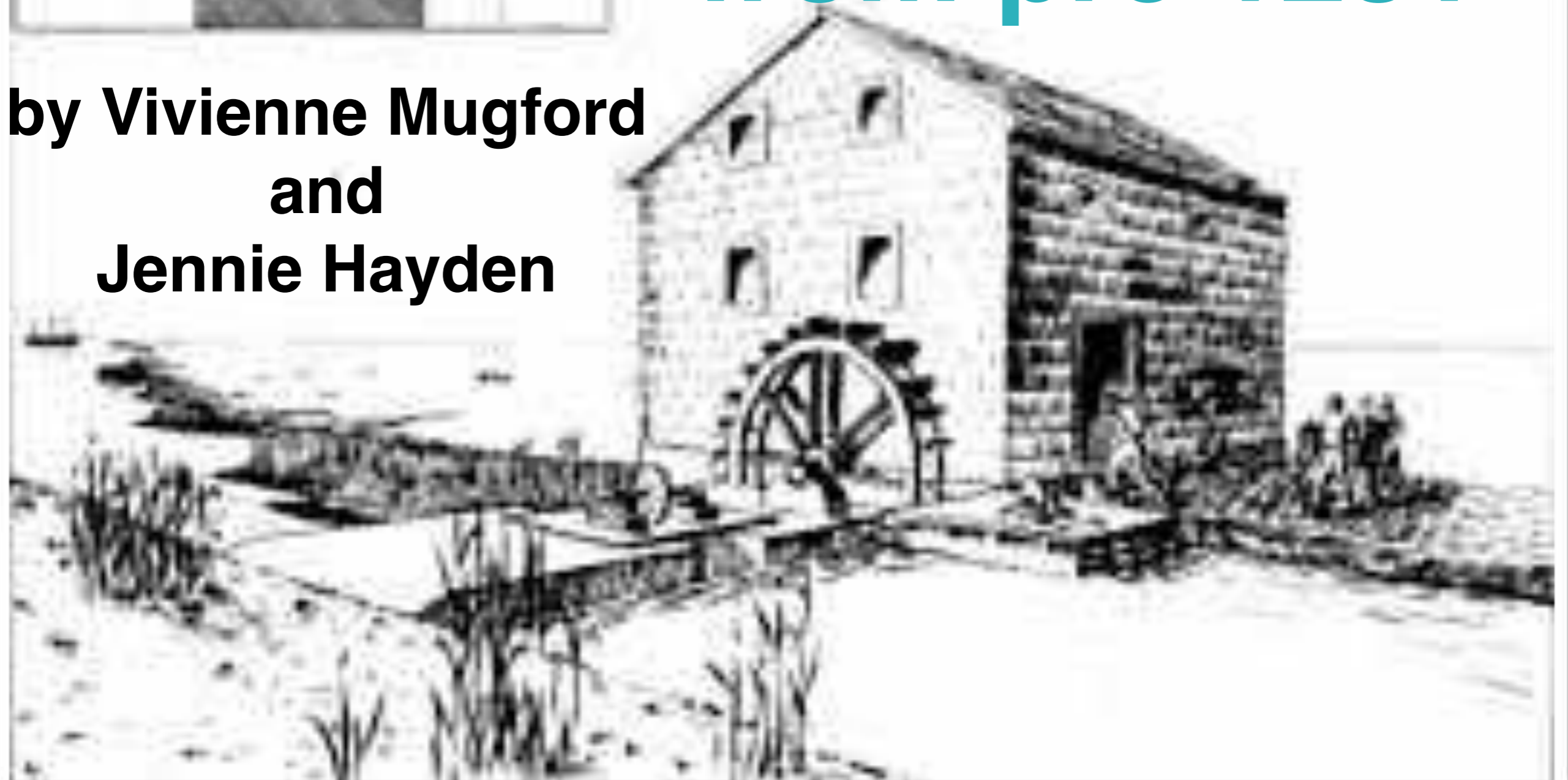


# Salt Mill and its environment from pre 1281



by **Vivienne Mugford**  
and  
**Jennie Hayden**



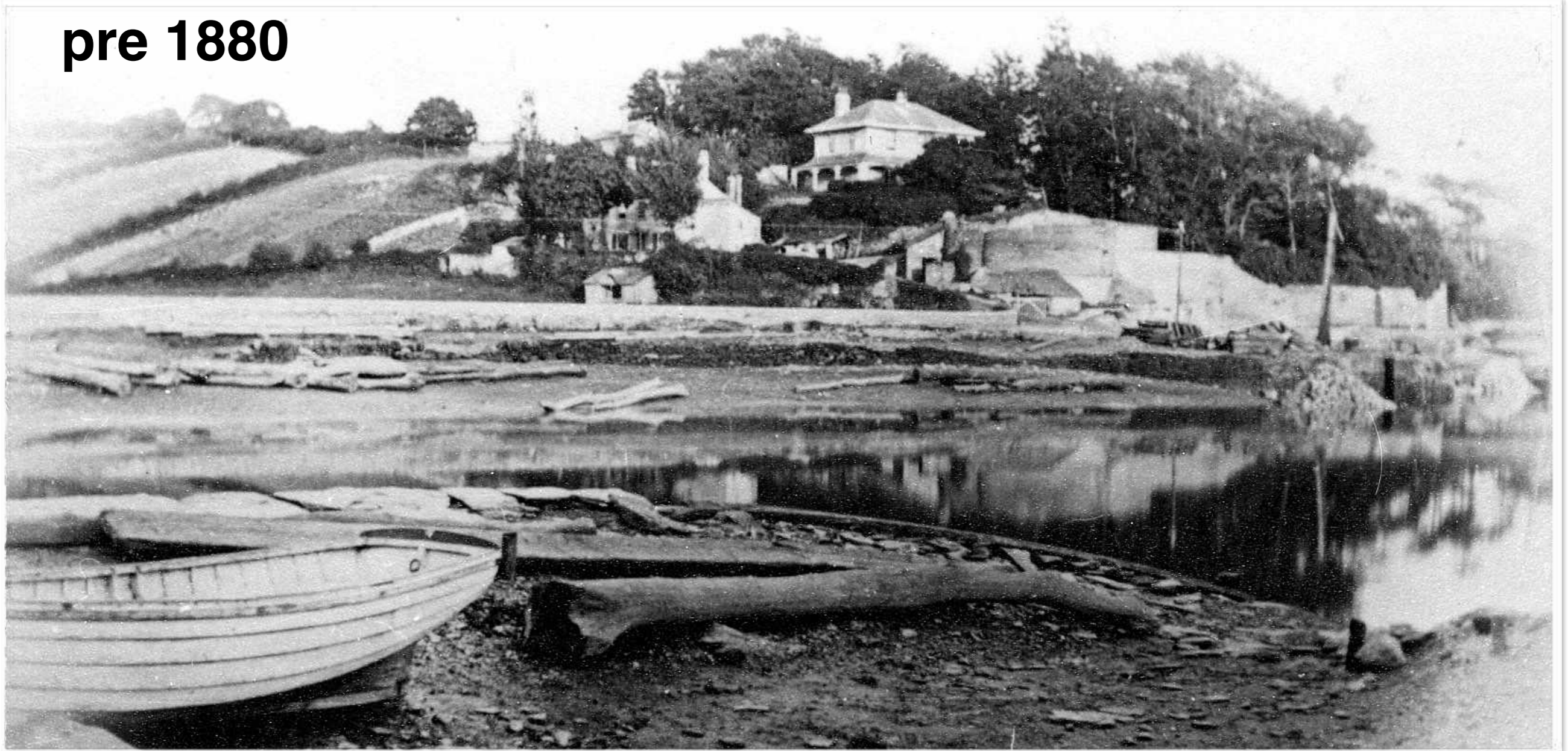
# Chapter 1

The location of  
The Salt (Tidal)  
Mill of Dodbrooke



The area, previously called Salt Mill,  
looking from the town-end of the Recreation Ground

**pre 1880**



‘This is where it all started from me (Vivienne). Soon after I moved in, Jennie gave me this photo and said ‘look your house is not there’. I thought - ‘it must have been’.

(This photo -pre 1880-shows our area from across the estuary.

You can see the lovely house that is now Kahala Court, a Lime Kiln where Salt Quay moorings now stands and the houses Gate House 1 and 2 above the recreation ground.)

So, thinking that surely my house must be on the end here, I took photos from across the estuary, lining up with Kahala’s terrace, and realised that my house was there but **only half** the width’ VM.

**Breakspeare, Embankment Rd, Kingsbridge  
alias *Salt Mill Cottage, Kiln Cottage, Ivy  
Cottages, Kiln, Lime Kiln Cottage, Quay...***



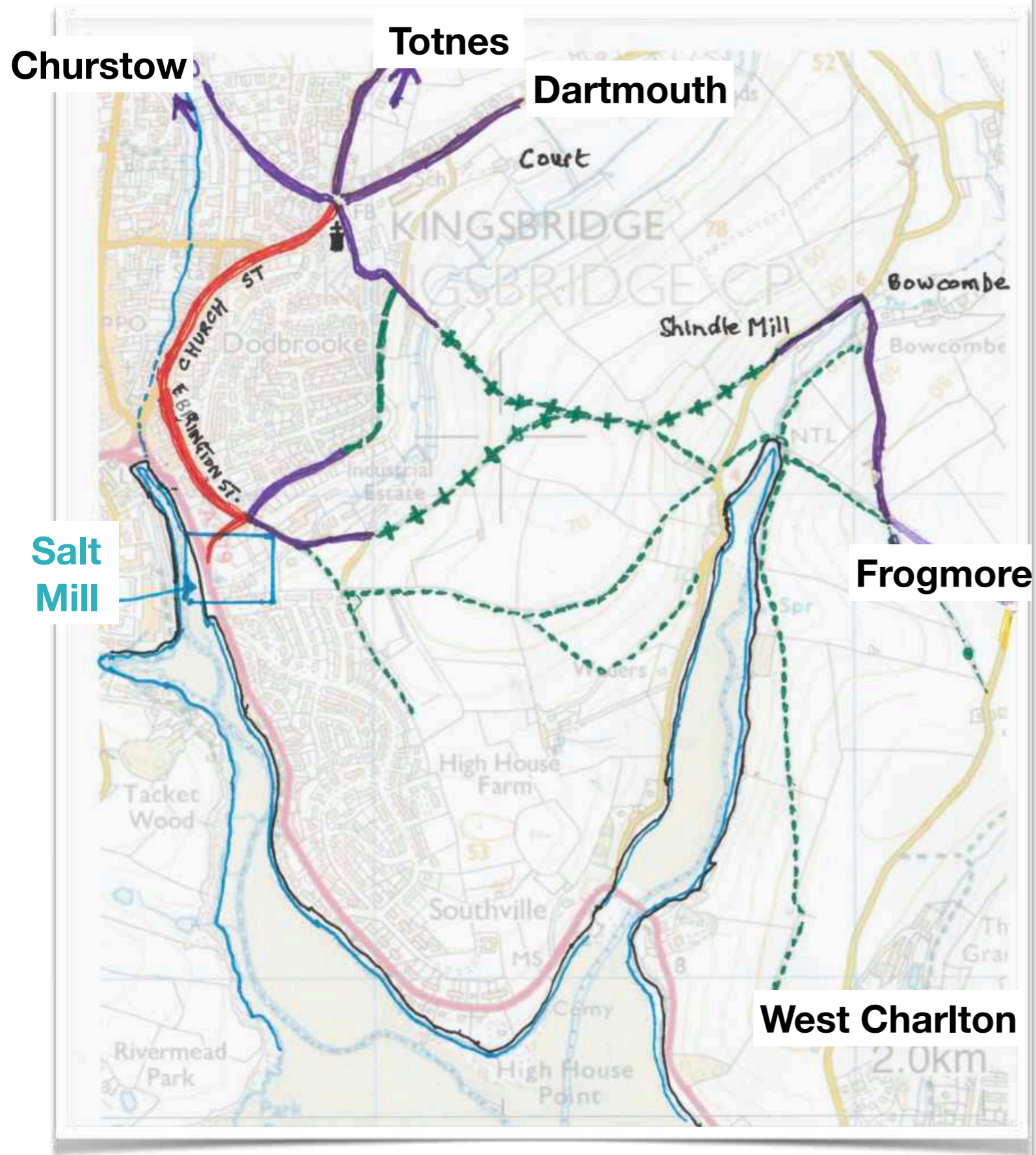
Breakspeare at its full width -just up the lane to Kahala.  
In the photograph on the previous page, (pre 1880) only the left half was there.  
It has many ancient features, which helped in the research of what happened in the area.



The area we will look at is in the ancient manor of Dodbrooke. So, first by way of background: **Dodbrooke** was quite separate from Kingsbridge. Kingsbridge was under the Abbot of Buckfast.

Dodbrooke appears in the Domesday book (1088) and had a **secular Lord of the Manor** probably since Saxon times ie before William the Conqueror.

It is the land to the east of the Dod Brook- the stream that runs through /now under Duncombe Park, and reached as far High House Point, Bowcombe Creek, Shindle Mill and Court.



If we look at the ancient routes, then Dodbrooke as an entity makes sense. The ancient routes that have been upgraded to modern roads are in purple or orange and in green are the Green Lanes much as the pack horses would have seen them.

The Church, on the highest point, was at a cross roads in Saxon times, and all the roads radiating from there are of ancient origin - to Churchstow, Totnes, Dartmouth, down to Washabrooke and Shindle Mill in Bowcombe and beyond to Frogmore, and down Church St and Ebrington St, which would have been the main street of the town.

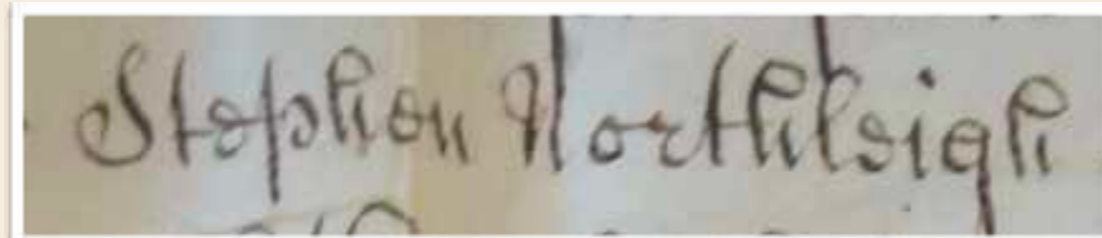
The Salt Mill area - was also served well by these ancient routes - one going directly to Shindle Mill, and Derby road being the route from the town to the Quay.

There were no routes along the estuary until 1800s and with most of the transport being by boat, this area as a Quay would have been very important to the manor.

# Chapter 2

## What we know of The Salt (Tidal) Mill of Dodbrooke

The Lord of the Manor in 1066 was Bictric , and in 1086 in the Domesday book, his wife, Godeeva, had succeeded him. The manor was bought and sold over the ages and the last Lord of the Manor of Dodbrooke was Stephen Northleigh who died in 1731

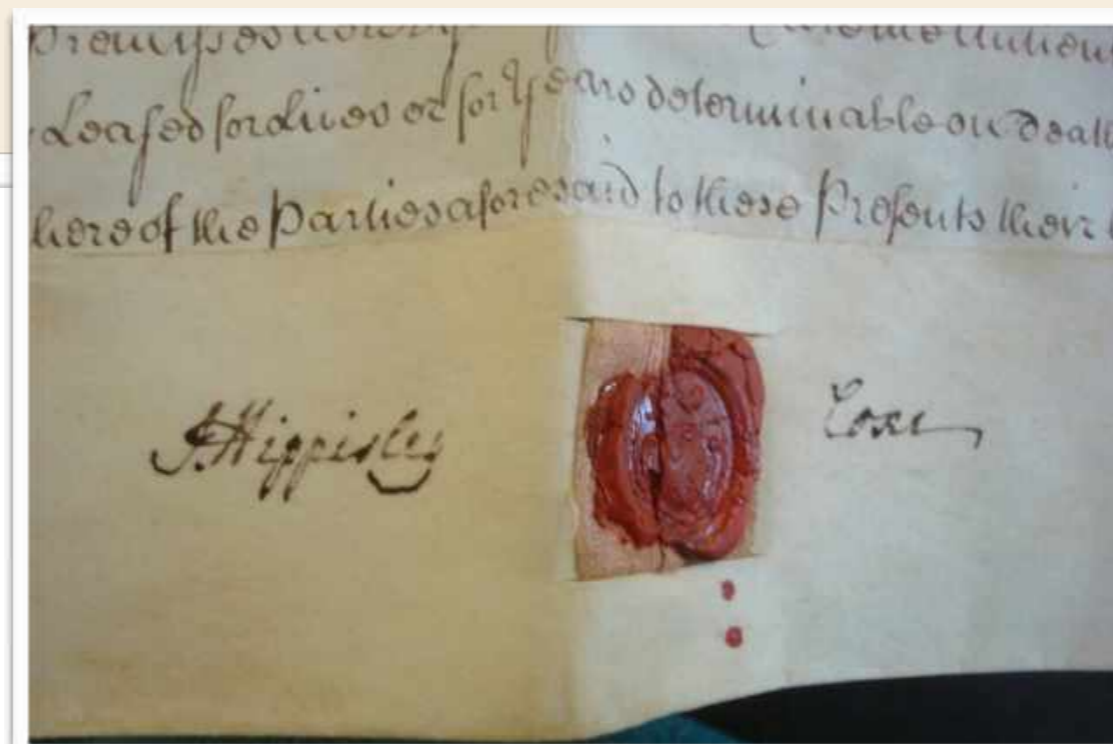


Stephen Northleigh

He left his estate to his daughters - Mary and Margaret.

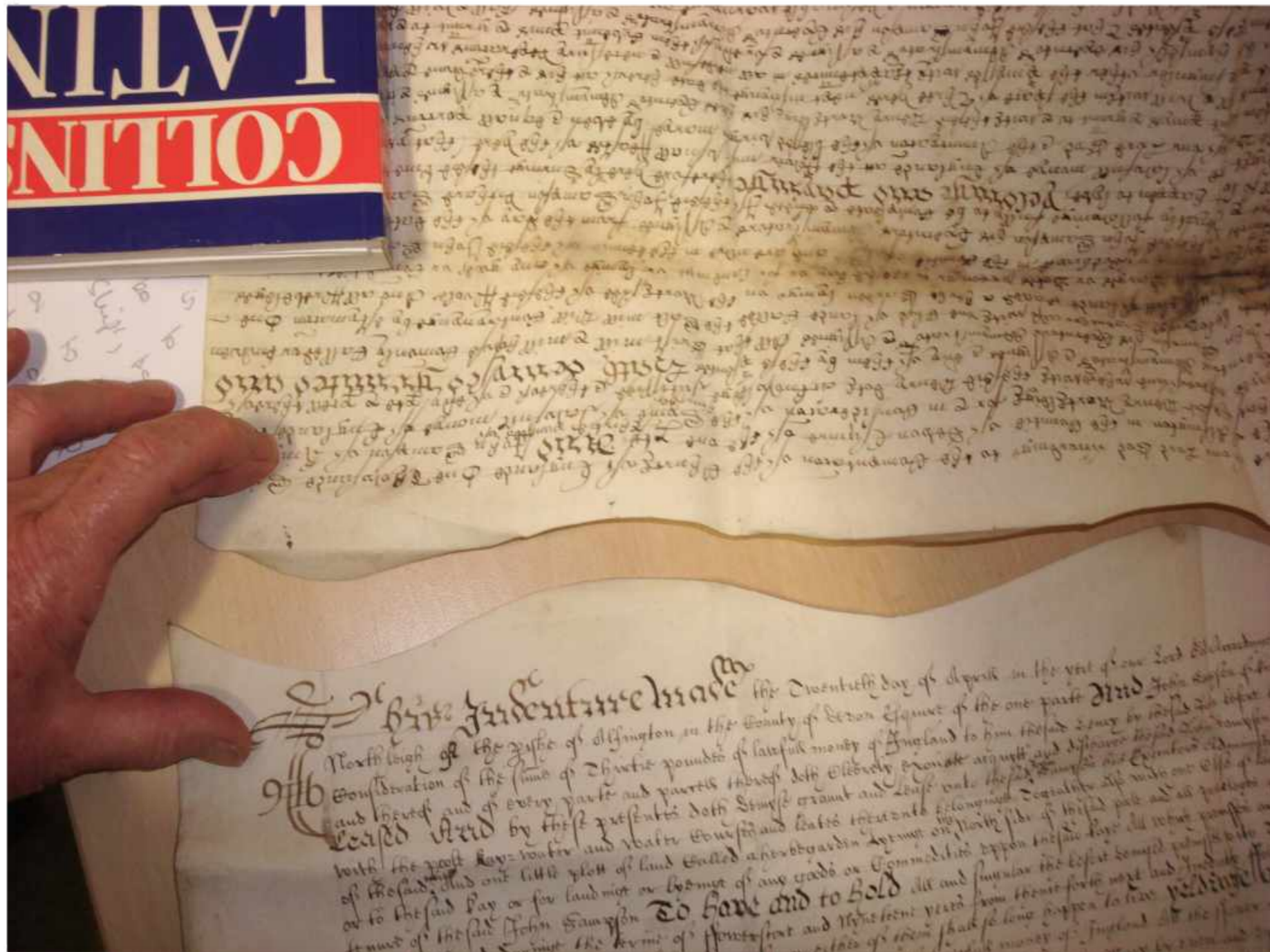
Mary married John Hippersley Coxe, who had a thriving manor in Somerset. He died in 1769 but had started disposing of Dodbrooke Manor and by 1800 all The Manor assets had been sold off .

Since Hippersley Cox came from Somerset, many of the deeds concerning The Lords of the Manor of Dodbrooke ended up in the Somerset Heritage Centre.



Loafed for diues or for years and determinable on death  
hereof the parties aforesaid to these presents their

Hippersley Coxe

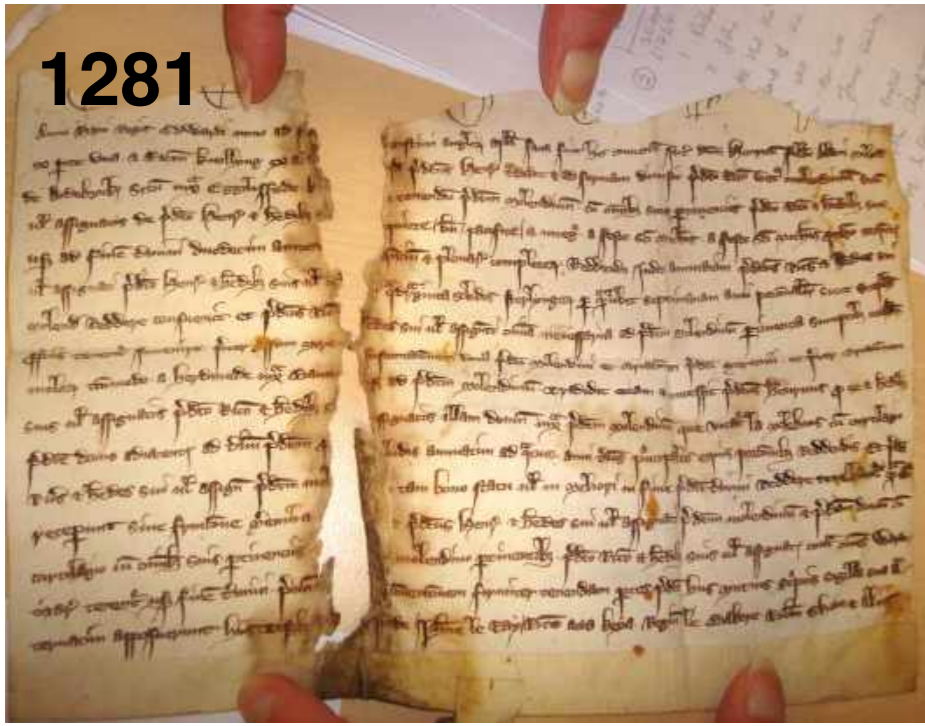


The documents at the Somerset Heritage Centre are fascinating and I was lucky to have a very helpful lady (Josephine) to translate them for me. The early ones were in Latin and even the later English documents are hard to decipher.

Do you the origin of the word **Indenture**? I didn't until this exercise.

Duplicate documents were written on a single piece of parchment and then separated by a wiggly - indented - cut. The Leassor kept one copy and the Leassee the other and the matching indentures were there to prove they were matching and original deeds.

1281



There are 6 leases in the Somerset Heritage Centre (the first 5 in Latin) relating to a Salt Mill and 2 at the Devon Record Office.

1481



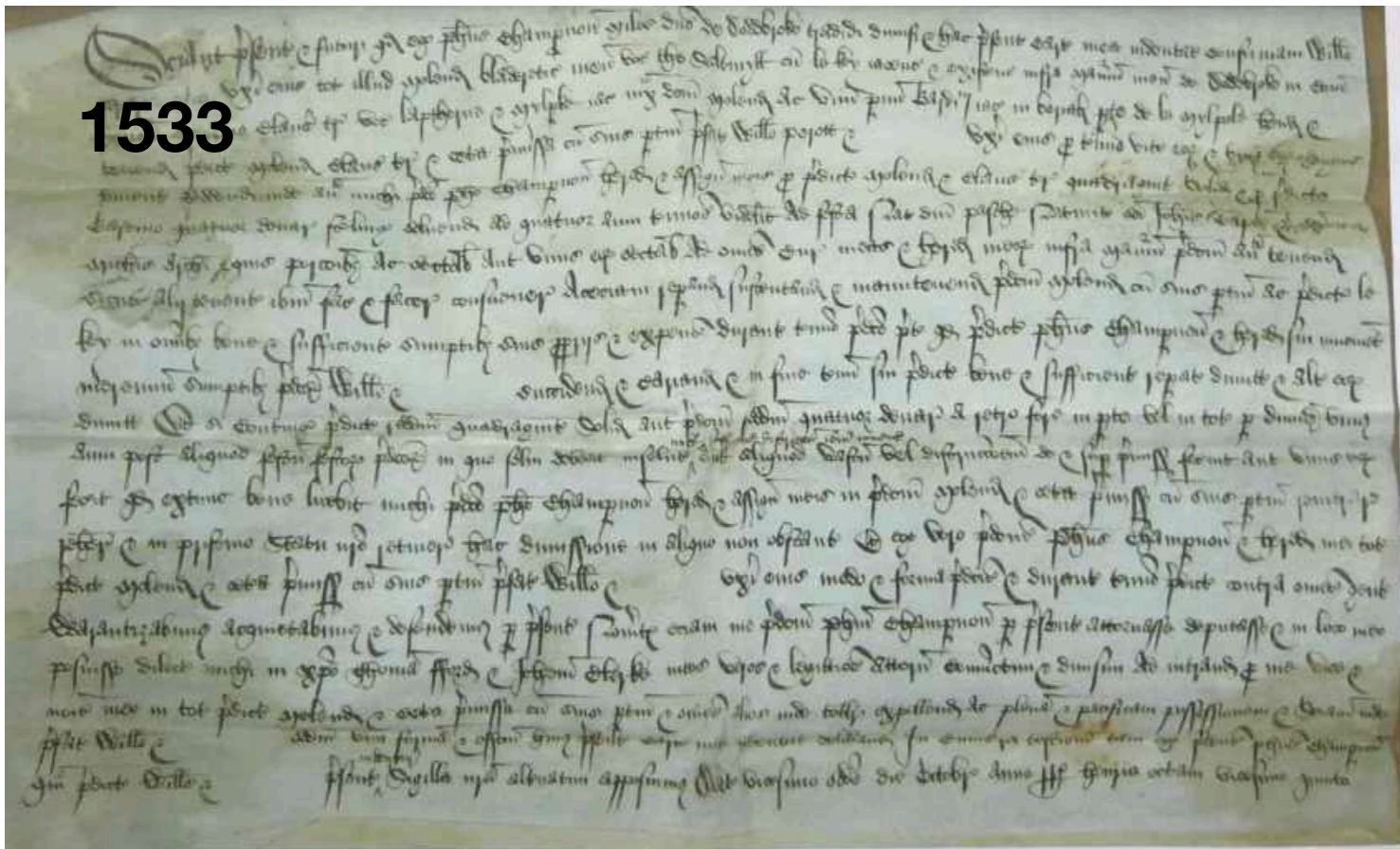
1490



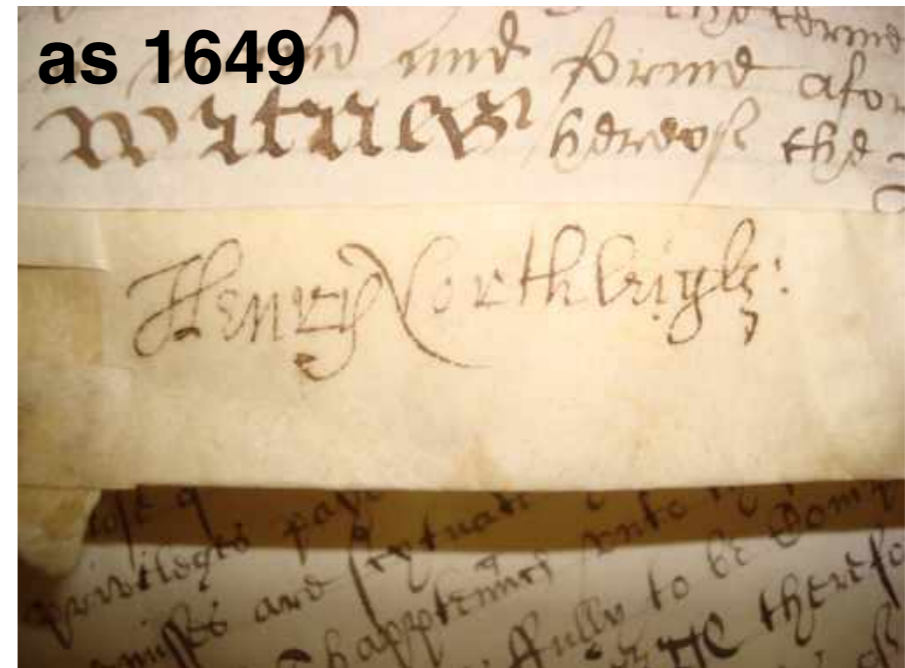
1305

1397

1533



as 1649



1730

1756

Date	Ref	By	To	Extract
1281	<i>SRO</i> 470 4 and 5 <i>latin</i>	<i>Sir Henry Son of</i> <i>Alan, Lord of</i> <i>Dodbrooke</i>	<i>Richard</i> <i>Knollying</i>	Lease, with warranty, of the <b>old mill at Dodebrookes</b> , situated next to Eggelisforde. And also that <b>house next to the said mill called ‘La Melchous’</b> with the adjacent curtilege.
1305	<i>SRO</i> 471 3 <i>Latin</i>	<i>Henry Son of</i> <i>Alan, Lord of</i> <i>Dodbrooke</i>	<i>John Le Ray</i>	<b>Repairing lease of that mill at Dodbrockes</b> , situated opposite the property of one William Le Wara, together with all rents and <b>a reasonable way to the said mill, together with the “gurga” [weir/sluices] of the mill-pond.</b> Also, the <b>adjacent croft.</b>
1397	<i>D N &amp;</i> <i>Q</i> <i>vol 5</i>			Document concerning <b>adjoining meadow to ‘Salt Water Mill Pool</b> of the Lord of the Manor’s Mill

These deeds show that there was a **Salt (Tidal) Mill** in **poor repair**

1281.....it was already an old Mill,

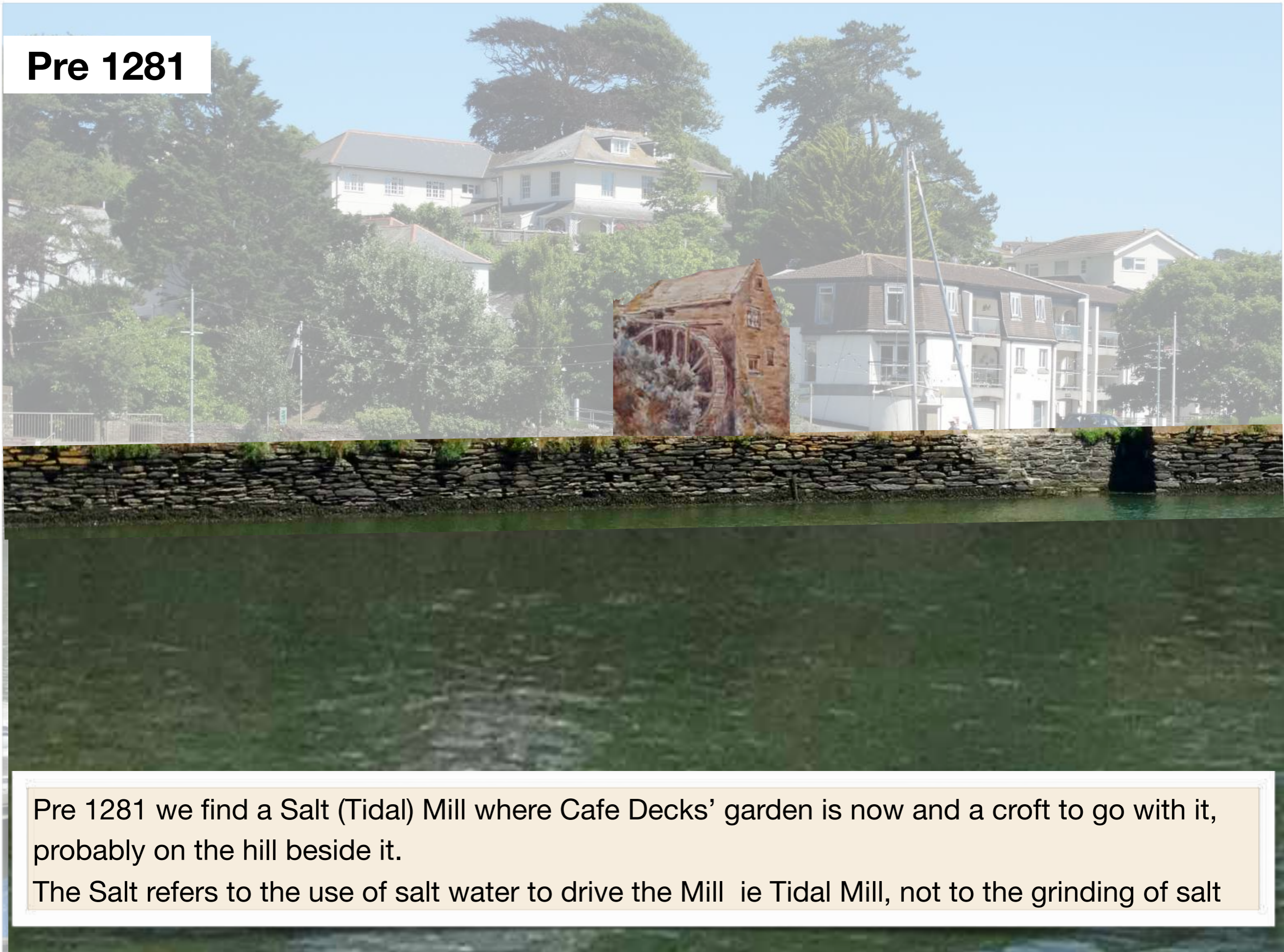
1305 ....John Le Ray gets to repair the mill and the “gurga” (weir and sluices.)

1397 -a lease found at St Edmund’s mentions a meadow called [Shurtelstrate](#) **‘by the Salt Water Mill Pool of the Lord of the Manor’s Mill’**

The Salt Mill area from across the estuary



**Pre 1281**



Pre 1281 we find a Salt (Tidal) Mill where Cafe Decks' garden is now and a croft to go with it, probably on the hill beside it.

The Salt refers to the use of salt water to drive the Mill ie Tidal Mill, not to the grinding of salt

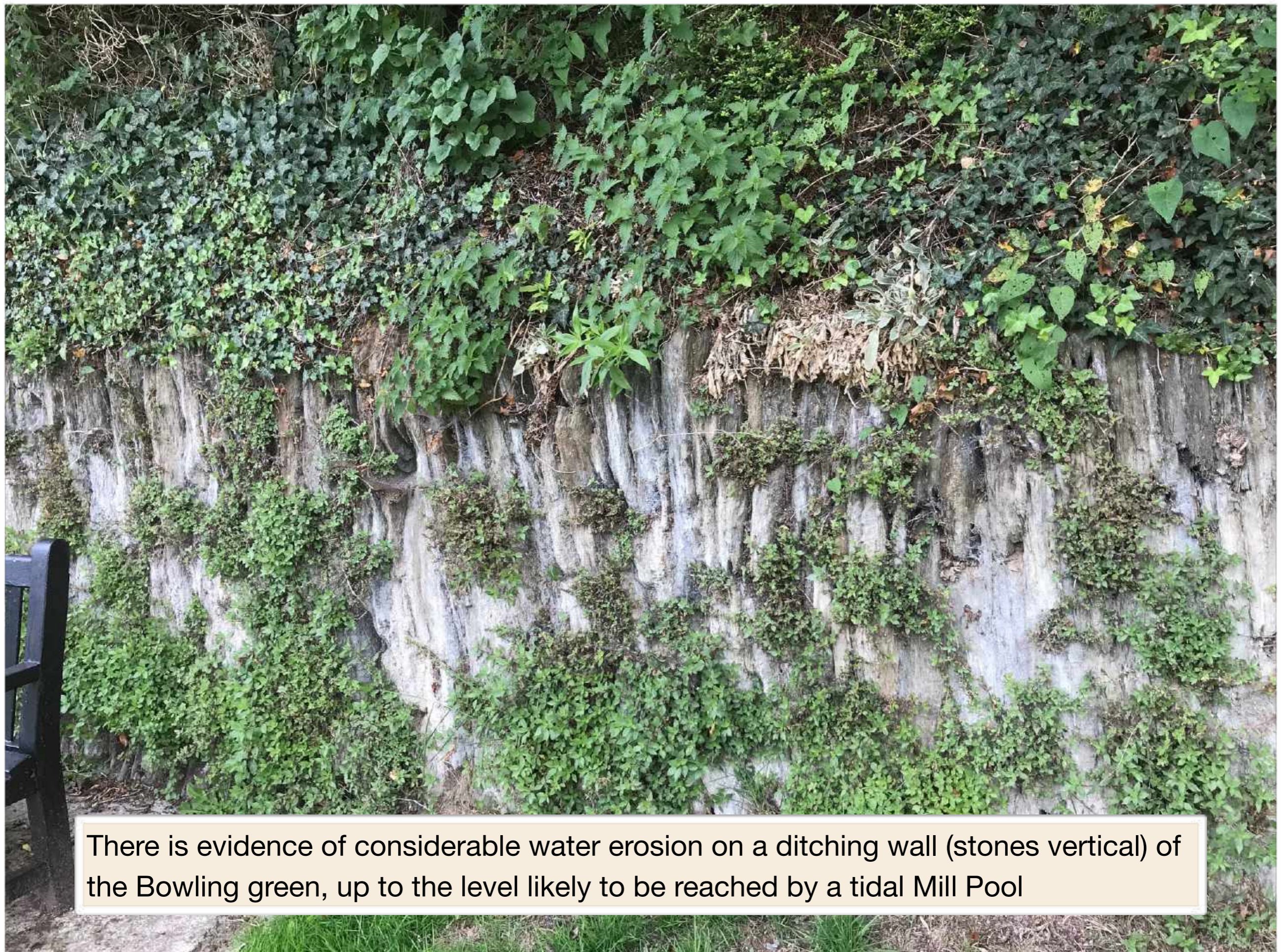
## Tidal (Salt) Mill

There is no evidence for its type of construction but this is a possible design.




**Estuary**

The Recreation Ground area was the Mill pool. This would be filled by the little stream (Washabrooke) and successive High tides with the inlet from the estuary controlled by sluices. When it was full and they needed to grind corn, the water was released at low tide to drive the wheel, which then turned the grind stones to mill the grist.



There is evidence of considerable water erosion on a ditching wall (stones vertical) of the Bowling green, up to the level likely to be reached by a tidal Mill Pool

A photograph showing a close-up view of a rock wall. The wall is composed of light-colored, horizontally layered rock, possibly limestone or sandstone, showing signs of weathering and erosion. The top of the wall is covered in dense green ivy and other climbing plants. The bottom of the wall is bordered by a thick layer of green grass. The overall scene suggests a natural or semi-natural setting, possibly a park or a historical site.

Water erosion is even more evident in the wall next to the ditching wall. This is surely more than could have been caused by the flooding that periodically fills the park, and is consistent with its past use as a Mill Pool.



A close up.

Date	Ref	By	To	Extract
1481	<i>SRO 473 Latin</i>	<i>John Champernoun</i>	<i>Robert Kente</i>	<b>Demise of the site of a corn mill</b> and two closes of land in Dodbrooke with warranty. One empty piece of land with its appurtenances, in my manor of Dodbrooke, being 42 ft on length and 24ft in width, in which a corn mill formerly stood, together with the watercourse of the said mill. Also two closes of land called Butland. Robert Kente is <b>To build or cause to be built a corn mill on the said vacant piece of land within the year</b> next ensuing after the date of the <b>deed at his own cost and expenses.</b> And after the mill has been built RK is to keep it in good repair at his own cost and expense
1490	<i>SRO 473 Latin</i>	<i>John Champernoun</i>	<i>Robert Kente</i>	<b>Salt Mill with one close myl park. Repair</b> to the Mill and appartenus and <b>Fosse and 2 flood gates</b> between the land of John Champernoun which is called Lopters Park and the Mill

The Mill had demised by 1481 and to be rebuilt by Robert Kent 'in one year' and maintenance lease in 1490

Date	Ref	By	To	Extract
1533	SRO 474	<i>Sir Phillip Champernoun Lord of Dodbrooke</i>	<i>William Perrot and ——— his wife</i>	<b>All that my corn Mill called 'The Saltmyll' over 'Le Key'</b> lying and being within the Manor of Dodbrooke in the County of Devon. And also 2 closes of land called Laphorn and Mylperke lying next to said Mill and one piece of garden lying to the north part of the 'Mylpole'. WP and wife are to keep the mill and lands in it <b>in good repair at their own cost and expenses.</b>

No mention of a Mill House and  
the first mention of the garden to the north

Date	By	To:	Extract
1649	Henry Northleigh, Lord of the Manor of Dodbrooke	John Sampson	<i>..all that Grist Mill and <b>Millhouse</b> commonly called the <b>Salt Mill</b> with the <b>pool Key Water Watercourses and leats</b> together with one close of land called the <b>Salt Mill Hill</b> which is one acre of land or thereabouts which is lying on the south side of the said mill and one little plot of land called a <b>herb garden</b> lying on the north side of the said pool and <b>all priviledges payments and duties</b> which is or have been used to be paid for mooring of <b>ships Barques Barges or Boats</b> upon or to the said Key or for <b>landing or loading of any Goods or commodities upon the said Quay</b>. In tenure of John Sampson</i>

The deed of 1649 to John Sampson, shows the Mill in full use. The deeds from 1730 and 1756 - all have similar wording. The lease is for the Mill and Millhouse, pool etc but also refers to payments for mooring of ships etc.

So John Sampson was not only a Miller but a Harbour Master too

Date	Ref	By	To	Extract
1730	DRO 1011 T18	Stephen Northleigh Esq	Richard Hawkins of Kingsbridge, Dyer	<p>Unto the said RH his / ----- assigned <i>all that Grist Mill and Millhouse commonly called and known as by the name of the Salt Mill with the pool Key Water Watercourses and leats thereonto belonging together with one close of land called the Salt Mill Hill which is one acre or land ot thereabouts lying on the southside of the said mill and one little plot of land called the herb garden lying on the northside of the said pool and all priviledges payments and duties which is or have been used to be paid for mooring of Ships Barques Barges or Boats upon or to the said Key or for landing or loading of any Goods or commodities upon the said Quay.</i> All which promised are situated lying and being within the parish and manor of Dodbrooke within County aforesaid and <i>late in the possession of John Sampson of Kingsbridge aforesaid Miller-----</i> and now in the possession of <i>Jacob Phillips of West Alvington</i> in the said County his tenant or under tenant to have and to hold all and singular the before -----</p>

The same wording as the Deed of 1649 -  
Jacob Miller now Miller/Harbour Master

<b>Date</b>	<i>Ref</i>	<i>By</i>	<i>To</i>	<b>Extract</b>
<b>1756</b>	<i>DRO 1011 M T19 20</i>	<i>John Hippersley Cox for Margaret Northleigh, Lunatic, daughter and heir to Stephen Northleigh</i>	<i>Richard Hawkins of Kingsbrid ge, Gent</i>	<i>All that <b>Grist Mill and Mill House normally called and known by the name of the Salt Mill with the pool and key and water and watercourse and leats thereto belonging together wiith 1 close of land called the Salt Mill Hill containing an estimated one acre of land lying on the S side of the said Mill and one little piece of ground called a herb garden lying on the N side of the said pool and all priviledges and payment and dues ..... and now heretofore in possession of Jacob Phillips but non alof the said Richard Hawkins and all that Quillet or parcel of land called Bean Hay estimated 12 ? south of land lying in the east part of the key of Dodbrooke.</b></i>

Same wording as 1649 and 1730. Probably being disposed of with Richard Hawkings as go between, perhaps as he acquires Bean Hay - (part of Box Hill??)

# Summary of Leases re. Salt (Tidal) Mill at Dodbrooke

Date of		State of Mill	Miller
Pre 1281		in use - earliest date unknown	
1281		Already and old Mill	Richard Knolling
1305		Working and being repaired	John Le Ray
1397		Working	
1481		Demised. To rebuild within a year	Robert Kente
1490		Working and being repaired	Robert Kente
1533		Working	William Perrot & wife
1649		Working	John Sampson
1730		Working	Jacob Phillips
1756		Working	Jacob Phillips
1780ish		Demised	

All mills get rattled into disrepair, so a few rebuilds would be the norm.  
But these deeds suggest that the tidal Mill functioned for a very long time.

## Properties adjacent to Salt Mill

**1281**- the Mill is 'situated next to [Eggelisforde](#)'

**1305** - 'Mill....Opposite the property of [William de Wara](#)'

**1397**...meadow called [Shurtelslate](#) '**by the Salt Water Mill Pool of the Lord of the Manor's Mill**'

**1481** Also two closes of land called [Butland](#).

**1490** repair Fosse gates between the land of John Champernoun which is called [Lopters Park](#) and the Mill

**1533** And also 2 closes of land called [Laphorn](#)

1649

**1756** and all that Quillet or parcel of land called [Bean Hay](#) estimated 12 south of land lying in the east part of the key of Dodbrooke.

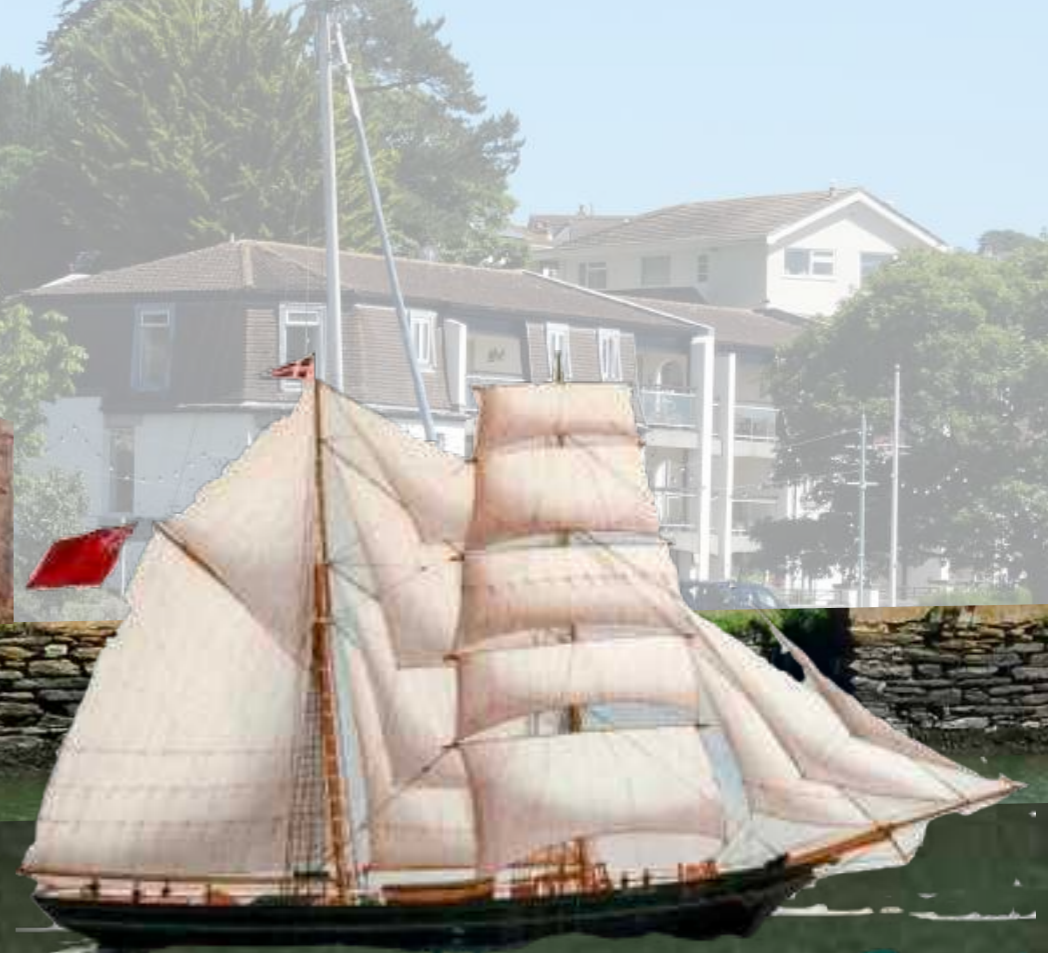
Another thing to note is that these old leases identified the property as being by, or south of etc someone else's property, often described as the name of the person there at the time. So throughout these leases various names come up. It would be good to link these names together and provide more accurate information, especially if the same names crop up in different documents.

**Between 1649 and 1800 ish**

**By 1649 there was a Mill House for the Millers of Salt Mill**

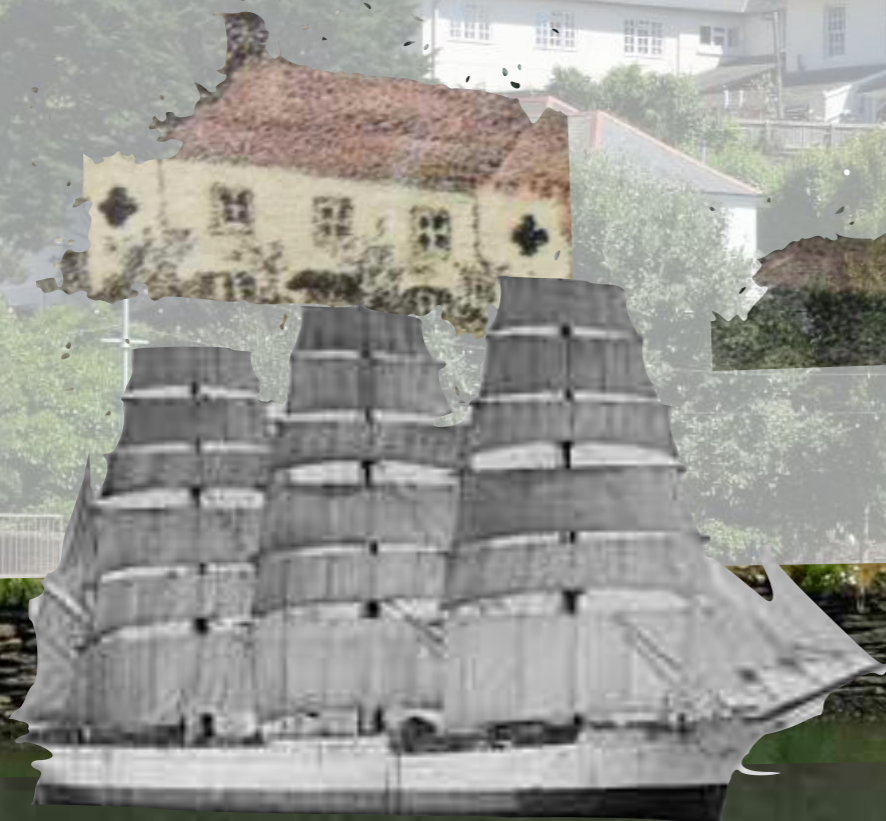


**Between 1649 and 1800 ish**



**A Brigantine sailing by - popular with pirates so hence the name**

**Between 1649 and 1800 ish**



**A Barque mooring at Salt Mill Quay**



**and a Barge**

**Between 1649 and 1800 ish**

**in the late 1700s the Salt Mill disappeared  
and probably the use of the Quay**



**Between 1649 and 1800 ish**

**By 1649 there was a Mill House for the Millers of Salt Mill**

**in the late 1700s the Salt Mill disappeared  
and probably the use of the Quay**



**Between 1649 and 1800 ish**



**at some point a Lime Kiln was built**



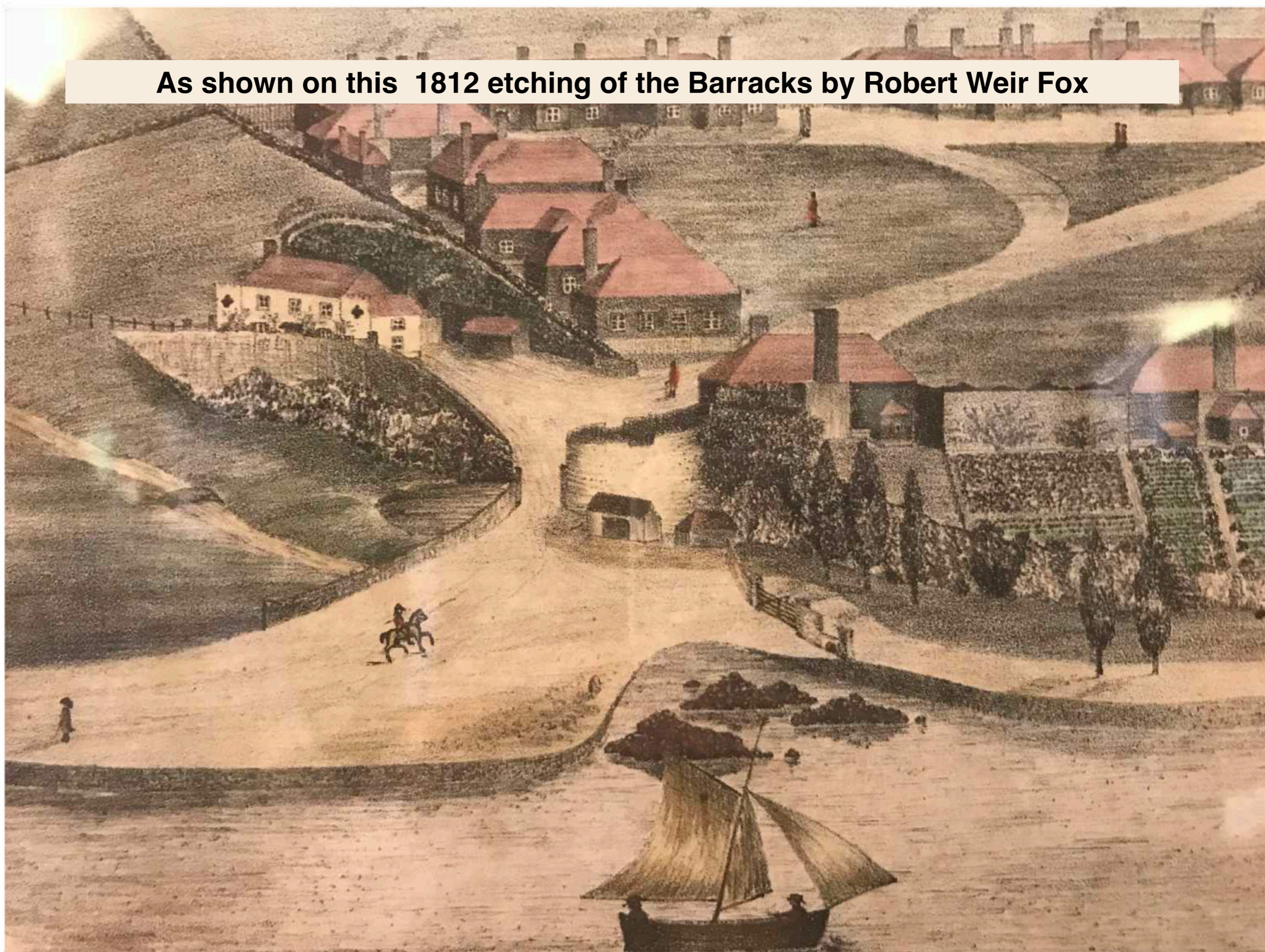
**Between 1649 and 1800 ish**



**and an extension on the Mill House(Salt Mill Cottage)**



As shown on this 1812 etching of the Barracks by Robert Weir Fox



The delightful etching by Robert Weir Fox of the Barracks for the soldiers of the Napoleonic wars, has been so useful in setting the scene in 1812. He was not an artist but a gentleman in the family who now owned the Mill house and pool. He skewed perspective so we can see the house as well as the Barracks. You can see the lime kiln - no mill but the stream running through what was the mill pool but now a meadow.

Also the road running to Dodbrook to the left (leading up Derby Road)

There are some reports the Mill House (renamed Ivy Cottage) and/or Salt Mill Cottage (the extension to the right) were used as the bake house for the barracks

The Barracks were temporary wooden buildings mostly and were taken down in 1815



### **The 'Mill House' shows some interesting features**

There is a 'shed' to the right and indication of sheds behind, which are still there today.

On the ends of the original house, were integral structures - probably sheds or dove cotes - with castellations over a diamond / cross shaped window.

Also, an extension appears to have been built on later on the near end - Salt Mill Cottage

These features are in evidence under the render today.

When the render was stripped off Breakspeare, this is what was found.....



**The castellations!!!!**



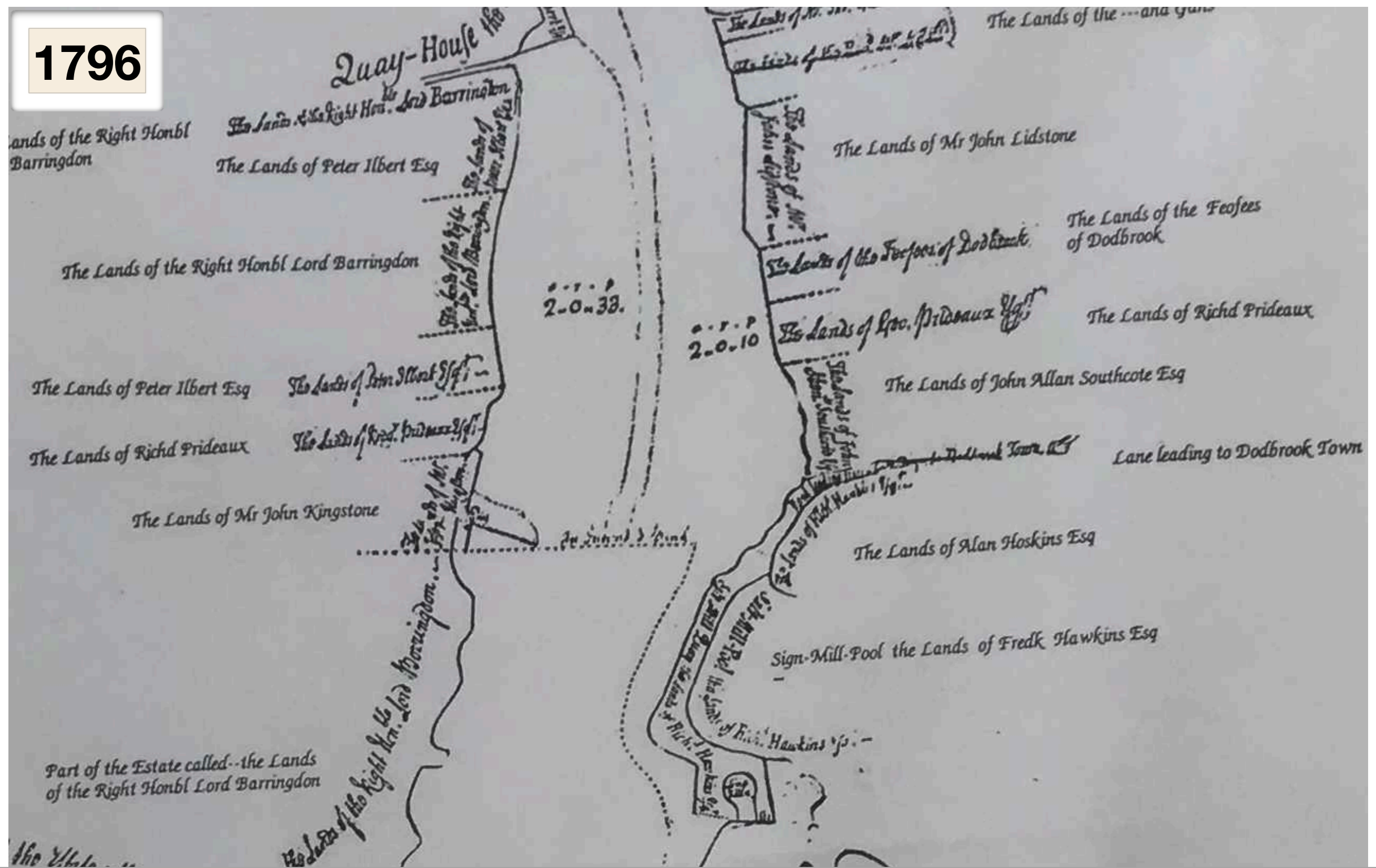
**The diamond shaped window!!!**  
(taken from above as the scaffolding was in the way)



....and the join (or lack of) of the extension.

This is the north wall - about 30 photos cobbled together - showing the castellations, diamond shaped window - now filled with bricks- and the 'join',  
You can also make out where a further extension was joined in at the front.

1796



This map of 1796 confirms there was no Mill at Salt Quay at that time. But there was a Lime Kiln just south of the Quay. The land at Salt Mill and the Quay were now owned by Richard Hawkins, who may have been pivotal, with the other owners indicated, in selling off the manor lands, which were all sold off by 1800.