



Wellington History Group

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Wellington's Market Charter, 1514



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Wellington has had at least four Market Charters, granted by the Crown in 1244, 1283, 1514 and 1692. One of the main reasons for a Lord of the Manor to obtain such charters was so that he could levy a tax on goods bought and sold at his markets . . . and monarchs, always in need of money, were often happy to grant a charter for a suitable consideration, usually financial. One of the interesting aspects of charters is that they could be inherited, sold, exchanged and withdrawn. Here, the events surrounding the 1514 charter reveal an interesting set of circumstances.

Wellington had a market charter long before this one of 1514.

Giles of Erdington, then lord of the manor, obtained the first charter by which King Henry III in 1244 granted him the right to hold a market weekly on Thursdays throughout the year.

Many lords of manors paid the king for a market charter in the thirteenth century, a time when the population was increasing and the economy booming. Sometimes these charters were to formalise an existing market to ensure that the lord received the tolls from people setting up their stalls or coming to buy or sell at the market.

Sometimes they were purely speculative ventures on the part of the lord of the manor in the hope that a settlement might develop and become profitable if it had the right to hold a market.

There were many such speculative charters acquired by hopeful lords in Shropshire in unlikely places, such as Wheathill

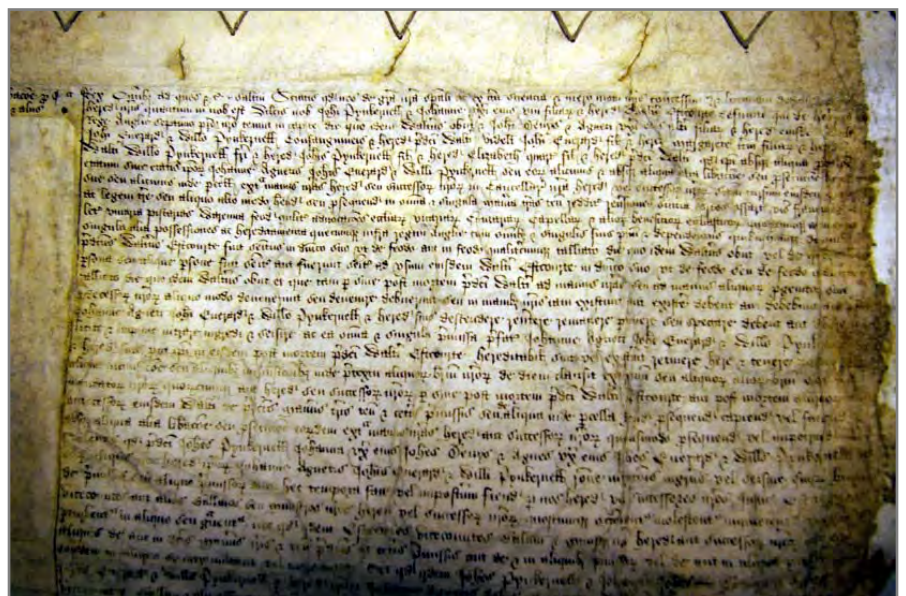
which was high on the Cleve Hills and had a very small population, and Aston Botterell which was too near Bridgnorth to compete and had little chance of ever becoming successful.

Giles of Erdington, however, gave Wellington a better chance of development by also laying out a new market place with burgage plots there and on New Street and Walker Street.

Burgage plots were long strips of land stretching back from the road on which tenants could build a workshop at the front and a house behind.

Men with a trade or craft, such as shoemaking or tailoring, would have been tempted to move into the town by the lure of a low rent (12d a year) and the freedom from having to work on the lord's land for a certain number of days in a week.

The market charter of 1514 was part of a grant of the manor of Wellington to Sir Christopher Garneys by King Henry VIII.



Extract from the original charter, copyright National Archives

Sir Christopher was a gentleman usher at the court of King Henry and became one of his close companions.

In return for Sir Christopher's win at cards the king granted him the manors of Burpham, Wigginholt and Greatham in Sussex, Saxlingham in Norfolk and Wellington, the wardship of the son and heir of Henry Kebill, a London alderman, and an annuity of £10 later raised to £20.

As the king's trusted friend and servant Sir Christopher was sent on various diplomatic missions. In 1513 Sir Christopher was with the king in France and was knighted in Tournai cathedral as part of a mass celebrating a victory over the French.

The following year Sir Christopher was sent to France to escort the king's sister Mary on the occasion of her marriage to the French king, Louis XII.

In 1520 he was again in France making arrangements for visitors to the Field of the Cloth of Gold (next page, bottom). He later held the office of Porter of Calais and one of his chief responsibilities was to ensure a regular supply of vegetables, particularly cucumbers, to Henry VIII.

The manor of Wellington was in the king's hands at the time of the grant because it had once belonged to Francis, Viscount Lovell. Lovell was convicted of high treason in 1487 and all his lands were forfeited to King Henry VII.

Francis Lovell was a friend of Richard III; he had grown up with him in Middleham castle in Yorkshire and remained his strong supporter in adult life. When Richard became king, Lovell was given many small appointments and, in 1485, was made Lord Chamberlain.

Later that same year he was sent with a fleet in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent Henry Tudor from landing. Henry landed at Milford Haven and marched through Wales into the Midlands, gathering support as he went. Lovell fought at the Battle of



King Henry VIII at about the time the charter was granted

Bosworth and, early in 1486, raised a revolt against Henry VII and nearly captured him while he was at York. The revolt was put down and Lovell fled, seeking shelter in Flanders after a while in hiding.

In May 1487 Lovell joined Lambert Simnel who claimed to be one of the princes in the Tower and thus the rightful claimant to the throne.

Simnel and his followers first landed in Ireland but, after raising a band of supporters, sailed for England. However, they were defeated at the Battle of Stoke which turned out to be the last battle of the Wars of the Roses.

Lovell, once more on the losing side, again fled; his subsequent fate is a mystery. Some believe he escaped to his manor of Minster Lovell and died there of starvation in a locked room after the servant who had sheltered and brought him food died. Others say that it is unlikely that Lovell would have gone to Minster Lovell as, though it belonged to him, he had never spent much time there.

The story of his starvation dates from the early eighteenth century when a skeleton was found in a locked room and people jumped to the conclusion that it must have been that of Francis Lovell.

As well as granting a market every Thursday and two fairs a year, one on the eve, day and morrow of the feast of St Barnabas (11 June) and another on the day of the feast of St. Leonard (6 November), the charter also conferred on Garneys the right to hold a court of piepowder and a view of frankpledge.

The court of pie powder was a court held at the time of the market or fairs when those caught using short measures or selling bad meat, for example, could be brought before the court without delay before they left the town. The term 'piepowder' comes from the French 'pieds poudre' – dusty feet.

All lords had the right to hold a court for their tenants, but some had the additional right to hold a court leet or view of frankpledge which entitled the lord to try certain minor criminal offences as a franchise of royal justice.

This right became of considerable importance in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when towns which were not incorporated and did not have the right of self-government used the powers of the court leet to punish 'nuisances', a catch-all offence which could include whatever the manor officials wanted to include.

The charter also granted the right to have waifs and strays in the manor.

If a stray animal came into the manor the bailiff or one of the tenants would keep it for a year and a day and then announce the finding in the market place and the church. If no one claimed the animal it would become the property of the lord.

Waifs were stolen goods dropped by the thief as he tried to make his escape, and these also became the property of the lord of the manor.

The grant of the manor with its lands and these various rights was a generous one for which Sir Christopher was required only to pay a red rose each year, and that only if it were actually demanded.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE CHARTER

To all to whom etc greeting.

Know that we, moved by our special grace and knowledge, have given and granted and by the presents give and grant to our beloved servant Sir Christopher Garneys and Joan his wife our manor of Wellington with appurtenances in our county of Shropshire, the which manor indeed was lately in the possession of Henry Lovell, Lord Morley, and is now in our hands after the death of the said Henry and after the death of the lord Henry lately king of England, our most beloved father, by reason of the attainder and forfeiture of Francis Lovell, late viscount, who by a certain Act of Parliament was attainted and convicted of high treason and by the same Act it was ordered that the said Francis had forfeited to the said Henry our father and his heirs all his lordships, manors, lands and tenements, rents, reversions and services, possessions and hereditaments whatsoever of the said Francis, as by the same Act among other things may plainly appear. And further we give and grant by the presents to the said Christopher and Joan all those lands and tenements, rents, reversions and services in Wellington in the said county of Shropshire which were in the possession of Henry Lovell lately Lord Morley and which are in now in our hands after the death of the said Henry Lovell and of the death of our said father by reason of the attainder and forfeiture of the said Francis Lovell late viscount, and also all and whatsoever advowsons and patronages of churches and other – [torn]

... ecclesiastical whatsoever and presentations to the same and also kinights fees, offices, villeins, festivals, markets, fairs, free warren, privileges and franchises whatsoever appertaining and belonging to the said manor and the said lands in Wellington aforesaid or to any parcel of them of which any ancestor of the late viscount had the use or enjoyment by reason of the manor lands and tenements – [torn]

... or to any parcel of them. And moreover we have given and granted and by the presents we give and grant to the said Christopher and Joan that they and the [heirs] of the said Christopher shall have a market every year a weekly market to be held on Thursday in

Wellington aforesaid, and two fairs to be held every year forever in the manor and form following: the first fair for three days together annually, to wit on the eve of St Barnabas, on the day of St Barnabas and the



next day following of the said day of St Barnabas, and the second fair annually on the day of St Leonard in Wellington aforesaid with a court of piepowder and all that pertains to such a court, so that they be not to the harm of [neighbouring] markets and fairs. And we give and grant to the said Christopher and Joan the view of frankpledge of all men dwelling and residing [torn]

... of the manor of Wellington aforesaid and of all premises and all that belongs to the view of rankpledge and all and every waifs and strays – [torn]

... to have and to hold the said manor, lands, tenements, markets, fairs, view of frankpledge and waifs and strays and all other premises with their appurtenances to the said Christopher Garneys and Joan and the heirs and assigns of the said Christopher forever from us and our heirs for one [red] rose to be paid annually on the feast of St John the Baptist if it be demanded and for such fealty for all other services and demands without account or anything else to be rendered, paid or made to us or our heirs. And further we have given and granted and by the presents give and grant to the said Christopher and Joan all issues, revenues, profits and emoluments of the said manor, lands tenements whatsoever from the feast of St Michael the Archangel last past arising or increasing both by his own hands and by the hands of sheriffs, escaetors, bailiffs, farmers and other occupiers of the same there for the time being without paying or making any account or anything else to us and our heirs – [torn]

... And this without making or paying a fine or fee for the premises or anything of the premises in our chancery or in our treasury of the said Christopher or elsewhere for the premises or anything of the premises besides twenty shillings and four pence for the signing of the said letters – [torn]

... and without any order directed by a bill assigned by us to the clerk of our said treasury or otherwise because – [torn]

... concerning the true annual value of the manor, lands and tenements aforesaid and other premises or of any parcel of them or any certainty of the premises or any parcel of them by the grant or any grants made beforehand by us or our ancestors to the said Christopher and Joan or to either of them in the presents – [torn]

... by restriction made to the contrary or proviso or by other thing, cause or matter whatsoever not withstanding. In witness of which etc. Witnessed by the king at ...
... on the day
... [blank]

THE CHARTER IN ITS ORIGINAL LATIN

Because medieval Latin documents include many abbreviated words, it is customary to expand them to the full words and indicate the expansions with italics so that readers can see what has been done.

Cristoforo Garneys et Johanne uxori eius

Rex Omnibus ad quos etc salutem Sciatis quod nos de gratia nostra speciali et certa scientia & mero motu nostris dedimus & concessimus ac per pres[entes] damus & concedimus dilecto servienti nostro Cristoforo Garneys militi & Johanne uxori eius manerium nostrum de Wellyngton cum pertinenciis in C[omitatu] nostro Salopie quod quidem manerium nuper fuit in possessione Henrici Lovell domini morley & in manibus nostris iam existit post mortem ipsius Henrici & post mortem domini Henrici nuper Regis Anglie precarissimi patris nostri ratione attincture & forisfacture ffrancisci lovell nuper vicecomitis – [worn] . . . qui per quendam actum parlamenti attinctus & convictus fuit de alta prodictione & per eundem actum ordinatum fuit quod idem ffranciscus [Lovell] forisffecerit prefato Henrico patri nostro & heredibus suis omnia dominia maneria terras & tenementa redditus reversiones & servicia possessiones ac hereditamenta quecumque ipsius ffrancisci ut per eundem actum inter alia plene potest apparere Et ulterius damus & per presentes concedimus eisdem Cristoforo & Johanne omnia illa terras & tenementa redditus reversiones & servicia in Wellyngton in eodem Comitatu Salopie que nuper fuerunt in possessione Henrici Lovell nuper domini morley & que in manibus nostris iam existunt post mortem ipsius Henrici Lovell ac mortis dicti patris nostri ratione att[incture] & forisfacture predicti ffrancisci lovell nuper vicecomitis lovell necnon omnia & omnimoda advocaciones & patronatus ecclesiarum ac aliorum ?ben[eficiorum] ecclesiasticorum quorumcumque & presentaciones ad easdem ac etiam feodum militis officia villanos ferias mercata nundinas Warenam liberam privilegia & franchises quecumque eisdem manerio terris & tenementis predictis in Wellyngton predict' sive eorum alicui parcelle appendentes – [torn] . . . spectantes aut que aliquis antecessor ipsius nuper vicecomitis lovell habuit usus aut gavvisus fuit ratione manerii terrarum & tenementorum – [torn] . . . eorundem alicui inde parcelle ac insuper dedimus & concessimus & per presentes damus & concedimus prefatis Cristoforo & Johanne quod ipsi & [heredes] ipsius Cristofori habeant unum mercatum singulis annis die Jovis septimanatim in Wellyngton predict' tenendum ac duas Nundinas te[nendas] singulis annis imperpetuum modo & forma sequentibus videlicet prima nundina per tres dies invicem & annuatim scilicet in vigilia sancti Barnabe in die sancti Barnabe & proximo die sequenti

eiusdem diei sancti Barnabe & secunda nundina annuatim in die sancti leonardi in Wellyngton predict' tenenda cum Curia pulverizata et omne id quod huiusmodi Curie pertinet Ita quod non sint preiudicia sive ad nocumentum [vicinorum] mercatorum sive nundinarum Ac damus & concedimus eisdem Cristoforo & Johanne visumfranciplegii ac omnibus hominibus residentibus & inhabitantibus --- [torn] . . . manerii de Wellyngton predict' ac ceterorum premissorum & omne id quod ad visumfranciplegii pertinet ac omnia & omnimoda Wayffes & Strayes – [torn] . . . predictum manerium habenda & tenenda predictum manerium terras tenementa mercata nundinas visumfranciplegii ac Wayeffes & Strayes ac cetera premissa cum suis pertinenciis universis predictis prefatis Cristoforo Garneys & Johanne ac heredibus & assignatis ipsius Cristofori imperpetuum de nobis & heredibus nostris per unam rosam [rubram] annuatim solvendam in festo sancti Johannis Baptiste si petatur & per fidelitatem tantum pro omnibus aliis serviciis & demandis quibuscumque absque compoto seu aliquo alio inde nobis vel heredibus nostris reddendo solvendo seu faciendo Et ulterius dedimus & concessimus ac per presentes damus & concedimus eisdem Cristoforo & Johanne omnia exitus reventiones proficua & emolumenta dicti manerii terrarum tenementorum & ceterorum premissorum a festo sancti michaelis archangeli ultimo preterito hucusque provenientes sive crescentes tam per manus suas proprias quam per manus vicecomitum Escaetorum Ballivorum firmariorum & aliorum occupatorum eorundem ibidem pro tempore existentium absque compoto seu aliquo alio inde nobis vel heredibus nostris reddendo solvendo seu faciendo Et hoc absque fine seu feodo pro premissis seu aliquo premissorum in Cancellaria nostra seu in hanaperio eiusdem – [faded] . . . nostre vel alibi pro premissis seu aliquo premissorum faciendo seu solvendo preter viginti solidos & quatuor denarios pro sigillatione litterarum predictarum – [torn] . . . hanaperii nostri predicti & absque aliquo mandato nostro per billam per nos assignando clerico hanaperii nostri predicti dirigendo vel aliter Eo quod -- -- [torn] . . . de vero valore annuo manerii terrarum & tenementorum predictorum & ceterorum premissorum seu alicuius inde parcelle aut aliqua certitudine premissorum seu alicuius parcelle aut aliqua certitudine premissorum seu alicuius inde parcelle aut aliqua concessione vel aliquibus concessionibus per nos -- -- [torn] . . . progenitorum nostrorum prefatis Cristoforo & Johanne aut eorum alteri preantea factis in presentibus minime factis existit aut -- -- [torn] . . . restrictione in contrarium facto sive proviso seu alia re causa vel materia quacumque non obstante In cuius etc Teste Rege apud – [faded] . . . [blank] die.

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