

Deddington Fairs

During the period 1820-1837, 3 annual fairs continued to be held in Deddington:

- a fair on Old St. Lawrence's Day on 21 August;
- a statute fair on the Saturday following Old Michaelmas Day on 12 October;
- a winter fair on Old Martinmas Day on 22 November.

There seems to have been considerable confusion amongst the weekly lists of fairs published in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* and other newspapers concerning the date of the annual fair in August.

The newspaper entries from at least 1799 to 1837 indicate the holding of an annual fair on 10 August every year during this period, with the apparent exception of 1821, 1823, 1825 and 1829.

The lists also indicate that there was an annual fair on 21 August in 1799, 1801, 1814, and every year from 1820 to 1837.

The newspaper notices therefore suggest that two fairs were held in August in each of the years 1799, 1801, 1814, 1820, 1822, 1824, 1826, 1827 and 1830 to 1837, which seems unlikely.

5 national directories published between 1781 and 1839 give the date of the August fair (for horses and cows) as 21 August.¹

10 August was celebrated as St. Lawrence's Day, whereas 21 August was not a special feast day.

The reality is that the fair probably originated on St. Lawrence's Day, but that after the Gregorian calendar replaced the Julian calendar in 1752, the date of the fair, like that of the winter fair, was moved to compensate for the 'lost' 11 days.²

The statute fair on 10 October was a hiring fair, established in 1780, for the hiring of farm labourers and servants for the ensuing year. It was the custom to roast a whole ox in the Market Place.

The most important of the fairs was the Winter Fair, otherwise known as the 'Pudding-Pie' Fair, in the Market Place each year on 22 November. According to Owen, Walpole and Cooke, the Winter Fair was for horses, cows and swine.

Based on the recollections of elderly Deddington residents going back to the mid-19th century, Mary Vane Turner, writing in 1933 (see below), relates that in its heyday the late November fair featured stalls and booths along the west side of Market Place,

¹ The directories were:

- Owen's 'New Book of Fairs', 1781;
- G.A. Walpole, 'The new and complete British Traveller', 1784;
- Universal Directory, 1792;
- G.A. Cooke, 'A Topographical and Statistical Description of the County of Oxford', 1805;
- Robson's Commercial Directory, 1839.

² The Julian calendar was replaced by the Gregorian calendar in the British Empire in September 1752 (the 11 'lost' days), so that in future the legal year began on 1 January instead of 25 March (Lady Day).

pigs in the centre of the square, sheep in Bull Ring and Victoria Terrace (then Hoof Lane) up to Earl's Farm (where the pound was), with up to 600 or 700 horses in Horse Fair from the King's Arms to some distance up the Hempton Road.

For more detailed descriptions of fairs in Deddington, see:

Chapter 6, Deddington Fairs in *The Story of Deddington* by Mary Vane Turner, 1933.

<https://www.deddingtonhistory.uk/publishedhistories/mvt/6.deddingtonfairs>

Sub-section on 'Markets and fairs' under 'Parishes: Deddington' in the Victoria County History of the County of Oxford, Volume XI (Wootton Hundred, Northern Part), ed. Alan Crossley (London, 1983), pp. 81-120.

<https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol11/pp81-120#h3-0007>

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19 August 1820, page 3

FAIRS IN THE ENSUING WEEK.

Monday - Deddington (Summer fair), Winslow.

20 August 1825, page 3

FAIRS. - Monday next, Deddington, Bracknell, Winslow.

Oxford University and City Herald, 20 August 1825, page 3

FAIRS Deddington, (horses and cows)

Oxford University and City Herald, 8 October 1825, page 3

FAIRS. - Abingdon, (statute,) Charlbury, (cheese and cattle,) Deddington, (statute,) , Monday next

Oxford University and City Herald, 19 November 1825, page 3

FAIRS. - Deddington (horses, cows, and pigs) Rugby (horses, cows, sheep, &c.) Tuesday next.

7 October 1826, page 1

Deddington Hiring Fair.

NOTICE is hereby given, That in consequence of Banbury Fair happening this year on the day after Old Michaelmas Day, DEDDINGTON HIRING FAIR will be held on WEDNESDAY NEXT, Old Michaelmas Day.

Oct. 4, 1826.

JOHN CHURCHILL, High Bailiff.

► An Ox will be roasted as usual.

