



The Hundred Parishes

An introductory article about MARKETS AND MARKET TOWNS

The Domesday Book of 1086 lists just 50 markets across England. During the Middle Ages the number increased dramatically and two thousand new markets were established between 1200 and 1350 AD. From the 12th century, monarchs granted charters to towns and villages allowing them to hold markets on specific days. A charter was a formal document and gave protection from rival markets which were prohibited from trading on the same day or within a certain distance.

The term market town originated in the Middle Ages and the Hundred Parishes has no fewer than four former market towns that still hold a regular market, albeit very different to the occasions when cattle and sheep were traded.

Newport had a flourishing market until 1141 when Geoffrey de Mandeville was granted the right to move the market to Saffron Walden. This was about the time Saffron Walden's church and castle were built and nearby Walden Abbey was founded. Chipping was an old name for market and the town was then known as Chipping Walden.

Today Saffron Walden holds a market on Tuesdays and Saturdays. They are usually the biggest in the Hundred Parishes. The photo below shows part of Market Place on market day.



Thaxted's charter was granted in 1205. Its markets are held on Friday mornings.



In the photo above, Thaxted's guildhall peeps above the market stalls.

Another view shows that the guildhall has an open ground floor where part of the market could be held under cover.



Buntingford was allowed a market in the 14th century by Edward III.

A relatively small weekly market, shown on the left, is still held each Monday.

In 1253, King Henry III granted Great Dunmow the right to hold a market. It is no longer held in Market Place, pictured on the right.



Nowadays, Dunmow's market stalls are set up on Tuesday mornings in Angel Lane / Chequers Lane, pictured below.



Barkway, Hatfield Broad Oak, Linton, Puckeridge and Standon were also once classed as market towns. The wide High Streets of Barkway, Linton and Standon suggest that these were at least part of the market locations.

An exploratory visit to any of the parishes mentioned is thoroughly recommended. Each of those with an active market has a car park, although they tend to get busy on market days.

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