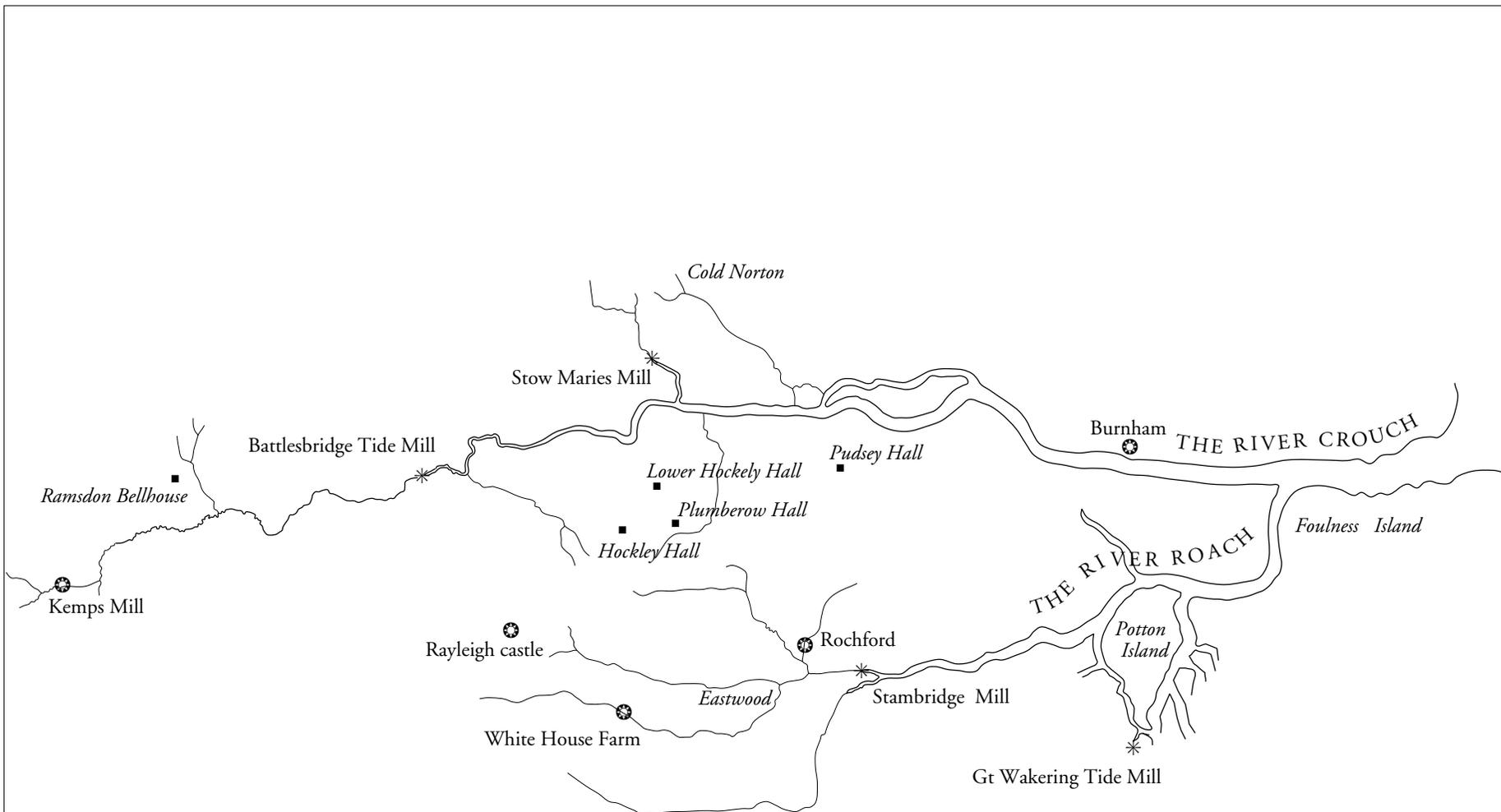


River Crouch

A SURVEY OF WATER POWERED INDUSTRIES  
IN THE COUNTY OF ESSEX

THE RIVER CROUCH

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**THE MILLS OF THE RIVERS CROUCH AND ROACH**

## Gt Bursted

A survey of Gt Burstead for 1593 mentions a **Kemps** mill that was held by a copy hold tenant John Crouch, who lived in a cottage called Kemps lying by the Church yard. The mill was described as --Kemps mell lying by Kemps brook. The site could possibly be by Noak Bridge.

### NOTES

1] E.R.O D/DP M986

## Ramesdon Belhouse

In 1086 there was in *Ramesdana* In the lands of the Bishop of London, (held by William), now one mill.

## Raweth

### **Battlesbridge tide mill.**

On the 22nd of November 1765 the copy holders and others of the parish of Rettingdon petitioned Thomas Fitch of Danbury (the Lord of the manor) to grant Edward Bilding the elder of the hamlet of Moulsham, miller, permission to erect and build a water corn mill in the Parish of Rettingdon upon the river....claiming that such a mill when erected would be of great service to that part of the county [1] However the mill was built on the opposite side of the river in the parish of Raweth. A licence was given on the 3rd of March 1766, by Master, Fellows & Scholars of St John College, Cambridge, Lords of the Manor of Raweth to Edward Bilding of Moulsham to erect a water corn mill at Battlesbridge stating 'that a mill for grinding corn is much wanted in the parish of Raweth..... by our tenants and other inhabitants [2]. In June 1766 Thomas Fitch granted permission for Bilding to place stakes, piles and boards on the north bank of the river providing the proposed dam did not pen the water above the normal high water mark, a sum of £5 was to be paid quarterly to the Lord of the manor of Rettendon. The freehold to the land on which the proposed mill was to stand was purchased from the College [3]. The mill was certainly standing in February 1767 and may have been erected in the previous autum. On September 17th 1770 the county weights inspector visited the parish and found the weights and measures of Edw Bilding miller, to be "good" [4] By 1773 the mill seems to have been leased

to Daniel Alger and in 1775 Elizebeth Ann Bilding leased to mill to Daniel Algar, of Gt Waltham and Lionel King of South Hanningfield.

The mill advertised for sale in september 1775 [5].

To be sold to the highest bidder at the Blackboy Inn, Chelmsford, on the 27th of October 1775- Battlesbidge Mill .

The mill consists of 4 floors with good celler underneath and a very convient lodging room for servents, store room and bins. It works with two water wheels 4 pairs of french stones and goes by spur gears, it has therin 3 flour mills and is capable of grinding 20 loads of wheat weekly. The going gear and impliments of the mill to be taken by the purchaser at fair appraisalment.

Freehold subject to £5 per annum payable to the lord of the manor of Rettendon. Also dwelling house and out house.

The mill may not have been sold at the auction and seems to have been sold by Elizebeth Bilding to Daniel Algar the transaction being completed in 1782 [6].

The mill and machinery was insured by Daniel Algar of Gt Waltham, in 1777 for the sum of £1950 the mill being described as being timber built and tiled [7]. 1784 Daniel Algar leased the mill to Edmund Taylor, miller of Raweth, who had purchased the mill by 1790 when he made his will [8]. On 14 Feb 1786 Thomas Bird, miller of South Okendon, insured the mill for the sum of £600 [9]. In the following year on the 9 oct 1787 Edmund Taylor, miller, insured his dwelling house and the mill both said to be adjoining for £1000 and his utensils and trade for £850 [10]. On 24th December 1795, Edmund Taylor insured his water corn millhouse, timber and tiled for the sum of £2000, the mill was said to be tenented by Duly & Vaughan, millers [10]. In 1795 taylor insured insured the water wheel and gears millstones machines in his water corn millhouse for £420 [12].

In 1796 Edmund Taylor had made an agreement to sell a moiety of the mill to John Deely for the sum of £2550 the tranaction being completed in 1800, the mill was leased to Augustine King George of Middlesex [13].

On the 24th of September 1797 John Deeley wrote to W Johnson, architect, Marybone, London concerning the state of the road near the mill [14]

Sir:

I take the liberty to inform you that Mr Hickman has removed the posts that stood by the mill into the hard road as you ordered, and the road is not made good, it was impassable a cart comeingto my mill with five quarter and four bushels of wheat was turned bottom upwards and the horse thrown on his back, and a waggon with ten cwt of wheat and 6 or 7 horses set and broke a shaft, from which I judge the posts to be a great nuisance to me and other his Majestys subjects, one post I have drawn up and two more I have

## River Crouch

sawed of that carriages may go on the old road. I understand that Mr Hickman is coming tomorrow to replace the posts and if the road is not made good prior to their so doing I shall again remove them as a common nuisance.

A reply to this letter was sent back to John Deely the following day, the 25 July which gives some indication of the speed of the post at that time!

Sir.

I think that before you had removed one of the posts you mentioned you should have requested one of the Majestrates of the Division to have inspected them and the road as it was from their report and an order of the last Quarter session that I gave directions to the workman to proceed

In April 1800 John Deely, insured his movable utensils and trade for £500. [15]. However by 1836 his business had failed as the Court of Bankruptcy made an order for the sale of Battlesbridgemill, the property of John Deely, miller, dealer and chapman. The mill was advertised as a free hold Tide mill with dwelling house, stabling coach house and granary together with extensive coal wharf and brick yard with dry Kilns [16]. The mill was put up for sale by auction on 31st January 1837, being described as [17]:

The power of the mill is almost unlimited, from the constant and abundant supply of water at every tide. fall of 9ft; with breast wheel 18ft dia and 10ft wide. mill contains 4 floors with stage. 5pr french stones. and has ground upon an average 35 loads per week. The mill leat is capable of receiving lighters through the gates at every tide. Coal wharf & trade & brick yard.

The ground plan of the mill is marked on a map of Battlesbridge dated 1836 and is shown as an L shaped building consisting of the mill house and mill, a granary stood downstream, on the other side of the bridge, presumably to give better access to sailing barges which would have had to lower their masts to reach the tide mill [18]. Deely's moiety of the mill was purchased by Messers Meeson and Flinton. In 1838 John Flinton

retired and the business was continued by John Meeson. In 1841 articles of partnership were drawn up between Richard and James Meeson who obtained full possession of the mill in 1853 by purchasing the other moiety from a John Bridges for £2400 [19]. For 1841 the mill accounts [20], for William Meeson give:-

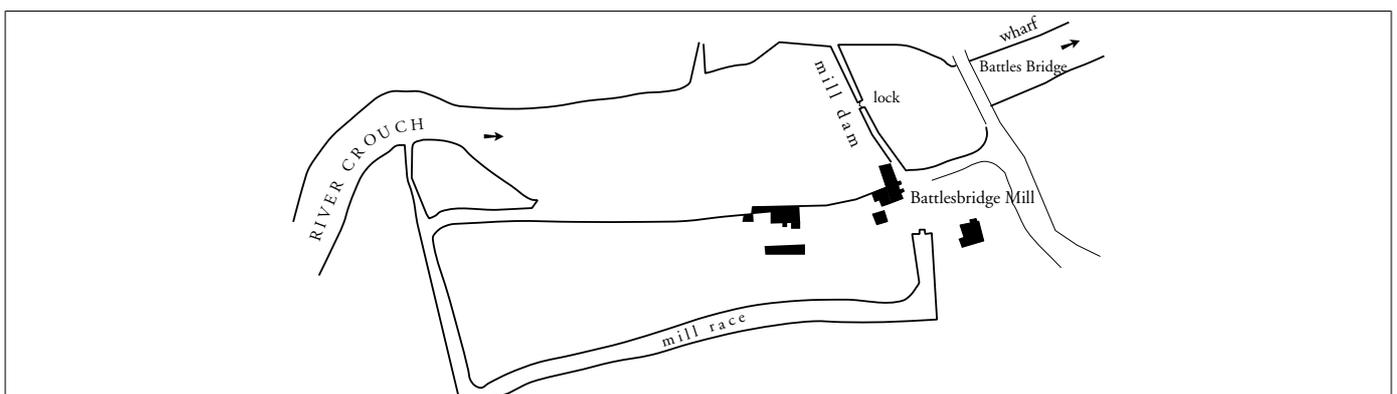
purchase	£4340
iron wheel	£200
conveyance	£100
repairs	£100
	£4740
mortgage	£4000

By 1847 the mill was being leased by Robert Burls who insured his stock in trade for £1000 but by 1854 only insured his stock for £600 [21]. By 1857 James Paritt, miller, was tenant when he insured his stock in trade for £600 [22]. A survey and valuation taken in 1858, lists a newly erected mill house Tide corn mill and old mill house adjoining the mill with five pairs of stones was leased by Mr Pavitt at a rent of £246 per annum [23]. The milling of oats was not allowed under the insurance policy and in 1877 a remark on the insurance policy notes no steam engine [24]. Sometime after this date a new mill was built down river of the bridge, on the north bank.

Kelly's trade Directory for Essex gives for 1874 James Parrit, 1882 Wm Meeson working with water and for 1886 Wm Meeson working with steam and water. Percy Meeson was listed as working with water and steam in 1926, however photographs of the tide dated to earlier than 1908 show that the mill was in a derelict state.

Battlesbridge Mills were sold by Edith Meeson to J.H. Matthews in 1926 [25]. In 1928 James & Geo Matthews were listed as working with steam, although the mill was fitted with two oil engines.

The present owner of the tide mill restored the tide gates in 1989 and fitted a new wheel driving an electrical generator.



River Crouch



Battles Bridge tide mill in derelict state.



River Crouch



Battles Bridge tide mill dam. (1960's)  
Showing lock gate and sluice gates for former water wheel.



## River Crouch



Battlesbridge steam mills. (C.1919)

Left : Standing on north bank of river. Mill built by William Meeson, 1896. Now used as an antique center.

Right : Standing on south bank of river. Mill built by William Meeson, 1916. Sold to J & G Matthews in 1926. Building destroyed by fire in 1932.



Provinder mill built by J & G Matthews in 1933. Originally powered by a Blackstone oil engine later electricity. Closed and pulled down in the 1980's.



Entrance to tide mill (1960's)

- 2] E.R.O D/DJe T73
- 3] ibid 2
- 4] E.R.O Q/SBb 263/29
- 5] Chelmsford Cronicle, 22 Sept 1775.
- 6] ibid 2
- 7] Royal Exchange Fire Insurance policy No.71210
- 8] E.R.O D/DJe T75; DAER 35/186
- 8] Royal Exchange Fire Insurance policy No.96541
- 9] Royal Exchange Fire Insurance policy No.103586
- 10] Royal Exchange Fire insurance policy No. 149061
- 11] Royal Exchange Fire insurance policy No. 149047,  
24th December 1795
- 12] E.R.O D/DJe T73,T75
- 13] E.R.O Q/SBb 369/19
- 14] Royal Exchange Fire insurance policy No. 173747.  
3rd April 1800.
- 15] E.R.O D/DJe T77, D/DJe B7;  
London Gazette 29/11/1836.
- 16] Chelmsford Cronicle 30/12/1836
- 17] E.R.O D/DDw P70
- 18] E.R.O D/DJe B7; D/CT 284; D/DJe T49.
- 19] E.R.O D/DJe B7
- 20] E.R.O D/F 21/11, 24/12/1847;  
D/F 21/14 pp102, 23 Oct 1854.
- 21] E.R.O D/F 21/15 pp107, 3/1/1857.
- 22] E.R.O D/DJe B7
- 23] E.R.O D/F 21/21 pp102 Oct 1874. Suffolk Alliance;  
D/F 21/22 pp307, 1877. James Parrott miller Raweth
- 24] E.R.O D/DU 205/193

NOTES

1] E.R.O D/DSu M67

## Cold Norton

In 1086 there was in *Nortuna* on the lands of Ralph Baynard, (held before by Wulfric, a free man, as a manor), now one mill. In 1568 William Clark of Cold Norton, mentions a mill in his will, but whether this was a wind or water mill is not clear [1].

### NOTES.

1) Wills of Essex.

## Stow Maries

Tide mill at the head of Stow Creek.

The parish registers indicate that a mill stood on the parish during the 16th and 17th century [1]. In 1564 John Wade, miller of Stowemaries, was buried, to be followed by John Grove who is listed as miller in 1566. In 1600 the manor of Hayes in Stow maries possessed one water mill [2]. In 1601 John Morrice, miller of Stowe, was buried and in 1616 the occupation of a John Johnson was given as miller. For 1613 the registers note the burial of John, a mill picker a poor walking man. A mill existed in 1682 as a note in the parish register lists the liability of land owners "to repair ye church yard pale", and includes, "The mill - North east stile", the name of the owner or miller is unfortunately omitted. This note would seem to imply that only one mill was in the parish for the year 1682. Documents relating to Lord Petre of Writtle, dated 1632, mention a water mill in Stow Maries called Stowe Mill [3]. The sequestration accounts for Royalist Estates for the year 1644 [4], give a John Bugby as miller, for what would seem to be a wind mill:

Expenses about the repair of ye mill and house.  
For iron work and nails for one of the sails 2/-  
For fetching of clay 1/-  
For daubing of the house 14/-  
Summ 17/-

Possible by 1682 the water mill had been displaced by a wind mill, but this is not clear as no further reference to mills or millers after this date have been found by the author. The tith award map of 1840, indicates the site of a tide mill at the head of Stow Creek where the following field names are listed: (No.123) mill pool; (No.40) mill pool; (No.140) water; (No.135) upper fleet marsh and (No. 122) Home stead [5].

This must be the water mill recorded on manor of Hayes since both Gt and Lt Hays are situated near Stow Creek.

### NOTES.

- 1) E.R.O, T/R 212/8; D/P 391/1/1
- 2) Essex Feet of Fines.
- 3) E.R.O, D/DPT 189
- 4) E.R.O, Q/SBa 8/70
- 5) E.R.O, D/CT 338

## Burnham

In 1086 there was in *Burneham* on the lands of Ralph Baynard, (held before 1066 by 10 free men), now one mill.

Walter Fitz Robert (C. 1126-1198) gave to Dunmow Priory his mill in Burnham which was described as being in salt water, so this mill may have been a tide mill [1].

### NOTES.

- 1) Harvesting the Air. E. J. Kealy, pp114.