones* in London for the use of the provost and scholars, and there was a 40s rent from another house in the city.³⁷

King's College obtained goods from other prominent towns, particularly ports and fishing centres. The bursar bought 257 lbs of wax at Lynn in 1448/9.³⁸ A man from

³⁴ KCMB, x, 1508/9, 1509/10 accounts; *The alien communities of London in the fifteenth century. The subsidy rolls of 1440 & 1483-4*, ed. J.L. Bolton (Stamford, 1998), p. 6.

³⁵ KCMB, i, fols. 89v, 137v, iii, fols. 113-113v, v, fol. 35v.

³⁶ C.M. Barron, 'Centres of conspicuous consumption: the aristocratic town house in London, 1200-1550', *London Journal*, 20 (1995), 1-16.

³⁷ G. Williams, 'Ecclesiastical vestments, books and furniture in the collegiate church of King's College, Cambridge, in the fifteenth century', *Ecclesiologist*, 20 (1859), 306-8; *Documents*, i, p. 262.

³⁸ KCMB, i, fol. 137v.

Huntingdon supplied 12 dozen candles in 1535.³⁹ Fish was obtained from tradesmen from Lynn, ‘Well’, Ipswich, Lowestoft and Norwich.⁴⁰ Some of these men may have attended Stourbridge fair, but the college also bought in bulk on the East Anglian coast, as the Paston family did.⁴¹

Cloth was bought from London, Salisbury and Winchester, and payments to merchants in these towns regularly accounted for most of the cost of cloth liveries in many later fifteenth-century accounts. All these towns had important cloth industries in the fifteenth century, and various types of cloth were purchased including musterdevillers, green cloth, Kendal cloth and rays.⁴² In 1465/6 King’s College paid for the dyeing and ‘Rowyng Barbyng Scheryng’ of cloth, and on another occasion, for the ‘sheryng et paryng’ of cloth.⁴³ This was a more common practice among the middle and lower ranks of the aristocracy, who employed craftsmen directly to finish cloth, reducing costs by excluding middlemen and allowing greater choice over the appearance of the finished product.⁴⁴ No expense was spared however, on a suit of white vestments ordered by Bishop John Langton for King’s College from Robert Coksale, vestment maker of London, at a cost of £241 19s 3d.⁴⁵

King’s College did not use the town of Cambridge extensively for cloth purchases. Cloth for liveries only occasionally came from Cambridge drapers.⁴⁶ During the late 1460s and 1470s, though, King’s College bought substantial quantities of spices from a Cambridge apothecary, Richard Smyth. The relationship between the college and this supplier appears to have been particularly close: Smyth secured three leases of

³⁹ KCMB, xii, 1535/6 account.

⁴⁰ KCMB, ii, fol. 68, xii, 1535/6, 1536/7, 1541/2 accounts, xiii, 1547/8 account, xiv, 1556/7, 1557/8 accounts. ‘Well’ may refer to Wells-next-the-Sea, Norfolk.

⁴¹ KCMB, ii, fol. 68; *PL*, i, p. 251, ii, pp. 357-8.

⁴² KCMB, ii, fol. 112v, iii, fol. 115, iv, fol. 94, v, fol. 99, vi, fol. 25; Dyer, *Decline and growth*, pp. 13, 16. Musterdevillers - a mixed grey woollen cloth; rays - a striped cloth: *OED*, x, p. 143, xiii, p. 241.

⁴³ KCMB, iv, fol. 22, v, fol. 39.

⁴⁴ Dyer, ‘Consumer’, 322-3.

⁴⁵ Williams, ‘Vestments’, 309-13.

⁴⁶ KCMB, iii, fol. 115, iv, fol. 94v, vii, fol. 24.

property in Great St Mary's parish from the college, and had his will proved by the college in 1504.⁴⁷

For bulky and cheaper items, such as livestock, the wealthiest households often negotiated directly with rural producers for supplies. In the eight years of surviving accounts for King's College between 1450 and 1470, detailing nearly 160 purchases of livestock, the place of residence of the seller is recorded in 45 cases. Of these, only 11 purchases were made in the market and a handful at local fairs. Some cattle were bought from college tenants, including Richard Holmstead of Felsted, Essex and John Blakney of Kersey, Suffolk. One hundred and fifty sheep came from John Gyott, farmer of the college's manor at Combe in Hampshire, who was paid 2s to drive them to Cambridge.⁴⁸ The priors of Barnwell and Spalding and rectors of Knapwell and Boxworth sold livestock, the latter supplying a total of 310 sheep in three transactions. Additional livestock came from men in the Cambridgeshire villages of Hardwick, Haslingfield, Histon, Impington and Rampton, where the college did not hold any estates.⁴⁹ King's Hall and King's College also negotiated directly with suppliers to obtain cereals and fuel, as will be shown in chapter six.

The college also sold the by-products from animals it slaughtered. This is most clearly recorded between 1505/6 to 1507/8, when sales of wool, sheep and cow skins, pigs' heads and intestines were entered under a separate heading, bringing a total income of around £19-24.⁵⁰ However, by the 1540s this had ceased, and the college was buying meat from one or two butchers, some apparently supplying their meat ready-cooked as 'boyled' or 'rosted'.⁵¹

⁴⁷ KCMB, v-vii; KC Ledger Book, i, fols. 41v, 114, 126, 191v.

⁴⁸ KCMB, ii, fol. 129v, iii, fols. 33, 110-110v.

⁴⁹ KCMB, ii-vi; J. Saltmarsh, 'Hand-list of the estates of King's College, Cambridge', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 12 (1934), 32-8.

⁵⁰ KCMB, x, 1505/6-1507/8 a/c.

⁵¹ KCMB, xiii, 1552/3 a/c.

King's College made large purchases every year, although not all of this expenditure was being spent locally. In the second half of the fifteenth century, on average about £11 a year was spent on fish, spices and kitchen utensils, probably most of which went to suppliers outside Cambridge. After some heavy expenditure of over £100 per annum in the 1450s, between 1460 and 1500, King's College generally spent between £50 and £70 per year on cloth for liveries. Nearly 70 per cent of this total, and sometimes more than 90 per cent, was spent on purchases made at London, Winchester and Salisbury. In the same period, around £56 on average was spent each year on livestock, most of which would have gone to farmers in the local area.⁵²

King's Hall, and its successor, Trinity College, seem to have used similar types of suppliers as King's College, but there is less detailed evidence. Although in terms of size and income in 1546, the college resembled a knightly or upper gentry household, King's Hall, through its origin as an extension of the Chapel Royal, always retained the atmosphere of the royal household. The average commons charge, or basic maintenance cost, was far higher than other colleges, and it was necessary for scholars to possess substantial private means to be able to afford to live in the college.⁵³ In keeping with its royal origins, King's Hall spent considerable sums on spices, which are itemised in detail in the accounts. Spices included two types of imported foodstuffs, dried fruits and strongly flavoured spices, which were used in aristocratic cookery across western Europe.⁵⁴ In 1528/9 for example, the college spent nearly £4 on spices, which included pepper, saffron, cinnamon, cloves, mace, almonds, red sanders, large and small grapes, sugar, ginger, rice, dates and prunes. Large purchases of spices and fish were made at Stourbridge and Midsummer fairs. Other supplies of fish and spices may have been secured in London or Lynn, like the barrel of herring sent from London to the college in 1543/4.⁵⁵

⁵² KCMB, ii-ix.

⁵³ Cobban, *King's Hall*, pp. 140-1.

⁵⁴ Dyer, *Standards*, pp. 62-3.

⁵⁵ KH a/c, xxiv, fols. 22v-23v, xxvi, fol. 151.

Trinity College was given an endowment to yield £1,600 per annum in 1546 and provision for 50 fellows and 60 scholars in 1552, although in its early years fewer scholars were probably resident and the annual income fell short of the intended sum.⁵⁶ The college continued to make extensive use of Stourbridge and Ely fairs, as well as resorting to the capital and nearby small towns: paraphrases were brought from London, fish from Lynn, bowls and buckets from Newmarket, and tankards repaired at Walden.⁵⁷

Time has not permitted a detailed study of the accounts from the colleges of St John's, Queens' and Christ's, which are not as well arranged as those of King's College or King's Hall. But similar types of suppliers appear to have been used. St John's College, for example, bought a goblet and standing cup from a London silversmith in 1526/7. Queens' College sent canvas hangings from their hall to be repainted in Southwark in 1504/5.⁵⁸

Smaller colleges, like smaller households, tended to make purchases from a more restricted area. At Corpus Christi College in the mid-fifteenth century, there were between five and seven fellows, plus staff and other lodgers, and annual expenses were around £160 per annum, a situation not dissimilar to that in 1546.⁵⁹ A goldsmith in Cambridge repaired the college's Eucharistic vessels, rather than a craftsman from London. Wine for the Mass was obtained from the nearby 'Angel' or 'New Tavern'. Like many small monastic households, no riding horses were kept, but they were hired when needed from local inns; in contrast, King's College had its own stables.⁶⁰ Like the larger colleges though, Corpus made purchases at local fairs, particularly for

⁵⁶ *VCH Cambs.*, iii, pp. 462-6.

⁵⁷ TCSB a/c, fols. 71, 139v, 193v, 369.

⁵⁸ SJC, SB3.1; Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, ii, p. 44.

⁵⁹ P. Zutshi, 'John Botwright master of the college, 1443-1474', *Letter of the Corpus Association*, 77 (1998), 14, 16.

⁶⁰ E.C. Pearce, 'College accounts of John Botwright, master of Corpus Christi, 1443-74', *PCAS*, 22 (1917-20), 83, 86-7; Dyer, *Standards*, p. 71.

timber.⁶¹ Another smaller college, Peterhouse, usually spent between £4 and £6.25 on fish, spices, and other commodities for the kitchen, and between £2 and £6 on cloth for liveries in the 1450s and 1460s.⁶² Places of purchase for goods are rarely stated, although during the 1450s, 28 lbs of wax and 1lb of pepper were obtained from London and fish from Stourbridge fair.⁶³

St John's Hospital had an income comparable with many minor monastic houses. In 1484-5 it spent between 40 and 45 per cent of its total expenditure of just over £70 on food. The hospital supported a master, three brethren, an almsman and four servants, but was probably not housing many sick or poor inmates by this time.⁶⁴ Purchases were generally made in Cambridge or other towns in East Anglia: fish were brought from Ely, barrels from Lynn and a wey of salt from Ipswich.⁶⁵ The hospital had a landing stage by the river, with a crane or pulley, to unload goods transported by water.⁶⁶ A plough wright from Fulbourn was used. The hospital did however, journey as far as London for the exchange of its chalice in 1505/6.⁶⁷ Like Corpus Christi College, the hospital bought wine for the Eucharist from local taverners, and a horse and cart may have been obtained from an inn, as payment was made to 'Jankyn of the Star'.⁶⁸ Payments were made for the spinning of wool, and for the weaving, fulling, 'dyttyng up', and shearing of cloth.⁶⁹

St Radegund's Priory in Cambridge was a small house containing around 11 nuns, with an annual income of £74 and £77 in two surviving account rolls from 1449/50 and 1450/1. The nuns did not travel to London for goods, and the priory's main

⁶¹ CCC, 'Liber Albus', fols. 76, 79, 97v; CCC, 'Registrum Accounts', fols. 221v, 226.

⁶² Peterhouse, Cambridge, Computus rolls, 1456/7-1469/70.

⁶³ Peterhouse computus rolls, 1456/7, 1457/8, 1458/9.

⁶⁴ Dyer, *Standards*, p. 70; M. Rubin, *Charity and community in medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 174-5, 234.

⁶⁵ SJC, D106.9, fol. 9; D106.2, fols. 4, 12.

⁶⁶ M. Underwood, 'The impact of St John's College as landowner in the west fields of Cambridge in the early sixteenth century', in Zutshi, ed., *Medieval Cambridge*, p. 171.

⁶⁷ SJC, D106.2, fol. 10; D102.3, fol. 8.

⁶⁸ SJC, D106.9, fol. 9v; D106.2, fol. 6.

⁶⁹ D106.2, fol. 11. 'Dyting': preparing, making ready (*Thetford*, i, p. xxx).

source of supply outside Cambridge was at Lynn, where the priory bought barrels of fish, linen cloth, timber and oil. These purchases from Lynn, together with fish from Ely fair, were brought to Cambridge by boat.⁷⁰ William Rogger supplied a large amount of meat; he held a Cambridge tenement from the priory, probably in the market-place. The nuns also obtained supplies from villages in the area, such as one dozen cheeses from William Webbe of Balsham, a horse from Richard Baker of Bumsted, two new ploughs from Michael Bower of Fulbourn, and an axe from William Brook of Sawston.⁷¹ The priory probably made more purchases in the local market-place than some of the larger colleges, including green peas, wheat, chickens and hens, and other foodstuffs.⁷² The priory also appears to have been more self-sufficient than larger institutions. Candlewax was bought and then made into candles. Wool was spun and woven into cloth for the livery of the household servants by Roger Rede of Hinton, which was then fulled and sheared. A tailor at St Ives was used to make the servants' liveries.⁷³

As the priory faced increasing financial difficulty, it looked to a particular Cambridge supplier for support. An indenture of 1478 relates how when the prioress and nuns were 'destitute of money', Richard Wodecok of Cambridge, butcher, supplied meat to the value of £21 and when the priory could not settle this debt, he permitted the nuns to pay back in instalments of 19s per year. Wodecok received the yearly repayments from two tenements, and two of his daughters lodged at the priory. However, by 1481-2, the priory's income appears to have fallen considerably to under £32, and farm produce was no longer being sold.⁷⁴

In addition to the institutional demand generated by the colleges and religious houses, there were also the needs of individual scholars. Most scholars at the university did

⁷⁰ *St Radegund*, pp. 150, 152, 157, 166, 167, 168, 173.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 151-2, 165, 168.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 151, 168, 172.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 165, 167.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 156, 159, 172, 175, 176-9.

not come from the richest groups in society, but were men of modest wealth, from the more affluent peasantry, yeomanry, lesser gentry, leading urban merchants and property-owners.⁷⁵ Even so, many accumulated some possessions. The wills of a King's College scholar, clerk, and three masters of arts in the 1460s and 1470s reveal a wide range of belongings, including coverlets, linen sheets, blankets, robes, surplices, hoods, a mantle, mazer bowls, salt-cellars, pieces of silver, a counter (i.e. a table), a featherbed and books.⁷⁶ Some wealthy scholars relied, like the richest colleges, on London suppliers. So although a Cambridge vintner around 1511 supplied malmsey, rumney, bastard, red claret and white claret to five colleges and some forty private customers, these wines were not good enough for the discerning tastes of the scholar Erasmus, who sent for Greek wine from London.⁷⁷

There is some evidence to suggest that the standard of living of college fellows increased in this period. Although in the fifteenth century, college fellowships were of limited value and many fellows were anxious to secure benefices that offered greater income, after 1500, fellows profited from a growing number of payments, the increasing availability of chantry chaplaincies, and more numerous fees from pupils. Another indicator of increasing prosperity may be the declining importance of college loan chests at this time. Loan chests provided scholars with interest-free loans, which were obtained by pledging items of greater value as security. Many loan chests experienced financial difficulties in the early sixteenth century, which have been attributed to their disuse by an increasingly wealthy fellowship. But the chests also suffered from the spread of the printed book, replacing the manuscript which had previously been the most common pledge, and the tendency for colleges to appropriate the capital of chests for their corporate use. In any case, the college

⁷⁵ Aston, Duncan, & Evans, 'Alumni', 50.

⁷⁶ KC, Ledger Book, i, fols. 58, 70v, 77, 107v.

⁷⁷ 'A Cambridge vintner's accounts, c.1511', ed. E.H. Minns, *PCAS*, 34 (1934), 50-8; *Erasmus and Cambridge. The Cambridge letters of Erasmus translated*, ed. D.F.S. Thomson & H.C. Porter (Toronto, 1963), pp. 85-6, 108, 176.

fellows, numbering less than 200, formed only a small academic and wealthy elite among the total university population of over 1,000.⁷⁸

It seems likely that demand from the university and colleges grew substantially during the 1450 to 1560 period, although this cannot be measured with certainty. Firstly, the university expanded considerably in size: it has been estimated that student numbers doubled between the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁷⁹ Although student numbers appear to have fallen from the late 1530s, with the dissolution of the monasteries and the uncertainty over the future of the colleges, they were growing again by the 1560s. More important than the growth in numbers was the rise to ascendancy of the colleges. Seven new non-monastic colleges were founded in Cambridge between 1350 and 1500, and scholars began to reside in colleges rather than hostels. Although a few hostels had halls, libraries and other facilities, and sometimes received gifts from their members, they never had the property of even the poorest colleges, as they lacked endowments and the right to hold possessions in mortmain.⁸⁰

The growth of the colleges also created new employment opportunities. The survey of 1546 lists the servants employed by each college. All colleges had a cook, and those with more than about 25 members employed an undercook. Most colleges had a manciple or butler, although he was variously described as *promus*, *mancipius* or *pincerna*. Servants were employed for the masters of St John's, Peterhouse and Queens', while King's employed a groom, cellarer, scullion, two stable boys and a bell ringer. Fees were also paid for various professional services to stewards, auditors, clerks and recorders.⁸¹ Although only eighty-three college servants are listed in the survey, it is quite possible that there were other servants who were not recorded

⁷⁸ R. Lovatt, 'Two collegiate loan chests in late medieval Cambridge', in Zutshi, ed., *Medieval Cambridge*, pp. 129-65, esp. p. 144 & n. 66, pp. 153-4.

⁷⁹ Aston, Duncan & Evans, 'Alumni', 11-27.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 14; Leader, *University*, pp. 45-7.

⁸¹ *Documents*, i, pp. 105-294.

because they only worked occasionally or did not receive a full stipend from the college.⁸² At King's Hall, gardeners, extra bakehouse and kitchen staff, assistants for the laundress, and labourers were hired on a casual basis, when required. Additionally, some fellows kept private servants. The extent of this practice is unclear, but at King's Hall the number of personal servants began to increase around 1460, and by the sixteenth century half of the college's fellows supported servants.⁸³

Relatively little is known about the servants of the religious houses in the town, but they would appear to have offered even more limited scope for employment. A cook and a boy, a steward, a barber and an almsman served the master and three brethren of St John's Hospital in 1485.⁸⁴ In 1513, Barnwell Priory employed 11 servants, of whom 8 earned £1-2 per annum in wages, and 3 earned under £1 in wages, and the Black Friars kept a cook.⁸⁵ St Radegund's Priory retained a larger staff in the mid-fifteenth century, many of whom cultivated the monastery's estates: wages were paid to a confessor and chaplains, a collector of rents, a baker and brewer, and various workers in husbandry, including ploughmen, swineherds, maidservants, a shepherd and a yardwoman, while additional workers were hired when needed.⁸⁶

A range of specialist trades developed to serve the academic community. A schedule survives from 1503 of 68 people who held the university privilege, placing them under the authority of the university rather than the borough.⁸⁷ These included manciples, launderers, bakers, barbers, surgeons, stationers, apothecaries and the university mason. An even wider range of specialist occupations is found in the tax returns of the 1520s including an organ player, freemason and collar-maker.⁸⁸ Thomas

⁸² Lists of servants in monasteries compiled at the Dissolution probably omitted those servants who did not receive board from the house: Harvey, *Living and dying*, pp. 149-53.

⁸³ Cobban, *King's Hall*, pp. 232-3, 242-4.

⁸⁴ Rubin, *Charity and community*, p. 175.

⁸⁵ *CBD*, pp. 123, 129-30.

⁸⁶ *St Radegund*, pp. 158, 174, 178.

⁸⁷ For the extent of these privileges, see Chapter 4, below.

⁸⁸ UA, Luard 145b; PRO, E 179/81/133.

Browne of Cambridge (flourished 1508) was one of the few known organ-makers outside London in this period. John Siberch operated a printing press in Cambridge in 1521-2, and a paper mill existed by 1557.⁸⁹ Some university graduates in medicine stayed to practise as physicians in the town.⁹⁰ This diversity of trades was wider than would have been justified by the size of the town alone.

Some of these specialist tradesmen also found markets beyond the university. Garrett Godfrey, bookseller and bookbinder in the 1520s and 1530s, supplied members of various monastic orders, a parson, and perhaps a schoolmaster, and had customers from Ely priory, Crowland, Colchester, Peterborough, and possibly Ipswich.⁹¹ Members of colleges and religious houses could also offer specialist services to the wider town. Holy Trinity church had an antiphonary bound and covered by a Friar Jeffrey in 1509/10, and an antiphonary, organ book, and missal repaired by Leonard of Christ's College in 1529-31.⁹² A man from Christ's by the same name worked on vestments for St John's Hospital in 1510/11; this house also relied on the services of a friar to play their organ and repair its pipes.⁹³

It is very difficult to quantify the combined demand of the colleges, but the 1546 survey shows that these institutions had a total net income of £3,500 per annum. That sum was three times the amount yielded from Cambridge and its county by taxation in 1524, or the equivalent of 500 to 700 building craftsmen earning between £5 and £7 per year.⁹⁴ Although the demand that this income generated led to the emergence of some specialist academic trades in Cambridge, traders from Lynn and London also

⁸⁹ D.H. Boalch, *Makers of the harpsichord & clavichord 1440-1840* (Oxford, 3rd edn., 1995), pp. 27, 693-5; G.J. Gray, *The earlier Cambridge stationers and bookbinders and the first Cambridge printer*, Oxford Bibliographical Soc. Illus. Monographs, XIII (Oxford, 1904), pp. 54-5; *Annals*, ii, p. 132, n. 1.

⁹⁰ C.H. Talbot & E.A. Hammond, *Medical practitioners in medieval England: a biographical register*, Publications of the Wellcome Historical Medical Library, new series, VIII (London, 1965), pp. 17, 143-4, 353-4.

⁹¹ *Garrett Godfrey's accounts c.1527-33*, ed. E. Leedham-Green, D.E. Rhodes & F.H. Stubbings, Cambridge Bibliographical Society monograph, XII (Cambridge, 1992).

⁹² CCRO, P22/5/1, fols. 26v, 107, 111.

⁹³ SJC, D102.3, fol. 78; D106.2, fol. 11.

⁹⁴ Sheail, *1524/5 lay subsidy*, ii, p. 28; Dyer, *Standards*, p. 196.

supplied this market. In return for these goods, Cambridge sent products from its own hinterland to Lynn and London, and these patterns of supply are examined below.

2. Patterns of supply

a) Credit

Debt cases can reveal different levels of trade. Manorial and borough courts were generally used for debts of up to 40s and record local and small-scale trade, mostly in food, clothes, leather goods and other necessities.⁹⁵ These courts were not well suited though, for cases relating to trade on a larger scale or over long distances, which were heard in larger borough courts, while many creditors sought recovery of debts in various London courts. Although central government records tend to be too voluminous to locate cases relevant to the region with ease,⁹⁶ pardons of outlawry for not appearing to answer pleas of debt in the royal courts, recorded in the Patent Rolls, do give a rough indication of the pattern of credit. From these records, all cases between 1450 and 1509 have been extracted involving debtors, creditors, or both, stated to be from Cambridgeshire, for analysis using a computer database.⁹⁷ There were 109 cases in all, of which 98 had Cambridgeshire men as debtors, and 18 involved Cambridgeshire men as creditors. Fewer cases were recorded as the fifteenth century progressed. There were 510 pardons for not appearing to answer pleas of debt in the Patent Rolls between 1450 and 1454 and 15 of these involved Cambridgeshire men; there were 109 pardons between 1501 and 1505 and four involved Cambridgeshire men. The proportion of Cambridgeshire debt cases remained around 3-4 per cent of the total at the beginning and end of the period, despite the dwindling number of cases recorded. Cambridgeshire debt cases ranged from 20s to £100 in size, and the average debt was £11.95. The latter figure is similar to the average sum

⁹⁵ See Chapter 4.

⁹⁶ Research projects at the Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research, are examining such debt cases: Keene, 'Changes'.

⁹⁷ *CPR*, 1446-52, 1452-61, 1461-7, 1467-77, 1476-85, 1485-94, 1494-1509.

found in debt cases in the Court of Common Pleas involving Exeter residents during the later fourteenth century.⁹⁸

The locations of the creditors lending money to Cambridgeshire men are shown in table 3.2. They reveal a core of regular dealing by Cambridgeshire men with London, and a smaller degree of contact with other parts of East Anglia. In addition, there were creditors in the Home Counties, the Midlands and Yorkshire. There was no concentration of creditors from a particular centre, apart from London, although most came from towns of varying size, which in East Anglia included Norwich, Bury St Edmunds, King's Lynn, Hadleigh, Walden and Wisbech. A similar concentration of residents from urban centres was found amongst the Cambridgeshire men who received these loans, as table 3.3 reveals. Medieval towns acted as focal points for financial services, offering the ability to register debts, and a wide range of people to act as pledges.⁹⁹ Cambridge was clearly the leading financial centre within the county.

Table 3.2: *Most common residence of creditors, by county, making loans to Cambridgeshire men, 1450-1509*

<i>Creditor county</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Average (£)</i>
Not stated	47	10.08
London	21	13.85
Norfolk	10	11.23
Cambs.	7	8.10
Suffolk	3	7.22

Source: CPR, 1446-1509.

⁹⁸ Kowaleski, *Exeter*, p. 215.

⁹⁹ Kermode, *Merchants*, pp. 245-6.

Table 3.3: *Most common residence of Cambridgeshire debtors, 1450-1509*

<i>Debtor place</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Average (£)</i>
Cambridge	14	19.74
Wisbech	9	6.26
Ely	4	4.81
Fulbourn	4	15.71
Newton by Leverington	4	18.24

Source: CPR, 1446-1509.

Cambridgeshire men acted as creditors to men from a similar geographical area to those from whom they owed debts: namely, to men in Walden, Essex; Baldock, Buntingford and Hitchin, Hertfordshire; Caistor, Lincolnshire; Stow Bardolph, Norfolk; Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, and to seven people in Cambridgeshire. In cases involving Londoners, though, Cambridgeshire men were always debtors rather than creditors.

The examination of the occupations of Cambridgeshire debtors in table 3.4 shows that the most numerous groups were husbandmen, yeomen and gentlemen. Many of these debts may have arisen from agricultural transactions, and reflect a regional economy heavily based on agriculture. Most cases heard before the Court of Common Pleas in 1424 and 1570 involved one or more parties that were dependent on landed income. The counties where such groups dominated debt cases tended to have local economies in which the supply of primary agricultural produce to London was more significant than commerce or manufacturing.¹⁰⁰ That said, the terms yeoman and husbandman were often used generically, and such individuals did not always receive the majority of their income from land – London merchants were sometimes described as yeomen.¹⁰¹ Among the Cambridgeshire debtors were two drovers from Haddenham and Willingham, two adjoining parishes on the edge of the fenland, with abundant

¹⁰⁰ Keene, 'Changes', pp. 72-3.

¹⁰¹ Thrupp, *Merchant class*, pp. 217-18.

pasture for raising cattle. Fewer trade occupations were listed, but there was one debt each from a baker, brewer, chandler and vintner, all from Cambridge, reflecting the predominance of the service trades in the town. The prominence of clerks and chaplains may in part at least, have reflected the presence of the university.

Table 3.4: *Most common occupations of Cambridgeshire debtors, 1450-1509*

<i>Debtor occupation</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Average (£)</i>
husbandman	35	9.04
yeoman	14	14.20
gentleman	11	9.14
clerk	7	17.17
chaplain	4	11.16
yeoman alias husbandman	3	17.65
baker	3	4.72

Source: CPR, 1446-1509.

Among the occupations of creditors recorded in table 3.5, mercantile occupations were more strongly represented than among the debtors, and these included mercers and drapers. Several prominent clerics acted as creditors, a trend found in debt cases elsewhere, and they may have been acting for themselves or for their institutions.¹⁰² The handful of Cambridgeshire creditors comprised three clerks, two burgesses and a prior, a parson, a mercer, a bailiff, a baxter and a wife. A similar pattern of occupations is found amongst Cambridgeshire debtors appearing in recognizances for debt during the second half of the fifteenth century. They included a husbandman from Lolworth, a gentleman of Thorney, a yeoman of Over, a pewterer of Cambridge and esquires from Ditton, Stow cum Quy, Bottisham and Cambridge.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Kermode, *Merchants*, pp. 236-7; Swanson, *Medieval artisans*, pp. 147-8.

¹⁰³ *CCR, 1447-54*, pp. 181, 184; *CCR, 1461-8*, pp. 138, 267; *CCR, 1476-85*, no. 1311, p. 386; *CCR, 1485-1500*, no. 652, p. 192, no. 726, p. 212.

Table 3.5: *Most common occupations of creditors lending to Cambridgeshire men, 1450-1509*

<i>Creditor occupation</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>Average (£)</i>
Not stated	39	9.61
mercier	5	12.25
esquire	4	13.50
clerk	4	8.99
prior	4	15.50
abbot	3	36.60
knight	3	13.27
draper	3	10.67
dean	3	46.97

Source: CPR, 1446-1509.

Gifts of goods and chattels provide further evidence of credit networks. These may have been a legal way to avoid distraint of goods for debt, or pledges against the repayment of a loan, and their use appears to have increased during the monetary scarcity of the 1440s.¹⁰⁴ Londoners are prominent in cases involving Cambridgeshire men. In association with Cambridge men, Londoners received gifts of goods and chattels from Arthur Greysson of Newmarket, Richard Aleyne of Comberton, husbandman and John Penne of Great Shelford, husbandman.¹⁰⁵ Cambridgeshire men were among those receiving gifts of goods and chattels from a fishmonger, tailor, haberdasher, 'upholder', and mercer of London, a draper from Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire and the rector of Upminster, Essex.¹⁰⁶

Admittedly, one would expect to find a greater number of Londoners in courts based in the capital than at provincial courts, but the same pattern is found in local records across the country, including Godmanchester, Romford, Chester and in Yorkshire. As

¹⁰⁴ J.I. Kermode, 'Money and credit in the fifteenth century: some lessons from Yorkshire', *Business History Review*, 45 (1991), 493-5; P. Nightingale, 'Monetary contraction and mercantile credit in later medieval England', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 43 (1990), 573-4.

¹⁰⁵ *CCR*, 1454-61, p. 168; *CCR*, 1468-76, no. 813, p. 219, no. 922, p. 250.

¹⁰⁶ *CCR*, 1447-54, pp. 328, 353; *CCR*, 1461-8, p. 405; *CCR*, 1468-76, no. 1441, p. 403; *CCR*, 1485-1500, no. 286, p. 77, no. 861, p. 252; *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London, 1437-1457*, ed. P.E. Jones, (Cambridge, 1954), p. 179.

a larger group than those in provincial towns, London merchants were better placed to survive the monetary scarcity and trade depression of the mid-fifteenth century, and their increasing role in debt cases reflects their increasing dominance of internal and export trade during this period.¹⁰⁷ London drew in trade from across the country; in the case of Cambridge and its region, malt barley and saffron seem to have been particularly significant.

b) Trade in malt barley

Total demand for cereals fell in the later middle ages as the population declined. However, at the same time, rising living standards and greater leisure time led to increased ale consumption. This raised per capita consumption of grains so that overall demand did not fall by as much as population. It also promoted major shifts in the grain supply of urban hinterlands, most notably those areas supplying London. So while contacts between London and East Anglia were neither strong nor regular at the turn of the fourteenth century, after the Black Death, increasing ale consumption meant that East Anglia probably supplied barley more regularly to the capital. A parliamentary ordinance of 1394 named Cambridgeshire as a source of malt, which should be carried to London and sold there for the benefit of the royal household, noble households, and the whole population.¹⁰⁸ John Paston I reported Cambridgeshire malt on sale in London in 1465.¹⁰⁹

With fertile soils, more hours of sunshine than the national average, and accessible waterways for transport, Cambridgeshire was an ideal cereal-growing region. 'If any district in medieval England were able to ship corn in a continuous stream to feed the

¹⁰⁷ J.A. Raftis, *Early Tudor Godmanchester: survivals and new arrivals*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts, XCVII (Toronto, 1990), pp. 162-5; J. Kermode, 'The trade of late medieval Chester', in Britnell & Hatcher, eds., *Progress & problems*, p. 300; M.K. McIntosh, 'Money lending on the periphery of London 1300-1600', *Albion*, 20 (1988), 566; Kermode, 'Money and credit', 496-501.

¹⁰⁸ J.A. Galloway, 'Driven by drink? Ale consumption and the agrarian economy of the London region c.1300-1400', in M. Carlin & J.T. Rosenthal, eds., *Food and eating in Medieval Europe* (London, 1998), pp. 92-9; Campbell et al., *Medieval capital*, pp. 70, 181.

¹⁰⁹ *PL*, i, p. 130.

population of other districts, it was this Cambridge area', wrote Gras, who identified the region as one of below average prices in the period 1401-1500.¹¹⁰ Cambridge had long been an important collecting point for grain that had been grown in the locality. Fines were imposed on over sixty townsmen in 1177 for the unlicensed carriage of grain. James Fletcher, a grocer, baker and trader in malt barley, introduced a parliamentary bill 'against malt bills' while serving as Cambridge's Member of Parliament in 1553. The details of this measure are not known, but the town corporation paid Fletcher 3s 4d for his efforts.¹¹¹

Grain left Cambridgeshire by two routes, one of which was by ship along the rivers Cam and Great Ouse to Lynn, whence it could be taken by sea to London, the North, or overseas. In 1565, the university asked the Privy Council to halt the transport of corn from Cambridge to Lynn, protesting that it was 'to the pinching of poor scholars' bellies'. In reply, the Privy Council stated that the 'sheire of Cambridge and others adjoyninge therto have yearlie bene accustomed to utter and convey their graine by Water that waye to Lynne, and frome thence have brought it hither to London to the victuallinge of this citey'.¹¹² Disputes heard before Chancery provide earlier examples of supply through Lynn. David Johnson of Cambridge was involved in an obligation for £100 to supply malt at Lynn, and William Richardson of Cambridge agreed to supply 60 quarters of malt to William Cokkes and Thomas King, grocers of London, at Lynn.¹¹³

However, corn shipped along the Ouse from Cambridge to Lynn was not always bound for London. In the thirteenth and late sixteenth centuries, Boston and Lynn were shipping grain from Cambridgeshire and East Anglia to northern England,

¹¹⁰ N.S.B. Gras, *The evolution of the English corn market from the twelfth to the eighteenth century* (Harvard, 1915), pp. 41-9, 62-3.

¹¹¹ *VCH Cambs.*, iii, p. 6; S.T. Bindoff, ed., *The House of Commons 1509-1558*, The History of Parliament, 3 vols. (London, 1982), ii, p. 151.

¹¹² UA, Collect.Admin.5, fol. 163; Gras, *Corn Market*, p. 109, n. 1.

¹¹³ PRO, C 1/293/59, C 1/687/35.

garrison towns and Flemish cities, rather than to London.¹¹⁴ Some Cambridgeshire men were also involved in this overseas trade. James Fletcher was accused of illegally exporting malt from Lynn to Middelburg in 1542. Thomas Ventris of Cambridge was arrested in 1551 for the non-payment of customs on barley exported to Antwerp, and a few years later, Henry Serle of Histon was sued for non-delivery of 180 quarters of barley at Dover.¹¹⁵

Cambridgeshire grain could also be taken to London overland and then down the river Lea, and towns along this route like Enfield, Ware and Royston, show increasing involvement in the malt trade during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In a court declaration of 1512, it was stated that the men of Standon had always delivered their malt at Ware, and men of Enfield and other places had carried this malt to London.¹¹⁶ John Leland remarked in the mid-sixteenth century that the market at Royston was ‘mervelusly frequentid, espetially with corne’.¹¹⁷ From 1559 onwards, the city of London took various measures to improve the navigation of the Lea to stimulate the grain trade from Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire.¹¹⁸ Another marketing centre for corn developed on the River Ouse at St Neots, during the early years of Elizabeth’s reign.¹¹⁹

Further evidence of barley being supplied to London brewers comes from the accounts in the 1430s and 1440s from Grantchester manor, two miles south-west of Cambridge. Henry Somer, chancellor of the Exchequer, bought Burwash and Jaks manors and resumed direct farming of most of the demesne. A large staff of up to 14

¹¹⁴ Campbell et al., *Medieval capital*, p. 181; N.J. Williams, *The maritime trade of the East Anglian ports, 1550-1590* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 72, 112, 150-9.

¹¹⁵ Bindoff, *House of Commons*, ii, p. 151; Siraut, ‘Cambridge’, pp. 162, 166.

¹¹⁶ D.O. Pam, *Tudor Enfield: the maltmen and the Lea navigation*, Edmonton Hundred Historical Society, Occasional Papers, new series XVIII (not dated), pp. 1-9.

¹¹⁷ *The itinerary of John Leland*, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, 5 vols. (London, 1907-10), i, part 3, p. 328.

¹¹⁸ K. Fairclough, ‘A Tudor canal scheme for the River Lea’, *London Journal*, 5 (1979), 218-27.

¹¹⁹ Everitt, ‘Marketing’, pp. 41, 51-2.

workers was employed. Somer was able to draw nearly £60 a year in cash from the proceeds of his sales.¹²⁰

The quantities of Grantchester malt bought by Londoners were large. In 1435/6, London brewers Thomas Yole and John Stone purchased 127 quarters of malt barley, from a total of 140 quarters sold by the bailiff. In 1436/7, most of the malt barley sold again went to London brewers Yole, Stone and Thomas Gildrigg. Another large sale, possibly to a London brewer, was made to John Mark of 400 quarters in 1444/5.¹²¹ These sales were undoubtedly facilitated by Somer's residence in London and the links between the manor and the capital. Regular payments were made for journeys between London and Grantchester. Costs were probably reduced because manorial transport and labour was being used. For example, Thomas Rangyll of Harston was paid 8d for carting various stock from London to Grantchester before Easter 1444. Such sales came to an end in 1452 when King's College purchased the manor and used it to provision the college, rather than relying on the small quantities of produce available in the market-place in Cambridge.¹²²

Under Somer's ownership, Grantchester manor also drew upon London suppliers. John Bromer of London, fishmonger, supplied fish and bunches of garlic and John Beneryche of London, grocer, sold cloth. The farm regularly took on additional local labour at harvest time, but in 1437, eight men from London were sent down to assist, possibly suggesting a local shortage of cheap labour.¹²³ Had it not been for Somer's links however, it seems unlikely that the manor would have drawn supplies of food and even labour from the capital.

¹²⁰ *VCH Cambs.*, v, p. 206.

¹²¹ KC, GRA/656-9, GRA/661, GRA/676.

¹²² GRA/657; J. Saltmarsh, 'A college home-farm in the fifteenth century', *Economic History*, 11 (1936), 155-72.

¹²³ GRA/657, GRA/661.

c) Trade in saffron

London was probably also an important stimulus behind the saffron trade, which developed across many parts of southern Cambridgeshire and northern Essex in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The saffron crocus, *crocus sativus*, is not a native flower, but originated in the Middle East, India and China. The saffron crocus was grown for its deep orange stigmas that were dried, and used as a medicine, a dye, a pigment in manuscripts, and as a flavouring and colouring in cookery. Aristocratic households and institutions had long purchased imported saffron, but increasingly saffron was being produced in the locality.¹²⁴

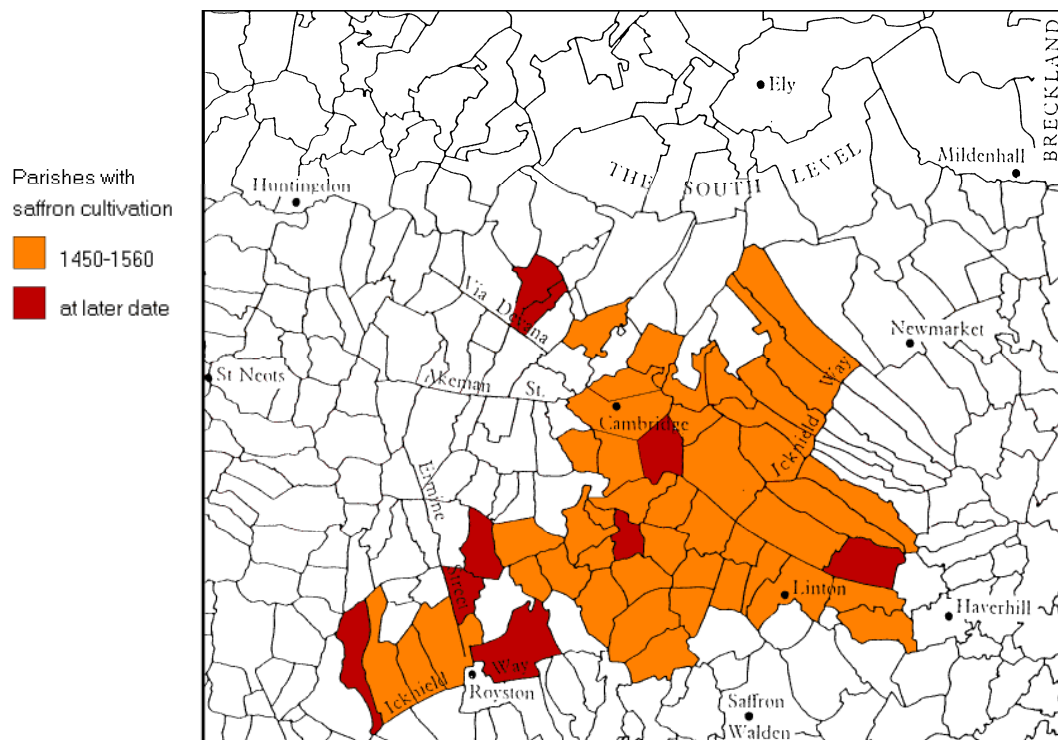


Figure 3.1: Saffron cultivation in Cambridgeshire parishes

Sources: BL Add. MS 5861; VCH Cambs., v-ix.

¹²⁴ Saffron Walden Museum, *The saffron crocus history & cookery* (Saffron Walden, 1997).

Saffron was grown in many villages in north-east Essex and south Cambridgeshire, mainly in areas of light, chalky soil, and particularly in parishes in the river valleys sub-region. In some places it was grown in separate grounds, in others it was planted in the fenced-off plots in the main fields. Evidence of cultivation is found in field names,¹²⁵ and in wills, bequeathing plots of saffron (see figure 3.1). As with many alternative crops, saffron may have been cultivated for many years for household use and not tithed, but when it began to be grown commercially, rectors and vicars claimed tithed payments.¹²⁶ There were disputes over and agreements made concerning the tithes of saffron at Walden in 1445, Linton in 1473, Thriplow in 1475, Ickleton in 1516, Hinxton in 1524, and Hauxton and Babraham in the 1530s.¹²⁷ In a lease of Barrington rectory of 1575, the vicar was reserved the whole tithe of saffron in the closes and the moiety of the saffron tithe in the fields.¹²⁸ Linton manor court ordered no one to throw ‘lez Saffron Flowres & le drose’ in the king’s highway, and fined several men for doing so.¹²⁹

The crop was sometimes cultivated in other parts of East Anglia in this period. Saffron plots existed in the small towns of Godmanchester in the late-fifteenth century, at Newmarket in the sixteenth century, and at Sawbridgeworth in east Hertfordshire, where saffron was grown in large quantities in the fifteenth century, but cultivation had been abandoned by the beginning of the sixteenth century.¹³⁰ Saffron was also cultivated in parts of Norfolk and Suffolk,¹³¹ including the infirmarium garden at Norwich cathedral priory where saffron and saffron roots were sold, probably as a

¹²⁵ *VCH Essex*, ii, p. 360.

¹²⁶ J. Thirsk, *Alternative agriculture: a history from the Black Death to the present day* (Oxford, 1997), p. 69.

¹²⁷ *VCH Essex*, ii, p. 360; *VCH Cambs.*, vi, p. 99; ‘Ely episcopal registers’, *Ely Diocesan Remembrancer*, (1907), 27 and (1911), 150, 167; *Cambridgeshire in the sixteenth century*, ed. W.M. Palmer (Cambridge, 1935), pp. 17-18, 23-5.

¹²⁸ Trinity College, Cambridge, Lease Book, 1547-85, fols. 197-198v.

¹²⁹ CCRO, R59/14/11/7A, mm. 15, 16, courts 1518, 1519; R59/14/11/7B, m. 8d, court 1553.

¹³⁰ Raftis, *Godmanchester*, p. 150; May, *Newmarket*, p. 54; *VCH Hertfordshire*, iii, pp. 332, 346.

¹³¹ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, iii, p. 579, n. 6.

nursery venture.¹³² Although small saffron closes could be found in other parts of the country,¹³³ the crop was concentrated within north Essex and south Cambridgeshire.

In Cambridge, saffron can also be found growing in the college gardens of King's Hall and Peterhouse in the late fourteenth century, in Peterhouse, Pembroke and King's College in the late fifteenth century, and in Queens' and Peterhouse in the early sixteenth century.¹³⁴ Around 1500, St John's Hospital bought saffron heads from John Orgor of Babraham, and paid for the digging of their saffron ground, and the pairing, picking and drying of saffron.¹³⁵ In the corporation treasurers' accounts of 1530/1 and 1531/2, there is a list of 21 or 22 rents paid for the liberty to plant saffron in Barnwell and Cambridge fields, at a cost of one penny per rood. Several prominent townspeople and property owners paid, including Thomas Altofte, Thomas Brakyn, Thomas Brassebrigge, William Hasyll, Richard Wolf and the prior of Barnwell. But these rents were added to the decays of rents in the following year's accounts.¹³⁶ This perhaps denoted a change in accounting procedure rather than an abandonment of cultivation, for in the late 1540s it was stated that the 'Radegun tythe', held by Jesus College, consisted of the tithe of grain, hay and saffron growing in the fields of Cambridge on the castle-side of the river.¹³⁷

Saffron cultivation must have been stimulated by growing demand. It is possible that the plant was increasingly perceived as containing medicinal benefits.¹³⁸ Thorold Rogers attributed a dramatic rise in the price of saffron after the Black Death to its supposed medical virtues against the plague.¹³⁹ Authors of books on medicinal herbs suggested various benefits from saffron. The physician of an Italian merchant

¹³² *Farming and gardening in late medieval Norfolk*, ed. C. Noble, C. Moreton & P. Rutledge, Norfolk Record Society, LXI (Norwich, 1997), p. 8.

¹³³ Thirsk, *Alternative agriculture*, p. 66.

¹³⁴ Peterhouse, Computus roll, 1470/1; Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, iii, pp. 578-81.

¹³⁵ SJC, D106.2, fols. 8, 11, 16.

¹³⁶ CCTA, i, fols. 122, 132v, 145v.

¹³⁷ PRO, C 1/1270/103.

¹³⁸ Thirsk, *Alternative agriculture*, p. 66.

¹³⁹ Rogers, *Agriculture and prices*, i, pp. 631, 641.

recommended its use as a preventive medicine against plague, and it was also apparently given to sufferers from tuberculosis and sweating sicknesses.¹⁴⁰ However, *The Grete Herball* of 1526 recommended oriental saffron (i.e. imported saffron) only for ‘feblenesse of the stomake of the hert and dysposycon of swownynge and fayntnesse’ and for ‘rednesse and webbe in the eye’. William Turner’s *New Herball* of 1551 stated that saffron was good for ‘exulcerations and going off’ of the skin, stomach, breast, kidneys, and for coughs and pleurisy, while William Harrison recommended its use in a range of remedies.¹⁴¹ The decline of saffron cultivation in the eighteenth century was attributed to the import of foreign saffron and its diminishing use in medicine.¹⁴²

The large amounts of labour and small amounts of land required to grow saffron would suggest that during the fifteenth century, at a time of high wages, its cultivation was concentrated on peasant holdings, which could use family labour at no additional cost. This is also the impression gained from examining Cambridgeshire wills recording bequests of saffron grounds.¹⁴³ The testators describe themselves as husbandmen, widows, a carpenter and a vicar; frequently, the only possessions recorded are a few roods of saffron, a handful of goods and perhaps a few acres of land. John Horne of Sawston bequeathed a house and croft, two bushels of peas, half an acre and a rood of saffron; John Mannyng of Bottisham gave a messuage and house, a quarter of wheat, a bullock, a team of horses, a coulter and a saffron ground.

Other evidence also suggests that saffron was largely grown by peasant farmers. John Howsden of Grantchester was a yeoman who agreed to supply a Hertfordshire haberdasher with 40 lbs of saffron. Howsden also supplied £20 6s 8d worth of wheat

¹⁴⁰ *Farming and gardening*, p. 8.

¹⁴¹ *The grete herball which geueth parfyt knowlege and understandyng of all maner of herbes...* (Southwark, 1526), Ca. ciii; William Turner, *A new herball*, part 1 (1551) ed. G.T.L. Chapman & M.N. Tweddle (Cambridge, 1989), part 1, p. 290; Harrison, *Description*, pp. 354-5.

¹⁴² *VCH Essex*, ii, p. 364.

¹⁴³ BL, Add. MS 5861.

to King's College in 1535/6 in three transactions. He probably came from a family of copyholders at Grantchester: James Howsden held a customary holding of a messuage there in 1536-7, and Thomas Howsden was a copyhold tenant with a cottage in 1565.¹⁴⁴ John Smyth, who held a tenement, land, meadow and pasture at Great Abington from King's College, sold 11lb of saffron to the college in 1467.¹⁴⁵ In the last year of the seven-year lease held by John Fauncey, husbandman, of Ickleton Valence manor, it was to be lawful for his successor as farmer to enter all lands except those planted with saffron. In 1515, John Aldam and John Whetby of Ickleton, husbandmen, bound themselves in an obligation of £10 to supply Robert Burton, vicar of Ickleton, with 17½ lbs of English saffron, supplying the saffron on St Leonard's day (6 November) over the next four years.¹⁴⁶ An action was brought against William Gilson of Stapleford, husbandman, in the vice-chancellor's court in Cambridge concerning the detention of a rood of saffron.¹⁴⁷ It was notable that the countrymen of Norfolk and Suffolk, who protested against enclosures in Kett's rebellion of 1549, were willing to allow existing saffron closes to remain, because of the expense of planting them.¹⁴⁸ Perhaps many of the rebels held saffron plots themselves. Saffron may be an early example of a cash crop which small farmers grew on holdings mainly devoted to subsistence: plants such as rape, flax, hemp, woad, tobacco and madder were increasingly cultivated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to supply industry or satisfy particular consumer demands.¹⁴⁹

London marketing links were evident in the saffron trade, as several early sixteenth-century Chancery proceedings show. Thomas Hodylston, haberdasher of London, purchased 14 lbs of 'English' saffron from a John Wode at Fulbourn in Cambridgeshire. John Capon, stockfishmonger of London, made a contract with

¹⁴⁴ PRO, C 1/809/45; KCMB, xii, 1535/6 account; KC, GRA/268-9; GRA/275, fol. 27v.

¹⁴⁵ KC Ledger Book, i, fol. 100; KCMB, iv, fol. 88.

¹⁴⁶ Trinity College, Cambridge, Box 21, items 44-5.

¹⁴⁷ UA, V.C.Ct.I.1, fol. 2.

¹⁴⁸ Thirsk, *Alternative agriculture*, pp. 17, 68.

¹⁴⁹ J. Thirsk, *Economic policy and projects* (Oxford, 1978).

William Elyott of Cottered in Hertfordshire at Stourbridge fair to supply saffron. John Gottis failed to deliver saffron to John Wodeward although an agreement had been made at the Swan Inn, Newmarket.¹⁵⁰ Robert Goldwyn of Hertfordshire, haberdasher, brought a plea against John Howsden of Grantchester, yeoman, who had failed to deliver 40 lbs of saffron to him, which he had planned to sell to a London grocer. The saffron was to have been brought to 'Colle fayre', which was probably Cold fair, held at Newport, Essex.¹⁵¹ At Trinity College's manor of Ickleton in 1483 there were at least five small plots planted with saffron, including one held by John Catby of London.¹⁵² Saffron was one of the commodities traded by the Grocers' Company, but as the examples above illustrate, other merchants came to be involved. It was perhaps significant that in 1471 the Grocers' Company relaxed their rule that members could only buy saffron from merchant strangers at the Great Beam in London:¹⁵³ increasingly saffron was being obtained from country producers.

Despite the spread of saffron cultivation across much of southern Cambridgeshire in this period, and even the sale of saffron at Stourbridge fair, it was the small Essex town of Walden that became the centre of this industry, rather than Cambridge. For Cambridge, this appears to have been something of a missed opportunity. It may be that saffron cultivation began in Walden, stimulated by a number of dyeworks that existed in the town in the 1380s.¹⁵⁴ According to Harrison, saffron was first planted around Walden during Edward III's reign.¹⁵⁵ But it was only during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries that the industry really seems to have flourished, when the town adopted the flower as its symbol and as the prefix to the town's name. Saffron flowers were represented on a late-fifteenth century spandrel on an arch in the

¹⁵⁰ PRO, C 1/264/8, C 1/489/28, C 1/596/37-9.

¹⁵¹ PRO, C 1/809/45; Harrison, *Description*, p. 253, n. 9.

¹⁵² Trinity College, Cambridge, Box 21, item 39.

¹⁵³ P. Nightingale, *A medieval mercantile community: the Grocers' Company and the politics and trade of London, 1000-1485* (New Haven, 1995), p. 548.

¹⁵⁴ D. Cromarty, 'Chepying Walden 1381-1420, a study from the court rolls', *Essex Journal*, 2 (1967), 109-11.

¹⁵⁵ Harrison, *Description*, p. 348.

south aisle of the parish church, in Henry VIII's charter of 1514, and on the new town seal of 1549, while the corporation presented royal dignitaries with gifts of saffron.¹⁵⁶

Saffron Walden was probably one of a group of small towns around London, which developed specialised crafts or markets in response to the demands of the metropolis. Nearby Thaxted developed a large cutlery trade, in which nearly one third of the townsmen worked by 1381, combining local resources such as a skilled workforce, low labour costs and plentiful firewood, with investment from London cutlers. Other small towns in the counties adjoining London developed specialised markets in grain, livestock and fuel, which supplied the capital.¹⁵⁷ As in the textile industry in this period, growth centred on small towns and villages rather than within established provincial towns, and this probably reflects the ease in which London entrepreneurial links could infiltrate settlements free from the regulations imposed by borough governments and existing mercantile networks.

Conclusion

Evidence from college accounts and other institutions in Cambridge reveals a consumer hierarchy which closely followed the pattern predicted by Dyer. The largest and wealthiest institutions looked to London for many of their supplies, while smaller households tended to shop more locally. There was however, in Cambridge, the added complexity of Stourbridge fair, from which households of all sizes could make bulk purchases of goods from merchants from various parts of the country.

The principal development in the 1450-1560 period was the increasing ascendancy of the colleges, amidst the general growth of the university. Specialist trades developed to serve the town's academic community. But not all the needs of the academic

¹⁵⁶ *VCH Essex*, ii, pp. 359-64; Richard, Lord Braybrooke, *The history of Audley End* (London, 1836), pp. 145-7; A. Clark, 'Saffron and Walden', *Essex Review*, 19 (1910), 61-3.

¹⁵⁷ K.C. Newton, *Thaxted in the fourteenth century* (Chelmsford, 1960); D. Keene, 'Small towns and the metropolis: the experience of medieval England', in J-M. Duvosquel & E. Thoen, eds., *Peasants and townsmen in medieval Europe* (Ghent, 1995), pp. 223-38, esp. pp. 234-6.

institutions could be met within the town or its immediate hinterland: many higher value goods came from outside the region, and particularly from London. The foundation of new and wealthier colleges, such as King's and St John's, created institutions that were more likely to look to London for supplies, unlike the smaller colleges of Corpus and Peterhouse or the poorer religious houses of St John's Hospital and St Radegund's Priory.

The extent of the service trades in Cambridge was matched by few other urban economies in this period. By the sixteenth century, around 50 per cent of the working population of the town were employed in the food and drink, clothing and building trades.¹⁵⁸ Oxford had also developed an economy with a strong service sector to supply another academic community by 1381. Another service-based urban economy existed in Westminster, meeting the demand of the royal palace and Benedictine abbey, but this London suburb possessed a more transient and affluent market than the university towns, with courtiers, suitors, members of parliament and pilgrims passing through. Oxford, Westminster and Cambridge were all centres of hospitality, with their alehouses and inns, victuallers, building craftsmen, specialist trades such as goldsmiths and printing, and very small manufacturing sectors.¹⁵⁹ Service-based economies were perhaps, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, more resilient than those based on manufacturing, particularly cloth, which were highly susceptible to fluctuations in trade.¹⁶⁰

The greatest competition in Cambridge for the provision of consumer goods and services came from London. This trend was, of course, not unique to Cambridge, but found in other prominent towns. The inventory of a York chapman in 1446 contained debts to London merchants and goods including 'London' purses, glasses and a

¹⁵⁸ N. Goose, 'English pre-industrial urban economies', *Urban History Yearbook* (1982), 24-5.

¹⁵⁹ *VCH Oxfordshire*, iv, pp. 40-8, 101-9; G. Rosser, 'London and Westminster: the suburb in the urban economy in the later Middle Ages', in J.A.F. Thomson, ed., *Towns and townspeople in the fifteenth century* (Gloucester, 1988), pp. 45-61; Rosser, *Westminster*, pp. 119-64, 201-16.

¹⁶⁰ e.g. the urban economies of Colchester or York: Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 163-80; Bartlett, 'York'.

belt.¹⁶¹ In Norwich, the largest provincial city in the country, Margaret Paston complained of the ‘right febill cheys’ in the drapers’ shops there, and asked John Paston I to obtain cloth for her in London.¹⁶² Even the abbey at Westminster did not make all its purchases in the local town, but resorted to tradesmen in the city of London for some goods.¹⁶³ Customers along the east coast were regularly supplied with wine from London. With the presence of the royal household and government, London could sustain specialised markets and services that it was difficult to compete with anywhere else.¹⁶⁴ Consumers, particularly those with large incomes, found that only London could supply the range and quality of goods they required.

Indeed, the extent to which London dominated the wider economy, and whether this was beneficial or detrimental to other towns and regions, are questions as relevant to the late medieval period as to more recent times. Although London had been a centre of consumption for the greater aristocracy since at least the thirteenth century, it seems to have been particularly influential in affecting patterns of local economic development during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. With the disruption to overseas trade at provincial ports during the fifteenth century, wool and cloth exports became increasingly concentrated through London, and networks of credit became increasingly dominated by London merchants.¹⁶⁵ The relationship between London and the regions is still the subject of much on-going research, but it appears that provincial towns and regions could gain or lose influence through links with London. Analysis of debts in the Court of Common Pleas in 1424 and 1570 suggests that between these two dates, London shifted from close engagement with the south-east to more extended linkages with counties in the north and west. The economic role of

¹⁶¹ Kermode, *Merchants*, p. 309.

¹⁶² *PL*, i, p. 252.

¹⁶³ Harvey, *Living and dying*, p. 5.

¹⁶⁴ Kermode, *Merchants*, p. 253.

¹⁶⁵ P. Nightingale, ‘The growth of London in the medieval English economy’, in Britnell & Hatcher, *Progress and problems*, pp. 89-106; Britnell, ‘1450-1560’, pp. 95-7.

counties around London became more exclusively one of supplying agricultural produce to the capital.¹⁶⁶

The trade of Cambridge and its region demonstrates both the advantages and disadvantages that relative proximity to the capital city could bring. Among the Cambridgeshire debt cases examined in the Patent Rolls, London was the single most frequently stated place of residence of creditors, and debts owing to Londoners tended on average to be larger than to creditors elsewhere. Opportunities existed to supply the London market with barley, prefiguring the role of the eastern counties as major suppliers of cereals to the capital in the early modern period. But agricultural commodity prices were low through much of the fifteenth century, and recourse to more distant markets was often necessary. The Paston family in Norfolk sold malt to London merchants and to Flanders when they could not sell grain locally on favourable terms, and bore more of the expenses of marketing themselves.¹⁶⁷ In the sixteenth century, London's demand could lead to occasional local shortages of grain in Cambridge. London demand and marketing may well have been behind the growth of the saffron industry in this period. It is unlikely that local demand alone would have been sufficient to cause the spread of cultivation of the crop. But Walden, rather than Cambridge, emerged as the centre of this industry, and perhaps this owed something to the influence of London.

Cambridge and its region demonstrate how patterns of supply and demand could develop, in a period that is often seen as producing little growth outside the cloth-making regions, but these trading links were scattered, and in several cases, linked to London.

¹⁶⁶ Keene, 'Changes', pp. 71-2, 79.

¹⁶⁷ R.H. Britnell, 'The Pastons and their Norfolk', *Agricultural History Review*, 36 (1988), 139.

CHAPTER 4

MARKETS

This chapter examines the local markets of Cambridge and its region: the formal trading institutions of weekly markets held in the town and surrounding villages, and their operation, regulation and trade. Market towns and villages, with their regulated sites for trade, also known as ‘the open market’, can be contrasted with ‘private bargaining’ or ‘hidden trade’ conducted outside formal markets, beyond the scrutiny of central or local officials.¹ The previous chapter has shown that colleges and other large households made limited use of Cambridge as a source of goods, obtaining many bulk purchases and luxury goods from merchants at Lynn and London. Colleges also bought certain foodstuffs and hardware products at fairs, and made agreements directly with suppliers for foodstuffs, fuel and building materials.² Merchants too, often conducted long-distance trade outside market-places. Formal or open markets were outlets for agricultural produce, foodstuffs and basic craft and household goods, where small households made many purchases. Even at this level though, some food retailers and other small traders operated outside regulated markets.³

Evidence relating to marketing is disparate and needs to be obtained from a variety of sources. Charter grants record the foundation of markets, but many did not continue to operate after the Black Death, and other records are needed to trace their survival. In Cambridge, the archives of the university and borough corporation provide evidence relating to the regulation and operation of the town’s markets, particularly in the documentation generated by the many disputes between these two bodies. Pleas in the town courts, in many instances resulting from transactions made in the town, show the extent of Cambridge’s sphere of influence. In surrounding villages, manorial courts

¹ Everitt, ‘Marketing’, p. 15; C. Dyer, ‘The hidden trade of the Middle Ages: evidence from the West Midlands of England’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 18 (1992), 141-57.

² College purchases at fairs are examined in Chapter 5, purchases of food and fuel supplies in Chapter 6 and purchases of building materials in Chapter 7.

³ Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 82, 97-8.

contain cases of retailing and petty trading. Through a range of evidence, therefore, the hinterlands of the markets in Cambridge and other parts of the region for basic goods and services can be revealed.

Grants of markets in the Cambridge region

Traditionally, the principal sources used to trace markets and fairs in the medieval period have been charter grants of their foundation. Although trading did not require a formal market to be instituted, a market grant signified that such exchanges were, or could become, substantial enough to benefit from official organisation. Royal charters licensed markets and fairs at specified times and places, and entitled the recipients to collect rents for stalls and tolls for trading. There was a remarkable growth in the number of weekly markets across England between the Norman Conquest and the Black Death, although many of these foundations failed to survive into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁴

The markets that were still operating in the early modern period were recorded in road books, almanacs, and by travellers.⁵ By this time, perhaps two thirds of the markets that had existed before the Black Death had disappeared. Although this decline partly reflected the fall in population, with fewer people to trade, other factors were involved. Medieval market grants recorded only the foundation of a market, not its operation: some markets may never have been established successfully, thus tending to exaggerate the extent to which the marketing system contracted.⁶ More significant though, were improvements in living standards after the Black Death, which reduced the numbers of cottagers and smallholders, who had been the greatest source of demand in village markets in the pre-plague period. Additionally, merchants increasingly handled consumer goods, and manufacturing was becoming more

⁴ R.H. Britnell, 'The proliferation of markets in England, 1200-1349', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 34 (1981), 209-21.

⁵ Everitt, 'Marketing', pp. 16-26.

⁶ Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 156-61; J. Masschaele, 'The multiplicity of medieval markets reconsidered', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 20 (1994), 255-71.

concentrated in particular towns and villages. The latter factor meant that even when population growth began again, during the sixteenth century, and the number of smallholders increased, most former markets did not reappear and only a core of the former medieval markets remained.⁷

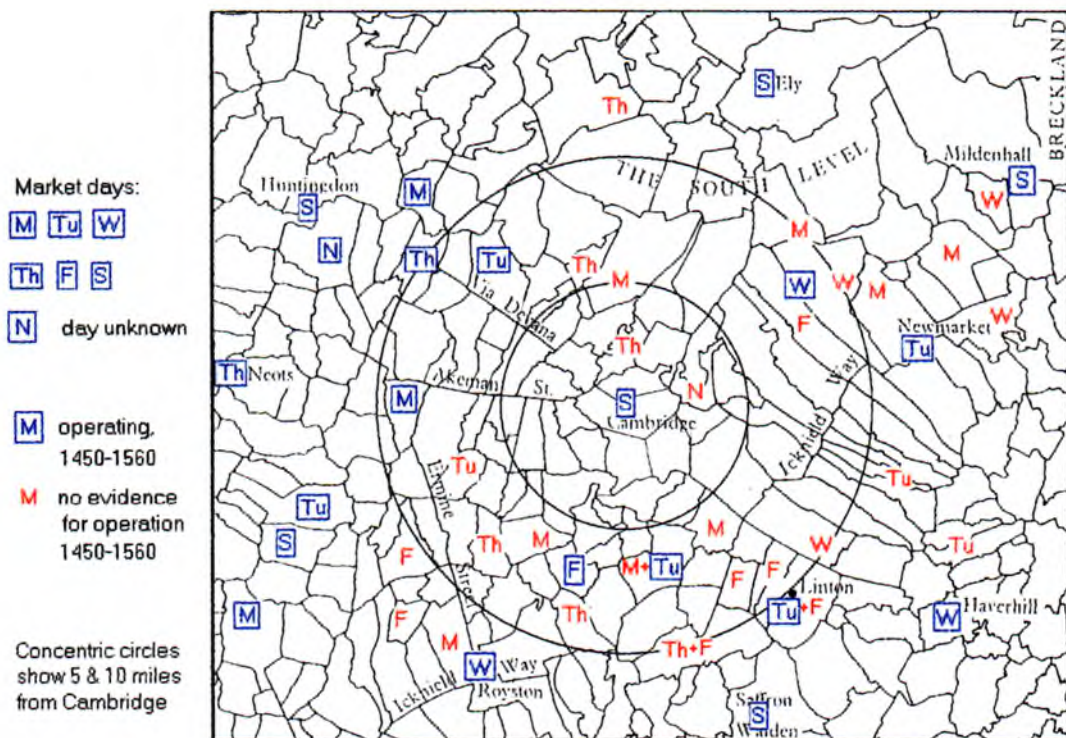


Figure 4.1: Markets of Cambridge and its region

Note: Where market-days were changed after the initial grant, the final day chosen is shown.

Sources: VCH Cambs., iv-ix; M. Siraut, 'Cambridgeshire fairs and markets' (CCRO, pamphlet collection); Everitt, 'Marketing', p. 23; Masschaele, *Peasants*, pp. 185, 237; R.M. Smith, 'A periodic market and its impact on a manorial community: Botesdale, Suffolk, and the manor of Redgrave, 1280-1300', in Z. Razi & R. Smith, eds., *Medieval society and the manor court* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 458-9.

⁷ Britnell, 'Urban demand', pp. 15, 19-20.

Figure 4.1 attempts to plot the distribution around Cambridge of markets known from their foundation charters.⁸ It also highlights those markets that still appear to have operated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.⁹ Several markets are known only from their foundation charters: the editors of the *Victoria County History* could find no further evidence for the operation of the markets and fairs at Great Abington, Hildersham, Impington and Milton.¹⁰ Other markets in the region are definitely known to have contracted or ceased during the later medieval period. The site of the stalls of Bassingbourn market and fair was empty in 1435, and the market, fair and pie-powder court of Whittlesford were all reported to be yielding nothing in 1460.¹¹

The high density of population and intensity of trade in East Anglia led to an exceptional concentration of markets before 1350, compared with other parts of the country.¹² Within Cambridge's region, the markets were mainly concentrated along the river valleys. This reflected the density of settlement in these particularly fertile and accessible areas, and also the social structure, as shown by the lay subsidies of 1524-5, with the largest proportion of wage-earners in the county, requiring markets to obtain foodstuffs and other goods.¹³ Bracton, a legal treatise of the mid-thirteenth century, stated that six and two-third miles was the normal limit for a day's journey to market and back.¹⁴ Even by the sixteenth century, few, if any parts of Cambridgeshire lay further from a market than this, at least measured by a straight-line distance. In practice though, people were prepared to travel further to reach particular markets.

⁸ See the map in H. Ridout, 'Market and fairs', in T. Kirby & S. Oosthuizen, eds., *An atlas of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire history* (Cambridge, 2000), chpt. 44, for the periods when Cambridgeshire markets were chartered. Dr Samantha Letters is currently completing a gazetteer of markets and fairs in England and Wales to 1540, at the Centre for Metropolitan History, Institute of Historical Research, London.

⁹ Markets listed in Everitt, 'Marketing', p. 23 and *VCH Cambs.*, iv-ix, *passim*.

¹⁰ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, pp. 13, 66, ix, pp. 135, 180.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, vi, p. 270, viii, p. 23.

¹² Britnell, 'Markets', 210; Poos, *Rural society*, pp. 35-6.

¹³ See Chapter 2.

¹⁴ Britnell, *Commercialisation*, p. 83.

The surviving markets in the Cambridge region, as elsewhere, tended to be the older establishments, created before 1250, and located at the larger settlements of the region.¹⁵ During the 1450-1560 period, available evidence suggests that there were no markets operating within five miles of Cambridge. Between five and ten miles from the town, there were markets at Caxton, Foxton, Fenstanton, Gamlingay, Linton and Swavesey, and possibly at Reach and Whittlesford. Although it was less important for village markets to be located in particularly accessible areas in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when most traders were travelling only a short distance, those markets which survived into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries around Cambridge tended to be on major roads or, in the case of Swavesey and Reach, to have links by water to the fenland. The variety of marketing opportunities available in Cambridge meant that very few village markets were ever established close to Cambridge, and none appear to have operated in the later Middle Ages.

The timing of weekly markets in and around Cambridge appears to have had significance, as in other counties. Saturday markets were usually held at larger settlements, as at Cambridge, Huntingdon, Ely and Saffron Walden: such a pattern, it has been suggested, allowed traders to visit several smaller markets in a week, and sell their combined purchases at the more extensive markets.¹⁶ Tuesdays tended to be the most popular day for the Cambridgeshire village markets that survived into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was rare for the day on which a market was held to be changed, as to do so usually required the expense of obtaining another charter. It did occasionally happen, though: relatively soon after the initial grant at Balsham and Brinkley, and at a later date at Walden.¹⁷ Neighbouring markets were sometimes founded on the same days, like the Friday markets at Great Abington and Hildersham, all located north-west of Linton, but such markets rarely survived long in close proximity.

¹⁵ Ridout, 'Markets'.

¹⁶ Unwin, 'Towns and trade', pp. 137-8; Smith, 'Periodic market', p. 461.

¹⁷ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, pp. 132, 138; Braybrooke, *Audley End*, p. 160.

The distribution of market grants provides a rough indicator of the market area of a town, by showing what other marketing opportunities were available. Such a picture, though, gives no indication of the extent to which town hinterlands overlapped, or the ability of larger towns to poach trade from smaller centres.¹⁸ The remainder of this chapter examines the operation of the markets held at Cambridge and other settlements in the region.

Cambridge market

The market-place

Whatever its other administrative and academic functions, Cambridge was primarily a market town: a centre of exchange for the goods and services of the town and surrounding sub-regions. As in many larger market towns,¹⁹ separate parts of the market-place developed within Cambridge for the trading of particular commodities: areas for the sale of corn, peas, cheese, leather, malt, milk and oats are recorded. Around the central market-place, which stretched from the church of St Mary the Great to the guildhall, lay the Butchery, Butter Row, Cordwainers' Row, Petty Cury, and a fish market. Freshwater fish was sold from tubs on the market hill. Livestock were traded at the hog and horse fair in the fairyard near the slaughterhouse, and were separated, as in other towns, from the main market-place.²⁰

The market-place was symbolically the heart of the medieval town: the location of the civic administration, and the place where proclamations and other symbolic acts were performed. Within the market-place at Cambridge stood the tollbooth or guildhall, town gaol, stocks and pillory, and market cross. The market cross, as depicted on Lyne's map of 1574, was mounted on a flight of stone steps and covered with a lead roof supported on columns. In 1563/4, the corporation paid the substantial sum of

¹⁸ H.B. Rodgers, 'The market area of Preston in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', *Geographical Studies*, 3 (1956), 49-50.

¹⁹ Everitt, 'Marketing', p. 29; Britnell, *Commercialisation*, p. 85.

²⁰ Ibid.; *Place-names of Cambridgeshire*, pp. 44-50; *LP*, xii (2), g. 1008 (17), p. 352; CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fol. 9; *CBD*, map opposite p. 168.

nearly 20s to a plumber and painter for mending and painting the cross.²¹ The Duke of Northumberland proclaimed Mary Tudor to be queen at Cambridge's market cross, having previously tried to place his daughter-in-law, Lady Jane Grey, on the throne.²² Robert Barker, found to be in possession of a book and instruments of the black art, was ordered in 1466 to walk round the market-places of Ely and Cambridge, barefooted, holding the books and wand, with the plates and charts round his neck, and the instruments were afterwards to be burned in Cambridge market-place.²³

Although most of the market-place was an open space in which stalls were erected when required, there were also permanent stands. The farm of the king's table (*tabula regis*) produced an income of £5 or more for the treasurers of Cambridge Corporation in the 1420s or 1430s. It is assumed that this rent was for the farm of the fish and flesh stalls in the market, fixed at £4 and described variously as *tabula piscis*, *fishbordes*, and later as the flesh stalls, in the subsequent series of treasurers' accounts from 1483/4 until 1551/2. Additional fish stalls brought in 8s from 1515/16, 16s after 1521/2, and 20s from 1552/3.²⁴ In 1551/2, the town corporation erected two houses for butchers, each containing fourteen standings. Country butchers who hired the new standings were permitted to sell flesh on Tuesdays and Saturdays, but paid nothing for their standings on Tuesdays. Shown on Hamond's map of 1592, these stalls were single storey buildings, with open fronts above the counters.²⁵ In the first year of their operation, 27 rents of between 3s 4d and 7s each were collected for half a year's rent. In subsequent years, a farm of £14 13s 4d was collected from these flesh shambles.²⁶ By 1560, therefore, the corporation's income from stalls had grown considerably, even by the standards of the early fifteenth century, indicating an increase in activity in Cambridge's market-place.

²¹ CCTA, ii, fol. 40; T.D. Atkinson & J.W. Clark, *Cambridge described & illustrated being a short history of the town and university* (London, 1897), pp. 64-8.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

²³ 'Ely episcopal registers', *Ely Diocesan Remembrancer* (1907), 95.

²⁴ CCA, X/70/1-10, X/71/1-10, X/71A, XVII/24A; CCTA, i, *passim*.

²⁵ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fol. 81; Atkinson & Clark, *Cambridge described*, p. 88.

²⁶ CCTA, i, fols. 342, 356-356v, 370v, 385v, 399.

Regulation of marketing in Cambridge

The regulation of urban markets involved a complicated mixture of royal statutes and local by-laws. Weights and measures were checked locally, to standards enforced by the crown. Market authorities sought to secure a competitive market price and prevent monopolies in a variety of different ways. They restricted the location and timing of trading. Priority was given to consumers over producers, such as bakers and brewers, and burgesses often had some claim on incoming supplies at an agreed public price. Market authorities also attempted to regulate supplies by forbidding the interception of goods before they reached the market, and acting against those who attempted to restrict supplies or fix prices. The quality and price of key commodities was regulated through the assizes of bread and ale, which sought to prevent excessive profits in the retail trades. The enforcement of these regulations was mainly left to local courts. Essentially, such mechanisms sought to maintain the commercial advantages of the town's own burgesses, control quality and raise revenue.²⁷

At Cambridge, however, the situation was complicated by the presence of a large community requiring foodstuffs and other goods to be available in abundance at a cheap price, but who were not producing goods themselves - the university. Difficulties were compounded by the fact that the market was administered by two rival bodies, the corporation and university, who constantly disputed the rights and privileges of the other. As a punishment for their part in the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, the king took control over the market, including the assize of bread, wine and beer, with the custody of weights and measures and cognisance of forestalling and regrating, from the townspeople of Cambridge, and granted these privileges wholly and forever to the university.²⁸ This was the basis of the university's control over the market. Regulation of marketing generated revenue for the university, but generated deep resentment in the town, and was the source of many town-gown disputes.

²⁷ Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 90-7; Kowaleski, *Exeter*, pp. 180-92; Kermode, *Merchants*, p. 195.

²⁸ *VCH Cambs.*, iii, p. 32.

Butchers and chandlers were controlled particularly closely by the university. Butchers were forbidden to sell tallow in the market, except to inhabitants dwelling within the precincts of the university.²⁹ The price at which butchers sold suet was stipulated in 1560, and chandlers were to sell candles of higher quality to scholars and aldermen than to any other person from the town or country.³⁰ In 1537 the proctors mounted a night watch to stop candles being carried out of the town and four barrels which had been sent to London were brought back.³¹ The demand for candles by scholars must have put pressure on supplies and led to the danger of shortage. The university also made numerous complaints about the disposal of waste by butchers. In 1491, for instance, it claimed that the corporation refused to provide a convenient place for slaughtering animals, and that butchers allowed waste to fall from their carts into the street, causing ‘contynuall pestilences and other deseases’. In 1546, the university was still complaining that there was no slaughterhouse outside the town. Erasmus recalled from his time at Cambridge the ‘stinking butchery...very noisome to them that went by it or through it’.³²

Regulation of the market was undertaken by the university’s proctors and taxors. The junior proctor’s book includes assizes or regulations for millers, bakers, brewers, innholders, butchers, fishmongers, cooks, taverners, spicers, weavers and tanners. These concern the use of correct measures and the maintenance of quality, and regulate against excessive profits. Officers were to take a fixed sum for weights and measures sealed according to the king’s standard: 1d for every hundredweight sealed.³³ The proctors made payments for destroying bad meat or fish, and illustrations from Elizabeth I’s reign show the proctors, taxors and gaugers testing weights and destroying false measures.³⁴

²⁹ UA, Collect.Admin.2, fol. 116v.

³⁰ UA, V.C.Ct.I.24, fol. 19v.

³¹ *Grace Book B*, ii, pp. 204, 207.

³² UA, Luard 133; Collect.Admin.5, fol. 22; *Erasmus*, p. 83.

³³ UA, Collect.Admin.2, fols. 105v-107v.

³⁴ *Grace Book A*, p. 7; *Grace Book B*, ii, p. 205; Peek & Hall, *Archives of the university*, plate 13.

Simple breaches of regulation were dealt with by fines at the proctors' leets, while more serious cases were brought before the university's other courts. Court leet records only survive from the late fourteenth and late sixteenth centuries, but include amercements of bakers and brewers, for hostellers selling hay, oats and victuals at excessive prices, for those regrating candles, selling corrupt meat and fish, selling ale and not displaying a sign, and for millers taking excessive toll.³⁵ The records of the vice-chancellor's court, although surviving in only a fragmentary form from the 1550s, contain presentments by proctors and taxors against people buying grain before the accustomed hour, forestalling butter and eggs and buying corn against the statute, and include men from Chesterford, Thriplow, Wilbraham and Wilburton.³⁶ The university commonly complained that burgesses broke the assizes and used false measures, and were disobedient towards correction.³⁷ The town, in turn, claimed that university officers took excessive charges from victuallers when measuring and gauging their wares.³⁸

Increasingly though, the university was becoming less dependent on these regulations for its own support. Around 1532, a corporation document stated that when the assize of bread and ale had been granted to the university, it had consisted mainly of hostels and halls, which were supplied with bread, ale and other victuals, by the townspeople; whereas at the present, the greater part of the university consisted of colleges which provided their own bakehouses and brewhouses.³⁹

Evidence of the increasing independence of the academic community from the town is demonstrated by the university's attempts to exclude miscreant traders from serving the colleges. In 1493/4, a letter from the corporation to the king asked for the university chancellor to abolish prohibitions made within the university 'commanding

³⁵ UA, C.U.R. 17.

³⁶ UA, V.C.Ct.I.1, fols. 3v, 4v, 9, 12, 13-13v, 14v; V.C.Ct.I.24, fols. 13v-14, 20.

³⁷ UA, Luard 133; Collect.Admin 5, fols. 22-23v.

³⁸ CCA, X/66, mm. 2-3; X/90, printed in *Annals*, i, pp. 356-8.

³⁹ CCA, X/69(ii), printed in *Annals*, i, p. 349.

thereby that no man should buy nor sell with divers burgesses of your said Town.'⁴⁰ This was a complaint against the practice of 'discommoning', whereby a trader who persistently refused to comply with the chancellor's regulations, or supplied commodities below standard and refused to pay the fine, had his name published in all colleges and students were forbidden to have dealings with him. Oxford University also used this tactic in 1533, and Cambridge had apparently revived the practice by the 1580s.⁴¹ A even more far-reaching ban on trade with the town's burgesses was implemented in a university statute of 1532/3, which forbade scholars and scholars' servants from buying victuals of freemen, requiring them to be bought from persons appointed by the masters of the colleges. Following bitter hostility, the university backed down the following year.⁴² The university was only able to make such threats though, by developing a system of privilege to support a particular group of townspeople that supplied many of its needs.

Privileged persons

The university's regulation over the market was complicated by the fact that the protection that the university exercised over its members also extended to certain persons serving the academic community, known as scholars' servants or privileged persons. Similar groups were found at other European universities. Privileged persons, being subject to the chancellor and so exempt from the duties and charges of the borough and the authority of the borough courts, were particularly resented by other townsmen who did not share these concessions. Protection of the chancellor's court may have been used as a shield from enemies in the town, or to effect a speedier and cheaper recovery of debts.⁴³ A scholar's servant swore obedience to the

⁴⁰ CCA, X/40, printed in *Annals*, i, p. 242.

⁴¹ R. ~~Porter~~^{Parker}, *Town and gown: the 700 years war in Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 65; C.I. Hammer, 'Oxford town and Oxford University', in J. McConica, ed., *The history of the University of Oxford*, iii: *the collegiate university* (Oxford, 1986), p. 91; *Annals*, ii, p. 437.

⁴² *Grace Book A*, p. xiii.

⁴³ Hammer, 'Oxford town', p. 85; A.B. Cobban, *The medieval English universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c.1500* (Aldershot, 1988), pp. 269-71.

chancellor and vice-chancellor and promised to maintain all ordinances, customs and liberties of the university.⁴⁴

An agreement made between the university and town in 1503 classed the following as scholars' servants: 'all Bedells... Mancipills, Cook, Butlers, & Launderers of everye Colledge, Hostell & other places... & all appotycars, Stationers, Lymners, Schryveners, Parchment-makers, Boke bynders, Phisitions, Surgeons, & Barbers in the said Universitie'. Classifying who came under the definition of a privileged person could nonetheless be difficult, and a schedule of people who enjoyed the privilege was attached to the award.⁴⁵ In 1526 the definition was extended to include every household servant of a scholar.⁴⁶

The 1503 award states the town's complaint that the university had 'accepted & toke everye person at their pleasure, as their Servaunts and Commen Ministers'. Under the terms of the indenture, menial servants living with or retained by scholars, were to be regarded as scholars' servants only during the time of their service. Unfortunately, a complaint drawn up c.1530 by the town suggests that this ruling was open to abuse. It argued that former students of the university, who had since moved elsewhere, had retained various craftsmen such as skinnners, tailors and shoemakers in the town, as their servants, by purchasing a livery or riding coat for them, or paying very small wages. These servants seldom if at all attended on their masters, who were not resident in the university.⁴⁷

The willingness of the university to accept regulation of the number of scholars' servants may have stemmed from their liability to cause disorder. Evidence from the chancellor's court at Oxford points to the 'chronic unruliness' of cooks, manciples

⁴⁴ See the oaths of scholars' servants in UA, C.U.R.36.2 and UA, Collect.Admin.5, fol. 15v.

⁴⁵ UA, Luard 143b (72 people listed), Luard 145b (68 people listed).

⁴⁶ CCA, X/20, printed in *Annals*, i, pp. 323-4.

⁴⁷ CCA, X/38.

and private servants employed by the friaries and monastic houses, who were frequently involved in intercollegiate brawls and affrays.⁴⁸ Several clauses in the Cambridge agreement of 1503 detail the procedure for the arrest and trial of privileged persons, all stressing that this was to be conducted by the university authorities and not the town.⁴⁹

From the town's point of view, the privileged persons were not, as was stated during the 1530s, contributing anything towards the finances and government of the borough:

bearyng no maner of Skott lott offices nor other impositiouns and Charges belongyng to the saide Towne to the no lytill hyndrannce and impoverishment of the said Mayer baylyffes and burgesses by reason that their dayly lyving is taken from them by the saide persons.⁵⁰

Similarly in 1554, it was claimed that the extension of the privilege of scholar's servant to men who did not serve in that function was leading to the 'decaie' of the town, the diminishing of sums due in subsidies, and a reduction in soldiers available in times of war.⁵¹

Medieval towns demanded considerable obligations from their inhabitants in money and time: to serve in municipal office and to contribute to the financial needs of the town's complex infrastructure and ceremonies. As urban populations contracted in the later middle ages, these burdens fell on fewer heads and became increasingly onerous. Many citizens became reluctant to bear these burdens and evaded or refused serving in municipal office.⁵² A growing number of scholars who were exempt from taxation placed an increasing burden on the other inhabitants of the town. Cambridge secured a reduction of its fixed taxation assessment in 1446 and 1465, partly on the basis that

⁴⁸ R.B. Dobson, 'The religious orders 1370-1540', in J.I. Catto & R. Evans, eds., *The history of the university of Oxford*, ii: *late medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992), p. 565.

⁴⁹ UA, Luard 145a, printed in *Annals*, i, pp. 262-5.

⁵⁰ CCA, X/38; see also X/69(ii).

⁵¹ X/3, printed in *Annals*, ii, p. 88.

⁵² Phythian-Adams, 'Urban decay', pp. 174-7; Dobson, 'Urban decline', pp. 278-9; J.I. Kermode, 'Urban decline? The flight from office in late medieval York', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 35 (1982), 179-98.

many houses formerly inhabited by craftsmen, were now occupied by scholars and not chargeable.⁵³ The growth of privileged persons increased the size of the community not participating in civic offices, town courts, or contributing to the borough's fee farm. For the town council, it was particularly annoying to see fellow tradesmen treated as privileged persons who were 'of right goode substance and valewe mette apte and able to bear thoffices of bayliff or mayer...and to Susteyn the charges therof'.⁵⁴

Tolls

In addition to the charges taken by university officials for checking weights and measures, the town corporation levied tolls on goods entering the market, creating another area of potential dispute. Epstein has recently called for more attention to be paid to institutional barriers to trade, such as the levying of tolls and customs at markets, and notes that one of the peasant demands in 1381 was for free access to markets. In England however, tolls on internal trade were relatively light compared to much of western Europe.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the potential trader could face a bewildering array of charges, and tolls were largely fixed by custom with the only check on owners that demands should be reasonable.⁵⁶ Cambridge Corporation took tolls for waterborne goods unloaded at the town's hithes, on carts and beasts driven through the town, and for use of the town's mills and markets. Henry I had given the borough a monopoly of tolls within Cambridgeshire by ordering that boats and barges were to be loaded at no hithe in the county except within the borough, and that toll was to be taken only there. Burgesses of Cambridge claimed freedom from toll throughout the country, by virtue of a grant of 1201.⁵⁷

⁵³ *Charters*, pp. xxvi, 55-61.

⁵⁴ CCA, X/38.

⁵⁵ S.R. Epstein, 'Regional fairs, institutional innovation, and economic growth in late medieval Europe', *EcHR*, 47 (1994), 474; Chartres, *Trade*, p. 13.

⁵⁶ G.H. Tupling, 'Early Lancashire markets and their tolls', *Transactions of the Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 50 (1934-5), 107, 122.

⁵⁷ *VCH Cambs.*, iii, p. 63; *Charters*, pp. xii-xiii, xv-xvii, 2-5.

Fluctuations in the revenue from tolls can be a useful indicator of activity in formal markets. Many markets faced declining toll income between 1330 and 1500; some cities even abolished their tolls to try to stimulate trade. The rapid expansion in trade that Everitt perceived as occurring after 1570 was accompanied by a spate of lawsuits, suggesting that the right to levy tolls had become a valuable source of income.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, at Cambridge, the bailiffs accounted for the tolls collected, and their accounts have survived for only two years. Tolls were paid in cash, except in Mill Ward, where most were collected in corn from the mill. The tolls amounted to £48 10s 4d in 1510/11.⁵⁹

Lists of tolls can provide detailed evidence of the types of goods entering local trade.⁶⁰ An agreement made between the town and university of Cambridge in 1503 gives a vivid impression of the different items brought to the weekly market, and their respective toll charges. Prior to this agreement, the university had complained about the excessive taking of toll, picage, stallage, and other customs by the town, which had caused scarcity and price increases. In 1503 it was agreed that no corporation officer would charge any toll on persons bringing pigs or poultry, dairy produce, freshwater fish, fruit, or other victual 'in ther hands, or at ther Bakke, or on horse backe in baggs or panyers without a wombtie (girth).' Butchers were not to be charged for selling retail, but only for standing and picage. Various charges were laid down for sellers of freshwater fish bringing pike, tenches, roach, perch, eels, and other freshwater fish 'in Barrells, Tubbes, Kelys & kimlyns'. Persons bringing oysters, herring, sperling, other fresh fish, or victuals, on horseback with a girth, had to pay ½d for every horseload. 1d was charged on every cartload of oysters, ½d on a cartload of wood, and 1d on a cartload of coals (charcoal).⁶¹ Some of these commodities though, like the charcoal and firewood, may have been traded outside, rather than

⁵⁸ Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 157-9; Everitt, 'Marketing', pp. 51-5.

⁵⁹ *CBD*, p. liii.

⁶⁰ C.M. Fraser, 'The pattern of trade in the north-east of England, 1265-1350', *Northern History*, 4 (1969), 45-7 and appendix.

⁶¹ UA, Luard 145a.

within, the market-place.⁶² A schedule of tolls for merchandise brought to Stourbridge fair lists charges from ½d for a laden horse to 8d for a hundred wainscot boards.⁶³

Tolls had long been an important source of income for the town. Back in 1330, the burgesses had petitioned parliament that they had no certain means to pay their fee farm except by small tolls and customs from strangers who brought merchandise on market-day. In 1420, the university testified that all colleges were exempt from tolls on building materials, fuel, and victuals, by land and water, but the bailiffs of Cambridge were placing charges on such goods. In 1491, the university again protested that the mayor and bailiffs were taking fines and great exactions from victuallers coming by land and water, including fines of between 20s and 40s from those in keels. The university claimed that victuallers, who should have been able to enter freely, were being charged tollage or a yearly fine, and so they went elsewhere. Thomas Cromwell accused the town in 1537 of forcing scholars to pay tolls and ordered them to take no such tolls from the university.⁶⁴

Tolls were one way in which the town corporation could profit from and possibly even regulate trade in the town and at Stourbridge fair, after it had lost its market rights to the university. Perhaps because of this, the tolls were particularly onerous; certainly Cambridge Corporation was also involved in disputes during the first half of the sixteenth century with the towns of Hertford, Huntingdon, Lynn, Northampton and Walden over tolls it tried to levy.⁶⁵

Town/gown disputes

Although many of the matters disputed by the corporation and university of Cambridge in this period were related to the market, it was only one of many areas of

⁶² Britnell, 'Markets', 217, n. 59.

⁶³ CCA, I/4, fols. 147a-147b, printed in C. Walford, *Fairs, past and present: a chapter in the history of commerce* (London, 1883), pp. 94-7 where it is attributed to a grant of Philip and Mary.

⁶⁴ *Annals*, i, pp. 84-5, 163-4, 388-9; UA, Luard 133.

⁶⁵ CCA, X/103, printed in *Charters*, pp. 202-3; *Annals*, i, pp. 302, 304, 310, 376-7, ii, pp. 2, 36, 55-8.

contention. The town, for example, claimed that scholars inter-commoned their cattle on the town commons, but refused to be assessed for their animals, and also that scholars over-fished in the town rivers.⁶⁶ As the university did not have its own prison, it depended on the co-operation of the townspeople to use the tollbooth or castle, but this was not always forthcoming.⁶⁷ The search for and punishment of suspect persons was a further area of confusion and disagreement during the sixteenth century, with the chancellor holding the authority to banish all prostitutes sinning within the University and precincts,⁶⁸ while the corporation punished waifs and strays.⁶⁹

The early sixteenth century was a particularly bitter period in town-gown tensions.⁷⁰ Complaints over the regulation of markets and supply of victuals were probably exacerbated by the growing demands made upon agriculture and the price inflation of the sixteenth century. National price indices of foodstuffs show that prices began to rise in the 1510s and 1520s and increased rapidly in the 1550s.⁷¹ Parliament passed a range of statutes during the 1530s in an unsuccessful attempt to deal with rising prices.⁷² The university must also have faced a growing mood of anti-clericalism around the Reformation, with some townsmen hoping that the colleges would face the same fate as the monasteries and chantries.

A similar heightening of tensions occurred in Oxford during the early sixteenth century. Both universities made new claims to banish burgesses, resorted to more frequent excommunications, and took a more energetic control over municipal trade. In the case of Oxford, the growing number of disputes has been attributed to renewed

⁶⁶ CCA, X/69(iii), X/3.

⁶⁷ *Annals*, ii, p. 3.

⁶⁸ *CPR 1452-61*, p. 502.

⁶⁹ CCA, X/66, m. 6; UA Collect.Admin.5, fol. 27.

⁷⁰ ~~Porter~~^{Parker}, *Town and gown*, pp. 69-75.

⁷¹ P.J. Bowden, 'Statistical appendix, 1500-1640', in P.J. Bowden, ed., *Chapters from the Agrarian History of England and Wales, i: Economic change: wages, profits and rents 1500-1750* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 149-50.

⁷² S.E. Lehmborg, *The Reformation Parliament 1529-36* (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 97, 173, 187, 251.

municipal vigour and possibly ineffectual control of privilege by the university. Oxford University gained additional chartered privileges by letters patent in 1523, but this has recently been seen as a modest document, which merely sought to codify many long-standing customs and generate additional sources of income for the university.⁷³ Cambridge submitted its own statutes to Wolsey in the following year, and although it gained no charter of liberties in return, the Cardinal favourably modified some of the clauses in the award of 1503.⁷⁴

The extent of town-gown hostility should not be overstated, though. ~~Porter~~^{Parker} has written of the '700 years' war in Cambridge' between town and gown, but it is doubtful whether the situation can be described as such, in the later middle ages at least.⁷⁵ Appeals to important figures at the royal court during the sixteenth century like Lady Margaret Beaufort, Cardinal Wolsey, Thomas Cromwell and Protector Somerset, offered the opportunity for grievances to be listed, which might otherwise not have come to light. The surviving evidence is therefore biased towards highlighting moments of conflict, often separated by years of more peaceful coexistence. Nor were the opposing forces of town and gown completely united among themselves. There were conflicts of interest between the burgesses who dominated trade and politics, and other inhabitants, while parish, craft and guild loyalties could also divide. Among the student population, as well as differences of age, wealth, degree and college or hostel, riots between northern and southern students were common until the sixteenth century.⁷⁶

The division between town and gown could also be bridged. Membership of Cambridge gilds provides one example of joint participation by individuals from the university and town corporation. The guild of St Katherine at Holy Trinity Church in

⁷³ Hammer, 'Oxford town', pp. 88-90.

⁷⁴ *Grace Book B*, ii, pp. x-xi.

⁷⁵ ~~Porter~~^{Parker}, *Town and gown*.

⁷⁶ Cobban, *Universities*, p. 273.

the early sixteenth century included a doctor of laws in the university, a father of the president of Queens' College, a university bedell and six mayors of Cambridge.⁷⁷ Even the corporation and university authorities could co-operate officially when major problems presented themselves. A paving leet was held jointly by the mayor and vice-chancellor from 1544, and in 1556 both officers worked together in trying to prevent the spread of the sweating sickness in the town.⁷⁸

Disputes between corporate bodies with responsibilities for marketing and other aspects of urban administration were not unique to university towns. The social and economic diversity of populations in all medieval towns generated tension and conflict among various interest groups. Cathedrals and large religious houses often held jealously-guarded rights of government, disputed by civic authorities, and could become the focuses for material grievances, as occurred at Bury St Edmunds and St Albans during the Peasants' Revolt.⁷⁹ Barnwell Priory was attacked by the townspeople of Cambridge in 1381, and disputes between the priory and town corporation were settled by arbitrators in 1506 and 1516.⁸⁰

Traders at Cambridge market

Despite the variety of records relating to the regulation of markets, few state where the buyers and sellers actually came from. The bulk of traders in markets consisted of small producers selling relatively cheap goods. The numerous traders, particularly victuallers, found in many towns would not have gained enough custom only within their town, and also supplied villagers in the neighbourhood, who in turn, carried some of their produce to be sold in market towns.⁸¹

⁷⁷ M. Siraut, 'Accounts of Saint Katherine's Guild at Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge: 1514-37', *PCAS*, 67 (1977), 114-15.

⁷⁸ Peek & Hall, *Archives of university*, pp. 61-2; *Collection from the MS library of Corpus Christi*, p. 190.

⁷⁹ Holt, 'Introduction', pp. 4-14; Dobson, *Peasants' Revolt*, pp. 234-6, 267-77.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 242; *Annals*, i, pp. 277-80, 298-301.

⁸¹ C. Dyer, 'Were peasants self-sufficient? English villagers and the market, 900-1300', in E. Mornet ed., *Campagnes médiévales: l'homme et son espace* (Paris, 1995), pp. 662-4.

Such a pattern of trade is reflected in pleas in borough courts, which show townsmen and men from surrounding villages involved in debt cases and other actions, highlighting the extent of the town's commercial contacts.⁸² Although most of the records of Cambridge's borough courts have been lost, a court book survives from 1389-90, recording pleas concerning men from local villages and more distant towns. Just over 300 cases are recorded in this book. The majority of cases, about 189, are pleas of debt; 76 are pleas of trespass, 24 for detention of chattels, 17 for broken contracts, and 2 are pleas of account.⁸³ Of the few debt pleas where further details are given, the cases involve leather, peas, locks, malt barley, a horse and half a barrel of ale.⁸⁴

Figure 4.2 illustrates the geographical distribution of participants involved in pleas at Cambridge borough court in 1389-90. Included in the map are all those involved in the cases, whether plaintiffs, defendants, or pledges, but excluded are those with surnames derived from place-names, like 'John de Nottyngham'. Although not all the pleadings necessarily resulted from trading transactions, they nevertheless highlight the economic hinterland of the town, as social contacts were most likely to occur where regular business took place.⁸⁵ The map reveals that the vast majority of contacts resided within a ten-mile radius of Cambridge, and of these, just over half came from within a five-mile radius. The most numerous contacts were with Barnwell, Chesterton and Haverhill, and then with Ely, London, Shelford, Swavesey and Trumpington – a mixture of adjacent villages and larger towns. The spatial spread of contacts was fairly evenly distributed around Cambridge, showing that the town operated as a gateway market for all the sub-regions around the town.

⁸² Kowaleski, *Exeter*, pp. 279-324; Kermode, 'Chester', pp. 298-301; S.H. Rigby, *Medieval Grimsby: growth and decline* (Hull, 1993), pp. 62-3; Dyer, 'Market towns', 20-5.

⁸³ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 1.

⁸⁴ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 1, fols. 9v, 10v, 11v, 17v, 32v.

⁸⁵ Dyer, 'Market towns', 21.

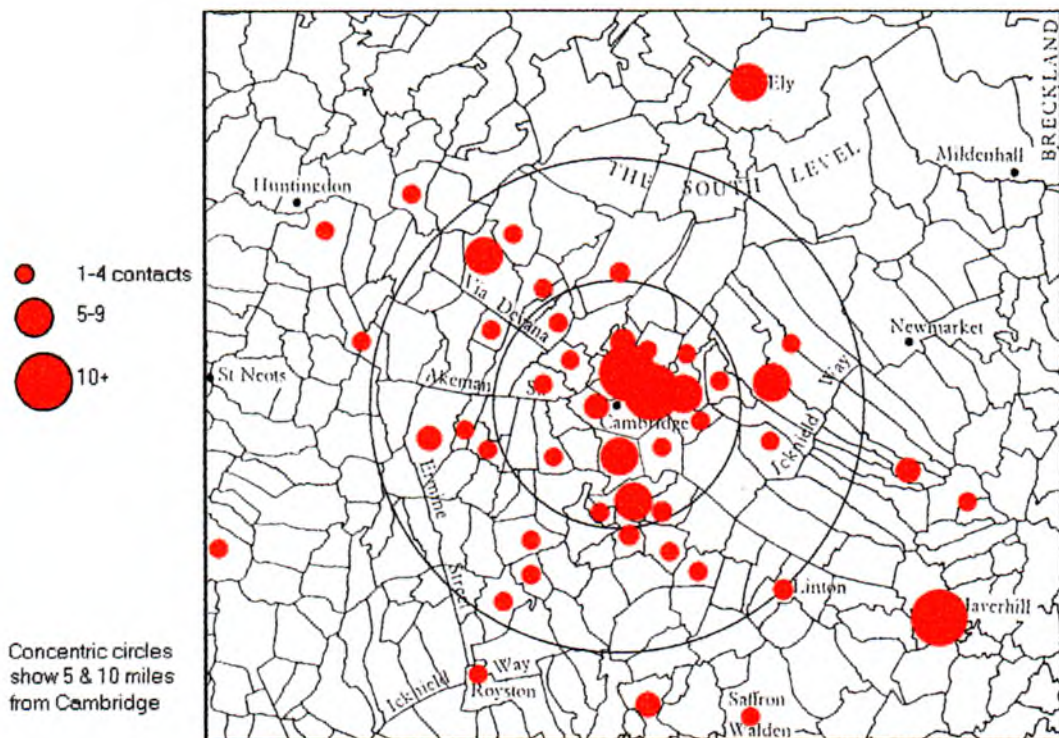


Figure 4.2: Cambridge town pleas, 1389-90

Source: CCA, Palmer/Barnard volume 1

Similar trade in food, clothes, leather goods and other necessities is found in the fifteenth-century debt cases from the town courts of Newmarket, Saffron Walden and Godmanchester, on the edge of Cambridge's region. The hinterlands of these towns generally complemented Cambridge's sphere of influence for pleas, with slight overlapping at the edges. At Walden, for example, traders generally came from villages south of Shelford, east of Royston and west of Haverhill, while at Newmarket traders originated from places east of Cambridge and north of Haverhill.⁸⁶ Analysis of

⁸⁶ Cromarty, 'Chepying Walden', 126-7; P. May, 'Newmarket and its market court, 1399-1413', *Proceedings of Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 35 (1981), 32-3; J. Davis, 'Trade and morals in a fifteenth-century small town', in *Economic History Society annual conference programme* (1999), 99-104; Raftis, *Godmanchester*, pp. 135-49, 170-83.

court records from other towns of various sizes has shown that nearly 50 per cent of contact came within a radius of 10 km, and that generally, smaller towns did not trade over a more limited area than larger cities. As borough courts could only handle debts of below 40s, the hinterlands revealed in these records are those of the primary area of retail trade, rather than those generated by higher-value and longer-distance trade for more specialist goods and services.⁸⁷

The most distant participants in the Cambridge borough courts lay outside the boundaries of the map in figure 4.2. These were men from the Norfolk villages of Bridgham and Wiggshall, 'Well', possibly Upwell in Cambridgeshire, and the towns of Bury, Lynn, Northampton and Thaxted. The maximum distance of contact was just over 50 miles, as Londoners were involved in eight cases, mainly pleas of debt. Stephan Sewale of London 'Issemonger' sued both Richard Randolph of Shelford and William Brunne, and William Eggesele, mercer, of London sued Hugh Fandon, chapman of Barnwell. The trade of the 'issemonger', is unclear, but the mercer was probably supplying the chapman with wholesale goods which the chapman would then resell locally.⁸⁸ Thomas Spayn, fishmonger, and Walter Blannkeye, mercer of London, were also involved in debt cases, as were two drapers, Henry Lavenden of Northampton and William Husk of Cambridge.⁸⁹ Although such cases were few, these more distant towns had important commercial links with Cambridge. Lynn, connected by river, acted as Cambridge's seaport, Northampton and Bury were the closest urban centres of significant size east and west of Cambridge, and there was a major interchange of goods with London. One might expect these towns to be more prominent among the court cases, but most of their trading transactions probably exceeded the 40s limit for actions in the borough court.

⁸⁷ Dyer, 'Market towns', 24-5.

⁸⁸ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 1, fols. 18, 32v, 33; Swanson, *Medieval artisans*, p. 146; Could the 'Issemonger' have sold ice, for which 'isse' (*OED*, viii, p. 134) is an obsolete form? Or perhaps he was a fishmonger.

⁸⁹ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 1, fols. 7v, 17v, 19.

Table 4.1: *Occupations of persons involved in Cambridge town pleas, 1389-90*

<i>Occupation and number of cases</i>			
cordwainer	17	porter	2
baker	12	prior	2
butcher	12	taverner	2
servant	10	vicar	2
barker	8	bailiff	1
skinner	7	bedeman	1
tailor	7	boatman	1
'segger'	6	canon	1
webster	6	capman	1
barber	5	carter	1
fuller	5	cleric	1
sheather	5	cook	1
chaplain	4	currior	1
chapman	4	cutler	1
mercier	4	drover	1
draper	3	fishmonger	1
fisher	3	furbisher	1
glover	3	goldsmith	1
roper	3	hayward	1
smith	3	lockmaker	1
chandler	2	prioress	1
hosier	2	saddler	1
'issemonger'	2		

Source: CCA, Palmer/Barnard volume 1

Table 4.1 shows the recorded occupations of those involved in pleas at Cambridge. All recorded occupations of plaintiffs, defendants and pledges, both from Cambridge and elsewhere, are included, but not those with occupational surnames alone, which by this date, had become largely hereditary. The occupations reveal that not only was Cambridge an important service centre, with many bakers, butchers,⁹⁰ and servants present, but also a significant leather-working centre, as represented by the cordwainers, barkers,⁹¹ and skinner. The town also functioned as a textile centre, shown by the tailors, websters,⁹² fullers and drapers, and as a mercantile centre, attracting chapmen and mercers. There were also specialist trades, including a

⁹⁰ Some may be 'botchers', who repaired clothes: *Alien communities*, p. 47, n. 1.

⁹¹ tanners: *OED*, i, p. 958.

⁹² weavers: *OED*, xx, p. 68.

sheather, who made sheaths for swords, a furbisher, who cleaned weapons and armour,⁹³ and a goldsmith, cutler and lockmaker. A bedeman was paid or endowed to pray for others.⁹⁴ The 'seggers' may have sold sedge, a rush-like plant of the fenland, which was burnt as fuel.⁹⁵

Analyses of Cambridge's occupational structure in the sixteenth century by Goose and Siraut have shown a similar predominance of the food, drink and service sectors, and the importance of clothing and leather workers.⁹⁶ It would be hazardous though, to infer too much from such a limited sample: the five cases containing a sheather, for example, all involved the same man. The occupations refer to all those involved in the cases, not only Cambridge residents. Nonetheless, in the absence of more detailed occupational information, particularly poll tax returns, the town pleas provide some indication of the main areas of economic activity in the town and its hinterland, and suggest that these did not change significantly between the late fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Although local religious houses were represented in the courts by the prior and a canon of Barnwell, and the prioress of St Radegund's,⁹⁷ the absence of university members is noticeable. The university in fact heard actions concerning debt and injury at their own vice-chancellor's and commissary courts, to which any case involving masters, students, scholars' servants and university members could be moved. By 1503, the university courts heard most actions concerning contracts of victual, and in 1526 oversight of all contracts of victual bought or sold within Cambridge was granted to the chancellor.⁹⁸ Shepard's research has shown that during the 1560-1640

⁹³ *OED*, vi, p. 275, xv, p. 208.

⁹⁴ *OED*, ii, p. 13.

⁹⁵ T.A. Rowell, 'Sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) in Cambridgeshire: its use and production since the seventeenth century', *Agricultural History Review*, 34 (1986), 140-8.

⁹⁶ Goose, 'Economic and social aspects', pp. 121-5; Siraut, 'Cambridge', pp. 201-3.

⁹⁷ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 1, fols. 1, 34v.

⁹⁸ UA, Luard 145a, printed in *Annals*, i, pp. 265-6; CCA, X/20, printed in *Annals*, i, p. 324.

period, the university courts experienced a considerable increase in business, from less than 100 cases per annum in the early 1560s, to over 600 cases by the 1630s. Men and women of all social positions used the courts, and the townspeople of Cambridge formed a disproportionately large number of litigants.⁹⁹ A book of acts of the vice-chancellor's court, recording a variety of pleas and presentments for breaches of market regulations between 1552 and 1557, lists men from the Cambridgeshire villages of Barton, Chesterton, Shepreth, Stapleford, Thriplow, Wilbraham, Wilburton and Whittlesford, from Bury, Stratford-le-Bow in London, and from Norfolk. Occupations included an apothecary or grocer, baker, basket-maker, cook, husbandman, innholder, rector and yeoman.¹⁰⁰

A few other disparate sources suggest that the hinterland for basic retail trade outlined in the pleas of 1389-90 altered little between the late fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Occasionally, records of the university's court leet from the early fifteenth century list villagers from around Cambridge, including men from Hinxton, Ickleton and Stow-cum-Quy who sold using the auncel,¹⁰¹ and men who came to sell ale in Barnwell ward, probably at Stourbridge and Midsummer fairs.¹⁰² In July 1534, 21 sworn witnesses gave depositions for the court of Star Chamber, concerning a riot which had occurred in the market square in Cambridge on Saturday, 11 April 1534, and who can generally be assumed to have visited the market on that day. They included men from Barton, Bottisham, Chesterton, Dry Drayton, Girton, Grantchester, Histon, Rampton, Shelford, Thriplow and Trumpington, and were mostly yeomen, husbandmen and gentlemen.¹⁰³ Men from Balsham, Dullingham, Girton, Waterbeach and Wilbraham had stalls in the new butchers' standings in Cambridge market-place

⁹⁹ Shepard, 'Meanings of manhood', pp. 243-93.

¹⁰⁰ UA, V.C.Ct.I.1, fols. 2-19v.

¹⁰¹ Auncel – a kind of balance: *OED*, i, p. 787. UA, C.U.R. 17, fol. 13.

¹⁰² See below, pp. 172-3, 178.

¹⁰³ G.R. Elton, *Star Chamber stories* (London, 1958), p. 75.

in the early 1550s.¹⁰⁴ This scattered evidence shows that surrounding villagers, from up to ten miles distant, although often closer, used Cambridge as a marketing centre.

Small town and village markets: Linton, Foxton and Whittlesford

Evidence emanating from other markets in the Cambridge region is limited. The seigniorial court was the usual instrument of government in both small towns and villages, dealing with trading offences, cases of debt and trespass, and pronouncing ordinances relating to markets and a range of other activities.¹⁰⁵ Court records detailing trading offences survive from Linton, a small town with about 580 inhabitants, and two villages, Foxton and Whittlesford, with around 300 people each in the 1520s.

These three villages stand on mainly chalk soils in the river valleys sub-region. Foxton lies seven miles south-west of Cambridge. The main manor, from which the court rolls survive, was owned by the nuns of Chatteris Abbey, and passed after the dissolution to London aldermen. There were three other manors in the parish. Whittlesford is located seven miles south of Cambridge on the Cam. The Tilney family possessed Whittlesford manor from 1451 until 1552, and it was shortly afterwards acquired by Sir John Huddleston of Sawston. Linton, situated nine miles south-east of Cambridge, was a slightly larger centre than the other two: it remained a small centre for local retail trade into the twentieth century. The Parys family, resident in the town, held three of Linton's manors, while the fourth, Barham manor, was held by the Alington and Barney family.¹⁰⁶ All three settlements were on important routes, with branches of the Icknield Way and other main roads passing through the villages.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ CCTA, i, fols. 342, 356-356v.

¹⁰⁵ A. Watkins, *Small towns in the Forest of Arden in the fifteenth century*, Dugdale Society occasional papers, XXXVIII (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1998), p. 8.

¹⁰⁶ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, pp. 80, 84-9, 263, 266, viii, pp. 165-9.

¹⁰⁷ Taylor, *Archaeology of Cambridgeshire*, i, pp. 49-51, 108-110, ii, pp. 55-60.

The trading opportunities provided by the accessibility of these settlements were exploited by grants of markets and fairs. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Foxton gained three fairs and a market, Linton received two markets and two fairs, and Whittlesford was granted two markets and a fair. Given the small size of these localities, it is unlikely that all the markets and fairs ever operated, and by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the marketing infrastructure in these villages, as throughout the country, had been much reduced. In Foxton, the market continued, and although there is no evidence for the operation of the fairs in this period, they were recorded on each manor around 1630. At Linton, the August fair survived, together with the Great Linton market. The market and fair at Whittlesford produced no income in 1460.¹⁰⁸ Although Whittlesford manor was reported to have no fairs in 1578, some holders of tenements still paid for admission to the market green in 1488, including John Dale of Cambridge.¹⁰⁹ Some trading may also have occurred at Whittlesford Bridge, one mile to the east.¹¹⁰ Trade in foodstuffs, particularly bread, ale and meat, occurred in many villages without markets.¹¹¹ There is no evidence for the operation of the market at Barrington, and Shepreth never possessed a market charter, but traders in these villages were also amerced in the Foxton court rolls.

All three localities held leet courts at which presentments were made for breaking the assize of bread and ale.¹¹² The majority of amercements were a few pence. Usually, it was simply stated that the persons had broken the assize, although at Linton, the butchers were sometimes fined for selling unwholesome meat, and two brewers were fined for not selling a quarter of ale for 1d outside their homes. At Foxton, it was occasionally reported that bread was of insufficient weight, or brewers had failed to send for the aletasters. Two brewers were fined for not selling ale by sealed measure

¹⁰⁸ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, pp. 96, 270, viii, p. 173.

¹⁰⁹ CCRO, 488/M Huddleston MSS, Whittlesford manorial records box 5, rental 1487/8, survey 1578.

¹¹⁰ See below, pp. 153-4.

¹¹¹ Britnell, *Commercialisation*, p. 98.

¹¹² CCRO, L63/17-18, L64/1-4; CCRO, R59/14/11/7A-B; 488/M, Huddleston MSS, Whittlesford manorial records box 5, court rolls 1461-83, 1513-23.

but by dishes and cups. Price regulations for ale were entered in the court rolls of Foxton in 1493 and 1529.¹¹³

Amercements for infringing the assizes of bread and ale appear so frequently in court rolls that they are generally assumed to be a form of licensing covering all commercial brewers. Brewing required only the resources of the household kitchen, and as the average output was unlikely to vary much, the numbers of brewers amerced can be used as a rough indicator of population trends and living standards. So in the late fourteenth century, a rise in the number of amercements at Colchester reflected the growth of the population and a rise in living standards, while the falling numbers recorded in many Breckland villages reflected the drop in trade and declining population.¹¹⁴

The number of bakers, brewers and butchers amerced at the three market courts over the period are shown in table 4.2. During the early sixteenth century, the number of bakers and brewers at Foxton and Linton rose, and the number of brewers at Whittlesford fell considerably.

In all three places, a number of women were amerced for brewing ale, although sometimes the courts amerced their husbands, rather than the women themselves. Women dominated the brewing of ale in the later Middle Ages, which required little capital investment and could be pursued at home. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries though, female brewers were gradually replaced by men. To some extent this shift may have been due to legal changes, whereby the husband was indicted while the wife continued to do the brewing. It has also been claimed though, that men dominated the new technology of beer-brewing, while women lacked the capital to

¹¹³ CCRO, L63/17, mm. 2, 6, 7v, 13, courts 1493, 1497-8, 1507; L63/18, m. 22d, court 1529.

¹¹⁴ J.M. Bennett, *Ale, beer and brewsters in England: women's work in a changing world, 1300-1600* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 158-70; Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 89-90, 93-5; Bailey, *Marginal economy?*, pp. 259-62.

compete, had no legal autonomy when married, and suffered from negative images of the corrupt tradeswoman.¹¹⁵

Table 4.2: *Bakers, brewers and butchers amerced at Foxton, Linton and Whittlesford*

<i>no. of courts with ameracements</i>		<i>bakers</i>		<i>brewers/ale sellers</i>		<i>butchers</i>	
		<i>total</i>	<i>average</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>average</i>	<i>total</i>	<i>average</i>
<i>Foxton</i>							
1491-1500	7	3	0.4	8	1.1	0	
1501-10	4	0		10	2.5	4	1.0
1511-20	11	12	1.1	22	2.0	12	1.1
1521-30	7	13	1.9	15	2.1	2	0.3
1531-40	6	12	2.0	19	3.2	0	
1541-50	7	13	1.9	14	2.0	0	
<i>Linton</i>							
1511-20	7			16	2.3 *	6	0.9
1521-30	7			26	3.7 *	14	2.0
1531-40	9			56	6.2 *	21	2.3
<i>Whittlesford</i>							
1471-80	3	2	0.7	23	7.7		
1511-20	4	4	1.0	13	3.3		

Note: * includes bakers and brewers

Sources: CCRO, L63/17-18, L64/1-4; CCRO, R59/14/11/7A-B; CCRO, 488/M, Huddleston MSS, Whittlesford manorial records box 5, court rolls 1461-83, 1513-23

Occasionally, there is evidence of other market activity in the court rolls. Fish and butter was sold at Foxton.¹¹⁶ Fish sellers were not routinely recorded, and appear to have received larger fines. At Linton in 1552, Thomas Awncell was fined 3s 4d for selling defective herring in Lent, and John Lane fined 5s for selling defective whiting in the market and throwing them in the river. Courts also amerced traders for buying goods in the market and then reselling them at a higher price, but few fines were made in the three villages for this offence, known as regrating. Robert Meller was fined 2s for buying 1 quarter of barley in Linton market and then reselling it for 2d more.

¹¹⁵ Bennett, *Ale*, pp. 145-57; M. Mate, *Women in medieval English society* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 38-45.

¹¹⁶ L63/18, m. 6d, court 1513.

Robert White was fined 3s 4d, having bought eight herring for 1d, and selling four for 1d.¹¹⁷

Places of residence of the traders are rarely recorded, suggesting that many men came from the same village and were known to the court. At Foxton, William Walles, baker, from Fowlmere (2 miles away) was recorded on 14 occasions, and Cambridge bakers John Browne and Gill (7 miles away) on 8 occasions and 3 occasions respectively. There were also single visits from bakers Farror of Cambridge, John Williams of Fowlmere and Holt of Sawston (5 miles). At Linton, a butcher visited from Hadstock (1½ miles away) and another from Haverhill (7 miles distant). At Whittlesford, brewers came from Whittlesford Bridge and Sawston (1 mile away) and Great Shelford (3 miles) and a baker from Walden (7½ miles). Butchers and bakers travelled from further afield than brewers, as meat and bread were easier to transport than ale. The hinterlands of these smaller markets seem to have stretched to nearly 8 miles for suppliers from towns, down to around 5 miles for suppliers from local villages.

Many food retailers were poorer inhabitants, trying to earn a few additional pence. At both Foxton and Linton, the social structure of the village in 1524/5 was fairly extensively differentiated. At Foxton, 54 per cent of the taxpaying population had assessments of under £2, and at Linton, 75 per cent, compared to 39 per cent at Whittlesford. Many of these poorer inhabitants must have relied on the market to obtain foodstuffs and other supplies, as they lacked sufficient land to support themselves. Even more prosperous peasant households often found it convenient to make purchases in the market.¹¹⁸

Some local inhabitants can be identified as traders in the local markets, by matching taxpayers in the lay subsidy of 1524-5 with the names of those who were amerced for

¹¹⁷ R59/14/11/7A, m. 27, court 1532; R59/14/11/7B, m. 8d, court 1552.

¹¹⁸ PRO, E 179/81/130, E 179/81/134, E 179/81/147; Dyer, 'Were peasants self-sufficient?', pp. 660-1.

baking and brewing at the three markets. Some can also be traced in a list of tenants and their holdings in the Foxton court rolls of 1507.¹¹⁹ Among those amerced at Linton were John Thornton, assessed on goods of £4, and William Benet, Richard Misent, Richard Self, and William Thake, each assessed on goods of 20s in 1524. At Foxton, Thomas Welles, a miller, with £5 10s 0d in goods, and Robert Verley, a butcher, with £3 in goods, both had wives who brewed ale. Thomas Welles held three holdings and a mill in 1507. The Symton and Rayner families, with members assessed at 20s, 23s 4d and £4, also had members involved in brewing. William Beton of Shepreth was a brewer assessed on goods of 40s, and held only a cottage in the 1507 list. William Prior and Robert Strykke were brewers at Barrington, assessed on goods of £4 10s 0d and £5 10s 0d respectively. William Prior, Robert Strykke and John Strykke, whose wife brewed, held a messuage and a virgate each. At Whittlesford, John Scote, with £3 in goods in 1525, Richard Saddeler with 40s in goods, and John Whiteby with 20s in wages, were fined for breaking the assize of ale. Thus most of the food retailers amerced were labourers, craftsmen and husbandmen, with goods of £4 or less in 1524-5, although a few were more substantial craftsmen and yeomen, perhaps owning a little more land, with assessments of around £5.¹²⁰ Those like William Beton, with only a cottage and others with less than £2 in wealth, probably did not hold enough land to support their families, and for these households in particular, the production and retailing of food and drink would have been a valuable additional source of income. Similar social groups of market traders were found at Botesdale, Suffolk, in the late thirteenth century: many of the tenants with holdings in that market-place were artisans and tradesmen; nearly half were landless, but a significant proportion of those with land held over 10 acres.¹²¹

The leading assessment in the 1524 lay subsidy at Foxton was Dame Anne St George, assessed at £20 on lands, and at Linton, Philip Parys was assessed at £100 in lands.

¹¹⁹ E 179/81/130, E 179/81/134, E 179/81/147; L63/17, m. 12-12d, court 1507.

¹²⁰ For categories of occupational wealth in the 1524-5 lay subsidies, see Chapter 2, above.

¹²¹ Smith, 'Periodic market', pp. 466-81.

Philip Parys directed in his will of 1557 that his corn was to be sold in the open market near his dwelling house.¹²² Close to Whittlesford was the Huddleston residence at Sawston. Sir John Huddleston, a vice-chamberlain and privy councillor, rebuilt the house during Mary's reign.¹²³ While noble and gentry families and other landlords may occasionally have stimulated local trade through their own purchases, or by marketing their own produce, the economy of many small towns and markets was supported largely by the consumption of the peasantry.¹²⁴

Accompanying many market grants in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were additions or changes to the layout of villages to accommodate a market-place. At Linton, after the Parys family acquired the two main manors in the later fourteenth century, the market moved from its original location to a better-placed site south of the river. This new location contained both an open area and permanent stalls; 20s were left towards the building of a market cross in 1528.¹²⁵ Various shops in the 'midelrow' and 'Butcheryrow' of Linton market were held at rents of between 7d and 2s per annum in the 1530s and 1540s, and two of these shops were held by men from Walden.¹²⁶ At Foxton, the market was presumably held on the 'market stead', mentioned in 1500, a green at the western end of the village street.¹²⁷ In Whittlesford, the green was halfway along West End and expansion in that area may have been the result of the market grant of the early thirteenth century.¹²⁸

Another focus of trade in Whittlesford may have been the medieval bridge that carried the Newmarket to Royston road over the river Cam. A small hamlet grew up around Whittlesford Bridge, centred on the hospital of St John the Baptist, founded in the

¹²² W.M. Palmer, *The antiquities of Linton* (privately printed, 1913), p. 4.

¹²³ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, pp. 250-1.

¹²⁴ Dyer, 'Consumer', 324-5; Smith, 'Periodic market', pp. 470-1.

¹²⁵ BL, Add MS 5861, fol. 106; C.C. Taylor, 'Medieval market grants and village morphology', *Landscape History*, 4 (1982), 21-8.

¹²⁶ R59/14/11/7A, mm. 25, 29d, courts 1531, 1534; R59/14/11/7B, m. 4, court 1549.

¹²⁷ L63/17, m. 9, court 1500; *VCH Cambs.*, viii, p. 173.

¹²⁸ C.C. Taylor, 'Whittlesford: the study of a river-edge village', in M. Aston, D. Austin & C. Dyer, eds., *Rural settlements of medieval England* (Oxford, 1989), p. 222.

mid-thirteenth century, which probably provided accommodation for travellers. A fair was reported as belonging to Whittlesford Bridge hospital in 1279, but was not recorded later.¹²⁹ The White Lion inn took over the role of providing accommodation for travellers from the hospital in the sixteenth century, and the hospital building was used as its barn. Inns, providing rest and refreshment for travellers, often developed as informal centres of trade, outside formal market-places.¹³⁰

The tolls of Whittlesford Bridge were largely owned by Cambridge Corporation, and leased to farmers. In 1499, every person leasing the bridge was to pay an additional charge of 8d to the town corporation. The corporation spent £40 8s 4d on rebuilding the bridge in 1565, and the following year it was leased, with the tolls, for a £4 fine and 30s annual rent.¹³¹ The lord of Whittlesford manor had been granted the right to collect tolls of Whittlesford Bridge on Tuesdays throughout the year,¹³² and although these were worth only 12d a year in 1460, a description of manorial profits c.1450 lists a tariff of potential charges. Tolls were taken on horses and colts, cattle, sheep, sacks of malt, wheat or corn, horseloads of fish and merchandise, fardells of wares and woolpacks. 'Franchised men' with merchandise were charged 1d to set up a stall, presumably at the bridge or in Whittlesford market-place.¹³³ As Whittlesford Bridge was said to lie within four parishes in 1279, it may be that its site, away from the power of a single authority to control or profit from the trading activities, encouraged the growth of an informal market as at Buntingford in Hertfordshire.¹³⁴

¹²⁹ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, pp. 202, 215.

¹³⁰ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, p. 202; Dyer, 'Hidden trade', 149-50; A. Everitt, 'The English urban inn, 1560-1760' in A. Everitt, ed., *Perspectives in English urban history* (London, 1973), pp. 91-137.

¹³¹ *Annals*, i, p. 253, ii, p. 216; CCA, XVIII/12, no. 4.

¹³² The market granted in 1206 was to be held on Tuesdays: *VCH Cambs.*, vi, p. 270.

¹³³ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, p. 270; Description of manorial profits c.1450, printed in T.F. Teversham, *A history of the village of Sawston*, 2 parts (Sawston, 1942-7), part ii, p. 26. The present whereabouts of this document is not known – it is not catalogued among the Huddleston MSS at CCRO.

¹³⁴ M. Bailey, 'A tale of two towns: Buntingford and Standon in the later Middle Ages', *Journal of Medieval History*, 19 (1993), 358.

Manorial courts also recorded pleas of debt, detention of chattels and broken agreements, showing that the buying and selling of commodities was an important feature of peasant society.¹³⁵ But many manorial courts were no longer being used for pleas of debts in the later fifteenth century. At Whittlesford, a handful of pleas were made in the late fifteenth century, mainly relating to the agricultural economy and including debts for 1 quarter and 1½ quarters of barley, farms and rents of land, and arrears of account. A couple of defendants came from Thriplow, a mile to the south-west. Debts are not found in the sixteenth-century court rolls. At Linton, a few debts were sued in the manorial court, including debts for barley and saffron. John Thornton was fined 40s for prosecuting a 20s debt which was made outside, and not at, the court.¹³⁶ The decline in debt cases was a general feature of many manorial courts, and it seems that peasants must have increasingly turned to other borough or ecclesiastical courts to pursue their debts.

Masschaele has recently proposed that the marketing structure that had been formed by c. 1300 functioned chiefly to supply the needs of the fifty largest English towns. Rural markets acted as nodes in this supply network.¹³⁷ The evidence presented here, though, gives little support to such claims. The handful of Cambridge bakers which visited these rural markets may have been coming to obtain supplies of wheat, but were just as likely to have been selling their own produce there, and such traders did not predominate. The markets at Foxton, Shepreth and Whittlesford, like most other rural markets, essentially served the needs of smallholders, cottars and labourers.

The continuing operation of markets in these particular localities arguably reflects the diversity of economic opportunities available in these communities. At Linton and Whittlesford, the river provided power to process several raw materials. There were

¹³⁵ R.H. Hilton, *The English peasantry in the later Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 43-7.

¹³⁶ 488/M, Huddleston MSS, Whittlesford manorial records box 5, court rolls 1461-83, mm. 1-2d, 4-5, 7-8d; R58/14/11/7A, mm. 12, 15, courts 1516, 1518.

¹³⁷ Masschaele, *Peasants*.

fulling mills in both places, although that at Whittlesford had fallen out of operation by 1400. The only cloth sales recorded in the county's ulnage accounts during the 1460s which occurred outside Cambridge and Ely were at Linton (9 cloths) and Sawston (8 cloths).¹³⁸ There are documentary references from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to four mills at Linton, and also to timber sales, tanning and a tile kiln and lime pits.¹³⁹ The watermill at Whittlesford was a valuable item: producing 20s a quarter in 1487/8, it was being leased in seven year terms in 1463/4 and 1477/8 for 100s, and although in decay in 1514, it was worth £8 by 1578.¹⁴⁰ Saffron was cultivated at Foxton, Linton and Whittlesford.¹⁴¹ There may also have been a growth in the land market at Foxton and Whittlesford from the mid-sixteenth century: entry fines and heriots increased at Foxton after 1550, and at Whittlesford, entry fines appear to have risen from a year's annual rent in 1555 to two year's rent by 1560.¹⁴²

Conclusion

Cambridge's region, along with the rest of the country, experienced a reduction in the number of functioning markets between the Black Death and the sixteenth century, although the decline cannot be dated precisely. This reflected a temporary reduction in the number of landless people, although this particular trend was reversed in the course of the sixteenth century. Of longer-lasting significance were changes in the structure of marketing, with the increasing importance of mercantile networks.¹⁴³ The surviving markets tended to be concentrated in the larger settlements of the region, many of which possessed urban characteristics.

¹³⁸ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, p. 270; PRO, E 101/338/9.

¹³⁹ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, pp. 95, 97.

¹⁴⁰ 488/M, Huddleston MSS, Whittlesford manorial records box 5, bailiff's accounts, 1463/4, 1477/8; rentals 1487/8, 1514; survey 1578. *VCH Cambs.*, vi, p. 270.

¹⁴¹ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, pp. 92, 99, 269, viii, p. 171.

¹⁴² 488/M, Huddleston MSS, Whittlesford manorial records box 5, court rolls 1554-76; *VCH Cambs.*, viii, p. 171.

¹⁴³ Britnell, 'Urban demand', pp. 16, 19-20.

With the contraction of the marketing network, the regional importance of Cambridge's market appears to have been enhanced. Increasing income was received from stalls in the town's market-place during the sixteenth century. The growth of the university in the fifteenth century arguably placed increased pressure on the supply and marketing of foodstuffs, while in the sixteenth century all consumers faced price inflation. But most Cambridge students, at least by the sixteenth century, were housed in colleges and other institutions, which relied largely on private arrangements for their supplies. In the 1530s, the university could even go so far as to declare a total ban on the supply of victuals by freemen, although admittedly it did rely on a prominent section of the townspeople, its privileged persons, for a range of goods and services.

Foxton, Linton and Whittlesford show the continued operation of some small markets into the sixteenth century. Evidence from Barrington, Shepreth and Whittlesford Bridge demonstrates that some petty trading occurred outside formal market-places, and much more probably escaped the notice of the manorial courts. In the early sixteenth century, as in the thirteenth century, the majority of those supplying local markets were labourers, craftsmen and husbandmen, with a few more substantial landholders, and these markets were located in settlements with a relatively buoyant local economy, accommodating a range of different trades. The evidence does not suggest that these rural markets were geared to supplying the needs of Cambridge, or any other large regional town. Indeed Cambridge's largest consumers, the colleges, relied little on markets held in the town or elsewhere.

Thus the network of formal markets in Cambridge and its region, while heavily rationalised in comparison with the pre-Black Death period, and despite systems of private and informal marketing, continued to serve its region, and evolved to meet the changing economic circumstances of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

CHAPTER 5

FAIRS

The network of markets in Cambridge and its region was complemented by an equally extensive network of fairs. Whereas local and retail trade predominated in markets, which were held weekly and lasted only one day, wholesale and regional trade dominated fairs, which were annual events, held over several days. Fairs generally attracted buyers and sellers who came from greater distances, and dealt in more valuable items, than those attending markets. So while markets provided the opportunity to buy and sell basic foodstuffs and household goods, in addition fairs generally offered the chance to buy livestock, farming equipment, non-staple and luxury items.¹

Three fairs were held in Cambridge, and others operated in other towns and villages throughout the region. Being annual, transient events, fairs did not encourage the keeping of records, and for many fairs, only the charter grant licensing the fair survives. At Cambridge though, a considerable amount of additional evidence exists, mainly relating to Stourbridge fair, held on the edge of the town. Many colleges, together with other ecclesiastical and noble households, made purchases at this fair, illuminating trade from the perspective of the consumer. Records also survive from the town corporation, which owned many of the booths in this fair, and from the university authorities, who had oversight of some trading offences, while more serious disputes appear in the Chancery proceedings. It is therefore possible to examine the buyers, sellers, and products being traded at Stourbridge fair and other fairs in Cambridge and its region.

¹ Kowaleski, *Exeter*, p. 41; D.L. Farmer, 'Marketing the produce of the countryside, 1200-1500', in Miller, ed., *Agrarian history*, iii, p. 345.

Late medieval fairs

Despite the recent attention paid to several aspects of medieval marketing, fairs remain a relatively under-researched subject, and so a brief general survey of English fairs in the later middle ages may help to place the fairs of Cambridge and its region in a broader perspective. Many fairs, like markets, disappeared with the dramatic reduction in population after the Black Death, and most of those that remained experienced a contraction in profits. Particularly severe was the decline of the larger English fairs at Boston, St Ives, Westminster and Winchester, which at their height in the mid-thirteenth century, had attracted traders from across Europe. These international fairs had already begun to be eclipsed in the early fourteenth century by towns that offered year-round trading in luxury goods and the distribution of cloth, and after the Black Death they slid into obscurity.²

With the decline of the international fairs and the widespread contraction in marketing, medieval historians have focused little attention on English fairs in the later medieval period.³ But this is in contrast to the importance that has been attributed to these institutions in the early modern period. Everitt has described the mass of different business transacted at fairs in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, reflecting population growth and the development of private marketing institutions. He has claimed that in terms of trade, luxury goods, news and ideas, fairs were probably more important for most provincial people than the London market.⁴ Other writers have pointed to the vitality of fairs during Elizabeth's reign, the extensive network of fairs that served the horse and livestock trades, and to the

² Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 155-61; E.W. Moore, *The fairs of medieval England: an introductory study*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts, LXXII (Toronto, 1985), pp. 217-22; J.Z. Titow, 'The decline of the fair of St Giles, Winchester, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 31 (1987), 58-75; Rosser, *Medieval Westminster*, pp. 97-115.

³ Continental European fairs are examined by O. Verlinden, 'Markets and fairs', in M.M. Postan, E.E. Rich & E. Miller, eds., *Cambridge economic history of Europe*, iii: *Economic organisation and policies in the middle ages* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 150-3.

⁴ Everitt, 'Marketing', pp. 81-92; A. Everitt, 'Introduction', in Everitt, ed., *Perspectives*, p. 6.

fact that their widespread demise only occurred in the nineteenth century.⁵ Nonetheless, the role of fairs in the century before Elizabeth's accession remains obscure.

The later middle ages saw major changes in the levels and distribution of incomes which in turn led to major shifts in the composition of demand and the structure of marketing. In some regions, certain sectors of the late medieval economy flourished, such as livestock farming, fishing, cloth production and lead mining, and fairs developed to serve these areas of growth. Welsh cattle drovers met West Midland graziers at the fairs of Birmingham and Coventry. Exeter's Lenten fair, founded in 1374, mainly served as a market for the expanding fisheries of the south-west.⁶ In the West Riding of Yorkshire, fairs in Bradford, Halifax, and Wakefield provided an outlet for the cloth made in those districts, and the rapid decline in the income from Ripon's fairs at the end of the fifteenth century may have been a result of the decline of cloth production there.⁷ Wye fair was a major centre for the sale of cloth in Kent in the later fourteenth century. Despite a slump in the 1390s, the purveyor for the Calais garrison bought cloth there in the mid-fifteenth century, and it was described as a 'great fair' by Leland in Henry VIII's reign. Peasant workers in the Mendip lead mining industry in the late fifteenth century may have used fairs in the locality to engage in inter-regional trade.⁸

⁵ M.T. Hodgen, 'Fairs of Elizabethan England', *Economic Geography*, 18 (1942), pp. 389-400; P.R. Edwards, 'The horse trade in Tudor & Stuart England', in F.M.L. Thompson, ed., *Horses in European economic history. A preliminary canter* (Reading, 1983), pp. 113-31; J.A. Chartres, 'Markets and fairs in England and Wales, 1500 to 1860', University of Leeds, School of Business and Economic Studies, Discussion paper series, G93/03 (1993), pp. 11-16.

⁶ Britnell, *Commercialisation*, p. 160; M. Kowaleski, 'The expansion of the south-western fisheries in late medieval England', *EcHR*, 53 (2000), 447.

⁷ K.L. McCutcheon, *Yorkshire fairs & markets to the end of the eighteenth century*, Thoresby Society, XXXIX (Leeds, 1940), pp. 51, 111, 131, 135; H. Heaton, *The Yorkshire woollen and worsted industries from the earliest times up to the industrial revolution* (Oxford, 2nd edn., 1965), pp. 71, 75, 145.

⁸ M. Mate, 'The rise and fall of markets in southeast England', *Canadian Journal of History*, 31 (1996), 69, 77; I. Blanchard, *International lead production and trade in the "Age of the Saigerprozess" 1460-1560* (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 307-9.

Many towns held fairs, and some towns even obtained charters licensing additional fairs in this period. As Exeter's commerce expanded between the 1370s and 1460s, five new fairs were founded in the city. Two new fairs were introduced at York in 1502, which were advertised in towns across the county from Guisborough to Rotherham and from Skipton to the coast. The city's merchants also attended the major fairs of Beverley and Howden, the latter attracting traders from London and the West Riding.⁹ A statute of 1487 described the 'meny feyers for the comen welle of your seid lege people' at Salisbury, Bristol, Oxford, Cambridge, Nottingham, Ely, Coventry, and elsewhere, where all groups in society could purchase church ornaments, linen, woollen cloth, brass, pewter, bedding, iron, flax and wax.¹⁰

Epstein has recently suggested that the increased per capita trade in higher quality goods and foodstuffs led to the growth of many regional fairs in late medieval Europe. In England, which had a very dense network of markets and fairs before 1350, the marketing network became more integrated and rationalised, and regional fairs 'tended to fuse into complex, integrated networks spanning one or more agricultural regions'.¹¹

Fairs of Cambridge and its region

The fairs of Cambridge and its region form an ideal area in which to examine Epstein's suggestions. Fairs can be traced, like markets, through grants of their foundation, and in lists compiled by early modern writers and travellers.¹² Table 5.1 and figure 5.1 plot the distribution around Cambridge of fairs known from their foundation charters, and highlight those fairs which still appear to have operated in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the principal source being the list of fairs

⁹ Kowaleski, *Exeter*, p. 68; Palliser, 'York under the Tudors', pp. 52-3.

¹⁰ 3 Henry VII, c. 9: *SR*, ii, p. 518.

¹¹ Epstein, 'Regional fairs'.

¹² Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 11-19, 81-90; Everitt, 'Marketing' pp. 16-26; Hodgen, 'Fairs', 389-400.

compiled by William Harrison in his *Description of England* published in 1577.¹³ The survival rate of fairs in Cambridge's region was very similar to that of the markets: by the later middle ages, about 40 per cent of fairs continued to operate. Like the surviving markets, the remaining fairs tended to be concentrated in the towns of the region.

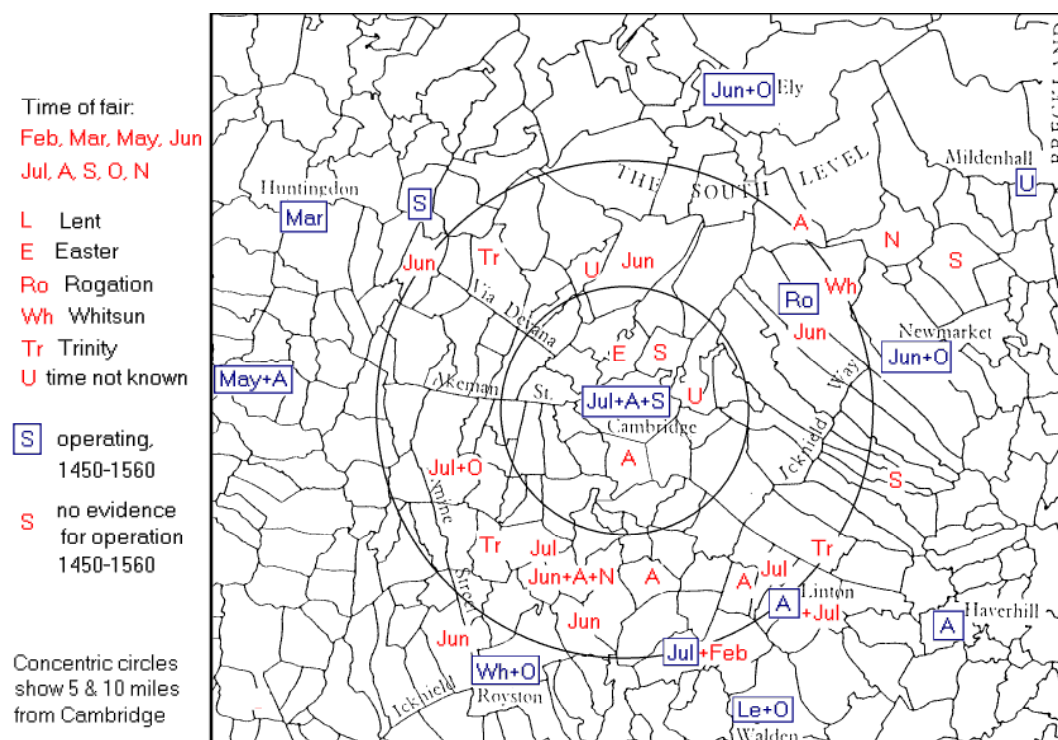


Figure 5.1: Fairs of Cambridge and its region

Source: Table 5.1

Table 5.1: Dates of fairs of Cambridge and its region

14-16 Feb
Mid Lent Sunday
Easter, 7 days at

Ickleton
Saffron Walden
Impington

¹³ Harrison, *Description*, pp. 392-6.

Easter, 8 days at
Monday before Ascension, 10 days from
Lady Days
 vigil of Ascension, 22 days from
 Ascension, 3 days at
 Monday in Whitsun week, 15 days from
Wednesday in Whitsun week
 Trinity, 3 days at
Monday in Rogation week
7 May
Translation of St Nicholas (8 May), 2 days at
St Barnabas (11 Jun)
St Etheldreda (23 Jun) and 3 days after
Midsummer (24 Jun), 4 days at *
 Midsummer (24 Jun), 3 days at
 St John the Baptist (24 Jun), 5 days at
 28-30 Jun, 3 days
 SS Peter and Paul (29 Jun), 8 days at
 SS Peter and Paul (29 Jun), 3 days at
St Thomas the Martyr (7 Jul)
 19-21 Jul
 St Margaret (20 Jul), 3 days at
St Mary Magdalene (22 Jul)
St Neot (31 Jul), 3 days at
 St Peter ad Vincula (1 Aug), 3 days at
St Peter ad Vincula (1 Aug), 3 days at
4 Aug
 5-6 Aug
 St Lawrence (10 Aug)
St Lawrence (10 Aug), 3 days at
 St Lawrence (10 Aug), 3 days at
 St Lawrence (10 Aug), 8 days at
Blessed Virgin Mary (15 Aug), 2 days at *
15 August
 St Bartholomew (24 Aug), 3 days at
 Nativity of St Mary (8 Sept), 3 days at
Exaltation of Holy Cross (14 Sept), 2 days at *
 St Lambert (17 Sept), 15 days at
21 Sept
 Michaelmas (29 Sept), 3 days at
 Michaelmas, 2 days at
13 Oct
St Luke's even (17 Oct)
 17-19 Oct
21 Oct
SS Simon and Jude (28 Oct)
 feast of St Leonard (6 Nov)
 29-30 Nov

St Ives
Huntingdon
Huntingdon
 Ely
 St Neots
 Burwell
Royston
 Balsham, Orwell, Swavesey
Reach
St Neots
Royston
Newmarket
 Ely
Cambridge, Midsummer fair
 Fowlmere
 Swaffham Prior
 Foxton
 Bassingbourn, Fenstanton
 Cottenham
Royston
 Barrington, Hildersham, Kingston
 Linton
Ickleton
St Neots
 Trumpington
St Neots
Linton
 Walden
 Great Abington
Linton
 Foxton, Wicken
 St Ives
Cambridge, Garlic fair
Haverhill
 Whittlesford
 Milton
Cambridge, Stourbridge fair
 Ely
St Ives
 Brinkley
 Chippenham
Royston
Ely
 Kingston
Saffron Walden, Newmarket
Newmarket
 Fordham
 Foxton

Note: Entries in bold indicate fairs operating 1450-1560; entries in italic indicate dates given by Harrison which differ from earlier grants and may reflect changes of dates rather than additional fairs.

* Subsequently extended.

Sources: VCH Cambs., iii-ix; Siraut, 'Cambridgeshire fairs and markets'; Harrison, *Description*, pp. 392-6

The varying times at which the region's fairs were held, shown in table 5.1 and figure 5.1, suggest that they may have operated in a temporal cycle over the year, like a network of local markets over a week. In origin, many fairs were held at the times of church festivals, thus linking with holidays. Fairs tended to be concentrated in the summer months, when travel was easier. Seasonal peaks also matched the needs of production and trade. Cattle and sheep fairs, for example, tended to be clustered in spring, and to a lesser extent, in autumn. Exeter's Lenten fair and Yarmouth's autumn herring fair reflected when imports of fish were concentrated.¹⁴ The great fairs of eastern England operated in an annual cycle from Lent to November during the thirteenth century, as did the fairs held in Champagne and Flanders.¹⁵ It seems likely that Cambridge's fairs comprised one or more self-contained local cycles, but Stourbridge fair, the largest fair in the region, may have been part of a wider cycle which stretched over several regions, as many of its participants came from outside the town's immediate hinterland.

As befitted its status as the leading centre of trade, Cambridge hosted the largest number of fairs in the region.¹⁶ Stourbridge, or Sturbridge fair, held on Stourbridge Common on the outskirts of the town, had been granted to the leper hospital of St Mary Magdalene by King John. After the hospital was dissolved in the mid-thirteenth century, the fair continued, with the town corporation taking oversight. The fair had initially been held on the 13-14 September, but by 1516 it lasted from the 24 August to the 29 September. Midsummer fair,¹⁷ granted to the Canons of Barnwell in 1211, to be held on the 22-25 June, continued over fourteen days by 1498. By the sixteenth century the fair had given its name to the common, formerly known as Greencroft, on which it was held. A fair on the vigil and feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary was granted to St Radegund's Priory in Cambridge by King Stephen, and

¹⁴ Farmer, 'Marketing', pp. 339-41; Chartres, 'Markets and fairs', pp. 14-16; Kowaleski, 'Fisheries', 447.

¹⁵ Masschaele, *Peasants*, p. 143; Verlinden, 'Markets and fairs', pp. 125-7.

¹⁶ Similarly, Exeter had the most numerous and largest fairs and markets in Devon: Kowaleski, *Exeter*, p. 60.

¹⁷ Also known as St John's fair and Barnwell fair.

a third day added during Henry VI's reign. It was known as Garlick fair by the later sixteenth century.¹⁸ No recorded purchases have been found which were made at this fair, although the priory appointed toll collectors, and drew an annual profit of 5s in the 1450s.¹⁹

Outside Cambridge, but within the county, several fairs continued to operate in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Ely fair was an important market for fish, cloth and local basketry products. Held around the feast of St Etheldreda, whose shrine was housed in the cathedral, the fair also sold tawdry lace: these silk laces or neckties were held in veneration as having touched St Etheldreda's shrine, and some were sent to Thomas Cromwell in 1533. Ely also had a prominent cattle fair, which attracted a butcher from Colchester, who bought cows and steers there through an agent in 1394.²⁰ Reach fair, at Rogationtide, was proclaimed by the mayor of Cambridge but held at Reach, eight miles north-east of the town, where boats came up Reach Lode from the Cam. A horse fair was recorded there in 1349.²¹ The St Mary Magdalene day fair at Ickleton, and an August fair at Linton, were recorded by Harrison in his late-sixteenth century list of fairs, together with a number of fairs in towns outside the county.²²

Other fairs in the region were even smaller and have left little trace. Although some are known to have decayed in this period,²³ others continued to be granted and confirmed, showing that these rights were still valued by their owners, even if they were not necessarily in operation. The bishop of Ely was granted a Friday market and February fair at Ickleton in 1556, the date of Swavesey fair was altered in 1505, and the fair at Rampton confirmed in 1534, but so far, no evidence has been found to

¹⁸ *VCH Cambs.*, iii, p. 92; *Annals*, i, p. 249; *Place-names of Cambridgeshire*, pp. 42-3.

¹⁹ *St Radegund*, pp. 147, 156, 163, 167.

²⁰ *OED*, xvii, p. 675; *LP*, vi, no. 1264, pp. 315-16; *VCH Cambs.*, iv, p. 50; Britnell, *Colchester*, p. 142.

²¹ *VCH Cambs.*, iii, p. 91; *Place-names of Cambridgeshire*, p. 137.

²² Harrison, *Description*, pp. 392-6.

²³ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, p. 270, viii, p. 23.

prove that these fairs were ever held.²⁴ Like weekly markets, charters may have been obtained for fairs which never functioned.

Not all the fairs described by early modern travellers were significant trading institutions either. William Harrison acknowledged that some of the fairs he listed in his *Description of England* had ‘little else bought or sold in them more than good drink, pies, and some peddlery trash; wherefore it were no loss if divers of them were abolished’. There were other fairs, however, ‘not inferior to the greatest marts in Europe, as Sturbridge fair, near to Cambridge, Bristol fair, Bartholomew fair at London, Lynn mart, Cold fair at Newport Pond for cattle, and divers other’.²⁵

If we wish to analyse the contribution of fairs to a regional economy, it is necessary to search for additional documentation. Fortunately, there is a considerable amount of evidence from different sources pertaining to the fairs of Cambridge and its region, and particularly to Stourbridge fair, concerning traders, consumers, regulation and ownership.

Traders

A notable feature of Stourbridge fair, and an indication of its size and the commodities traded, was the names given to groups or streets of booths within the fair. These included the ‘Duddery’, where woollen cloth was sold, Water Fair, Garlic Row, Petty Mercery, Ironmonger Lane, Stockfish Booths, Cordwainer Row, and Timber Fair. The Lenton fair at Nottingham in 1516 had a similar range of street names.²⁶ Three of the names, Birchin Lane, Cheapside and Soper Lane, were also London streets, where drapers, mercers, haberdashers, pepperers and grocers could be found; these names may have reflected the prominence of Londoners at the fair and in

²⁴ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, p. 241, ix, pp. 216, 390.

²⁵ Harrison, *Description*, pp. 253, 392.

²⁶ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, *passim.*; *Records of the borough of Nottingham 1155-1547*, ed. W.H. Stevenson, 3 vols. (London, 1882-5), iii, pp. 349-52.

these particular rows.²⁷ Many of the street names occur in a plan of Stourbridge fair drawn in 1725, and the topographical details given in the sixteenth-century leases suggest that at least some of these streets were in the same position in both periods. Garlic Row for example, ran roughly north to south, with booths on either side opening towards the east or west; Cheese Row opened to the north.²⁸ Remarkably, by the mid-sixteenth century, the size of the fair was such that the layout of the booths bore many similarities to the fairground in the eighteenth century.

The booths were substantial items, like covered stalls or tents. Timber, hair cloth, skins, packthread, penny nails and ‘trasshes’ were the items used by the corporation to repair its booths, and a tailor was occasionally employed.²⁹ Booths were often given elaborate names, which sometimes reflected the commodity traded, but more often were just for identification. Five booths in the Water Fair in 1544, for example, were known as ‘le holybusshe, le wullffles, le Mayden hedde, le buckes hedde, et le rammes hedde’.³⁰ At some fairs such as Winchester, booths were permanent structures like shops, but at Stourbridge they were dismantled every year at the end of the fair, so that the common field could revert to cultivation, and the owners of the strips profited from the manure provided by the refuse of the fair.³¹ Implements for building the booths were to be delivered to the new treasurers of the town every year by indenture.³² Despite being temporary constructions, many booths were regarded as valuable items and treated like property: some disputes over the ownership of booths were taken to the Chancery court; John Manfeld was assessed at £10 and Margaret Gryme at £6 for their booth rents in the Cambridge lay subsidy returns of 1524.³³

²⁷ John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. C.L. Kingsford, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1908), i, pp. 81, 199, 261, ii, pp. 306, 330; CCTA, i, fols. 58v-59, 79A-79Av, 123v-124.

²⁸ J. Nichols, *The history and antiquities of Barnwell Abbey, and of Sturbridge fair*, Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica, no. XXXVIII (London, 1786), (Appendix to history of Barnwell Abbey), p. 73; CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fols. 26v, 31, 58v, 60v, 68, 92.

²⁹ CCA, X/71/6, X/71/9-10; CBD, p. 166.

³⁰ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fol. 2.

³¹ Salzman, *Trade*, p. 152; Maitland, *Township*, p. 80.

³² CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fol. 98v.

³³ PRO, C 1/562/20-1, C 1/708/32, C 1/715/25, C 1/719/23; E 179/81/133.

Many Cambridge burgesses held booths in Stourbridge fair. As Maitland explained, these booths were treated ‘as copyhold property “held of” the corporation by the burgess’, even though ‘the material booth only existed for a few weeks in the year’. Every burgess with booths in the fair might give, sell, or surrender booths in the court of the mayor and burgesses, with 4d fine paid for every booth transferred.³⁴ These transfers began to be recorded regularly in the Corporation treasurers’ accounts from 1525/6, and the number of transactions per year has been extracted from these and shown in figure 5.2. There are gaps even when the accounts survive, and in these years it is not clear whether there were no surrenders or if the income was recorded elsewhere. Although the series is not continuous, making comparisons difficult, there appears to have been an increase in the number of transactions in the 1550s and 1560s, when the number of booths surrendered annually regularly exceeded 40. This increase alone is not a clear indicator of any particular trend, but, as will be discussed below, it may in fact have been a time of considerable growth in demand. The graph also shows how numerous the booths were. In 1560/1, a total of 128 booths were surrendered, although a group of 28 were exchanged twice.

There were also treasurers’ booths, let for a yearly rent by Cambridge Corporation, mainly to traders who were not Cambridge burgesses.³⁵ The total and average income from these booths is shown in figure 5.3. The trend seems to suggest a substantial increase in trade at the fair, although unfortunately it is not clear what proportion of all the stalls at the fair are represented. From the 1520s, the average and gross income from the corporation’s booths increased substantially. Income from booths may have been a more profitable source of income than property rents at this time, as several Cambridge burgesses chose to bequeath booths to the corporation to provide funds for

³⁴ Maitland, *Township*, p. 80. Additional ordinances relating to Stourbridge fair booths are recorded in CCA, I/4, fols. 5b, 8b, 10b, 11b, 77b-79a.

³⁵ CCTA, i-ii.

masses after their deaths.³⁶ These revenues came to the crown with the dissolution of the chantries, but most of the income was re-granted to the town in 1557.³⁷ The rise in the 1520s is particularly interesting as it coincided in Cambridge with a large number of college building projects and some traces of rising wage rates for labourers and building craftsmen.³⁸

A more sustained rise in booth rents occurred from the later 1540s onwards. Although these rises may have been partly caused by the general price inflation at this time, further evidence of the growth of trade at Stourbridge fair is found in Cambridge Corporation's introduction of fines, levied on leases of their own booths. Christopher Hoddesson paid 2s 4d fine for a booth in 1543/4, and Frances Pope paid 20s for a lease in the Duddery in 1546/7,³⁹ and during the 1550s, fines were regularly collected when leases of booths were taken up. These fines rose to as much as £6 13s 4d for two booths let to Frances Hynde, esquire, at 5 marks annual rent in 1555, an astonishing amount for property only used for a month every year.⁴⁰

³⁶ *Annals*, i, pp. 210, 222, 246, 259.

³⁷ PRO, SC 11/90; *Charters*, pp. 205-9.

³⁸ See below, Chapter 7.

³⁹ CCTA, i, fols. 238v, 267.

⁴⁰ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fols. 41v, 58, 62, 63v, 77, 82v, 98, 106.

Figure 5.2: Transfers of booths in Stourbridge Fair held by Cambridge burgesses

Source : CCTA, i-ii

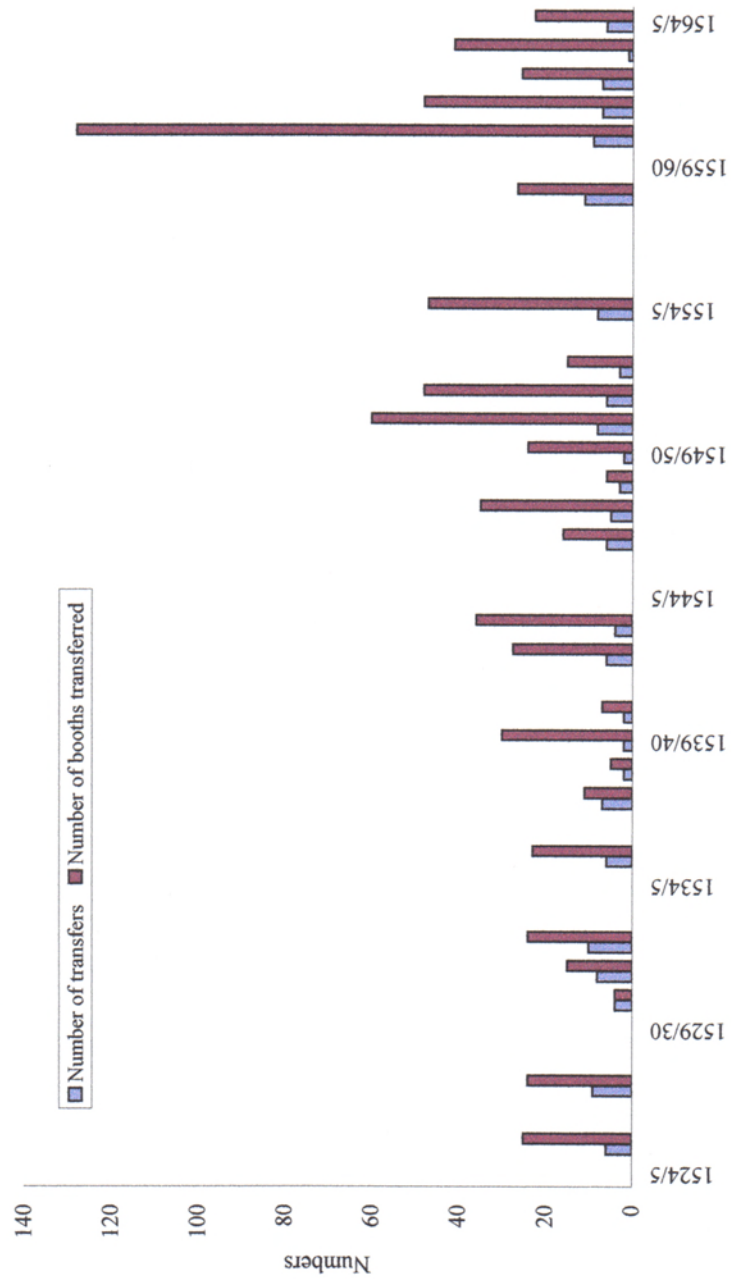
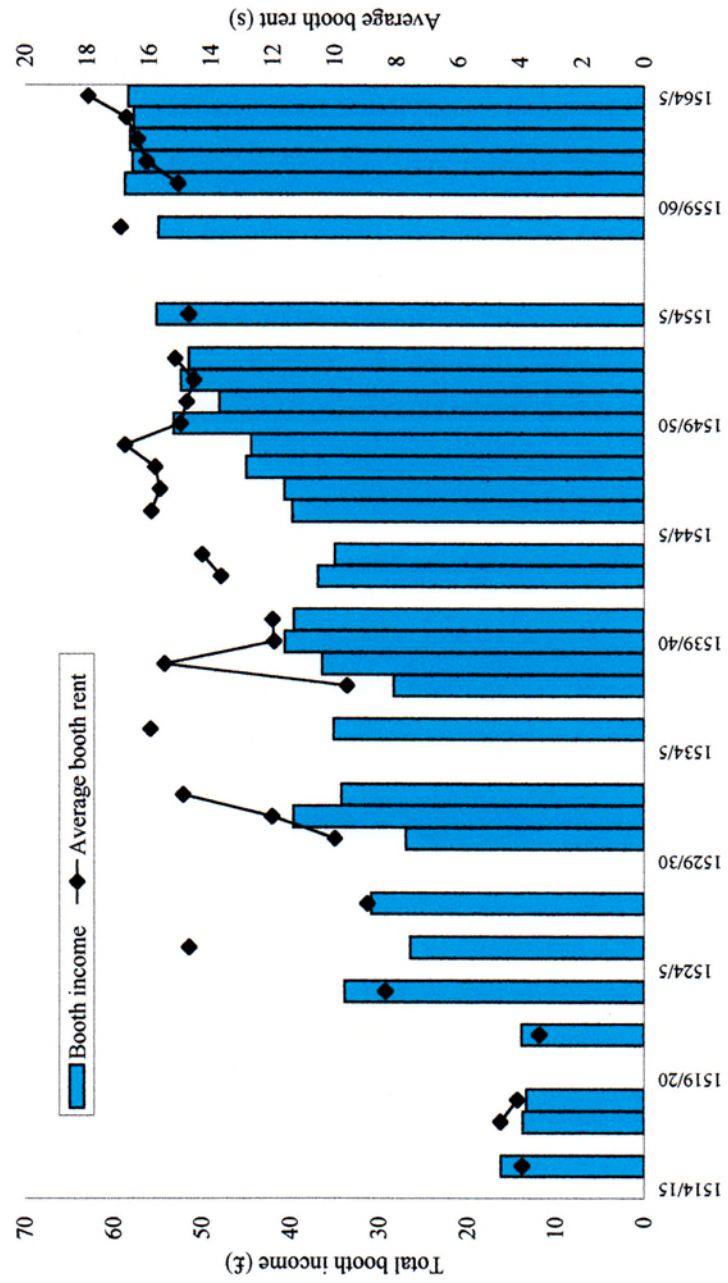


Figure 5.3: Income from treasurers' booths in Stourbridge Fair

Source: CCTA, i-ii



Many of the traders who attended Stourbridge fair can be identified from the treasurers' accounts and some can be traced further using other records. Payments were taken from 'pakkes' - bundles of goods carried by pedlars, often containing cloth.⁴¹ Among the 'pakkes' listed in the Corporation accounts were men assessed for 'clothis', 'a remnante' and broad cloths.⁴² 'A Treatise concerning the Staple', written c.1519-35, describes how 'sixty years ago old merchaunts bought all ther clothes of cloth makers in the country by the holl sortes in pakkes', while at the time the author was writing, pedlars and chapmen took imported merchandise, 'from fair to fair, from markett to markett, carieth it to sell in horspakks and fote pakks'.⁴³ Packs were carried to other fairs: the Lent fair in Bridgwater had a common house for packs, and the churchwardens organised a night watch over the packs at St James's fair, Bristol. Similar security measures may have been taken in Cambridge, as two men were paid 20d each to 'wayte upon the pakks' for six days in the accounts of 1519/20.⁴⁴ In 1564/5 a payment was taken from 'certeyne poore pedlers that solde pinnes on the banckes'.⁴⁵ These pedlars who came to Stourbridge and other late-medieval fairs were probably similar to the chapmen described by Spufford a century later, who made frequent visits to fairs, often travelling outside their local marketing area to reach particular fairs, and selling textiles, haberdashery, and ready-made clothing accessories such as stockings, gloves, caps, handkerchiefs and neckcloths.⁴⁶

Even at a large and important regional fair like Stourbridge, ale sellers, brewers and other small food retailers were present. Surviving records of the university's leet courts from the 1390s and early 1400s show that large numbers of brewers and ale sellers were fined at the autumn court for selling ale and victuals within Barnwell

⁴¹ *OED*, xi, p. 39.

⁴² CCTA, i, fols. 47, 80-80v.

⁴³ *Tudor economic documents*, ed. R.H. Tawney & E. Power, 3 vols. (London, 1924), iii, pp. 108-9.

⁴⁴ N.F. Hulbert, 'A survey of Somerset fairs', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 82 (1936), 142; *CBD*, p. xliii.

⁴⁵ CCTA, ii, fol. 50v.

⁴⁶ M. Spufford, *The great reclothing of rural England: petty chapmen and their wares in the seventeenth century* (London, 1984).

Ward, explicitly at Stourbridge fair.⁴⁷ Ale booths, often held by ale wives, were listed in the treasurers' accounts during the 1520s. Rents were between 3s and 4s, far greater than the charges made for pedlars. Holders of ale booths included Robert Bayseley of Bury, John Coleson of Bury, and possibly Agnes Turnour of Depden, assessed on goods of 5 marks, £2, and £5 respectively in the lay subsidy of 1524.⁴⁸

However, these ale wives and their booths disappeared from the accounts during the late 1520s, and although the odd ale booth is occasionally listed thereafter, the retailing of ale appears to have become a more minor part of the fair. This change may reflect the declining role of women in brewing and selling ale, the growth of larger-scale production, and an increasing demand for beer.⁴⁹ Kitchens gave additional refreshments and were provided in at least seven different booths. Even St Radegund's Priory took on an extra cook at the time of their fair.⁵⁰ Other petty traders from the locality included a barber, first appearing in 1548/9, and tanners from Potton in Bedfordshire, Waldon in Essex, and Chesterton, recorded in 1521/2.⁵¹

A group was listed yearly as 'Hadleigh men', who came from the vicinity around that Suffolk town: men from Bury, Sudbury, Waldingfield and Monks Eleigh ('monkisylle') were recorded in 1521/2.⁵² The recording of place-names in the treasurers' accounts for that year fortuitously coincided with the 1522 muster survey for Babergh hundred and the 1524 lay subsidy for Suffolk. The traders who can be traced in these lists had occupations in the textile industry: John Colman of Cornard Magna was a weaver,⁵³ William Jacob of Sudbury, clothmaker,⁵⁴ Robert Glaswright

⁴⁷ UA, C.U.R. 17, fols. 2, 3, 4, 6v, 7v, 10v.

⁴⁸ CCTA, i, fols. 59, 79Av; *Suffolk in 1524*, ed. S.H.A. Hervey, Suffolk Green Books, X (Woodbridge, 1910), pp. 283, 352, 355.

⁴⁹ Bennett, *Ale*, pp. 77-97.

⁵⁰ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fol. 80v; *St Radegund*, p. 167.

⁵¹ CCTA, i, fols. 59, 293v.

⁵² CCTA, i, fol. 59v.

⁵³ *The military survey of 1522 for Babergh hundred*, ed. J. Pound, Suffolk Records Society, XXVIII (Woodbridge, 1986), p. 72; 'of Sudbury' in treasurers' accounts, but Cornard Magna adjoins Sudbury.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24; 'Jacob of Sudbury' in treasurers' accounts; there was also a John Jacob of Sudbury: *ibid.*, p. 22.

of Waldingfield Magna, clothmaker,⁵⁵ Thomas Holton of Nayland, sherman⁵⁶, and William Turnour of Hadleigh, weaver.⁵⁷ These traders also had a range of different incomes. William Aleyn of Hadleigh was assessed on wages of less than 40s per annum in the 1524 subsidy, William Turnour, weaver, of Hadleigh, assessed for £2 in goods, and Richard Braddeway and Walter Mannyng of Stowe, assessed for £40 and £50 in goods.⁵⁸ The presence of these Suffolk textile workers strongly suggests that these men used the fair to market their own cloth.

Although rents from Hadleigh men continued to be received by the town treasurers, from the 1530s onwards, a smaller number of larger rents were recorded. While this may merely reflect a change in recording practice, it could also reflect a change in the cloth trade, with a smaller number of wealthier traders visiting the fair.

There were also a number of traders from Ipswich, Needham Market and Stowmarket, holding booths in the chapel ground in 1521/2, whose taxable wealth in 1524 varied from £2 to £50 in goods.⁵⁹ William Raynbald of Ipswich, merchant, held a fish booth in the Water Fair during the 1540s and 1550s. King's College bought half a hundred ling from him on 9 September 1548, probably at the fair.⁶⁰ William Raynbald was assessed at £60 in a lay subsidy of the 1540s, and served as bailiff of Ipswich in 1542-3. During the 1530s he had offered to pay £7 for a skilled man to undertake a single voyage to Iceland, causing the bailiffs of Southwold to complain that their voyages to Iceland had almost ceased because of the excessive wages Raynbald and his fellow merchants offered. Henry Tooley of Ipswich, merchant adventurer, frequently came to

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 55; 'Roger Glassowyke of Waldyngfeld' in treasurers' accounts.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 32; no place-name is given in the treasurers' accounts.

⁵⁷ *Suffolk in 1524*, p. 154; another William Turnour of Hadleigh is assessed on wages: *ibid.*, p. 156.

⁵⁸ *Suffolk in 1524*, pp. 154, 156, 316.

⁵⁹ CCTA, i, fol. 60; *Suffolk in 1524*, pp. 121, 316, 358.

⁶⁰ CCA, III/10A, part 1; KCMB, xiii, 1547/8 a/c.

Stourbridge fair, although his usual area of internal trade extended only as far west from his home port as to Bury St Edmunds and Thetford.⁶¹

Merchants from larger and more distant towns also came to Stourbridge fair. A couple of Coventry merchants paid rent for two booths owned by the corporation, known as the Woolfleece and Horseloaf. These drapers and mercers were often prominent office-holders in the civic government there. In 1521/2 Masters Troussell and Bandwell of Coventry held these booths: Thomas Trussell was warden of Coventry Corporation in 1520, sheriff in 1524, and bailiff in 1525; Thomas Banwell was draper and mayor in 1524, and William Banwell a Coventry mercer.⁶² Grafton Owellyng and John Sanders of Coventry held two booths in the Duddery in 1527/8. Christopher Waren and Thomas Ryley, drapers, who rose through the council ranks to become mayors of Coventry in 1542 and 1555, held the two Duddery booths in the 1530s and 1540s.⁶³ Julian Nethermyll, draper, one of the richest men in Coventry in 1524, was trading at the fair in 1529.⁶⁴

London merchants were also important traders at the fair. As early as 1403, Cambridge Corporation ordained that any bailiff or burgess leasing or lending the place called the Tolbooth in Stourbridge fair to any citizen of London was to be heavily fined and to lose his freedom.⁶⁵ Several of the leading London merchant companies had representatives in the fair. Richard Hunt, mercer, was riding to Stourbridge fair when he came to blows with Edward Grene in 1522; Hunt was one of three mercers holding six standings in the fair in Cheapside in 1523/4.⁶⁶ Mr Warner,

⁶¹ J. Webb, *Great Tooley of Ipswich. Portrait of an early Tudor merchant*, Suffolk Records Society, V (1962), pp. 7, 77-8, 122, 142, map facing p. 93.

⁶² CCTA, i, fol. 58v; *The Coventry Leet Book*, ed. M. Dormer Harris, Early English Text Society, 4 vols., CXXXIV, CXXXV, CXXXVIII, CXLVI (London, 1907-13), iii, pp. 601, 667, 686, 688, 690-1.

⁶³ CCTA, i, fols. 124, 134v, 144, 216v, 227, 237, 251v, 293v; *Coventry Leet Book*, iii, pp. 767, 811.

⁶⁴ PRO, C 1/660/33; Hoskins, 'Provincial towns', 6.

⁶⁵ *Annals*, i, p. 149.

⁶⁶ *Acts of the court of the Mercers' Company, 1453-1527*, ed. L. Lyell & F.D. Watney (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 547, 699; CCTA, i, fol. 79A.

holding an 8s booth in 1521/2, was possibly a mercer.⁶⁷ A Mistress Bankes of London, silkwoman, held the farm of a little booth in Soper Lane in 1523/4, and mercers, grocers, and founders also paid for booths in that year. Another London silkwoman had died whilst away at Stourbridge fair in the late fifteenth century.⁶⁸ Chancery proceedings give further examples of these London traders. The wife of Thomas Barneby of London, haberdasher, brought caps, hats and other haberdashery wares to be sold in the fair, worth over £100 when seized for a debt. Richard Robynson, a London draper, claimed in the 1530s to have occupied a booth for 24 years selling embroidery products. Drapers, a mercer, linen draper, haberdasher, girdler, 'brocer' and barber surgeon, all from the capital, took leases of booths in the 1550s.⁶⁹

By the 1540s and 1550s, the range of traders coming to the fair had grown even wider. Two men from Bristol paid for booths in Cheapside in 1552/3. Fines taken from traders at Stourbridge in 1550 and 1553 included men from neighbouring towns like Huntingdon, Bury, Bedford and Walden, as well as from Bristol, Stow-on-the-Wold and Stafford, showing that the fair was drawing traders from both the surrounding region and much further afield.⁷⁰ Siraut's work, using court records from the last two decades of the sixteenth century, has shown that 40 per cent of sellers at Stourbridge fair came from counties neighbouring Cambridge and 25 per cent from London and the south east.⁷¹

The chief distributing crafts, the London mercers and grocers, used fairs extensively for their trade, but their companies often adopted a hostile attitude to major provincial fairs like Stourbridge. At times they felt strong enough to prohibit their members from trading at fairs, but on other occasions they feared losing trade by boycotting these

⁶⁷ CCTA, i, fol. 59. My thanks to Dr Anne Sutton for this suggestion.

⁶⁸ M.K. Dale, 'The London silkwomen of the fifteenth century', *EcHR*, 4 (1932-4), 327.

⁶⁹ PRO, C 1/471/12, C 1/708/32; CCA, III/10A, part 1.

⁷⁰ CCTA, i, fol. 355. CCC, MS 106, pp. 103, 109-10.

⁷¹ Siraut, 'Cambridge', p. 114.

events. The Grocers' Company levied fines on members selling at fairs in the early fifteenth century, but some grocers found it more profitable to continue trading.⁷² The mercers forbade their members from attending fairs or markets outside London in 1376. This issue was raised several times by the fellowship during the late fifteenth century, as their rivals, the haberdashers, had become very successful through trading at fairs.⁷³ An ordinance of the common council of London made in 1487 forbade freemen from sending wares to any fair or market in the realm for seven years, on pain of £100, but a month later the ordinance was suspended, and parliament subsequently annulled it.⁷⁴ Action by the London crafts continued however: in 1491 the mercers prepared to present a bill before parliament to reform 'the grete abusion of fayres, straungers & other &c., used to the grete hurte of this Citie', and the Goldsmiths' Company took fines from members attending fairs in 1502 and 1505.⁷⁵ Cambridge Corporation attributed a fall in rent of a group of booths from 60s in previous years to 20s in 1499/1500, to the withdrawal of London merchants from the fair, and for the same reason reported in 1500/1 that a large part of the farm of the chapel ground could not be collected.⁷⁶ It would appear that richer members of the merchant companies wished to maintain London prices and not to be undercut by other traders at fairs, and so encouraged provincial traders to come to London to buy their goods, rather than at the fairs.

The London companies also complained of the poor quality of goods sold at fairs and tried to obtain powers of search. As early as 1419, the city of London and the university of Cambridge appeared in a suit before the king's council, where both bodies claimed the custody of assize and assay of bread, wine and beer, and supervision of the measures and weights of London citizens coming to Stourbridge

⁷² Nightingale, *Grocers' Company*, p. 439.

⁷³ *Mercers' Company*, pp. xvi-xvii, 100, 116, 138-9, 158, 219-20.

⁷⁴ *Calendar of Letter-Books preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London, 1275-1498*, ed. R.R. Sharpe, 11 vols. (London 1899-1912), vol. 'L', pp. 240, 242.

⁷⁵ *Mercers' Company*, pp. 219-20; T.F. Reddaway, *The early history of the Goldsmiths' Company, 1327-1509* (London, 1975), pp. 194-5.

⁷⁶ CCA, X/71/9, under *Recepte Forinsece*; X/71/10, under *Reparaciones*.

fair.⁷⁷ In 1423, parliament was requested to allow the wardens of the embroiderers power of search in the fairs of Stourbridge, Ely, Oxford and Salisbury, where many embroiderers from the city and suburbs of London sold embroidery of insufficient quality. The wardens of the Horners' Company were given authority to search for defective wares in Stourbridge and Ely fairs in 1464, and to seize defective manufactures.⁷⁸ Two London pewterers disputed the university's right to examine pewter in Stourbridge fair in 1550,⁷⁹ and in 1557 the university was ordered to permit no unlawful searches in the fair, after a complaint had been made by the drapers, merchant tailors and cloth workers of London.⁸⁰ The London merchant companies may have thought that gaining powers of search over provincial fairs was a more acceptable alternative to banning their members from trading at these fairs.

The limited information available for other Cambridgeshire fairs suggests that they attracted tradesmen from less extensive areas. In the July leet courts in 1391 and 1395, sellers of ale from Brinkley, Cambridge, Chesterton, Fulbourn, Hinton, Sawston, Shelford, Teversham, Trumpington, Wrating and Lynn were amerced at Barnwell - they had probably come to Midsummer fair, as so many amercements were not made in the ward at other times of the year.⁸¹ Proceedings of the court of Reach fair in 1508 list merchants from Bury St Edmunds and Bottisham, and husbandmen from Fordham, Steeple Bumpsted and Wethersfield, Essex.⁸² The smallest village fairs seem to have been very minor occasions and may have attracted only local residents. John Bruett of Ickleton listed trestles and pulleys belonging to Mary Magdalene fair, Ickleton, among the agricultural tools left in his will of 1541.⁸³ The trading hinterlands of the smaller fairs were not much larger than those of the weekly markets held in small towns and villages.

⁷⁷ *Annals*, i, p. 163.

⁷⁸ *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, Record Commission, 6 vols. (London, 1783), iv, p. 254, v, p. 567.

⁷⁹ CCC, MS 106, pp. 105-10.

⁸⁰ UA, Collect.Admin.5, fols. 138, 140v; CCC, MS 106, p. 503.

⁸¹ UA, C.U.R.17, fols. 2v, 4v.

⁸² CCA, X/6.

⁸³ A.R. Goddard, 'Ickleton church and priory', *PCAS*, 11 (1903-6), 192.

Consumers

Among the most prominent consumers at larger fairs were noble, ecclesiastical and collegiate households, of varying size and wealth, stocking up with bulk purchases of non-perishable goods and foodstuffs. The household book of the earl of Northumberland of 1512 recommended buying supplies for the house for the whole year at fairs, such as wine, wax, beef, mutton, wheat and malt. In the early sixteenth century, the prior of Royston used Stourbridge fair, ‘for the provision & store of his said howse for all the hole yere folowyng’.⁸⁴ Many of the Cambridge colleges made regular purchases at local fairs. King’s Hall, for example, between 1521 and 1544, annually spent between 5s 6d and 56s 6d at Midsummer fair, Cambridge, and between £7 6s and £22 7s at Stourbridge fair;⁸⁵ these figures were roughly similar to the amount spent on fish and spices at other times during the year. The main items purchased at the fairs by King’s Hall and other Cambridge colleges, large and small, were fish, spices, cloth, and hardware products.

Most of the fish sold in the fairs of Cambridge and its region was preserved fish. Available relatively cheaply, institutions could purchase large supplies to last most of the year. King’s Hall regularly purchased about one hundred each of cod, stockfish, and ling, and a barrel of salmon, and maybe also herring, lob, sturgeon, cat fish, and salted eels at Stourbridge.⁸⁶ Trinity College, King’s College, Peterhouse, St Radegund’s Priory in Cambridge, Thetford Priory, and the estate officials of the Crowland Abbey manors of Oakington, Cottenham and Dry Drayton also obtained fish at the fair.⁸⁷ Ely fair was another major fish market, visited occasionally by Cambridge colleges like King’s College and King’s Hall.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ McCutcheon, *Yorkshire fairs and markets*, p. 130; PRO, C 1/438/33.

⁸⁵ KH a/c, xxii-xxvi.

⁸⁶ KH a/c, xxiv, fols. 67v, 97, 156, xxv, fols. 34, 75, 111v.

⁸⁷ TCSB a/c, fols. 107, 189v, 220v; KCMB, ii, fol. 131, iv, fol. 20, xii, 1535/6, 1536/7, 1541/2 a/cs; Peterhouse computus rolls, 1458/9 a/c; *St. Radegund*, p. 151; *Thetford*, i-ii, *passim*; QC, QC10, views of accounts, 4 & 7 Hen VIII.

⁸⁸ KCMB, ii, fol. 68, vii, fol. 23, xii, 1541/2 a/c; KH a/c, xxvi, fol. 151.

The large East Coast fishing industry generated specific legislation, in the form of a statute of 1534 against forestalling and regrating of fish to apply ‘specially in Sturbruge fayre Seynte Ives faire and Elye fayre being the most notable faires within this Realme for provysions of fysshe’. However, this act was repealed in 1544, as ‘diverse Marchauntes of London & Coventrie’ and elsewhere, who had previously bought fish for ready money at the coast side and carried it to the fairs, had left, causing hardship for the fishermen. A royal grant of two fairs to King’s Lynn, made in 1537, was revoked in 1542, because they were allegedly damaging ‘Styrbrige faire Ely fair and other Fayres & markettes in the Countie of Cambryste & Huntyngton and other Shyres for the Provysion of Salt fyshe & Heryng for their households’. When the possibility of reviving the fair at Lynn arose again in 1556, Cambridge Corporation sent a letter of objection to the bishop of Ely.⁸⁹

Despite the difficulties of preservation, some fresh fish and shellfish were also sold at Stourbridge fair. Nichols, writing in the late eighteenth century, described the demand for Colchester oysters and white herrings at the fair, which had just come into season at the time the fair was held.⁹⁰ In 1534 and 1548 the townspeople of Cambridge complained of the charges put on carts laden with oysters entering the fair.⁹¹

Spices and other imported foodstuffs, purchased by the largest colleges and aristocracy, could be obtained in Stourbridge fair. King’s Hall bought raisins, prunes, almonds, pepper, dates, cloves, maces, sugar, saffron and bay salt.⁹² Peterborough Abbey purchased a similar range of spices at the fair in the early sixteenth century.⁹³ Most of these spices would have been imported from abroad, and entered via East Anglian ports, or through London merchants.

⁸⁹ 25 Hen. VIII, c. 4; 33 Henry VIII, c. 34; 35 Henry VIII, c. 7: *SR*, iii, pp. 440-1, 873, 964; *CCA*, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fol. 93v.

⁹⁰ Nichols, *History*, p. 82.

⁹¹ *UA*, Collect.Admin.5, fols. 8v, 26v.

⁹² *KH a/c*, xxiii, fol. 194v; xxiv, fol. 97; xxvi, fol. 151.

⁹³ *Account rolls of the Obedientaries of Peterborough*, ed. J. Greatrex, Northamptonshire Record Society, XXXIII (Northampton, 1984), pp. 180, 194.

Cloth was another major item of expenditure at Stourbridge fair for King's Hall, which often spent over £3 on the servants' liveries there.⁹⁴ The almoner and abbot's receiver of Peterborough Abbey, and members of Thetford Priory obtained various types of cloth at the fair.⁹⁵ Fines taken at the fair in the 1550s reveal a wide range of cloth and upholstery products, including kerseys, broad cloths, felts, caps, feather beds and mattresses.⁹⁶ The presence of drapers, hosiers, embroiders and other merchants from important marketing centres for textiles like London and Coventry, as well as local cloth producers from Suffolk, provided a wide range of textiles.

A large number of hardware products were sold at Stourbridge and other fairs. Thetford Priory regularly bought basketry products, probably made in the local fenland, at Ely fair, together with large quantities of nails of varying size and price, and kitchen and dining utensils.⁹⁷ At Stourbridge fair, the priory bought oil, tar, and on one occasion spent over £20 on lead and 15s 2d on its carriage.⁹⁸ The priory bought charcoal or mineral coal at Brome hill fair in Suffolk, although there were also coal heaps at Stourbridge fair.⁹⁹ King's Hall bought spades, shovels, and timber at Stourbridge and Midsummer fairs, and Trinity College later obtained nails and timber at these two fairs.¹⁰⁰ The churchwardens of Holy Trinity and Cambridge Corporation purchased timber at Midsummer fair.¹⁰¹ Around 1530, the following items of merchandise were also described as being sold at Stourbridge fair:

⁹⁴ KH a/c, xxiii, fol. 194v, xxiv, fol. 97, xxvi, fol. 151.

⁹⁵ *Book of William Morton, Almoner of Peterborough Monastery 1448-1467*, ed. P.I. King, Northamptonshire Record Society, XVI (Northampton, 1954), pp. 124, 167; *Obedientaries of Peterborough*, pp. 183, 197; *Thetford*, ii, pp. 534, 686, 705, 723.

⁹⁶ CCC, MS 106, pp. 103, 109.

⁹⁷ *Thetford*, i, pp. 284-5, 297, 309, 320.

⁹⁸ *Thetford*, i, pp. 260, 319, ii, pp. 550, 568, 598, 618, 631.

⁹⁹ *Thetford*, i, pp. 44, 130, ii, pp. 460, 479, 515, 533, 582, 614, 680, 704, 721; CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fols. 10v, 20, 26v, 28, 77v.

¹⁰⁰ KH a/c, xxiii, fol. 23, 161v, xxiv, fol. 28v, 67v, 96v; TCSB a/c, fols. 5, 102v, 147, 228v; TCJB a/c, fols. 148, 173v, 229.

¹⁰¹ CCA, P22/5/1, fol. 17v; CCA, X/71/3, X/71/5.

pewter brasse heyre girthwebbe¹⁰² Saddelles bowgettes¹⁰³ males¹⁰⁴ sylkes
Furres beddes and all other vpholsteye wares and all grocery wares what so
ever it be fuschions¹⁰⁵ worsteddes sayes¹⁰⁶ Chaumblettes hony sope waxe and
all other wares.¹⁰⁷

Clearly the traders who brought heavy, bulky products were confident that they would find customers at the fair.

Stourbridge fair also offered a range of other specialist goods and services. Pewterers bought old or damaged pewter to reuse in producing new wares. St Radegund's exchanged vessels at the fairs in 1450/1 and King's Hall had vessels garnished or exchanged at the fair.¹⁰⁸ Goldsmiths are listed in the fines collected in 1550 and 1553,¹⁰⁹ and York goldsmiths are known to have travelled to the fair.¹¹⁰ In 1540, the churchwardens of Great St Mary's, Cambridge, decided to sell a 'colar or baudryk of golde' and a 'lityll Monstre of Relick of Seynct Nicolas oyll' in the fair.¹¹¹ The fellows of Clare Hall, anticipating the dissolution of their institution, sold the college plate at the fair in 1549.¹¹² The university and religious houses in particular created a demand for specialised products. Thetford Priory and Peterborough Abbey bought wax, paper and parchment at Stourbridge fair.¹¹³ The fair became a well-known market for booksellers in the later sixteenth century, but Joyce Pykegrome of London, bookseller, had been selling law titles there in the 1490s.¹¹⁴ Fairs at university towns

¹⁰² girthweb – woven material of which girths are made: *OED*, vi, p. 532.

¹⁰³ bouget – (form of budget) a pouch, bag, wallet, usually of leather: *OED*, ii, p. 620.

¹⁰⁴ mail – a bag, pack or wallet, a travelling bag: *OED*, ix, p. 212.

¹⁰⁵ fustian – coarse cloth of cotton and flax: *OED*, vi, p. 292.

¹⁰⁶ say – a cloth of fine textile resembling serge: *OED*, xiv, p. 542.

¹⁰⁷ CCA, X/66, m. 5.

¹⁰⁸ *St Radegund*, p. 167; KH a/c, xxiv, fols. 28v, 67v, xxvi, fol. 72v; J. Hatcher & T.C. Barker, *A history of British pewter* (London, 1974), pp. 181, 229, 239.

¹⁰⁹ CCC, MS 106, pp. 103, 109.

¹¹⁰ D.M. Palliser, *Tudor York* (Oxford, 1979), p. 182.

¹¹¹ *Churchwardens' accounts of St Mary the Great*, ed. J.E. Foster, CASOS, XXXV (Cambridge, 1905), p. 94.

¹¹² *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the reign of Edward VI, 1547-1553*, ed. C.S. Knighton (London, 1992), no. 223, p. 101.

¹¹³ *Thetford*, ii, pp. 464, 481, 534, 582, 598, 618, 647, 686; *Obedientiaries of Peterborough*, pp. 178, 183, 194.

¹¹⁴ PRO, C 1/218/2; D. McKitterick, *A history of Cambridge University Press, i: printing and the book trade in Cambridge 1534-1698* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 14-17.

were probably important markets for books from an early date. One of the books in the stock of the Cambridge stationer Garrett Godfrey had been bought at a fair; the Oxford bookseller John Dorne sold books in the fairs of his town in 1520.¹¹⁵

Household accounts from institutions which lay outside the immediate region of between 10 and 15 miles from Cambridge, but within 50 miles of the town, show little if any regular contact with the town, outside the time of Stourbridge fair. Thetford Priory held manors in Cambridgeshire at Dullingham and Wood Ditton, received a former master of Corpus Christi College as a corrodian, and occasionally made payments to poor scholars at Cambridge. But although agents from the priory regularly attended Stourbridge fair, they rarely came to Cambridge on any other occasion.¹¹⁶ Similarly at Peterborough Abbey, the abbot's receiver carried sweet wine from Cambridge on one occasion, and obtained lime from Reach and wheat from Burwell, but otherwise, goods were not usually bought in Cambridge or its local region except at Stourbridge fair.¹¹⁷ Servants of the prior of Dunmow in Essex and Sir Thomas Vaux, lord of Harrowden in Northamptonshire also ventured beyond their usual shopping areas to make purchases at Stourbridge fair in the 1530s.¹¹⁸

More distant households, which had no contact with the town at other times of the year, also came to Stourbridge fair. In the 1420s and 1430s members came from the household of Sir William Mountford of Kingshurst, Warwickshire, and a servant from Greenwich, from the household of Thomas of Lancaster, Duke of Clarence. The Willoughby family of Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire, travelled to Stourbridge in the 1520s and 1540s for fish, spices and cloth.¹¹⁹ Burcester Priory, Oxfordshire purchased horse collars, silk, deal boards, and iron there in 1425, and in the first and second

¹¹⁵ *Garrett Godfrey's accounts*, p. 42; *VCH Oxfordshire*, iv, p. 311.

¹¹⁶ *Thetford*, i, pp. 29-30, 274, ii, pp. 652, 710, 722, 737.

¹¹⁷ *Obedientaries of Peterborough*, pp. 147, 179, 184.

¹¹⁸ *LP*, viii, no. 865, pp. 338-9, ix, no. 697, p. 234.

¹¹⁹ *Household accounts*, part 2, pp. 445, 449, 659, 667; *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord Middleton preserved at Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire*, ed. W.H. Stevenson, Historical Manuscripts Commission (London, 1911), pp. 315-16, 362, 368, 372, 387, 403-4.

decades of the sixteenth century, Oseney Abbey, Oxford bought salted fish, herring, salmon, figs, raisins, oil, soap, wax and other goods, and paid six carters to go to the fair.¹²⁰ At the time of Stourbridge fair, the number of visitors in Cambridge must have increased considerably: the prior of Blackfriars in Cambridge reported that an image of Our Lady in his house drew much pilgrimage, especially when the fair was held.¹²¹

While the Cambridge colleges rarely visited fairs outside Cambridge, for more distant households, Stourbridge was one of a number of fairs used. Thetford Priory relied on various local fairs in Norfolk and Suffolk within a thirty mile radius of the priory, but Stourbridge fair was the third most regularly visited, after those at Ely and Brome hill, near Brandon, in Suffolk: the priory went to Stourbridge twenty-one times in the forty-one years of accounts between 1498 and 1539.¹²² In the account book of William Morton, almoner of Peterborough Abbey, 1448-1467, purchases were made three times from fairs at Stourbridge, Ely and Peterborough Bridge, five times from Stamford fair, and once from Deeping fair, Lincolnshire.¹²³ The abbot's receiver of Peterborough Abbey bought cows and sheep at Coventry and Oundle fairs, keys at Peterborough and Stamford fairs, and fish and spices at Ely and Stourbridge fairs, during 1504/5 and 1505/6.¹²⁴ The Willoughby family visited a wide range of fairs in the Midlands, and also fairs in Kent and Yorkshire, as well as Stourbridge fair.¹²⁵ Great households purchased luxury goods, bulk foodstuffs, and hardware products from fairs in the same way as they did from London. By purchasing in bulk and direct from leading merchants they could obtain goods at wholesale, rather than retail, prices.¹²⁶

¹²⁰ *Annals*, i, p. 173; *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, vi, ed. H.E. Salter, Oxford Historical Society, CI (Oxford, 1936), pp. 211, 219, 283.

¹²¹ *LP*, xiii (2), no. 224, p. 85.

¹²² *Thetford*, i, pp. 43-7.

¹²³ *Book of William Morton*, pp. 34, 87, 90, 97, 110, 116-17, 124, 125, 151, 165-7.

¹²⁴ *Obedientiaries of Peterborough*, pp. 172-200.

¹²⁵ *Wollaton Hall*, pp. 329, 332, 337, 342, 347, 351, 361, 368, 372, 374, 380, 387, 386, 392-3.

¹²⁶ Dyer, 'Consumer', 308-10.

The smaller Cambridgeshire fairs appear only in the accounts of local households, and infrequently even in these. Some were used to buy livestock. Thetford Priory went to both Reach and Wisbech fairs twice between 1498 and 1540, to purchase a few horses or oxen. King's College occasionally visited St Thomas' fair, Royston and Reach fair for livestock and salt.¹²⁷ St John's Hospital in Cambridge once bought oxen and lambs at Cold fair at Newport, Essex.¹²⁸ Commodities traded at Reach fair in 1508 included a horse, a pair of shoes, 10½ quarters of barley, and various lengths of woollen cloth, and these were bought by local merchants, husbandmen, and labourers, rather than large institutions.¹²⁹ Smaller fairs probably relied, like so many lesser market towns and rural markets, on transactions of food, clothing, tools and livestock between small-scale producers and consumers for the bulk of their trade.¹³⁰

So much of the evidence for medieval patterns of consumption comes from the accounts of aristocratic and institutional households that it is difficult to tell to what extent and for what purpose other groups in society visited fairs. One would assume that peasant households purchased modest quantities and cheaper versions of the fish, spices, cloth, and hardware products available. But being only annual events, fairs were a very intermittent source of supply, unsuitable for consumers who wished to buy products in small and regular quantities, who were more likely to rely much more heavily on the weekly market.

On the other hand, individual consumers of more substance must have been attracted by the range of imported and luxury goods available at the larger fairs, and an unusual source strongly suggests that scholars made purchases at fairs like Stourbridge. Remarkably, the fame of this fair was sufficiently well-known to be the subject of a schoolboy's exercise in a rival university town. A school book of English prose

¹²⁷ *Thetford*, ii, pp. 424, 432, 620, 700; KCMB, v, fol. 33, vi, fols. 21, 70.

¹²⁸ SJC, D106.2, fols. 5-6.

¹²⁹ CCA, X/6.

¹³⁰ Britnell, 'Markets', 213-18.

passages with model Latin translations, probably composed by a teacher of grammar at Magdalen School, Oxford at the end of the fifteenth century, covers everyday activities of schoolboys in the town. One passage speaks specifically of Stourbridge fair:

Yff all thyng hade fortunede after my mynde I hade
ben this day at stirbrige faire wher, as men say, a man may
bye better chepe than enywher ellys.¹³¹

Other references to fairs in the schoolbook probably refer to St Giles' fair, the principal fair in Oxford, held in early September, but could equally apply to Stourbridge fair in Cambridge. The presence of Londoners, and their deceptively attractive goods were subjects for translation:

He that hath money enough to cast away lete hym
pike hymselfe¹³² to the faire and make a bargyn with the
londyners, and I doubte not but er he depart thei shall
make hym as clen from it as an ape fro tailys, for thei study
nothyng in the worlde ellys but for to deceyve menn with
fair spech.

Many scholars of this universite wolde spende wast-
fully all their fathers goodes in japys and trifulles this
faire yf they myght have it at their liberte. for thies lon-
dyners be so craftye and so wyly in dressynge their gere so
gloriously that they may deceyve us scholars lyghtly.¹³³

Other passages mention a student who received a pen case and ink horn at the last fair from his uncle. Another schoolboy hoped that his mother and father would come when the next fair was to be held. At the fair he saw many of his acquaintances brightly apparelled in gold chains, brooches with gold, pearls and precious stones, probably bought at the fair.¹³⁴ As well as stationery supplies, one gets the impression

¹³¹ *A fifteenth century school book from a manuscript in the British Museum (MS Arundel 249)*, ed. W. Nelson (Oxford, 1956), p. 90.

¹³² pike hymselfe: be off.

¹³³ Ibid., p. 54.

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 14, 22, 90.

that the students were being tempted by a wide range of cheaper goods, perhaps objects like the straw hats, Nuremberg mirrors, imitation pearls, and mistletoe beads which were imported into London in 1480/1, and similar items which came in through Lynn in 1503/4.¹³⁵

The other major role of larger fairs like Stourbridge was in wholesale transactions. Major merchants, and in particular Londoners, used fairs to sell goods to local tradesmen, who then resold retail in towns and markets in the locality. Pewter was distributed in this way, as were expensive spices, mercery goods, and cloth.¹³⁶ Nightingale has suggested that during the contraction of trade in the mid-fifteenth century, chapmen turned from provincial urban suppliers to London wholesalers in the capital and at fairs, with whom they could barter locally produced cloth for raw materials and luxury goods imported through London.¹³⁷ The evidence from Stourbridge fair cannot give a date to this transition, but it would seem likely that a variety of urban merchants, including men from London, Coventry and elsewhere, obtained locally produced goods, particularly cloth, at Stourbridge, from the 'clothiers booths', 'pakkes' of 'brode clothes' and 'Hadleigh men' listed in the corporation treasurers' accounts.

Stourbridge and Ely fairs were important wholesale markets for cloth. Some indication of the extent of cloth production and marketing in the region is provided by the ulnage accounts, although these accounts present many difficulties in their use. The Suffolk and Cambridgeshire accounts become unreliable from 1473-4, with entries copied almost exactly from the previous year and rounded totals, although in

¹³⁵ *The overseas trade of London: Exchequer customs accounts 1480-1*, ed. H.S. Cobb, London Record Society, XXVII (London, 1990), pp. xxxvi-xxxviii; J.L. Bolton, *The medieval English economy 1150-1500* (London, 1980), p. 319.

¹³⁶ Hatcher & Barker, *Pewter*, p. 253.

¹³⁷ Nightingale, *Grocers' Company*, p. 368.

the late 1460s there had been a determined attempt to improve efficiency.¹³⁸ Cloth sales in Cambridgeshire in the 1460s were very small: a mere fraction of those in Suffolk and Essex, and comparable with those of Huntingdonshire, Rutland, and Derbyshire.¹³⁹ Within the county, sales were concentrated in the towns of Cambridge and Ely and at Stourbridge and Ely fairs. Subsidy was paid on 27 cloths and 4 kerseys at Stourbridge fair in 1465-6, 15 cloths in 1469/70, and 40 in 1473/4.¹⁴⁰ These totals, covering a fair that lasted perhaps four weeks of the year, were of similar size to, or greater than, the total subsidies from the town of Cambridge, which were generally collected throughout the year. More significantly, the fairs attracted traders from a greater area. Although sales in Cambridge occasionally list clothmakers from outside the town, like the men from Wisbech and Lynn who sold cloth there in 1465-6, most of the sales were by the townspeople. In contrast, traders from Stratford, Higham, and Nayland in Suffolk were assessed at Ely fair in 1464-5, while at Stourbridge fair men came from London and Leicester in 1464-5 and 1466, and *ex patriam* in 1469/70.¹⁴¹ Earlier ulnage accounts from the 1390s also record cloth sales at Stourbridge and Ely fairs, but these comprised only a small part of the total sales during the year.¹⁴²

Subsequent references to cloth producers at Stourbridge fair suggest an expansion in the wholesale trade in textiles. John Robinson, tailor of Westminster, rode with two hosiers of that town to Stourbridge in the early 1480s to gather cloth as they ‘muste nedis occupye in thair saide occupacions’. Julian Nethermyll of Coventry, draper, sold to William Richardson of Wakefield, draper, various cloth, including violet, muster and tawney colour and ‘Kentishe Risett’, for a total of £11 8s 2d in 1529. Matthew Harteley of York, draper, bought cloth worth over £27 from Andrew Yardlay of London, merchant tailor, at the fair, and tied William Harper of York, draper, into the

¹³⁸ E.M. Carus-Wilson, ‘The aulnage accounts: a criticism’, in E.M. Carus-Wilson, *Medieval merchant venturers* (London, 1954), pp. 279-91; Thornton, *Clare*, pp. 144-54; Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 78-81, 187-9.

¹³⁹ Heaton, *Woollen and worsted industries*, pp. 85-6.

¹⁴⁰ PRO, E 101/338/9, E 101/343/7, E 101/343/9.

¹⁴¹ E 101/338/9, E 101/343/1, E 101/343/7.

¹⁴² E 101/338/3.

transaction. Two London grocers were arrested for receiving broadcloths worth over £20, which were unstamped, from a London clothworker at the fair.¹⁴³ Adam Wolford and Patrick Bryket, both described as ‘kendalman’ in 1523/4, John Stablehill, ‘devenshire manne’ in 1550/1, and ‘an yryshe man’ in 1551/2, all renting treasurers’ booths, were probably traders in the distinctive cloth products of those regions.¹⁴⁴ Matthew Goodwyn of Ipswich, who held a Hadley booth in the fair for at least twelve years, and Richard Cary of Bristol, fined at the fair, were both also recorded as cloth traders at Blackwell Hall, London in 1561-2.¹⁴⁵

The significant role which fairs played in the distribution of English cloth in the late middle ages has not always been fully appreciated. Under a statute of 1554-5, people dwelling in the countryside were not to sell by retail any ‘Wollen Clothe Lynnen Clothe Haberdashe wares Grocery wares Mercerye wares’ at or within any town or its suburbs and liberties, except in open fairs.¹⁴⁶ Connections with the cloth trade seem to have helped several markets in south-east England to survive during the fifteenth century. Cloth sales in late fourteenth-century Colchester peaked during June and July when the town’s cloth fairs, which attracted outside merchants, including Londoners, were held.¹⁴⁷ Exported English wool and cloth was sold in the great seasonal fairs or marts of Bergen-op-Zoom and Antwerp.¹⁴⁸ Cloth could only be sold wholesale in London at the cloth market at Blackwell Hall or at the fairs of St Bartholomew, Southwark and Westminster.¹⁴⁹ Stourbridge may well have performed a similar function to St Bartholomew’s fair in London, where sixteenth-century Yorkshire

¹⁴³ PRO, C 1/61/350, C 1/660/33, C 1/999/4, C 1/1094/40.

¹⁴⁴ CCTA, i, fols. 79A, 324, 340.

¹⁴⁵ CCTA, i, fols. 171-171v, 216, 227, 251, 266v, 280v, 294, 310, 325, 340, 371v, 385, 398v; CCC, MS 106, pp. 103, 109; G.D. Ramsay, ‘The distribution of the cloth industry in 1561-2’, *English Historical Review*, 57 (1942), 364-5.

¹⁴⁶ 1 & 2 Phil. & Mar. c. 7: *SR*, iv, part 1, pp. 244-5.

¹⁴⁷ Mate, ‘Markets’, p. 72; Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 68, 80, 181.

¹⁴⁸ E. Power, *Medieval people* (London, 1924), p. 142; A. Hanham, *The Celys and their world: an English merchant family of the fifteenth century* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 209-11.

¹⁴⁹ A.H. Johnson, *The history of the worshipful company of the Drapers of London*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1914), ii, p. 26.

clothiers left bequests in their wills for the freeholds of their booths, and where according to Stow, ‘the Clothiers of all England, and Drapers of London repayed’.¹⁵⁰

Saffron was another commodity that was traded at fairs in the region. As in the cloth trade, fairs seem to have offered an opportunity for local men to buy and sell from London merchants.¹⁵¹ In the mid-sixteenth century, forfeitures of saffron were taken by the treasurers of Walden at the town’s Ursula fair, from traders which included a man from Walsingham and another from Suffolk.¹⁵²

Visits to fairs also offered opportunities for conducting other transactions, like the settling of debts. The feasts on which York’s fairs were held may have been used to fix the dates for payments of loans made in the county.¹⁵³ John Smythe of Bristol collected £7 10s 0d for one pipe of wool oil at Stourbridge fair in 1546, and gathered other debts at fairs in south-west England.¹⁵⁴ Some of Henry Tooley of Ipswich’s debts matured at Stourbridge fair, as did those of a London mercer in 1525, and the abbot of Peterborough’s receiver collected rents from Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Rutland, and payments for the sale of wood en route to, or at, the fair.¹⁵⁵ At least by the early modern period, the hiring of labour was also conducted at fairs.¹⁵⁶ Fairs also provided news, recreation and entertainment. The Pastons awaited news from St Bartholomew’s fair, London, and bonfires were lit at Stourbridge fair to celebrate the birth of Henry VIII’s daughter, Princess Elizabeth.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁰ Heaton, *Woollen and worsted industries*, p. 146; Stow, *Survey*, ii, p. 27.

¹⁵¹ See above, Chapter 3.

¹⁵² Clark, ‘Saffron’, 61.

¹⁵³ Kermode, *Merchants*, pp. 234, 246.

¹⁵⁴ *The ledger of John Smythe 1538-1550*, ed. J. Vanes, Bristol Record Society Publications, XXVIII (London, 1974), pp. 43, 56, 147, 164, 298.

¹⁵⁵ Webb, *Great Tooley*, p. 108; *Mercers’ Company*, p. 699. *Obedientiaries of Peterborough*, pp. 172-7, 187-8, 191 - the phrase used in the Peterborough accounts is *erga Sturbridge*.

¹⁵⁶ Chartres, ‘Markets and fairs’, pp. 16-17.

¹⁵⁷ *PL*, i, p. 440, ii, p. 42; *Annals*, i, p. 360.

Regulation and ownership of the fairs

Given their size and the value of the goods being traded, the largest fairs, such as Stourbridge, required careful regulation. At the beginning of Stourbridge fair, a proclamation or cry was given, detailing regulations by which all traders were to abide. Three versions, which vary slightly, have been attributed to the mid-sixteenth century,¹⁵⁸ while a fourth was produced during the chancellorship of William Cecil, Lord Burghley (1559-82).¹⁵⁹ These proclamations included regulations for bakers, brewers, tiplers, gaugers, potters, vintners, fishmongers and butchers. No one was to regrade fish, wax, flax, osmond, yarn, pitch, tar, cloth or any other merchandise under pain of forfeiture and imprisonment. Large gatherings also raised the possibility of disturbances, and the cry ordered everyone to ‘make no fraye, crye, owtasse, scekinge, or any other noys bythe which insurrectiones, coventicles, or gaderinge of people maybe made’. Strangers were to leave their weapons at inns, and innkeepers were required to warn their guests of this. All ‘comyn women and mysbehavyng people’ were ordered to keep away from the fair, and the proctors investigated and removed vagrants and prostitutes.¹⁶⁰ In 1395, probably mindful of the Peasants’ Revolt 14 years before, Barnwell Priory feared great numbers of the commonalty and university of Cambridge going to Barnwell fair, and the sheriffs were to proclaim that no unlawful assemblies were to be made.¹⁶¹ Regular watches were organised by the proctors and townspeople while Stourbridge fair was held: the colleges provided 20 watchmen with harnesses and weapons, to serve the proctors in the night watch in 1550 and 1551.¹⁶² The commissioners of the shire noted in 1555 that ‘the resort and confluence ys from all parts of this realme’ at the time of Stourbridge fair, ordered the watches to be doubled and requested the university and town to ‘joyne lovinglie

¹⁵⁸ UA, Collect.Admin. 2, fols. 111v-117 is subdivided into ‘The crye in Sturbrydge fayre’, ‘For the fische fayre’ and ‘The Crye in the Towe’ and ends ‘God save ye King’. UA, Collect.Admin.9, pp. 342-7 has the same text, but without the subheadings and ending; printed in *Annals*, ii, pp. 18-21. A further copy is in CCC, MS 106, pp. 99-102.

¹⁵⁹ UA, C.U.R. 67(1).

¹⁶⁰ UA, Collect.Admin.2, fol. 112; *Grace Book B*, ii, p. 147.

¹⁶¹ CCR, 1392-6, pp. 426-7.

¹⁶² CCC, MS 106, pp. 322-3: printed in *Annals*, ii, p. 48.

together in this your watches'. Unfortunately, four years later, the two groups of watches came to blows at the fair.¹⁶³

The university's control over marketing in Cambridge extended to the town's fairs. The town corporation made regular complaints about the excessive fees taken by the university for searching and gauging goods brought to Stourbridge fair.¹⁶⁴ Every fair had the right to hold a court of pie-powder, which offered remedy for all contracts, trespasses, covenants, debts and other misdemeanours occurring within and during the fair. Cases were tried in front of a jury of traders on the spot, before the parties concerned had left for distant parts of the country. In 1478 it was ordered that the plaintiff was to swear that the action had occurred during the time of the fair.¹⁶⁵ At Stourbridge fair, the university held the chancellor's commissary court daily during the fair.¹⁶⁶

The divided control at Stourbridge fair, with the town controlling the rights to the fair but the university regulating marketing, inevitably caused disputes, and it was not until 1589 that the position was clarified. New charters were issued to the town and university authorities. The inspection and search of all wares except bread, wine, ale and victuals, was to be the responsibility of both the mayor and vice-chancellor, who were to take turns at presiding at the fair's court and to divide the fines taken. Even then, the dissatisfied townsmen accused the mayor of betraying their interests.¹⁶⁷ But although the university fought to preserve its privileges in Stourbridge fair, proposals were made to offer these privileges for sale to the town in 1548 and 1558, although they were never carried out.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶³ *Annals*, ii, pp. 98-99, 154-7.

¹⁶⁴ UA, Collect.Admin.5, fols. 8v, 26v.

¹⁶⁵ 17 Edw IV, c. 2; 1 Ric. III, c. 6: *SR*, ii, pp. 461-2, 480-2.

¹⁶⁶ UA, Collect.Admin.2, fols. 115-115v.

¹⁶⁷ *Charters*, p. xxxi, 97-117, summarised in *VCH Cambs.*, iii, p. 93, n. 97.

¹⁶⁸ *Annals*, ii, pp. 13, 143.

The town corporation strove to confirm and extend its ownership over Stourbridge and Midsummer fairs in this period. Midsummer fair had been granted to the prior and convent of Barnwell, but Cambridge Corporation gradually acquired the rights to this fair, obtaining leases from the priory in 1496 and 1498, and tenure in perpetuity in 1506.¹⁶⁹ At Stourbridge fair, the corporation obtained the land surrounding the former chapel of the leper hospital and the building itself, through agreements made in 1497 and 1544.¹⁷⁰

Stourbridge fair was a valuable source of income for Cambridge Corporation, and the importance they attached to their rights in the fair was highlighted when these were temporarily forfeited. In 1539 the king's attorney general challenged the town corporation in the court of the King's Bench to show by what warrant they claimed the right to hold fairs at Barnwell and Stourbridge and a court of pie-powder. The corporation could produce no title and the king seized the liberties, although in practice the town continued to draw income from the fair.¹⁷¹ The university may have prompted this action. In response to grievances presented by the corporation in 1534, the university stated that the mayor and bailiffs had exacted over £500 a year in profits from the fair, 'Contrary to the kinges lawe prerogatyve and advantage as may more plenily appere by due and diligent examinacion of the Townes Charters grauntes and liberties'.¹⁷² A charter was prepared at the huge cost of 1,000 marks, granting a pardon to the town corporation and permitting them to continue holding the fair, but this document never apparently bore the great seal.¹⁷³ In 1553 it was agreed that the town should pay one half of the charges and the owners of stalls and booths the other half, and money was collected towards the first instalment of 200 marks. The matter

¹⁶⁹ *Annals*, i, pp. 246, 249, 279.

¹⁷⁰ *Annals*, i, pp. 248, 416.

¹⁷¹ *Annals*, i, p. 393.

¹⁷² UA, Collect.Admin.5, fol. 11.

¹⁷³ *LP*, xiv, no. 1188, p. 529; Nichols, *History* (Appendix to history of Sturbridge fair), pp. 5-11.

was not finally settled until 1589, when Elizabeth's charter stated that the corporation had held the fair from time immemorial.¹⁷⁴

Conclusion

A charter of 1589 described Stourbridge fair as 'by far the largest and most famous fair in all England' and its success was attributed to 'the laudable industry of the mayor, bailiffs and burgesses...the convenience of the place itself, the neighbourhood of the university, and the favourableness of the time helping'.¹⁷⁵ This charter tried to settle long-running disputes between the town and university over jurisdiction of trading offences in the fair, and so it was perhaps inevitable that both parties were congratulated. However, the favourable factors mentioned in the charter were significant and can offer suggestions why Stourbridge fair had become so important.

An important element in the success of any fair or market was its accessibility to customers by road or river. Cambridge stood at the intersection of a number of roads from London, the Midlands and East Anglia. In the 1430s, Sir William Mountford and John de Vere sent their 'chariots', vehicles kept for routine household journeys, to transport their purchases back from Stourbridge fair.¹⁷⁶ Stourbridge fairground lay alongside the Cam, so was easily reached by water. In 1550, Cambridge Corporation rebuilt the bridge near the fairground in stone, while further repairs were undertaken in 1553.¹⁷⁷ A ford across the river provided access to the fair from Chesterton.¹⁷⁸ Thetford Priory, Peterborough Abbey, King's Hall and Trinity College used boats to transport their purchases from Stourbridge and Ely fairs.¹⁷⁹ Such was the scale of river traffic from Lynn to Cambridge at the time of the fair that there were complaints about dock charges and agreements were made between the two towns regarding

¹⁷⁴ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fols. 66v-67; *Charters*, p. xxxi.

¹⁷⁵ *Charters*, p. 97.

¹⁷⁶ Lobel, 'Cambridge', p. 1; *Household accounts*, part 2, pp. 449, 529; Dyer, 'Consumer', 310.

¹⁷⁷ *Annals*, ii, p. 47; CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fols. 39v, 64.

¹⁷⁸ CCA, X/82.

¹⁷⁹ *Thetford*, i, p. 93, ii, pp. 464, 534, 647, 686, 723, 738, 747; *Book of William Morton*, p. 125; KH a/c, xxv, fol. 75; TCSB a/c, fols. 142v, 189v, 220v; TCJB a/c, fols. 174v, 455v.

charges for mooring boats in 1518 and 1552.¹⁸⁰ The fairs at Midsummer Common, Reach and Ely were also accessible by both road and river.

The university and colleges generated demand for large purchases of foodstuffs, in the manner of an aristocratic household, as well as for supplies of wax, parchment, paper and books. Stourbridge fair was held in late August and September, just after harvest when money was plentiful, but before the onset of more difficult weather. For other fairs with a major trade in livestock, cattle could be supplied to drovers and graziers for fattening before slaughter. In fact, September was the most popular month among fairs chartered in England and Wales between 1227 and 1326.¹⁸¹

Although fairs could be found in country locations, most fairs in Cambridge's region, as elsewhere in England, were associated with towns. Allix claimed that 'the fair is a supplementary town, a parasite in a certain sense' and that fairs were of little benefit to towns, with which they had 'only superficial relations'.¹⁸² Evidence from the Cambridge region does not support these claims. Fairs that continued to operate in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries tended to be located in urban centres. Stourbridge fair reflected the specialist occupations and trading contacts of Cambridge, with the presence at the fair of academic trades and links with Lynn and London. The fair also served as a cloth market, a trade which does not appear to have been significant in the town at other times of the year. One might assume that the attendance of so many merchants from other towns at Stourbridge fair would be damaging to Cambridge traders. No protest, however is recorded like that found at Bristol, when in 1542 the citizens claimed that due to the fair at Redcliffe they were unable to dispose of wares and the presence of London and foreign cappers damaged their own industry.¹⁸³ Unlike the fair at Redcliffe, created in 1529, that at Stourbridge had been established

¹⁸⁰ PRO, C 1/316/65; CCA, X/42, X/50.

¹⁸¹ Farmer, 'Marketing', pp. 339, 341.

¹⁸² A. Allix, 'The geography of fairs: illustrated by Old-World examples', *Geographical Review*, 12 (1922), 543-4.

¹⁸³ Salzman, *Trade*, pp. 158-60.

for well over three centuries. Furthermore, many townspeople had a vested interest in Stourbridge fair through the possession of booths, which also provided the town corporation with valuable income.

Stourbridge fair had surpassed other local fairs by the sixteenth century because, like many of the expanding fairs of late medieval Europe highlighted by Epstein, its trade came from a variety of different regions. As it was put by Cambridge Corporation c.1530, Stourbridge fair was

not onely the veray locke and keye of the saide Towne of Cambridge...butt also a great and singuler Realeeff Succour and comforte aswell to tall the inhabitants of the hole cuntreth thre as of diuerce and many other cuntres within this Realme to the same adjoynyng.¹⁸⁴

In particular, at a time when the prospects for economic growth were generally limited, the fair drew upon two particularly dynamic areas of the economy - the textile trade and London. Cloth dealers from major marketing centres like Coventry, as well as Suffolk cloth-makers, provided Stourbridge fair with a wide range of textiles to be sold retail and wholesale, while profits gained from cloth sales could also be spent on the range of hardware and luxury goods at the fair. Increasingly London was dominating not only the luxury trades, with its goldsmiths, pewterers and embroiderers, but also the distribution of wine and cloth, and general mercantile networks of trade and credit, while overseas trade was increasingly focused on the London-Antwerp link.¹⁸⁵ Lying just over 50 miles from Cambridge, London was close enough for the occasional journey, but not for regular shopping trips. Stourbridge fair was effectively becoming an extension of the London market.

Stourbridge fair consolidated these advantages, and continued to flourish in subsequent centuries. One indicator of its importance was the attention it attracted from contemporary observers: John Evelyn climbed the roof of King's College

¹⁸⁴ CCA, X/66, m. 5.

¹⁸⁵ Britnell, '1450-1550', pp. 89-97.

Chapel to see the stalls, Samuel Pepys' wife made a special journey from London to see the spectacle, and Daniel Defoe described it as the greatest fair in the world. It may indeed have been the inspiration for the 'Vanity Fair' of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.¹⁸⁶ Stourbridge fair continued to be a prominent trading market until well into the nineteenth century until improved communications, most notably the arrival of the railways, finally allowed traders to deal directly without the need to meet at a specified time or place.¹⁸⁷

Thus large fairs like Stourbridge were able to combine some of the advantages of both the open and private markets. It was a regulated open market, where standards were controlled and redress was provided for buyers and sellers, which provided security which was often much more difficult to obtain in private agreements. Fairs also offered economies of scale and scope for traders, and large institutions could buy in bulk and deal directly with larger merchants, rather than through middlemen. Traders benefited from low fixed costs and a wide range of potential contacts. Local tradesmen and merchants could buy products wholesale to be resold later retail in smaller markets. A wide range of products was offered, all on display at the same time and in the same place. In a pre-industrial economy, where the quality of goods could range enormously, only personal inspection could guarantee that the buyer's demands would be satisfied adequately. These advantages ensured that fairs were an important part of both the medieval and early modern marketing systems.

¹⁸⁶ Siraut, 'Cambridge', pp. 73-5; See H. Ridout, 'Sturbridge Fair in the eighteenth century' (unpublished Certificate of Local History dissertation, Board of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, 1992), appendix 1, pp. 28-9 for eighteenth-century observers.

¹⁸⁷ T. McIntosh, *The decline of Stourbridge fair, 1770-1934*, Friends of the Department of English Local History, University of Leicester, No. 2 (Leicester, 1998).

CHAPTER 6

FOOD AND FUEL SUPPLIES

This chapter examines the sources from which Cambridge derived its food and fuel supplies. Grain constituted the most important element of the medieval diet and its trade was thus particularly sensitive to changes in the size and wealth of the population, while cheap and accessible supplies of fuel, required for many household and industrial purposes, were essential for urban economies. Recent work has begun to illuminate the areas from which certain medieval towns drew basic commodities, and studies have examined the supply of foodstuffs to Colchester, Exeter, and London.¹ In many cases though, the extent of urban hinterlands are still unclear. Yet if towns acted as promoters of economic growth, their impact was surely most keenly felt in those areas from which towns drew everyday supplies, while shortages of these commodities could seriously constrain urban development.

In the case of Cambridge, the places of residence of the suppliers listed in the accounts of King's Hall and King's College can throw light on the town's hinterlands for corn and fuel supplies, and show whether this region changed over the 1450-1560 period. These detailed accounts also permit the identification of a number of suppliers, who in some cases, can be traced further to show their wealth, status, landholding and commercial interests, thereby revealing the types of people who were supplying the Cambridge market. Finally, the fluctuating price of wheat can be traced over the period, and the particularly severe crisis of 1556-9, when grain stocks were seriously depleted by two bad harvests and epidemic disease also struck, can be examined.

Many colleges at Cambridge and Oxford, and also those at Winchester and Eton, operated a system of commons to budget for food and fuel. Weekly allowances were

¹ Britnell, *Colchester*; Galloway et al., *Medieval capital*; Kowaleski, *Exeter*; M. Kowaleski, 'The grain trade in fourteenth-century Exeter', in E.B. DeWindt, ed., *The salt of common life: individuality and choice in the medieval town, countryside, and church* (Kalamazoo, 1995), pp. 1-52.

apportioned to each member of the college, at rates stipulated in the college statutes, covering the costs of food, drink, and fuel for cooking and heating the hall. Extra sums were distributed at festivals and to visitors, and allowances were raised at times of scarcity. In many cases, this was the only account of expenditure on basic foodstuffs, but fortunately, King's Hall and King's College also made yearly accounts recording the purchases of grain and fuel.²

The King's Hall accounts record purchases of wheat, malt barley and various types of fuel under two headings for each commodity, *emptiones* and *conventiones*.³ The former category seems to have listed purchases made and payments supplied at the same time. Some of these purchases were made *in foro*, some were bought from the same suppliers as those who made contracts with the college, but the source of most of these purchases is not recorded. Under the heading *conventiones*, agreements are recorded between the college and suppliers covering the purchase and delivery of goods. These state the supplier's name and often his residence, the quantity of the commodity, delivery date and the terms of payment. These *conventiones* can be analysed in much more detail than the data recorded in the *emptiones* category, which will be used principally to provide prices of wheat.

The King's College Mundum Books also record purchases of wheat, barley and fuel, and some purchases are specifically recorded as being made in the market-place. Most payments though, are from local farmers and dealers, some supplied or paid for in instalments, and it will be assumed here that these transactions were private agreements, at least delivered, and probably made, outside the market-place.⁴

² Cobban, *King's Hall*, pp. 121-41; Evans & Faith, 'College estates', p. 694; Beveridge, *Prices and wages*, pp. 7-8, 95.

³ KH a/c, xi-xxvi.

⁴ KCMB, ii-vii, xii-xiv.

In both series of accounts, the names and residences of the suppliers are often, though not always, recorded. As in manorial accounts, many sales were probably made to people who did not need to be identified by their place of origin.⁵ In order to analyse the King's Hall agreements, they were entered into a relational database and grouped by suppliers. About 70 per cent of the contracts stated the place of residence of the supplier, but by tracing the same supplier in subsequent contracts, places of residence could be identified for a further 10 per cent of the contracts. Some assumptions had to be made, as spellings varied considerably. Suppliers were grouped by surname unless there were different recorded forenames or places of residence for that surname. It was in fact rare in a single village for more than two families to have the same surname, and if they did, a distinguishing 'alias' was often added.⁶ Some King's College suppliers were also grouped by surname, but these accounts contained a much wider variety of names.

Much confusion can arise between the two methods of dating harvest years. The system adopted here is that used by Titow and Phelps-Brown, which describes the period Michaelmas (29 September) 1450 to Michaelmas (28 September) 1451 as the year 1451, whereas Thorold Rogers, Beveridge, Bowden and Hoskins would label the same period as the harvest year 1450.⁷

Food and fuel supplies

Townspeople and institutions in Cambridge, as in other medieval towns, could draw their food and fuel supplies from a variety of sources. Individuals and institutions could cultivate their own lands to support their needs. Cambridge was surrounded by town fields in which many townsfolk held plots, whilst there was grazing land alongside the river. Maps of the late sixteenth-century town drawn by Lyne and

⁵ Farmer, 'Marketing', p. 364.

⁶ As found by J.N. Hare, 'The demesne lessees of fifteenth-century Wiltshire', *Agricultural History Review*, 29 (1981), 3.

⁷ C.J. Harrison, 'Grain price analysis and harvest qualities', *Agricultural History Review*, 19 (1971), 136-7; J.Z. Titow, *English rural society, 1200-1350* (London, 1969), pp. 27-9.

Hamond show numerous gardens and orchards behind properties within the town centre.⁸ College grounds were used for growing fruit and vegetables, cultivating orchards and vineyards, maintaining pigeon-houses and beehives, and even keeping swans.⁹

Many large households fed livestock on pastures or hay to maintain a supply of fresh meat and dairy produce during the winter and spring,¹⁰ and some colleges kept livestock pastured in the fens. King's College reserved one acre for cattle in leases of its fen-edge manor of Isleham throughout this period.¹¹ Meadow ground was in short supply around Cambridge, and William Harrison noted how the townspeople and colleges were forced 'to provide their haye from other villages about, which minister the same unto them in verye great abundance'.¹² Those cultivating strips in the town fields bought hay from the fens for use in winter, and grazed their livestock on pastures in fen-edge parishes during the summer. St Radegund's Priory, for example, paid large sums for the agistment of beasts in Willingham fens in the mid-fifteenth century.¹³

The colleges and other large landowners had to decide whether their rural estates should be cultivated for their own consumption, or placed on lease (often described as being 'farmed out') and the income used to purchase foodstuffs. Around 1400, in response to falling grain prices and the rising cost of labour, many large landowners abandoned direct management of their estates and leased out most of the demesne lands which they had formerly cultivated. Manors or home farms near the residential centre might be retained to supply produce, and some rents could also be received in kind. Durham Priory, for example, grew corn at Elvethall farm, on the edge of the

⁸ J.W. Clark & A. Gray, *Old plans of Cambridge 1574 to 1798*, ii: *plans* (Cambridge, 1921), nos. 1, 3.

⁹ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, iii, pp. 578-82, 592-6; Cobban, *King's Hall*, pp. 244-6.

¹⁰ Dyer, *Standards*, p. 59.

¹¹ KC Ledger Book, i, fols. 82, 126, 146v, 248, 287, 344, 349.

¹² Harrison, *Description*, p. 67.

¹³ *The West Fields of Cambridge*, ed. C.P. Hall & J.R. Ravensdale, Cambridgeshire Records Society, III (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 28, 55; *St Radegund*, pp. 150, 167.

city. At Oxford though, even colleges with agricultural lands close to the town do not seem to have relied on estates for food, but provisioned themselves from the town market.¹⁴

While most of the estates of the Cambridge colleges were leased, a few manors around Cambridge were, at times, cultivated directly for food. The home-farm of King's College at Grantchester operated for fourteen years between 1452 and 1466, when eight full-time servants were employed to grow barley, wheat, and maintain a small amount of livestock and poultry to supply the college's kitchens. This farm was one of a number of expedients adopted by the college to secure grain supplies: in 1454, King's collected the tithe corn of Fulbourn rectory and the toll-corn from a lease of Grantchester mill. The home farm appears to have been expensive to cultivate, however, and in 1466 it was leased, the college reserving the right to pasture its flock of sheep on the demesne, and the use of the gardens, orchards and fishponds of the manor. The college also directly cultivated some land at Coton in 1508-10, when payment for seed and labour are recorded in the Mundum Books.¹⁵ This was possibly a temporary expedient because another lessee could not be found immediately to cultivate the land.

Smaller colleges and religious houses tended to cultivate their local estates, at least in some years during the later fifteenth century. Although St Radegund's Priory leased out its land in the surrounding villages and the tithes of St Giles' Church, the monastery ran a considerable farming operation on its lands in the Cambridge fields. The main crops were wheat and barley, some of which was malted in the kiln, but oats, peas, tares, mustard and 'le Bolymong'¹⁶ were also grown. Some wool was sold to John Wolleman of Cambridge, while some was spun and woven into cloth for the

¹⁴ Evans & Faith, 'College estates', pp. 661, 671-4; Dyer, *Standards*, pp. 67-9; R.A. Lomas, 'A northern farm at the end of the Middle Ages: Elvethall manor, Durham, 1443/4-1513/14', *Northern History*, 18 (1982), 26-53.

¹⁵ Saltmarsh, 'Home-farm'; KCMB, x, 1508/9 & 1509/10 a/cs.

¹⁶ Bullimong – a mixture of various kinds of grain sown together for feeding cattle: *OED*, ii, p. 643.

priory. The sale of corn and livestock produced £10 to £13 per year in the mid-fifteenth century. Farming operations seem to have contracted considerably by 1481/2, although the account of that year is incomplete. No proceeds from the farm are recorded apart from the sale of hay. The labour force appears to have been reduced and the priory was now purchasing malt barley, oats, and peas.¹⁷

Peterhouse owned a farm and rectory at Hinton, which during the 1450s and 1460s alternated between being leased out and cultivated directly by the college.¹⁸ The rectory site included old and new halls, a malt house, bakehouse, dovecote, and chambers for wheat and barley, and the college paid for repairs to these buildings. In 1457/8, Peterhouse spent £8 4s 1d on preparing and sowing land, and £5 5s 9d on the purchase and care of sheep; hens, ducks, piglets, a boar and a cow were also bought. A schedule of land and stock attached to the 1459 lease lists over 44 acres of land, much of which was being fertilised by manure from the folding of livestock or brought in carts; also itemised were 20 quarters of wheat and 40 quarters of barley to sow part of this land, a range of equipment, including carts, ploughs, chains and a yoke, and 2 oxen, 84 sheep, hay and peas.¹⁹ When the rectory was not being leased, most of the produce was probably supplied to the college, but some was sold, including 42 quarters of barley and 120 quarters of malt barley in 1457/8.²⁰

St John's Hospital owned a farmstead among its substantial landholding in the west fields of Cambridge, which included barns, stables, a dovecote, ponds, an oven and a kiln. Although by the late fifteenth century this property was generally leased out as a unit, payments in the accounts for livestock and agricultural work suggest that in some years at least, this or other land was being cultivated directly by the hospital.²¹ Among the livestock purchased c.1500 were 10 horses, 8 oxen, 12 cattle, and 184

¹⁷ *St Radegund*, pp. 145-75.

¹⁸ Peterhouse, H1-H3; Peterhouse computus rolls, 1455/6-1470/1.

¹⁹ Peterhouse, H2.

²⁰ Peterhouse computus rolls 1457/8.

²¹ Underwood, 'Impact', pp. 175-6.

ewes and lambs. Six stone of wool was spun, and there were payments to a shearman and weaver.²² In 1507, there were payments for buying beans and barley for seed, and for fallowing, sowing, weeding, and gleaning.²³ A study of the Forest of Arden in the fifteenth century has noted the short-term nature of some home farms, where the lord used lands one year and then leased them out in another; this flexible response to market and household needs may have been adopted by some of the colleges.²⁴

Another potential source of food was from the tithes and glebe produce of rectories, which many colleges held. Corpus Christi College held the rectories of Grantchester and Landbeach, and in the mid-fifteenth century accounts, the college appears to have received some of its rents in wheat and barley, particularly from Grantchester, sometimes as part of the tithes along with peas, hay, capons, geese and wool.²⁵ Corpus also received some rents in kind in wax, timber, or cloth in 1462.²⁶ Most rectories though, like other estates, were leased to a resident 'farmer': often, though not always, this lessee was the vicar, who paid a *firma* or fixed sum every year to the college in return for the right to collect the income.²⁷ Particularly during the period of rising cereal prices in the sixteenth century, rectories were sought for the cereals that the tithe and glebe lands could provide. Dr John Tayler, master of St John's College, Cambridge, 1538-1546, and dean of Lincoln from 1544, requested the advowson of the parsonage of Washingborough, 'whiche wolde fynde me well my drynk corne & some parte towarde my bread corne.'²⁸

Most colleges, though, relied on cash purchases of food for most of their needs, and this was often bought unprocessed. Bakers and brewers proliferated in towns, and

²² SJC, D106.2, fols. 5-6, 11.

²³ SJC, D106.10, fol. 19.

²⁴ A. Watkins, 'Landowners and their estates in the Forest of Arden in the fifteenth century', *Agricultural History Review*, 45 (1997), 18-33.

²⁵ CCC, 'Registrum Accounts', fols. 141, 154v-155, 166v, 179v, 189v, 196v.

²⁶ CCC, 'Liber Albus', fol. 68v.

²⁷ Evans & Faith, 'College estates', pp. 675-6.

²⁸ 'Notes from the college records', *The Eagle*, 18 (1895), 545.

were the main source of supply for most urban inhabitants and many country dwellers, but the larger Cambridge colleges, like other aristocratic households, bought only limited quantities of bread and ale, preferring to do their own baking and brewing.²⁹ In the lists of colleges' employees in the survey of 1546, King's Hall, Trinity Hall and King's College employed a baker,³⁰ while King's Hall and Peterhouse had bakehouses in the fifteenth century.³¹ Only King's Hall listed a brewer as being employed in 1546, although Queens' had built a brewhouse in 1533/4.³² Other college bakehouses and brewhouses may have relied on casual labour or been leased out, and some colleges may have baked bread in their kitchens. Jesus College acquired the reversion of a 'bierhouse' in 1519 and brewhouses operated on the sites of St Botolph's and St Thomas' Hostels, owned by Pembroke College, by the mid-sixteenth century, but such leases may merely have provided financial income rather than sources of supply for the colleges.³³ The townspeople complained in 1532 that the colleges, unlike the hostels and halls which had been furnished with bread and ale from the town, were now provided with bakehouses and brewhouses.³⁴ But some smaller colleges still relied on the town's bakers and brewers. Although Corpus Christi College ordered the construction of a bakehouse in 1456, and a contract was drawn-up three years later, the building was used successively as a tennis court and for college accommodation, and in 1586 the college still relied on supplies of bread from the town. Gonville and Caius College decided only in 1579 to abandon buying bread from the townspeople and to build a suitable oven in the college kitchen.³⁵

Town market-places were not used extensively by the Cambridge colleges and religious houses to buy corn. St Radegund's Priory bought 2 quarters and 6 bushels of wheat in the local market-place in 1450/1, but obtained most of its wheat from its own

²⁹ Dyer, *Standards*, pp. 57, 196-8.

³⁰ *Documents*, i, pp. 151, 158, 243.

³¹ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, p. 26, ii, p. 440.

³² *Documents*, i, p. 151; QC, *Magnum Journale*, ii, fols. 193, 194v-195.

³³ Information kindly supplied by Mr John Compton-Davy, Magdalene College, Cambridge.

³⁴ CCA, X/ 9(ii).

³⁵ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, pp. 184, 259-60; Siraut, 'Cambridge', p. 211.

estates.³⁶ Purchases of wheat in the market-place are occasionally recorded in the King's Hall accounts, but were usually for small quantities, the largest being 5 quarters.³⁷ Only a small and diminishing part of the total grain bought by King's College was gathered from the market-place. Between 1450 and 1480, 16 per cent of the total number of wheat purchases made by the college were described as occurring *in foro*, comprising 17 per cent of the total amount bought; between 1545 and 1558 the figures were 12 per cent of the total number of purchases and 4 per cent of the total amount bought. Omitting a handful of large purchases described as being made at various times, the average purchase in the market-place was 2.8 quarters in the 1450-80 period and 2.0 quarters in the 1545-58 period. With regard to the college's purchases of malt barley, 8 per cent of the total number and 4 per cent of the total amount bought, were made in the market-place between 1450 and 1480.³⁸ Such figures are only rough guides, as the consistency of recording where purchases were made varied considerably over the years. Nonetheless, it appears that over the 1450-1560 period, King's College was gradually withdrawing from purchases made in the market-place in favour of direct agreements with producers.

Private agreements

Throughout the medieval and early modern period, much trade in grain occurred outside formal market places. Producers sold their surpluses directly to middlemen, brewers and bakers, neighbouring landlords traded supplies, landless villagers obtained produce from their neighbours, and grain was purveyed directly from sellers to supply royal armies.³⁹ Larger colleges in particular, like King's Hall and King's College, relied on direct agreements with cultivators and dealers for most of the food and fuel supplies.

³⁶ *St Radegund*, p. 168.

³⁷ KH a/c, xix, fol. 199v, xx, fol. 175, xxiv, fol. 64, xxv, fol. 30.

³⁸ KCMB, ii-vii, xii-xiv; The average purchase in the market-place of 8 quarters of barley seems too high and some purchases were probably added together.

³⁹ Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 98-9.

Contracts for grain varied considerably in size. King's Hall made nearly 560 contracts for wheat, barley, and fuel between 1450 and 1544. Of these contracts, the smallest wheat contract was for 4 bushels and the largest for 80½ quarters, with a mean average of 9½ quarters. Barley purchases varied from 1 to 63 quarters, with a mean average of just under 19 quarters. In 12 years of surviving accounts at King's College between 1450 and 1480, 244 separate purchases of wheat were recorded with prices, which varied from 1 bushel to 60 quarters. In another 12 years of surviving accounts between 1545 and 1558, 346 purchases of wheat were recorded with prices, from 1 bushel to 40 quarters. In both periods, the average purchase of wheat was 5½ quarters. Between 1450 and 1480, 131 purchases of barley were made, varying from 4 bushels to 103 quarters, with an average purchase of 16 quarters.⁴⁰ Some of these purchases were made in the market-place, as outlined above, but the vast majority appear to have been private transactions.

Delivery dates were usually recorded in the King's Hall contracts, and generally fell on or around a saint's day or festival, the most popular dates being the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary, Easter, Pentecost, All Saints and Christmas. Similar dates are found in the King's College accounts for the delivery of wheat, and such days were commonly fixed when arranging the repayment of debts.⁴¹ But the date on which the contract was made is stated much less frequently: in only twenty-nine of the King's Hall contracts, all for wheat and barley. The length of time between the date of the contract and delivery was generally between 1 and 6 months, with an average of around 4 months, although it occasionally stretched to more than 8 months.⁴² Contracts specifying delivery after the harvest, but made before the harvest of that year was known, might risk suppliers being unable to fulfil their promises if the

⁴⁰ Malt barley was not purchased by King's College in the mid-sixteenth century, nor were purchases for hops, ale or beer recorded – the college may have been operating a brewhouse which was leased out, or accounted for separately.

⁴¹ Kermode, *Merchants*, p. 234.

⁴² KH a/c, xxiii, fol. 91v.

harvest turned out to be poor, and were rarely, though occasionally made.⁴³ Most agreements were made between September and December with delivery dates before Christmas, the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary (2 February) or Easter.⁴⁴ Stocks were plentiful and cheap at this time, compared to later in the year.

Terms of payment varied between contracts. The college might pay the supplier *pre manibus* the full amount or else part of the payment was withheld until later. Of the King's Hall contracts, 359 entries state a total and first payment. In 239 cases, the first payment made was the full payment, but the initial payment in the remainder of cases varied from 98 per cent to less than 1 per cent of the total payment, with no particular proportion standing out.

A few of the King's Hall contracts reveal some of the processes involved in making the agreements. When fuel was supplied, loads were occasionally brought *pro exemplo*.⁴⁵ Wheat and malt barley were sometimes sold in quarters described as 'chapmen's measures'; it is not known how these measures differed, and they have been included as regular measures in calculations of price.⁴⁶ The contracts sometimes show that the college retained the tradesman's bill for reference and surety: *ut patet in predicta billa remanenta in custodia senescalli*.⁴⁷ John Benett received total payment *pre manibus in aula nostra*.⁴⁸ Around ten entries have been crossed out; it was unclear whether this denoted the fulfilment of a contract or its failure to be established. These contracts have been included among the calculations on the assumption that any error introduced would be small.

⁴³ KH a/c, xx, fol. 112, xxii, fols. 27v, 122, xxiii, fol. 91v.

⁴⁴ e.g. KH a/c, xxii, fols. 28, 89v, 90, 122.

⁴⁵ KH a/c, xix, fols. 20v, 68.

⁴⁶ KH a/c, xv, fols. 25, 51v, 105v, 120v, xvi, fols. 22, 63, 64.

⁴⁷ KH a/c, xxii, fols. 89v, 122.

⁴⁸ KH a/c, xxiii, fol. 61.

A guarantor or *fideiussor* is named in some of the King's Hall contracts. Cobban discovered that generally, if the college was to pay after the delivery for all or a greater part of the consignment, the guarantor was normally one of the college's seneschals, whereas if the college made full payment shortly after the contract was made, the dealer had to provide a guarantor. He also suggested that the addition or omission of *fideiussores* was nothing more than inconsistent copying of the original contracts.⁴⁹ In two contracts made with John Tuly, vicar of Burwell in 1532, William Yvers, chantry priest of Wilbraham and John Playse, principal of the Saracen's Head served as pledges: the transactions may have been made in this Cambridge tavern.⁵⁰

Hinterlands of grain supplies

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 show the geographical spread of the King's Hall contracts between 1450 and 1500, and between 1501 and 1544.⁵¹ Turning initially to grain supplies, the most common places of residence for suppliers of malt barley between 1451 and 1500 were Oakington, Madingley, Chesterton and Swaffham, while wheat most frequently came from Swaffham and Madingley.⁵² Between 1501 and 1544, malt barley was brought most regularly from Grantchester, Histon, Burwell and Fulbourn, and wheat from Swaffham, Burwell, Grantchester and Fulbourn. Roughly half of the total contracts were made within five miles of the college, and few wheat or barley contracts were made over more than 10 miles. This may in part be due to the constraints of transport costs, but it also reflects the abundant cereal-growing areas around the town. The geographical spread of the contracts reflected the geological differences within the county. The heavy clay soils of the south west were heavy and unsuited to barley-growing; very few barley contracts came from this area.⁵³

⁴⁹ Cobban, *King's Hall*, pp. 212-14.

⁵⁰ KH a/c, xxiv, fols. 95-95v; *CBD*, p. 140.

⁵¹ Locations in figures 6.1 and 6.2 are approximate. A key to Cambridgeshire parishes can be found in figure 2.1 and appendix 1. Dots placed over parish boundaries indicate contracts which may have originated in either parish: e.g. 'Camps' may refer to Shudy Camps or Castle Camps.

⁵² Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior are not always differentiated in the accounts, so the totals for these two neighbouring villages have been combined.

⁵³ Pettit, *Cambridgeshire*, p. 397.

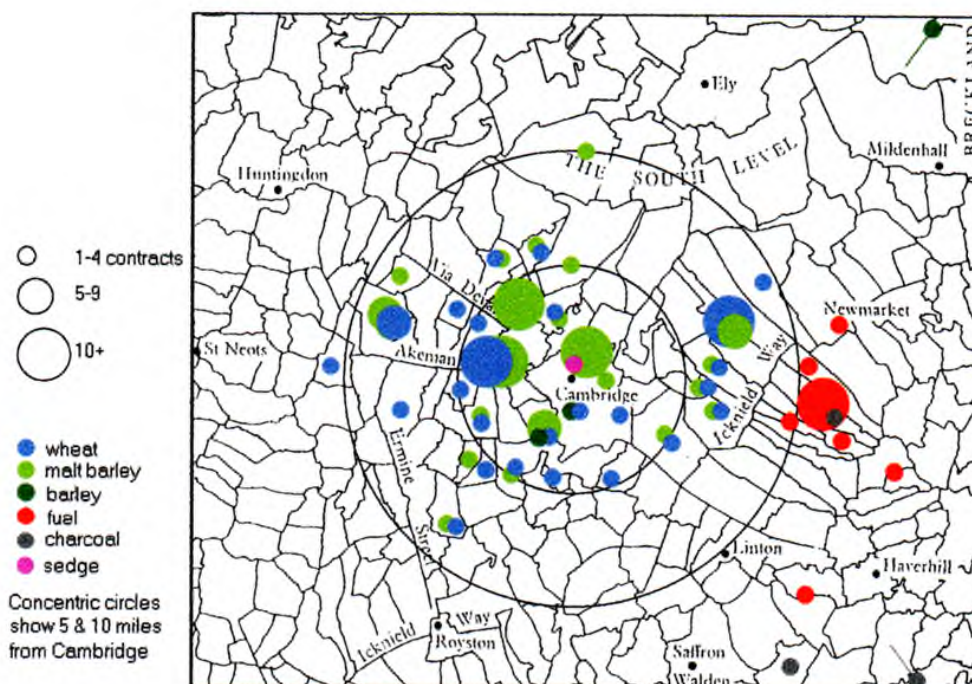


Figure 6.1: King's Hall suppliers, 1451-1500

Note: Fuel was probably firewood. Source: KH a/c, xi-xix

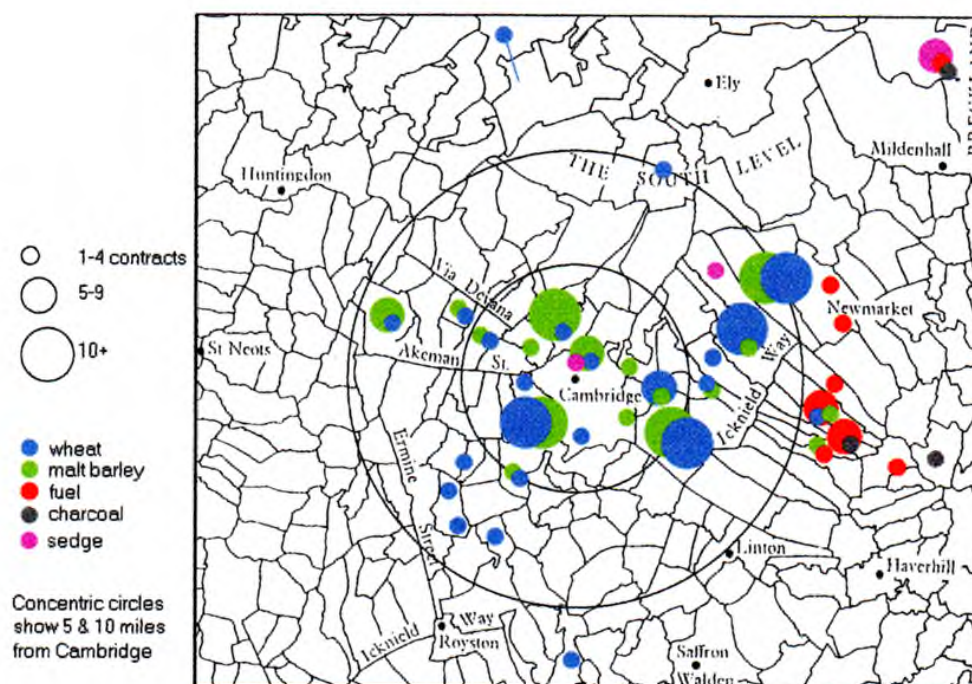


Figure 6.2: King's Hall suppliers, 1501-44

Note: Fuel was probably firewood. Source: KH a/c, xix-xxvi.

King's Hall received most of its income from royal exchequer allowances farmed to various bodies and from a number of appropriated churches.⁵⁴ The college had few estates that could supply its consumption needs and consequently depended on the market to a greater extent than other colleges with a larger landed endowment. Occasionally, the college received rents in kind from the manor of Chesterton, but these were usually recorded under the *Emptio brasii* category as well as the *Receptiones de Chesterton*.⁵⁵

The most distant supplies of grain to be delivered to King's Hall were 5 quarters of wheat from Doddington, north of Chatteris, in 1510/11, and 100 combs of barley from Methwold in Norfolk in 1483/4. The latter contract, made with a widow, Joanna Dutton, stipulated that Joanna was to transport the barley to Stoke Ferry; from there it was probably carried down the rivers Wisney, Ouse and Cam to the college.⁵⁶ It was odd that the barley in this contract was unmalted. Barley was usually supplied to both King's Hall and King's College malted, described as *brasium*, which reduced weight and added value, making the malt cheaper to transport than unprocessed grain.⁵⁷ Two consignments of unmalted barley, *ordeum*, were delivered to Chesterton in 1482, possibly to be malted there.⁵⁸

Figures 6.3 and 6.4 show supplies of wheat and malt barley to King's College, made in 12 years of surviving accounts between 1450 and 1480, and in another 12 years between 1545 and 1558. Wheat was most frequently supplied in the later fifteenth century from Swaffham, Burwell, Grantchester and Oakington, and in the mid-sixteenth century, when the places of origin of more suppliers were recorded, from Coton, Burwell, Elsworth, Grantchester and Barton. Malt barley was most often brought from Coton and Grantchester in the late fifteenth century. Even though the

⁵⁴ Cobban, *King's Hall*, pp. 202-7.

⁵⁵ KH a/c, xxv, fols. 110, 142v.

⁵⁶ KH a/c, xvi, fol. 120, xxi, fol. 148v.

⁵⁷ Campbell et al., *Medieval capital*, p. 113.

⁵⁸ KH a/c, xvi, fol. 64.

1550s were years of very high prices, the hinterland for wheat in this period does not appear to have extended over a greater distance than in the previous century.

King's College possessed a much larger landed endowment than King's Hall, and purchased grain from several villages where it held estates and sometimes from its own tenants. Between 1450 and 1480, for instance, farmers of manors at Grantchester and Isleham supplied wheat and barley.⁵⁹ Wheat was sent in the later fifteenth century from Robert Clyve, who held a lease of Grantchester manor from 1467, and during the mid-sixteenth century, by the Cole family of Coton, who held college lands in that village.⁶⁰ The prices do not appear to have differed from those from other suppliers: the college's tenants do not seem to have been supplying at a discount to the college, until the late 1550s, when the college became more reliant on its own tenants for supplies through a system of corn rents, examined below.

⁵⁹ KCMB, iii, fols. 30-2, v, fol. 93, vi, fol. 66v, vii, fols. 19v, 32v.

⁶⁰ KC Ledger Book, i, fols. 55-55v; *VCH Cambs.*, v, p. 193.

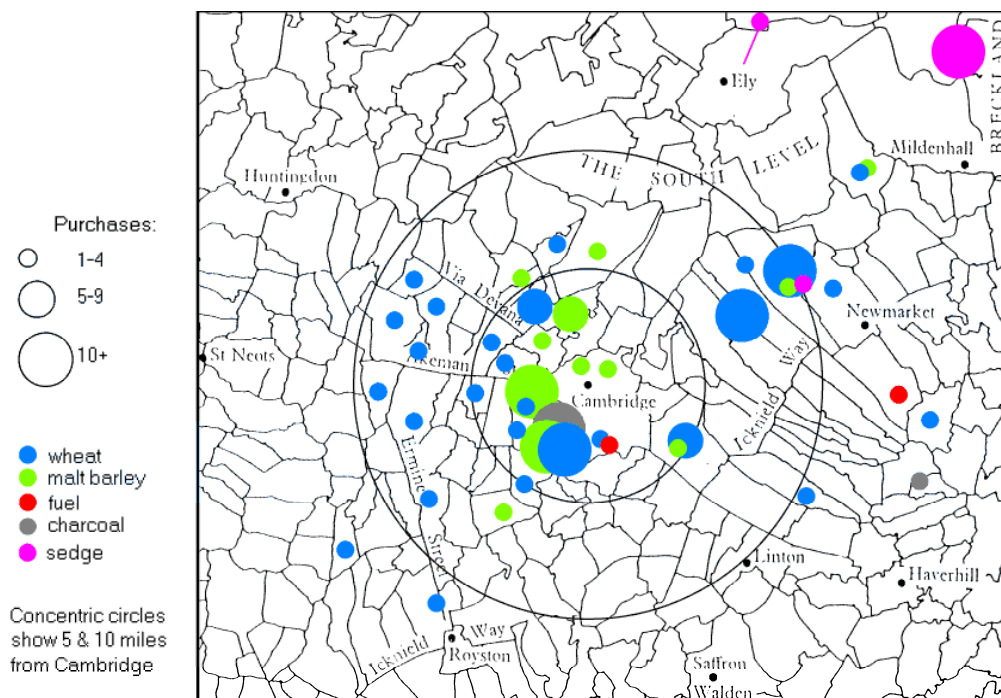


Figure 6.3: King's College purchases, 1450-80
 Note: Fuel was probably firewood. Source: KCMB, ii-vii.

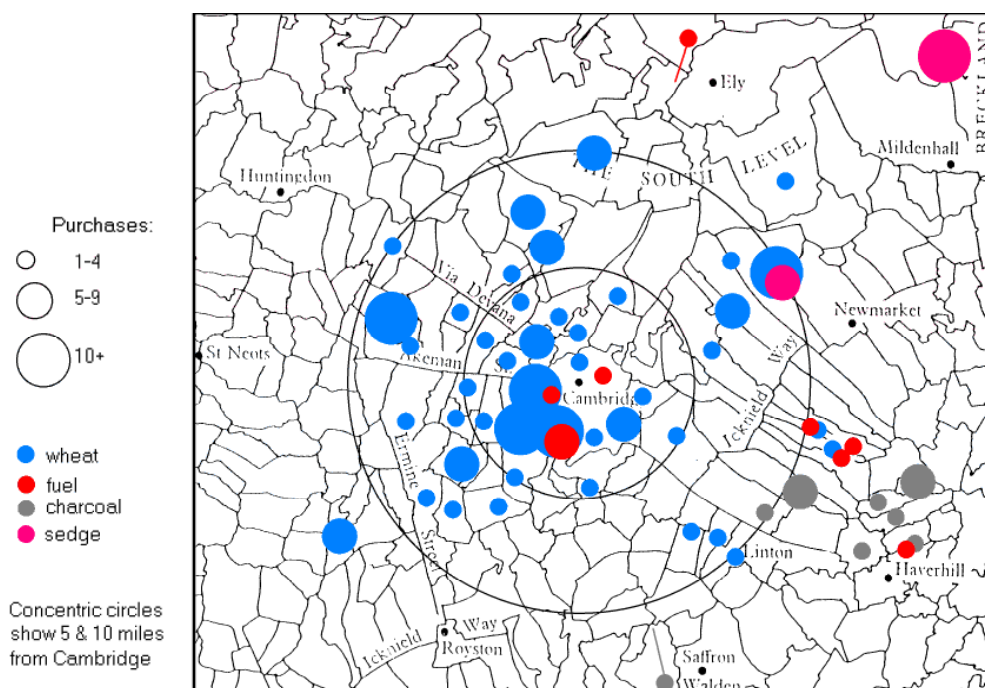


Figure 6.4: King's College purchases, 1545-58
 Note: Fuel was probably firewood. Source: KCMB, xii-xiv.

It is difficult to discover generally the distances over which producers transported their wheat, and therefore to show how typical the hinterlands of King's Hall and King's College were. At Longbridge Deverill and Monkton Deverill, two Wiltshire manors of Glastonbury abbey, most of the grain transported to market in the late fourteenth century went to Frome, a cloth town 7 miles away, but longer trips to Glastonbury were also undertaken. The average journey was about 9 miles, and it was only when the average price of wheat rose above 6s per quarter that most of the grain went to more distant markets. At Birdbrook in Essex during the 1380s, many sales were made within an average of 5 miles, although places of origin were not recorded for most sales. At least half of the people buying grain from the manor of Langenhoe in the second quarter of the fourteenth century came from Colchester, 4 miles away, and these townspeople tended to make the largest purchases.⁶¹

The areas supplying the Cambridge colleges can also be compared with those of other urban hinterlands. Cambridge's combined population, using estimates based on the number of taxpayers plus the members of the university, would suggest totals of approximately 4,200 inhabitants in 1377 and 4,900 in 1524-5.⁶² Villages up to 8 miles away by road regularly supplied early fourteenth-century Colchester with foodstuffs, a town with between 3,000 and 4,000 inhabitants. As the population and living standards increased in Colchester during the fourteenth century, the town became increasingly dependent on water-borne supplies of grain through its port at Hythe, particularly from the east coast of Norfolk.⁶³ Around 1300, when London's population was perhaps as large as 80,000 or 100,000, the city's grain supply extended in normal years to market towns up to 20 miles from the city when only land transport was available, and up to 60 miles when water transport was provided. In the same period, Winchester and Oxford, towns with between 10,000 and 12,000

⁶¹ Farmer, 'Marketing', pp. 363-5; R.H. Britnell, 'Production for the market on a small fourteenth-century estate', *ECHR*, 2nd ser., 19 (1966), 380-7.

⁶² See Chapter 2.

⁶³ Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 41-7, 132, 141-2, 246-7.

inhabitants, were supplied with grain from within a radius of about 12 miles.⁶⁴ Exeter had a population that probably doubled between the late fourteenth and early sixteenth centuries to nearly 7,000, but lay within an agricultural region less fertile than that around Cambridge or Colchester. Exeter's grain hinterland extended to about 30 miles overland to the south and east for wheat and malted barley, while imports were also brought by sea from France and south-east England.⁶⁵

On the basis of these comparisons, it would seem that the residences of the suppliers serving King's Hall and King's College, normally extending up to ten miles around the town, generally reflected Cambridge's area of supply for wheat and malt barley, with the possibility that these large and wealthy colleges could afford to bring supplies from further afield. Most marketing activity at the beginning of the sixteenth century, whether occurring in market places or through private agreements, was carried out in markets with hinterlands of about 10 miles in radius, and it has been estimated that such systems of exchange could support towns of up to 10,000 people.⁶⁶

Fuel supplies

The fall in population after the Black Death reduced fuel consumption and increased the supply of fuel through the renewal of natural woodland as pressure on land fell. But when population growth began to reverse these trends in the sixteenth century, fuel became scarce, particularly around many towns, where demand exceeded supply. At York for example, in the mid-sixteenth century, the corporation urged its members of parliament to support bills against the destruction of woodland, and it was claimed that malt production had consumed all the woods within 20 miles of the city.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Campbell et al., *Medieval capital*, pp. 9, 173.

⁶⁵ Kowaleski, 'Grain trade', pp. 21-4, 30-1.

⁶⁶ Overton, *Agricultural revolution*, p. 137.

⁶⁷ J. Hatcher, *The history of the British coal industry, i: before 1700, towards the age of coal* (Oxford, 1993), p. 28; Palliser, *Tudor York*, pp. 9-10.

The accounts of King's Hall record contracts for *carbonum* (charcoal) and *focalum* (fuel), which was probably firewood in most cases. Cambridgeshire has always been sparsely wooded: even at the time of Domesday Book woodland covered only 3.3 per cent of the county and was concentrated in the east and west.⁶⁸ Reflecting this shortage of woodland, the King's Hall contracts for fuel dealt with suppliers further afield than those supplying the college with wheat and barley. Figures 6.1 and 6.2 show that charcoal and firewood came from south-east Cambridgeshire, or across the border into Essex and Suffolk. The most numerous contracts for fuel were supplied from Dullingham and Burrough Green. Contracts for charcoal came from Burrough Green and Dullingham in Cambridgeshire, Cowlinge and Lakenheath in Suffolk, and Radwinter and Shalford in Essex. A number of manors in northern Essex had developed a distinctive trade in wood and firewood during the fourteenth century.⁶⁹ The King's College Mundum Books itemise the purchase of firewood, faggots and charcoal from a similar hinterland between 1450 and 1480 (figure 6.3). Although some wood was obtained from the college estates at Grantchester, most fuel was purchased from outside suppliers, though the places of residence of these men are rarely stated in the accounts.

By the mid-sixteenth century, the colleges' hinterland for firewood and charcoal appears to have extended further south and east suggesting that resources closer to the town were becoming exhausted. The purchases of fuel made by King's College between 1545 and 1558 (figure 6.4) included suppliers from the Suffolk villages of the Bradleys, the Wrattings and the Thurlows, located to the north of Haverhill. A similar area supplied Trinity College, into which King's Hall was incorporated, with fuel between 1547 and 1563 (figure 6.5). As contracts and purchases are not stated as precisely in the Trinity College accounts, the map shows the numbers of years in

⁶⁸ O. Rackham, *Ancient woodland: its history, vegetation and uses in England* (London, 1980), pp. 122-3.

⁶⁹ J.A. Galloway, D. Keene, & M. Murphy, 'Fuelling the city: production and distribution of firewood and fuel in London's region, 1290-1400', *EcHR*, 49 (1996), 466.

which different localities supplied the college. In 1550, Trinity College's senior bursar rode to Newport to speak with Nicholas Rookes for charcoal, 'owr college beyng destitute'. The college once obtained wood from its farmers at Barrington, occasionally bought wood in the marketplace, and in 1560 bought forfeited charcoal from the university taxors.⁷⁰

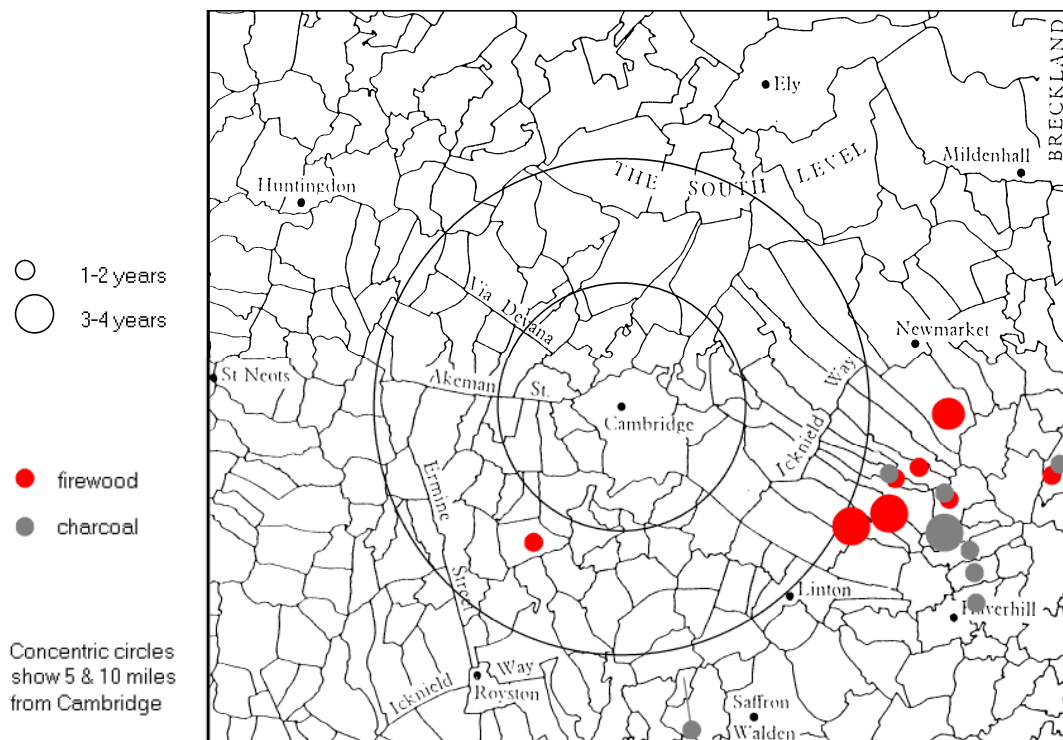


Figure 6.5: Trinity College fuel supplies, 1547-63

Sources: Trinity College, Cambridge, Senior Bursar's accounts, i, 1546/7-1562/3; Junior Bursar's accounts, i, 1549/50-1562/3.

In some cases at least, firewood was bought while still growing as underwood: Cambridge Corporation complained that the masters of colleges and hostels refused to pay tolls on carts carrying wood and charcoal bought in the country 'at the Stubb or by the hundreth'.⁷¹ In addition to contracts made with producers, some firewood must

⁷⁰ TCSB a/c, fols. 96, 97, 220v, 369; TCJB a/c, fol. 122.

⁷¹ CCA, X/38. Buying at the stubb meant to buy while growing: *OED*, xvi, p. 968.

have been purchased at the town's inns. The king's chief judge expressed his dissatisfaction to the university about faggots made and sold in inns around 1491, and in the later sixteenth century, the university's leet courts fined innholders selling underweight parcels of firewood.⁷²

Fenland products provided an additional source of fuel in Cambridge. Manorial courts often regulated the cutting and sale of turves, to give preference to those with common rights within the manor. But the restrictions placed on the common turbary at Waterbeach still permitted the sale of 10,000 turves per annum in the mid-fifteenth century. In practice, amercements by manorial courts became little more than temporary licences to cut and sell turves.⁷³ St Radegund's Priory bought turves in the 1450s from a supplier in Waterbeach. King's College bought turves in 1449/50, and Peterhouse in 1458/9, but they do not seem to have been purchased regularly by the colleges in this period.⁷⁴

The colleges apparently preferred to use another fenland product, sedge, which provided material for thatching, litter, and fuel.⁷⁵ Sedge came to King's Hall through contracts with dealers at Chesterton, Reach, and particularly from Lakenheath in Suffolk (figures 6.1-6.2). King's College purchased large quantities of sedge from Lakenheath and also obtained supplies from Burwell and Littleport (figures 6.3-6.4). Peasants had been regularly amerced for the sale of turves and sedge at Lakenheath in the fourteenth century, but these indictments were seldom recorded by Henry V's reign.⁷⁶

The bulk and relatively low value of fuel meant that a high proportion of the final price comprised the cost of transport. Unfortunately, the prices in the college accounts

⁷² UA Luard 133; C.U.R. 17, fol. 15.

⁷³ Bailey, *Marginal economy?*, pp. 163-4; Britnell, *Commercialisation*, p. 162.

⁷⁴ *St Radegund*, p. 173; KCMB, i, fols. 67-67v; Peterhouse computus, 1458/9 a/c.

⁷⁵ Rowell, 'Sedge', 140-3.

⁷⁶ Bailey, *Marginal economy?*, p. 304.

are inclusive of transport. Where possible, water transport was used to reduce carriage costs. Sedge could be shipped onto the River Cam from Reach via Reach Lode and from Lakenheath via the Little Ouse. In the eighteenth century sedge was unloaded by barge at the quay by Magdalene Bridge, and the same practice probably operated three hundred years earlier: 3s 4d was paid to carry 1,000 sedges from the Great Bridge in Cambridge to King's College in 1467, and 200 sedges were purchased for King's College from the 'Seggeshith' in 1451.⁷⁷ But faggots and charcoal came from areas lacking navigable waterways, and the costs of overland carriage must have been considerable. The theoretical extent of London's supply zone for faggots c.1400 has been calculated as around 11 miles overland, or up to 9 miles if 20 per cent for profit and transaction costs are allowed: even in the early fourteenth century, firewood was rarely carried more than 12 to 18 miles overland. Where possible, the Thames was used to reduce transport costs.⁷⁸ In comparison, Cambridge colleges regularly relied on supplies from up to 15 miles away, highlighting the lack of woodland within the immediate hinterland.

The Cambridge colleges occasionally purchased coal, but they do not appear to have been burning it regularly in the late medieval period. One of the earliest recorded deliveries of coal to a Cambridge college appears to have been three consignments of 1, 2 and 4½ 'chawders' of 'secole' to King's Hall in 1482/3, with prices varying from 4.28s to 6.42s per chaldron.⁷⁹ Peterhouse occasionally bought sea coal during the first two decades of the sixteenth century.⁸⁰ Trinity College obtained sea coal to burn in its lime kiln when building work was underway, but relied on firewood and charcoal for domestic purposes in the mid-sixteenth century.⁸¹

⁷⁷ KCMB, ii, fol. 67, v, fol. 118v; Rowell, 'Sedge', 147.

⁷⁸ Galloway, Keene & Murphy, 'Fuelling the city', 458-9, 468.

⁷⁹ KH a/c, xvi, fol. 93v. Coal was commonly described as 'sea coal', to distinguish it from charcoal. A chaldron or chalder of coal was little more than a generic name given to a large quantity of coal, and comprised widely differing measures: Hatcher, *Coal*, pp. 559-69.

⁸⁰ Rogers, *Agriculture and prices*, iii, pp. 265-8.

⁸¹ TCSB a/c, fols. 103, 144; TCJB a/c, fols. 45, 176.

In the first half of the sixteenth century, there is evidence of coal supplies being sent from Newcastle-upon-Tyne to Cambridge. Coal had been shipped from collieries in the North East of England to London and other East Coast ports since at least the thirteenth century, but the pattern of trade was haphazard before the sixteenth century.⁸² In response to a legal dispute with Lynn, the mayor and four aldermen of Newcastle sealed an indenture on 24 October 1510, testifying to the delivery of coals purchased there by four men from Cambridge. George Bird of Newcastle had sold one hundred 'celer coles' and had delivered forty-eight, Anthony Rede of Newcastle had sold fifty-six 'celer coles', Thomas Hill of Newcastle had sold four score 'celer coles' and James Robynson of Newcastle had sold three score 'celer coles', of which twenty-eight had been delivered. All deliveries were made at Lynn, and every 'celer' of coal was to be of the 'len mesur'. Bird and Rede charged 2s 3d a celer and 2d over and above, and Hill and Robynson charged 3s 4d a celer with 2d over and above.⁸³

The survival of the Newcastle chamberlains' accounts for this period, recording tolls charged on ships loading and unloading at the port, show the extent of the coastal trade in coal. Lynn was one of the main ports trading with Newcastle at this time, with over 90 ship movements recorded in the accounts between 1508 and 1511. Unfortunately, as the coals purchased by the Cambridge merchants were sold and shipped by Newcastle freemen, they were probably not subject to toll and so the transactions of the indenture of 1510 do not appear to have been recorded in the chamberlains' accounts.⁸⁴ The Newcastle merchants supplying Cambridge in 1510 were also regularly involved in overseas trade in the late fifteenth century - indeed James Robynson could not testify in person for the indenture, as he was at

⁸² Hatcher, *Coal*, pp. 25-6.

⁸³ CCA, X/7.

⁸⁴ *The accounts of the Chamberlains of Newcastle upon Tyne 1508-1511*, ed. C.M. Fraser, Society of Antiquities of Newcastle upon Tyne Record Series, III (Newcastle, 1987), pp. viii, xiii-xiv.

Bordeaux.⁸⁵ George Bird, Thomas Hill and James Robynson were Hostmen, responsible for supplying outside merchants with coal.⁸⁶

While there were trading links between Cambridge and Newcastle in the mid-sixteenth century, regular shipments of coal did not begin until the later years of the century. Cambridge Corporation promised protection to merchants sailing to Newcastle for coal against suits by the town of Lynn in 1544 and 1547. Two Cambridge burgesses, Thomas Brakyn and John Line, held the post of collector of customs at Newcastle in 1543, which they probably exercised through deputies.⁸⁷ During the 1560s, two charitable gifts provided sea coal to be distributed among the poor of Cambridge.⁸⁸ Coal first became a significant and regular purchase at King's College in 1580, and in this decade William Harrison included in his description of Cambridge, 'Only wood is the chief want to such as study there, wherefore this kind of provision is brought them either from Essex and other places thereabouts, as is also their coal [charcoal]... and sea coal, whereof they have great plenty, led thither by the Grant [Granta or Cam].'⁸⁹ Cambridge in the 1450-1560 period was probably not large enough to produce sufficient demand for a regular trade in coal from the North East, despite the shortage of firewood.

Suppliers of corn and fuel

A distinct feature of the King's Hall contracts, which may have been one of their strengths, was their continuity. As tables 6.1 and 6.2 show, some suppliers had long-standing arrangements with the college. Nicholas Sanforth made a total of nineteen contracts for wheat and barley between 1511-27 and Thomas Bentley made sixteen

⁸⁵ *The Customs Accounts of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1454-1500*, ed. J.F. Wade, Surtees Society, CCII (Durham, 1995), see under names in index.

⁸⁶ *Chamberlains of Newcastle*, pp. xxi, 263-5.

⁸⁷ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fols. 5, 27; Bindoff, *House of Commons*, i, p. 485, ii, p. 533.

⁸⁸ *Annals*, ii, pp. 181, 229.

⁸⁹ Hatcher, *Coal*, p. 44; Harrison, *Description*, p. 67.

for wheat between 1502-18. The sixteenth century saw a trend towards more contracts and more regularly with the same suppliers.

Table 6.1: *King's Hall suppliers with largest number of contracts, 1450-1500*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Residence</i>	<i>Contracts</i>	<i>Total amount</i>	<i>Type</i>
Grene, John	Swaffham	11	204.5 qrts	wheat
Colyn, Robert	Madingley	7	136 qrts	malt barley
Harris, John	Elsworth	6	104 qrts	malt barley
Colyn, Robert	Madingley	6	58 qrts	wheat
Sutton, Thomas	not stated	6	23 qrts	wheat
Fane, John	Grantchester	5	81.5 qrts	malt barley
vicar	Oakington	4	84 qrts	malt barley
Breton, John	Dullingham	4	2500	fuel
Stertour, William	Madingley	4	19.5 qrts	wheat
Attwoode, Thomas	Oakington	4	26 qrts	malt barley
Harris, John	Elsworth	4	34 qrts	wheat

Source: KH a/c, xi-xix

Table 6.2: *King's Hall suppliers with largest number of contracts, 1501-43*

<i>Name</i>	<i>Residenae</i>	<i>Contracts</i>	<i>Total amount</i>	<i>Type</i>
Bentley, Thomas	Swaffham Prior	16	105.5 qrts	wheat
Sanforth, Nicholas	Grantchester	10	177 qrts	malt barley
Sanforth, Nicholas	Grantchester	9	57 qrts	wheat
Benet, John	Burwell	8	170.5 qrts	wheat
Benet, John	Burwell	8	220.5 qrts	malt barley
Cakebred, Hugh	Fulbourn	7	210 qrts	malt barley
Cook, Henry	Chesterton	6	164 qrts	malt barley
Cakebred, Hugh	Fulbourn	6	83.5 qrts	wheat
Harris, John	Elsworth	6	105 qrts	malt barley
Pache, John	Swaffham	5	45 qrts	wheat
Tuly, John, vicar	Burwell	5	57 qrts	wheat

Source: KH a/c, xix-xxvi

At King's College, however, no particular men dominated the supply of wheat. Among the purchases made between 1450 and 1480, over 97 different individuals

were listed in 133 transactions which recorded names; between 1545 and 1558, there were over 230 different suppliers listed in 299 transactions which recorded names.⁹⁰ The most frequent suppliers in the later period were William Coole supplying 6 consignments of wheat, and Martin Gill, supplying 5, while other members of the same families also delivered wheat.⁹¹

The names and places of residence given for many suppliers enable them to be traced further using the indexes of the *Victoria County History*, together with the 1524-5 taxation records, and other documents. This evidence provides a rare opportunity to examine the kinds of people who were marketing agricultural produce.

During the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, most large landowners abandoned the direct cultivation of their manorial demesnes and leased them out. The lessees appear to have come from several social groups, for they included gentlemen, yeomen and husbandmen.⁹² For Postan, this marked a change from a market-orientated economy of great landlords selling grain to a more self-sufficient 'natural' economy. Indeed it has been estimated that at the beginning of the sixteenth century, around 80 per cent of farmers were producing food only for their own subsistence needs and not for exchange in markets.⁹³ But the King's Hall contracts show that many lessees of demesnes, together with other yeomen and husbandmen, were participating in the market by supplying the college with their produce.

Several of these suppliers stand out as the wealthiest men in their community. The schedule of contributors to the first loan of 1522, listing those with more than £20 in goods or lands, included several suppliers of wheat and barley to King's Hall and

⁹⁰ KCMB, ii-vii, xii-xiv.

⁹¹ KCMB, xiii, 1551/2 a/c, xiv, 1553/4, 1554/5, 1556/7 a/c.

⁹² F.R.H. Du Boulay, 'Who were farming the English demesnes at the end of the middle ages?', *EcHR*, 2nd ser., 17 (1965), 443-55; B. Harvey, 'The leasing of the abbot of Westminster's demesnes in the later middle ages', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 22 (1969), 17-27; Hare, 'Demesne lessees'.

⁹³ Postan, 'Fifteenth century', 162-3; Overton, *Agricultural revolution*, p. 22.

King's College: Henry Cook of Chesterton, valued at £300, William Rouse of Swaffham at 200 marks, Robert Sewall of Bottisham at £42, and John Gotobed of Chesterton at £20.⁹⁴ These rising men escape easy classification. They are not recorded as possessing gentry status, and many seem to have had peasant origins.

Many of these wealthy suppliers had taken leases of demesnes or other farms. Thomas Baron of Comberton, who furnished King's Hall with 20 quarters of wheat and barley in 1475, was farmer of Barnwell Priory's land there in 1498, and provided a window with a request for prayers in the parish church. Henry Cook, farmer of Chesterton, sent six consignments of wheat and barley between 1505 and 1529. His family rose from the yeomanry in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and when Henry died in 1535, he was lessee to Clare College, and probably also held the lease of the Barnwell Priory demesne at Chesterton.⁹⁵ The Leynton family sold wheat to both colleges in the 1460s: they held Marhams estate at Madingley.⁹⁶ Farmers of leases of lands (*firmary*) at Bourn, Chesterton, Dry Drayton and Malton supplied King's Hall, and farmers at Bourn and Swaffham Prior brought wheat to King's College in the late fifteenth century.⁹⁷

A number of other large and wealthy farmers supplied King's Hall with wheat and barley. Robert Colyn of Madingley delivered six contracts of barley, totalling 136 quarters; his family occupied 87 acres around Girton c. 1500. John Fane of Grantchester supplied nine loads of cereals between 1498 and 1504; the family had a holding at Barton from the mid-fourteenth century and through the fifteenth century.⁹⁸ Thomas Goodwyn of Chesterton, who sent barley in 1529, was assessed at £20 in 1524, and employed at least one servant, Margaret Dissher, with whom he allegedly

⁹⁴ *LP*, iii (2), no. 2640, pp. 1116-19.

⁹⁵ *KH a/c*, xv, fol. 25; Table 6.2, above; *VCH Cambs.*, v, pp. 183, 187, ix, p. 15.

⁹⁶ *KCMB*, v, fol. 30; *KH a/c*, xiii, fol. 144; *VCH Cambs.*, ix, p. 168.

⁹⁷ *KH a/c*, xii, fols. 15v, 53, xiii, fol. 144, xxvi, fol. 109v; *KCMB*, iii, fol. 31, v, fol. 94.

⁹⁸ Table 6.1, above; *VCH Cambs.*, v, p. 163, ix, p. 121.

exchanged marriage vows.⁹⁹ Some farmers were wealthy enough to leave small bequests. Thomas Martin of Chesterton, supplying 63 quarters of barley in 1500, left in his will of the following year, one mark a year to pay a priest to sing a Jesus mass every Friday in the parish church.¹⁰⁰ Other suppliers who could probably be described as yeomen were John Atkyn of Haslingfield, William Carew of Hinton, and John Cole of Coton, who all held £11-£20 in goods in the lay subsidy returns of 1524.¹⁰¹

King's College was also served by prosperous yeomanry families, including John Amy of Abington, the Angier families at Comberton and Coton, Henry Parish of Chesterton and John Yaxley of Girton.¹⁰² These wealthy farmers and leading yeoman usually held holdings on a variety of different tenures, often including leases of the lord's manorial lands. They employed local wage labour or resident servants and produced a surplus which was marketed.¹⁰³

Some fifteenth-century gentry took up demesne leases and Carpenter has pointed to the entrepreneurial role of this class in Warwickshire. But this was largely through specialised pastoral farming for the market,¹⁰⁴ and only a few Cambridgeshire gentry supplied the wheat, barley, or fuel recorded in the King's Hall accounts. A few suppliers were described as gentlemen like John Benet of Burwell, assessed at £100 in 1522, who made 16 contracts of wheat and barley with King's Hall between 1517 and 1527. Richard Childe of Harlton, who sent 5 quarters of wheat in 1456, was probably lord of Huntingdon or Harlton manor at this time. Five quarters of wheat were bought from Edward Langley, who was lord of the manor of Lolworth between 1509 and 1515.¹⁰⁵ The gentry were not as heavily committed to the sale of produce as yeomen,

⁹⁹ KH a/c, xxiv, fol. 25; *Cambridgeshire in the sixteenth century*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁰ KH a/c, xix, fol. 169; *VCH Cambs.*, ix, p. 31.

¹⁰¹ PRO, E 179/81/130, E 179/81/132.

¹⁰² *VCH Cambs.*, v, pp. 183, 192, vi, p. 11, ix, pp. 16, 121.

¹⁰³ Bailey, 'Rural society', p. 151.

¹⁰⁴ C. Carpenter, 'The fifteenth-century English gentry and their estates', in M. Jones, ed., *Gentry and lesser nobility in late medieval Europe* (Gloucester, 1986), pp. 36-60; C. Dyer, 'A small landowner in the fifteenth century', *Midland History*, 1, part 3 (1972), 1-14; Du Boulay, 'English demesnes', 450.

¹⁰⁵ Table 6.2, above; KH a/c, xii, fol. 15v, xxi, fol. 113v; *VCH Cambs.*, v, p. 217, ix, pp. 158-9.

because their own households often consumed a large proportion of their produce, and they had other preoccupations such as patronage and office-holding.¹⁰⁶

Some of the suppliers of grain appear to have come from less wealthy groups and are probably best described as husbandmen. John Chapman, Thomas Ely, John Noble and Thomas Ricard, all of Histon, and William Whiting of Teversham possessed £5-£10 in goods, and so may have cultivated 50-60 acres. John Annable of Histon, Henry Benys of Harston, various members of the Cakebred family at Fulbourn, James or Richard Culp of Fulbourn, the Harris family at Elsworth, William Killingworth of Hinton, Thomas Martin of Coton and John Pathe of Chesterton were assessed at £2-£4, and perhaps held tenements of 30-40 acres.¹⁰⁷ These husbandmen were unlikely to be leasing whole demesnes, but perhaps leased part of a demense, possibly under a sublease. They had enough surplus to be able to market their produce, at least in some years, while a few families, like the Harrises at Elsworth and the Cakebreds at Fulbourn, appear to have regularly filled contracts for King's Hall. Generally though, these husbandmen were only supplying smaller contracts, of up to 20 quarters of wheat or barley, and most of them came from villages only two or three miles outside Cambridge, rather than from localities on the more distant fringes of the town's hinterland.

Women appear occasionally in the King's College accounts as sellers of wheat: some women are named, others are described as wives or widows. With a couple of exceptions, all these sales were of very small quantities of wheat, often only a few bushels.¹⁰⁸ This suggests that many of these women were engaging in petty retailing of grain, perhaps together with selling poultry, vegetables, and dairy products, or combined with baking or brewing.¹⁰⁹ The widow, Joanna Dutton, is the only woman

¹⁰⁶ C. Dyer, 'Were there any capitalists in fifteenth-century England?', in C. Dyer, ed., *Everyday life in medieval England* (London, 1994), pp. 323-4.

¹⁰⁷ PRO, E 179/81/126, E 179/81/130, E 179/81/132; Spufford, *Contrasting communities*, pp. 35-6.

¹⁰⁸ KCMB, iii, fols. 108-108v, xii, 1536/7 a/c, xiii, 1547/8, 1548/9, 1549/50, 1551/2 a/cs.

¹⁰⁹ Mate, *Women*, pp. 32, 44-6; Kowaleksi, 'Grain trade', pp. 46-7.

found in the King's Hall contracts in this period, but this contract involved carriage of grain over the longest distance undertaken for the college.¹¹⁰

Several clergy also supplied the two colleges. John Petyt, vicar of Shudy Camps (1462-97), provided King's Hall with two consignments of fuel in the 1470s.¹¹¹ The vicars of Burwell and Oakington,¹¹² the rectors of Chesterton, Dry Drayton, Ditton, Girton and Rampton, and the farmer of Wilbraham rectory, also sent wheat and barley.¹¹³ King's College was supplied with wheat by the rectors of Boxworth, Elsworth, Eversden, Grantchester, Knapwell, Willingham and Wimpole, the vicar of Madingley, and the farmers of Barton and Burwell rectories.¹¹⁴ The Howsden family, who sold wheat to the college, farmed Grantchester rectory.¹¹⁵ Tithe farmers and clergy were also active in the grain markets at Exeter and York.¹¹⁶ Clergy could supply agricultural produce received in tithes from their parishioners or produce they had grown on their glebe lands. An investigation of the Lincolnshire probate inventories of the sixteenth century has shown that practically every parson was a farmer, with as much stock and farming equipment as the average husbandman and, in some cases, as a wealthier yeoman.¹¹⁷

Suppliers of fuel tended, on the whole, to be less prosperous than suppliers of cereals. William Barker of Burrough Green supplied firewood in 1520 and 1523.¹¹⁸ Two men with this name were assessed at £1 and £3 in goods in the same village in 1524. Other fuel suppliers included Thomas Crane, assessed on £4 in goods at Lakenheath,

¹¹⁰ KH a/c, xvi, fol. 120.

¹¹¹ KH a/c, xiv, fols. 45, 129; *VCH Cambs.*, vi, p. 57.

¹¹² KH a/c, xv, fol. 83v, xvii, fols. 93, 116v, xxiv, fols. 95-95v.

¹¹³ KH a/c, xii, fol. 145, xiii, fol. 146, xvii, fol. 69, xviii, fol. 20, xxiii, fol. 91v, xxiv, fols. 25, 152.

¹¹⁴ KCMB, v, fol. 31, vi, fol. 112v, xii, 1536/7 a/c, xiii, 1547/8, 1548/9, 1549/50, 1551/2 a/cs, xiv, 1553/4, 1554/5 a/cs.

¹¹⁵ *VCH Cambs.*, v, p. 210.

¹¹⁶ Kowaleski, 'Grain trade', pp. 35-7; Swanson, *Medieval artisans*, p. 136.

¹¹⁷ F.W. Brooks, 'The social position of the parson in the sixteenth century', *Journal of British Archaeological Association*, 3rd series, 10 (1945-7), 34-5.

¹¹⁸ KH a/c, xxii, fol. 90, xxiii, fol. 61v.

Thomas Hithe of Dullingham with £2 in goods, Thomas Keynd (?King) of Burrough Green with £1 in goods, and Thomas Yeve/Ive of Swavesey with £2 in goods.¹¹⁹

Some suppliers of fuel though, were more prosperous men. John Folkes was the farmer of the demesne of Stetchworth manor, and supplied fuel to King's Hall.¹²⁰ John Breton of Dullingham, who regularly delivered fuel in the 1480s and 1490s, may have been related to Thomas Bretyn of the same place, assessed at £7 in goods in 1524. Other suppliers of fuel included John Harvy of Stetchworth, assessed at £8 in goods in 1524, and John Loveday and Thomas Wellis, who owned £12 and £10 in goods at Burrough Green.¹²¹

The occupational titles given to some suppliers may indicate that these men were specialised traders in their commodities. St Radegund's Priory bought turves from a 'turffeman'.¹²² Fuel suppliers to King's Hall included men described as *carbonarii*, 'sedgemen', and woodmen.¹²³ Members of the Tollar family were major suppliers to King's College and King's Hall, but sometimes failed to deliver: in 1466 three hundred sedge were bought *ob defectum Tollar segeman* and in 1477 three quarters of sedge were purchased for the same reason.¹²⁴ Other specialist suppliers at King's Hall included a malt carrier, and William Markelee of Hinton, described as a 'lymebrenner', who brought wheat in 1484. Thomas Basham, 'inmein' of Chesterton, supplied 21 quarters of barley in 1468;¹²⁵ innkeepers also engaged in trading grain at Exeter and York.¹²⁶

¹¹⁹ PRO, E 179/81/126, E 179/81/134; *Suffolk in 1524*, p. 226.

¹²⁰ *VCH Cambs.*, vi, p. 173, n. 82.

¹²¹ E 179/81/134.

¹²² *St Radegund*, p. 158.

¹²³ KH a/c, xiii, fol. 63, xvi, fol. 62v, xvii, fol. 91v, xx, fols. 19, 136v, 203v, xxi, fols. 58v, 148, xxiv, fol. 96.

¹²⁴ KCMB, iv, fol. 40, vii, 1476/7 a/c.

¹²⁵ KH a/c, xiii, fol. 114, xvii, fols. 93v, 116.

¹²⁶ Kowaleski, 'Grain trade', p. 47; Swanson, *Medieval artisans*, p. 136

Wheat prices

The records of wheat purchases in the King's Hall and King's College accounts consist of a number of abbreviated Latin entries for the quantity and amount paid for each purchase, from which prices can be calculated in shillings per quarter. Averaging of prices has followed the convention adopted by Thorold Rogers and Beveridge, by assuming that a small purchase was as typical of market prices as a larger entry. The price therefore given is a non-weighted average of all the prices of the year, irrespective of the quantity bought or sold.¹²⁷ This meant calculating the price in shillings per quarter for every transaction and using this to produce the mean price for the year.

Fuel prices have not been calculated, owing to two major difficulties with the data. Transport costs are rarely itemised separately, and these formed a much larger proportion of the total cost than for the carriage of a relatively lighter and less bulky commodity like grain. Fuel is also described in a range of different measures, including the hundred and cart-load, many of which are imprecise. Other studies though, have suggested major price increases, above the rate of inflation, during the mid-sixteenth century: prices of standing underwood in west Cambridgeshire, which cost between 3½d and 4½d per acre in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, jumped from 8d to 2s 6d during the 1540s, and the retail price of firewood may have risen even more.¹²⁸

Estimates of consumption have not been made, as the King's Hall and King's College accounts show wide fluctuations in the number of entries and total amount of wheat and fuel purchased each year. Although the King's Hall statutes ordered that entries were to be added every week or fortnight under the supervision of the seneschals of the college,¹²⁹ it appears that not every transaction has been recorded every year.

¹²⁷ Rogers, *Agriculture and prices*, iv, p. 211; Beveridge, *Prices and wages*, p. xliii.

¹²⁸ Rackham, *Ancient woodland*, pp. 166-7; Hatcher, *Coal*, p. 36.

¹²⁹ Cobban, *King's Hall*, p. 115.

With a fairly steady demand and little grain stored from one year to the next, wheat prices were very sensitive to the harvest, and fluctuated more sharply than those of any other major commodity. Historians have debated the validity of using wheat prices as a proxy for other grains. Harrison claimed that wheat prices did not reflect the movement of other grains over the period 1465-1634, and that the average of all grains was a more reliable source from which to calculate the quality of the harvest.¹³⁰ Farmer, however, has argued for the later Middle Ages that wheat prices were broadly representative of general grain prices. A poor wheat harvest led to increased demand for other grains, so rye and barley prices often reflected the success of the wheat crop rather than their own yields.¹³¹

Figure 6.6 shows annual average wheat prices calculated from the King's Hall accounts. Years which saw substantial increases in wheat prices were 1483 and 1484, when the average of the prices recorded under the *emptiones* heading was 9.06s and 9.93s per quarter, 1513 at 10.63s, 1521 at 10.73s (although only one price is recorded for this year), 1528 and 1529 at 16.88s and 10.19s, and 1536 and 1537 at 13.07s and 10.67s. These were generally years of widespread harvest failure across the country.¹³² The maximum recorded prices that King's Hall paid for a quarter of wheat were 18.27s in 1528 and 18.67s in 1536. The worst year of harvest failure for the college was 1528, for even the lowest price in that year was 16s. The dearth of 1527-8 led to disturbances in Norwich and Yarmouth, and Henry VIII's government was so concerned about the shortage that it ordered a country-wide search of all available corn.¹³³ The King's Hall prices should not be regarded as maximum prices: a Cambridge college was in a far better position to search for suppliers than the average townsman. The advantage that King's Hall gained from the *conventiones* was most

¹³⁰ Harrison, 'Grain price'.

¹³¹ D.L. Farmer, 'Prices and wages, 1350-1500', in Miller, ed., *Agrarian history*, p. 433

¹³² W.G. Hoskins, 'Harvest fluctuations and English economic history, 1480-1619', *Agricultural History Review*, 12 (1964), 31-5, 39, 44-5; Harrison, 'Grain price', 152-3. Note that Hoskins and Harrison label harvest years in the opposite way to that adopted here, see above, p. 200.

¹³³ Hoskins, 'Harvest fluctuations', 34; D. Dymond, 'The famine of 1527 in Essex', *Local Population Studies*, 26 (1981), 29-40.

apparent in these years of scarcity. The average price of the *conventiones*, although rising in years of harvest failure, usually lagged behind the average price of the *emptiones*. In 1483, 1484 and 1513, the proportion of wheat received from the *conventiones* was significantly greater than the *emptiones*, although this trend also occurred in some years of lower prices.

As wheat prices fluctuated with the harvest, it is difficult to discern long-term trends from them. In an attempt to smooth out the annual fluctuations, a nine-year moving average has been calculated in figure 6.7. While groups of poor harvests in the 1460s, 1480s and 1500s are still reflected in the average, the effects of inflation only began to appear in the mid 1510s and 1520s, when the average price remained above 6s per quarter, and prices rose further in the late 1520s. These trends reflect those found in the national price indices of all agricultural products compiled by Bowden, which show sustained increases during the 1510s and 1520s.¹³⁴

Grain shortages could lead to the temporary expansion of an urban hinterland, and in years of particularly high prices, King's Hall sought some grain from more distant suppliers. In 1484, for example, the college bought barley from Joanna Dutton, of Methwold in Norfolk, 29 miles away; in 1512, the college purchased from William Hopper of Chrishall in Essex, 13 miles distant. There was also a tendency at such times to resort to more unusual suppliers. In 1483, the master of St John's Hospital in Cambridge sold 14 quarters of wheat at 8s per quarter and Lord John Filay sold 5 quarters at the same price.¹³⁵ In 1501 a baker called Gybson supplied 25 quarters of wheat, and William Syre of Coton sold wheat described as *frumento antiquo*, possibly because the college was unable to secure better quality supplies.¹³⁶ If even a large and wealthy institution felt the effects of harvest fluctuations, the average townsman would have suffered much more so.

¹³⁴ Bowden, 'Statistical appendix', pp. 148-9.

¹³⁵ KH a/c, xvi, fols. 94, 120, xxi, fol. 113v.

¹³⁶ KH a/c, xix, fols. 199v-200.

Figure 6.6: King's Hall wheat prices, 1450-1544

Source: KH a/c, xi-xxvi

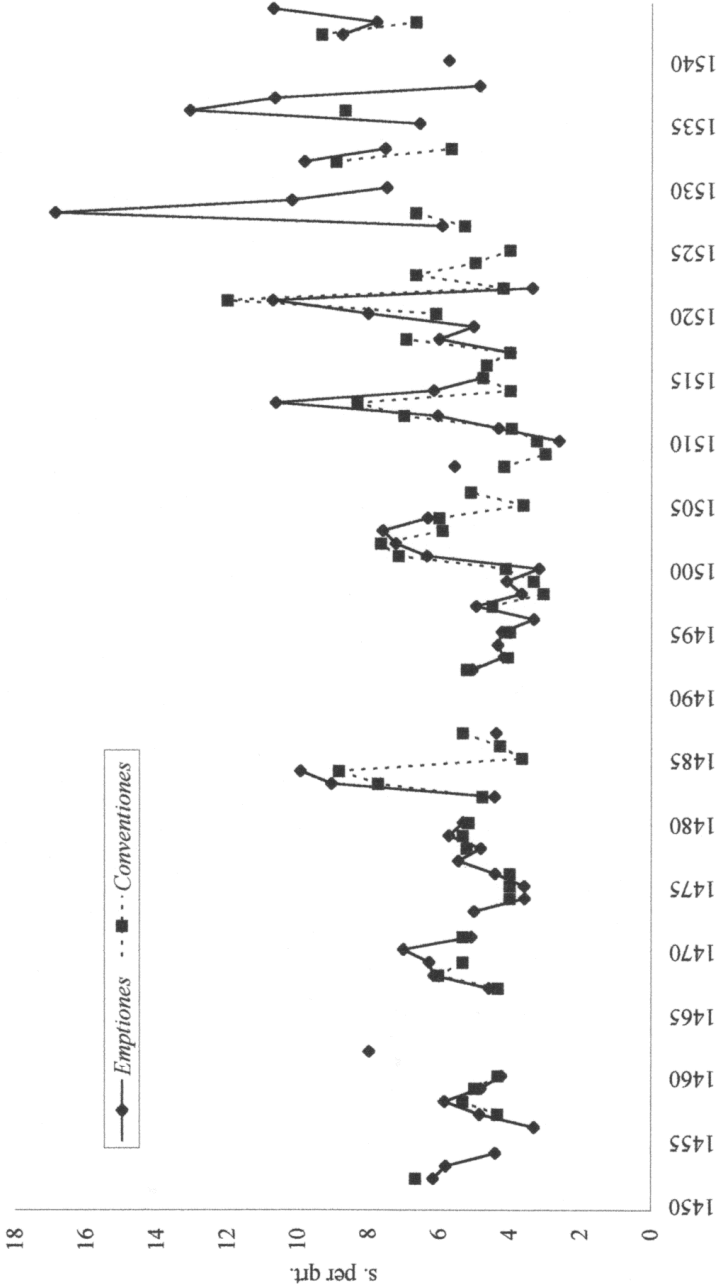
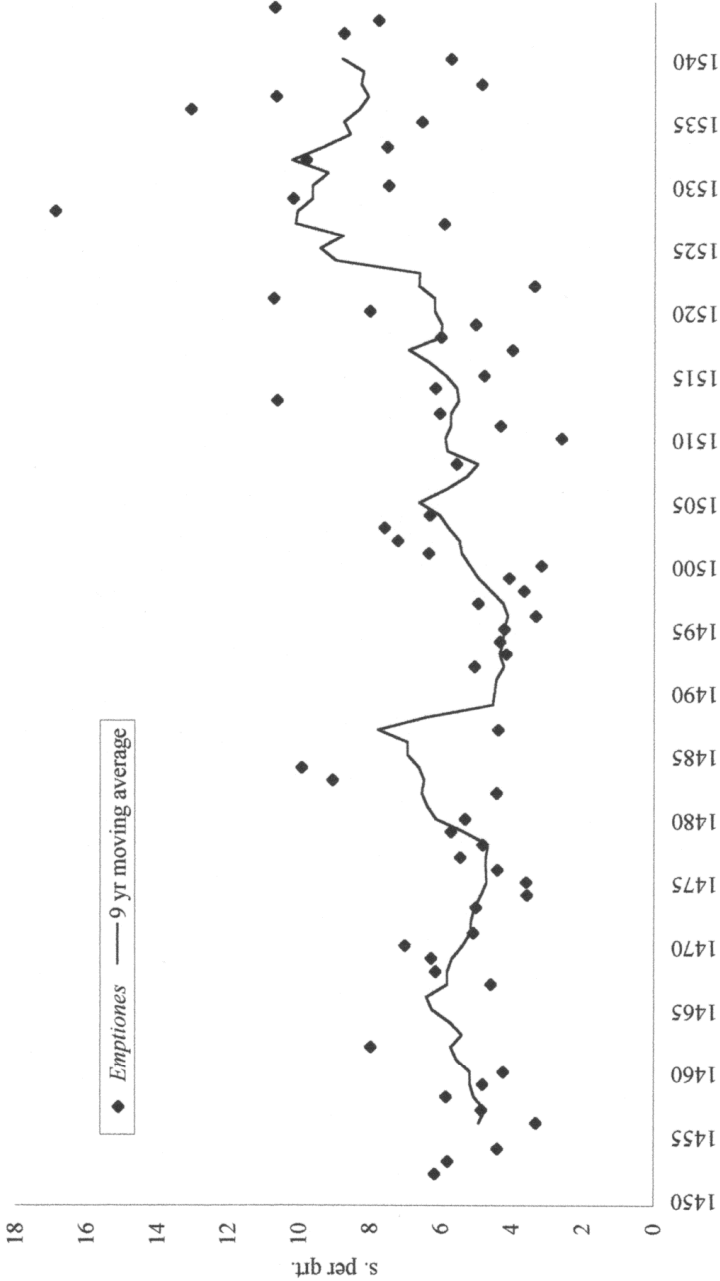


Figure 6.7: Average of King's Hall wheat prices, 1450-1544

Source: KH a/c, xi-xxvi



1550-60: dearth, epidemics, and corn rents

During the 1540s and 1550s, the price inflation which had begun in the early sixteenth century intensified, and corn supplies were severely disrupted in the late 1550s, when a succession of bad harvests were followed by epidemic disease. The survival of some particularly detailed evidence allows examination of the prices in Cambridge during this period. Although the King's Hall accounts cease in 1544, shortly before the college became part of the new foundation of Trinity College, the King's College Mundum Books cover more years over the mid-sixteenth century than before. One would expect King's Hall and King's College to have similar wheat prices, as both drew on a similar area for supplies, and the average price differed only slightly between the two colleges in 1536, 1537 and 1542. Prices of wheat purchased by King's College in this period are shown in table 6.3.¹³⁷ In addition to the college accounts, John Mere, a university bedel, wrote a detailed account of events in the town and university between November 1556 and May 1557, in which he recorded the prices in Cambridge market-place and precautions taken against the plague.¹³⁸

The 1550s witnessed several bad harvests. As table 6.3 shows, the average prices of wheat purchased by King's College increased dramatically in the years 1552, 1555, 1556 and 1557. Hoskins recorded the harvests in these four years as bad, average, dearth and dearth.¹³⁹ The misery was compounded by at least two outbreaks of epidemic disease during the decade. Sweating sickness, probably a type of viral infection, prevailed at Cambridge, as in many other parts of the country in 1551. Henry Brandon, Duke of Somerset and his brother Charles left Cambridge University to escape the sickness, but died in Huntingdonshire.¹⁴⁰ Another epidemic disease struck in the late 1550s after the harvest failures. An examination of the annual number of wills proved in sixteenth-century Cambridge has shown that 1557 was a

¹³⁷ Corn rents (see below, pp. 240-1) are excluded from the prices.

¹³⁸ *Collection from the MS library of Corpus Christi*, pp. 184-236.

¹³⁹ Hoskins, 'Harvest fluctuations', 45, for the years 1551, 1554, 1555 and 1556.

¹⁴⁰ *Annals*, ii, p. 59; Slack, 'Mortality', pp. 25-7.

year of particularly severe mortality.¹⁴¹ University matriculations fell from more than 200 to 59 between 1554 and 1557, before recovering, although the religious upheavals of Mary's reign, as well as the epidemics, probably contributed.¹⁴²

Table 6.3: *King's College wheat prices, 1536-62*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Average price (s. per qtr.)</i>
1536	13.86
1537	10.21
1542	9.15
1545	10.74
1546	14.04
1548	4.88
1549	7.55
1550	13.41
1552	23.46
1553	9.88
1554	8.70
1555	17.84
1556	20.85
1557	29.09
1558	10.14
1559	9.93
1561	14.67
1562	13.88

Source: KCMB, xii-xv

John Mere's account of the prices of cereals on Saturdays in Cambridge market-place between November 1556 and May 1557 reveals a peak at the beginning of January (table 6.4). On 4 January there was 'greate wante of breade in the towne', but by 23 January, more supplies had arrived, and there was 'a greate markett of people and plenty of grayne and other vytells'. King's College bought wheat early in 1557 at around the same price as Mere quotes, and prices do not appear to have decreased significantly until the middle of May. On 11 May, Mere wrote, 'Butter and chese very

¹⁴¹ Goose, 'Economic and social aspects', p. 300.

¹⁴² Leedham-Green, *Concise history*, pp. 62, 90.

much fallen in Suffolke' and on the next day, 'all kynde of grayne fell at Royston and all other markettes'.¹⁴³

Table 6.4: *Cambridge prices, 1556-7*

	<i>in the market per quarter</i>		<i>for King's College per quarter</i>	
	<i>wheat</i>	<i>barley</i>	<i>wheat</i>	
28 Nov	32s	23s 8d – 24s		
5 Dec		above 25s		
12 Dec	33s 4d +	26s 8d		
16 Dec		(30s) ^a		
19 Dec	36s 8d +	30s		
21 Dec	(40s +) ^b			
24 Dec		37s 4d		
2 Jan	45s 4d	33s 4d		
9 Jan	fell			
16 Jan	fell	26s 8d		
23 Jan	40s			
			31 Jan	39s 6d
6 Feb	rose		6 Feb	37s 4d; 38s 11½d
			2 Mar	40s
			19 Mar	35s 4d; 40s
			29 Apr	37s 4d
			6 May	40s
15 May	32s			
			10 Jul	30s 8d <i>in foro</i>

Notes: ^a at Royston

^b at St Ives

Sources: cols. 1-2, *Collection from the MS library of Corpus Christi*, pp. 184-236; col. 3, KCMB, xiv, 1556/7 a/c.

Mere attributed some of the price rises in Cambridge to the debasement of the coinage. On 19 December 1556 he wrote, 'a greate brute all the towne over of the faule of testons and theruppon all thinges deere', and on 24 December he was informed of a London proclamation that 'no man shuld refuse to take testons under payne of dethe', made the previous day on account of the dearth. The teston was a base coin ordered to be worth 12d, whose silver content had fallen between 1542/3

¹⁴³ *Collection from the MS library of Corpus Christi*, pp. 197, 208, 230.

and 1545/6; it was lowered in value to 6d by Edward VI and further reduced in 1560.¹⁴⁴

Norwich and Yarmouth established a permanent grain stock at this time, with funds administered by officials.¹⁴⁵ Although this did not happen in Cambridge, the authorities made some provision for the upheaval caused by the dearth and epidemics. The vice-chancellor and mayor commanded the churchwardens in every parish to assess the number of the poor on 6 December, and subsequently ordered them to record how many had entered the parishes within the last three years. Superintendents later visited parishes to assess the state of the poor and to determine appropriate relief. On 9 December 1556, all infected with 'the plague' were sent to prison. There was some form of proclamation at the time of plague and those who disobeyed were fined or imprisoned. A watch was appointed for 'straunge beggeres' on 14 December and by 3 January four or five people had been imprisoned for begging. During December the brewers requested and were granted higher prices for drink, but the bakers were summoned before the vice-chancellor 'for not bakinge browne brede ynowghe for the porer sorte.'¹⁴⁶

Historians have identified the later 1550s as one of the most severe periods of mortality during the sixteenth century, but the magnitude of the crisis and its causes is still debated. Identifying a sharp rise in the number of wills proved, Fisher tentatively suggested that two disastrous harvests of 1555 and 1556 and a major influenza epidemic might have reduced the population by up to 20 per cent.¹⁴⁷ Moore's recent analysis of all probate records between 1541 and 1570 has largely confirmed Fisher's conclusions, while suggesting that typhoid, as well influenza, may have been

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 192, 194; *Annals*, ii, p. 109, n. 1-2.

¹⁴⁵ Hoskins, 'Harvest fluctuations', 36.

¹⁴⁶ *Collection from the MS library of Corpus Christi*, pp. 187-8, 190-1, 193, 196-7.

¹⁴⁷ F.J. Fisher, 'Influenza and inflation in Tudor England', in Corfield & Harte, eds., *London and the English economy*, pp. 163-72.

present.¹⁴⁸ Wrigley and Schofield's work, based on an analysis of parish registers of baptisms and burials, found that 1558/9 was by far the worst year of crisis mortality between 1541 and 1871, with an annual crude death rate of 124 per cent above the trend, and 1557/8 was the second worst year. There was a further surge of crises in 1559/60. In contradiction of Fisher and Moore, however, Wrigley and Schofield suggested that the population fell by only 6 per cent as a result of these periods of increased mortality, although Dyer, using probate and register sources, has suggested mortality was around 15 per cent of the adult population.¹⁴⁹ Slack proposed that the epidemic of 1556-9 was a 'mixed crisis', initially related to the famine, and followed by a more autonomous epidemic. He suggested that the first phase of the crisis was an epidemic, possibly typhus, which affected mainly rural parishes and poorer sections of the population, and was then followed by a virulent viral infection which particularly hit towns and the more prosperous members of society.¹⁵⁰

Parliament was also alerted during the 1550s to the difficulties that Cambridge faced in securing food supplies. 'An Acte that the Purveyoures shall not take Victualles within v. miles of Cambridge or Oxforde' was passed on 21 October 1555. It recalled how the two university towns had formerly been free by custom from purveyance within a five-mile circuit of each town, but lately purveyors had frequented the markets excessively, making 'the Victualls bothe more skante & mucche dearer, to a notorious decay of Scollers, which also daily in this greate Dearth is like tencerease'. No purveyance was henceforth to be taken from within the town or the five miles adjoining, on penalty of quadruple value, and three months' imprisonment, and the university was given the power to determine offences.¹⁵¹ Purveyance for the king's army or the royal household had led to occasional complaints from the university.¹⁵² The statute was modified in 1571, as the townspeople had 'converted the benefit of

¹⁴⁸ J.S. Moore, 'Jack Fisher's "flu": a visitation revisited', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 46 (1993), 280-307.

¹⁴⁹ Wrigley & Schofield, *Population history*, pp. 234, 333, 651, 671; Dyer, 'Bishops' census', 21, 24.

¹⁵⁰ Slack, 'Mortality', pp. 27-32.

¹⁵¹ 2 & 3 Philip & Mary, c. 15: *SR*, iv, part 1, pp. 289-90.

¹⁵² *Annals*, i, p. 439, ii, p. 68-9.

the said Acte to theyre pryvate use and commoditye without any profite or commodity to the poore Schollers'. The vice-chancellor could license purveyors to take victuals or grain in the markets or within five miles adjoining. If any person within the precinct of five miles reasonably refused to provide necessary provisions for the universities, they would be liable to the demands of the royal purveyors.¹⁵³

Despite the legislation enacted during autumn 1555, on 3 January 1557 the Privy Council ordered the justices of the peace in Cambridgeshire to make a search of all corn stored within 5 miles of the university. If the view of corn appeared insufficient, they were to order the university to be furnished with supplies from other nearby towns, and any person hindering the justices was to be bound to appear before the Privy Council. On the same day, the Privy Council asked the vice-chancellor to ensure that corn brought to the town was not conveyed outside it by badgers until the victuallers of the town and university were sufficiently furnished.¹⁵⁴ These orders seem to have been received in Cambridge on 7 January.¹⁵⁵ Searches of grain appear to have been commissioned across the country in 1549-50 and 1556-7 with powers to force those with surpluses to bring their supplies to the market.¹⁵⁶ Commissioners had first been appointed to survey stocks of available grain by central government in 1527, although the mayor of Coventry had compiled a local census of available corn supplies in 1520. Such searches became the established practice at times of dearth during the sixteenth century, and the directions were codified into *Books of Orders*, issued by the Privy Council in 1586/7.¹⁵⁷

With considerable price rises and major dearths during the 1550s, it became increasingly difficult and expensive for colleges to obtain supplies of corn. King's

¹⁵³ 13 Elizabeth, c. 21: *SR*, iv, part 1, pp. 556-7.

¹⁵⁴ UA, Collect.Admin.5, fols. 139v-140.

¹⁵⁵ *Collection from the MS library of Corpus Christi*, p. 198.

¹⁵⁶ P. Slack, 'Social policy and the constraints of government, 1547-58', in J. Loach & R. Tittler, eds., *The mid-Tudor polity c.1540-1560* (London, 1980), pp. 105-6.

¹⁵⁷ *Coventry Leet Book*, iii, pp. 674-5; Dymond, 'Famine'; R.B. Outhwaite, *Dearth, public policy and social disturbance in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1991), pp. 39-41.

College looked to alternative methods of securing supplies. Saltmarsh estimated that the decennial average expenditure on foodstuffs at King's rose by 55 per cent between 1501-10 and 1541-50, but the decennial average estate revenue rose by only 18 per cent. To combat this shortfall, the college increasingly collected fines when leases were made, introduced reversionary leases, and began to receive rents which were partly paid in wheat.¹⁵⁸

King's College began to receive rents partly in wheat, beginning with the lease of Horstead in 1551, to take effect from Michaelmas 1557. From the account of 1557/8 onwards, the Mundum Books record wheat received from college estates including Grantchester in Cambridgeshire, Dunton Waylett in Essex, Fordingbridge in Hampshire, Biggin in Hertfordshire and Horstead in Norfolk, *ex conventione lesse*.¹⁵⁹ The college always paid the lessee 6s 8d per quarter for this wheat, a price which in the years 1557 to 1562, ranged from between 2s to 22s below the average market price. Delivery dates were stipulated in the contracts and staggered over the year to ensure a continuous supply: the wheat from Horstead, for example, had to be delivered between Michaelmas and Christmas, that from Fordingbridge between Christmas and Easter, and that from Great Abington at the feast of St John the Baptist.¹⁶⁰ Between 2 and 10 quarters were collected from each estate, and over the next few years the corn rents provided a growing proportion of the wheat purchased, as shown in table 6.5.

During the 1550s and 1560s, King's College tenants also began to supply other foodstuffs as part of their rents, for which, unlike the wheat, they were not usually reimbursed. The lessees of Barton manor and Biggin had to provide a boar at

¹⁵⁸ J. Saltmarsh, 'The employment of the estates of King's College in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; with special reference to the origins of beneficial leasing', (unpublished fellowship dissertation, King's College, Cambridge, 1930), pp. 223-30, deposited in King's College Archives, JS 1/36, Copy A.

¹⁵⁹ KCMB, xiv-xv, 1558/9-1561/2 a/cs; KC Ledger Book, i, fols. 352-352v, 360-1, 365v-366, 366v-367.

¹⁶⁰ KC Ledger Book, i, fols. 352-352v, 360-1, 364.

Christmas. The lease of Isleham manor made in 1561, to commence in 1568, specified that in addition to the £9 annual rent, ‘the carcasses or bulkes of xx good & fatte wethers beyng well kyllyd’ with heads, hearts and livers were to be delivered, every carcass weighing 40 lbs. Six score wethers were to be supplied from Cottenham, and ten score from Grantchester, under leases of 1563 and 1567.¹⁶¹

Table 6.5: *Wheat supplied to King’s College from corn rents and the market, 1557-62*

	<i>Corn rents</i> <i>qrts.</i>	<i>Other purchases</i> <i>qrts.</i>
1557	4.0	108.4
1558	76.0	72.5
1559	91.0	83.5
1561	105.5	1.0
1562	122.5	73.25

Sources: KCMB, xiv-xv, 1557-62 a/cs

The college also began to take payments of wheat for entry fines from the mid 1550s. Hartleys brought 5 bushels of wheat for the fine for his customary land in Grantchester, Grymstow was charged with 20 quarters of wheat for his entry to the farm of Barton manor, and Stephen of Coton gave 4 quarters for his copyhold fine.¹⁶²

The move towards the payment of rents partly in kind could be found elsewhere, in response to the price inflation. Leases of the estates of Winchester College began to include the provision of fixed amounts of grain, livestock, firewood or fodder as part of their rents from 1551. Eton College collected rents in the form of grain and livestock from 1553.¹⁶³ Corn rents were systemised by an act of parliament in 1576, which stated that one third of the rent in all future college leases was to be received in wheat at 6s 8d and malt barley at 5s per quarter, or in cash, at current market prices

¹⁶¹ KC Ledger Book, i, fols. 361, 366v-7, ii, pp. 59, 85, 139-40.

¹⁶² KCMB, xiv, 1554/5, 1555/6 a/cs, xv, 1558/9 a/c.

¹⁶³ Beveridge, *Wages and prices*, pp. 9, 101.

for wheat and malt. The corn was to be used only for the commons of the colleges and could not be sold.¹⁶⁴

By the early 1560s, King's College had reduced its purchases of corn by more than half, which must have had a considerable impact on the local market. At a time of rising prices, and perhaps hastened by the scarcities of the 1550s, the college withdrew from the open market and increasingly relied upon its own estates for cheaper and more reliable supplies. This reversion to rents in kind was similar to the system of food farms that once supplied Ely and other abbeys and royal estates, and which had been instituted before the Norman Conquest.¹⁶⁵

Conclusion

In the provision of their basic foodstuffs, as in their supply of higher value commodities, the Cambridge colleges were largely independent of the townspeople. Some Cambridge colleges and religious houses organised the cultivation of their own estates to provide foodstuffs for their households, and drew tithes and rents in kind. Several colleges possessed their own facilities for baking and brewing, rather than relying on tradesmen in the town. When purchasing supplies of corn and fuel, Cambridge market-place was not used extensively, and only smaller quantities could usually be procured there. Instead, the colleges relied heavily on direct contracts with producers in the region around Cambridge. The accounts of King's Hall and King's College show that this hinterland extended to around 10 miles in radius around the town for supplies of wheat and malt barley, and up to 15 miles, sometimes more, for fuel. In contrast to the model of an urban hinterland proposed by Von Thünen, which placed a zone of forestry close to the city and commercial grain production beyond this, firewood was brought to Cambridge over longer distances than grain.¹⁶⁶ Much

¹⁶⁴ 18 Elizabeth, c. 6: *SR*, iv, part 1, pp. 616-17; G.E. Aylmer, 'The economics and finances of the colleges and university c.1530-1640', in J. McConica, ed., *The history of the university of Oxford*, iii: *the collegiate university* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 535-43.

¹⁶⁵ Miller, *Abbey and bishopric*, pp. 41-2.

¹⁶⁶ Hall, *Von Thünen*, pp. 106-23, 140-3.

depended though, on the availability of natural resources and transport networks. Cambridge, for example, in a relatively treeless area, and readily accessible from the east coast, began to consume coal in the late sixteenth century, but Oxford, lying in a heavily-wooded region and lacking accessible waterways from inland collieries, still relied on wood and charcoal in the mid-seventeenth century.¹⁶⁷ There was insufficient demand for regular supplies of coal from the collieries of north-east England to Cambridge in the 1450-1560 period, but occasional shipments and the widening hinterland for fuel show how and why this trade subsequently developed.

A variety of suppliers sent corn and fuel to King's College and King's Hall during the 1450-1560 period, including a large number of demesne lessees, yeomen, and husbandmen. However, a marked trend can be discerned towards more frequent direct contracts with leading suppliers, and a commensurate decline in purchases in the market-place. Some of these Cambridgeshire suppliers appear to have resembled demesne farmers in other areas of the country, like those in the west midlands and the south-east, who consolidated holdings, engaged in relatively large-scale production, and orientated their production towards markets, often meeting demand from nearby towns. Such farmers were arguably adopting more 'capitalist' methods of production.¹⁶⁸

Yet the area Cambridge drew upon for its supplies, like that of most medieval towns, was very restricted. Even the largest and wealthiest colleges relied on a relatively small area for their corn, and they faced large price increases in years of scarcity. In response to rising prices, in the late 1550s King's College, and subsequently other colleges, began to rely increasingly on rents received in kind from their own estates. This was not a move towards a more capitalist, market-orientated economy, but to increasing self-sufficiency. Rents paid in food rather than in cash echoed the practices of the early middle ages and, it has been suggested, helped to preserve the medieval

¹⁶⁷ Hatcher, *Coal*, p. 51.

¹⁶⁸ Dyer, 'Capitalists', pp. 316-20; Mate, 'Land market', 60-1.

pattern of tenure and cultivation in the common fields of Cambridgeshire until the nineteenth century.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Cunningham, 'Economic history', 21-2.

CHAPTER 7

PROPERTY, LABOUR AND BUILDING PROJECTS

This chapter examines three inter-related aspects of the economy of Cambridge and its region, which illustrate additional links between the town and hinterland, and provide indications of economic activity in the town. Firstly, the property market in the town is examined through the rental income received by Cambridge Corporation and the arrears owed to Corpus Christi College. Secondly, demand for labour in the town is investigated through the extent of migration, as revealed in records of freemen admitted to the town and foreign immigrants residing in the region. Finally, the many construction projects that took place in the town in this period are explored to reveal the sources of supply for building materials and labour.

Urban land market

The depopulation of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries reduced demand for urban property. Though initially, the increased income of many townspeople and the expansion of cloth-making led to buoyant demand in some towns after the Black Death, depression became more general after 1420. The overall extent and density of property was reduced: lands and houses were not so subdivided as before, and gardens and waste grounds appeared on the former sites of buildings. The property income of Oseney Abbey in Oxford and the cathedral priory at Canterbury declined during the second half of the fifteenth century, reaching a nadir in Canterbury in the last quarter of the century and at Oxford in the early 1500s. Rents in some London suburbs began to recover before the end of the fifteenth century, but property values and settlement densities in many central commercial and residential districts did not increase substantially until after 1550.¹

¹ A.F. Butcher, 'Rent and the urban economy: Oxford and Canterbury in the later Middle Ages', *Southern History*, 1 (1979), 11-43; D. Keene, 'The property market in English towns A.D. 1100-1600', in *D'Une Ville à l'autre: Structures, Matérielles et Organisation de L'Espace dans les villes Européennes XIII^e-XVI^e Siècle* (Rome, 1989), pp. 214-17; Rosser, *Medieval Westminster*, pp. 74-92, 173-7.

Few published studies have examined the property market in Cambridge, apart from the acquisition of land for sites where colleges were founded.² Examination of the property rentals of St John's Hospital has shown that the house suffered from the difficulties encountered by many urban landlords in the later middle ages: large and long-standing arrears, dilapidation of properties, and a major fall in land values. In 1490, rents in Cambridge comprised 31 per cent of the hospital's total income. St John's College consolidated this estate by acquiring some additional properties in the town.³

The survey of the colleges undertaken in 1546 provides a convenient starting point for examining the extent of landholdings in the town and region. The amount of property owned by colleges in Cambridge varied considerably, as table 7.1 reveals. The largest net income from property in the town was received by Corpus Christi - the college which had been founded by two town guilds; large property holdings in the town were also held by St John's and Jesus - colleges which had formerly been religious houses. The older colleges and religious houses had accumulated urban property over several centuries through pious gifts from property holders in the town.

Many colleges held considerable estates outside Cambridge, although as table 7.1 shows, there was a considerable variation in the location of these holdings by the mid-sixteenth century. The older foundations of Corpus Christi, Peterhouse and Michaelhouse drew the largest proportion of their incomes from within Cambridgeshire. King's College and St John's received larger revenues from more distant counties. These estates were scattered throughout the country: King's College drew income in 15 English counties that stretched from Devon to Suffolk and from Lancashire to Sussex. The range of sources of income was also wide: in the case of King's College it included rents, farms, tithes, perquisites of courts, entry fines, and

² Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i-iii, *passim*. Dr Rosemary Horrox at Fitzwilliam College, Cambridge, is currently researching the topographical development of medieval Cambridge.

³ Rubin, *Charity and community*, pp. 226-35; Underwood, 'Impact', pp. 178-9.

revenue from mills, woods, pasture and marsh, sales of wood, London houses, and six brick kilns at Ruislip in Middlesex.⁴ The distribution of college estates depended largely on the gifts of founders and benefactors, many of whom, until the Reformation, obliged the colleges to offer prayers in return for their gifts. The personal connections of some founders led to concentrations of properties in particular areas, while the high proportion of income derived from estates in Cambridgeshire and neighbouring counties suggests that, as among the Oxford colleges, there was a strong preference for holding properties near the university town.⁵

Table 7.1: *Property income of the Cambridge colleges, 1546*

	<i>Cambridge</i>	<i>Cambridgeshire</i>	<i>adjacent counties</i>	<i>elsewhere</i>	<i>total income</i>
	£	£	£	£	£
King's College	22.08	96.06	224.67	612.24	1,010.65 ¹
St John's	54.54	83.17	142.51	256.65	536.87
Christ's	2.62	68.83	102.15	115.90	287.50
Queens'	3.08	106.57	117.03	45.44	272.68
King's Hall	11.50	73.67	75.30	53.55	214.01
Corpus Christi	124.71	46.66	0.00	0.00	171.38
Pembroke	0.80	96.81	33.00	40.53	171.14
Michaelhouse	16.24	106.90	4.35	14.17	141.66
Peterhouse	17.83	104.79	9.18	6.35	138.15
Clare Hall	14.45	79.95	28.97	8.99	132.36
Jesus	41.41	62.34	0.00	26.67	130.42
Gonville Hall	18.40	35.25	66.33	0.00	119.97
Trinity Hall	23.85	6.00	57.71	31.53	119.10
St Catharine's	8.10	34.92	12.90	0.00	55.93
Magdalene	0.84	0.00	20.00	23.06	43.90

Notes: All sources of income are stated, and are net. Cambridgeshire includes the Isle of Ely but excludes the town of Cambridge. Adjacent counties comprise Bedfordshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

¹ There is a discrepancy between the sum of individual sources of property income and the total income stated in the survey.

Source: *Documents*, i, pp. 105-294

⁴ *Documents*, i, pp. 246-63; See also Saltmarsh, 'Hand-list'.

⁵ Evans & Faith, 'College estates', pp. 651-6.

Many residents of Cambridge also had property interests outside the town.⁶ Several Cambridge townsmen who stood as members of parliament for the borough invested in property in the region; they were men of substantial means, as the wages paid by the borough were insufficient to cover their daily expenses in London. John Leynton acquired Caxton manor in 1488, Thomas Brakyn purchased Chesterton manor in 1540, and Edward Slegge obtained a twenty-one year lease of lands at Comberton in 1550, and later purchased lands of former chantries in Cambridgeshire, Staffordshire and elsewhere worth £1,539.⁷

Through the landholdings of townspeople and town institutions, Cambridge was linked not only to many parts of the county and neighbouring counties, but also to estates much further afield. The extent of these links varied considerably, but in the case of the colleges might include the appointment of fellows to church livings and the supply of foodstuffs by tenants. Some Oxford colleges recruited scholars and servants from their estates.⁸

The urban property administered by the treasurers of Cambridge Corporation produced a gross income of about £25 in the 1540s. This was not large compared to some of the colleges, but provides a useful indicator of the pattern of rents over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The corporation's property income consisted of rents from houses, shops, lands and market stalls. In addition, empty or waste grounds were frequently let to the owners of adjoining houses, and rents were charged for encroachments on waste sites, ditches and lanes with, for example, buttresses, chimneys and drains. Cambridge Corporation had requested the right to make their profit from the small lanes and waste places of the town in 1330; no royal licence

⁶ For other towns, see Kermode, *Merchants*, pp. 276-90; Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 209-10, 260-1; Thrupp, *Merchant class*, pp. 118-30.

⁷ J.C. Wedgwood, *The History of Parliament: Biographies of members of the Commons House, 1439-1509* (London, 1936), p. 543; Bindoff, *House of Commons*, i, pp. 43, 485, iii, p. 327.

⁸ For food supplies, see above, Chapter 6; Evans & Faith, 'College estates', pp. 655-6, 687; *Canterbury College, Oxford*, iv, ed. W.A. Pantin, Oxford Historical Society, new series, XXX (Oxford, 1985), p. 91.

approving this request is recorded, but the corporation's right was effectively conceded in the fifteenth century when Henry VI and Edward IV purchased waste ground from the corporation for the colleges of King's and Queens'.⁹

A handful of items, which were recorded under the property income in the treasurers' accounts, have been excluded from the calculations used here. These include the income described as the farm of the king's table (*tabula regis*) in the 1420s and 1430s, and as the farm of the fish and flesh stalls in later accounts.¹⁰ The payment to four men for the farm of the sergeants' maces, of 13s 4d per annum, was recorded under the property income between 1483/4 and 1530/1. The leases of the Bishop's Mill, Newnham Mill and Mortimer's lands were recorded under foreign receipts in 1503/4, and listed with the property rents from 1515/16 onwards. In 1503/4, £14 was received from the Bishop's Mill; this fell to £10 10s 0d from 1515/16 to 1535/6, before rising to £12 from 1537/8 onwards. Newnham Mill and Mortimer's land were leased for £21 12s 4d in total in 1503/4, but produced only £18 per annum from 1515/16 onwards, apart from payments of £20 in 1527/8 and 1530/1. The corporation held these mills on leases from the bishop of Ely and Gonville Hall, and sub-leased them to farmers at a profit.¹¹ Other items, which occasionally appear under property rents, such as rents of booths and profits from the sale of timber, have also been excluded.

Figure 7.1 presents the corporation's gross income (minus the items described above) and the mean average annual rent. The latter series is something of a crude measure, because the range of rents was so large. Like many urban landlords, Cambridge Corporation received many small payments or 'quit-rents'. Nonetheless, the average annual rent provides a useful indicator because the corporation was obtaining an ever-

⁹ Maitland, *Township*, pp. 83-4, 188-90; *CBD*, pp. xxxvii.

¹⁰ See Chapter 4.

¹¹ The corporation also owned the other mill in Cambridge, the King's Mill, but these profits were recorded separately in the mayor and bailiffs' accounts: Maitland, *Township*, pp. 206-8.

growing number of properties. Property income came from 61 different properties in 1422/3, 81 in 1500/1, and 128 in 1560/1.

The treasurers' accounts show a sharp decline in property income and average rents during the 1420s and 1430s. When the surviving accounts resume again in the 1480s both series declined further, and the average rent probably reached its nadir around 1500. By the 1520s, the average rent had almost but not quite returned to the levels of the 1420s and 1430s. The former fifteenth-century level of average rent was not reached again consistently until the 1540s and not exceeded until the 1550s and 1560s. Furthermore, the severe inflation of the mid-sixteenth century meant that money was worth less than in the early fifteenth century: the national price average for agricultural products, with a base of 100 in 1450-99, had risen to 282 by 1560-9.¹² So in real terms, average rents had still not returned to the level of 130 years before, though there had been a substantial recovery from their nadir at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

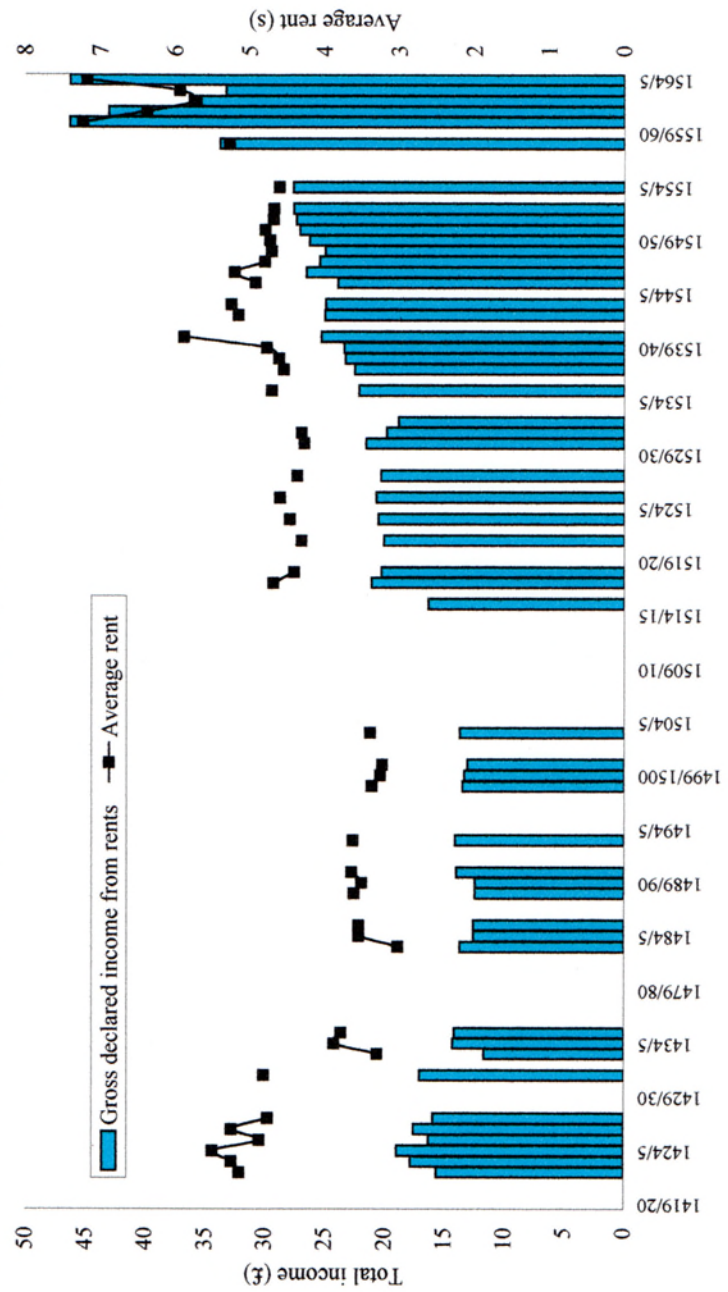
Entry fines and leases determined by the corporation, which are recorded from 1544 in the Common Day Book, reinforce the impression given by the movements in property income, that demand for property was still relatively limited in the mid-sixteenth century. In the 1540s and 1550s, property was let for fairly long periods of time: terms of between 20 and 40 years were common, while two leases for 99 years were recorded. Fines were generally relatively low, and could be less than the annual rent, although Dr Hatcher paid a fine of £13 6s 8d for a ninety-nine year lease of several houses.¹³ However, the rents accruing to other landlords, including many colleges, were slow to increase in the sixteenth century due to the length of leases and a failure to distinguish the long-term rise in prices, even after demand for land in the countryside must have risen with the growth in population.¹⁴

¹² Bowden, 'Statistical appendix', p. 164.

¹³ CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fols. 8, 8v, 9, 11v, 16, 18v, 22v, 25v, 31v, 64v.

¹⁴ Aylmer, 'Economics and finances', pp. 524-5.

Figure 7.1: Cambridge Corporation's property income
Sources: CCA, X/70/1-10, X/71/1-10, X/71A, XVII/24A; CCTA, i-ii



The property income recorded in the accounts of the Cambridge treasurers, like those of other institutions, shows only the theoretical amount due. Many of these rents could not in practice be collected, and such rents were usually listed under headings of decays or defaults of rent. A similar picture has emerged elsewhere. Of the rents in Newcastle-upon-Tyne acquired by University College, possibly only half the annual declared value reached Oxford during the 1450s and early 1460s, and in the next 15 years less than a third of the total rent was collected. This absence of payments occurred despite the progressive fall in property values, and the periodic writing-off of arrears. By 1509-10, half of Oseney Abbey's rents in Oxford were in decay. Large amounts of waste and decay from urban property rents were also recorded among the accounts of York Minster and Durham Priory from the mid-fifteenth century.¹⁵ Rural rents too, were more commonly static or declining than rising in the late medieval period, and many lords faced major problems in drawing their full revenues.¹⁶

In the Cambridge treasurers' accounts, decays or defaults of rents included cases where rents had been reduced, or properties were vacant and in the hands of the treasurers.¹⁷ They were recorded under the heading *defectus redditus* and sometimes also after the balance had been calculated at the end of the account. The figures presented in figure 7.2 relate only to decays from property: other items have been excluded. The corporation's decays of rents were generally fairly small in the fifteenth century, usually totalling less than 3 per cent of the gross income. This suggests that the lists of rents due were revised fairly frequently to reflect changes in rents collected. Only in 1483/4 did defects of rents amount to nearly 21 per cent of the gross income, when rents could not be extracted from a number of shops.

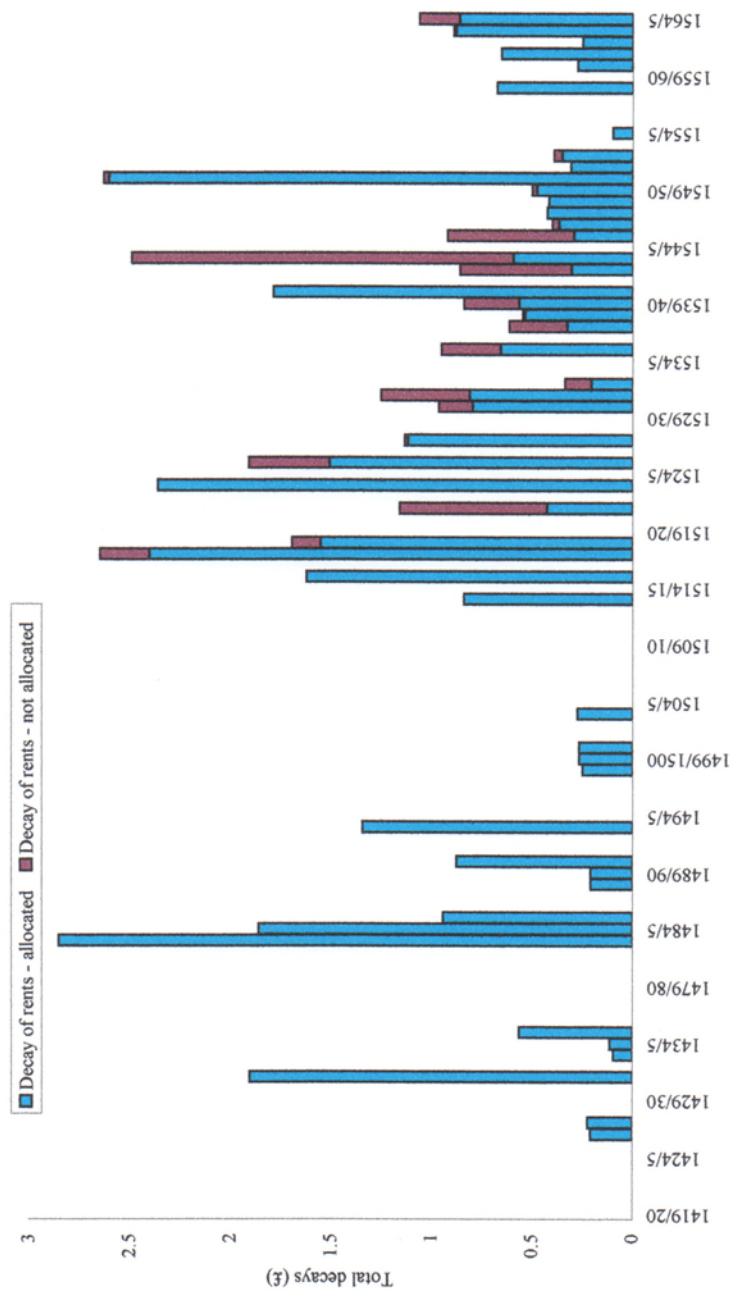
¹⁵ A.F. Butcher, 'Rent, population and economic change in late-medieval Newcastle', *Northern History*, 14 (1978), 67-77; Butcher, 'Oxford and Canterbury', 37; R.B. Dobson, 'Cathedral chapters and cathedral cities: York, Durham and Carlisle in the fifteenth century', *Northern History*, 19 (1983), 36; M. Bonney, *Lordship and the urban community: Durham and its overlords, 1250-1540* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 123-8.

¹⁶ Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 193-4; Evans & Faith, 'College estates', pp. 689-91.

¹⁷ e.g. X/71/7.

Figure 7.2: Decays of rents from Cambridge Corporation's property

Sources: CCA, X/70/1-10, X/71/1-10, X71A, XVII/24A; CCTA, I-ii



When the accounts moved from being compiled on parchment rolls to paper books, which begin to survive from 1515/16, the treasurers recorded both decays of rent allocated and not allocated. Decays of rents increased slightly in total during the sixteenth century, but as the total gross income from rents was also rising, the proportion of the total rental income in decay did not increase.

The continuing problems of managing an urban estate in Cambridge in the mid-sixteenth century are illustrated by a book of rent arrears of tenants of Corpus Christi College, dating from 1523 to 1547.¹⁸ Initially, tenants with arrears were listed for each Cambridge parish. For the last 11 years though, from 1535/6, a more systematic approach was adopted, with all tenants being recorded, and arrears listed to the left of the names and payments to the right; totals of payments, arrears, and decays of rent (i.e. reductions to the stated rent) were calculated for each parish, making comparisons much easier. These rents can also be compared with those listed in a rental of 1551.¹⁹

Table 7.2 shows the rental income between 1536/7 and 1551. The college received between 68 per cent and 85 per cent of the total rents owed every year, and arrears comprised between 12 per cent and 28 per cent of the total rents. Decays comprised between 2 per cent and 7 per cent of the total, and there were no vacant holdings, apart from in 1546/7. As in other late medieval towns, the problem facing Corpus appears not to have been a shortage of tenants, but the inability or reluctance of tenants to pay the full amount of rent. Unlike some landowners though, the college did not allow notional arrears to accumulate and instead made regular downward revisions to the total rent. In most years, the total rent roll was reduced slightly, by between 1 and 4 per cent. By 1551, the total declared value of the urban rents was £18

¹⁸ CCC, 'Arreragia', 1523-47.

¹⁹ CCC, XXXIX.119.

less, or 12 per cent less than in 1536/7, a considerable fall over only 15 years, during which the purchasing power of money had fallen by more than a quarter.²⁰

Table 7.2: *Cambridge rents of Corpus Christi College, 1536/7-1551*

	<i>total declared value of rents</i>	<i>total rents received</i>	<i>arrears</i>	<i>decay</i>	<i>vacant</i>
	£	£	£	£	£
1536/7	149.37	102.26	41.43	3.10	0
1537/8	147.33	118.66	22.11	6.60	0
1538/9	143.16	121.64	17.26	4.01	0
1539/40	148.08	112.31	30.80	5.30	0
1540/1	147.81	109.99	28.07	9.20	0
1541/2	144.15	112.22	25.44	6.30	0
1542/3	144.00	111.35	23.29	9.40	0
1543/4	144.25	107.43	25.94	10.38	0
1544/5	138.75	102.99	26.08	9.68	0
1545/6	136.15	104.39	26.15	5.86	0
1546/7	134.77	97.20	28.48	1.61	7.63
1551	131.12				

Note: includes all property in Cambridge and lands in Cambridge fields, but not rents from Grantchester and Barton, which are not recorded consistently in the 'Arreragia'.

Sources: 1536/7-1546/7: CCC, Accounts, 'Arreragia', 1523-47; 1551: CCC, XXXIX.119

Table 7.3 reveals that while some reductions to the total declared rents were made in most Cambridge parishes, the largest reductions were concentrated in the parishes of St Andrew, to the east of the town centre, and St Clement and St Sepulchre, to the north. Although these parishes partly covered suburban parts of Cambridge, beyond the river and the King's Ditch, other parishes which also had areas outside these boundaries, like St Mary the Less and St Peter and St Giles, experienced few reductions.²¹ Only in Jesus parish and in the Cambridge fields, did the total rental income actually increase between 1536/7 and 1551, and even in these areas, some arrears of rent were recorded. This suggests that property values had fallen across

²⁰ Phelps-Brown & Hopkins, *Perspective*, p. 29, using the index of the wage-rate of building craftsmen expressed in a composite physical unit of consumables for 1532 and 1552.

²¹ For parish boundaries, see Lobel, 'Cambridge', map 6.

much of the town during the fifteenth century, and failed to recover substantially even by the middle of the sixteenth century.

Table 7.3 *Distribution of reductions in Corpus Christi College's total declared rents by parish, 1536/7-1551*

<i>Cambridge parish</i>	<i>1536/7</i>	<i>1546/7</i>	<i>1551</i>	<i>1536/7-1551</i>
	total rent	total rent	total rent	% change
	£	£	£	
St Peter & St Giles	3.28	3.23	3.18	-3.05
St Clement & St Sepulchre	7.78	5.78	4.37	-43.84
Holy Trinity	6.93	6.93	6.08	-12.15
St Edward	14.99	12.89	12.62	-15.79
St Benedict	30.85	29.17	28.63	-7.19
All Saints	14.00	13.03	13.79	-1.52
St Michael	2.33	2.33	1.97	-15.71
Great St Mary	30.13	29.18	26.33	-12.61
St Botolph	17.68	13.03	16.01	-9.43
St Mary the Less	6.19	6.54	5.88	-5.11
St Andrew	6.60	3.57	3.40	-48.42
Jesus	0.53	0.60	0.60	12.50
Cambridge fields	8.08	8.49	8.26	2.19
Total	149.37	134.77	131.12	-12.22

Sources: 1536/7-1546/7: CCC, Accounts, 'Arreragia', 1523-47; 1551: CCC, XXXIX.119

Labour force: migration

Mobility rates in late medieval and Tudor England were high. The period after the Black Death in particular has been seen as one of increased geographical mobility, with the loosening of the ties of serfdom and the availability of new economic opportunities. Migrants could be driven to towns by 'push' factors, such as the loss of land and employment in the locality, while others were attracted by 'pull' factors – the greater economic opportunities available in urban centres. Migration could be permanent or temporary, lasting for a season or the duration of an apprenticeship.²²

²² Poos, *Rural society*, p. 159.

Migration took place over a range of distances. In rural parts of fourteenth-century Essex or sixteenth-century Kent, most migrants moved to parishes within a radius of 10-15 miles from each other.²³ Larger towns drew on local hinterlands, but also gained migrants from longer distances, particularly more skilled migrants as apprentices and freemen.²⁴ Two further groups of records, freemen's admissions and alien subsidies, shed a little more light on this upper stratum of migration into Cambridge and its region.

The admissions of burgesses to the freedom of the borough give an indication of a medieval town's ability to attract skilled and prosperous migrants, which cannot provide a reliable guide to population trends. The number of admissions may reflect mortality among the burgesses though, as at York, where high entry rates followed years of plague mortality.²⁵ The admissions can also give some indication of general economic fortunes. At Colchester and York, the numbers of new burgesses elected annually were consistently higher in the late fourteenth century than in the 1330s and 1340s, reflecting the increased economic opportunities in these towns, while the declining applications by the late fifteenth century mirrored the contraction of local trade and industry.²⁶

Admissions of freemen in Cambridge are only recorded in detail in the corporation's Common Day Book, which begins in 1544. Before this date, income from freemen's admissions is recorded in the treasurers' accounts, in which the names of those admitted are sometimes listed. Admissions tended to be clustered in a few years, with intervening years characterised by relatively few admissions, with totals usually in

²³ Ibid., pp. 162, 164; Zell, *Industry*, p. 85.

²⁴ J. Patten, 'Patterns of migration and movement of labour to three pre-industrial East Anglian towns', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 2 (1976), 111-29; C.I. Hammer, 'The mobility of skilled labour in late medieval England: some Oxford evidence', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 63 (1976), 194-210.

²⁵ Dobson, 'Urban decline', p. 281; R.B. Dobson, 'Admissions to the freedom of the city of York in the later Middle Ages', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 26 (1973), 17.

²⁶ Bartlett, 'York', esp. 22-3; Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 96, 203-5, 279-80.

single figures. The averages presented in table 7.4 therefore conceal a large range of figures. There was a noticeable increase in admissions in the four decades between 1490 and 1530, when a large amount of building work was underway in the town.²⁷ Few building craftsmen appear to have become freemen, apart from John Morley, slater, and possibly John Bury, mason,²⁸ but the construction work may have generated a general increase in economic activity. Another rise in admissions during the 1550s coincided with an increase in the corporation's urban rents, and possibly suggests an upturn in economic activity and migration into the town, although the reduction of fees for admission to the freedom in 1544 may also have encouraged more men to apply.

Table 7.4: *Burgesses admitted to freedom of Cambridge, 1422/3-1560*

	<i>Treasurers' accounts</i>			<i>Common Day Book</i>		
	No. of years with admissions	Total freemen admitted	Yearly average admitted	No. of years with admissions	Total freemen admitted	Yearly average admitted
1421-30	4	34	9			
1431-40	2	7	4			
1481-90	3	11	4			
1491-1500	3	44	15			
1501-10	2	35	18			
1511-20	3	32	11			
1521-30	4	49	12			
1531-40	6	56	9			
1541-50	9	72	8	7	69	10
1551-60	5	59	12	10	104	10

Sources: Treasurers' accounts: CCA, X/70/1-10, X/71/1-10, X/71A, XVII/24A; CCTA, i;
Common Day Book: CCA, Palmer/Barnard, volume 57.

In Cambridge, freedom of the borough could be obtained through birth, apprenticeship, purchase, or gift. In 1534 the mayor urged all foreigners in the town to become freemen, 'affyrmynge that they had as good a corporatyon as london had'.

²⁷ See Table 7.8.

²⁸ CCTA, i, fol. 92; X/71/9; J. Harvey, *English medieval architects: a biographical dictionary down to 1550* (Gloucester, 1984), pp. 41-2.

Unless this was an effort to raise support against the university, it seems that the freedom was not in great demand, a suggestion supported by the fact that entrance fees for burgesses' sons were reduced in 1544 and 1576. A burgess or freeman was entitled to trade in the town without paying toll, received preferential treatment in the borough courts, and in Cambridge acquired the right to hold a booth in Stourbridge fair without charge. But burgesses were also liable to borough taxes and office holding, which could make the privilege expensive and time-consuming.²⁹

The places of residence of those admitted as freemen reveal the areas from which towns could draw migrants. At York, for example, 50 per cent of freemen admitted in the sixteenth century came from within 40 km of the town, and 20 per cent from between 20 km and 40 km away; Romney drew around one third of its freemen from within 5 miles, and one quarter from beyond Kent.³⁰ Unfortunately, the Cambridge treasurers' accounts rarely state the residence of those becoming freemen. From the few surviving references three groups emerge. Firstly, many men came from the surrounding countryside, like Robert Fenne of Over, John Grene of Girton, Thomas Atkyns of Bourn, John Massenger, innholder of Barnwell, William Norman, barber of Madingley, and Bankes, smith of Waterbeach in the 1520s and 1530s.³¹ Secondly, a few London merchants became freemen like Thomas Taylor, fishmonger (admitted in 1525) and William Sympson, draper (1523),³² possibly so that they could hold booths in Stourbridge fair.³³ Thirdly, a handful of men from overseas also became burgesses, including Dutchmen Nicholas Symond, Francis van Horne and William Johnson in the 1520s and 1530s, and seven men during the 1540s and 1550s, who were described as from *dominium domini Imperatoris*.³⁴ The residence of freemen admitted in

²⁹ *Grace Book*, A, p. 230; *VCH Cambs.*, iii, p. 47; Dobson, 'Admissions', 15.

³⁰ D.M. Palliser, 'A regional capital as magnet: immigrants to York, 1477-1566', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 57 (1985), 114; A.F. Butcher, 'The origins of Romney freemen, 1433-1523', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 27 (1974), 20.

³¹ CCTA, i, fols. 9v, 57v, 91v, 93v, 154.

³² CCTA, i, fols. 78, 93v.

³³ Thomas Taylor held a double booth in Stourbridge fair in 1525/6: CCTA, i, fol. 91.

³⁴ CCTA, i, fols. 57v, 77v, 123; CCA, Palmer/Barnard vol. 57, fols. 23, 35, 51, 75, 98, 122, 125v.

Cambridge is recorded much more frequently from the mid-sixteenth century: Siraut's analysis has shown that just under one third of freemen came from Cambridge, 18 per cent from Cambridgeshire, 23 per cent from adjoining counties, and 18 per cent from the north.³⁵

The occupations of freemen admitted to the borough are recorded infrequently in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, although more occupations are listed in the 1520s. Among the admissions, butchers predominated, and other service trades were also represented, such as drapers, fishmongers, a baker, a brewer, an innholder and hosteler.³⁶ Textile and leather workers also received the freedom, including a dyer, a weaver, a tanner, a shoemaker and a glover,³⁷ while a few more unusual occupations, like a goldsmith, a 'hardware man', a 'farecariar', a minstrel and a holy water clerk are recorded.³⁸ These groups of trades are similar to those represented in the debt cases pursued in Cambridge in the late fourteenth century.³⁹

Foreign immigration formed only a small part of the total migration in the region, but is particularly well-documented by the subsidies levied on aliens residing in the county. These accounts survive from the mid-fifteenth century onwards; the most detailed are assessments for the first subsidy, granted in 1440.⁴⁰ Foreigners living in Cambridge and Cambridgeshire were also recorded in letters of protection issued to 'Flemings' in England in 1436,⁴¹ and in the lay subsidies of 1513 and 1524.⁴²

³⁵ M. Siraut, 'Physical mobility in Elizabethan Cambridge', *Local Population Studies*, 27 (1981), 66.

³⁶ CCTA, i, fols. 57v, 77v, 92-4.

³⁷ CCTA, i, fols. 77v, 92, 92v, 133.

³⁸ X/71/6; CCTA, i, fols. 78, 91v-92, 108v.

³⁹ See Chapter 3.

⁴⁰ PRO, E 179/235/4 is the clearest copy, with assessments for the 1440 alien subsidy for the Isle of Ely, Cambridgeshire, and Cambridge. The same names are recorded in E 179/81/85, inquest for Cambridge and E 179/81/87, inquests for 10 Cambridgeshire hundreds. The alien subsidy return examined in *CBD*, p. 105 seems to have been an assessment made in 1441: E 179/235/3.

⁴¹ *CPR*, 1429-36, pp. 537-9, 541-88.

⁴² *CBD*, pp. 110-31; PRO, E 179/81/129, E 179/81/132-3, E 179/81/137.

Unfortunately, these subsidies varied in their coverage of different nationalities of aliens over time and so precise comparisons cannot be made.⁴³

Aliens comprised less than 1 per cent of the country's total population in the mid-fifteenth century, but were more prominent in some areas, such as port towns and above all in London, where they formed at least 6 per cent of the population of the city and its suburbs. The scale of this immigration can be measured crudely by expressing the number of aliens in 1440 as a percentage of the number of taxpayers in 1377. By this measure, aliens comprised 4 per cent of Cambridge's population, a similar proportion to towns in west Wiltshire, but they formed a negligible part of the total population in the rest of the county.⁴⁴

The nationality of aliens in Cambridge and its county in 1440 is shown in table 7.5. The majority of aliens in Cambridge were described by the blanket term, 'Ducheman' or 'Duchewoman', which covered Flemish, Dutch and German migrants.⁴⁵ The town still contained a predominance of 'Dutch' and a smaller number of French and Scottish immigrants in the early sixteenth century: 9 'Dutchmen', 4 Scots and a Norman were listed in 1513, and 29 'Dutch', 5 Scottish, and a French taxpayer in 1524.⁴⁶ In the county in 1440 though, French migrants outnumbered the 'Dutch'. The proportions of different nationalities varied across the country, but a similar predominance of Dutch and Flemish immigrants were found in other parts of East Anglia and in London. Economic opportunities in England and the opportunity to escape political instability and religious persecution in the Netherlands attracted these migrants from across the North Sea.⁴⁷ Foreigners from more distant parts occasionally

⁴³ *Alien communities*, pp. 3-4.

⁴⁴ S.L. Thrupp, 'A survey of the alien population of England in 1440', *Speculum*, 32 (1957), 266, 271; *Alien communities*, p. 8; Hare, 'Growth and recession', 15; *Poll taxes*, p. 69.

⁴⁵ Thrupp, 'Alien population', 271; S.L. Thrupp, 'Aliens in and around London in the fifteenth century', in A.E.J. Hollaender & W. Kellaway, eds., *Studies in London history presented to Philip Edmund Jones* (London, 1969), p. 259.

⁴⁶ *CBD*, pp. 110-31; PRO, E 179/81/133.

⁴⁷ Thrupp, 'Alien population', 266-7; *Alien communities*, pp. 6-7, 28-34.

appeared in the Cambridge region. In 1460, Corpus Christi College gave alms to two Greeks, presumably refugees after the Turkish capture of Constantinople.⁴⁸ A ‘Spanyard’ resided at Fulbourn in 1524.⁴⁹

Table 7.5: *Nationality of aliens in Cambridgeshire, 1440*

	<i>Number of aliens</i>		
	Cambridge	Cambridgeshire	Isle of Ely
‘Dutch’	59	24	2
French	6	37	2
Scots	4	1	0
Irish	9	6	1
Other	1	0	0
Not stated	5	2	23

Source: PRO, E 179/235/4

Many aliens found employment in towns, particularly the Flemish, Dutch and German migrants, who tended to work in crafts that were largely urban-based, such as the leather and textile industries. In Wiltshire, alien immigration was a particular feature of the towns and cloth-making hundreds of the county, while in Norfolk, aliens clustered in Norwich, Lynn and Yarmouth.⁵⁰ In Cambridgeshire, aliens congregated mainly in Cambridge, with a few minor clusters in some small towns, and a sprinkling across the countryside. In 1436, of the 49 ‘Flemings’ receiving letters of protection in the county, the largest concentrations were at Cambridge (25 aliens), Huntingdon (5 aliens) and Ely (3 aliens). In 1440, 84 aliens were assessed in Cambridge, 7 in Wisbech, 6 in Ely, and 85 in 55 villages spread across the county and Isle of Ely. In 1524, 35 aliens were assessed in Cambridge and 7 in other parts of the county, at Burwell, Bassingbourn, and three villages in Flemdish hundred – Fulbourn, Fen Ditton and Hinton.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Zutshi, ‘Botwright’, 17.

⁴⁹ PRO, E 179/81/132.

⁵⁰ Thrupp, ‘Alien population’, 267; Hare, ‘Growth and recession’, 15-16; N.J.M. Kerling, ‘Aliens in the county of Norfolk, 1436-1485’, *Norfolk Archaeology*, 33 (1965), 205.

⁵¹ Of the 1524 lay subsidy returns for Cambridgeshire listed in the bibliography, only three list alien taxpayers: E 179/81/129, E 179/81/132, E 179/81/137.

Occupations are not recorded consistently in the alien subsidies, but some accounts provide sufficient entries to give a rough breakdown of the main areas of work. Aliens in Cambridge tended to enter leather working, as table 7.6 shows, with cordwainers, cobblers, and curriers listed in the subsidy of 1440. There were four cordwainers among the Flemings who resided in Cambridge in 1436.⁵² The patternmaker in table 7.6 may have worked in either the textile or iron industries.⁵³ Occupations have not been inferred from surnames in the 1440 subsidy, but the surnames Barbour, Coryour, Girdelere and Sadeller may indicate trades in which aliens participated.

Table 7.6: *Occupations of aliens in Cambridge, 1440*

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number of aliens</i>
cordwainer's servant	20
wife	16
servant	14
not stated	12
cordwainer	8
university member	6
webster	2
bookbinder	1
cobbler	1
currier	1
fisher	1
labourer	1
patternmaker	1

Source: PRO, E 179/235/4

The occupations of aliens in the county are not recorded in 1440, but a subsidy of 1463, shown in table 7.7, suggests that the majority of aliens were employed in agricultural work and weaving. Several aliens resided with local landowners. In 1440, two Frenchmen lived in the household of William Alington, owner of Horseheath manor, and another Frenchman with Henry Somer of Grantchester, who also employed Welshmen on his estate for ditching work. John Fermour of Elsworth,

⁵² *CPR, 1429-36*, pp. 545, 588.

⁵³ *OED*, xi, p. 358.

whose family held the lease of Ramsey Abbey's demesne in the village, had a French servant in 1441.⁵⁴

Table 7.7: *Occupations of aliens in Cambridgeshire, 1463*

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Number of aliens</i>
servant	5
husbandman	4
weaver	4
shoemaker	2
labourer	1
smith	1

Source: PRO, E 179/81/111

Some aliens in Cambridge were, by the standards of the time, substantial employers. In 1440, Giles Ducheman, cordwainer employed 5 Dutchmen, and Elie Ducheman employed 6 alien servants; in 1513 three Dutchmen had a number of employees: Nicholas Williamson, shoemaker, had 6 servants and 2 apprentices, Nicholas Symond, goldsmith, had 4 servants and an apprentice, and Richard Cole had 5 servants.⁵⁵ Even larger units of production were found among aliens in London.⁵⁶ Successive parliamentary legislation tried to restrict the numbers of apprentices, servants and journeymen kept by foreign artificers, although strangers of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge were initially exempted.⁵⁷

Six university members were assessed as aliens in 1440.⁵⁸ Although during the course of the sixteenth century the university attracted such eminent foreign scholars as Erasmus, Martin Bucer and Paul Fagius,⁵⁹ the university's recruitment from overseas in the fifteenth century was extremely limited. Only 1 per cent of the university's

⁵⁴ E 179/235/4, E 179/235/3; KC, GRA/658-9; *VCH Cambs.*, v, p. 206, vi, p. 71, ix, p. 311.

⁵⁵ E 179/235/4; *CBD*, pp. 104-5, 111, 115, 117.

⁵⁶ *Alien communities*, pp. 20-22.

⁵⁷ 14 & 15 Henry VIII, c. 2, 21 Henry VIII, c.16, 32 Henry VIII, c. 16: *SR*, iii, pp. 208-9, 298-300, 766.

⁵⁸ E 179/81/85.

⁵⁹ Leedham-Green, *Concise history*, pp. 34, 52.

recorded alumni up to 1500 came from Wales, Scotland and Ireland to study at Cambridge, and another 1 per cent from the continent, the largest number being German and Italian, and the majority of such scholars were friars. Contacts with other institutions of learning outside England were also very restricted, although a few scholars had studied at continental universities before coming to Cambridge, and some Cambridge men migrated overseas, most frequently to Italy.⁶⁰

Demand from the university encouraged migrants skilled in specialised crafts such as printing and brewing to settle in Cambridge. A number of aliens were stationers, bookbinders, or printers, including Gerard Wake, an Irish bookbinder listed in the subsidy of 1440, and Garret Godfrey, Nicholas Spierinck, John Siberch, Segar Nicholson and Nicholas Pilgrim, who came to Cambridge from the Netherlands during the first half of the sixteenth century.⁶¹ Beerbrewing was a skill imported from the Low Countries and aliens often operated the first breweries producing beer.⁶² The fifteenth-century alien subsidies do not record any immigrants brewing in Cambridge, but in the sixteenth century Francis van Horne and stationers Nicholas Speryng and Segur Nicholson held a 'beerebruehouse' by Magdalene Bridge in Cambridge.⁶³ Some aliens found work in the colleges. Corpus Christi College employed Dutchmen and Flemings as casual workmen in the mid-fifteenth century.⁶⁴ Janyyn Frensshman worked as a cook at Trinity Hall in 1441.⁶⁵

Building projects

Throughout the late medieval period, Cambridge resounded to the noise of building work. From the mid-fifteenth century onwards, St Catharine's, Queens' and King's Colleges and the university's canon and civil law schools were constructed. In the

⁶⁰ Aston, Duncan & Evans, 'Medieval alumni', 37-40.

⁶¹ E 179/235/4; Gray, *Stationers and bookbinders*, pp. 10-65.

⁶² *Alien communities*, p. 21; Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 195-7; Bennett, *Ale*, pp. 79-81.

⁶³ *CBD*, pp. 83, 155.

⁶⁴ Pearce, 'College accounts', 82.

⁶⁵ E 179/235/3.

early sixteenth century this flurry of activity continued, with the construction of buildings for the new colleges of Jesus, Christ's and St John's. As well as the construction of King's College Chapel, one of the last major ecclesiastical building projects in England, many parish churches were extended or altered. The study of this building work relies on documentary and physical evidence; in Cambridge both survive in large quantities, and have been collated by Willis and Clark and the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments.⁶⁶

The identification of widespread cycles of building activity is fraught with difficulty. A period of intensive rebuilding across the country, accompanied by an increase in household furnishings and equipment, was identified between 1570 and 1640, but more recently, it has been claimed that more was achieved between 1660 and 1739. A regular cycle of twenty-year peaks in building activity has also been detected from the mid-sixteenth century onwards.⁶⁷ In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, rebuilding is often obscured by the lack of an accurate chronology and uncertainty as to who was actually funding the work: church rebuilding for example, may indicate individual rather than collective prosperity.⁶⁸ It seems likely though, that the increased incomes and standards of living for many after the Black Death were reflected by a general improvement in housing between 1350 and 1520. Spending on houses increased not only because materials and labour had become more expensive, but because houses were being built to higher specifications. Improved standards of carpentry and the appearance of more efficient fireplaces and chimneys were found in many peasant houses, while some wealthier townspeople added tiled roofs and glazed windows, and many purchased large quantities of clothing, bedding and household textiles.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i-iii; *RCHMC*.

⁶⁷ W.G. Hoskins, 'The rebuilding of rural England, 1570-1640', *Past and Present*, 4 (1953), 44-59; R. Machin, 'The Great Rebuilding: a reassessment', *Past and Present*, 77 (1977), 33-56; R. Machin, 'The mechanism of the pre-industrial building cycle', *Vernacular Architecture*, 8 (1977), 815-19.

⁶⁸ Postan, 'Fifteenth century', 164-5; Dobson, 'Urban decline', pp. 273-5.

⁶⁹ Dyer, *Standards*, pp. 166-7, 204-7.

Peaks in building activity in Cambridge can be identified more readily from the work produced for the colleges. Building projects tended to occur when student numbers were at their highest: between the late sixteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, the largest amount of building occurred when university matriculations peaked between 1610 and 1640 and between 1820 and 1830.⁷⁰ In the absence of matriculation figures, such trends cannot be discerned with the same degree of confidence before the late sixteenth century. Nonetheless, it seems likely that the increase in student numbers during the fifteenth century led to a renewed programme of building. Table 7.8, which provides a time line of major college building projects in Cambridge, shows the extensive building work which took place during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and the particular concentration of activity which occurred around the 1510s and 1520s.

This flurry of activity was not confined to construction projects in the colleges. Older colleges appear to have improved their accommodation. A short account of the history of Corpus Christi College, produced for the use of Archbishop Matthew Parker, relates that there was little glass or panelling in the chambers of the college before Henry VIII's reign, and describes how glazing, plastering, and panelling of the master's lodgings and the fellows' chambers was added between 1509 and the 1560s.⁷¹ Several churches in the town were also extended or rebuilt in this period, most notably Great St Mary's, where the nave, chapels and aisles were rebuilt between 1478 and 1519, and work on the tower continued intermittently until 1608.⁷²

⁷⁰ *RCHMC*, chart facing p. lxxxiii.

⁷¹ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, pp. 242, 252-4.

⁷² *RCHMC*, pp. 258, 264, 267, 269, 271, 275, 281.

Table 7.8: College building projects, 1450-1560

	1450	1460	1470	1480	1490	1500
Peterhouse	1450 kitchen	1460-66 chambers, combination room				
Clare Hall						
Pembroke	1452 library	1463 chapel features		1481 garden walls	1490 east side of court	
Gonville Hall						
Trinity Hall						
Corpus Christi	1443-74 library, Master's lodge	1456 bakehouse begins			1487-1515 new buildings, fittings	
King's College	1441-c. 1454 work on initial site; 1446 work begins on new Chapel			1484 work resumed	1508 work resumed	
Queens'	1448-9 earliest building contracts				1494-5 cloister work	
St Catharine's			1473 first buildings completed			
Jesus						1495-6 alterations
King's Hall & Trinity College		1464-85 chapel			1490-2 porter's lodge	
Schools & libraries	1457 Canon law school, library; 1457-71 Philosophy & Civil law schools, library; 1470-3 library					
Peterhouse						
Clare Hall		1523-8 rebuilding after fire	1530	1540	1550	1560
Pembroke		1534-7 chapel: west window				
Gonville Hall						
Trinity Hall	1513 chapel completed					
Corpus Christi					1545 Garret Hostel Lane & wall	
King's College	1512-15 vault, chapel stonework completed	1531-5 roodloft	1536- lodge	1544-53 dovehouse, gallery	1557-69 library	
Queens'	1515-16 cloister roof repairs	1533-4 brewhouse built				
St Catharine's	1517 chambers on south side					
Jesus	1503-7 contributions to buildings west of entrance					
Christ's	1505-11 college buildings erected					
St John's	1511-16 building	1516-19 chapel adapted	1528 small additional court			
Magdalene	1519 hall built					
King's Hall & Trinity College	1518/19-24 gateway	1528-35 gateway finished			1547 hall, buttery repairs 1554-60 chambers, kitchen, chapel	

Sources: *RCHMC*; Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i-iii

Work outside the town is more difficult to identify. Many churches in the county have perpendicular features, but most cannot be dated with certainty. Burwell church, where the nave and chancel were rebuilt between c.1460 and c.1520, is an exception. Cambridgeshire lacked large estates, and consequently there was little building by noble households, although the bishop of Ely's residences at Downham and Ely were redeveloped.⁷³ Several large houses were built though, by men with successful careers in royal service: Lord North, son of a London merchant, who became Chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, built Kirtling Tower in 1530 and a funeral chapel in the parish church. Thomas Wendy, physician to Henry VIII, bought property in 1541 to construct Haslingfield Hall. John Hynde commenced Madingley Hall soon after 1543. Sir John Huddleston, vice-chamberlain and privy-councillor by 1554, rebuilt Sawston Hall, probably between 1557 and 1584.⁷⁴

Building materials

Building work in Cambridge relied heavily on materials from outside the town. Cambridgeshire has been described as among the least fortunate of English counties for the availability of local building materials.⁷⁵ Although clay was readily available for brickmaking, and the Fens provided reed and sedge for thatch, there was no good stone and even wood was in short supply.

Clunch, a soft limestone, came from chalk in the southern and eastern parts of the county, and was extracted at several quarries within ten miles of Cambridge. The stone is easily carved, making it suitable for sculpture, but weathers quickly, and so was often faced with rendering, imported stone, or brick. The stone was used extensively for many local churches and Cambridge colleges, and in the sixteenth century, its use in secular buildings became more widespread, possibly after demand

⁷³ A. Emery, *Greater medieval houses of England and Wales 1300-1500*, ii: *East Anglia, central England and Wales* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 16, 83, 89.

⁷⁴ Pevsner, *Buildings*, pp. 404, 419-20, 436, 453; *VCH Cambs.*, vi, pp. 250-1.

⁷⁵ Pevsner, *Buildings*, p. 289.

from church building had fallen. Clunch was quarried in the west at Barrington, the Eversdens, Harlton, Haslingfield and Orwell, towards the fen-edge at Burwell, Swaffham Prior and Reach, and near Cambridge at Hinton, where lime was also obtained.⁷⁶ Several of these quarries were used for college building projects: King's Hall took stone from Hinton, Barrington and Burwell,⁷⁷ and Christ's and St John's Colleges obtained stone from Hinton and Eversden.⁷⁸ Some colleges even secured rights to quarries. Corpus Christi College received the grant of a quarry at Hinton in 1358-9, St John's extracted stone at Hinton from a quarry owned by its founder, Lady Margaret Beaufort, and Trinity College reserved the stone quarry at Barrington in their lease of the rectory in 1575.⁷⁹

For high-quality building stone, Cambridge and its region had to rely on imports from quarries in the limestone belt which stretched across Northamptonshire and Rutland, and lay about 40 miles from Cambridge. These East-Midland quarries supplied building stone to a large number of cathedrals, castles, monasteries and churches across East Anglia.⁸⁰ Stone from quarries at Barnack, south-east of Stamford, was used in some Cambridge churches, and by several fenland monasteries, which acquired quarrying rights there. However, supplies had been exhausted by the beginning of the sixteenth century.⁸¹ Weldon, north of Kettering, supplied stone for King's College Chapel, for most of Bishop Alcock's work at Jesus College, for part of King's Hall tower in 1520/1, and at Great St Mary's Church in 1522.⁸² Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge obtained stone from the same source when it made an agreement with William Cakllay of 'Wyltan in nieth hampton shyre' in the early sixteenth

⁷⁶ *RCHMC*, p. xcvi; *RCHMW*, p. xxxi; *RCHMNE*, pp. xxviii-xxix. Hinton is now known as Cherry Hinton.

⁷⁷ Cobban, *King's Hall*, pp. 216-17.

⁷⁸ SJC, D106.1, fols. 8v, 10v, 16; C17.23; D107.7, pp. 20, 25, 26.

⁷⁹ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, p. 251, n. 2; SJC, C17.23; Trinity College, Lease book, 1547-85, fols. 197-8v.

⁸⁰ J.S. Alexander, 'Building stone from the East Midland quarries: sources, transportation and usage', *Medieval Archaeology*, 39 (1995), 107-35.

⁸¹ *VCH Northamptonshire*, ii, p. 293-5.

⁸² KH a/c, xxii, fol. 120; *Churchwardens' accounts of St Mary the Great*, p. 46; *RCHMC*, p. xcix.

century to deliver 6 tons of stone at 6s 8d per ton to the church.⁸³ Other quarries in the East Midlands at King's Cliffe, Clipsham, and Ancaster provided stone for Cambridge colleges and stone slates were brought from Collyweston, near Stamford.⁸⁴

The most distant sources of building stone used in Cambridge in this period were the supplies of magnesium limestone obtained from Yorkshire for King's College Chapel. In 1446, Henry VI granted to the college a quarry in Thefdale, or Thevesdale, near Tadcaster, which had supplied stone to York Minster and other Yorkshire abbeys. The college also obtained the right of carriage from the quarry over Henry Vavasour's estate to the River Wharfe. Three years later, arrangements were made for the college to use the nearby quarry of Huddleston. Stone for the vaults of the porches was brought from Hampole near Doncaster in 1513.⁸⁵

With a lack of good quality building stone in the region, derelict buildings were quickly plundered for their stone. Henry VI permitted King's College to take stone from the Great Hall of Cambridge Castle, and rapid destruction followed in Elizabeth's reign.⁸⁶ Cambridge Corporation obtained rag stone from the castle in 1558/9.⁸⁷ This practice increased when the dissolution of the monasteries made available a large amount of surplus building materials. Initially, the former friaries in the town were used. Great St Mary's church bought timber and stone from the Black Friars, and slate from the Austin Friars and White Friars in 1545-6 and 1552.⁸⁸ Trinity College was granted the site of the Grey Friars in Cambridge, and removed 2,950 loads of stone in 1555/6.⁸⁹ Queens' College used slates, tiles and timber from the Carmelite house that adjoined them, and King's College purchased stone from this

⁸³ CCRO, P22/5/1, fol. 79.

⁸⁴ *RCHMC*, p. xcix; KH a/c, xxii, fol. 66v; SJC, C17.23; Alexander, 'Building stone', 113-14.

⁸⁵ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, pp. 466, 480; *VCH Yorkshire*, ii, pp. 376-7.

⁸⁶ Taylor, *Cambridge*, p. 54.

⁸⁷ CCTA, i, fol. 388.

⁸⁸ *Churchwardens' accounts of St Mary the Great*, pp. 107, 109, 111-12, 125.

⁸⁹ TCSB a/c, fols. 67v, 143v, 230; Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, ii, pp. 465, 562, 726.

house in 1536.⁹⁰ During the 1560s and 1570s, several Cambridge colleges reused stone from more distant abbeys. In addition to receiving stone from Barnwell Priory, Corpus Christi College obtained supplies from Thorney Abbey, and King's, Trinity, and Gonville and Caius took stone from Ramsey Abbey.⁹¹ Surplus building materials were also occasionally procured from other institutions in the town.⁹²

With such a heavy reliance on stone brought from outside the region, brickmaking developed early. In the mid-fourteenth century, bricks were being produced at Ely and Waldersea, near Wisbech.⁹³ Queens' was the first Cambridge college to use exposed brickwork extensively in its Front Court of 1448, and was followed by Jesus, Christ's and St John's at the turn of the sixteenth century. Brick was also used for many domestic buildings in the county, including Ely and Downham palaces in the late fifteenth century, and Malton Farm at Orwell, Kingswood Farm at Kingston, Kirting Tower and Madingley Hall in the first half of sixteenth century. Bricks could be produced locally from clay in many parts of the region. A brick kiln existed at Papworth St Agnes in 1530.⁹⁴ King's Hall obtained bricks for its Great Gate from a supplier in Ely in 1528/9, and Trinity College bought them from Ditton in 1553/4.⁹⁵

St John's College organised the production of its own bricks. By an indenture of 1 February 1511, Richard Reculver of East Greenwich, 'brickman', agreed to produce 800,000 bricks of 10 inches by 5 inches by 2½ inches. Reculver agreed to be present at all times when the bricks were being moulded and set, and was to be paid in instalments at the casting, moulding, firing, and delivery. Reculver and his servant spent seven days going to Cambridge to view the ground where bricks could be

⁹⁰ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, p. 543, n. 1, ii, pp. 4, 35.

⁹¹ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, pp. 174, 290, 536, ii, pp. 566-7.

⁹² TCSB a/c, fol. 205; *Churchwardens' accounts of St Mary the Great*, pp. 20, 22; Cobban, *King's Hall*, p. 217, n. 13.

⁹³ D. Sherlock, 'Brickmaking accounts for Wisbech, 1333-1356', *PCAS*, 87 (1998), 59-69.

⁹⁴ *RCHMC*, p. c; *RCHMW*, p. xxxii.

⁹⁵ KH a/c, xxiv, fol. 34v; TCJB a/c, fol. 133.

made.⁹⁶ John Fotehed, master of Michaelhouse, warned John Fisher that ‘Here is very skarys wood to bryne your great kylne of breke, and that will make the breke derer’, but wood was secured at Coton,⁹⁷ and at ‘Haylys Wood’.⁹⁸

As Cambridgeshire lacked extensive woodland, building timber was in short supply, and like charcoal and firewood, tended to come from the more wooded parts of Suffolk and Essex. King’s College used timber from Ashdon, Canefield Park, Thaxted, Walden, and Weybridge in Essex during the 1480s. Earlier in the fifteenth century, King’s Hall had sent men to view timber in Essex and Suffolk, and Peterhouse had obtained timber from Thaxted.⁹⁹ St John’s College brought timber from Wethersfield and Shalford in Essex and Winfarthing Park, near Diss in Norfolk in 1512-14.¹⁰⁰ Trinity College obtained timber at Balsham and Hadstock in Essex.¹⁰¹ The churchwardens of Holy Trinity also received timber from Walden Park in 1523/4, and brought ‘quarter boards’ from London in 1525/6. They paid one carpenter for ‘goyng into Woodelond’ for timber, which was used to make stools for the church.¹⁰² Timber was also bought at Lynn and in Midsummer and Stourbridge fairs, much of which had probably been imported from the Baltic.¹⁰³

Some items and fittings had to be obtained from other urban centres. Cambridge Corporation had iron plates brought from London in 1498/9, and bought 500 lath nails at Royston in 1551/2.¹⁰⁴ Nicholas Joiner was paid 5s by Christ’s College to view wainscot in London for 5 days in September 1510 but bought nothing ‘by cause of the

⁹⁶ SJC, D57.173, D57.28.

⁹⁷ ‘Notes from the college records’, *The Eagle*, 16 (1891), 349 and *The Eagle*, 26 (1905), 300.

⁹⁸ SJC, C17.23. Presumably this was Hayley Wood, near Gamlingay, owned by the bishop of Ely: Rackham, *Ancient woodland*, pp. 37, 137.

⁹⁹ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, pp. 10, 473, ii, pp. 440, 443.

¹⁰⁰ SJC, C17.23.

¹⁰¹ TCSB a/c, fol. 70.

¹⁰² CCRO, P/22/5/1, fols. 72v, 75v, 76v, 91v. For the term ‘quarter boards’, see L.F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540: a documentary history* (Oxford, 1952), p. 242.

¹⁰³ CCA, X/71/3, X/71/5; SJC, D106.1, fol. 9v; *St Radegund*, pp. 153, 170, 171; Rackham, *Ancient woodland*, p. 151.

¹⁰⁴ X/71/8; CCTA, i, fol. 346.

grett prices then'.¹⁰⁵ As there were no foundries in Cambridge, church bells had to be obtained from London, Norwich or Bury St Edmunds.¹⁰⁶ Thomas Church of Bury, bell-founder, was employed by St John's Hospital, Great St Mary's, and King's College.¹⁰⁷

The weight and bulk of many building materials meant that water transport was used where possible. Supplies such as slates, thatch, tiles and bricks could be unloaded at the Great Bridge, where there was a staithe.¹⁰⁸ Stone was often transported by water to save on the costs of transport. The quarries at Burwell, Swaffham and Reach were linked to the Cam by navigable canals, called lodes. Stone from Weldon and King's Cliffe was carted to Gunwade on the river Nene and thence shipped to Cambridge, for Trinity College in 1560-1, and for Corpus Christi College and Great St Mary's church in the late sixteenth century.¹⁰⁹ John Glasse, waterman carried 3½ tons of freestone for the church walls of Great St Mary's in his keel from Weldon in Northamptonshire to Jesus Green in Cambridge at a cost of 5s in 1522. It cost another 2s to carry the same stone less than a mile to the churchyard.¹¹⁰ Corpus Christi also unloaded Northamptonshire stone at Jesus Green in 1583-4.¹¹¹ Timber from Winfarthing Park was taken by carts from Winfarthing, Banham, Carleton, Diss and elsewhere to Brandon Ferry, and then by water and land to St John's College in Cambridge in 1512-14. Major building projects required extensive provision of transport involving many people. Over 700 cartloads of Hinton stone were carried by six different carters for the building of Christ's College in 1510.¹¹²

¹⁰⁵ SJC, D106.1, fol. 14.

¹⁰⁶ J.J. Raven, *The church bells of Cambridgeshire*, CASOS, XVIII-XIX (Cambridge, 2nd edn., 1881), pp. 29-35.

¹⁰⁷ SJC, D106.2, fols. 4, 7, 12; Raven, *Church bells*, pp. 36-7; J.W. Clark, 'History of the peal of bells belonging to King's College, Cambridge', *PCAS*, 4 (1876-80), 234.

¹⁰⁸ X/71/7, X/71/10; CCTA, i, fol. 51v; *Churchwardens' accounts of St Mary the Great*, p. 109; QC, *Magnum Journale*, ii, fol. 27; *Grace Book A*, p. 130.

¹⁰⁹ *RCHMC*, p. ciii.

¹¹⁰ *Churchwardens' accounts of St Mary the Great*, pp. 46-7.

¹¹¹ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, p. 293.

¹¹² SJC, C17.23, D106.1, fols. 10v, 16.

Use of outside labour

In addition to building materials, large numbers of building workers were drawn from Cambridge's region and beyond for construction work in the town. Although Cambridge Corporation's building and repair work involved relatively few men from outside the town, apart from a few residents from the neighbouring villages of Barnwell, Girton, Hinton, Milton and Trumpington, who provided carrying services or cleaned the King's Ditch, colleges drew upon larger numbers of outside labour.¹¹³ In the mid-fifteenth century, for example, Corpus Christi College employed tilers Thomas Pygot and William West from Stuntney, Thomas Waleys from Ely, and John Russell from 'Berwey',¹¹⁴; carpenters came from Haslingfield, a 'thakman' from Swaffham and a roofer from Grantchester.¹¹⁵ Large building projects required a range of specialist craftsmen, who often had to be drawn from outside the town.

Many carpenters employed on projects in Cambridge were brought from Essex and Suffolk. Thomas Sturgeon of Elsenham in Essex was appointed chief carpenter at King's College in 1443 and provided carpentry work at Queens' College in 1448-9.¹¹⁶ William Harward and William Bakon, carpenters of Halstead, agreed to provide the ceilings, floor and roof of the university schools in 1466, and were bound with Thomas Gawge of Dunmow, timberman, and Thomas Bowman of Braintree, pailmaker, to complete the work.¹¹⁷ William Harward and another carpenter from Halstead also worked at Peterhouse. King's Hall used carpenters from Suffolk in the 1380s and 1410s.¹¹⁸ Cambridge Corporation employed three carpenters, John Stokes, Richard Draper and Robert Rote from Cressing in Essex to make the roof of the tolbooth in 1509. Thomas Loveday of Sudbury, Suffolk, agreed to produce woodwork at St John's College in 1516, and supplied timber for the gateway at King's Hall in

¹¹³ X/71/9; CCTA, i, fols. 18, 27, 98v, 159, 160v.

¹¹⁴ possibly Bury St Edmunds.

¹¹⁵ CCC, 'Liber Albus', fols. 97, 98, 108-109v, 110v.

¹¹⁶ Harvey, *Architects*, p. 289.

¹¹⁷ UA, Luard 128-9.

¹¹⁸ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, p. 12, n. 4, p. 13, ii, pp. 438, 440.

1528-9.¹¹⁹ John Nune of Drinkstone and Roger Belle of Ashfield in Suffolk, carvers, contracted to erect the rood loft at Great St Mary's Church in 1520.¹²⁰ Two carpenters from Haverhill in Suffolk built walls of a brewhouse at Queens' in 1534.¹²¹ Carpenters were probably recruited from these more wooded counties because they often supplied their own materials. There were, of course, also local carpenters who were employed in college works.¹²²

Glaziers and other specialised craftsmen often came from outside the town. A glazier from Walden repaired windows in the choir of Hinton church, while a London glazier worked in Great St Mary's.¹²³ St John's College employed Richard Wright of Bury St Edmunds. Trinity College hired glaziers from London and Thaxted.¹²⁴ A man was sent to fetch a plumber from Loughborough for Christ's College in 1510, although this may simply have been his last place of work rather than his place of residence.¹²⁵ Not surprisingly when so many building projects were in progress, specialist craftsmen often worked for more than one institution in the town.¹²⁶

Many of the most specialised craftsmen came from London. Richard Reculver of East Greenwich produced bricks for St John's College in 1511. At least two joiners working at Christ's College in 1510 were from London, and the accounts include the cost of carrying their tools to Cambridge.¹²⁷ Most of the leading glaziers working at King's College Chapel came from a colony of glass artists who lived at Southwark or in other London suburbs.¹²⁸ John Wramp of the parish of Our Lady St Ursula in the

¹¹⁹ CCA, VI/4; Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, ii, pp. 243-4, 453-4.

¹²⁰ S. Sanders, *Historical and architectural notes on Great St Mary's Church, Cambridge*, CASOS, X (Cambridge, 1869), pp. 63-7.

¹²¹ Queens' College, *Magnum Journale*, ii, fol. 194v.

¹²² Harvey, *Architects*, pp. 42-3, 214; Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, p. 12, ii, p. 562.

¹²³ Peterhouse computus roll 1463/4; *Churchwardens' accounts of St Mary the Great*, p. 30.

¹²⁴ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, ii, p. 347-8; TCSB a/c, fol. 5v, TCJB a/c, fol. 447.

¹²⁵ SJC, D106.1, fol. 11v.

¹²⁶ PRO, E 101/553/15; Harvey, *Architects*, pp. 94-7, 165, 291-2.

¹²⁷ SJC, D57.173, D106.1, fol. 11.

¹²⁸ H. Wayment, *King's College Chapel, Cambridge. The great windows. Introduction and guide* (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 6-9.

Strand in London agreed to glaze five windows with Normandy glass for St John's College. Anthony Trassillion (or Tresylyan) of Westminster, clockmaker, provided a clock for St John's College in 1522, with quarter chimes. He kept a shop in King Street in Westminster and at his death in 1532 his stock included a gilded cuckoo-clock valued at £10.¹²⁹

Several craftsmen may have originated from overseas. John Utynam was brought from Flanders to make coloured glass for Eton and King's Colleges in 1449. Barnard Flower, who was probably German, and Galyon Hone, James Nicholson and Francis Williamson, who were born in the Low Countries, all lived in Southwark and carried out glazing in King's College Chapel. The designs of the glass have been attributed to Adrian van den Houte of Mechlin, on the border of Brabant, and Dierick Vellert of Antwerp.¹³⁰ Dyrik Harrison of London, possibly a Fleming, worked on the stalls of Christ's College in 1510 and with another Fleming, Giles Fambeler, carved the panelling for the hall of Queens' in 1531-2. The screen and stalls in King's College Chapel may have been carved by foreigners like Philip the carver, who dined at the college in 1534/5.¹³¹

The few surviving details of building projects in the region outside Cambridge suggest that similar sources of materials and labour were used. Repairs to college property often used craftsmen who had also worked at the college. Thomas Sturgeon, chief carpenter of works at King's College, also carried out work on the college's properties at Grantchester mill, Merton Hall grange, a barn at Felstead, and the Hart Inn at Huntingdon.¹³² Bricklayers came to King's Hall in 1452/3 from Felmersham in Bedfordshire, where the parish church had been appropriated to the college.¹³³ Trinity College employed the glazier of Benet parish to repair windows at Bottisham and

¹²⁹ SJC, D56.181, D56.183; Rosser, *Medieval Westminster*, p. 163.

¹³⁰ *RCHMC*, p. cxiii; Wayment, *Great windows*, pp. 6-11.

¹³¹ Harvey, *Architects*, pp. 105, 130, 232.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 289.

¹³³ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, ii, pp. 449; Cobban, *King's Hall*, p. 205.

Barrington as well as within the college.¹³⁴ For repairs to the manor of Malton, Christ's College sent carpenters Colyns, Tompson and Awnger, used at the college, as well as John Nicholson, who provided workmen and supervised the work, but relied on different thatchers, labourers and bricklayers, who were probably local. Bricks for Malton were bought from Raffe Buntynge, just as bricks for the college had been, but for tiles the college went to Hitchin.¹³⁵ St John's Hospital used John Algor 'þe reydder' to repair St John's barns in the west fields of Cambridge and the chancel at Horningsea Church, and also used William Turner, slater, at both locations.¹³⁶ Some Cambridge craftsmen also found work in the local region. Reginald Ely, master mason at King's College, directed the rebuilding of the chancel and nave at Burwell church.¹³⁷ John Bury of Cambridge, mason and Alewyn Newman of Cambridge, carpenter, worked on contracts at Great Chesterford in Essex in 1491.¹³⁸

However, major royal building projects circumvented the market for labour. Master-craftsmen and clerks-of-works were granted powers to enrol craftsmen and labourers through commissions for impressment, and to threaten those who refused to co-operate with imprisonment. Authority to obtain building materials and carriage could also be granted. In 1444, Reginald Ely, head mason of King's College, with the two clerks of works, received a commission to recruit stonemasons, carpenters, plumbers, tilers, smiths, plasterers, and other workmen, and materials, and horses, carriage and freightage, and to set labourers to work at the king's wages. The previous year, Thomas Sturgeon, the chief carpenter, had been granted a similar commission, and further workmen were impressed in 1459 and 1484.¹³⁹ Trinity College was given similar commissions for its construction projects in 1554 and 1560, while Christ's College had commissions for bricklayers and carvers in 1510.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁴ TCSB a/c, fols. 101, 103, 146v, 192.

¹³⁵ SJC, D106.1, fols. 41v, 44.

¹³⁶ SJC, D102.3, fols. 12, 13.

¹³⁷ *RCHMNE*, p. 19.

¹³⁸ Salzman, *Building*, pp. 550-1.

¹³⁹ *RCHMC*, p. cvi; *CPR*, 1441-6, pp. 247, 269; *CPR*, 1452-61, p. 478; *CPR*, 1476-85, p. 472.

¹⁴⁰ Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, ii, pp. 198, 469-70, 472.

The extent of the demand generated by the building projects of the colleges and other landlords in the town and region cannot be estimated with any certainty. College building projects necessitated major capital outlays. Christ's College spent £1,625 on building work between 1505 and 1509; the first court of St John's College cost approximately £5,000 between 1511 and 1516. Almost £15,000 was spent constructing King's College Chapel between the reigns of Henry VI and Henry VIII, and accounts do not survive for all periods of building.¹⁴¹ Large numbers of workmen were also required. During the final phase of building the stonework of King's College Chapel between 1509 and 1515, between 100 and 150 craftsmen and labourers were employed, rising to over 200 during the summer of 1511.¹⁴² For many employees though, the building work provided by the colleges and other institutions would have been only short term and casual. At Durham Cathedral Priory at the turn of the sixteenth century, only 13 per cent of the employees appeared in more than 10 years of accounts.¹⁴³

Labour: wage rates

The accounts of building work at the Cambridge colleges also provide valuable wage data for the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which has been extracted by several researchers.¹⁴⁴ Information about other workers is very scarce, so labourers and building craftsmen have been generally used as a proxy for other manual workers.¹⁴⁵ Two additional records of wages in Cambridge are examined here – the accounts of Cambridge Corporation and the churchwardens of Holy Trinity. The borough corporation's accounts list a variety of building, repair and maintenance work covering the guildhall, bridges, houses owned by the town, King's Ditch, and booths

¹⁴¹ M.K. Jones & M.G. Underwood, *The king's mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort, countess of Richmond and Derby* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 224, n. 75; Willis & Clark, *Architectural history*, i, p. 481.

¹⁴² *RCHMC*, p. 102.

¹⁴³ C.M. Newman, 'Employment on the estates of the priory of Durham, 1494-1519: the priory as an employer', *Northern History*, 36 (2000), 43-58.

¹⁴⁴ Thorold Rogers, *Agriculture and prices*, iii, pp. 606-35; British Library of Political and Economic Science, London, Beveridge Price History Archive, W5, file 2, Cambridge wages MSS.

¹⁴⁵ D. Woodward, *Men at work: labourers and building craftsmen in the towns of northern England, 1450-1750* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 3-4, 171-2.

in Stourbridge fair.¹⁴⁶ At Holy Trinity Church, the tasks included construction work and repairs to the church fabric and property owned by the church.¹⁴⁷

These accounts record the daily wages paid to building craftsmen and labourers. The craftsmen comprised mainly carpenters, but also tilers, masons, roughmasons and bricklayers. Other craftsmen, such as glaziers, plumbers and goldsmiths, tended to be paid for individual tasks performed.¹⁴⁸ Payment 'by great' or 'in gross' at a set price was occasionally arranged for larger jobs.¹⁴⁹ Labourers performed tasks that did not require specialist skills and were usually hired by the day. Some payments though, were made in the form of piece rates, such as for ditching, slating and paving, which could be paid by the length of work completed, and the carrying of manure and sand, which was sometimes paid per load.¹⁵⁰ Food and drink payments were rarely recorded: 'mensa' or board was paid at 2d a day to three men repairing a tenement in 1498/9 and to two men in 1517/18, while ale was given to a slater in 1521/2, and these have not been included among the wage rates.¹⁵¹

Women were usually paid at lower rates than men, although it is unclear whether this differential arose through male attitudes, lower female physical strength, or because women were performing slightly different tasks which are not recorded in the accounts.¹⁵² A woman laying straw for a thatcher in 1500/1 and 1515/16 was paid 3d a day. A man serving the same thatcher was paid 4d, although men could also be paid only 3d for drawing thatch and working as a thatcher's labourer.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁶ CCA, X/71/1-10, X/71A, XVII/24A; CCTA, i.

¹⁴⁷ CCRO, P22/5/1.

¹⁴⁸ e.g. P22/5/1, fols. 11v, 18v, 91v.

¹⁴⁹ CCTA, i, fols. 181v, 256v.

¹⁵⁰ CCTA, i, fols. 27v, 160, 182v.

¹⁵¹ X/71/5, CCTA, i, fols. 28v, 66v.

¹⁵² Mate, *Women*, pp. 29-31; Woodward, *Men at work*, pp. 112-14.

¹⁵³ X/71/10, CCTA, i, fols. 18, 51v, 114v.

Most studies of wages in other towns between 1450 and 1560 have found stable wage rates up to 1540, and increases thereafter. Phelps-Brown and Hopkin's analysis of the wages of building workers in southern England showed a remarkable stability in wages between 1412 and 1532, with craftsmen earning 6d per day and labourers 4d per day. Wages of craftsmen rose to 6d-7d in the period 1532-48, and 7d-8d between 1548 and 1552, and wages of labourers increased to 4d-6d in the period 1545-51. Both groups experienced further rises in the 1550s.¹⁵⁴ Similar increases in wages during the 1540s and 1550s occurred in the wages rates in northern towns examined by Woodward, and among agricultural labourers at Oxford and Cambridge tabulated by Bowden.¹⁵⁵

As table 7.9 shows, the majority of recorded wages in the Cambridge accounts were paid to men at the standard rate of 4d per day to labourers, and 6d to craftsmen. Some of the wages paid by Cambridge corporation, though, were higher than the usual rates. Labourers cleaning the King's Ditch were paid 5d-6d per day in 1500/1, 5d per day in 1515/16 and 1517/18, 5d-6d in 1521/2, 5d in 1523/4, 5-5½d in 1525/6, and 6d in 1545/6.¹⁵⁶ Men were paid 6d for cleaning a stable in 1523/4 and 5d in 1525/6.¹⁵⁷ A labourer helping a carpenter build a wall was paid 4¼d per day in 1500/1.¹⁵⁸ Another was paid 6d a day for claying in 1521/2, and others were paid 6d for working on a causeway in 1523/4.¹⁵⁹ There are fewer examples of craftsmen being paid more than 6d, and this may reflect the employment of more highly-skilled men. A mason and a carpenter received 6½d in 1500/1 and some carpenters received 7d a day in the 1520s and 1530s.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁴ Phelps-Brown & Hopkins, *Perspective*, p. 11

¹⁵⁵ Woodward, *Men at work*, pp. 171-2 and appendix 1; Bowden, 'Statistical appendix', p. 166.

¹⁵⁶ X/71/1/10; CCTA, i, fols. 19, 27, 65v, 85, 98v, 257.

¹⁵⁷ CCTA, i, fols. 84, 100.

¹⁵⁸ X/71/1/10.

¹⁵⁹ CCTA, i, fols. 63v, 86v.

¹⁶⁰ X/71/1/10.

Table 7.9: *Cambridge wage rates (accounts of Cambridge Corporation and churchwardens of Holy Trinity)*

	<i>Craftsmen d per day</i>	<i>Labourers d per day</i>		<i>Craftsmen d per day</i>	<i>Labourers d per day</i>
1483/4	6		1520/21	6	4
1484/5	6	4	1521/2	6-7	4-6
1485/6			1522/3		
1486/7			1523/4	6	4-6
1487/8			1524/5	6	
1488/9	6		1525/6	6-7	4-5.5
1489/90	6		1526/7	6	4
1490/1	6	4	1527/8	6	4
1491/2			1528/9	6	4
1492/3			1529/30	6	4
1493/4			1530/1	6	
1494/5			1531/2	5-6	
1495/6			1532/3		4
1496/7			1533/4		
1497/8			1534/5		
1498/9	6	4	1535/6	6-7	5
1499/1500	5-6	4	1536/7		
1500/1	6-6.5	4-6	1537/8	7	4
1501/2			1538/9	7	4
1502/3			1539/40	6	4
1503/4		4	1540/1	6	
1504/5			1541/2		
1505/6			1542/3	6	
1506/7	5-6		1543/4	6	4
1507/8	6		1544/5		
1508/9	6		1545/6		6
1509/10		4	1546/7	6.5-7	
1510/11			1547/8	6-7.5	
1511/12	6		1548/9	7	
1512/13			1549/50		
1513/14	6	4			
1514/15					
1515/16	6	4-5			
1516/17					
1517/18	6	4-5			
1518/19	6				
1519/20	6				

Sources: CCA, X/71/1-10, X/71A, XVII/24A; CCTA, i; CCRO, P22/5/1

The high wages paid to some labourers in Cambridge may indicate a local building boom. The first three decades of the sixteenth century saw a large amount of building activity by the colleges. When labour was at a premium, unskilled workers rose in status: at the end of the fourteenth century in Stratford-upon-Avon, for example, some labourers were paid the same rates as craftsmen.¹⁶¹ It is also possible though, that the labourers working in the King's Ditch were being compensated with higher wages for what must have been extremely unpleasant work in an open sewer. Labourers were occasionally paid extra for very strenuous, difficult, or unpleasant tasks. Thomas Outlawe received an additional ½d from Corpus Christi College in the mid-fifteenth century for cleaning the latrines. Three labourers were paid 20d each for five days for 'haueeing hupe stonnys to ye stepell' of Great St Mary's church in 1529.¹⁶² The wage rates paid in and around Cambridge for day-to-day agricultural operations, such as hedging and ditching, do not appear to have risen above 4d until the 1540s.¹⁶³

Conclusion

Evidence from the markets for property, labour and building work within the town suggests a chequered pattern of economic performance in this period. Building work among the colleges peaked in the 1510s and 1520s, and this may have been reflected in evidence of increased wage rates and admissions of freemen. If localised economic expansion occurred in this period though, the property market did not share this boom, as Cambridge Corporation's rental income and average rent level reached its nadir around 1500, having fallen from the early fifteenth century. These rents did not recover substantially until the mid-sixteenth century, while evidence from Corpus Christi College shows that high arrears and falling rental income were still being faced in this period.

¹⁶¹ T.H. Lloyd, *Some aspects of the building industry in medieval Stratford-upon-Avon*, Dugdale Society occasional papers, XIV (Oxford, 1961), pp. 14-15.

¹⁶² Pearce, 'College accounts', 82; *Churchwardens' accounts of St Mary the Great*, p. 67. See also Woodward, *Men at work*, pp. 107-8, for other examples.

¹⁶³ Bowden, 'Statistical appendix', p. 166.

The property, labour markets and building sector also reveal further examples of the economic links between Cambridge and its region. Colleges and townspeople held estates in the county and beyond. Freemen were drawn from the surrounding region, and a significant number of overseas immigrants found work in the town and its hinterland. Building projects drew specialist craftsmen from the local area, adjoining counties and from London, while much of the building stone used in the town came from quarries in Northamptonshire and Rutland, and timber from Suffolk and Essex.

Finally, the dominance of the colleges in these three sectors is apparent. The colleges held substantial amounts of property in the town and county, and provided employment for servants within their communities. Their building projects must have generated significant, albeit temporary, demand within the local economy, even though many of the specialist craftsmen and the materials they required had to be brought from outside the immediate region.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Although a number of changes occurred in the economy of Cambridge and its region in the 1450-1560 period, it would be difficult to describe any of these developments as revolutionary or transitional. Many of the traditional descriptions of economic transformation attributed to this period, such as economic modernisation, the rise of a capitalist economy, or the emergence of agrarian capitalism, are not appropriate for the town and region. While urban centres could promote economic development within their hinterlands, the size of most medieval English towns meant that, in most cases, the effects were very limited. The growth that took place in Cambridge and its economic region between 1450 and 1560 was largely stimulated by the demands of London and the expansion of the university, and substantial growth in the town's economy occurred in only a few decades within the period.

Recent research of the medieval economy in earlier centuries has thrown into question the basis on which the 1450-1560 period can be characterised as an age of economic modernisation. Many of the innovations in commercial development formerly attributed to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries arose as part of the wide-ranging commercialisation of the economy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Traditionally, the century after 1450 has been highlighted as a key period in the transformation from a feudal to capitalist economy, but very few significant developments were made in this direction during the period. In the countryside, social relations between landlords and peasants were transformed by the demise of serfdom after the Black Death, but many land tenures were still constrained by custom. No key steps towards capitalism occurred in the towns, although in some cloth-making centres, in both urban and rural areas, workers became dependent on merchant

clothiers for employment.¹⁰⁵² Major technological innovations or significant transformations in economic organisation and production did not take place.

Brenner's argument that this period saw the widespread emergence of agrarian capitalism¹⁰⁵³ finds little support from the evidence of Cambridge and its region. Some lands were engrossed and enclosed in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but this process was by no means universal. The Cambridgeshire taxation assessments of the 1520s reveal a polarisation of wealth and an abundance of wage-earners in the river valleys sub-region, suggesting that much of the land there was concentrated in a small number of hands, and the employment of agricultural labourers was common. Widespread enclosure did not take place in this sub-region until the nineteenth century. During the later middle ages most enclosure in Cambridgeshire occurred in the western plateau and south-east uplands, in areas of declining population and wealth.¹⁰⁵⁴

In an economy where the urban sector was still relatively small, comprising no more than about 10-15 per cent of the total population, the opportunities for medieval towns to be agents of modernisation, arousing economic development within their hinterlands, were restricted. Cambridge acted as the main marketing and service centre for the county, with the most important markets and fairs, and a wide range of specialist occupations. But the population and wealth of Cambridge comprised only one fifth of the total wealth, and one seventh of the total population, within a ten-mile radius from the town. Demand from Cambridge could not prevent the decline of population and wealth in several nearby parishes.¹⁰⁵⁵ Examples of towns stimulating significant commercial and industrial expansion in the surrounding countryside during

¹⁰⁵² Britnell, *Commercialisation*, pp. 228-37; Britnell, 'Commerce and capitalism', 362-9

¹⁰⁵³ Brenner, 'Agrarian class structure'; Brenner, 'Agrarian roots'.

¹⁰⁵⁴ See Chapter 2, above

¹⁰⁵⁵ See Chapter 2, above.

this period seem to have been limited to a few cloth towns whose expansion was mainly export-driven, and to the restructuring of trading links around London.¹⁰⁵⁶

Urban demand, however, provided markets for some of the agricultural produce of the Cambridge region, and encouraged the cultivation of particular crops. Pastoral farming in parishes in the fen and fen-edge sub-regions may have been encouraged by demand for meat and dairy produce from nearby towns. For several centuries, corn had been exported from the region; after the Black Death, large quantities of malt barley were sent to London, Lynn and other coastal and overseas markets. From the late fifteenth century, many villages in south Cambridgeshire and north Essex began to plant saffron, and the area increasingly specialised in the cultivation of this crop. Saffron was particularly prominent among peasant households, which increased this group's contact with the market. The marketing involved London merchants, and demand from the capital probably stimulated the adoption of the crop, and may have led to the emergence of Walden as a centre for production.¹⁰⁵⁷ The urban demand for agricultural products like saffron and barley helped the river-valleys sub-region to avoid the depopulation and decline of wealth that occurred in other parts of the Cambridgeshire uplands. In each sub-region though, urban demand was only one factor which influenced the performance of the local economy, as the pattern of settlement, the types of agriculture practised, and the availability of employment outside agriculture were also influential.

Despite the consumption requirements of towns, the market for foodstuffs remained poorly developed, with limitations of supply and demand. Some Cambridge institutions relied on home farms to supply at least some of their produce, reducing demand in the market. Formal markets provided limited supplies for large households: King's Hall and King's College bought most of their wheat, malt barley and fuel, with

¹⁰⁵⁶ Yates, 'Change and continuities', 630-3, 636; Keene, 'Small towns', pp. 234-8; Britnell, '1450-1550', pp. 95-7.

¹⁰⁵⁷ See Chapter 3, above.

CONCLUSION

the exception of a few small purchases, outside the market-place, through contracts with local suppliers. In years of scarcity though, even these contracts could be difficult to secure: more distant and infrequent suppliers had to be sought, and price fluctuations were considerable, if less than those in the market-place. In the 1550s, faced with rising prices and static estate income, King's College, followed by other colleges, increasingly turned to rents of produce from their own estates at guaranteed prices. The close of the period therefore saw a move towards self-sufficiency, rather than market dependence, among Cambridge's largest consumers.

While the pattern of change in the 1450-1560 period did not amount to the fundamental transformation in economic development that some writers would suggest, a large amount of economic restructuring did occur. The Black Death and subsequent epidemics changed the balance of population to land and resources across the country, and in turn affected the balance of power between landlords and tenants, and employers and employees. The changing distribution of population and wealth in Cambridge and its region between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries occurred primarily as a result of these factors. Some towns suffered greater losses in population and wealth than others, but the urban hierarchy in the region was modified rather than transformed. The reduced population led to the rationalisation of markets and fairs in the region. Many of these developments were well underway before 1450, although they cannot always be dated with precision. During the course of the sixteenth century, the population began to grow again, and prices rose sharply, but many of the effects of these trends did not become apparent until the later sixteenth century.

There were no dramatic changes in the economy of Cambridge and its region between 1450 and 1560, but a number of important developments enlarged the town's hinterland. Cambridge's economic region in the later middle ages comprised three inter-related spatial areas. A local region extended to about 10 miles in radius around the town, incorporating most of Cambridgeshire and the small towns which straddled

the county's borders. Contacts with a wider regional market, comprising adjoining parts of East Anglia and the East Midlands, appear to have strengthened in the later middle ages, while links were also being forged with more distant urban centres, notably London.

The local region contained the sub-regions of the fen, fen-edge, river valleys, western plateau and south-east uplands, which produced different agricultural commodities that were exchanged in local markets. Cambridge market was the main centre for this exchange, but small towns, village markets, fairs and informal trading sites provided additional locations where basic commodities could be bought and sold. Cambridge drew raw materials and labour from the local region, and in turn supplied it with goods and services. The accounts of King's Hall and King's College reveal that Cambridge's hinterland for basic foodstuffs extended to about 10 miles in radius from the town. The majority of those admitted to the freedom of the borough came from within this area, as did most of those bringing cases to be heard in the borough and university courts. Although the marketing network within the local region changed between 1450 and 1560, with the decline of many village markets and the growth of population in several small towns, the actual boundaries of this region remained remarkably constant over the period and in subsequent centuries. The ring of small market towns lying 10-15 miles from Cambridge still defined the boundary of the region in which Cambridge provided local goods and services in the later twentieth century.¹⁰⁵⁸

The local region could not, however, satisfy all the needs of Cambridge, and some goods and services were brought from a wider region of around 50 miles in radius, with more diverse natural resources. Cambridgeshire was particularly short of firewood and timber, which was supplied from Essex and Suffolk, and building stone, which was taken from quarries in Northamptonshire and Rutland. Debt cases in the

¹⁰⁵⁸ Gerald Eve & Co., *Report on an assessment of future shopping needs in Cambridge central area* (London, 1965), p. 3.

CONCLUSION

Cambridge borough court reveal important commercial links with Bury St Edmunds and Northampton. Links with this wider region appear to have strengthened in the later middle ages, with the increasing need for stone and timber for college building projects, while the accounts of King's Hall and Trinity College reveal that firewood increasingly had to be obtained from more distant sources, along with small amounts of coal from the North East.

In addition, Cambridge had wider links with towns outside these two regions. London was the most important location, with Cambridge's local region supplying London with malt barley and saffron. The capital sent a range of bulk commodities and luxury goods to larger and wealthier consumers. Many of these goods were also bought at Stourbridge fair, which attracted buyers and sellers from many parts of East Anglia, the Midlands and more distant towns. Coastal and overseas trade, conducted through Lynn, produced further points of contact: Cambridge merchants exported corn from this port to the Low Countries, and brought coal from Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The widely scattered land-holding interests of several colleges created additional links from the town. Craftsmen came to work in Cambridge from many parts of the country, particularly from London, and Cambridge was also an important focus for overseas migrants. Although these links fluctuated, this period saw a notable growth in trading links with London, as well as the expansion of trade at Stourbridge fair.

The different areas of local, regional and wider links, which constituted Cambridge's economic region, are evident in studies of other late medieval towns, where they have been described as comprising local markets and regional trade,¹⁰⁵⁹ or as the *umland*, the immediate market area, where goods were exchanged for basic needs, and the *hinterland*, the wider market area.¹⁰⁶⁰ The models of central place theory and land use devised by Christaller and von Thünen also use principles of concentric regions.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Kowaleski, *Exeter*, p. 2.

¹⁰⁶⁰ H. Eiden & F. Irsigler, 'Environs and hinterland: Cologne and Nuremberg in the later middle ages', in Galloway, ed., *Trade*, pp. 43-4.

These models though, give the impression that such regions are static entities, whereas Cambridge's regions fluctuated in size and significance over time.

During the course of each year, Cambridge's hinterland was temporarily widened as Stourbridge fair attracted buyers and sellers from beyond the local region. Cloth from the Stour valley of Suffolk and fish from the East Anglian coast was brought, while representatives from households like Thetford Priory and Peterborough Abbey, which had little contact with Cambridge during the rest of the year, came to shop at the fair. Traders from other areas of the country, including merchants from London and Coventry, and officials of great households from Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, also attended. Stourbridge fair extended Cambridge's hinterland over the longer term too: as the fair grew in size and importance during the sixteenth century, it brought traders from further afield, such as Bristol and Yorkshire.¹⁰⁶¹

The growth of the university also enlarged the town's hinterland. The building projects of the colleges required large quantities of materials that could not be obtained in the immediate area and brought craftsmen to the town. Scholars migrated to the university from across the country and some from overseas. Specialist academic trades developed to serve the university. Cambridge therefore provided some services over a larger hinterland than other towns of similar size. The expansion of the university, though, also reduced its reliance on the town. The larger and wealthier colleges which were founded in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries tended to purchase many of their supplies in bulk from London and other major towns, and at Stourbridge fair, rather than from tradesmen in Cambridge. These colleges often constructed their own facilities for baking and brewing, and from the 1550s, turned to their own estates to supply their food.

¹⁰⁶¹ Chapter 5, above.

CONCLUSION

London's trading links expanded considerably in this period: the capital had always served the consumption needs of the wealthiest aristocratic consumers, but increasingly its mercantile networks were extending to control trade which had previously been handled by provincial merchants.¹⁰⁶² Within the Cambridge region, London supplied many of the goods required by the wealthier colleges, obtained malt barley and saffron from local producers, and dominated longer-distance networks of credit.

Identifying the timing of change in Cambridge's economy, as in other urban economies in this period, is an imprecise exercise that must rely upon the collective evidence of several series of data.¹⁰⁶³ The Cambridge Corporation accounts show a clear fall in property income between the early and late fifteenth century. Dwindling rents are the main evidence in Cambridge of urban decline, a method of analysis which has dominated studies of towns in this period. Absolute decline was the experience of almost all towns, and the countryside too, as demand for land fell, due to the large-scale population loss.¹⁰⁶⁴ A large number of college building projects were underway in Cambridge between 1490 and 1530, when admissions of freemen increased, and some wage rates appear to have risen. The building projects and wage rises tended to be concentrated in the 1510s and 1520s, and corporation property rents and booth income at Stourbridge fair also rose at this time. These were the last decades in which the university faced relative stability before the many religious reforms that affected student numbers, particularly the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s. During the 1550s, the corporation's income from stalls in the market and booths in Stourbridge fair rose considerably. While some of these increases may be attributed to the rapid price inflation of this decade, a growth in the numbers of booths transferred, the introduction of fines on leases of booths, and an increase in the admissions of freemen also occurred. The corporation's property rents recovered

¹⁰⁶² Kermode, *Merchants*, pp. 308-10.

¹⁰⁶³ Britnell, *Colchester*, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Hatcher, *Plague*, pp. 36-44.

CONCLUSION

substantially, although not completely in real terms, during the 1540s and 1550s to return to the average levels of the early fifteenth century. Yet the mounting arrears at Corpus Christi College show the continuing difficulties of obtaining income from properties in the town. It seems that despite disruption in the cloth trade, poor harvests and repeated taxation during the 1520s,¹⁰⁶⁵ and epidemics, harvest failure, rapid price inflation and the precarious situation for cloth exports in the 1550s,¹⁰⁶⁶ periods of growth occurred in Cambridge during both decades.

Cambridge probably fared more favourably than many other late medieval towns, despite the pleas of impoverishment from its burgesses and the depressed conditions in the property market. At a time when many urban populations were contracting, Cambridge experienced a considerable growth in its student population, while population estimates from taxation records suggest that the rest of the town's population remained roughly static between the late fourteenth and early sixteenth century. Its service-based economy was probably less prone to trade fluctuations than towns based mainly on manufacturing. The local region around Cambridge did not benefit from the growth in student numbers to the same extent, as the effect of the university's demand was much less concentrated outside the town. While many basic foodstuffs were obtained from farmers in the surrounding area, some products which the colleges required, such as firewood and building stone, could not be supplied from the local region.

Between 1450 and 1560 Cambridge's economic region consisted of three inter-connecting regions linked to the town - a local region extending to 10 miles from the town, a wider region up to 50 miles away, and more distant ties with other urban centres. During this period the economic region experienced a number of developments: the changing distribution of population and wealth, a reduction in the number of markets, the growth of the malt barley and saffron trades, the expansion of

¹⁰⁶⁵ Dymond, 'Famine'; Hoyle, 'Taxation'; Britnell, '1450-1550', pp. 103, 112.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Fisher, 'Commercial trends', pp. 89-91; Fisher, 'Influenza and inflation'.

CONCLUSION

Stourbridge fair, the enlargement of the university, and an increase in the number of college building projects. These trends did not, however, lead to major structural changes, nor did they fundamentally transform the relationship between the town and its region. Theories of economic transition are therefore not applicable to this region at least, in the 1450-1560 period. Concepts that stress the role of towns as promoters of economic activity can be useful in identifying areas of growth, and particularly in highlighting the influence of London, but the size of most medieval towns in England restricted their impact on surrounding regions.

Appendix 1: parish totals of taxpayers and taxable wealth, 1334-1524 and householders, 1563

No.	Place	Hundred	Sub region	Acres	1563 HH	1524 s d	TP	1377 TP	1334 £ s d
84	Abington Piggots	Armingford	V	1,237	24			78	3 4 0
64	Arrington	Wetherley	W	1,407	25	43 10	35	119	6 12 0
119	Ashley with Silverley	Cheveley	S	2,225				116	4 6 0
79	Babraham	Chilford	V	2,387	36	89 6	40		7 12 0
109	Balsham	Radfield	S	4,550	80	117 4	65	255	4 13 4
89	Barrington	Wetherley	V	2,282	59	70 11	55	256	12 0 0
122	Barlow	Chilford	S	377	20	18 0	7	32	1 10 0
56	Barton with Whitwell	Wetherley	W	1,834	25	45 2	19	140	5 10 0
86	Bassingbourn	Armingford	V	3,381	90	238 0	116	347	9 10 0
25	Bottisham	Staine	E	5,987	104			392	11 10 0
51	Bourn	Longstow	W	4,175	72	135 0	90	299	11 6 0
43	Boxworth	Papworth	W	2,602	17	91 2	19	101	6 0 0
	Brinkley, Carlton &								
113	Willingham	Radfield	S	3,700	51	55 2	29 (1)	163 (1)	6 12 0
	Burrough Green with Westley								
114	Waterless	Radfield	S	3,421	49	223 8	58 (1)	141	4 10 0
28	Burwell	Staploe	E	7,446	19	329 0	133	402	7 10 0
52	Caldecote	Longstow	W	948	9			78	2 18 0
117	Camois with Wooditton	Cheveley	S	5,071				131	
124	Castle Camps	Chilford	S	2,703	37	176 0	34	113	6 10 0
50	Caxton	Longstow	W	2,242	32	54 10	31	131	6 0 0
32	Cherry Hinton	Flendish	E	2,059	43	103 6	61	185	9 5 0
70	Chesterton	Chesterton	V	2,795	69	468 8	75	331	8 0 0 (3)
118	Cheveley	Cheveley	S	2,559		43 0	39	146	4 13 4
107	Chippenhams	Staploe	V	4,301		75 0		241 (2)	9 16 0 (2)
61	Clopton with East Hatley	Armingford	W	1,189	11	44 12	6 (1)	104	5 5 0
55	Comberton	Wetherley	W	1,954	30	104 8	40	152	6 8 0
41	Conington	Papworth	W	1,522	26	84 6	22	109	4 0 0

13	Cottenham with Westwick	Chesterton	E	7,557	121	233	4	87 (1)			15	10	0
48	Croxton	Longstow	W	1,909	25	80	11	38	118		8	10	0
62	Croydon	Armingford	W	2,734	19	69	8	20	78		5	0	0
46	Dry Drayton	Chesterton	W	2,421	31	75	2	25	120		6	6	0
115	Dullingham	Radfield	S	3,387	51	80	10	39	115		7	0	0
103	Duxford	Whittlesford	V	3,239	58						8	12	0
40	Elsworth	Papworth	W	3,839	53	55	8	24	209		7	0	0
49	Eltisley	Longstow	W	1,970	20	87	10	36	136		6	16	0
23	Fen Ditton with Horningsea	Flemdish	E	3,562	87	138	4	87 (1)	330		15	10	0
15	Fen Drayton	Papworth	E	1,492	40	62	10	30	111		3	6	0
30	Fordham	Staploe	E	4,204		166	8	50	341		7	0	0
95	Fowlmere	Thriplow	V	2,272	34	73	7	39			5	16	0
94	Foxton	Thriplow	V	1,752	30	80	4	46			7	0	0
36	Fulbourn	Flemdish	E	5,263	105	257	6	122	426		19	10	0
57	Gamlingay	Longstow	W	4,460	50	204	10	105	219		9	14	0
69	Girton	Northstow	V	1,681	34	137	2	49	196		5	0	0
71	Grantchester with Coton	Wetherley	V	2,527	37	67	6	42 (1)	177		9	0	0
37	Graveley	Papworth	W	1,582	23	69	0	19	94		6	0	0
100	Great Abington	Chilford	V	1,588	32	10	2	20	96		4	18	0
66	Great and Little Eversden	Longstow	W	2,190	34				148		10	10	0
	Great Childerley and Little												
45	Childerley	Chesterton	W	1,069	3				76		3	6	0
77	Great Shelford	Thriplow	V	2,258	60	161	5	71			8	0	0
35	Great Wilbraham	Staine	E	2,291	50						6.56		(4)
81	Guilford Morden	Armingford	V	2,599	54	324	4	62	223		6	10	0
5	Haddenham	Witchford	F	8,925	188	527	6	222	353		9	2	0
53	Hardwick	Longstow	W	1,438	14				81		3	16	0
68	Harlton	Wetherley	W	1,261	21	138	6	33	103		7	0	0
74	Harston	Thriplow	V	1,741	38	127	5	32			6	10	0
73	Haslingfield	Wetherley	V	2,573	53				271		7	6	0
60	Hatley St George	Longstow	W	1,011	4	61	10	10	69		2	5	0
101	Hildersham	Chilford	V	1,511	17	19	10	23	47		1	16	0

104 Hinxtan	Whittlesford	V	1,503	43	65	2				115	5	15	0
19 Histon	Chesterton	E	2,300	54	146	8	36				10	10	0
121 Horseheath	Chilford	S	1,922	34	120	10	35			121	5	16	0
105 Ickleton	Whittlesford	V	2,672	68	241	4	88				5	14	0
21 Impington	Northstow	E	1,200	14	72	2	13			57	3	10	0
31 Isleham	Staploe	E	5,230		183	10	88			362	7	13	4
108 Kennett with Kentford	Staploe	V	1,431		18	8	19			48	2	4	4.5
65 Kingston	Longstow	W	1,907	42	155	0	53			111	6	10	0
120 Kirtling	Cheveley	S	3,126							186	5	6	0
42 Knapwell	Papworth	W	1,236	22	19	4	11			73	2	10	0
91 Kneesworth	Armingford	V	997		34	10	16			76	4	4	0
20 Landbeach	Northstow	E	2,225	36	107	4	25			114	4	10	0
29 Landwade	Staploe	E	127		9	4	5			44	2	0	0
102 Linton	Chilford	V	3,817	92	250	4	89			155	8	10	0
85 Litlington	Armingford	V	2,172	36	74	8	51			235	4	8	0
99 Little Abington	Chilford	V	1,309	15	16	8	7			45	5	0	0
58 Little Gransden	Longstow	W	1,920	26						126	5	16	0
76 Little Shelford	Thriplow	V	1,196	32	55	5	34				3	16	0
34 Little Wilbraham	Staine	E	1,990	21						108	5	10	0
44 Lolworth	Northstow	W	1,110	17	58	0	11			154	5	10	0
17 Longstanton	Northstow	E	2,779	42	112	2	39			267	10	0	0
59 Longstowe	Longstow	W	1,544	24						97	5	6	0
47 Madingley	Northstow	W	1,768	27	39	0	24			124	4	16	0
92 Melbourn	Armingford	V	4,688	80	214	2	85			323	10	10	0
90 Meldreth	Armingford	V	2,000	47	88	2	48			253	8	10	0
22 Milton	Northstow	E	1,416	36	25	8	19			146	7	10	0
75 Newton with Hauxton	Thriplow	V	1,595	36	61	4	35 (1)				8	0	0
18 Oakington	Northstow	E	1,692	43	88	0	27			174	7	10	0
88 Orwell with Malton	Wetherley	V	2,083	46	114	3	62			203	9	6	0
10 Over	Papworth	E	3,737	124	157	0	57			378	13	0	0
98 Pampisford	Chilford	V	1,607	31	35	4	40			109	6	0	0
39 Papworth Everard	Papworth	W	1,139	15	24	6	9			82	4	10	0

38	Papworth St Agnes	Papworth	W	826	18	91	2	18	85	4	0	0 (4)
12	Rampton	Northstow	E	1,312	31	24	10	12	82	3	10	0
80	Sawston	Whittlesford	V	1,898	64				226	7	10	0
93	Shepreth	Wetherley	V	1,318	33	50	7	34	147	6	15	0
83	Shingay with Wendy	Armingford	V	1,791	22			32 (1)	166	8	6	0
123	Study Camps	Chilford	S	2,362	30	88	6	27	141	3	5	0
106	Snailwell	Staploe	V	2,034		50	4	26	105	4	13	4
9	Soham	Staploe	E	12,999		634	1	105	382	12.3	0	0 (4)
78	Stapleford	Thriplow	V	1,835	28	134	3	33	67	5	5	0
82	Steeple Morden	Armingford	V	3,846	44	149	10	69	249	6	15	0
116	Stetchworth	Radfield	S	2,891	46	94	8	52	106	3	5	0
24	Stow cum Quy	Staine	E	1,879	31				148	5	0	0
7	Stretham with Little Thetford	Witchford	F	5,097	119	157	6	105 (1)	220 (1)	7	10	6
1	Sutton with Mepal	Witchford	F	8,597	114	326	1.5	168 (1)	423	5	5	0
26	Swaffham Bulbeck	Staine	E	4,110	58				194	7	0	0
27	Swaffham Prior	Staine	E	5,587	83				265	7	14	0
16	Swavesey	Papworth	E	3,982	78	123	2	63	379	14	0	0
63	Tadlow with Pincote	Armingford	W	1,743	15			28	130	5	4	0
33	Teversham	Flendish	E	1,221	15	26	4	13	93	6	10	0
96	Thriplow	Thriplow	V	2,501	42	114	5	56		7	10	0
54	Toft	Longstow	W	1,285	24				76	3	6	8
72	Trumpington	Thriplow	V	2,312	45	117	8	52		9	8	0
14	Waterbeach	Northstow	E	5,750	70	79	6	31	207	7	10	0
110	West Wickham	Chilford	S	2,931	33	62	4	27	108	5	0	0
111	West Wrattling	Radfield	S	3,543	47	39	6	28	180	3	17	0
112	Weston Colville	Radfield	S	3,235	26	30	0	28	119	4	8	0
87	Whaddon	Armingford	V	1,515	33	157	6	45	170	7	0	0
97	Whittlesford	Whittlesford	V	1,976	49				161	9	10	0
8	Wicken	Staploe	E	3,965		115	4	44	157	4	10	0
6	Wilburton	Witchford	F	2,437	47	117	1	59	85	2	8	0
11	Willingham	Papworth	E	4,663	105	133	6	66	287	7	0	0
67	Wimpole	Wetherley	W	2,468	36	144	7	41	173	7	5	0

Appendix 2: Changes in ranking of parishes by wealth, 1334 and 1524

No.	Place	Sub-region	Acres	1334		1524		1334-1524
				W per A	RO	W per A	RO	
5	Haddenham	F	8,925	0.24	94	0.71	20	74
	Burrough Green with							
114	Westley Waterless	S	3,421	0.32	87	0.78	14 (1)	73
9	Soham	E	12,999	0.23	97 (3)	0.59	31	66
6	Wilburton	F	2,437	0.24	96	0.58	33	63
105	Ickleton	V	2,672	0.51	67	1.08	6	61
81	Guilden Morden	V	2,599	0.60	58	1.50	2	56
28	Burwell	E	7,446	0.24	95	0.53	41	54
102	Linton	V	3,817	0.53	63	0.79	13	50
70	Chesterton	V	2,795	0.69	47 (2)	2.01	1	46
60	Hatley St George	W	1,011	0.53	64	0.73	18	46
1	Sutton with Mepal	F	8,597	0.15	98	0.46	53 (1)	45
124	Castle Camps	S	2,703	0.58	59	0.78	15	44
20	Landbeach	E	2,225	0.49	72	0.58	32	40
86	Bassingbourn	V	3,381	0.67	50	0.84	12	38
78	Stapleford	V	1,835	0.69	48	0.88	10	38
69	Girton	V	1,681	0.71	44	0.98	7	37
41	Conington	W	1,522	0.63	55	0.67	22	33
30	Fordham	E	4,204	0.40	79	0.48	48	31
57	Gamlingay	W	4,460	0.52	66	0.55	36	30
116	Stetchworth	S	2,891	0.27	91	0.39	61	30
123	Shudy Camps	S	2,362	0.33	85	0.45	56	29
65	Kingston	W	1,907	0.82	36	0.98	8	28
82	Steeple Morden	V	3,846	0.42	77	0.47	49	28
21	Impington	E	1,200	0.70	46	0.72	19	27
31	Isleham	E	5,230	0.35	84	0.42	57	27
121	Horseheath	S	1,922	0.72	41	0.75	17	24
67	Wimpole	W	2,468	0.71	45	0.70	21	24
92	Melbourn	V	4,688	0.54	62	0.55	39	23
77	Great Shelford	V	2,258	0.85	32	0.86	11	21
109	Balsham	S	4,550	0.25	93	0.31	73	20
15	Fen Drayton	E	1,492	0.53	65	0.51	45	20
73	Haslingfield	V	2,573	0.68	49	0.60	29	20
8	Wicken	E	3,965	0.27	90	0.35	70	20
7	Stretham & L Thetford	F	5,097	0.35	83	0.37	68 (1)	15
55	Comberton	W	1,954	0.79	37	0.64	24	13
11	Willingham	E	4,663	0.36	82	0.34	71	11
85	Litlington	V	2,172	0.49	70	0.41	60	10
38	Papworth St Agnes	W	826	1.16	9 (3)	1.32	3	6
87	Whaddon	V	1,515	1.11	11	1.25	5	6
96	Thriplow	V	2,501	0.72	43	0.55	38	5
76	Little Shelford	V	1,196	0.76	39	0.56	35	4
43	Boxworth	W	2,602	0.55	60	0.42	58	2
	Witchford with							
3	Wentworth	F	3,813	0.38	80	0.29	78 (1)	2
	Cottenham with							
13	Westwick	E	7,557	0.49	69	0.37	69 (1)	0
62	Croydon	W	2,734	0.44	73	0.31	74	-1
36	Fulbourn	E	5,263	0.89	29	0.59	30	-1

68	Harlton	W	1,261	1.33	2	1.32	4	-2
101	Hildersham	V	1,511	0.29	89	0.16	93	-4
19	Histon	E	2,300	1.10	12	0.77	16	-4
14	Waterbeach	E	5,750	0.31	88	0.17	92	-4
111	West Wratting	S	3,543	0.26	92	0.13	96	-4
49	Eltisley	W	1,970	0.83	35	0.54	40	-5
95	Fowlmere	V	2,272	0.61	57	0.39	62	-5
72	Trumpington	V	2,312	0.98	21	0.61	27	-6
110	West Wickham	S	2,931	0.41	78	0.26	84	-6
29	Landwade	E	127	3.78	1	0.88	9	-8
88	Orwell with Malton	V	2,083	1.07	14	0.66	23	-9
46	Dry Drayton	W	2,421	0.62	56	0.37	66	-10
18	Oakington	E	1,692	1.06	16	0.62	26	-10
122	Bartlow	S	377	0.95	23	0.57	34	-11
51	Bourn	W	4,175	0.65	52	0.39	63	-11
115	Dullingham	S	3,387	0.50	68	0.29	79	-11
112	Weston Colville	S	3,235	0.33	86	0.11	97	-11
10	Over	E	3,737	0.83	34	0.50	46	-12
108	Kennett with Kentford	V	1,431	0.37	81	0.16	94	-13
	Brinkley, Carlton &							
113	Willingham	S	3,700	0.43	76	0.18	90 (1)	-14
118	Cheveley	S	2,559	0.44	74	0.20	88	-14
106	Snailwell	V	2,034	0.55	61	0.30	75	-14
32	Cherry Hinton	E	2,059	1.08	13	0.60	28	-15
94	Foxton	V	1,752	0.96	22	0.55	37	-15
40	Elsworth	W	3,839	0.44	75	0.17	91	-16
79	Babraham	V	2,387	0.76	38	0.45	55	-17
37	Graveley	W	1,582	0.91	26	0.52	43	-17
44	Lolworth	W	1,110	1.19	8	0.63	25	-17
17	Longstanton	E	2,779	0.86	30	0.48	47	-17
42	Knapwell	W	1,236	0.49	71	0.19	89	-18
90	Meldreth	V	2,000	1.02	19	0.53	42	-23
50	Caxton	W	2,242	0.64	53	0.29	77	-24
48	Croxton	W	1,909	1.07	15	0.51	44	-29
47	Madingley	W	1,768	0.65	51	0.26	80	-29
12	Rampton	E	1,312	0.64	54	0.23	85	-31
23	Fen Ditton with	E	3,562	1.04	18	0.47	50 (1)	-32
56	Barton with Whitwell	W	1,834	0.72	42	0.30	76	-34
16	Swavesey	E	3,982	0.84	33	0.37	67	-34
61	Clopton & E. Hatley	W	1,189	1.06	17	0.45	54 (1)	-37
91	Kneesworth	V	997	1.01	20	0.42	59	-39
71	Grantchester & Coton	V	2,527	0.85	31	0.32	72 (1)	-41
75	Newton with Hauxton	V	1,595	1.20	7	0.46	51 (1)	-44
93	Shepreth	V	1,318	1.23	6	0.46	52	-46
64	Arrington	W	1,407	1.13	10	0.37	64	-54
98	Pampisford	V	1,607	0.90	27	0.26	81	-54
100	Great Abington	V	1,588	0.74	40	0.08	98	-58
74	Harston	V	1,741	0.90	28	0.22	87	-59
39	Papworth Everard	W	1,139	0.95	24	0.26	83	-59
89	Barrington	V	2,282	1.26	5	0.37	65	-60
99	Little Abington	V	1,309	0.92	25	0.15	95	-70
33	Teversham	E	1,221	1.28	3	0.26	82	-79
22	Milton	E	1,416	1.27	4	0.22	86	-82

Headings

No. = refers to numbers of parish in figure 2.1

Sub-regions: fen-Edge, **F**en, **S**outh-east uplands, **W**estern plateau, river **V**alleys

W per A = taxable wealth in d per acre

RO = rank order

1334-1524 = change in rank order between 1334 and 1524

Notes

(1) Combined totals of different vills, recorded separately in returns

(2) Taxed at a tenth, converted to a fifteenth

(3) Part taxed at a tenth, converted to a fifteenth and added to other assessment at a fifteenth

Source

Appendix 1

Appendix 3: Changes in ranking of parishes by number of taxpayers, 1377 and 1524

No.	Place	Sub-region	Acres	1377		1524		1377-1524
				TP per A	RO	TP per A	RO	
6	Wilburton	F	2,437	3.49	83	2.42	20	63
5	Haddenham	F	8,925	3.96	76	2.49	18	58
102	Linton	V	3,817	4.06	74	2.33	26	48
65	Kingston	W	1,907	5.82	56	2.78	10	46
57	Gamlingay	W	4,460	4.91	67	2.35	24	43
7	Stretham & L Thetford	F	5,097	4.32	71 (1)	2.06	33 (1)	38
78	Stapleford	V	1,835	3.65	81	1.80	45	36
116	Stetchworth	S	2,891	3.67	80	1.80	44	36
98	Pampisford	V	1,607	6.78	45	2.49	16	29
1	Sutton with Mepal	F	8,597	4.92	66	1.95	37 (1)	29
101	Hildersham	V	1,511	3.11	87	1.52	62	25
	Burrough Green with							
114	Westley Waterless	S	3,421	4.12	73	1.70	50 (1)	23
2	Witcham	F	2,671	5.17	61	1.91	38	23
108	Kennett with Kentford	V	1,431	3.35	86	1.33	71	15
32	Cherry Hinton	E	2,059	8.98	21	2.96	7	14
48	Croxton	W	1,909	6.18	49	1.99	36	13
86	Bassingbourn	V	3,381	10.26	14	3.43	2	12
28	Burwell	E	7,446	5.40	60	1.79	48	12
68	Harlton	W	1,261	8.17	26	2.62	14	12
88	Orwell with Malton	V	2,083	9.75	16	2.98	5	11
64	Arrington	W	1,407	8.46	25	2.49	17	8
115	Dullingham	S	3,387	3.40	85	1.15	77	8
	Witchford with							
3	Wentworth	F	3,813	4.46	69	1.49	63 (1)	6
121	Horseheath	S	1,922	6.30	47	1.82	42	5
51	Bourn	W	4,175	7.16	36	2.16	32	4
49	Eltisley	W	1,970	6.90	42	1.83	41	1
	Fen Ditton with							
23	Horningsea	E	3,562	9.26	20	2.44	19 (1)	1
36	Fulbourn	E	5,263	8.09	28	2.32	27	1
81	Guilden Morden	V	2,599	8.58	23	2.39	23	0
29	Landwade	E	127	34.65	1	3.94	1	0
92	Melbourn	V	4,688	6.89	43	1.81	43	0
82	Steeple Morden	V	3,846	6.47	46	1.79	46	0
87	Whaddon	V	1,515	11.22	6	2.97	6	0
15	Fen Drayton	E	1,492	7.44	34	2.01	35	-1
124	Castle Camps	S	2,703	4.18	72	1.26	74	-2
73	Haslingfield	V	2,573	10.53	10	2.68	12	-2
69	Girton	V	1,681	11.66	5	2.91	8	-3
118	Cheveley	S	2,559	5.71	57	1.52	61	-4
9	Soham	E	12,999	2.94	88	0.81	92	-4
55	Comberton	W	1,954	7.78	29	2.05	34	-5
8	Wicken	E	3,965	3.96	75	1.11	81	-6
109	Balsham	S	4,550	5.60	58	1.43	65	-7
70	Chesterton	V	2,795	11.84	4	2.68	11	-7
62	Croydon	W	2,734	2.85	89	0.73	96	-7
93	Shepreth	V	1,318	11.15	8	2.58	15	-7
31	Isleham	E	5,230	6.92	41	1.68	51	-10
106	Snailwell	V	2,034	5.16	62	1.28	72	-10

110	West Wickham	S	2,931	3.68	78	0.92	88	-10
112	Weston Colville	S	3,235	3.68	79	0.87	91	-12
50	Caxton	W	2,242	5.84	55	1.38	68	-13
71	Grantchester & Coton	V	2,527	7.00	40	1.66	53 (1)	-13
89	Barrington	V	2,282	11.22	7	2.41	21	-14
21	Impington	E	1,200	4.75	68	1.08	82	-14
122	Bartlow	S	377	8.49	24	1.86	39	-15
67	Wimpole	W	2,468	7.01	39	1.66	54	-15
85	Litlington	V	2,172	10.82	9	2.35	25	-16
99	Little Abington	V	1,309	3.44	84	0.53	100	-16
11	Willingham	E	4,663	6.15	50	1.42	66	-16
20	Landbeach	E	2,225	5.12	63	1.12	80	-17
14	Waterbeach	E	5,750	3.60	82	0.54	99	-17
90	Meldreth	V	2,000	12.65	3	2.40	22	-19
38	Papworth St Agnes	W	826	10.29	12	2.18	31	-19
43	Boxworth	W	2,602	3.88	77	0.73	97	-20
46	Dry Drayton	W	2,421	4.96	65	1.03	85	-20
37	Graveley	W	1,582	5.94	53	1.20	75	-22
100	Great Abington	V	1,588	6.05	51	1.26	73	-22
63	Tadlow with Pincote Brinkley, Carlton &	W	1,743	7.46	33	1.61	55	-22
113	Willingham	S	3,700	4.41	70 (1)	0.78	95 (1)	-25
91	Kneesworth	V	997	7.62	31	1.60	56	-25
41	Conington	W	1,522	7.16	37	1.45	64	-27
123	Shudy Camps	S	2,362	5.97	52	1.14	79	-27
83	Shingay with Wendy	V	1,791	9.27	19	1.79	47 (1)	-28
111	West Wratting	S	3,543	5.08	64	0.79	93	-29
47	Madingley	W	1,768	7.01	38	1.36	69	-31
42	Knapwell	W	1,236	5.91	54	0.89	90	-36
40	Elsworth	W	3,839	5.44	59	0.63	98	-39
16	Swavesey	E	3,982	9.52	18	1.58	58	-40
12	Rampton	E	1,312	6.25	48	0.91	89	-41
60	Hatley St George	W	1,011	6.82	44	0.99	87	-43
18	Oakington	E	1,692	10.28	13	1.60	57	-44
10	Over	E	3,737	10.12	15	1.53	60	-45
30	Fordham	E	4,204	8.11	27	1.19	76	-49
17	Longstanton	E	2,779	9.61	17	1.40	67	-50
33	Teversham	E	1,221	7.62	32	1.06	83	-51
56	Barton with Whitwell	W	1,834	7.63	30	1.04	84	-54
22	Milton	E	1,416	10.31	11	1.34	70	-59
39	Papworth Everard	W	1,139	7.20	35	0.79	94	-59
61	Clopton & E. Hatley	W	1,189	8.75	22	0.50	101 (1)	-79
44	Lolworth	W	1,110	13.87	2	0.99	86	-84

Headings

No. = refers to number of parish in figure 2.1

Sub-regions: fen-Edge, Fen, South-east uplands, Western plateau, river Valleys

TP per A = taxpayers per 100 acres

RO = rank order

1377-1524 = change in rank order between 1377 and 1524

Notes: (1) Combined totals of different villis, recorded separately in returns

Source: Appendix 1

BIBLIOGRAPHY

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

British Library (BL)

Add. MS 5861 Rev. W. Cole, Collections chiefly relating to
Cambridge, lx (transcripts and indexes of wills
from the diocese of Ely)

Harleian MS 594, fols. 198-200v Bishop of Ely's certificate of households in the
diocese, 20 Aug 1563

Public Record Office (PRO)

Chancery: Six Clerk's Office: Early Proceedings, Richard II- Philip & Mary (C 1)

Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Accounts Various (E 101)

Ulnage accounts

E 101/338/3	Particulars of accounts, Cambridge, 18-20 Ric II
E 101/338/9	Particulars of accounts, (Camb. & Hunt.), 5 & 6 Edw IV
E 101/343/1	Accounts of ulnage (Essex, Suffolk & Camb.), 5 & 6 Edw IV
E 101/343/7	Particulars of accounts, (Norf, Suffolk, Essex, Camb., Hunt.), 9 & 10 Edw IV
E 101/343/9	Particulars of accounts, (same counties) 13 & 14 Edw IV

Sheriff's administrative accounts (Cambridge & Huntingdon)

E 101/553/15	Expenses of repairs of Cambridge gaol, 15 & 16 Hen VIII
--------------	---

Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Particulars of Account and other records relating to Lay and Clerical Taxation (E 179)

Reductions to fifteenth and tenths in Cambridgeshire

E 179/81/80	Schedule of reductions 1433
E 179/81/93	Commission and schedule of reductions 1445
E 179/81/119	Schedule of reductions 1490x1491
E 179/81/120	Schedule of reductions 1490x1491
E 179/81/124	Particulars of account, 1511-12

Writs of exemption

E 179/81/107	Assessments and writs exempting Merton College, King's College, Denney Abbey, Syon Abbey, and Clare Hall, 1453-5
E 179/241/318	Writs exempting abbeys of Syon, Denney, and Cambridge colleges, and Merton College, Oxford, for liability under tax out of their lands in Cambridgeshire, 1512

Cambridgeshire: returns of the first subsidy, granted in 1523 and collected in 1524

E 179/81/126	Chesterton, North Stow, Papworth hundreds
E 179/81/129	Armingford hundred
E 179/81/130	Wetherley, Thriplow hundreds
E 179/81/132	Whittlesford, Flendish hundreds
E 179/81/133	Cambridge
E 179/81/134	Chilford, Radfield hundreds
E 179/81/136	Ely, Witchford hundreds
E 179/81/137	Staploe hundred
E 179/81/161	Longstowe hundred
E 179/82/220, part 2	Staploe hundred
E 179/82/224, part 2	Cheveley hundred

E 179/81/147 Whittlesford hundred (subsidy collected in 1525)

Alien subsidies

E 179/81/85 Alien poll tax inquest, 1440, for subsidy granted 1440 (Cambridge)

E 179/81/87 Commission and alien poll tax inquests, 1440, for subsidy granted 1440 (10 Cambs. hundreds)

E 179/81/111 Alien poll tax inquest, 1463, for subsidy granted 1453 (Cambs.)

E 179/235/3 Assessments and particulars of accounts, 1441, for subsidy granted 1440 (Cambridge, Cambs. & Hunts.)

E 179/235/4 Assessments, return of writ and writ, 1440, for subsidy granted 1440 (Cambs. & Hunts.)

Special Collections, Rentals and Surveys, Rolls (SC 11)

SC 11/90 Schedule of rents from Stourbridge fair booths for obits

British Library of Political and Economic Science, London

Beveridge Price History Archive, W5, file 2, Cambridge wages MSS

Cambridge County Record Office, Cambridge Corporation archive (CCA)

I/4 Corporation Cross Book

III/10A, part 1 Leases of booths at Stourbridge fair

VI/4 Covenant bonds, 1464-1557

X/3 Articles concerning usurpation on the part of the university, 1554

X/6 Proceedings in court of Reach fair, 1508

X/7 Letters and testimonials from the mayor of Newcastle concerning delivery of coals, 1511

X/20	Determination of Lord Cardinal and Chief Justice, 1526
X/38	Town and university of Cambridge disputes, 16 th century
X/40	Petition of town v. university, 1493/4
X/42	Navigation award, Cambridge and King's Lynn, 1552
X/50	Accord between Lynn and Cambridge, 1517/18
X/66	Complaint of town v. university, c.1530
X/69 (ii-iii)	Articles of complaint. Town v. university, c. 1532
X/70/1-10	Treasurers' accounts, 1422/3-1435/6
X/71/1-10	Treasurers' accounts, 1483/4-1500/1
X/71A	Treasurers' accounts, 1503/4
X/82	Bond relating to Stourbridge fair, 1561
X/90	Note of misdemeanours done by university, 1534
X/103	Northampton award, 1519
XVII/24A	Treasurers' accounts, 1513/14
XVIII/12, no. 4	Lease of Whittlesford Bridge, 1566
Palmer/Barnard volume 1,	Cambridge town pleas, 1389-90
Palmer/Barnard volume 57,	Corporation Common Day Book, 1544-82

Cambridge County Record Office, other collections (CCRO)

488/M, Huddleston MSS	Whittlesford manorial records box 5: court rolls, 1461-83, 1513-23, 1554-76; bailiff's accounts, 1463/4, 1477/8; rentals, 1487/8, 1514; survey, 1578
L63/17-18	Foxton Chatteris, Shepreth, Barrington and Madingley court rolls, 1492-1507, 1510-43
L64/1-4	Foxton with members, court rolls, 1537-8, 1539-40, 1541-2, 1547-52
R59/14/11/7A-B	Great and Little Linton with Chilfords and Michaelotts manor court rolls, 1509-47, 1547-53
P22/5/1	Churchwardens' accounts, Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge, 1504-58

Cambridge University Library, University archives (UA)

- Collect.Admin.2 Junior Proctor's Book
- Collect.Admin.5
- Collect.Admin.9
- C.U.R. 17 Court Leet, 1382-1422, 1568-87
- C.U.R. 36.2 Privileged persons and claims of cognisance
- C.U.R. 67(1) Proclamation of Stourbridge fair by Sir William Cecil
- Luard 128 Indenture of covenant for carpenters' work on new schools, 1467
- Luard 129 Bond of carpenters and timbermen to chancellor, 1466
- Luard 133 Articles embodying privileges and liberties claimed by university 1491
- Luard 143b List of those who are to enjoy university privilege, 11 Jul 1502
- Luard 145a Indenture of agreement between university and corporation, 1503
- Luard 145b List of those who are to enjoy university privilege, 12 May 1503
- V.C.Ct.I.1 Vice-Chancellor's Court, Act book, fair copy, 1552-7
- V.C.Ct.I.24 Vice Chancellor's Court, Act books, draft, 1557-65

Cambridge University Library, Queens' College archives (QC)

- Magnum Journale, ii Queens' College accounts, 1517-35
- QC10 Oakington, Dry Drayton and Cottenham, views of accounts, 4 & 7 Hen VIII

Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (CCC)

- MS 106 Documents relating to the University of Cambridge
- 'Arreragia' Arrears of rent from college property, 1523-47
- 'Liber Albus' College accounts, 1457-67
- 'Registrum Accounts' College accounts, 1376-1485
- XXXIX.119 Rental of college property, 1551

Downing College, Cambridge

Bowtell MS 1-2, 'Liber Rationalis', Cambridge Corporation Treasurers' accounts, vol. i, 1515/16-1560/1, vol. ii, 1561/2-1588/9

King's College, Cambridge (KC)

King's College Ledger Books, i-ii

King's College Mundum Books, i-vii, x-xv

GRA/268-9 Grantchester rentals, 1536, 1537

GRA/275 Grantchester terrier, c. 1565

GRA/656-9, 661, 676 Grantchester bailiff's accounts 1435/6-1445/6

Peterhouse, Cambridge

Peterhouse Computus rolls, 1455/6-1470/1

H1-H3 Indentures of demise of rectory of Hinton, 1452, 1459, 1476

St John's College, Cambridge (SJC)

C17.23 Account of Oliver Scales, St John's College building works, 1512-14

D56.181 Memo of agreement by John Wramp for John Fisher's chantry, 1528

D56.183 Agreement Nicholas Metcalfe & Anthony Trassillion for St John's College clock, 1522

D57.28 Richard Reculver's expenses for inspecting brick grounds, 1510-11

D57.173 Bond, Richard Reculver to John Fisher, for making bricks, 1511

D102.3 St John's Hospital, accounts of receipts 1505-8 and expenses 1505-1509/10

- D106.1 Account of John Scott, including expenses for Christ's College Chapel
and manor of Malton, 1510-11
- D106.2 Accounts of repairs by master of St John's Hospital, c.1500
- D106.9 St John's Hospital accounts 1484/5
- D106.10 St John's Hospital accounts, 1505-10 (partly duplicated in D102.3)
- D107.7 Accounts of Nicholas Metcalfe, mainly for Fisher's chantry, 1527/8
- SB3.1 Bursars' account 1526/7

Trinity College, Cambridge

- King's Hall accounts, xi-xxvi, 1450-1544
- Trinity College Senior Bursars' accounts, i, 1547/8-1563/4
- Trinity College Junior Bursars' accounts, i, 1550/1-1563/4
- Trinity College Lease Book, 1547-85

- Box 21, item 39, Ickleton rental 1483
- Box 21, item 44, Ickleton Valence lease 1508
- Box 21, item 45, Ickleton bond 1515

PRINTED SOURCES

- The accounts of the Chamberlains of Newcastle upon Tyne 1508-1511*, ed. C.M. Fraser, Society of Antiquities of Newcastle upon Tyne Record Series, III (Newcastle, 1987)
- Account rolls of the Obedientiaries of Peterborough*, ed. J. Greatrex, Northamptonshire Record Society, XXXIII (Northampton, 1984)
- Acts of the court of the Mercers' Company, 1453-1527*, ed. L. Lyell & F.D. Watney (Cambridge, 1936)
- The alien communities of London in the fifteenth century. The subsidy rolls of 1440 & 1483-4*, ed. J.L. Bolton (Stamford, 1998)
- Annals of Cambridge*, ed. C.H. Cooper, 5 vols. (Cambridge, 1842-1908)
- Book of William Morton, Almoner of Peterborough Monastery 1448-1467*, ed. P.I. King, Northamptonshire Record Society, XVI (Northampton, 1954)
- Calendar of Close Rolls*, HMSO, 46 vols. (London, 1892-1963)
- Calendar of Letter-Books preserved among the archives of the Corporation of the City of London, 1275-1498*, ed. R.R. Sharpe, 11 vols. (London 1899-1912), vol. 'L'
- Calendar of Patent Rolls*, HMSO, 54 vols. (London, 1891-1916)
- Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London, 1437-1457*, ed. P.E. Jones (Cambridge, 1954)
- Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the reign of Edward VI, 1547-1553*, ed. C.S. Knighton (London, 1992)
- Cambridge Borough Documents*, ed. W.M. Palmer (Cambridge, 1931)
- 'A Cambridge vintner's accounts, c.1511', ed. E.H. Minns, *PCAS*, 34 (1934), 50-8
- Cambridgeshire in the sixteenth century*, ed. W.M. Palmer (Cambridge, 1935)
- Canterbury College, Oxford*, iv, ed. W.A. Pantin, Oxford Historical Society, new series, XXX (Oxford, 1985)

- Cartulary of Oseney Abbey*, vi, ed. H.E. Salter, Oxford Historical Society, CI (Oxford, 1936)
- Charters of the borough of Cambridge*, ed. F.W. Maitland & M. Bateson (Cambridge, 1901)
- Churchwardens' accounts of St Mary the Great*, ed. J.E. Foster, CASOS XXXV (Cambridge, 1905)
- A collection of charters, letters and other documents from the MS library of Corpus Christi College*, ed. J. Lamb (London, 1838)
- The Coventry Leet Book*, ed. M. Dormer Harris, Early English Text Society, 4 vols., CXXXIV, CXXXV, CXXXVIII, CXLVI (London, 1907-13)
- The Customs Accounts of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1454-1500*, ed. J.F. Wade, Surtees Society, CCII (Durham, 1995)
- Documents relating to Cambridgeshire villages*, ed. W.M. Palmer & H.W. Saunders, VI (Cambridge, 1926)
- Documents relating to the university and colleges of Cambridge*, HMSO, 3 vols. (London, 1852), i
- Domestic accounts of Merton College Oxford*, ed. J.M. Fletcher & C.A. Upton, Oxford Historical Society, new series, XXXIV (Oxford, 1996)
- 'Ely episcopal registers', *Ely Diocesan Remembrancer* (1907-11)
- Erasmus and Cambridge. The Cambridge letters of Erasmus translated*, ed. D.F.S. Thomson & H.C. Porter (Toronto, 1963)
- Farming and gardening in late medieval Norfolk*, ed. C. Noble, C. Moreton & P. Rutledge, Norfolk Record Society, LXI (Norwich, 1997)
- A fifteenth century school book from a manuscript in the British Museum (MS Arundel 249)*, ed. W. Nelson (Oxford, 1956)
- Garrett Godfrey's accounts c.1527-33*, ed. E. Leedham-Green, D.E. Rhodes & F.H. Stubbings, Cambridge Bibliographical Society monograph, XII (Cambridge, 1992)

- Grace Book A, containing the proctors' accounts and other records of the university of Cambridge, 1454-88*, ed. S.M. Leathes, CASLMS, I (Cambridge, 1897)
- Grace Book B...1488-1511*, ed. M. Bateson, CASLMS, II-III (Cambridge, 1903-5), parts i-ii
- Grace Book C...1501-1542*, ed. W.G. Searle (Cambridge, 1908)
- The grete herball which geueth parfyt knowlege and understanding of all maner of herbes...* (Southwark, 1526)
- Harrison, William, *The description of England*, ed. G. Edelen, Folger Shakespeare Library (Ithaca, New York, 1968)
- Household accounts from medieval England*, ed. C.M. Woolgar, 2 parts, BARSEH, new series, XVII-XVIII (Oxford, 1992-3)
- Inquisitions and assessments relating to feudal aids...1284-1431*, HMSO, 6 vols. (London, 1899-1920), i
- The itinerary of John Leland*, ed. L. Toulmin Smith, 5 vols. (London, 1907-10), i
- The lay subsidy of 1334*, ed. R.E. Glasscock, BARSEH, new series, II (London, 1975)
- The ledger of John Smythe 1538-1550*, ed. J. Vanes, Bristol Record Society Publications, XXVIII (London, 1974)
- Letters and papers, foreign and domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII*, ed. J.S. Brewer, J. Gairdner and R.H. Brodie, 2nd edn., 23 vols. (London, 1862-1932)
- The military survey of 1522 for Babergh hundred*, ed. J. Pound, Suffolk Records Society, XXVIII (Woodbridge, 1986)
- 'Notes from the college records', *The Eagle* (Magazine of St John's College, Cambridge) 16-26 (1891-1905)
- The overseas trade of London: Exchequer customs accounts 1480-1*, ed. H.S. Cobb, London Record Society, XXVII (London, 1990)
- Paston letters and papers of the fifteenth century*, ed. N. Davis, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1971)
- The priory of St Radegund Cambridge*, ed. A. Gray, CASOS, XXXI (Cambridge, 1898)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The poll taxes of 1377, 1379 and 1381, Part 1, Bedfordshire-Leicestershire*, ed. C.C. Fenwick, BARSEH, new series, XXVII (Oxford, 1998)
- Records of the borough of Nottingham 1155-1547*, ed. W.H. Stevenson, 3 vols. (London, 1882-5), iii
- The register of Thetford Priory*, ed. D. Dymond, BARSEH, new series, XXIV-XXV (Oxford, 1995)
- Report on the Manuscripts of Lord Middleton preserved at Wollaton Hall, Nottinghamshire*, ed. W.H. Stevenson, Historical Manuscripts Commission (London, 1911)
- Rotuli Parliamentorum*, Record Commission, 6 vols. (London, 1783)
- Select cases in Chancery 1364-1471*, ed. W.P. Baildon, Selden Society, X (London, 1896)
- Statutes of the Realm (1101-1713)*, Record Commission, 11 vols. (London 1808-28)
- Stow, John, *A Survey of London*, ed. C.L. Kingsford, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1908)
- Suffolk in 1524*, ed. S.H.A. Hervey, Suffolk Green Books, X (Woodbridge, 1910)
- Tudor economic documents*, ed. R.H. Tawney & E. Power, 3 vols. (London, 1924), iii
- Turner, William, *A new herball*, part 1 (1551) ed. G.T.L. Chapman & M.N. Tweddle (Cambridge, 1989)
- Valor Ecclesiasticus*, ed. J. Caley & J. Hunter, Record Commission, 6 vols. (London, 1810-34), iii
- The West Fields of Cambridge*, ed. C.P. Hall & J.R. Ravensdale, Cambridgeshire Records Society, III (Cambridge, 1976)

PRINTED SECONDARY WORKS

- Abrams, P., 'Towns and economic growth: some theories and problems', in Abrams & Wrigley, eds., *Towns in societies*, pp. 9-33
- Abrams, P. & Wrigley, E.A., eds., *Towns in societies* (Cambridge, 1978)
- Alexander, J.S., 'Building stone from the East Midland quarries: sources, transportation and usage', *Medieval Archaeology*, 39 (1995), 107-35
- Allix, A., 'The geography of fairs: illustrated by Old-World examples', *Geographical Review*, 12 (1922), 532-69
- Aston, T.H., Duncan, G.D. & Evans, T.A.R., 'The medieval alumni of the University of Cambridge', *Past and Present*, 86 (1980), 9-86
- Aston, T.H. & Philpin, C.H.E., eds., *The Brenner debate: agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe* (Cambridge, 1985)
- Atkinson, T.D. & Clark, J.W., *Cambridge described & illustrated being a short history of the town and university* (London, 1897)
- Aylmer, G.E., 'The economics and finances of the colleges and university c.1530-1640', in J. McConica, ed., *The history of the university of Oxford*, iii: *the collegiate university* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 521-58
- Bailey, M., 'Demographic decline in late medieval England: some thoughts on recent research', *EcHR*, 49 (1996), 1-19
- A marginal economy? East Anglian Breckland in the later middle ages* (Cambridge, 1989)
- 'Rural society', in R. Horrox, ed., *Fifteenth-century attitudes: perceptions of society in late medieval England* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 150-68
- 'A tale of two towns: Buntingford and Standon in the later middle ages', *Journal of Medieval History*, 19 (1993), 351-71
- Barron, C.M., 'Centres of conspicuous consumption: the aristocratic town house in London, 1200-1550', *London Journal*, 20 (1995), 1-16

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bartlett, J.N., 'The expansion and decline of York in the later middle ages', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 12 (1959-60), 17-33
- Bennett, J.M., *Ale, beer and brewsters in England: women's work in a changing world, 1300-1600* (Oxford, 1996)
- Beresford, M., *The lost villages of England* (London, 1954)
- New towns of the middle ages: town plantation in England, Wales and Gascony* (London, 1967)
- Beresford, M. & Hurst, J.G., eds., *Deserted medieval villages* (London, 1971)
- Beveridge, W., *Prices and wages in England, from the twelfth to the nineteenth century* (London, 1939)
- Bindoff, S.T., ed., *The House of Commons 1509-1558*, The History of Parliament, 3 vols. (London, 1982)
- Blanchard, I., *International lead production and trade in the "Age of the Saigerprozess" 1460-1560* (Stuttgart, 1995)
- 'Population change, enclosure, and the early Tudor economy', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 23 (1970), 433-42
- Boalch, D.H., *Makers of the harpsichord & clavichord 1440-1840* (Oxford, 3rd edn., 1995)
- Bolton, J.L., *The medieval English economy 1150-1500* (London, 1980)
- Bond, C.J., 'Central place and medieval new town: the origins of Thame, Oxfordshire', in T.R. Slater, ed., *The built form of western cities. Essays for M.R.G. Conzen* (Leicester, 1990), pp. 83-106
- Bonney, M., *Lordship and the urban community: Durham and its overlords, 1250-1540* (Cambridge, 1990)
- Bowden, P.J., 'Statistical appendix', in P.J. Bowden, ed., *Chapters from the Agrarian History of England and Wales, i: Economic change: wages, profits and rents 1500-1750* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 116-72
- Braybrooke, Richard Lord, *The history of Audley End* (London, 1836)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brenner, R., 'Agrarian class structure and economic development in pre-industrial Europe', in Aston & Philpin, eds., *The Brenner debate*, pp. 10-63
- 'Agrarian roots of European capitalism', in Aston & Philpin, eds., *The Brenner debate*, pp. 213-328
- Bridbury, A.R., 'Dr Rigby's comment: a reply', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 39 (1986), 417-22
- Economic growth: England in the later middle ages* (London, 1962)
- 'English provincial towns in the later middle ages', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 34 (1981), 1-24
- 'Sixteenth-century farming', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 27 (1974), 538-56
- Britnell, R.H., *The closing of the middle ages? England, 1471-1529* (Oxford, 1997)
- 'Commerce and capitalism in late medieval England: problems of description and theory', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 6 (1993), pp. 359-76
- The commercialisation of English society 1000-1500* (Manchester, 2nd edn., 1996)
- 'The economic context', in A.J. Pollard, ed., *The Wars of the Roses* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 41-64
- 'The English economy and the government, 1450-1550', in Watts, ed., *End of the middle ages?*, pp. 89-116
- Growth and decline in Colchester, 1300-1525* (Cambridge, 1986)
- 'The occupation of the land – Eastern England', in Miller, ed., *Agrarian History*, pp. 53-67
- 'The Pastons and their Norfolk', *Agricultural History Review*, 36 (1988), 132-44
- 'Production for the market on a small fourteenth-century estate', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 19 (1966), 380-7
- 'The proliferation of markets in England, 1200-1349', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 34 (1981), 209-21
- 'Urban demand in the English economy, 1300-1600', in Galloway, ed., *Trade*, pp. 1-21
- Britnell, R. & Hatcher, J., eds., *Progress and problems in medieval England: essays in honour of Edward Miller* (Cambridge, 1996)
- Brooke, C., Highfield, R. & Swaan, W., *Oxford and Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1988)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brooks, F.W., 'The social position of the parson in the sixteenth century', *Journal of British Archaeological Association*, 3rd series, 10 (1945-7), 23-37
- Butcher, A.F., 'The origins of Romney freemen, 1433-1523', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 27 (1974), 16-27
- 'Rent, population and economic change in late-medieval Newcastle', *Northern History*, 14 (1978), 67-77
- 'Rent and the urban economy: Oxford and Canterbury in the later Middle Ages', *Southern History*, 1 (1979), 11-43
- Butlin, R.A., 'Regions in England and Wales c.1600-1914', in Dodgshon & Butlin, eds., *Historical geography*, pp. 223-54
- Cade, J. & Brayshay, M., 'The taxable wealth and population of Devon parishes in 1524/5: an application of GIS and computer cartography', *History & Computing*, 8 (1996), 105-21
- Campbell, B.M.S., 'The population of early Tudor England: a re-evaluation of the 1522 muster returns and 1524 and 1525 lay subsidies', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 7 (1981), 145-54
- Campbell, B.M.S., Bartley, K.C. & Power, J.P., 'The demesne-farming systems of post-Black Death England: a classification', *Agricultural History Review*, 44 (1996), 131-79
- Campbell, B.M.S., Galloway, J.A., Keene, D. & Murphy M., *A medieval capital and its grain supply: agrarian production and distribution in the London region c.1300*, Historical Geography Research Series, XXX (London, 1993)
- Campbell, B.M.S. & Overton, M., 'A new perspective of medieval and early modern agriculture: six centuries of Norfolk farming c.1250-c.1850', *Past and Present*, 141 (1993), 38-105
- Carpenter, C., 'The fifteenth-century English gentry and their estates', in M. Jones, ed., *Gentry and lesser nobility in late medieval Europe* (Gloucester, 1986), pp. 36-60

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Carus-Wilson, E.M., 'The aulnage accounts: a criticism', in E.M. Carus-Wilson, *Medieval merchant venturers* (London, 1954), pp. 279-91
- 'The medieval trade of the ports of the Wash', *Medieval Archaeology*, 6-7 (1962-3), 182-201
- Carus-Wilson, E.M. & Coleman, O., *England's export trade, 1275-1547* (Oxford, 1963)
- Chartres, J.A., *Internal trade in England 1500-1700* (London, 1977)
- 'Markets and fairs in England and Wales, 1500 to 1860', University of Leeds, School of Business and Economic Studies, Discussion paper series, G93/03 (Leeds, 1993)
- Christaller, W., *Central places in southern Germany*, trans. C.W. Baskin (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966)
- Clapham, J.H., 'A thirteenth-century market town: Linton, Cambs.', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 4 (1933), 194-202
- Clark, A., 'Saffron and Walden', *Essex Review*, 19 (1910), 57-64
- Clark, E., 'Debt litigation in a late medieval English vill', in J.A. Raftis, ed., *Pathways to medieval peasants* (Toronto, 1981), pp. 247-79
- Clark, J.W., 'History of the peal of bells belonging to King's College, Cambridge', *PCAS*, 4 (1876-80), 223-43
- Clark, J.W. & Gray, A., *Old plans of Cambridge 1574 to 1798*, ii: *plans* (Cambridge, 1921)
- Clark, P. & Slack, P., *English towns in transition 1500-1700* (Oxford, 1976)
- Cobban, A.B., *The King's Hall within the University of Cambridge in the later middle ages* (Cambridge, 1969)
- The medieval English universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c.1500* (Aldershot, 1988)
- Corfield, P.J. & Harte, N.B., eds., *London and the English economy 1500-1700* (London, 1990)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Cornwall, J., 'English population in the early sixteenth century', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 23 (1970), 32-44
- Wealth and society in early sixteenth century England* (London, 1988)
- Cromarty, D., 'Chepying Walden 1381-1420, a study from the court rolls', *Essex Journal*, 2 (1967), 104-13, 122-39, 181-6
- Cunich, P., Hoyle, D., Duffy, E. & Hyam, R., *A history of Magdalene College, Cambridge 1428-1988* (Cambridge, 1994)
- Cunningham, W., 'The economic history of Cambridgeshire', in *Ely Diocesan Remembrancer* (1909), 19-24
- The growth of English industry and commerce during the early and middle ages* (Cambridge, 5th edn., 1915)
- Dale, M.K., 'The London silkwomen of the fifteenth century', *EcHR*, 4 (1932-4), 324-35
- Darby, H.C., *The draining of the fens* (Cambridge, 2nd edn., 1956)
- The medieval Fenland* (Newton Abbot, 2nd edn., 1974)
- Medieval Cambridgeshire* (Cambridge, 1977)
- Darby, H.C., Glasscock, R.E., Sheail, J. & Versey, G.R., 'The changing geographical distribution of wealth in England: 1086-1334-1525', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 5 (1979), 247-62
- Davis, J., 'Trade and morals in a fifteenth-century small town', in *Economic History Society annual conference programme* (1999), 99-104
- Dickinson, R.E., *City and region. A geographical interpretation* (London, 1964)
- Dobb, M., *Studies in the development of capitalism* (London, 1946)
- Dobson, R.B., 'Admissions to the freedom of the city of York in the later Middle Ages', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 26 (1973), 1-22
- 'Cathedral chapters and cathedral cities: York, Durham and Carlisle in the fifteenth century', *Northern History* 19 (1983), 15-44
- The Peasants' Revolt of 1381* (London, 2nd edn., 1983)

- 'The religious orders 1370-1540', in J.I. Catto & R. Evans, eds., *The history of the university of Oxford*, ii: *late medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 539-80
- 'Urban decline in late medieval England', in Holt & Rosser, eds., *Medieval town*, pp. 265-86
- Doughty, R.A., 'Industrial prices and inflation in southern England, 1401-1640', *Explorations in Economic History*, 12 (1975), 177-92
- Du Boulay, F.R.H., 'Who were farming the English demesnes at the end of the middle ages?', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 17 (1965), 443-55
- Dyer, A., 'The bishops' census of 1563: its significance and accuracy', *Local Population Studies*, 49 (1992), 19-37
- Decline and growth in English towns 1400-1640* (Cambridge, 2nd edn., 1995)
- Dyer, C., 'The consumer and the market in the later middle ages', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 42 (1989), 305-27
- 'The hidden trade of the Middle Ages: evidence from the West Midlands of England', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 18 (1992), 141-57
- 'Market towns and the countryside in late medieval England', *Canadian Journal of History*, 31 (1996), 17-35
- 'A small landowner in the fifteenth century', *Midland History*, 1, part 3 (1972), 1-14
- Standards of living in the later middle ages: social change in England, c. 1200-1520* (Cambridge, 1989)
- 'Were peasants self-sufficient? English villagers and the market, 900-1300', in E. Mornet, ed., *Campagnes médiévales: l'homme et son espace* (Paris, 1995), pp. 653-66
- 'Were there any capitalists in fifteenth-century England?', in C. Dyer, ed., *Everyday life in medieval England* (London, 1994), pp. 305-27
- Dymond, D., 'The famine of 1527 in Essex', *Local Population Studies*, 26 (1981), 29-40

- Dymond, D. & Virgoe, R., 'The reduced population and wealth of early fifteenth-century Suffolk', *Proceedings of Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 36 (1985-8), 73-100
- Edwards, P.R., 'The horse trade in Tudor & Stuart England', in F.M.L. Thompson, ed., *Horses in European economic history. A preliminary canter* (Reading, 1983), pp. 113-31
- Eiden, H. & Irsigler, F., 'Environs and hinterland: Cologne and Nuremberg in the later middle ages', in Galloway, ed., *Trade*, pp. 43-57
- Elton, G.R., *Star Chamber stories* (London, 1958)
- Emden, A.B., *A biographical register of the university of Cambridge to 1500* (Cambridge, 1963)
- Emery, A., *Greater medieval houses of England and Wales 1300-1500*, ii: *East Anglia, central England and Wales* (Cambridge, 2000)
- Epstein, S.R., 'Regional fairs, institutional innovation, and economic growth in late medieval Europe', *EcHR*, 47 (1994), 459-82
- Evans, T.A.R. & Faith, R.J., 'College estates and university finances, 1350-1500', in J.I. Catto & R. Evans, eds., *The history of the University of Oxford*, ii: *late medieval Oxford* (Oxford, 1992), pp. 635-707
- Everitt, A., 'Country, county and town: patterns of regional evolution in England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 29 (1979), 79-108
- 'The English urban inn, 1560-1760' in A. Everitt, ed., *Perspectives in English urban history* (London, 1973), pp. 91-137
- 'Introduction', in Everitt, ed., *Perspectives*, pp. 1-15
- 'The marketing of agricultural produce, 1500-1640', in J. Chartres, ed., *Chapters from the Agrarian History of England and Wales*, iv: *Agricultural markets and trade, 1500-1750* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 15-141
- Fairclough, K., 'A Tudor canal scheme for the River Lea', *London Journal*, 5 (1979), 218-27

- Farmer, D.L., 'Marketing the produce of the countryside, 1200-1500', in Miller, ed., *Agrarian History*, pp. 324-430
- 'Prices and wages, 1350-1500', in Miller, ed., *Agrarian History*, pp. 431-525
- Fletcher, J.M. & Upton, C.A., 'Feasting in an early Tudor college: the example of Merton College, Oxford', in D. Williams, ed., *Early Tudor England. Proceedings of the 1987 Harlaxton symposium* (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 37-60
- Fisher, F.J., 'Commercial trends and policy in sixteenth-century England', in Corfield & Harte, eds., *London and the English economy*, pp. 81-103
- 'The development of London as a centre of conspicuous consumption in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in Corfield & Harte, eds., *London and the English economy*, pp. 105-18
- 'Influenza and inflation in Tudor England', Corfield & Harte, eds., *London and the English economy*, pp. 163-72
- 'London as an "engine of economic growth"', in Corfield & Harte, eds., *London and the English economy*, pp. 185-98
- Fraser, C.M., 'The pattern of trade in the north-east of England, 1265-1350', *Northern History*, 4 (1969), 44-66
- Fox, H.S.A., 'The chronology of enclosure and economic development in medieval Devon', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 28 (1975), 181-202
- Fudge, J.D., *Cargoes, embargoes and emissaries. The commercial and political interaction of England and the German Hanse 1450-1510* (Toronto, 1995)
- Galloway, J.A., 'Driven by drink? Ale consumption and the agrarian economy of the London region c.1300-1400', in M. Carlin & J.T. Rosenthal, eds., *Food and eating in Medieval Europe* (London, 1998), pp. 87-100
- ed., *Trade, urban hinterlands and market integration c.1300-1600*, Centre for Metropolitan History working papers series, 3 (London, 2000)
- Galloway, J.A., Keene, D. & Murphy, M., 'Fuelling the city: production and distribution of firewood and fuel in London's region, 1290-1400', *EcHR*, 49 (1996), 447-72

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Gerald Eve & Co., *Report on an assessment of future shopping needs in Cambridge central area* (London, 1965)
- Glasscock, R.E., 'The distribution of wealth in East Anglia in the early fourteenth century', *Institute of British Geographers' Transactions*, 32 (1963), 113-23
- Glennie, P., 'In search of agrarian capitalism: manorial land markets and the acquisition of land in the Lea Valley c.1450-c.1560', *Continuity and Change*, 3 (1998), 11-40
- Goddard, A.R., 'Ickleton church and priory', *PCAS*, 11 (1903-6), 181-95
- Goose, N., 'The bishops' census of 1563: a re-examination of its reliability', *Electronic Seminars in History*, Institute of Historical Research web site at <http://www.ihrinfo.ac.uk/ihr/esh/bishart2.html>
- 'The ecclesiastical returns of 1563: a cautionary note', *Local Population Studies*, 34 (1985), 46-7
- 'English pre-industrial urban economies', *Urban History Yearbook* (1982), 24-30
- 'In search of the urban variable: towns and the English economy, 1500-1650', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 39 (1986), 165-85
- Grantham, G., 'Agricultural supply during the industrial revolution: French evidence and European implications', *Journal of Economic History*, 49 (1989), 43-72
- 'Privileged spaces: agricultural productivity and urban provisioning zones in pre-industrial Europe' (English summary), *Annales*, 52 (1997), 729
- Gras, N.S.B., *The evolution of the English corn market from the twelfth to the eighteenth century* (Harvard, 1915)
- Gray, G.J., *The earlier Cambridge stationers and bookbinders and the first Cambridge printer*, Oxford Bibliographical Society Illustrated Monographs XIII (Oxford, 1904)
- Hadwin, J.F., 'The medieval lay subsidies and economic history', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 36 (1983), 200-17
- Hall, P., *Von Thünen's isolated state* (Oxford, 1966)

- Hammer, C.I., 'The mobility of skilled labour in late medieval England: some Oxford evidence', *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte*, 63 (1976), 194-210
- 'Oxford town and Oxford University', in J. McConica, ed., *The history of the University of Oxford*, iii: *the collegiate university* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 69-116
- Hanham, A., *The Celys and their world: an English merchant family of the fifteenth century* (Cambridge, 1985)
- Hare, J.N., 'The demesne lessees of fifteenth-century Wiltshire', *Agricultural History Review*, 29 (1981), 1-15
- 'Growth and recession in the fifteenth-century economy: the Wiltshire textile industry and the countryside', *EcHR*, 52 (1999), 1-26
- Harrison, C.J., 'Grain price analysis and harvest qualities', *Agricultural History Review*, 19 (1971), 135-55
- Harvey, B., 'The aristocratic consumer in England in the long thirteenth century', in M. Prestwich, R.H. Britnell & R. Frame, eds., *Thirteenth century England*, vi: *Proceedings of the Durham conference 1995* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 17-37
- 'The leasing of the abbot of Westminster's demesnes in the later middle ages', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 22 (1969), 17-27
- Living and dying in medieval England, 1100-1540: the monastic experience* (Oxford, 1993)
- Harvey, J., *English medieval architects: a biographical dictionary down to 1550* (Gloucester, 1984)
- Hatcher, J., 'The great slump of the mid-fifteenth century', in Britnell & Hatcher, eds., *Progress and problems*, pp. 237-72
- The history of the British coal industry*, i: *before 1700, towards the age of coal* (Oxford, 1993)
- Plague, population and the English economy 1348-1530* (London, 1977)
- 'Mortality in the fifteenth century: some new evidence', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 39 (1986), 19-38

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Hatcher, J. & Barker, T.C., *A history of British pewter* (London, 1974)
- Hatcher, J. & Bailey, M., *Modelling the middle ages: economic development in theory and practice* (forthcoming, Oxford, 2001), chapters 3-5
- Heaton, H., *Yorkshire woollen and worsted industries from the earliest times up to the industrial revolution* (Oxford, 2nd edn., 1965)
- Hilton, R.H., *English and French towns in feudal society: a comparative study* (Cambridge, 1992)
- The English peasantry in the later middle ages* (Oxford, 1975)
- ‘Introduction’, in R. Hilton, ed., *The transition from feudalism to capitalism* (London, 1976), pp. 9-30
- ‘Towns in English medieval society’, in Holt & Rosser, eds., *Medieval town*, pp. 19-28
- Hodgen, M.T., ‘Fairs of Elizabethan England’, *Economic Geography*, 18 (1942), 389-400
- Holt, R. & Rosser, G., eds., *The medieval town: a reader in English urban history 1200-1540* (Harlow, 1990)
- ‘Introduction: the English town in the middle ages’, in Holt & Rosser eds., *Medieval town*, pp. 1-18
- Hoskins, W.G., *The age of plunder: the England of Henry VIII, 1500-1547* (London, 1976)
- ‘English provincial towns in the early sixteenth century’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th series, 6 (1956), 1-19
- ‘Harvest fluctuations and English economic history, 1480-1619’, *Agricultural History Review*, 12 (1964), 28-46
- ‘The rebuilding of rural England, 1570-1640’, *Past and Present*, 4 (1953), 44-59
- Hoskins, W.G. & Finberg, H.P.R., *Devonshire Studies* (London, 1952)
- Hoyle, R.W., ‘Taxation and the mid-Tudor crisis’, *EcHR*, 51 (1998), 649-75
- ‘Tenure and the land market in early modern England: or a late contribution to the Brenner debate’, *EcHR*, 2nd series, 43 (1990), 1-20

- Tudor taxation records: a guide for users*, PRO Readers' Guide no. 5 (London, 1994)
- Hudson, W., 'The assessment of the townships of the county of Norfolk...', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 12 (1895), 243-97
- Hulbert, N.F., 'A survey of Somerset fairs', *Proceedings of the Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society*, 82 (1936), 83-159
- Johnson, A.H., *The history of the worshipful company of the Drapers of London*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1914)
- Jones, J., *A human geography of Cambridgeshire* (Cambridge, 1924)
- 'Villages of Cambridgeshire', in H.C. Darby, ed., *The Cambridge region* (Cambridge, 1938), pp. 106-15
- Jones, M.K. & Underwood, M.G., *The king's mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort, countess of Richmond and Derby* (Cambridge, 1992)
- Keene, D., 'Changes in London's economic hinterland as indicated by debt cases in the Court of Common Pleas', in Galloway, ed., *Trade*, pp. 59-81
- 'Medieval London and its region', *London Journal*, 14 (1989), 99-111
- 'The property market in English towns A.D. 1100-1600', in *D'Une Ville à l'autre: Structures, Matérielles et Organisation de L'Espace dans les villes Européennes XIII^e-XVI^e Siècle* (Rome, 1989), pp. 201-26
- 'Small towns and the metropolis: the experience of medieval England', in J-M. Duvosquel & E. Thoen, eds., *Peasants and townsmen in medieval Europe* (Ghent, 1995), pp. 223-38
- Kerling, N.J.M., 'Aliens in the county of Norfolk, 1436-1485', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 33 (1965), 200-15
- Kermode, J., *Medieval merchants: York, Beverley and Hull in the later middle ages* (Cambridge, 1998)
- 'Money and credit in the fifteenth century: some lessons from Yorkshire', *Business History Review*, 45 (1991), 475-501

- 'The trade of late medieval Chester', in Britnell & Hatcher, eds., *Progress & problems*, pp. 286-307
- 'Urban decline? The flight from office in late medieval York', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 35 (1982), 179-98
- Kerridge, E., 'The movement of rent, 1540-1640', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 6 (1953-4), 16-34
- Kowaleski, M., 'The expansion of the south-western fisheries in late medieval England', *EcHR*, 53 (2000), 429-54
- 'The grain trade in fourteenth-century Exeter', in E.B. DeWindt, ed., *The salt of common life: individuality and choice in the medieval town, countryside, and church* (Kalamazoo, 1995), pp. 1-52
- Local markets and regional trade in medieval Exeter* (Cambridge, 1995)
- Knowles, R. & Wareing, J., *Economic and social geography made simple* (London, 4th edn., 1981)
- Langton, J. & Hoppe, G., *Town and country in the development of early modern western Europe*, Historical Geography Research Series, XI (Norwich, 1983)
- Leadam, I.S., 'The inquisition of 1517...Cambridgeshire', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, new series, 8 (1894), 298-305
- Leader, D.R., *A history of the University of Cambridge*, i: *the university to 1546* (Cambridge, 1988)
- Leedham-Green, E., *A concise history of the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1996)
- 'The University Archives (what are they, anyway?)', in P. Fox, ed., *Cambridge University Library. The great collections* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 197-210
- Lehmberg, S.E., *The Reformation Parliament 1529-36* (Cambridge, 1970)
- Lloyd, T.H., *Some aspects of the building industry in medieval Stratford-upon-Avon*, Dugdale Society occasional papers, XIV (Oxford, 1961)
- Lobel, M.D., 'Cambridge', in M.D. Lobel, ed., *The atlas of historic towns*, (London, 1975), ii

- Lomas, R.A., 'A northern farm at the end of the Middle Ages: Elvethall manor, Durham, 1443/4-1513/14', *Northern History*, 18 (1982), 26-53
- Lovatt, R., 'Two collegiate loan chests in late medieval Cambridge', in Zutshi, ed., *Medieval Cambridge*, pp. 129-65
- Machin, R., 'The Great Rebuilding: a reassessment', *Past and Present*, 77 (1977), 33-56
- 'The mechanism of the pre-industrial building cycle', *Vernacular Architecture*, 8 (1977), 815-19
- Maitland, F.W., 'The history of a Cambridgeshire manor', *English Historical Review*, 35 (1894), 417-39
- Township and borough* (Cambridge, 1898)
- Marx, K., *Capital*, trans. E. & C. Paul, 2 vols. (London, 1930)
- Masschaele, J., 'The multiplicity of medieval markets reconsidered', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 20 (1994), 255-71
- Peasants, merchants, and markets: inland trade in medieval England, 1150-1350* (Basingstoke, 1997)
- Mate, M., 'The East Sussex land market and agrarian class structure in the late middle ages', *Past and Present*, 139 (1993), 46-65
- 'The rise and fall of markets in southeast England', *Canadian Journal of History*, 31 (1996), 59-86
- Women in medieval English society* (Cambridge, 1999)
- May, P., 'Newmarket and its market court, 1399-1413', *Proceedings of Suffolk Institute of Archaeology*, 35 (1981), 31-9
- Newmarket – medieval and Tudor* (Newmarket, 1982)
- Mayhew, N.J., 'Population, money supply, and the velocity of circulation in England, 1300-1700', *EcHR*, 48 (1995), 238-57
- McCutcheon, K.L., *Yorkshire fairs & markets to the end of the eighteenth century*, Thoresby Society, XXXIX (Leeds, 1940)

- McIntosh, M.K., 'Money lending on the periphery of London 1300-1600', *Albion*, 20 (1988), 557-71
- McIntosh, T., *The decline of Stourbridge fair, 1770-1934*, Friends of the Department of English Local History, University of Leicester, No. 2 (Leicester, 1998)
- McKitterick, D., *A history of Cambridge University Press, i: printing and the book trade in Cambridge 1534-1698* (Cambridge, 1992)
- Miller, E., *The abbey and bishopric of Ely* (Cambridge, 1951)
- ed., *The agrarian history of England and Wales*, iii: 1348-1500 (Cambridge, 1991)
- Moore, E.W., *The fairs of medieval England: an introductory study*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts, LXXII (Toronto, 1985)
- Moore, J.S., 'Jack Fisher's "flu": a visitation revisited', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 46 (1993), 280-307
- Newman, C.M., 'Employment on the estates of the priory of Durham, 1494-1519: the priory as an employer', *Northern History*, 36 (2000), 43-58
- Newton, K.C., *Thaxted in the fourteenth century* (Chelmsford, 1960)
- Nichols, J., *The history and antiquities of Barnwell Abbey, and of Sturbridge fair*, Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica, no. XXXVIII (London, 1786)
- Nightingale, P., 'The growth of London in the medieval English economy', in Britnell & Hatcher, eds., *Progress and problems*, pp. 89-106
- A medieval mercantile community: the Grocers' Company and the politics and trade of London, 1000-1485* (New Haven, 1995)
- 'Monetary contraction and mercantile credit in later medieval England', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 43 (1990), 560-75
- Outhwaite, R.B., *Dearth, public policy and social disturbance in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1991)
- Inflation in Tudor and early Stuart England*, (London, 2nd edn., 1982)
- Overton, M., *Agricultural revolution in England: the transformation of the agrarian economy 1500-1850* (Cambridge, 1996)
- Owen, D.M., *Cambridge University archives. A classified list* (Cambridge, 1988)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The Oxford English Dictionary*, 20 vols. (Oxford, 2nd edn., 1989)
- Palliser, D.M., 'A regional capital as magnet: immigrants to York, 1477-1566', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 57 (1985), 111-23
- Tudor York* (Oxford, 1979)
- 'Urban decay revisited', in J.A.F. Thomson, ed., *Towns and townspeople in the fifteenth century* (Gloucester, 1988), pp. 1-21
- 'York under the Tudors: the trading life of the northern capital', in A. Everitt, ed., *Perspectives in English urban history* (London, 1973), pp. 39-59
- Palmer, W.M., *The antiquities of Linton* (privately printed, 1913)
- Palmer, W.M., 'Enclosures at Ely, Downham and Littleport A.D. 1548', *Transactions of the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Archaeological Society*, 5 (1937), 369-84
- Pam, D.O., *Tudor Enfield: the maltmen and the Lea navigation*, Edmonton Hundred Historical Society, Occasional Papers, new series XVIII (not dated)
- Page, F.M., *The estates of Crowland Abbey* (Cambridge, 1934)
- Patten, J., 'Patterns of migration and movement of labour to three pre-industrial East Anglian towns', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 2 (1976), 111-29
- Pearce, E.C., 'College accounts of John Botwright, master of Corpus Christi, 1443-74', *PCAS*, 22 (1917-20), 76-90
- Peek, H.E. & Hall, C., *The archives of the University of Cambridge. An historical introduction* (Cambridge, 1962)
- Pettit, G.H.N., *The land of Britain: report of the Land Utilisation Survey of Britain*, part 74, *Cambridgeshire* (London, 1941)
- Pevsner, N., *The buildings of England. Cambridgeshire* (London, 2nd edn., 1970)
- Phelps-Brown, E.H. & Hopkins, S.V., *A perspective of wages and prices* (London, 1981)
- Phythian-Adams, C., 'Local history and societal history', *Local Population Studies*, 51 (1993), 30-45

- 'Urban decay in late medieval England', in Abrams & Wrigley, eds., *Towns in societies*, pp. 159-85
- Pirenne, H., *Medieval cities: their origins and the revival of trade* (Princeton, N.J., 1952)
- Poos, L.R., *A rural society after the Black Death: Essex, 1350-1525* (Cambridge, 1991)
- ~~Porter~~^{Parker} R., *Town and gown: the 700 years war in Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1983)
- Postan, M.M., 'The fifteenth century', *EcHR*, 9 (1938-9), 160-7
- Postgate, M.R., 'Field systems of East Anglia', in A.R.H. Baker & R.A. Butlin, eds., *Studies of field systems in the British Isles* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 281-324
- Postles, D., 'An English small town in the later middle ages: Loughborough', *Urban History*, 20 (1993), 7-29
- Power, E., *Medieval people* (London, 1924)
- Rackham, O., *Ancient woodland: its history, vegetation and uses in England* (London, 1980)
- Raftis, J.A., *Early Tudor Godmanchester: survivals and new arrivals*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts, XCVII (Toronto, 1990)
- The estates of Ramsey Abbey: a study in economic growth and organisation*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Studies and Texts, III (Toronto, 1957)
- Ramsay, G.D., 'The distribution of the cloth industry in 1561-2', *English Historical Review*, 57 (1942), 361-9
- Raven, J.J., *The church bells of Cambridgeshire*, CASOS, XVIII-XIX (Cambridge, 2nd edn., 1881)
- Ravensdale, J.R., 'Landbeach in 1549: Ket's rebellion in miniature', in L.M. Munby, ed., *East Anglian studies* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 94-116
- Liable to floods: village landscape on the edge of the Fens, A.D. 450-1850* (Cambridge, 1974)
- Reaney, P.H., ed., *The place-names of Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely*, English Place-name Society, XIX (Cambridge, 1943)

- Reddaway, T.F., *The early history of the Goldsmiths' Company, 1327-1509* (London, 1975)
- Riden, P., *Record sources for local history* (London, 1987)
- Ridout, H., 'Markets and fairs', in T. Kirby & S. Oosthuizen, eds., *An atlas of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire history* (Cambridge, 2000), chapter 44
- Rigby, S.H., *English society in the later middle ages: class, status and gender* (London, 1995)
- 'Late medieval urban prosperity: the evidence of the lay subsidies', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 39 (1986), 411-16
- Medieval Grimsby: growth and decline* (Hull, 1993)
- '"Sore decay" and "fair dwellings": Boston and urban decline in the later middle ages', *Midland History*, 10 (1985), 47-61
- 'Urban decline in the later middle ages: some problems in interpreting the statistical data', *Urban History Yearbook* (1979), 46-60
- Rodgers, H.B., 'The market area of Preston in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', *Geographical Studies*, 3 (1956), 46-55
- Rogers, J.E.T., *A history of agriculture and prices in England*, 7 vols. (Oxford, 1866-1902)
- Rosser, G., 'London and Westminster: the suburb in the urban economy in the later middle ages', in J.A.F. Thomson, ed., *Towns and townspeople in the fifteenth century* (Gloucester, 1988), pp. 45-61
- Medieval Westminster, 1200-1540* (Oxford, 1989)
- Rowell, T.A., 'Sedge (*Cladium mariscus*) in Cambridgeshire: its use and production since the seventeenth century', *Agricultural History Review*, 34 (1986), 140-8
- Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *An inventory of the historical monuments in the city of Cambridge*, 2 vols. (London, 1959)
- An inventory of the historical monuments in the county of Cambridge*, i: *West Cambridgeshire* (London, 1968), ii: *North-East Cambridgeshire* (London, 1972)
- Rubin, M., *Charity and community in medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1987)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Russell, J.C., 'The metropolitan city region of the middle ages', in *Journal of Regional Science*, 2 (1960), 55-70
- Saffron Walden Museum, *The saffron crocus: history & cookery* (Saffron Walden, 1997)
- Saltmarsh, J., 'A college home-farm in the fifteenth century', *Economic History*, 11 (1936), 155-72
- 'Hand-list of the estates of King's College, Cambridge', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 12 (1934), 32-8
- Salzman, L.F., *Building in England down to 1540: a documentary history* (Oxford, 1952)
- English trade in the middle ages* (Oxford, 1931)
- Sanders, S., *Historical and architectural notes on Great St Mary's Church, Cambridge*, CASOS, X (Cambridge, 1869)
- Scammell, G.V., 'English merchant shipping at the end of the middle ages: some East Coast evidence', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 13 (1961), 327-41
- Schofield, R.S., 'The geographical distribution of wealth in England, 1334-1649', *EcHR*, 2nd series, 18 (1965), 483-510
- Sheail, J., 'The distribution of taxable population and wealth in England during the early sixteenth century', *Institute of British Geographers' Transactions*, 55 (1972), 111-25
- The regional distribution of wealth in England as indicated in the 1524/5 lay subsidy returns*, ed. R.W. Hoyle, List & Index Society, special series, XXVIII, 2 vols. (Kew, 1998)
- Sherlock, D., 'Brickmaking accounts for Wisbech, 1333-1356', *PCAS*, 87 (1998), 59-69
- Siraut, M., 'Accounts of Saint Katherine's Guild at Holy Trinity Church, Cambridge: 1514-37', *PCAS*, 67 (1977), 111-21
- 'Cambridgeshire fairs and markets' (CCRO, pamphlet collection)

- 'Physical mobility in Elizabethan Cambridge', *Local Population Studies*, 27 (1981), 65-70
- Slack, P., 'Mortality crises and epidemic disease in England, 1485-1610', in C. Webster, ed., *Health, medicine and mortality in the sixteenth century* (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 9-59
- 'Social policy and the constraints of government, 1547-58', in J. Loach & R. Tittler, eds., *The mid-Tudor polity c.1540-1560* (London, 1980), pp. 94-115
- Smailes, A., *The geography of towns* (London, 1953)
- Smith, A., *An inquiry into the nature and causes of the wealth of nations*, ed. R.H. Campbell, A.S. Skinner & W.B. Todd, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1976)
- Smith, C.T., 'Cambridge in its regional setting', in J.A. Steers, ed., *The Cambridge region 1965*, British Association for the Advancement of Science (London, 1965), pp. 133-92
- Smith, R.B., *Land and politics in the England of Henry VIII. The West Riding of Yorkshire: 1530-1546* (Oxford, 1970)
- Smith, R.M., 'A periodic market and its impact on a manorial community: Botesdale, Suffolk, and the manor of Redgrave, 1280-1300', in Z. Razi & R. Smith, eds., *Medieval society and the manor court* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 450-81
- Spufford, M., *Contrasting communities: English villagers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (Cambridge, 1974)
- The great reclothing of rural England: petty chapmen and their wares in the seventeenth century* (London, 1984)
- Swanson, H., *Medieval artisans: an urban class in late medieval England* (Oxford, 1989)
- Sweezy, P., 'A critique', in R. Hilton, ed., *The transition from feudalism to capitalism* (London, 1976), pp. 33-56
- Talbot, C.H. & Hammond, E.A., *Medical practitioners in medieval England: a biographical register*, Publications of the Wellcome Historical Medical Library, new series, VIII (London, 1965)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Tawney, R.H., *The agrarian problem in the sixteenth century* (London, 1912)
Religion and the rise of capitalism (London, 1922)
- Taylor, A., *Archaeology of Cambridgeshire*, 2 vols. (March, 1997-8)
Cambridge. The hidden history (Stroud, 1999)
- Taylor, C., *The Cambridgeshire landscape* (London, 1973)
 'Medieval market grants and village morphology', *Landscape History*, 4 (1982), 21-8
 'Whittlesford: the study of a river-edge village', in M. Aston, D. Austin & C. Dyer, eds., *Rural settlements of medieval England* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 207-27
- Teversham, T.F., *A history of the village of Sawston*, 2 parts (Sawston, 1942-7)
- Thirsk, J., *Alternative agriculture: a history from the Black Death to the present day* (Oxford, 1997)
Economic policy and projects (Oxford, 1978)
England's agricultural regions and agrarian history 1500-1750 (Basingstoke, 1987)
- Thornton, G.A., *A history of Clare, Suffolk* (Cambridge, 1928)
- Thrupp, S.L., 'Aliens in and around London in the fifteenth century', in A.E.J. Hollaender & W. Kellaway, eds., *Studies in London history presented to Philip Edmund Jones* (London, 1969), pp. 251-72
 'A survey of the alien population of England in 1440', *Speculum*, 32 (1957), 262-73
The merchant class of medieval London (Chicago, 1948)
- Titow, J.Z., 'The decline of the fair of St Giles, Winchester, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries', *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 31 (1987), 58-75
English rural society, 1200-1350 (London, 1969)
- Tupling, G.H., 'Early Lancashire markets and their tolls', *Transactions of the Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 50 (1934-5), 107-37
- Underwood, M., 'The impact of St John's College as landowner in the west fields of Cambridge in the early sixteenth century', in Zutshi, ed., *Medieval Cambridge*, pp. 167-88
- Unwin, P.T.H., 'Towns and trade 1066-1500', in Dodgshon & Butlin, eds., *Historical geography*, pp. 123-49

- Venn, J.A., *Oxford and Cambridge matriculations 1544-1906 with a graphic chart illustrating the varying fortunes of the two universities* (Cambridge, 1908)
- A statistical chart to illustrate the entries at the various colleges in the university of Cambridge, 1504-1907* (Cambridge, 1908)
- Verlinden, O., 'Markets and fairs', in M.M. Postan, E.E. Rich & E. Miller, eds., *Cambridge economic history of Europe*, iii: *Economic organisation and policies in the middle ages* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 119-53
- The Victoria County History of the counties of England* (London, 1900- in progress)
- Walford, C., *Fairs, past and present: a chapter in the history of commerce* (London, 1883)
- Watkins, A., 'Landowners and their estates in the Forest of Arden in the fifteenth century', *Agricultural History Review*, 45 (1997), 18-33
- Small towns in the Forest of Arden in the fifteenth century*, Dugdale Society occasional papers, XXXVIII (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1998)
- Watts, J.L., ed., *The end of the middle ages? England in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries* (Stroud, 1998)
- 'Introduction: history, the fifteenth century and the Renaissance', in Watts, ed., *End of the middle ages?*, pp. 1-22
- Wayment, H., *King's College Chapel, Cambridge. The great windows. Introduction and guide* (Cambridge, 1982)
- Weatherill, L., *Consumer behaviour and material culture in Britain, 1660-1760* (London, 1988)
- Webb, J., *Great Tooley of Ipswich. Portrait of an early Tudor merchant*, Suffolk Records Society, V (1962)
- Wedgwood, J.C., *The History of Parliament: Biographies of the members of the Commons House, 1439-1509* (London, 1936)
- Williams, G., 'Ecclesiastical vestments, books and furniture in the collegiate church of King's College, Cambridge, in the fifteenth century', *Ecclesiologist*, 20 (1859), 304-15

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Williams, N.J., *The maritime trade of the East Anglian ports, 1550-1590* (Oxford, 1988)
- Willis, R. & Clark, J.W., *The architectural history of the University of Cambridge and of the colleges of Cambridge and Eton*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1886, vols. 1-3 reprinted, 1988)
- Woodward, D., *Men at work: labourers and building craftsmen in the towns of northern England, 1450-1750* (Cambridge, 1995)
- ‘Wage rates and living standards in pre-industrial England’, *Past and Present*, 91 (1981), 28-46
- Wrightson, K. & Levine, D., *Poverty and piety in an English village, Terling 1525-1700* (London, 1979)
- Wrigley, E.A., ‘City and country in the past: a sharp divide or a continuum?’, *Historical Research*, 64 (1991), 107-20
- ‘Parasite or stimulus: the town in a pre-industrial economy’, in Abrams & Wrigley, eds., *Towns in societies*, pp. 295-309
- ‘A simple model of London’s importance in changing English society and economy, 1650-1750’, in Abrams & Wrigley, eds., *Towns in societies*, pp. 215-43
- Wrigley, E.A. & Schofield, R.S., *The population history of England, 1541-1871: a reconstruction* (London, 1981)
- Yates, M., ‘Change and continuities in rural society from the later middle ages to the sixteenth century: the contribution of west Berkshire’, *EcHR*, 52 (1999), 617-37
- Zell, M., *Industry in the countryside: Wealden society in the sixteenth century* (Cambridge, 1994)
- Zutshi, P., ‘John Botwright master of the college, 1443-1474’, *Letter of the Corpus Association*, 77 (1998), 13-19
- ed., *Medieval Cambridge: essays on the pre-Reformation university* (Woodbridge, 1993)

UNPUBLISHED DISSERTATIONS

- Galloway, J.A., 'Colchester and its region, 1350-1560: wealth, industry and rural-urban mobility in a medieval society' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1986)
- Goose, N.R., 'Economic and social aspects of provincial towns: a comparative study of Cambridge, Colchester and Reading c.1500-1700' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1984)
- Hamid, R., 'A service centre hierarchy in Cambridgeshire' (unpublished dissertation, Department of Geography, University of Durham, 1965)
(deposited in the Cambridgeshire Collection, Cambridge Central Library)
- Koren, A., 'Ely in the late middle ages' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Indiana University, 1977)
- Ridout, H., 'Sturbridge Fair in the eighteenth century' (unpublished Certificate of Local History dissertation, Board of Continuing Education, University of Cambridge, 1992)
(deposited in the Cambridgeshire Collection, Cambridge Central Library)
- Saltmarsh, J., 'The employment of the estates of King's College in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; with special reference to the origins of beneficial leasing' (unpublished fellowship dissertation, King's College, Cambridge, 1930)
(deposited in King's College Archives, JS 1/36, Copy A)
- Schofield, R.S., 'Parliamentary land taxation 1485-1547' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1963)
- Shepard, A.J., 'Meanings of manhood in early modern England with special reference to Cambridge, c.1560-1640' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1998)
- Siraut, M.C., 'Some aspects of the economic and social history of Cambridge under Elizabeth I' (unpublished M.Litt. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1978)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Stone, D.J., 'The management of resources on the demesne farm of Wisbech Barton, 1314-1430' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1998)
- Whittle, J., 'The development of agrarian capitalism in England, c.1450-c.1580' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1995)
- Yates, M., 'Continuity and change in rural society c.1400-1600: West Hanney and Shaw (Berkshire) and their region' (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1997)