

1584 Ledbury Charter:

Ledbury Markets, Fairs And Court Of Pie Powder

Translation Of Pro C.66/1264, Mem.27/28

The Queen to all, etc., greeting: Let it be known that, according to reliable reports received, the inhabitants of our borough or town of Ledbury in the County of Hereford and are inconvenienced particularly by the fact that all the markets in the County of Hereford where victuals and other necessities may be bought are very far distant (the nearest is more than eight miles away) and the trouble caused by making so long and frequent a journey to obtain not one thing only but indeed everything for the use and enjoyment of the poor inhabitants of the same town or borough; in order to enact and apply by statute, that their necessities may be more plentifully supplied, by the special grace and from our exact knowledge and by our sole action we gave and granted and for our heirs and successors we give and grant by these presents (i.e. this document) to Edward Cowper, Master of the Hospital of Ledbury aforesaid and to his successors, to Edward Cowper, cleric, parson of the rectory or benefice called the Nether Hall in the church of Ledbury in the County aforesaid and to his successors, to William Penson, cleric, parson of the rectory or benefice called the Over Hall in the church of Ledbury aforesaid in the said County of Hereford and to his successors, and to William Davyes, cleric vicar of the parish church of Ledbury aforesaid and to his successors in perpetuity, that they and their successors in perpetuity should have, hold and maintain within the town or borough of Ledbury aforesaid every year weekly during the year a market on Tuesday lasting for the whole of that day and also two fairs or 'mops' each year, every year in perpetuity: the first fair of the said two fairs to begin on the day of the feast of Apolstles Philip and James and lasting for the whole day of that feast, and the other fair or 'mop' of the said two fairs or 'mops' beginning on the fest of St. Barnabas the Apostle and lasting for the whole day of the same feast.

And if at any time in the future it should happen that the said feast of the Apostles Philip and James or the said feast of St. Barnabas the Apostle should fall on a Sunday we wish, order and grant by those presents to the said Edward Cowper, master of the hospital of Ledbury aforesaid and to his successors, to William Penson, cleric, parson of the rectory or benefice called the Nether Hall in the church of Ledbury aforesaid and to his successors, William Penson, cleric, parson of the rectory or benefice called the Over Hall in the church of the Ledbury aforesaid and his successors and William Davies, cleric, vicar of the parish church of Ledbury aforesaid and his successors, that they and their successors, at that time and as often should have, hold and maintain the fair or 'mops' aforesaid appointed to be held on the day of the feast of the Apostles Philip and James or on the feast of St. Barnabas the Apostle on the Tuesday next following the said feast Apostles Philip and James or the said feast of St. Barnabas Apostle lasting for the whole of that Tuesday: together with the Court of Pie Powder at the time of the holding of markets, fairs and 'mops' aforesaid and together with all liberties and free customs pertaining to such a Court and also with tolls, stall age (i.e. dues for holding stall), pick age (payment for right to break ground to erect a stall), fines, amercements and all other profits, commodities and emoluments whatsoever proceeding, occurring, emerging or resulting from such markets, fairs, 'mops' and Court of Pie Powder and with all liberties and free customs relating and pertaining to such markets, fairs, 'mops' and Court of Pie Powder: Provided that the markets and fairs aforesaid may not be a nuisance to other neighbouring markets and fairs.

And finally we desire, ordain and decree by these presents that the Constables of the town or borough of Ledbury in office from time to time and forever in future times should hold and administer the Court and the provision of the markets, fairs and 'mops' aforesaid and by themselves or by an adequate deputy or adequate deputies may collect, receive and levy (or another of them may collect, receive or levy), without impediment from our heirs or our successors or from anyone else whatsoever, all tolls, customs, fines, amercements, profits, commodities and emoluments whatsoever as a result of the markets, fairs and 'mops' aforesaid, or as a result of the Court of Pie Powder aforesaid from time to time, arising or proceeding from all and every trading in merchandise and cattle sold and bought without impediment from our heirs or our successors or from anyone else whatsoever, all tolls, customs, fines, amercements, profits, commodities and emoluments they may distribute and disburse according to their discretion in relief for the use of the poor dwelling within the said Hospital of Ledbury or elsewhere within the town or borough of the said Ledbury. And that the same Constables and any of them may collect, receive and levy the profits, commodities and emoluments proceeding and emerging from and in the said markets, fairs and 'mops' or any of them and in the said Court, and collecting, receiving or levying they should render and make (and any other should rend and make) in perpetuity a faithful reckoning also from the distribution and disbursement of the same each year within the space of twenty days next after the feast of St. Michael and Archangel to the Master of the Hospital of Ledbury aforesaid and the Rector or beneficiary aforesaid and the vicar of the church aforesaid for the time being, to the three, two or one of them; we desire also and by these presents we direct of our sheriffs of Hereford, Monmouth, Shropshire, our sheriffs of our City of Gloucester that within the same City in places where it may seem to be that three, two or one of them, should have the foregoing publicly read, proclaimed and notified and nay one of them should cause it to be read, proclaimed and notified.

And that all and each of our subjects dwelling within the Counties and City aforesaid may by the validity of these presents (i.e. this document) congregate and come together freely and safely in the said town or borough of Ledbury for frequenting and attending the markets and fairs aforesaid. And this on the demonstration alone of these presents, to those or to anyone of those (i.e. the subjects) made without any writ sent or warranted to those or to any one of those, in whatever manner may be directed or provided for. And above all we desire also, and our heirs and successors, by these presents we grant to the said Edward Cowper, Master of the aforesaid Hospital and to his successors. Also to the parsons and vicars of the aforesaid churches and their successors that they should hold our letters patent*by law according to all meaning and judgements without any writ 'ad quod dampnum', prosecuting or suing on that account. Seal of England made and sealed in due manner without henceforth rendering, paying or enacting in any way fine or fee to us large or small in the Chancery or elsewhere at our use. In that express mention etc., In which affair etc. Witness, the Queen, at Westminster 26th June (circa 1584) **

*The end of the last line of men.27 is covered by the top of men.28.

**1585 According to the date in the Parish Register