

## **TRADE, SERVICES AND MARKETS**

As producer and consumer of agricultural produce, rural and urban Scotland were tied together in a symbiotic relationship. The transactions which linked them were marketing, and the venues markets.

Markets took different forms – in terms of frequency, rural or urban setting and the range of goods traded.

The smaller, annual events were termed *fairs*. The right to hold a fair was granted by the Crown or Parliament. Produce was sourced locally and other goods brought in for sale.

There was also a recreational element, which has significantly outlived the core trading function. Though fairs were associated with specific localities they have left little trace; this view, of **Trinity Fair, Brechin, Angus**, gives some impression of what they might have been like.



Regular markets were also the subject of royal or parliamentary grant, but tended towards more urban locations. The venue was marked with a mercat (i.e. market) cross. Examples are to be found in many places,



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including settlements no bigger than villages, such as Fettercairn, Kincardineshire, or Gifford, East Lothian. Not crosses as such, **mercat crosses typically consist of a column**, mounted on a stepped plinth, with an ornamental capital, sometimes very finely carved. This one at **Crail, Fife**, is one of many with a **unicorn capital**, flanked by coats of arms, and dates from the early 17<sup>th</sup> century.

The unusually wide High Streets in many Scottish towns arise from their former use as market places. Sometimes the origin of urban streets is made more explicit, in the name '**Market Street**' as this example in **Haddington, East Lothian**.



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Edinburgh's Lawnmarket was one of 15 market sites in the city chartered by James III, in 1477. The 'Lawn-' element signifies linen. This image shows a **street market in Edinburgh**.

This 19<sup>th</sup> century painting of **Edinburgh's Grassmarket** shows some of the throng of activity, both business and pleasure, on a market day.



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Scotland's big agricultural commodity was *cattle*. Many of the *drove roads* which took cattle from the Highlands and Islands down through Scotland towards London can still be traced, as can the *stances* (stopping places) and *tryst* sites – places where the cattle were assembled for sale before resuming their journey south. The principal trysts were at a succession of sites near Falkirk, Stirlingshire, and near Crieff, Perthshire.

The marketing of livestock was revolutionised by two 19<sup>th</sup> century developments: railways and purpose-built auction markets or *marts*. Railways allowed animals to be moved over long distances, rapidly. Marts, usually located close to railways, were a product of Victorian efforts to improve amenity and public health by taking markets off Scotland's High Streets and Market Streets.

This aerial view of **Hawick** shows the **Waverley railway line** sweeping past the auction **mart**, with its lines of pens and characteristic polygonal auction house.



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This auction house **Castle Douglas, Kirkcudbrightshire**, is typical of its kind.





This photograph of the **Milnathort, Kinross-shire mart** gives a flavour of these places on a sale day. More occasional sales were held on show days.



Here, at **Newton Stewart, Wigtownshire**, belted Galloway cattle are being shown, outside the mart building.

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Reference has already been made to Edinburgh's many street markets and to 19<sup>th</sup> century moves to take them elsewhere. This early-19<sup>th</sup> century view shows the **site which was to become Market Street, Waverley Market (1868) and Waverley Station**. Pressures on these 19<sup>th</sup> century sites eventually led to markets relocating on urban fringes.



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In the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a car-owning population, it was to the urban-rural boundary that many large retail premises moved, eating further into the countryside. Meanwhile, another effect of car ownership was the decline in rural shops and post offices, now marked only by larger than usual front windows or the location of a post box; small units such as these are no longer economical. Today, in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, even the travelling shops, which brought goods to country people's doors, are less apparent than they were forty years ago.

***To find out more:***

Millman, R.N. *The Making of the Scottish Landscape*. London, 1975

Marwick, Sir A. *List of Markets and Fairs now and formerly held in Scotland*. Glasgow, 1890

## Markets – Then and Now

### 1. Who granted the right for a settlement to hold a fair?

- (a) The local landowner
- (b) The Kirk of the parish
- (c) The Crown or Parliament

### 2. What is a 'tryst'?

3. Place names and street names within a town can tell us a lot about the history of that place.

Next time you are passing through a town, village or city, notice the street names. The older settlements (from medieval times onwards) tend to have street names in the centre which indicate some kind of market or meeting place for trading.

Most Scottish towns have a High Street or a Market Street, like this example in Haddington, East Lothian [471-333]. Perhaps the original function of this street still remains today. Or is the **name** the only indication **now** of what the street was for **then**?

**In your town, what can you derive from the street names? How do you think names are selected for streets today? Are they still indicative of their function? Or do they to commemorate a person or an event?**

4. The moving of livestock over land was always done on foot, over the many drove roads that crossed over the Highlands of Scotland. **What do you think might have revolutionised this in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?**

5. Markets were held less and less in Market Streets in towns, moving rather to purpose-built auction marts, outside the town centre. This outward movement continued into the 20<sup>th</sup> century as pressures on adequate space for retail pushed trade further outside the towns.

**Can you suggest why this might have happened?**

**How do you think markets have changed *then* and *now*?**

**Answers**

1. The right to hold a fair was granted by (c) The Crown or Parliament
2. A '**tryst**' is the place where cattle were gathered after being driven from all over the Highlands and Islands, on their way to the markets in the south of England.
3. (*Own responses*)
4. Better communications including the development of railways. The railway allowed animals to be moved over long distances, much more rapidly than before.
5. Many changes were underway in the late 19<sup>th</sup>- early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As well as improved communications, hygiene standards forced markets out of the town streets, to purpose-built auction marts. These were often sited next to railway lines, for easier access and transport.

By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, most people had cars which made travelling outside the town possible.

(*Own responses*)