

The Cantlowes demesne

At the beginning of the third volume, Middlesex, of Daniel Lysons' history of the 'environs of London' of 1795.ⁱ 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 Survey of Londonⁱⁱ 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'. It reports the Parliamentary survey of 1649, the first year of the Commonwealth, with land in the possession of 'Richard Gulater and Leonard Streete': the copyholder rents, leases and timber were valued at £20 1 7d annually, while a manor house and thirteen fields had leases totalling £554. The Survey of London further-on states that Richard Utber, draper, bought the freehold of the manor in 1649, the manor house was sold to Richard Hill, merchant, and the lease of the demesne lands belonged to Richard Gwalter from 1647 for 21 years. The tenant at the Restoration in 1660 is Elizabeth Nicoll, widow. [Source: Eccl. Com. 243, 155.]

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. In the Parliamentary period they lived away from London.

In 1649, following execution of King Charles, church properties such as the St Paul's prebendaries, were sold. Cantlowes, as well as two other prebends of St Pauls, in Stoke Newingtonⁱⁱⁱ and Finchley, were sold to Richard Utber. 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 son Richard was admitted in 1654^{iv}. A book describing the civil conflict by Levellers and Diggers describes Whetstone and Finchley as "the scene of conflict over entry fines"^v; and also in Finchley, Utber's "arbitrary fines were resisted by copyholders in 1659". But in 1664, after the Restoration, Richard Utber still had a large house in Ballards Lane, Finchley, assessed as "17 hearths".

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^{vi}, 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^{vii}. 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's relationship is rather different: he had a 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^{viii} "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.

Less is known of Richard Streete. One Chancery court record, also for 1649, shows an interest in 'Hill fields and the old laystall' at St Andrew's Holborn^{ix}.

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 ..."^x 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^{xi}. 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 Pretymen. (Bennett is recorded in his role as Master of Chancery in a separate plea at the House of Lords in 1662^{xii}.)

William Pretymen (d 4 March 1687), who came from a merchant family from Norfolk, was John King's son in law by his daughter Elizabeth. Pretymen held property in Greenwich and Deptford^{xiii} 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"^{xiv}. 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"^{xv}

His brother, Sir John Pretymen, 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^{xvi}. The debts continued – even with spells in Fleet prison – to his death in 1676.

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.

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 discrete in the management of businesse.'^{xvii}

In 1666 also, Benjamin Baron, the third of the 'lives' in the original lease of 1633, surrendered his interest to William Pretymen, and for a payment of £3000, ownership passed to Sir George Ent, a prominent physician.



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

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

ⁱ Daniel Lysons, 'Pancras', in *The Environs of London: Volume 3, County of Middlesex* (London, 1795), pp. 342-382. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-environs/vol3/pp342-382> [accessed 20 January 2017].

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

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/middx/vol6/pp140-146>

^{iv} http://www.londonroll.org/event/?company=drp&event_id=DRML2193

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

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

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

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

^{ix} LMA: ref Q/HAL/090

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

^{xi} Will T142-Nn

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

^{xiii} The National Archives. Chancery document C 7/41/46 Short title: Browne v Pretymán.

^{xiv} Discovery (TNA). Assignment: William Pretymán 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.

^{xv} 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

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

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

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