

Victoria County History Shropshire

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Shrewsbury: Institutions, buildings and culture

Section 3.2, 'Markets and fairs'

The following text is an unrevised draft prepared by the late W. A. Champion. It is made available here through the kindness of his executors.

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3.2 Markets and fairs. [W.A. Champion – Final draft, Jan. 2012]

Markets before the 19th century.

A market place at Shrewsbury is first mentioned in 1155 and again c.1200.¹ In 1203 the King ordered that it be held on a Saturday,² and it was mentioned again in the following year in a grant to the lepers of St Giles Hospital.³ In 1228 the market was said to have been damaged by that at Oswestry.⁴ The principal market place was originally located in the cemetery of St Alkmund and St Juliana, as the county sheriff was ordered in 1261 to move it from there to *Gunpestolstrete*, i.e. to the Cornmarket in the High Street,⁵ and in 1276 a grant of pavage for the new market place stated that it had been moved because of the filth on the old churchyard site.⁶ As the *novum forum* it was mentioned c.1300,⁷ and gave its name to *Chepyngstrete* (Market Street), though some references may be to the earlier market site.⁸ At least 15 years prior to 1261, however, a market had also existed at the junction of Mardol Head and the west end of the High Street, with stalls apparently extending round both sides of the corner.⁹ Earlier names for Mardol Head included Hokerstall (and variants),¹⁰ and a pillory appears to have been located in the same vicinity.¹¹ Work on the new market site nearby was underway by 1268–9, and involved the reclamation and paving of a glacial kettle hole, though the pool was evidently not completely drained as the communal ducking-stool, which provided the earliest name for High Street, was still located there in 1327.¹² From the 16th century Wednesday and Saturday are recorded as Shrewsbury's market days,¹³ and 300 years later it was said that 'The former is small, but that on the latter day is well attended and abundantly supplied.'¹⁴

¹ U. Rees (ed.), *The Cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey* (1975), I, 41, 170 .

² *Pleas before the King or his Justices 1198-1212* (Selden Soc. 83), 70; above, Topography, 1200–1340.

³ *Rot. Chart.* 122.

⁴ *Close* 1227–31, 121.

⁵ *Close* 1259–61, 351; M. Gelling, *The Place-Names of Shropshire*, IV (2004), 16; above, Topography, 1200–1340.

⁶ *Cal. Pat.* 1272–81, 129.

⁷ SA 6001/2794, p. 5.

⁸ Gelling, *Place-Names*, 16; J.L. Hobbs, *Shrewsbury Street Names* (1954), 27.

⁹ N. Baker, R.K. Morriss, P. Stamper, 'Shrewsbury Market Place and Hall', *The Archaeological Journal* 163 (2006), 181-5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; Gelling, *Place-Names*, 27-8.

¹¹ Bodleian, Gough Shrop. 1, f. 147.

¹² *Ibid.*, 194-5, 199-203; above, Topography, 1200–1340.

¹³ SA 3365/76, f. 26v, 3365/2647 (livestock); SA 3365/2696 (corn, 1550); Bodleian, Gough Shrop. 1, f. 177 (c.1621, meat).

¹⁴ H. Pidgeon, *Memorials of Shrewsbury* (2nd edn. 1851), 261.

Other market sites also existed in medieval Shrewsbury but good evidence for their different functions, as for the Cornmarket, does not appear until the 16th century.

(i) *Markets for meat and hides.*

A reference of 1376 to the flesh shambles (*La Flesshames*) placed it in Fish Street,¹⁵ and the communal fleshboards, comprising 11 butchers shops erected in 1468,¹⁶ also appear in later borough rentals under that street-name, which originally included the present Butcher Row.¹⁷ Later, c.1610, chambers were erected above the shops and the rents increased.¹⁸ The shops, originally extending to the Bull Inn,¹⁹ can be identified as the long timber-framed range on the north east side of Butcher Row.²⁰ By the 17th century this part of Fish Street was thickly populated with butchers, and was known as Double Butcher Row, with shops spilling around the corner into the lower south east side of Pride Hill, which became known as Single Butcher Row.²¹ When victuals were short country butchers were permitted to erect stalls beneath the churchyard walls of St Alkmund and St Juliana (in Fish Street),²² an arrangement, regularized in 1758,²³ that lasted into the 19th century.²⁴

The location of a shambles in Fish Street can be explained by its proximity to the original location of the meat market on the higher parts of Pride Hill.²⁵ Hereabouts was located *Le Waxchere* a street-name recorded in the 13th and 14th centuries, indicating the presence of sheds from which tallow, by-product of the butchery trade, was purveyed.²⁶ In the same area, in 1270, the borough constructed the first known communal fleshboards.²⁷ Supplanted in 1468 by the shops erected in Fish Street (Butcher Row), the original fleshboards stood on the north west side of Pride Hill (12-17 Pride Hill).²⁸ They may have been part of the

¹⁵ SA 3365/784, m. 20.

¹⁶ SA 3365/401.

¹⁷ J.L. Hobbs, 'Three borough rentals of Shrewsbury, 1521, 1580 and 1610', *TSAS* 53 (1949-50), 226, 237; BL, Add. 30,317, f. 103v.

¹⁸ Bodleian, Gough Shrop. 1, ff. 168v-169; Gough Shrop. 3, f. 87v; BL, Add. 30,317, f. 103v.

¹⁹ Bodleian, Gough Shrop. 3, f. 77v.

²⁰ J.T. Smith, 'Shrewsbury; topography and domestic architecture to the middle of the 17th century' (Birmingham M.A. thesis, 1953), 490-1.

²¹ Above, Topography, 1540-1640.

²² [Revd H. Owen], *Some Account of the Ancient and Present state of Shrewsbury* (1808), 451; H.W. Adnitt, 'The orders of the corporation of Shrewsbury, 1511-1735', *TSAS* 11 (1888), 163, 172.

²³ SA 3365/72 (26 May, 1758).

²⁴ H. Pidgeon, *Memorials of Shrewsbury* (2nd edn. 1851), 262.

²⁵ Above, Topography, 1200-1340.

²⁶ *Ibid.*; Gelling, *Place-Names of Shropshire*, IV, 7.

²⁷ Above, Topography, 1200-1340.

²⁸ W.A. Champion, 'Notes on some Shrewsbury buildings', unpubl. TS at SA.

Flesshewerewe, mentioned in 1344 and 1381.²⁹ In 1614 the Glovers agreed that fells and skins could only be bought from the fleshboards at the prescribed hours, and not on a Friday or Sunday.³⁰ However, the Tanners' composition (1606) located the market for hides and skins on Pride Hill,³¹ the lower part of which (Corvisors Row) was also used in 1526 as a salt market.³² By 1655 the market for hides had moved to a cellar at the foot of St. John's Hill,³³ though by that date many transactions were taking place in inns, backsides and stables.³⁴

(ii) *Livestock markets.*

The original concentration of the butchering trade in the upper parts of Pride Hill was probably connected to the proximity, at the High Cross, of the *altum forum* mentioned about the 1270s.³⁵ Rocque's map of 1746 shows a perceptible widening of the street at this point, and the 'high market' was undoubtedly ancient. Although probably the original site of the livestock market,³⁶ cattle sales are not documented there until 1555.³⁷ In 1566 and 1570 the streeters of Corvisors Row and Mardol both complained that the beast market should be held not at the High Cross but in Frankwell,³⁸ as a council order of 1558 had instructed.³⁹ But the advantages of the Frankwell site were not clear-cut, and in 1610 thought was even given to removing it.⁴⁰ In 1672 the markets for cattle, sheep and oxen were still being kept in the Castle ward,⁴¹ and a recommendation in 1756 to remove the sheep market to the Quarry does not seem to have been acted upon.⁴² Both sheep (in Castle Street) and cattle (in St Mary's Street, then called Ox Lane), continued to be sold adjacent to the High Cross into the 19th century.⁴³

²⁹ SA 1514/439, 444.

³⁰ SA 6001/4275.

³¹ SA 6001/3166 (article 43).

³² SA 3365/1010/1/5 (cf. 3365/1959, tanners' petition).

³³ SA 3365/2632 (petition of Tanners' co.)

³⁴ SA 3365/4277 (article 44).

³⁵ SA 6000/3978, 6000/3981 (dated from O & B, II, 528-9).

³⁶ Above, Topography, 1200–1340.

³⁷ SA 3365/1849 (*Berwicke v Gerye*).

³⁸ SA 3365/1057, 1062.

³⁹ SA 3365/76, f. 26v.

⁴⁰ Bodleian, Gough Shrop. 1, f. 168.

⁴¹ TNA: PRO C/7/11/33.

⁴² SA 3365/72 (16, 22 June 1756).

⁴³ R.P. Sturges, *A brief guide to the literature on Shrewsbury's markets and fairs* (1966, unpubl. TS at SA D 32.7 v.f.), 19; P. Marsh, 'Shrewsbury Markets in the Nineteenth Century', in B. Trinder (ed.), *Victorian Shrewsbury* (1984), 20.

In 1584 the High Cross was also the appointed market for pigs,⁴⁴ but from the later 17th century that market appears to have been located on St John's Hill, alias Swine Market Hill, near Charlton Hall.⁴⁵ Quarry Place, the extension of St John's Hill across the line of the town wall, was then known as Pighall Lane,⁴⁶ and a pig pound is recorded nearby in 1766.⁴⁷ In 1756 the corporation proposed moving the pig market to the Dry Dingle in the Quarry,⁴⁸ and again in 1781, though the measure was opposed by Roger Kynaston who claimed that removal 'would be injurious to his property as well as to many others on the Swine Market Hill.'⁴⁹ By 1824 the swine market was restricted to St John's Hill, Cross Hill, and the area between St John's Hill and Claremont Hill adjacent to the Quarry.⁵⁰

(iii) Other markets at the High Cross.

In 1584 the corporation ordered that the market for butter, cheese, geese, pigs, hens, capons and other poultry be held at the High Cross, as had probably been the case for centuries.⁵¹ Ten years later the same market was provided with a timber shelter, although its precise location is unknown.⁵² In 1781 the corporation voted to remove the cheese and butter fairs to the Dry Dingle in the Quarry,⁵³ but this agreement does not appear to have been acted upon, probably, as with the pig market, because of local opposition (above). In 1540 the High Cross had also been confirmed as a place to sell bread,⁵⁴ and in 1586 a riot occurred there after the bakers had rejected the assize.⁵⁵ As with the butchers, the corporation often intervened to allow country bakers to come into town,⁵⁶ though no specific location for them is known. Milk, however, was presumably brought for sale to Milk Street, a name first recorded c.1540,⁵⁷ though no specific evidence for a market there exists.

(iv) Fish markets.

⁴⁴ SA 3365/1803.

⁴⁵ Hobbs, *Shrews. Street Names*, 95-6; T. Minshall, *The Shrewsbury Guide and Salopian Directory* (1786), 52.

⁴⁶ Hobbs, *Shrews. Street Names*, 81.

⁴⁷ Bodleian, Gough Shrop. 3, f. 76.

⁴⁸ SA 3365/72 (16, 22 June 1756; 27 July, 1781).

⁴⁹ SA 3365/72 (7 Jan. 1782).

⁵⁰ Watton's Newspaper Cuttings, v. 9, p. 146.

⁵¹ SA 3365/1803; 3365/1098/50; 3365/1122/11.

⁵² *Early Chronicles*, 330.

⁵³ SA 3365/72 (7 May, 27 July, 1781)

⁵⁴ SA 3365/64, f. 443.

⁵⁵ SA 3365/2624 (petitions).

⁵⁶ W.A. Champion, 'The economy of Shrewsbury 1400-1560/1660' (Typescript, 1987, at SA 6001/6866), 171-3.

⁵⁷ Gelling, *Place-Names of Shropshire*, IV, 16.

Fish Street is first mentioned c.1325,⁵⁸ although fish sales are not specifically recorded there until 1574.⁵⁹ The market was sited at the ‘King’s Board’, referred to in 1466,⁶⁰ and again in 1518 when it was moved from Fish Street to the upper end of High Street because of an outbreak of plague.⁶¹ Enlarged in 1539,⁶² both fish and oysters were sold at the board in 1638,⁶³ at about which date it was moved the short distance from ‘Old Fish Street’ (St Alkmund’s Square) to Butcher Row.⁶⁴ In 1647, despite protests from itinerant fishmongers, it was removed again to a newly paved location on St John’s Hill. It was said to be intolerable that the meat and fish markets had been held in the same place; access to St Alkmund’s church had often been blocked; and the butchers themselves had engrossed fish brought to market, to the detriment of the poor.⁶⁵ Renamed the ‘State’s Board’ during the Interregnum, the location of the fishboard carried a political charge into the 1670s,⁶⁶ and in 1671 the town council agreed that although St John’s Hill was the most convenient place, future mayors could elect where to keep it.⁶⁷ In 1758 the Green Market in the Cornmarket was appointed as the location of the fishboard, with four purveyors licensed annually to exercise the trade, but after complaints it was restored in 1763 to Fish Street,⁶⁸ though fish was still being sold at the former site in 1810.⁶⁹ By the 19th century the Fish Street site was described as ‘a small mean inconvenient market for fish.’⁷⁰

(v) *The Cornmarket.*

As its name suggests, the grain market, held in 1550 on Wednesdays and Saturdays,⁷¹ was kept in the Cornmarket, the new market place laid out in the 1260s (above). Corn itself was sold at the south end, where in 1567 two timber-framed bays, with a loft above, were erected as a shelter,⁷² with five more bays being added upto 1570.⁷³ By 1586 three of the bays appear

⁵⁸ SA 6000/3758.

⁵⁹ SA 3365/1871 (*Pawle v Hamonde*).

⁶⁰ SA 3365/396.

⁶¹ SA 3365/438, f. 54.

⁶² SA 3365/75/3, f. 49v.

⁶³ SA 3365/2537/1.

⁶⁴ Adnitt, ‘Orders’, 183; TNA: PRO C 7/11/33.

⁶⁵ TNA: PRO C 7/11/33; SA 3365/2631 (petitions).

⁶⁶ TNA: PRO C 7/11/33.

⁶⁷ Adnitt, ‘Orders’, 189.

⁶⁸ SA 3365/72 (20 Oct. 1758, 30 Sept. 1763); [Owen], *Some Account*, 456.

⁶⁹ SA 3365/73 (10 Dec. 1810).

⁷⁰ [Owen], *Some Account*, 450.

⁷¹ SA 3365/2696.

⁷² *Early Chronicles*, 267-8.

⁷³ *Ibid.* 269-70; SA 3365/76, ff. 91v, 264v.

also to have been in use for the wool market,⁷⁴ whose location in the Cornmarket is recorded in 1552.⁷⁵ The structure was replaced (1596–7) in stone by ‘a sumptuous hall, a loft and a lardge market howse for corne benethe,’ still extant as the Old Market Hall.⁷⁶

The plan of the Old Market Hall is a rectangle, 33m by 9m, with three bays on either side of two projecting transepts, each of one bay also.⁷⁷ The building is built or faced in ashlar from the Grinshill quarries, and was originally roofed with Harnage ‘slates’. The ground storey is open, with intermediate piers of stubby Tuscan columns carrying semi-circular arches. The upper story is pierced by square-headed windows of three or four lights, mullioned and transomed, and surmounted by a parapet of inverted volutes. The gabled ends have diagonal buttresses at the angles. A recess over the bay of the western transept, the main symbolic entrance, carries the arms of the old Royal House of England, with the date 1596. A datestone on the north gable, probably in origin one of two, also commemorates the building’s erection in that year. The interior on the first floor originally consisted of a large hall-like space, open to a fine timber roof, and a smaller room at the south end, also open to the roof, heated by a stone fireplace.

Although the design of this ‘remarkable’ building retained solid local vernacular characteristics, its relatively chaste masonry, subtle proportions, and use of classically-derived design motifs, represents one of the earliest examples in the country of a more formal classical style employed for a public building of this kind. For the work Walter Hancocks (d.1599), who had worked at Stafford Town Hall, had been recommended to the corporation in 1595 by Sir Francis Newport, and the corporation described Hancock as ‘master & chief workman of the same’.⁷⁸ The principal joiner was the Shrewsbury carpenter Roger Smith.

In addition to providing shelter for corn vendors, a tally-stone at the north end of the ground-floor may have been used for counting fleeces or bales of wool,⁷⁹ but within 30 years of erection the Market Hall was also employed for another purpose. After Shrewsbury had captured the cloth trade from Oswestry in the 1620s, the market for Welsh cloths was also held in the Cornmarket, initially on Wednesday.⁸⁰ Perhaps because of a clash with market

⁷⁴ Bodleian, Gough Shrop. 3, f. 92.

⁷⁵ SA 3365/1851 (*Bartelemew v Heyward*).

⁷⁶ *Early Chronicles*, 334-5; Baker, Morriss, Stamper, ‘Shrewsbury Market Place and Hall’.

⁷⁷ Except where stated, the next two paras. are based on Baker et. al., ‘Shrewsbury Market Place and Hall’, 204-18, 225-8.

⁷⁸ Bodleian, Gough Shrop. 16, pp. 108-09.

⁷⁹ Baker et. al., ‘Shrewsbury Market Place and Hall’, 215.

⁸⁰ Above, *Economic and social history, 1540–1640*; SA 1831/6, f. 47v.

day, it later moved to Friday, the prescribed hours being from noon to 5 p.m. between 25 March and 29 September, and from noon to 4 p.m. during the rest of the year.⁸¹ In 1649, however, the cloth market was moved to Thursdays (1 p.m. to 6 p.m.) after ministers from Dolgellau and Merionnydd had complained that parishioners attending the Shrewsbury cloth market had insufficient time to return for the Sabbath.⁸² The cloth market was held on the first floor of the Market Hall, the Drapers renting the room from the corporation until 1803 when they gave it up after Shrewsbury's role in the trade collapsed.⁸³

Rocque's map (1746) indicates that the north end of the Cornmarket beside the High Street, and beyond the old Booth Hall which closed off most of the market place, was the location for the Green Market, also recorded in 1756.⁸⁴ Fruit and vegetables were still being sold here in the 19th century, as probably they had been for centuries.⁸⁵ Also known as the Apple Market, a play was staged there in 1584,⁸⁶ and stall rents for the Apple Market are recorded from the late 16th century.⁸⁷ In 1658 it was said to lie 'at the end of the Market House',⁸⁸ i.e. between the Market Hall and the Booth Hall, suggesting that by that date vendors congregated on both sides of the Booth Hall prior to its demolition in 1783.⁸⁹

Tolls and market seasonality.

Weekly receipts from the Shrewsbury tolls provide much information about the seasonality of trade before 1550. As elsewhere, the pattern was influenced by the labours of the month and the church calendar.⁹⁰ In the late 15th and early 16th centuries stallage receipts show a noticeable peak during Lent, perhaps because of fish sales, while income from both murage (a toll on goods passing through the gates) and theolony (a toll on actual transactions, principally, it seems, livestock) regularly rose after Whitsun to a peak in high summer, falling sharply – most clearly in the case of murage – during the harvest period, followed by a recovery upto the Christmas festival. Winter months always saw much reduced trade.⁹¹ Earlier, however, in the later 13th and early 14th centuries murage receipts were little

⁸¹ SA 1831/6, f. 68.

⁸² *Ibid.*, f. 69v.

⁸³ Baker, Morriss, Stamper, 'Shrewsbury Market Place and Hall', 218, 220.

⁸⁴ Hobbs, *Shrewsbury Street Names*, 55.

⁸⁵ P. Marsh, 'Shrewsbury Markets', 19-20 (with photo c.1860).

⁸⁶ *Early Chronicles*, 298.

⁸⁷ SA 3365/519, 519A.

⁸⁸ Adnitt, 'Orders', 185.

⁸⁹ M.C. Hill, *The History of Shropshire's many Shirehalls* (1963), 2; below, Municipal Buildings.

⁹⁰ J. Laughton, C. Dyer, 'Seasonal Patterns of Trade in the Later Middle Ages: Buying and Selling in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, 1400-1520', *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 46 (2002), 180, 184.

⁹¹ W.A. Champion, 'Shrewsbury tolls and commerce, 1259-1638' (Typescript, 1986, at SA 6001/6855), 84-88.

affected by the harvest season, perhaps a reflection of the importance then of the wool trade and its mode of marketing.⁹² Receipts from the *custuma de modiorum* – a dish of grain said in 1598 to be a voluntary contribution to keeping the market clean – suggest, unsurprisingly, that vendors were most generous immediately following the harvest.⁹³

Tolls on goods passing through the gates (i.e. murage) were abolished in 1790 as part of the scheme to build a new Welsh Bridge.⁹⁴ Toll collection was said to be ‘obnoxious’ and constantly attended by disputes with farmers, millers and maltsters. To compensate the borough, a sum of £6,230 was raised by public subscription, contributed by local noblemen, county gentry and leading members of the corporation. However, tolls on livestock transactions, and for pitching stalls in the market, continued.

Fairs.

(i) The borough.

In 1205 King John granted to the burgesses a three-day fair beginning on 1 June.⁹⁵ Known by the 15th century as St Nicomede’s fair, its date fluctuated between 1485 and 1498 before settling on the Wednesday before Pentacost (the ‘Whitsun’ fair).⁹⁶ Another three-day fair beginning on the vigil of St Clement’s day (23 November) was granted in 1267,⁹⁷ but was replaced by a fair beginning on the vigil of St James’s day (25 July),⁹⁸ which in turn was replaced in 1327 by a four-day fair beginning on the vigil of St Mathew’s day (21 September).⁹⁹ At fairtime in the early 16th century the toll booths at the gates were decorated with greenery, herbs and flowers, while licences to beg were handed out to the poor in the form of canvas tokens, painted with leopard heads.¹⁰⁰ Toll receipts indicate that at that time St Mathew’s fair was generally the more popular, particularly with stall-holders, but during the 16th century the Whitsun fair, for actual transactions, came to dominate.¹⁰¹

By the 1620s the growth of inland trade encouraged the corporation to obtain additional fairs, and in 1638 two new fairs were granted by charter, one beginning on the Wednesday

⁹² *Ibid.*, 62-5.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 10, 118.

⁹⁴ For the following, *Some Account Of The Abolition Of The Tolls At Shrewsbury* (1833), copy at SA C01.

⁹⁵ *Rot. Chart.* 142.

⁹⁶ Champion, ‘Shrewsbury tolls’, 119.

⁹⁷ *Cal. Chart.* 1257–1300, 80.

⁹⁸ *Cal. Chart.* 1300–26, 127.

⁹⁹ *Cal. Chart.* 1327–41, 6.

¹⁰⁰ SA 3365/438.

¹⁰¹ Champion, ‘Shrewsbury tolls’, Appendix 6.

after Easter, the other on St Andrew's day (30 November).¹⁰² In 1702 (held on the first Saturday after 15 March) and in 1762 (on the last Saturday in February), two one-day 'horn markets' were also appointed by the corporation.¹⁰³ After the calendar change of 1752 St Mathew's fair was moved to 2 October, and St Andrew's to 12 December.¹⁰⁴

(ii) *The Abbey Foregate*.¹⁰⁵

About 1138 King Stephen confirmed to the abbey a three-day fair beginning on 1 August (St Peter ad vincula), allegedly granted by Earl Roger.¹⁰⁶ A royal confirmation of 1155, however, named Henry I as the grantor.¹⁰⁷ In 1227 Henry III allowed the fair to begin on the vigil,¹⁰⁸ and shortly afterwards the abbot and burgesses agreed that persons coming to the fair should be able to pass freely through the town on both the vigil and feast day. Toll was to be paid to the borough for goods bought within the town, but to the abbey for purchases outside. For this, and other concessions, the abbey agreed to pay the borough 40s. p.a., reduced to 38s. in 1296 after an agreement over some islands in the Severn near the Stone Bridge.¹⁰⁹

In 1298 the burgesses confirmed that murage and pavage would not be levied during fairtime, and the town shops would all be closed and only wine and ale sold. The abbey was to supervise the fair and take all the profits, paying 38s. p.a. as before.¹¹⁰ This payment continued until the Dissolution, but an agreement of 1425 about the Lammas fair suggests that from that date arrangements were more favourable to the borough.¹¹¹ The abbey still retained officers at the Welsh and Castle gates to exact a fee on goods to be sold during the fair, and also collected tolls on cattle sold in Coleham, but the borough now retained the toll receipts from the gates, including Sergeant's Fee (a grain toll). Buying and selling was also permitted within the town, including on market days coinciding with the fair, provided goods were not re-sold. In addition, stalls could be erected within the borough, though not in order to exploit the additional fairday traffic.

¹⁰² Above, Economic history, 1540–1638.

¹⁰³ T. Phillips, *The History and Antiquities of Shrewsbury* (1779), 167.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Research for this section by David Cox.

¹⁰⁶ Rees (ed.), *Cart. Shrews.* II, 255.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 43.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 57-8.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, II, 240-2, 348-50.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 238-40.

¹¹¹ SA 215/36.

The August, or Lammas fair, seems to have been the only one in Abbey Foregate in 1298,¹¹² but by 1542 there was another held the Wednesday after Trinity Sunday (the eve of Corpus Christi), called St Winifred's fair. Both passed to the control of Shrewsbury corporation in 1542.¹¹³ In the 1550s the date of St Winifred's fair was fixed at 22 June and it became known as Midsummer fair.¹¹⁴ After the calendar change of 1752 the fairs were moved to 3 July and 12 August.¹¹⁵ Both fairs were predominantly for livestock, horses, linen-cloth and wool, and were still deemed 'very considerable' in 1803.¹¹⁶ After the corporation began monthly fairs in the borough in 1819 only horse fairs remained in Abbey Foregate,¹¹⁷ held from c.1824 in rotation with those of Castle Foregate and Frankwell.¹¹⁸ But Abbey Foregate's traditional fair days continued to be marked by the annual 'Eel Pie' and 'Cherry Pie' wakes held on nearby Sundays until 1836 or later.¹¹⁹ Horse fairs ended in Abbey Foregate when the corporation's Smithfield opened in 1850 (below).

It is likely that medieval fairs in Abbey Foregate were held in the triangular space of which the abbey church's west front was the base. Called the Green,¹²⁰ its apex was at the east end of the Monks' bridge, where a cross stood before 1495¹²¹ and a toll booth, dismantled by Philip Prynce, lord of the manor, in 1681.¹²² By 1610 a rectangular space, once considerably larger than the Green but by then reduced by an island of buildings, adjoined the north side of the street on the north-east side of Holy Cross churchyard. Originally it too had a standing cross,¹²³ and it was called the Horsefair by 1677.¹²⁴ In 1816 it had 'lately' been enclosed and planted with trees,¹²⁵ and in the early 20th century it was built over.¹²⁶ The name Horsefair has survived as that of a narrow lane round part of the site.

The nature of the fairs.

¹¹² Ibid., 238-40. The suggestion in G.C. Baugh (ed.), *A History of Shropshire*, IV (1989), 69, that in 1256 the abbey was granted a fair in Abbey Foregate is a mistake. The ref. is to a fair at Betton in Hales: Rees (ed.), *Cart. Shrews.* I, 55-6.

¹¹³ Champion, *Shrews. tolls*, 119-20.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 120.

¹¹⁵ Phillips, *Hist. and Antiquities*, 167.

¹¹⁶ Champion, *Shrews. tolls*, 120; R. Gough, *Hist. of Myddle*, ed. D. Hey (1981), 266; J. Plymley, *General View of the Agriculture of Salop.* (1803), 337.

¹¹⁷ T. Phillips, *Hist. and Antiquities of Shrewsbury*, ed. C. Hulbert (1837), I, 173 n.

¹¹⁸ Marsh, 'Shrewsbury markets', 20.

¹¹⁹ *Eddowes's Shrews. Jnl.* 3 Apr. 1872, p. 4.

¹²⁰ TNA: PRO E 303/14/Salop./183, 208.

¹²¹ O & B, I, 265.

¹²² SA 6001/12, pp. 60-2, 65-6.

¹²³ J. Speed, *Map of Salop.* (1610).

¹²⁴ SA 6000/3066.

¹²⁵ T.J. Howell, *The Stranger in Shrewsbury* (1816), 155.

¹²⁶ O.S. Map 1/2,500, Salop. XXXIV. 11 (1902 and 1927 edns.).

In the 18th century all six Shrewsbury fairs catered for the horse trade.¹²⁷ In Abbey Foregate dealers evidently gathered at the Horsefair (above); otherwise, since at least 1431, in Frankwell beside the Severn.¹²⁸ In 1584 a flood during the St Mathew's fair meant that the 'horse fayre' was held in a tentry croft nearby.¹²⁹ At the same fair in 1578, during a drought, dealers displayed their horses on the river-bed.¹³⁰ Otherwise the fairs were noted for livestock sales, with increasing agricultural commercialization promoting more specialization.¹³¹ The first three fairs came to specialize in old and barren dairy animals available for fattening – the Whitsun fair in particular, provisioned by Lancashire and Cheshire dealers, was noted for its dairy animals – while St Mathew's was good for young heifers. Separate fairs also catered for old, fat, or fresh draught oxen.¹³² The Whitsun fair was also good for linen-cloth as well as sap and green timber;¹³³ the Midsummer and Lammas fairs for wool; St Mathew's for cheese; and St Andrew's for cheese, fat swine and beasts.¹³⁴ In Gough's time the Whitsun and St Mathew's fairs at least were held in Mardol,¹³⁵ where, at Mardol Head, the bi-annual agricultural hiring fairs, known as 'Gauby Fairs', were also kept. By the early 19th century these were held on the first Saturday of the year, and on the first Saturday after May Day.¹³⁶ Although some by-passing of both markets and fairs is apparent by the 17th century, with a constant temptation to forestall, Shrewsbury's fairs remained into the 18th century 'important dates in the calendar even if buyers and sellers found more flexible means of dealing.'¹³⁷

Market congestion.

By 1824 it was said that although Shrewsbury's markets were still well supplied, facilities were now inadequate for the increasing demands put upon them, and reflected badly on the town.¹³⁸ A similar complaint was made in 1808.¹³⁹ After the livestock fairs the streets would be covered with dung, a nuisance to churchgoers, with the cattle fair now extending from the High Cross to Dogpole, St Alkmund's churchyard, Milk Street, Princess Street, and as far as

¹²⁷ Phillips, *Hist. and Antiquities*, 167.

¹²⁸ SA 3365/837; 6000/3803, 3805.

¹²⁹ *Early Chronicles*, 300.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 281.

¹³¹ G.C. Baugh (ed.), *A History of Shropshire*, IV (1989), 161-2.

¹³² P. Edwards, 'The cattle trade of Shropshire in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', *Midland History* 6 (1981), 74, 76, 78; Gough, *Hist. of Myddle*, 266.

¹³³ P.R. Edwards, 'The Farming Economy of North-East Shropshire in the Seventeenth Century' (Oxford Univ. DPhil thesis, 1976), 280-1; SA 3365/2634 (c.1612, petition of Thos. Wottmore).

¹³⁴ Gough, *Hist. of Myddle*, 266.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Shropshire Notes & Queries*, 30 Oct. 1896.

¹³⁷ Baugh (ed.), *Hist. Shrop.*, IV, 167.

¹³⁸ Marsh, 'Shrewsbury Markets', 19. Except where stated, the rest of this section is based upon this account.

¹³⁹ [Revd H. Owen], *Some Account of the Ancient and Present State of Shrewsbury* (1808), 450.

the Cornmarket.¹⁴⁰ In 1808 a committee of the corporation heard evidence of over-crowding at the Green and Butter Markets and of squalor in Butcher Row, though slaughtering animals in the street had in theory been prohibited in 1724.¹⁴¹ By the 1820s horses were also being displayed outside the traditional fair grounds on the bridges and intra-mural streets, notably Wyle Cop, obstructing the Royal Mail and endangering passers-by.¹⁴²

At the High Cross the fate of the timber-framed shelter erected in 1594 for the butter, cheese and poultry market is not known, but the cross itself was demolished in 1705 and replaced by a cistern for the town's water system, with a 'Market Place ornamental and usefull under the same.'¹⁴³ The cistern was twice re-built, notably in 1758 when a space was again provided for market sellers beneath the reservoir, which was carried on groined arches.¹⁴⁴ According to Owen (1808), 'It is probable indeed, that this is the most inconvenient market-place of any considerable town in England, although certainly one of the best supplied.'¹⁴⁵ In the Cornmarket too congestion on market days was exacerbated by horse dealers showing their animals, and by country butchers congregating beside the Old Market Hall.¹⁴⁶ The latter building was now in poor condition, and in 1803 a corporation committee advocated demolition, but after a public outcry, it was decided instead to preserve it. Repairs cost over £500, but more renovation was needed in the years that followed.

The 19th century transformation.

The inadequacies of Shrewsbury's market arrangements were tackled by both private initiative and, more tardily, by municipal intervention. The sequence was typical, involving the evolution from open-air market places, to a combination of street markets and enclosed market sites, and finally to a comprehensive covered market hall.¹⁴⁷

(i) Butter and cheese markets.

At the High or 'Butter' Cross, both the corporation and private speculators began in the 1800s to acquire property in anticipation of the erection of new facilities for the butter and

¹⁴⁰ SA D 32.7 v.f., J.L. Hobbs, 'Old-Time Markets and Fairs', unpubl. TS (n.d. [1958]), 10.

¹⁴¹ [Owen], *Some Account*, 450.

¹⁴² Hobbs, 'Old-Time Markets', 9-10; Watton's Newspaper Cuttings, v. 9, p. 146.

¹⁴³ R. Cromarty, 'The water supply in Shrewsbury 1550-1835', *TSAHS* 75 (2000), 23.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 23-4; [Owen], *Some Account*, 449.

¹⁴⁵ [Owen], *ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ For this para., see Baker et. al., 'Shrewsbury Market Place and Hall', 220-5.

¹⁴⁷ J. Schmiechen, K. Carls, *The British Market Hall: A Social and Architectural History* (1999), 21-34.

poultry market.¹⁴⁸ The improvements, entangled with the fate of the town's water supply, were proposed under a proposed Town Improvement Act, discussed 1808–10.¹⁴⁹ The latter proved abortive and in 1819 private subscribers, having bought out the different property interests, erected a new market building, seven bays by five, at the corner of Pride Hill and Ox Lane (St Mary's Street).¹⁵⁰ Its inadequacies were recognized almost immediately, and in 1843 it was demolished and replaced in the following year, with both private and municipal subvention, with a more commodious market hall, costing £2, and designed in the Ionic manner by Edward Haycock.¹⁵¹

The wholesale trade, however, had already been assisted by the erection in 1822 by the brewer Henry Newton of a butter and cheese warehouse at the Circus Yard, Bridge Street (on the present site of Morris & Co.).¹⁵² The venture, supported by buyers from across the West Midlands and beyond, was an immediate success, and despite a proposal to close it in 1836, the Circus Yard continued to operate until the opening of the General Market Hall in 1869 (below). In the 1850s it was the wholesale depot for large quantities of Welsh dairy produce.¹⁵³ On the same site in 1839 Newton also provided a hall for a flannel market, held every third Tuesday and supported by the Montgomeryshire manufacturers.¹⁵⁴ Another wholesale outlet for the butter and cheese trade, convenient for the 'Cheshire' cheese trade, was opened in 1836 in Howard Street, Castle Foregate, at the newly extended terminus of the Shrewsbury Canal which had been linked to the national waterways network in the preceding year.¹⁵⁵ A spacious building, neatly exploiting its canal-side location, it was designed for the proprietor William H. Griffiths by the Birmingham architects Fallows and Hart in a monumental Greek Revival style with two giant Doric columns flanking the principal entrance on the street, and a massive entablature above.¹⁵⁶ The building was acquired by the London & North Western Railway in 1857, who had earlier purchased the canal in 1846,¹⁵⁷ and for some years the market benefited from its location close to the newly opened railways. After 1869 it became a goods warehouse.

¹⁴⁸ Cromarty, 'Water supply', 29-31.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 32-6; SA 3365/2669 (plan of Butter Cross).

¹⁵¹ Marsh, 'Shrewsbury Markets', 22-3; H. Pidgeon, *Memorials of Shrewsbury* (2nd edn., 1851), 177.

¹⁵² Except where stated, this para. is based on Marsh, 'Shrewsbury Markets', 21-2.

¹⁵³ Ibid.; Watton's Newspaper Cuttings, v. 15, pp. 63-4.

¹⁵⁴ Watton's Newspaper Cuttings, v. 3, p. 174.

¹⁵⁵ B. Trinder, *Beyond The Bridges. The Suburbs of Shrewsbury 1760-1960* (2006), 143-4.

¹⁵⁶ Watton's Newspaper Cuttings, v. 3, p. 49; J. Newman, N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England. Shropshire* (2006), 547.

¹⁵⁷ Trinder, *Beyond The Bridges*, 144.

(ii) *The Smithfield.*

In 1819 the corporation sought to mitigate congestion caused by the livestock trades by a scheme of monthly fairs, held on the second Wednesday of each month for cattle, horses and cheese, and on the preceding day for sheep and pigs.¹⁵⁸ In 1824 commissioners, appointed under the Shrewsbury Improvement Act of 1821, also prohibited casual horse sales in the streets, restricting them, in monthly rotation, to sites in the Welsh Ward (Frankwell), Stone Ward (Abbey Foregate), and Castle Ward (Coton Hill, Castle Foregate, and the lower end of Castle Gates).¹⁵⁹ Still the town's intricate topography proved inadequate to the growth of the markets, and by 1828 alternative sites were under consideration.¹⁶⁰ Arguments over possible sites lasted 20 years, but in 1848 the Shrewsbury Cattle Market Act empowered the corporation to raise up to £15,000, by mortgaging the tolls, to purchase land for a comprehensive livestock market, the Shrewsbury Smithfield.¹⁶¹ The chosen site, on Raven Meadow, was planned by the borough surveyor Thomas Tisdale, and comprised nearly four acres, accommodating up to 700 horses (with a trial ground), 4000 cattle, 5000 sheep, and 1000 pigs.¹⁶² On the river side a new road was also constructed, connecting the newly opened railway station to Mardol, at which end a toll house was erected in 1853.¹⁶³

The Smithfield opened in 1850, the corporation at first preferring the traditional system of private sales in hand, despite the presence of a small but successful auction market, including a Ram Fair, run by W.G. Preece at The Flash, Coton.¹⁶⁴ Sales by auction were eventually permitted in 1859, initially on alternate fair days only,¹⁶⁵ and from that date Shrewsbury auction houses, such as Hall, Wateridge and Owen (founded 1845), and the firm of A. Mansell, official auctioneer by 1910 for the Shropshire Sheep Society,¹⁶⁶ were increasingly involved with the Smithfield's operation. Income from the tolls, leased at short intervals, rose from £510 p.a. in 1858, to £1,250 p.a. in 1891,¹⁶⁷ and Shrewsbury remained the largest store market in the country with cattle sales increasing from the 1890s into the 1920s.¹⁶⁸ Sales of

¹⁵⁸ Phillips, *Hist. and Antiquities*, ed. C. Hulbert, I, 173 n; *Shrewsbury Corporation Markets Official Handbook* (1934), 21.

¹⁵⁹ Watton's Newspaper Cuttings, v. 9, p. 146; cf. *ibid.* v. 3, p. 430 (1836).

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, v. 3, p. 241; v. 14, pp. 50-5, 138, 147-9, 174-5, 183, 191-204.

¹⁶¹ 11 & 12 Vict. c. xvi; Pidgeon, *Memorials of Shrewsbury*, 208-09.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*; SA DA/100/2 (corp. minutes 1847-50);

¹⁶³ Marsh, 'Shrewsbury Markets', 23; SA DA /100/2, 14 Feb. 1853.

¹⁶⁴ Watton's Newspaper Cuttings, v. 15, pp. 6, 10, 20-8, 34-5.

¹⁶⁵ *Eddowes's Shrewsbury Journal*, 11 May 1859.

¹⁶⁶ E. Whetham, 'The trade in pedigree livestock 1850-1910', *Agricultural Hist. Rev.* 27 (1979), 49.

¹⁶⁷ Watton's Newspaper Cuttings, v. 15, p. 10; SA DA5/901/3/36.

¹⁶⁸ Baugh (ed.), *Hist. Shrop.*, IV, 247.

cattle, sheep and pigs were now held every Tuesday, with, by the 1900s, a sale of stores held twice a month on Fridays.¹⁶⁹ The opening of the Smithfield encouraged county landowners to promote a ‘Great Annual Horse Fair’, first held in March 1852,¹⁷⁰ though it did not prove as successful as hoped.¹⁷¹ By the early 20th century horse sales were dominated by the auctioneers Hall, Wateridge and Owen, proprietors of the Shrewsbury Horse Mart and Repository adjacent to the Smithfield, which by that date had been extended, with an abattoir, and modernized.¹⁷²

By the 1950s about a quarter of a million animals were being sold annually at the Smithfield, by then the third largest market of its kind in the country.¹⁷³ Due to the volumes of trade and chronic traffic congestion, the Smithfield was relocated from 1956 to 1959 to a site at Harlescott, five miles to the north of Shrewsbury, at the junction of Harlescott Lane and the Whitchurch road. The last livestock sales at the old site were held in March 1958, the windows of nearby pubs being decorated with black crepe. The new development, comprising 26a. and including three rings with sales conducted by a consortium of auctioneers, cost nearly £500,000 and was designed by the borough surveyor A.T. Morris.

By the late 1990s the Harlescott site needed refurbishment and administrative costs had become unsustainable. The corporation elected to move the livestock market again, recouping the cost by selling the old site for retail development.¹⁷⁴ The latest Smithfield opened in 2006 on a 22a. site at Shawbury Turn, Battlefield, and was leased to Halls Auctioneers.¹⁷⁵ Unlike 1958, however, the move received scant mention in the local press. The *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, which in the 19th century had carried extensive information about agricultural matters in Shropshire and Wales, was now virtually silent in that respect, featuring instead a regular business supplement, mute witness to the decline of farming’s cultural and economic significance to the town.

(iii) *The General Market.*

¹⁶⁹ *Kelly’s Dir. Shropshire* (1895), p. 195; *ibid.* (1905), p. 209.

¹⁷⁰ Watton’s Newspaper Cuttings, v. 8, p. 76.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, v. 15, p. 20; v. 17, p. 63.

¹⁷² *Kelly’s Dir. Shropshire* (1926), p. 221; *Shrews. Corp. Markets*, 23.

¹⁷³ ‘Shrewsbury’s New Livestock Market’, *Shropshire Magazine*, Feb. 1959, 17-20; *Shrews. Chron.* 15 April, 1999, p. 4. The rest of this para. is based on these sources and Sturges, *Brief guide*, 26-7; ‘Shrewsbury Livestock Market’, *Shropshire Magazine*, Jan. 1995, 43, 45.

¹⁷⁴ *Shrews. Chron.* 17 Dec. 1998, p. 16; Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough, Minutes of Council, 11 Jan. 2001.

¹⁷⁵ *Shrews. Chron.* 6 April 2006, p. 2.

Despite the opening of the Smithfield in 1850, it was another 20 years before congestion at Shrewsbury's other markets was resolved. In 1858 some 5,449 cheeses, tubs of butter and fitches of bacon had been sold from May to July at the Butter Market, and the average number of vendors at the fairs was 203.¹⁷⁶ By that date too some of the fruit and vegetable market had migrated from the Square to Pride Hill and Castle Foregate, and vendors' baskets sometimes stretched from Castle Street down to Mardol.¹⁷⁷ Proposals to erect a General Market to house all the residual markets of the town were made from the early 1850s, leading to another 'battle of the sites' during which, in 1861, the Home Secretary intervened.¹⁷⁸ Eventually a site, bounded by Mardol Head, Claremont Street, Shoplatch and Bellstone, was chosen and then, in 1866, cleared – the biggest single alteration to Shrewsbury's topography since the erection of the castle.¹⁷⁹

The new General Market Hall, 313 feet in length and 'the chief Victorian contribution to public architecture in the town',¹⁸⁰ opened in 1869 at a cost of nearly £70,000.¹⁸¹ Designed by Robert Griffiths, the county surveyor for Staffordshire, and built by Alfred Barlow of Stoke-on-Trent, it was in the Italianate style with white, black and blue brick, with dressings of Grinshill stone. It was topped by a tower and spire, with four clock faces, over 150 feet in height. The basement incorporated the fish market (later to move upstairs) and an ice house. The ground floor, whose main entrance was on the Mardol side, included a shopping arcade, the butchers' shops, and, at the Bellstone end, the General Hall where the green, apple and butter markets, including provision for the wholesale cheese trade, were all re-located. The previous Butter Market at the High Cross was then sold in 1874, the site being redeveloped (1877) for the Shrewsbury Post Office.¹⁸² Above the General Hall was the Corn Exchange, already leased in 1866 for 45 years to the Shrewsbury Corn Exchange Co. Ltd.,¹⁸³ though the space proved unsatisfactory and by 1934 had been converted into a billiard hall, much of the trade then taking place on Saturdays in adjoining streets, or at the Smithfield.

Until the 1930s the General Market, now open every week-day though the traditional market days remained important, still retained much of the vitality of its street predecessors,

¹⁷⁶ SA DA5/100/2, 9 Aug. 1858.

¹⁷⁷ Watton's Newspaper Cuttings, v. 17, ff. 21v, 45v, 61, 58.

¹⁷⁸ Marsh, 'Shrewsbury Markets', 24-5; *Shrews. Chron.* 11 Mar. 1864, p. 5.

¹⁷⁹ Marsh, *ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Newman, Pevsner, *Shropshire*, 547.

¹⁸¹ The rest of this para. is based on Marsh, 'Shrewsbury Markets', 24-8; *Kelly's Dir. Shropshire* (1870), pp. 130-1; *Shrewsbury Corporation Markets Official Handbook* (1934), 21-35.

¹⁸² SA D3651/B/155/5/4-5; T. Rowley, *The Shropshire Landscape* (1972), 204.

¹⁸³ SA DA5/900/2/1.

with 600-800 wives and daughters of farmers and market gardeners regularly attending from Shropshire and adjacent counties.¹⁸⁴ A live poultry market at Christmas was also one of the largest of its kind in the Midlands. The traditional cheese fairs had now been supplemented by more frequent ‘fairs’, inaugurated by the Shrewsbury and District Dairy Farmer’s Association, held every third Thursday, with upwards of 40 to 50 tons of cheese being pitched on each occasion. However, the establishment in 1933 of the Milk Marketing Board, which greatly promoted the growth of the liquid milk market and of milk processing off the farm, had a dramatic impact on farm cheese making, and within 20 years the Shrewsbury market had been reduced to a rump. The General Market’s function as an outlet for farmhouse butter was similarly affected.

By the late 1950s too the post-war transformation of the grocery retail trade,¹⁸⁵ and the incipient decay of the domestic farm economy,¹⁸⁶ had also begun to undermine the General Market, with the pannier market in terminal decline.¹⁸⁷ The building was also in need of expensive repairs, while surrounding streets struggled with the growing volume of motorised traffic.¹⁸⁸ The council therefore voted to demolish the Victorian building, and in 1961 leased the premises to the Second Covent Garden Property Company Ltd., retaining control over the soon to be extinct pannier market.¹⁸⁹ Rebuilt, but on a more compact plot, the new Market Hall (1961–5, opened in stages from 1963), by David du R. Aberdeen & Partners with Lionel Gregory, was designed in a ‘modern’, if controversial, idiom.¹⁹⁰

In 1975 the General Market was said to be flourishing, with traders coming from as far as Yorkshire, the Potteries, and North and South Wales. Its character, however, had radically departed from that of its predecessors, with stalls now catering for shoes, crockery, glass-ware, second-hand books, handbags, clothing, travel goods and jewellery. Space was allocated for no more than eight meat and provision stalls, far fewer than had existed even in the medieval town.¹⁹¹ In addition, the hall was now inconveniently located on the first floor,¹⁹² with the rest of the premises given over to offices and retail units. But even in its new guise the General Market – in 1994 effectively owned by the then leaseholder, the Eagle

¹⁸⁴ For this para., see *Shrewsbury Corporation Markets*, 23-31; Baugh (ed.), *Hist. Shrop.*, IV, 242-5.

¹⁸⁵ For Shrewsbury, see N. Watson, *A Family Business: Morris & Co. 1869-1994* (1995).

¹⁸⁶ For later stages, see A. O’Hagan, *The End of British Farming* (2001).

¹⁸⁷ Sturges, *Brief Guide*, 29, and refs. given there.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁹ *Shrews. Chron.* 19 Sept. 1975, p. 10.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*; Rowley, *Shropshire Landscape*, 204; Newman, Pevsner, *Shropshire*, 547.

¹⁹¹ *Shrews. Chron.* 19 Sept. 1975, p. 10.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 22 April, 1999, p. 64.

Star Group¹⁹³ – was soon in difficulty. A lack of customers was noted by 1984,¹⁹⁴ and in 1992 it was said to be in steady decline.¹⁹⁵ Although a proposal to close the Market Hall was rejected in 1998,¹⁹⁶ difficulties persisted, and in 2006 a trader stated that his weekly custom had more than halved in the last 20 years.¹⁹⁷ Problems were now linked, with the decline of the town centre generally, to the appearance of large out-of-town supermarkets and retail complexes.¹⁹⁸ That issue persists,¹⁹⁹ but the Market Hall had long since lost any relevance to the farming community of Shrewsbury's hinterland. The great break had already occurred, between 1930 and 1970. Significantly, attempts from 2000 to establish a niche 'farmers' market' have been sited elsewhere in the town.²⁰⁰

¹⁹³ Ibid., 14 April, 1994, p. 5.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 9 Dec. 1984, p. 4.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 4 Oct. 1992, p. 5

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 23 July, 1998, p. 3.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 20 April, 2006, p. 22.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 30 Sept. 1993, p. 3; 1 Dec. 1994, p. 2.

¹⁹⁹ *Shropshire Star*, 18 Nov. 2011, p. 1.

²⁰⁰ See series, DA5/101/-.