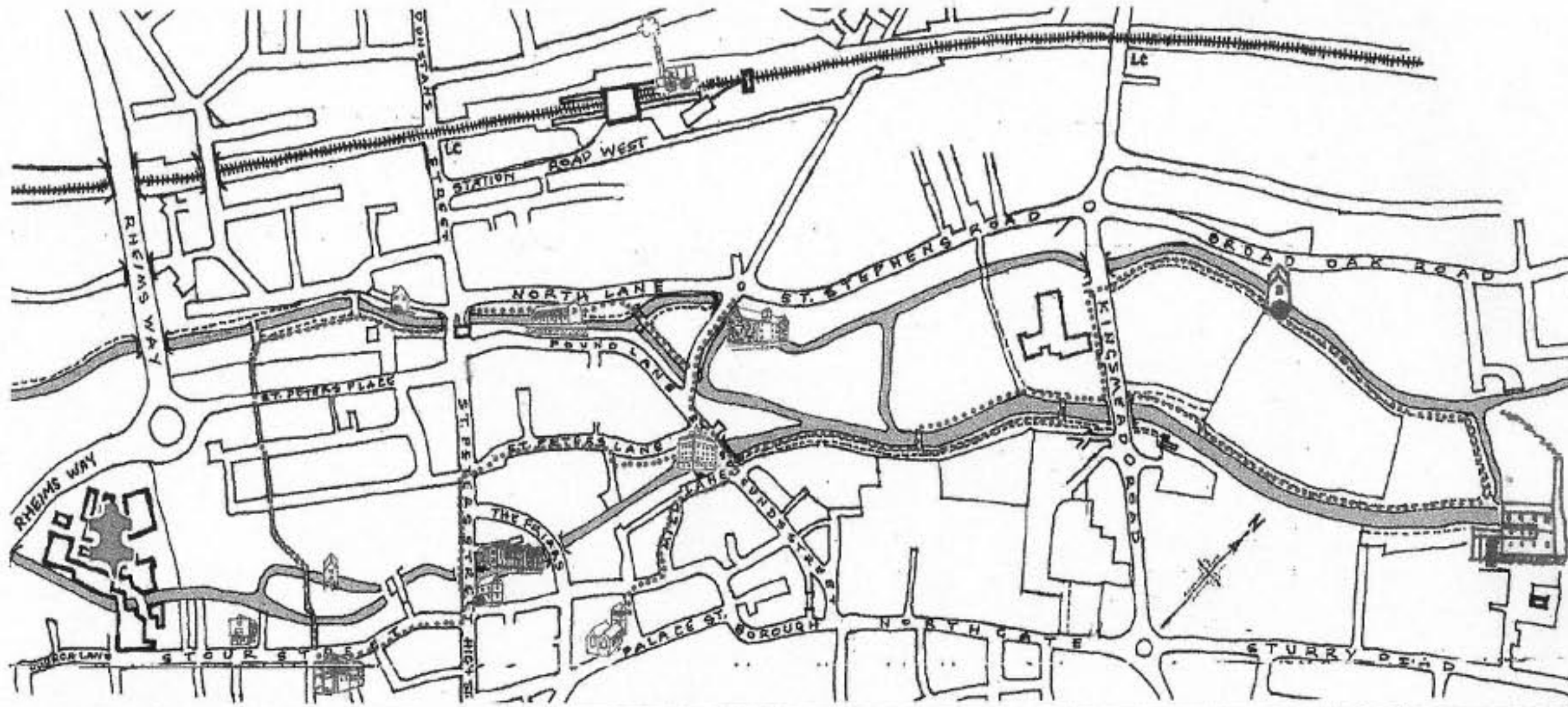


An Industrial Trail Through Canterbury



An illustrated trail produced by The Canterbury Environment Centre. Trail Number 13

CHAS SCANS

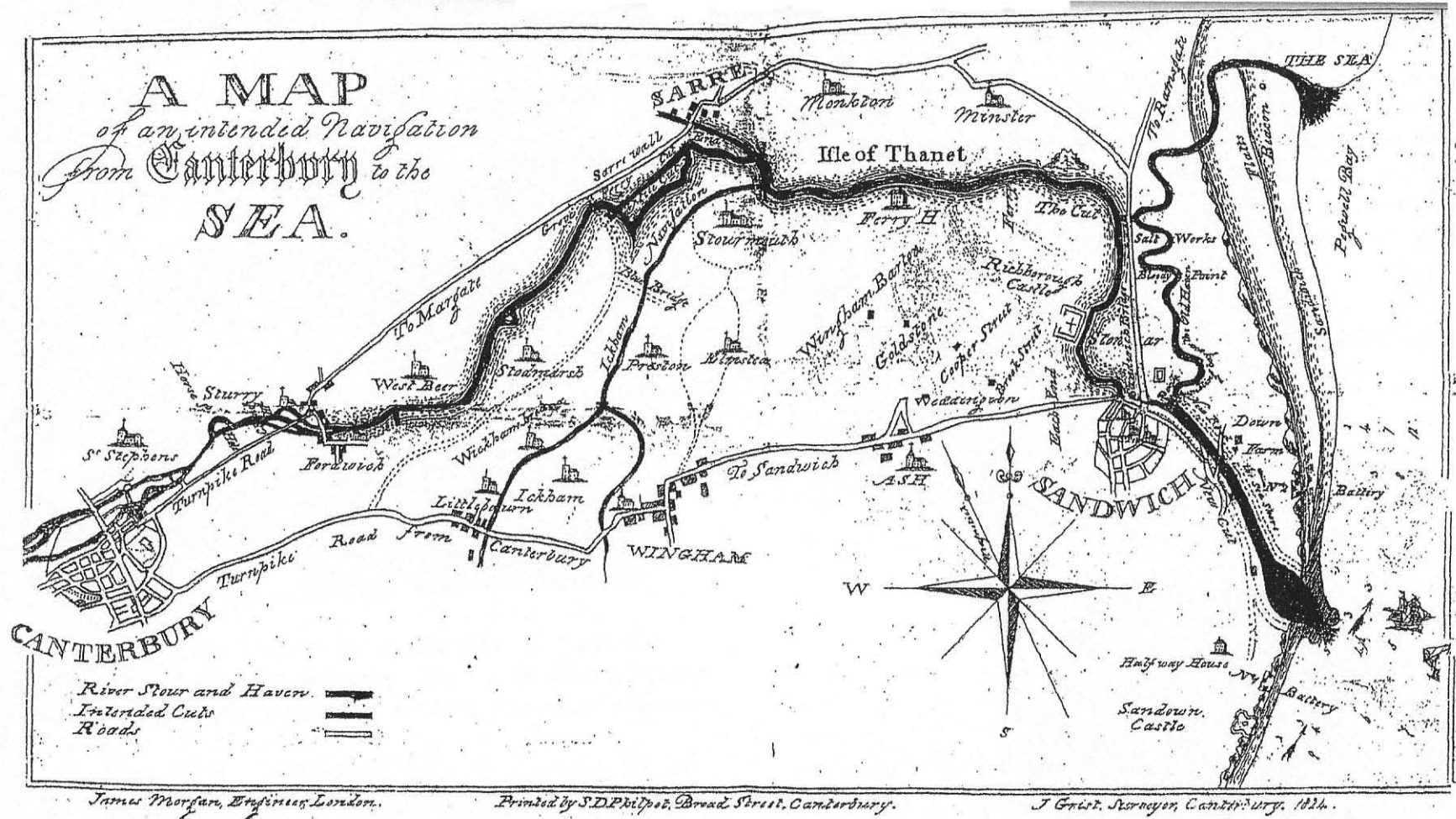
Between 1977 and 2002 Canterbury Urban Studies Centre and Canterbury Environment Centre published around 30 guides and city trails describing various aspects of Canterbury's past. Both organisations were based in St Alphege church.

Between them they produced 14 titles in the 'Trails' series, and a further 16 titles outside the main series. All are now out of print and many are difficult (a few impossible) to find through normal second hand sources. Many contain information that is not readily available in other printed or on line sources.

CHAS (Canterbury Historical and Archaeological Society) is scanning a selection of these publications for uploading to the CHAS website as PDFs. In this way a new generation of readers and researchers can have access to this unique resource.

A full list of these publications appears on the CHAS website:

<http://www.canterbury-archaeology.org.uk>



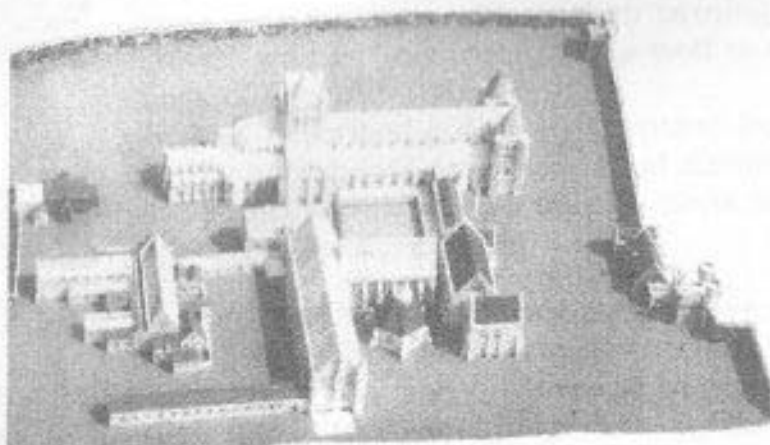
Since Roman times, being close to continental Europe, Canterbury has been an important communication centre. In 597 St. Augustine landed in Pegwell Bay to bring Christianity to these isles. Since then the short sea crossing between the British Isles and the continent has been the favoured route even with today's Channel Tunnel.

Whitstable, to the north, was Canterbury's other port and Romans ate the still famous Whitstable oysters.

In early times the port of Sandwich was a great trading centre for imports and exports and Canterbury had its own port at Fordwich.

In time, however, the River Stour silted up and Fordwich was abandoned. Sandwich suffered the same fate and Dover came into prominence as a port.

In Roman times Canterbury lay on the main road to London and with the subsequent founding in Christian times of St. Augustine's Abbey and later, the Cathedral, it became an important Christian centre.



With the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Becket its appeal to pilgrims grew enormously due to Becket's shrine reputedly having healing powers, drawing in pilgrims from far and wide.

Today, in a sense, things have gone a full circle, as these early pilgrims were the forerunners of today's tourist industry.



Indeed, quite an industry blossomed in early times for Canterbury, and mementos for these early pilgrims were sold in great numbers on routes into the city.



As to industry, the main local industries have been centred on the River Stour for water power and mills have been built to provide flour, paper and cotton since roughly medieval times and before. Weaving was a flourishing industry due to the influx of Huguenot religious refugees from France and the Low Countries in the 16th and 17th Centuries.

Another still thriving industry is The Tannery, founded in 1789, again situated beside the River Stour.



Although considerably reduced now, hop fields with their towering hop poles and crop can still be seen either approaching or leaving Canterbury to the south. Hop production and use was a thriving industry in the area.



One of the earliest references to hops was in the 6th century BC and the great Roman naturalist Pliny (AD23 to 79) described the hop as “the wolf of the willow”, because where hops grew amongst willows their twining growth was as “destructive as a wolf to a flock of sheep”.

He also described a delicacy prepared from young hop shoots and a botanical dictionary of 1805 contains a description of hops being prepared like asparagus.

In the 7th and 9th centuries there are records of cultivated hop gardens in France and Germany when many references were made to their useful medicinal properties. By the 12th century their value for flavouring and preserving beverages was well known. By the 14th century hop growing had spread from Germany, where it is thought that their use in beer originated, to the Netherlands and especially Flanders. Hops were probably grown in England by this time, but only as herbs.

It is believed that beer first arrived in England in about 1400, at Winchelsea Harbour in East Sussex, in a consignment ordered by Dutch merchants working in England, who doubtless preferred their native beer to the sweet thick English ale flavoured with herbs and spices, brewed without hops. The Dutch influence on the beer trade still survives with such terms as “firkin” and “kilderkin” for nine

and eighteen gallon (41 and 82 litre) casks.

The use of hops to brew beer had a somewhat chequered existence in the fifteenth century, no doubt to keep the old style English ale flowing, but by the beginning of the 16th century beer was gaining ground. As hops were a good preservative, the brewer had a wider market, but the first English hop garden wasn't created until 1520, so tradition has it, in the parish of Westbere just east of Canterbury.

By 1522 beer was brewed in England using local as well as imported hops and the industry has prospered since. In Kent, however, it has declined somewhat since the Second World War but a hop garden or hop field is easily recognised by the hop poles, wire and string used in the growing and the Oast houses used for drying the hops standing proud in the landscape. Many of the disused oasts have been converted into homes.

The well known pre-war and early post war annual “hop picking holidays” taken by many poorer London families in Kent are no more, as the vines are now cut off at the top and bottom by hand and then transported to be picked by machine. They are then dried and pressed into bags for distribution to breweries. Canterbury once boasted quite a few breweries but all have now gone, either bombed in the second World War or demolished due to a fall off in trade or for redevelopment.



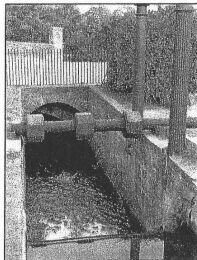
The trail can now begin in detail. In order to make it easier, it is set out in two loops. This is because the River Stour, around which much of the industry is based, has two branches running through Canterbury. One lies to the north, mainly outside the city walls and one to the south running through the city itself with links in some places.



Commencing at the Environment Centre in St. Alphege Lane, turn left on leaving the building, turn right at the crossroads into King Street and then the next turning left into Mill Lane.

Follow Mill Lane to its end. Opposite the Millers Arms Pub is a garden in which is all that is left of Denne's mill, formerly Abbot's Mill.

The millpond and the two mill races can be seen plus the main bearings for the two mill wheels.



There was a mill here, just inside the city walls, for some 800 years. The mill was bought by Abbot Hugh II (1126-51) for St. Augustine's Abbey and remained a part of the Abbey's possessions until the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII in 1538.

It was rebuilt in 1824, using some material from the city wall to the north and was designed by John Smeaton, who also designed and built the Eddystone Lighthouse. It was timber framed and clad and had stone foundations, some of which can still be seen on the site, and was six working storeys high, some 100 foot (30 metres) with an octagonal observatory at the centre of the roof. The two water wheels were 4.8 metres in diameter and 2.1 metres wide (15 ft 9ins x 6 ft 11ins)



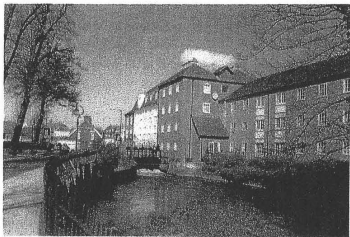
This picture was taken at the turn of the century from Westgate Mill.



The mill was destroyed in a fire on 17th October 1933, whilst being repainted.

Nearby is a modern private residence, Mill House, which is a considerably scaled down version which echoes the shape of the Old Mill and which was designed by a local architect.

From this mill site turn left over the bridge across the river into St. Radigunds Street and take the next turning right into the Causeway. Go down the Causeway towards North Lane with one of the river's cross links on your right. At the end on the right hand side is a recent development designed to echo the mill that once stood on this site. Opposite on the left is Millers Field



The Mill here was known as Dean's Mill and a mill had existed on this site since Doomsday. The mill was named after Dean John Parker who owned it from 1822. It was modernised to steam power in 1920 with the necessary chimney and with the addition of a roller mill. Roller mills succeeded the traditional circular grinding wheels used for centuries earlier.



Again, this mill was destroyed by fire on 9th June 1954 and the site subsequently developed in 1995.

There are also sluices here which control the flow of the river.

Retrace your steps back down the causeway and turn right across Millers Field on the footpath past three tree sculptures commemorating the storm of October 1987. Cross the river and walk along the bank behind the modern houses and the car park.



On the opposite bank stand the Woolstores in Pound Lane, built in the 16th and 17th centuries when wool was brought by river for storage before being used by local weavers.

Walk on to the end of the car park and go around the Westgate. Cross over and enter the Westgate Gardens. Continue through the gardens, past the Tower House and on the right, on the opposite bank, you will see Riverside Cottage.

This 17th century two storey building was originally the Westgate Mill. In 1936 when it stopped working as a mill, it was given to the city, together with the Tower House by the Williamson family who also owned St. Mildred's tannery.



The Tower House is now used as the official office of the Lord Mayor.

Walk as far as the second footbridge across the river and then turn left, through the service yard into St Peter's Place. Cross the road to the footpath which continues its way between houses. Cross Black Griffin Lane and St Peter's Grove into the Greyfriars Garden. To the right you can see St. Mildred's tannery.



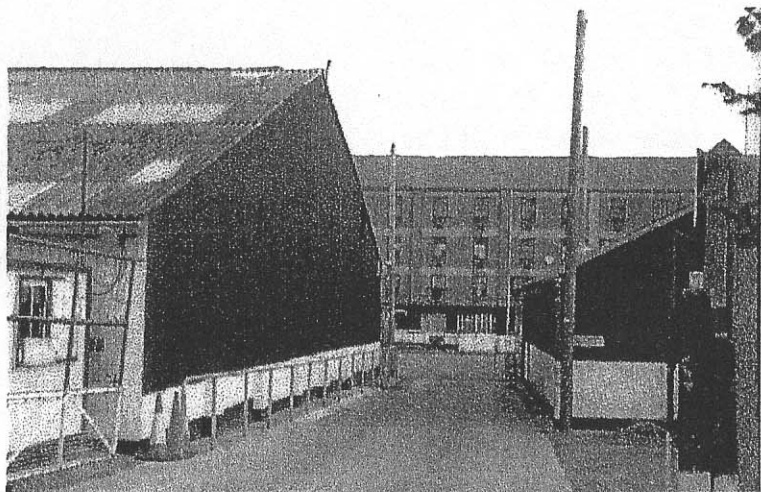
There were originally two tanneries. One, Hugmans, stood on the site next to the Poor Priests Hospital which was later occupied by Beasley's dye-works.

In 1871 ten inhabitants in the St. Mildred's area raised a petition complaining about the smell from the "soaking, putrid hides" from Hugmans.



No. 22 remodelled to its pre-war style

The building was destroyed by bombs in 1942. The other tannery still functions and is at the other end of Stour Street.



A tannery has been located here since the 18th century. This one was bought by the Williamson family in 1879 and extended in 1884. The family started their leather business from premises in Sun Street in 1791. Leather from their tannery was mainly produced for boots, shoes and horse harnesses. Later it was supplied to the army and notably was used at the battle of Waterloo in 1815 and the Boer War in 1899. Today the emphasis has changed and the leather is used mostly in furniture and cars but it was also used for the benches in the House of Commons and the Speaker's chair. The tannery suffered two major fires in 1894 and 1932 and was badly damaged in the Second World War. It is a short walk from St Peter's Place to look at the working tannery but be warned, tanning can be a smelly business!

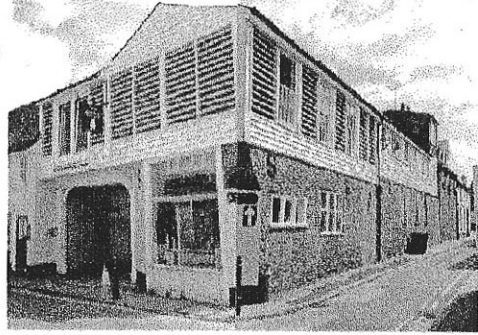


As far back as King Stephen's reign (1135-1154) two mills were operating on the River Stour. The first, called Hottemelne, or Hotte Mill, stood on the site of a present car park opposite Stour Street junction with Jewry Lane. By 1200 it had gone, but a well on its north side called Hottewelle continued to be used and was so called because its water had a hot chemical taste.

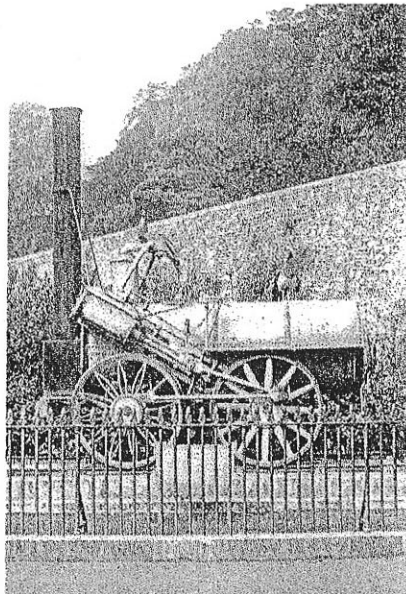
The other Mill completely blocked the end of St. Edmund's Road (originally Geroldes Lane) and the owners built a dam across the river to achieve the head of water needed to work its waterwheels.

Other industries operating in Stour Street in the 1800's included Neame's Soap and Candle Factory, situated where the Post Office now stands, and opposite the west side of the County Hotel. Frequent attempts to have it closed were made, as it was contended that the awful smell of melting tallow was driving away the hotel's guests, but seemingly to no avail.

There was also a large Brewery on the corner of Stour Street and Beer Cart Lane - amongst many other large and small ones, now all gone. It belonged originally to Fermer & Flint who sold it in 1849 to William, Edgar and George Rigden. Soot from its tall chimneys made life very uncomfortable for the local inhabitants who kept their windows closed and couldn't hang out washing. There were no laws at the time about pollution and the river suffered badly from the dye residue from Beasley's and untreated sewage was an even greater problem. Happily, today things are remarkably better.



As you cross the garden into the Franciscan way on the left is the one remaining Franciscan (Greyfriars) Friary Building, spanning a loop in the river. Continue to the end of Water Lane into Stour Street and turn left past the Canterbury Heritage Museum, formerly the Poor Priest's Hospital. This is Canterbury's main museum and houses the railway locomotive "Invicta".



It is fair to say, that in general the industrial revolution almost passed Canterbury by, with one major exception.... the railway.

On May 3rd 1830 the world's first passenger railway opened for business between Canterbury and Whitstable on the coast. This development was a major piece of engineering, and preceded the more famous Liverpool to Manchester route by almost four months.

The Canterbury to Whitstable line is probably more famous for the great engineers who had an interest in it. Amazingly it brought together George and Robert Stevenson, who were involved from the outset, guiding the design and layout. Thomas Telford, the eminent civil engineer was involved and Isambard Kingdom Brunel spent some time studying the bridge construction to use on his own Great Western route.

The line continued to carry passengers until 1954. Affectionately known as the "Crab and Winkle" line because of its connection with the fishing port of Whitstable, it delighted and amused many travellers.

It was in the late Autumn of 1824 that the Canterbury Rail Road Company was formed, with shares being offered at £50. Permission from Parliament to construct the railway was applied for in November 1824, and despite a lot of opposition to the plan it was granted permission in 1825. George Stevenson was appointed to oversee construction and design the engine. Many arguments ensued about the costs of construction as the work progressed.

Stevenson continued to order high quality goods for the project. Local tradesmen were suspicious of the men constructing the line and many fights were noted between them.

The major item of civil engineering was the construction of the Tyler Hill tunnel. The work proceeded at a very slow pace throughout 1826, with the men working in the dark both literally and metaphorically. But it was a great attraction for local people.

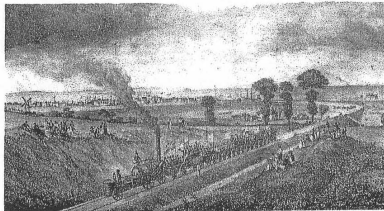
Over the next twelve months many applications were made to Parliament to deviate from the original route and many meetings were held by the company to raise more funds. However, by 1828 work was proceeding well.

The company's decision to adopt standard gauge was attributed to George Stevenson himself. The steepest gradient was on the final stage from Boghole to Whitstable itself, which varied between 1 in 50 and 1 in 57.

The engine, designed by Stevenson, costing £635 and named "Invicta" arrived by sea in April 1830 .

On Sunday May 2nd Invicta was taken on its trial run and reached a maximum speed of 17 miles per hour.

On Monday May 3rd at 11.15am the signal was given and the first passenger railway train in the world got underway. It arrived in Whitstable harbour at 11.57am amid much cheering and excitement.



This whole line was a project of firsts. The first passenger railway in the world; the first ticket was issued by this line; later the first season ticket was issued on this line and for the first and only time the countries leading engineers worked on one project together.



Canterbury West Railway Station today.

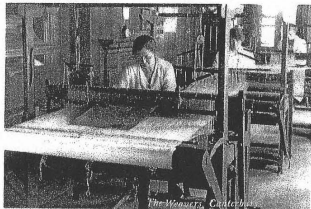
Continue down Stour Street and turn left into the High Street at the end. In a few steps one comes to the Eastbridge Hospital on the left which actually spans the river beside the King's Bridge.

Opposite, on the right, recently restored, is the King's Mill House, which stands on the site of the King's Mill.

This Mill stood until 1800 and the Mill Race still exists beneath the present building. It can be seen from a boat on the river but check the route when hiring your boat



On the site opposite this former Mill stands The Weavers. This is a timber framed building erected in 16th century with Victorian additions. This was one of the main buildings that was used by the Huguenot Weavers, religious refugees from France and Flanders.



In 1557, seventy-five families were allowed to move from Sandwich to Canterbury on condition that they were skilled in the weaving trade. At one time it has been estimated that about a quarter of Canterbury's inhabitants were made up of these immigrants.



Walk on down St. Peter's Place and turn right into St. Peter's Lane. About two thirds of the way down St. Peter's Lane on the right hand side lies Solly's Orchard. On entering the Orchard one can see, on the right, the only two buildings that survive of the Dominicans (Blackfriars) Priory.

That bordering the Orchard is in private ownership,

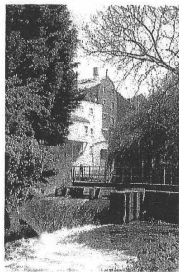


whilst the building across the river is now The Kings School Art Centre.



The walk continues beside the River with an excellent view of the site of Dennes Mill and the Mill House and this loop of the walk finishes here beside the Millers Arms.

The Trail's second loop commences by crossing the road and walking down the riverside path beside the St. Radigunds Street car park and then crossing the river by the footbridge opposite Kingsmead School. Continue along beside the river, passing beneath the Kingsmead Road Bridge and on past the Greyhound Racing Stadium.

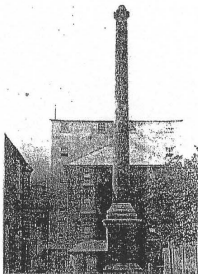


In five minutes or so one comes to Bartons Mill. This Mill was the city's one remaining working Mill and produced Animal Feed and Fertilizer until very recently.

The building will be preserved for the future when it is converted for housing, retaining the external features of the old mill.

Its name originates from the word "barton" meaning a granary for storing barley. It is four storeys high with a shiplap weatherboarded finish and has two water wheels.

The narrower building next to it, at its northern end, has one wheel.

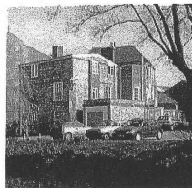


Originally, it was worked as one unit comprising a Corn Mill & Paper Mill, these being split up in 1829. The Mill was reunited in 1897 and the old stone grinding wheel arrangement was replaced with roller milling.



Mill workers of 1912

Steam power was introduced in 1916 and the whole process electrified in 1937.



The whole complex is now formed of "listed buildings" - although not the modern additions clad with steel panels on the Sturry Road side - and includes a set of flint buildings which were given brick fronts in about 18th century.



These buildings can be reached by crossing the footbridge in front of the original mill and are on the right hand side as one walks up towards the Sturry Road via a narrow driveway.

Beyond this is a large open area and the building on the left, Lesser Knowsthorpe, was built by the Mill's then owner, Allen Grebell in 1777. It is of redbrick, three storeys high and features fine gauged arches over its windows and an impressive main entrance.

To continue this loop of the trail, retrace your steps back across the footbridge and take the path to the right beside yet another cross-link of the river and then follow the path round to the left with the northern arm of the river on your right.

Once past the allotments on the opposite side of the river there are traces of the old Cotton Mill and the clues to its existence include a small weir across the river and a little further along, some brickwork forming part of the opposite river bank.



This Mill was built in 1791 by John Callaway, a Master of the Weavers Company. It produced cotton twist used in the production of Canterbury Muslins.

To return to the start of the trail continue along the river bank and up a short flight of steps through an opening in the hedge into Kingsmead Road. Cross the road, turn left and cross the river by the bridge adjacent to the supermarket. Turn right and follow the Riverside Walk to the Millers Arms, up Mill Lane and King Street to the Environment Centre.

We hope that you have enjoyed the Trail.

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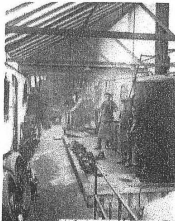
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Hops and Hop Picking

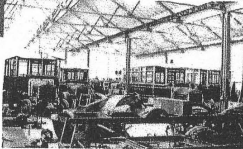
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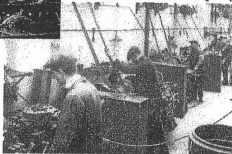
Blacksmith's Shop E.K. Road Car Co.



East Kent Bus Company



East Kent Road Car Company



Robert Brett's traction engine

