

Origins

Camden Town did not start as a traditional English village centred on a green, such as Hampstead and Highgate. Nor was it a strip development along a main road, such as Kentish Town and Islington. It was, in the words of architectural historian of London, John Summerson¹, a 'Georgian suburb', newly created on fields either side of the River Fleet through permission of an Act of Parliament in 1788.

Early maps show the countryside to the north of London - St Giles, Marylebone, Tottenham Manor and Pancras ('Marybone Park' was the hunting ground of Henry VIII that later became Regent's Park) – and upwards to the hills of Hampstead and Highgate.



John Speed. 'Middlesex described with the most famous cities of London and Westminster, 1611' (section).²

The River Fleet ran from the hills through Pancras to the Thames. St Pancras church formed a landmark, seen in this sixteenth century drawing of London's environs.

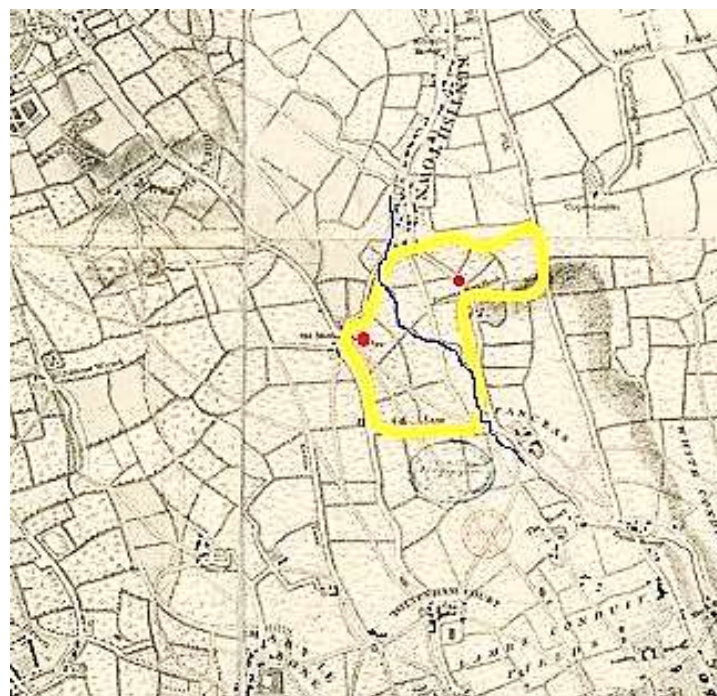
¹ John Summerson, *Georgian London* [orig 1945] London, Yale, 2013:333.

² British Library online gallery. Shelfmark Maps Crace Port. 1.28.



View from south of St Pancras Church with the River Fleet valley.³

The Roque map of 1746 shows the Fleet, roads and fields. The road from Tottenham Court to Hampstead passes to the northwest. It divides at the Mother Red Caps inn, also called the 'halfway house', and crosses the Fleet. Kentish Town is a straggle of houses along the road. There is also the Pancras Workhouse. Here, the inn and workhouse are identified as red, while the land of Cantlowes demesne, of which the Jeffreys family were the landlords, is outlined in yellow.



John Rocque. Map of London environs 1746, annotated to show Camden Town estate boundaries (yellow), buildings (red) and River Fleet (blue)

³ 'Plan of London (circa 1560 to 1570)', <british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-map-agas/1561/map>

Demesne and prebend

At the beginning of the third volume, Middlesex, of Daniel Lysons' history of the 'environs of London' of 1795. Of Cantlowes:

The demesne lands consist of about 210 acres, according to the survey taken by order of parliament in 1649. The manor house was then sold to Richard Hill, merchant of London, and the manor (which had been demised to Philip King and George Duncomb for three lives, all then surviving) to Richard Utber, draper. After the Restoration, the lessees, or their representatives, were reinstated in their property. About the year 1670 the lease came into the possession of John Jeffreys, Esq. father of Sir Jeffrey Jeffreys of Roehampton, Alderman of London (fn. 10). By the intermarriage of the late Earl Camden with Elizabeth, one of the daughters and coheirs of Nicholas Jeffreys, Esq. grandson of Sir John, it became vested in him in right of his wife, and is now the property of the present Earl.

This was retold by Gillian Tindall in *The fields beneath* (1977). Yet how the land arrived with Lord Camden does not appear to have been a subject of further investigation, and there are errors in this account.

The Manor of Cantlowes was one of four in the Parish of St Pancras recorded in Domesday. It stretched from Kentish Town to Highgate. At the south end, land of about 220 acres around the Manor house was a 'demesne', the land retained by the landlord for private use. St Paul's Cathedral held the Cantlowes demesne land as a 'prebend' – that is, the Cathedral allocated the income from its lease to a non-resident canon, called a prebendary.

The manor and farm is described in the survey of Church properties by Parliament in 1649:

"The manor house of Cantlowes stood on the east side of the King's Road, where that thoroughfare is now crossed by the railway, near Randolph Street. It was described in 1649 (on the Commonwealth Survey) as consisting of a little courtyard, a porch entry, hall, parlour, kitchen, milk house, a little yard, a brushing room, two pairs of stairs, two little rooms next the parlour, built with timber, an orchard, a fair garden with a brick wall on the south, a base yard, barn and two stables, cart house and little pingle, containing 3 acres 1 rood, then leased to Richard Gualter at £16 a year, together with fields which extended over the land now bounded by King's Road, Kentish Town Road, High Street, Camden Town, and Crowndale Road. The total area of the demesne lands was 213 acres."⁴

⁴ Victoria County History, London, vol 1:409-433.

Cantlowes had a complicated history in the seventeenth century, as it was used by land investors.

The Survey of Londonⁱ states that Rev'd John King (prebend from 1616) leased Cantlowes to Philip King and George Duncombe in 1633 'for natural lives of Mary King, wife of John King, and son John King and step-son Benjamin Baron'.

John King, prebendary of Cantlers, was one of three brothers all significant to St Pancras parish. Their father, John King, had been Rector of St Andrews, Holborn from 1597 and a well-known Calvinist anti-Catholic preacher; he became dean of Christ Church, Oxford from 1605, Vice-Chancellor of the University in 1607-1610 and then Bishop of London from 1611 until his death (of renal stones) in 1621. John King, his son, was given the Cantlers prebend at the age of 21, and held it from 1616 to 1638. He was later also a Canon at Windsor and at Westminster. His older brother Henry King (1592-1659) was given the adjacent prebend of St Pancras also in 1616. Henry was a co-executor in 1631 for the will of John Donne, and was himself also a notable poet. He later became Bishop of Chichester. The youngest brother, Philip King, was Rector at St Botolph, Billingsgate until his living was sequestered in 1644; and at the Restoration received the prebend in St Pancras as well as being treasurer at Chichester Cathedral and Archdeacon of Lewes until his death in 1667. All three brothers therefore were within the established church and connected to Christ Church, Oxford. In the Parliamentary period they lived away from London.

The Survey of London further-on states that

the freehold of the manor was bought in 1649 by Richard Utber, draper

the manor house was sold to Richard Hill, merchant

the demesne lands were leased to Richard Gwalter from 1647 for 21 years.

The land reverted to St Paul's at the restoration.⁵

Richard Utber was a city draper. His father Barnard was from Hoe, Norfolk. Richard was admitted 'in servitude' to the City Drapers' Company in 1623, and was a Master when his own son Richard was admitted in 1654ⁱⁱ. From 1635 through to 1668 he leased property including The Green Dragon on the corner of Old Jewry and Poultry in the

⁵ Walford's 'St Pancras' (1878), on British History Online, incorrectly stated: 'At the Restoration they were ejected, and the original lessees reinstated; but again in 1670 the manor changed hands, the father of Alderman Sir Jeffreys Jeffreys (uncle of the notorious Judge Jeffreys) becoming proprietor.' [There was no family link with 'notorious Judge Jeffreys.].

City.⁶ He is included on the pew lists at St Mary Colechurch. In 1647 began to build up an estate on either side of Ballards Lane by the purchase from Bartholomew Clerk of a house and 20 a., including Frithfield. He also bought the manor of Whetstone, or Friern Barnet, together with the manor of Brownswood in Hornsey, for £3228. A book describing the civil conflict by Levellers and Diggers describes Whetstone and Finchley as “the scene of conflict over entry fines”ⁱⁱⁱ; and in Finchley, Utber’s “arbitrary fines were resisted by copyholders in 1659”. A new house in Ballards Lane, which in 1664 was assessed for 17 hearths, the largest in Finchley after Bibbesworth, he sold in 1669, with other houses and 21 acres, to John Searle (d. 1682), who had made his fortune from a sugar plantation.

Richard Hill was a City merchant in the guild of Cordwainers in Lime Street, and Alderman for Candelwick ward in 1654-1656. Earlier, during the Long Parliament 1642-1649, he held the formidable-sounding post of “treasurer of sequestrations” at the Guildhall of London. He and his wife both died in 1660^{iv}, the year of the Restoration. His son, Abraham Hill, inherited his father’s fortune and the same year married (with his first son born in 1661) and bought an estate in Sutton in Kent. Abraham Hill joined business with learning^v. He became, at the early age of 27, a member of the Council of the Royal Society: he was active in committee work, and for many years was treasurer. After 1689 he became a commissioner of the Board of Trade for the new King and Queen, and ‘comptroller’ for the Archbishop of Canterbury.



Richard Gwalter, who leased the land, had a more direct interest in Cantlowes. The history of St Pancras Church records that Richard Gwalter leased, for £54 in cash and 2 pence a year rent, four acres of land in 1643 to build a chapel in Kentish Town^{vi} “which is very convenient and fit for all the parishioners to come unto”. A further two acres in Highgate, in Cantlowes manor, were leased to provide income for the chapel and church.

⁶ D J Keene and Vanessa Harding, 'St. Mary Colechurch 105/24', in *Historical Gazetteer of London before the Great Fire*. British History Online www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-gazetteer-pre-fire/pp552-556.

Restoration

It is not clear who owned Cantlowes directly after the Restoration, but in 1666 – near the time of reversion of Richard Gwalter's 21-year lease – Sir Joseph Sheldon and Robert Clayton (titled 'gent' and therefore probably Sheldon's lawyer) surrendered their interest to the prebendary Revd Walter Jones.

The restoration of King Charles II to the throne in 1660 accompanied the wider re-establishment of the powers and lands of the Church of England. Dr Walter Jones was appointed Sub-Dean of Westminster and Sub Dean of the Chapel Royal and given the prebend of Cantlowes. Originally from Worcester, in 1643 he had married Philippa, daughter of the Dr Samuel Fell, Dean of Christ Church and later Chancellor of the University. Philippa's brother, also Samuel Fell, is still remembered in the nursery rhyme lines "I do not like thee Samuel Fell ..."^{vii} Walter Jones was buried (without a marker) near his seat in the Quire of Westminster Abbey in 1672.

Yet a more complex history for Cantlowes can be found recorded at the time of reversion of the estate to the prebend in 1667^{viii}. It starts with the same lease in 1633 from the prebendary John King to Philip King, "of Lincoln's Inn", and **George Duncombe**. Duncombe's family was from Albury in Surrey, and he had property interests at several sites around London. But the reversion lease records that Philip King died and George Duncombe then sold the land in 1635 to Thomas Bennett, Master of Chancery. No mention is given of Richard Utber's ownership; but the document then states that by 1655 Duncombe had died and Bennett created a new indenture with William Pretymán. (Bennett is recorded in his role as Master of Chancery in a separate plea at the House of Lords in 1662^{ix}.)

William Pretymán (d 4 March 1687), who came from a merchant family from Norfolk, was John King's son in law by his daughter Elizabeth. Pretymán held property in Greenwich and Deptford^x and was active in shipping – in 1658 he was involved in sale of "an eighth part of the good ship called the Angell of London, 350 tons, master William Rand"^{xi}. Later, he and his son Thomas took up shares in the newly-formed Hudson Bay company. He is also mentioned as "a merchant adventurer to India and an ardent royalist who held a minor position in the Exchequer"^{xii} His brother, Sir John Pretymán, had a more difficult career. He was an MP after the Restoration but was indebted to the Crown and his brother William had to assist him^{xiii}. The debts continued – even with spells in Fleet prison – to his death in 1676.

Sir **Joseph Sheldon** was from a family in Derbyshire. In 1647, the year his father died, he started as an apprentice tallow chandler. Through marriage, he became son-in-law to the brother of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He was elected Alderman in 1666, Master of his company in 1667 and Lord Mayor of London in 1675. It was said of him and Sir Robert Vyner that 'the King hath noe two persons doe more passionately love his interest than these,' and that 'they are men of good abilities, and very sober and discreete in the management of businesse.'^{xiv}

In 1666 also, Benjamin Baron, the third of the 'lives' in the original lease of 1633, surrendered his interest to William Pretyman, and for a payment of £3000, ownership passed to Sir **George Ent**, a prominent physician. His family, living in Sandwich, Kent, had come from Flanders to avoid religious persecution. He was born in 1604, and travelled to Padua for his medical study. He met William Harvey in Italy, and became a life-long advocate for his scientific discoveries. (Both men were from East Kent, though Harvey was older than he and died in 1657). Ent was elected to the Royal Society in 1663, and President of the Royal College of

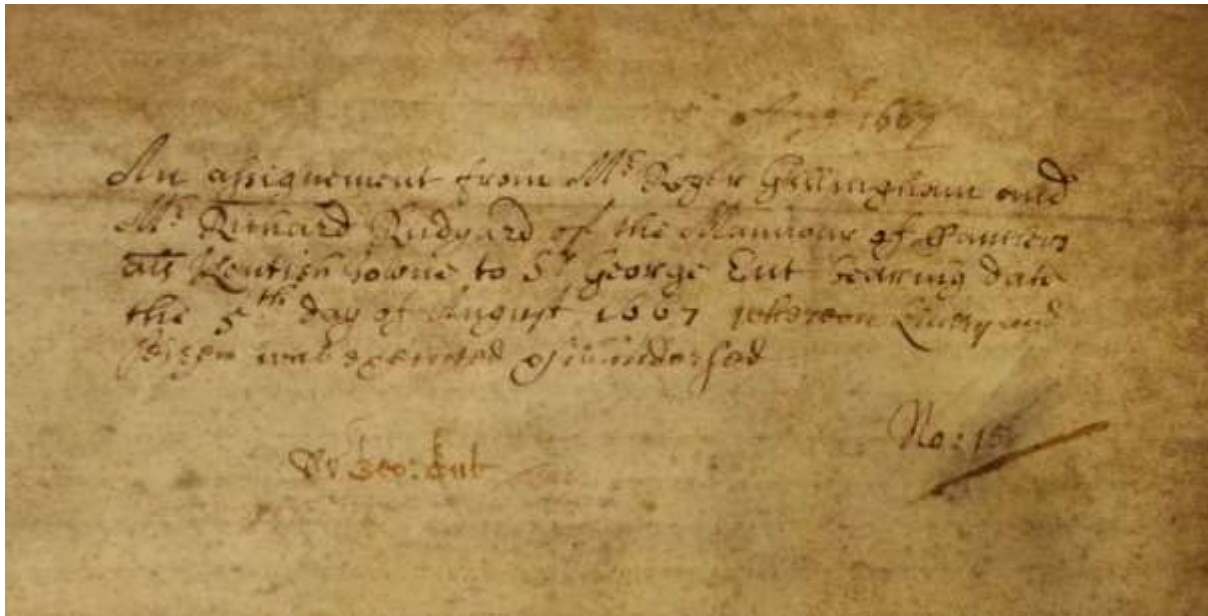
"They begin in the midst of *January* to heat the Ovens: spending every Morning an hundred *Kintars* (or an hundred pound weight) of *Camels*, or of *Buffald's* dung; and the like proportion at Night, till the midst of *February*. About which time the Ovens are so hot, that one cannot well endure to lay his hand upon the Walls. After this, they put the Eggs into the Ovens to hatch the Chicken; which they continue successively till the end of *May*."

The manner of hatching chicken in Cairo, observed by Mr John Graves, sometime professor of anatomy at Oxford; and communicated by Sir George Ent, late president of the College of Physicians, London. Philosophical Transactions No. 137, 10 February 1677/8

Physicians in 1670. He was "known as an author, a scholar, and an anatomist ... [and] widely reputed to be exceptionally eloquent, particularly in Latin".^{xv} He died at St Giles-in-the-fields in 1689.

In 1673, Ent claimed that Pretyman, with a default of £1000, had 'lost all rights'; but he continued to have an interest; and in May 1681, a new owner took the lease on the Cantlowes demesne from the prebend, paying Sir George Ent £2750 and £750 to William Pretyman for the sale.

In 1681 it was bought by Jeffrey Jeffreys, a lawyer- but who died next year. His executor, Lewis Jeffreys, passed ownership to John Jeffreys, whose money had earlier paid for it.



An assignment from Mr Roger Gillingham and
Mr Richard Rudyard of the Mannour of Cantlowes
als Kentish Towne to Sir George Ent bearing date
the 5th day of August 1667 between Gillingham
Rudyard and Gillingham
No: 15



20th May 1681
Mortgage by Release from
Wm Prettyman to Sir George Ent
and Charles Proctor
for 3500^l by the hands
of Sir George Ent
No: 19



2^d Decem: 1682
Release or Conveyance
for Mr Lewis Jeffreys
No: 20

"Assignment ... of the Mannour of Cantlowes als Kentish Town to Sir George Ent, 5 August 1667". "Mortgage by release from Wm. Prettyman (&) Sir George Ent and Charles Proctor (lawyer) Jeffry [sic] Jeffreys for £3500, 20 May 1681". "Release or conveyance for Mr Lewis Jeffreys, 2 December 1682" (Kent History and Local Archives)

ⁱ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol19/pt2/pp1-31#fnn99>

ⁱⁱ http://www.londonroll.org/event/?company=drp&event_id=DRML2193

ⁱⁱⁱ John Gurney. *Brave community: the Digger movement in the English Revolution*. Manchester University Press, 2007:186

^{iv} <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-aldermen/hen3-1912/pp75-119>

^v R. E. W. Maddison. *Abraham Hill. Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London Vol. 15 (Jul., 1960)*, pp. 173-182

^{vi} <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vol19/pt2/pp124-131>

^{vii} <http://www.patrickcomerford.com/2014/02/i-do-not-like-thee-doctor-fell-but-i.html>

^{viii} Will T142-Nn

^{ix} <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol8/pp344-345>

^x The National Archives. Chancery document C 7/41/46 Short title: Browne v Pretyman.

^{xi} Discovery (TNA). Assignment: William Pretyman of London, merchant, to George Farington of London, merchant -- a eighth part of "the good ship called the Angell of London" 350 tons, master

William Rand -- for the purpose of commencing suit against George Baker of London, merchant. (Not executed). Reference: DDF 1283 Date: 1658. Held by: Lancashire Archives.

^{xii} The 'Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay': A Study of the Founding Members of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1665-1670. Barry M. Gough *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1970), pp. 35-47

^{xiii} <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/pretyman-sir-john-1612-76>

^{xiv} <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-aldermen/hen3-1912/pp168-195>

^{xv} https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Ent