

A Brief Account of 3 Tanneries along North Lane and St Stephen's Road.

There have been tanners and tanneries in this area since before 1200. They deserve further research. Please contact CHAS if you believe any of following to be wrong or have further information.

Kent Hundred Rolls record: Then the jury say that the people dwelling outside the Westgate were, in the time of King John [1199-1216] father of King Henry, subject in all things pertaining to the lord king and the community of the City of Canterbury, just as the citizens of the city, but after Archbishop Hubert Walter's time [abp. 1189-1205] they are withdrawn, whence the lord king and the citizens suffered loss, because merchants there, such as tanners and other merchants, withdrew themselves from the aftersaid city, and they are supported and defended by the lord archbishop causing harm to the city.

The Tannery at 46 North Lane

Excavations at 46 North Lane in 1983 by Paul Blockley led to this article:

LOCAL archaeological workers have been putting their best feet forward — and turning up Roman hob-nailed boots and medieval leather shoes.

The finds were made on the North Lane dig, the site of Canterbury's flourishing tannery quarter, which produced shoes, clothing, plus a host of other leather goods of years gone by.

The site of the former Tune-In premises, soon to become old people's housing, has been dug up over the last three months by volunteers from Canterbury Archaeological Trust and youngsters from the Manpower Services

by Anne Riddell

Commission community programme.

Site supervisor Mr Paul Blockley described how the workers had dug down through the 19th Century foundry into the 17th Century tannery and below them to reveal the 14th Century tanning buildings.

Mr Blockley said: "The whole area here was tanneries. Christopher Marlowe's father was a tanner and had a tannery in this area — but there is no way of knowing if this is the one."

The high water table is responsible for the leather's good condition. In the Middle Ages, the river meandered through the dig site, much nearer North Lane than it is now, and the Roman hob-nailed boots were found on the bed of the old water course.

The workers, who finished on site on Friday, have also found several horn cores, used to remove the outer coating of cattle horns, which was then used as lantern glass or for optical instruments.

The leather finds are being stored in water as there is no money available to research and preserve them.

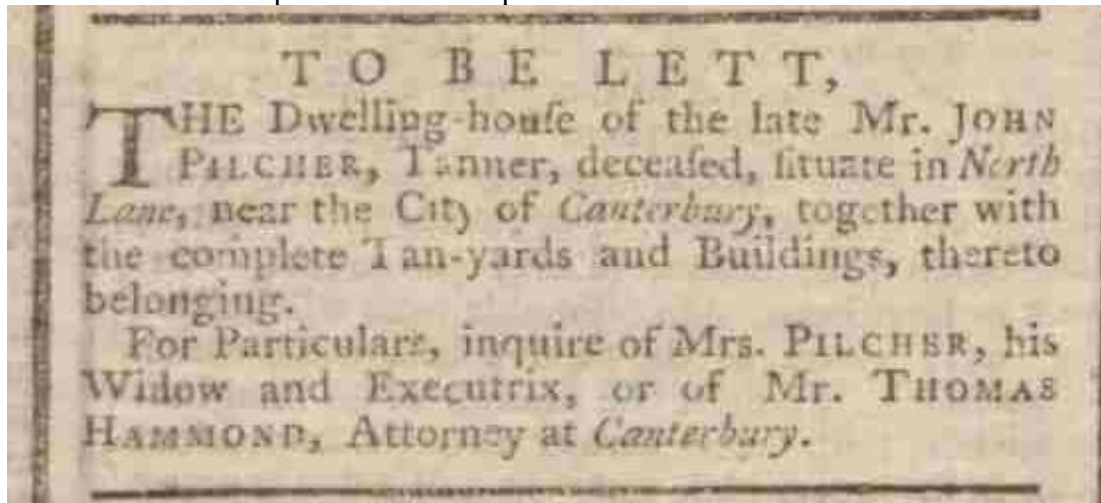
But the Trust hopes to interest Canterbury's only remaining St Mildred's Tannery in funding a research project.



The remains of a 14th Century tannery building with tannery pits in the foreground has been revealed by a team working for Canterbury Archaeological Trust in North Lane, Canterbury.

This became in 1775 [the tannery of the Slaughter family](#) .

Previously the Pilcher family had it. John Pilcher Tanner of North Lane became a Freeman in 1720 by marriage. His son John Tanner of Holy Cross became a Freeman in 1761. He died in 1770 and his widow put the business up for sale



Kentish Gazette February 1770

Before them it was owned by Busher Family. The Bushers had tanning interests across Kent. In particular there are Philip Busher the younger (1671-1752), Cordwainer of Canterbury, son of the Philip Busher of St Lawrance, Ramsgate, tanner ref CCA-U3-10/25/A/1/1 1701, who married Anne Jarman at St Stephens Hackington in 1694, and Josias Busher, Tanner of Westgate, married Marcy Allen in Tonbridge in 1699 and was probably another son of Philip the elder. Josias moved to Milton about 1717 as many if not all of his children and his wife were buried there between 1717 and 1721.

The Jarman had been tanners of Westgate for some time before this. In particular there is Israel Jarman recorded in 1662 as Tanner of Westgate and William Jarman in 1598 as Tanner of Westgate.

In 1540, Christopher Marley, tanner, of the parish of Westgate, Canterbury, bequeathed his soul to God and all the company of heaven (probably not closely related to Christopher Marlowe whose father John was born in Ospringe). To his widow, Joan, he left the tannery and twenty acres of land at Hackington.

Richard Marley died 1521 was a man of substance, for the property which he devised included a tanhouse, the 'principal tenement' in which he dwelt, three messuages in North lane and twenty acres of land leased from Sir John Ffyneux, Knight.

Richard Marley tanner son of John Marley tanner Westgate Street Freeman 1514.

12 Jul 1468-13 May 1469 Memorandum that John Marley, North Lane, Canterbury, tanner and Thomas Lynsey, shoemaker to appear at the next sessions.

John Marley of Holy Cross Freeman 1467.

Subsequent history

It seems the Slaughter Family with their connections to Sandwich sold the 46 North Lane site to William Mackney who had a millwright business in Sandwich

The cast iron flood gates for the Abbot-Mill are nearly finished.—The work has been executed by Messrs. Mackney and Burman of this City KG 8 Dec 1829

NOTICE is hereby given, that the Copartnership formerly, existing between us, as Iron-Founders and Millwrights, upon the premises situated in North-Lane, Westgate-Without, Canterbury, in the County of Kent, is this day dissolved by mutual consent.—Witness our hands this 8th day of June 1830.

William Thomas Mackney George x Burman, His Mark.

1832 Pigot Dir. Burman and Pike, Iron (and Brass) Founders

GEORGE BURMAN, BRASS and IRON FOUNDER, NORTH LANE, CANTERBURY. THE

PARTNERSHIP lately existing under the Firm of Burman and Pike, Iron and Brass Founders, having been dissolved by mutual consent KG 15 Oct 1833

John Pike THE FOUNDRY, nr. NORTH LANE, CANTERBURY, BEGS to acknowledge most cordially the esteemed favors conferred on him in his Foundry Business and especially the increase of those favors, since he has erected SMITHS FORGES the Premises, KG 11 Feb 1834

TO LET with immediate possession THE PREMISES in NORTH-LANE, late the occupation of Mr. John Pike, where the Business of IRONFOUNDER and SMITH has been carried on for several years. KG January 1836

A very substantial newly erected FREEHOLD MESSUAGE or TENEMENT, with stable,

chaisehouse, extensive garden thereto belonging, situate in North Lane, in the parish of Holy Cross Westgate, near and without the wall of the city of Canterbury, late in the occupation of Mr. John Pike, and now of Mr.

Arthur Herbert, as quarterly tenant. KG 1837

Mr. Burman who formerly carried on business in North Lane, as an iron founder, dropped down dead in the Butter-market, Canterbury, yesterday KG 1848

1838 Stapleton Dir. Herbert, Arthur Thomas, ginger beer and soda water manufacturer, North lane.

No 46 became 6 cottages called 'Foundry Cottages' by 1887.

The Tannery at 53 North Lane (and 3 Pound Lane)

In 1800 it was run by the Homershams. James Homersham (1742-1799), freeman carpenter 1767. It was probably as a consequence of his marriage to Elizabeth Southee (1754-1825) at St Peters in 1776 that he changed his trade to tanner. She was a sister of John Southee Fellmonger of Westgate (1756-1812). The Southees had the Parchment (made from sheepskins) Factory where the current entrance to Westgate Gardens is until it was pulled down in 1875.

Walter Cozens in his 1906 book 'Old Canterbury' wrote:

'Perhaps one of the greatest improvements of recent years in the neighbourhood of Westgate was the removal of the fellmonger's yard on the river's brink adjoining the High Cross Church. This was for many years not only an eyesore but a trial to the olfactory nerves of the passers-by, and possibly made a very bad first impression on the minds of pilgrims entering the city from the north and west. Those who remember the skin-racks and the old tarred buildings are grateful to the previous owners of the fine old Tower House for the removal of the undesirable, and the establishment of the very charming river-side approach with its border of gaily covered flowers.'

It was a condition of James's 1799 will that his eldest son William Homersham (1777-1837) should continue to run the tannery for a quarter share in it. Main interest was held by his widow Elizabeth. Mother and son were in partnership until August 1807.

KG 28 Jan 1806 On Friday evening, about six o'clock, a fire broke out in the drying sheds, at the tannery of Messrs. Elizabeth and William Homersham, in North-lane, near this city, which spread with uncommon rapidity. The most prompt and active assistance was given by the inhabitants and military, and a very considerable quantity of goods, to the amount of several hundred pounds, was preserved, but no exertion could possibly save the building, which was entirely consumed.— The alarm, occasioned by this accident, may be better conceived than described, for in a building not fifty yards from the fire, several barrels of ammunition belonging to the Canterbury Rifle Corps and Volunteer Infantry were deposited but this appearance did not deter an immense assemblage's, headed by our worthy chief Magistrate, exertions, from their admirable zeal in extinguishing the flames, and such was their promptitude that several persons plunged into the adjacent to supply the engines with water. The accident originated from the workmen incautiously leaving the Kiln fire for about half an hour,

and in that time the wind getting up it is supposed some of the sparks blew out, which set fire to the dried hark, and a few minutes spread through the whole of the building. The reflection of the flames on the Cathedral, and on other lofty buildings, at the height of the conflagration, was the most awfully grand we ever witnessed. We are happy to hear the premises are insured to nearly the amount of the loss, we learn with pleasure that the Kent Insurance Office intend to allow liberal reward to those who assisted the occasion, and that they likewise propose to render the County such as the principal inhabitants shall judge most conducive to prevent the spreading of dangerous fires.

From The Times 26th January 1815 (Also in Kentish Post)

By Messrs White at the Sir John Falstaff-inn in the parish of Holy Cross, Westgate, without the walls of the city of Canterbury on Saturday, the 8th day of February at 12 o'clock late the property of James Homersham, deceased, and subject to such conditions as will be then produced.

Lot 1. The following Freehold and Leasehold estates, compact, capital and well planned Tan-Yard and Buildings most eligibly situated with extensive bark barns, air drying sheds, beam-houses, leather-houses, coach-house and stable; with a Freehold Dwelling house attached to same for residence of foreman or manager which commands sight of whole premises; also a 6hp Steam Engine on the newest principle with two boilers and pipes for boiling 11 vats, the engine works bark mill, bark hatching and two striking machines with a pump, which works the whole tannery; the air drying sheds are very airy and extensive, capable of containing 500 hides drying at one time, the whole of the plant containing 110 vats, which is under cover, and arranged to save labour and hindrance from weather; the whole premises are in a complete state of repair and considered one of completest and first tanneries in the kingdom; the River Stour runs the through premises, which are well situated for bark, upwards of 150 load hatchings being sent from the neighbourhood to the London market every year, and immediate possession thereof will be given. In the above lot will be included the Reversion expectant upon the death of a person aged 61 years of a messuage, one tenement, carpenter's shop, yard, garden and premises with their appurtenances, in the Parish of Holy Cross, Westgate now in the possession of Mrs Elizabeth Homersham held under a lease from the Archbishop for 21 years from 27th of April 1812.

Also, with the above lot, will be sold a piece of Freehold land with erections thereon situate in Pound Lane, opposite, and constituting a part of the tan-yard.

Tan-yard, and premises, to be viewed till the day of sale by application to Richard Clark on the premises in North Lane, Canterbury between the hours of nine and one only on each day.

Solicitors: Thomas Brace, 25 Surry Street, Strand, Wm Solloway, St John, Southwark, Henry Buckton, Canterbury where plans of tan-yard may be seen.

It was subsequently let by Homersham Family to Robert Avann, Fellmonger, North Lane (so described in 1818 Poll List), who is also listed at North Lane in 1828/1839 Pigot Directories.

1851 Robert Avann fellmonger of North Lane was bankrupt (petitioners James Homersham snr and jnr). London Gazette.

But it seems his son continued the business and bought it back from Homershams in 1863.

To Butchers, Farmers, and Graziers.
ROBERT AVANN, JUN.,
FELTMONGER and LEATHER-DRESSER,
NORTH-LANE AND POUND-LANE, WESTGATE,
CANTERBURY,
RESPECTFULLY informs his Friends and the Public generally, that he has taken the Old-established Business recently conducted by his Father; and hopes, by punctuality and attention, to be favored with a continuance of their favors, which it will be his study to deserve.
 * * Best price given for lost Skins and Daggins.
 N.B.—Genuine Neat's-foot and Trotter oils.

KG 1851

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN.

THAT on SATURDAY, the 21st FEBRUARY instant, the FELLMONGER'S BUSINESS, lately carried on by me, upon premises in Pound Lane, Canterbury, was discontinued on my account, and that I shall not be responsible for any Debts or Engagements contracted or entered into in connection with the said Business on or after that date.

EDWARD HOMERSHAM.

St. Dunstan's, Canterbury,
23rd Feb., 1863.

ROBERT AVANN, JUN.,

BEGBS to inform his Friends and the Public, that he has resumed, on his own account, the FELLMONGER'S BUSINESS, for many years carried on in Pound Lane, Canterbury, and solicits the favour of their continued support.

North Lane, Canterbury,
23rd Feb., 1863.

IN THE CITY OF CANTERBURY.

A VALUABLE

FREEHOLD ESTATE,

Consisting of the OLD-ESTABLISHED BUSINESS PREMISES in POUND LANE with extensive ranges of Stores, Drying Lofts, Tan and Lime Pits on the river Stour, DWELLING HOUSE, fronting North-lane, with stabling and Bark Store opposite, the whole comprising a large extent of Property, wherein an extensive Fellmonger and Tanning Business has been carried on for many years.

MESSRS. COOPER,

Have been directed

TO SELL BY AUCTION,
AT THE MART, ST. MARGARET'S STREET,
CANTERBURY.

ON FRIDAY the 31st day of AUGUST, 1866, at Two for Three o'clock in the afternoon, in one Lot, all that extensive range of Buildings in Pound Lane, in the occupation of Mr AVANN, Fellmonger and Tanner, possessing a frontage of about one hundred feet, comprising Bark and Skin Stores, Offices, Beam and Washing House, Drying Lofts, &c., communicating by a bridge over the river Stour, with Lime and Tan Pits, and other outbuildings, Comfortable FAMILY RESIDENCE adjoining the Premises, and fronting into North-lane, with Bark Store and Stabling on the opposite side of the street.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale may be obtained of Messrs. Cooper, Surveyors, or of Messrs. Furley, Callaway and Furley, Solicitors, Canterbury.

VALUABLE NEWLY-BUILT

KG 18 Aug 1866

1867 Tannery Directory Avann R North Lane; E Homersham Pound Lane

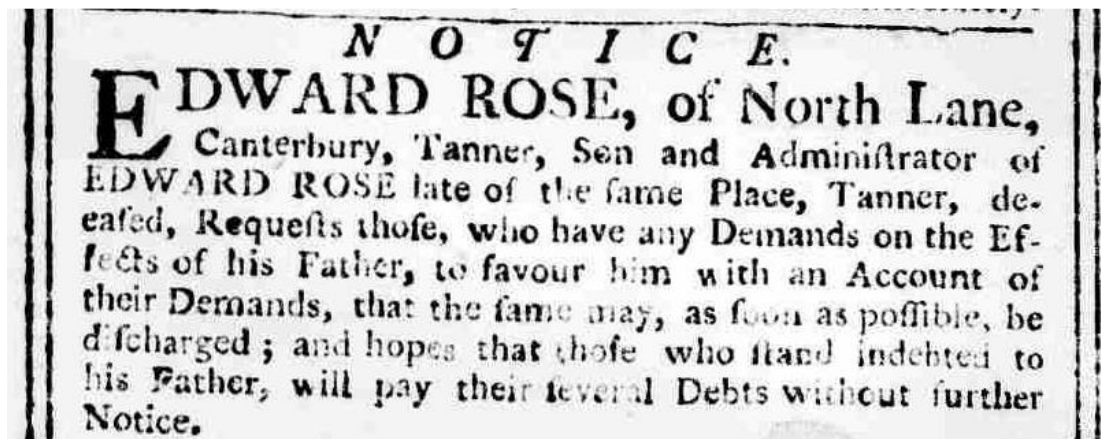
1872 Robert Avann North lane and Pound Lane was bankrupt again. Assets were liquidated. (London Gazette).

1880 Tannery Directory Hart H. 53 North lane & Pound Lane, Canterbury

1903 Directory Stagg R&W Fellmongers and Woolstaplers 53 North lane and 3 Pound Lane

Back history of 53 North Lane:

Prior to the Homershams this tannery was probably owned by the Rose family, Robert Strout, and Petman family



KG 10 Feb 1776

To be LETT or SOLD, with all the Utensils. A Tan-Yard and Dwelling House, situated in **North Lane**, Canterbury, and late in the Occupation of Mr. Robert Strout. For Particulars inquire of Mr. Edward Petman, Tanner, near St. Stephen's, or at the said House. KP 2 May 1761.

And to be LETT, A Messuage and **Tan-Yard**, with the Appurtenances there-unto belonging, (either separately or together) in North-Lane near the said City, and late in the Occupation of Mr Robert Petman. KP 28 Mar 1741.

John Petman Tanner 's 1706 Will mentions two sons John and Robert. It appears that both were tanners: Robert at 53 North Lane and John further along North Lane in St Stephens – see below.

Tannery at 68 St Stephen's Road, Hackington now called Kingsmead House

This house dates back to 1620 and it seems started life as a tanner's house.



William Fordred, tanner, Hackington married 1634 Mabel daughter of William Somner, Registrar.

Nicholas Knight (?1589-1667 buried St Georges) Tanner of Hackington 1651 will PRO 11/219.

Knight, Nicholas, of Holy Cross, Cant., tanner, and Sarah Newman, s. p., w. at St. Nicholas, Harbledown married in 1610.

1669 petition Richard Jarman tanner of Hackington for destruction of property caused by fire in gaol.

Subsequently it came to Petmans (see above).

KG Dec1778 Saturday morning died Mr. Edward Petman, an eminent Tanner, of St. Stephens near this city, aged 66.

KG 1779 On Monday last was married Mr. Thurston Whittle, (successor to the late Mr. Petman tanner, near this city) to Miss Rufford.

Tamsen Rufford was a principal beneficiary in will of Edward Petman.

Thurston Whittle Tanner is in 1784 Bailey's Directory.

Sun Life Insurance Records have Jan 1791 Stephen Dewell of Littlebourne and June Stephen Dewell Tanner of Hackington

SHORTLY will be SOLD by AUCTION,
 Unless previously disposed of by private Contract,
ALL that valuable FREEHOLD ESTATE,
 situate in the parish of St. Stephen's, near Canterbury,
 consisting of a convenient Dwelling House, a capital garden,
 a very commodious TAN-YARD, with every requisite convenience annexed; two attached Tenements, an Orchard, a WHEELER'S SHOP, and other appurtenances; now in the occupation of Stephen Dewell and undertenants.
 For further particulars apply to Mr. HARNETT, Palace-Street, Canterbury.

KG 4 Apt 1797

KG 1800 Mr Stephen Dewell occupying a dwelling house, tan yard, tenements adjoining, garden, part of an orchard and about $\frac{3}{4}$ acre at the end of the garden

Stephen Dewell's daughters Ann and Catherine married brothers George and William Keen and in 1826 inherited tanyard.

A waterwheel, composed of malleable and cast iron, has recently been erected on the premises of Mr. Keen, tanner, St. Stephen's. We have been induced to notice in consequence of opinions unfavorable to its successful operations, having been freely expressed; The diameter of the wheel is somewhere about feet, the rays shooting from a shaft not more than three inches diameter. The surface is enclosed with sheet iron, tied with strong wire to the periphery the floats are also manufactured from the same ductile material, and are firmly riveted together to enable them to sustain the pressure of water. Last week the wheel was put in motion, and performed twelve revolutions in a minute, although it had to turn a mill in which several thick pieces bark were introduced. An additional supply of water was then permitted through the gully, and the wheel moved round seventeen times in a minute, performing its work admirably, and without any tremulous motion to indicate future disturbance to the machinery. The wheel has been erected under the superintendence of Lieut. Philpott, R.N. KG 24 Sept 1833

It was in the Kentish Gazette on 12 Nov 1833 again:

There has lately been erected at the tannery of the Messrs Keen at St Stephen's, near this city, under the direction of Lieut. S Philpot RN, a water wheel attached to a bark mill. The wheel was composed wholly of bar and sheet iron, and in the construction of which no other artificers were employed than the labouring tanners of the yard. It works with surprising ease. Those conversant with the subject express themselves in high terms of admiration at the talents of its scientific projector.

In 1836 William Keen husband of Ann deceased conveyed to Thomas White in payment of debts: Messuage or tenement, barns, mill house, oasts, storages, edifices, building yards, backsides and gardens with appurtenances Water mill for the grinding of bark lately executed and built by William Keen Tanyard

1839 Owner Thomas White, occupier Thomas Brand. Inventory includes: garden, tan yard, orchard and 3 corner field (1838 Stapleton Dir has Thomas Branch, tanner, St Stephens)

Thereafter it seems to have become a private residence