MARKETS, THE HEART OF OUR GREAT CITY

URBAN SPACE MANAGEMENT LTD

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Since the days when men first banded themselves together in organised communities, markets have been a feature of first importance in the everyday life of nations throughout the world. In Britain the right to hold a market was one of the most valued privileges that could be granted, by a king or overlord, to a town or community. Not only in Britain but throughout Europe, the growing towns fought to secure by charter the right to hold a market, and, once secured, this privilege—a considerable source of wealth—was jealously guarded. In England the erection of Markets and Fairs formed part of the King's prerogative, and none could exist except by direct grant from the Crown, or by long and immemorial usage which indicated such a grant.

...
Trade is what made London Great.

London’s Markets provided the stage and backcloth to that trade.

London’s Markets encouraged, controlled and regulated trade from the purchase of a single apple to the flow of precious metals.
BILLINGSGATE
In the 1920s some 1500 porters were required to carry fish around the market
Just over 1 acre

SMITHFIELD
12.5 acres in size. The first consignment of frozen meat was sold at Smithfield in 1876. The façade of the first purpose built refrigeration building still exists in West Smithfield

BOROUGH MARKET
3.5 acres in size

SPITALFIELDS
4.5 acres under glass in 1992

LEADENHALL
In the 1930s 50 tons of poultry were sold each week with one wholesaler selling 250,000 turkeys at Christmastime.

COVENT GARDEN
6 acres

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET (CALEDONIAN MARKET)
12.5 acres 2,250 stalls on busy Fridays with up 100,000 visitors.

CAMDEN LOCK MARKET
2 acres up to 250 stallholders up to 100,000 visitors on Sundays.

STOCK EXCHANGE
Comparatively tiny footprint but staggering flows of trade.

FARRINGTON ROAD
Reduced to two stalls by 1980

A FEW STATISTICS FOR SOME LONDON MARKETS
BILLINGSGATE
First mentioned in AD 588
King Ethelred made laws governing the landing of goods at the dock there in A.D. 976

SMITHFIELD
Known as the Kings Market at the time of the establishment of St Bart's Hospital in 1123

BOROUGH MARKET
First recognised as an institution in 1276

SPITALFIELDS
Charles the 11 granted letters patent for two markets a week to John Balch in 1682

LEADENHALL
The first regular public markets were held on the land bought for the City by Dick Whittington in 1445

COVENT GARDEN
Granted Letters Patent from Charles the 11 in 1670

METROPOLITAN CATTLE MARKET (CALEDONIAN MARKET)
was opened on 13th of June 1855

CAMDEN LOCK MARKET
7th of March 1974

STOCK EXCHANGE
1773 stock jobbers rented their own premises in Threadneedle St.

FARRINGTON ROAD
the book market started in 1869

A FEW DATES FOR SOME LONDON MARKETS
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