

Sleaford Market Place.

1. Charters and their translations. (the text identified but not necessarily translated).

- (1) Henry 11 Charter to the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln.
- (2) Charter to Sir Edward Fynes of the Most Noble Order of the Garter Lord Clinton and Saye the Lordship of the Manor of Sleaford and all markets and tolls in Sleaford and New Sleaford, Philip & Mary (2 & 4 (1556) or 3 & 5 (1557)).

2. Photographs / Lithographs / Postcards / Watercolours / Drawings etc. (need to be sourced from The Museum with perhaps the need for some new photographs and a map showing the location of the buildings and features of note) etc.).

- (1) Market Place
- (2) St Deny's Church (including Rouen in France - view of the front of the Church - the Norman influence).
- (3) War Memorial
- (4) Drinking Water Fountain
- (5) The Sessions House
- (6) Lloyds Bank plc / Mock Tudor buildings
- (7) The Corn Exchange (the Wheatsheaf motif)
- (8) The Angel / The Bristol Arms Hotel (including The Post Horses and Carriages for Hire Charles Smith Proprietor sign in The Arcade)
- (9) The Black Bull Public House (now Bull and Dog) sign, "1689 BRM.....IW 1791".
- (10) The Blankney Hunt (Boxing Day)
- (11) The Lock up

The Town Council / District Council has a map with descriptive material as to buildings in and around the market place on an information board at the entrance to the market place. It may be we could borrow the format etc. Why invent the wheel?

3. Maps(apart from (4). maps already hung or held by The Museum).

- (1) The Cragg Map 1790 (Market Place, cock fighting pit etc)
- (2) The Fillingham Map 1766.
- (3) Inclosure Award Map 1796
- (4) Local Markets Map, Market Place; Northgate - Cattle and Sheep markets; Eastgate - Poultry market; Jermyn Street and Grammar School - Pig market; Westgate - Sheep market. [This Map needs to be created].

4. Exhibits. (already sourced).

- (1) Instructions to Mr. Clinton of Counsel
- (2) Brief to Mr. Clinton of Counsel to represent Mr Bedford (The Marquess of Bristol's collector of Market Tolls) and The Marquess of Bristol.
- (3) Lord Bristols Warrant to collect Tolls.

Sleaford Market Place

Introduction.

There has been a market in Sleaford since Anglo - Saxon times into the Norman and Tudor to the present day - over a thousand years.

The Anglo - Saxon market developed as a result of water mill technology around 900 A.D. Sleaford became an important milling and trading centre for local estates and as a local centre for royal justice and administration. There were no pre - conquest charters as Sleaford was then a royal manor - the King would not need to grant charters to himself.

The market belonged to Lord Bardi, the last local Saxon Lord in 1066 and is referred to in Great Domesday 1086. Lord Bardi had rights of "sac and soke, toll and team" which included the right to hold a market. The Bishop of Lincoln St. Mary received the right in 1072 by royal charter of William 1. In the middle of the 16th Century the rights passed from the Bishop of Lincoln to The Duke of Shrewsbury, then Edward V1, Philip and Mary, Admiral Lord Clinton, Robert Carre and later the Earls of Bristol (from 1692 (after 1828 Marquesses) until purchase by Sleaford Urban District Council in 1914, the market passed to North Kesteven District Council in 1974 upon local government reorganisation.

Every trader who did not live in Sleaford had to pay for his pitching place or standing. Until Victorian times it was usual for sellers to stand with their baskets of goods around them - stalls came in Victorian times. The best spots were under the eaves or penthouses of private houses which surrounded the market place. The owner charged a fee to tradesmen who hawked regularly - the owner kept the pitch reserved, cleaned and repaired.

Market Charters.

There were at least two Market Charters:

1. Charter of the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln - Henry 11 1154. [Originally the market was held on Sundays (before 1202) but was subsequently changed to Thursdays and confirmed by Order of Edward 111 in 1329. The market since the 17th century has been held on Mondays.[Sources:
(a) Gazetteer of Markets and Fairs in England and Wales to 1516 and
(b) Calendar of Charter Rolls 1327 - 1341 page 108 No. 22.]
2. Charter to Sir Edward Fynes of the Most Noble Order of the Garter Lord Clinton and Saye the Lordship of the Manor of Sleaford and all markets and tolls in Sleaford and New Sleaford) Philip and Mary (2 & 3 (1556) or 3 & 5 (1557)). [The Charter has some interesting language including "most wicked traitor Sir Thomas Wyatt Knight of High Treason".]

Market Rights.

The right to hold a market is often a valuable property right that can confer upon the owner a monopoly within a 6 2/3 mile radius (20 leagues). The distance was based upon the maximum distance a person may reasonably walk (and return) within a day.

Any market within the monopoly area usually requires permission (say by licence or lease) of the owner of the market rights, for example the livestock market in Westgate and later Northgate (1875) and the pig and poultry markets (Jermyn Street and Eastgate) in former times.

The market rights have been subject to challenge over time, including:

1. The Bishop of Lincoln in 1269 was in dispute with one Robert Bardoff over a market in Ruskington (within the radius of the Sleaford Market). The outcome was an agreement that the Ruskington market could continue on terms half the profit was paid to the Bishop.
2. Sir Robert Carre in the 1530's litigated in the London Court of Exchequer to enforce his legal monopolies including right to market and fair tolls and to charge goods and livestock passing through town. The case was against some of the leading townsmen.
3. The Marquess of Bristol defended his right to a market toll of 4 pence in respect of every score of sheep sold in the livestock market on Easter Monday 7 April 1828. The case of William Hewson v. Raynor Bedford (The Marquesses steward / collector who impounded 200 sheep for nonpayment of market tolls) was heard at Lincoln Assizes, Kings Bench in 1828. The market in Sleaford that day saw between 7,000 and 8,000 sheep sold.
4. North Kesteven District Council in the early 1980's considered legal action against a car boot market.

The market place was a large area in the centre of town with the west front of the Parish Church (1180) in the east and Northgate and Westgate in the west. The right to hold an annual fair to mark St Deny's day was granted by Stephen to the Bishop of Lincoln (as Lord of the Manor) in 1140. The fair began on the day before the feast of St Denys (9 October) and lasted for three days. There were also 5 other fairs held in the market place :

1. Plough Monday - an important Lincolnshire Festival marking the end of the Christmas holiday.
2. Easter Monday.
3. Whit Monday.
4. Cattle Fair - 14th August.
5. Cattle Fair - 20th October.

The market place has seen substantial building infill typical of early markets. The Bishop of Lincoln had five market booths for which rent was charged as early as 1258 which were probably ancestors of later infill buildings.

The block of buildings that now stand between the market place and Northgate in the west including Lloyds Bank, the former Sessions House (the old Town Hall) and mock Tudor half - timbered cafe / diner / takeaway, shops and "The Venue" as well as to the north the 19th century former Trustee Savings Bank (1879) (now Burtons solicitors) and associated buildings, were infill.

Thornhill Lane (now named Market Street) leads from Northgate into the north western corner of the market place (near the Solo Club).

Buildings in and around the market place

St Denys Church.

The medieval 12th century parish church was built by the Bishops of Lincoln in the Norman style of Ancaster limestone with a lead roof, decorated gothic nave, medieval rood screen, stained glass

windows and a communion rail possibly by Sir Christopher Wren. The church has a peel of eight bells dating to 1796.

The juxtaposition of the west front of St Deny's Church and the Market Place is unusual in England, but not in France, for example Rouen. The large west door is unusual in a parish church and was probably linked to processional activity of the Bishop of Lincoln (Alexander Bishop 1123 - 47 ("The Magnificent "of Blois) a Norman Dignatory and renown builder, for example Sleaford Castle.

The tower was struck by lightning 21 September 1884 during a service and was rebuilt in 1885. The perpendicular window was removed to strengthen the structure. The Victorians considered the window medieval in style and corrupt. The removal of the window restored the original symmetry of the tower. The Chancery window can now be seen amongst the trees at the back of the churchyard where it was rebuilt.

The Vicarage.

The earliest parts of the building are 15th century The red brick extension dates from 1861 and was undertaken by Charles Kirk. In the middle ages the dwelling was probably used by one of the Chantry priests.

The Lockup

The Lockup is located in the north eastern corner of the churchyard. The Lockup was in use between 1801 and 1820. The Lockup is in poor condition and has been locked and chained off.

Carres Hospital (The Almshouses otherwise known as "The Bede houses").

The hospital was founded by Sir Robert Carre in 1636 to house and support 12 local poor men. The hospital was set up with an Endowment which included Carre House.

The present building overlooking the market place was built in the middle of the 19th century and incorporates a private chapel.

The Corn Exchange.

The Corn Exchange was built in 1857 by Charles Kirk to provide better facilities for the corn trade. The Exchange also fulfilled other functions including facilities for public meetings, concerts, dances, lectures and exhibitions, library, billiard and recreation room, butter market (ground floor) and hosted amateur theatre and operatic performances, dances, balls, travel lectures, photographers and diorama pictures (before the local cinemas was built in Southgate in 1920). The facade of the Corn Exchange was demolished in 1964 and the remainder of the building after a fire in 1969. The Wheatsheaf motif (from above the main entrance is still to be seen at second floor level built into the more recent Southgate frontage).

Mortons Printers.

The predecessor of the half timbered building in the market place today was a print works occupied at one time by William Fawcett who founded "The Sleaford Gazette in 1854. The building was latter occupied by Mortons printers who later moved to Carre Street.

The Angel Inn (The Bristol Arms Hotel).

The Angel was Sleaford's premier Inn (since at least the 1530's) with 16 chambers and 9 garrets, parlours, kitchens, cellars for wine and beer and stables. The coaching trade was the principal

source of custom - London to Hull coaches stopped in Sleaford daily with passengers, royal mails and required fresh horses.

The Hon. John Byng had occasion to visit Sleaford twice in the summer of 1791 and stayed at The Angel. He did not mince his words, he complained the market below his window was disturbing him, dinner was tolerable and the wine intolerable. He described Sleaford as "this dismal town" and the church as "a cumbrous pile.... choked up with pews and galleries". The Angel changed its name to "The Bristol Arms Hotel" in 1820 and became a shopping centre in the 1960's.

The George Inn.

The George also on Eastgate overlooking the market place was another old coaching Inn. The Inn was near what is now the entrance to Carre Street (constructed in 1822). The George towards the bottom of the close, near the river had a cock pit which was probably used for cock fighting on market days. The location is shown on The Cragg Map 1790.

The Town Hall and Sessions House.

The Town Hall was built in 1755 in a classical style with an arcade as a walkway on the western side (as shown on The Cragg Map 1790). The premises included widow Parkes ironmongers shop and Samuel Rawlinson's small dyers shop. The Hall was demolished in 1829 and rebuilt by the Magistrates. The new building was designed by a London Architect H. E. Kendall and built by Charles Kirk.

Features in the Market Place - past and present.

The market place has contained over time:

1. Market Cross - opposite the north - east door of the church (last version dated 1575) was removed. The base was moved into the church and had carved shields each with a saltire between four roundels). The present whereabouts of the base stone is unknown.
2. Whipping Post and pair of stocks were removed in the early 19th century.
3. Bull Ring for public bull baiting around the place now occupied by the War Memorial using three dogs, last used in 1807, now removed. The Black Bull (now Bull and Dog) Southgate sign celebrates the sport, "1689 BRM IW 1791".
4. The "Market Bell" or Butter Bell. The bell was rung into the 20th century and was hung in one of the bell cotes high up on the west front of the the Church to signal the start of trading. No trading of corn was allowed before midday so the Bailiff could collect market dues. Over time corn dealers acquired a significant portion of the trades, some hoped to avoid tolls by trading before the bell or privately in an upstairs room or barn. Local farmers sold corn to millers and corn factors.
5. The Bristol Drinking Water Fountain. The fountain was built in ornate gothic style in 1874 in memory of The Sixth Earl and Second Marquess of Bristol, by a few of his local tenants. It is a reminder of the significant influence the Bristol family had in the Sleaford area over several centuries. The initial supply of drinking water to the fountain came from a spring in the rear yard to what is now Lloyds Bank plc (the Fountain predates Sleaford Water Company Limited).
6. War Memorial - erected in 1922 to mark the sacrifice of local families in the First World War (later also the Second World War).

Markets in Recent Times.

Stalls are found on Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays with fresh fruit and vegetables, plants and flowers in season and variously secondhand furniture.

On the first Saturday of every month Lincolnshire Farmers Market brings up to 20 stalls with local produce variously meats, honeys, preserves, breads, confectionary and pies including fish cooked venison and ostrich burgers.

A Christmas market is held (traditionally part of the town's Christmas celebrations) with lights from Advent Sunday.

There are flea markets on the third Saturday in every month with impromptu auctions on Mondays.

The Blankney Hunt.

The Hunt (which was founded in 1877 by Squire Chaplin) meets in the Market Place with hounds and followers on Boxing Day as guests of the town. The Chairman of the District Council provides drinks for the Huntsmen. The event is colourful and much enjoyed by local people. The Hunt leaves about 11 a.m.