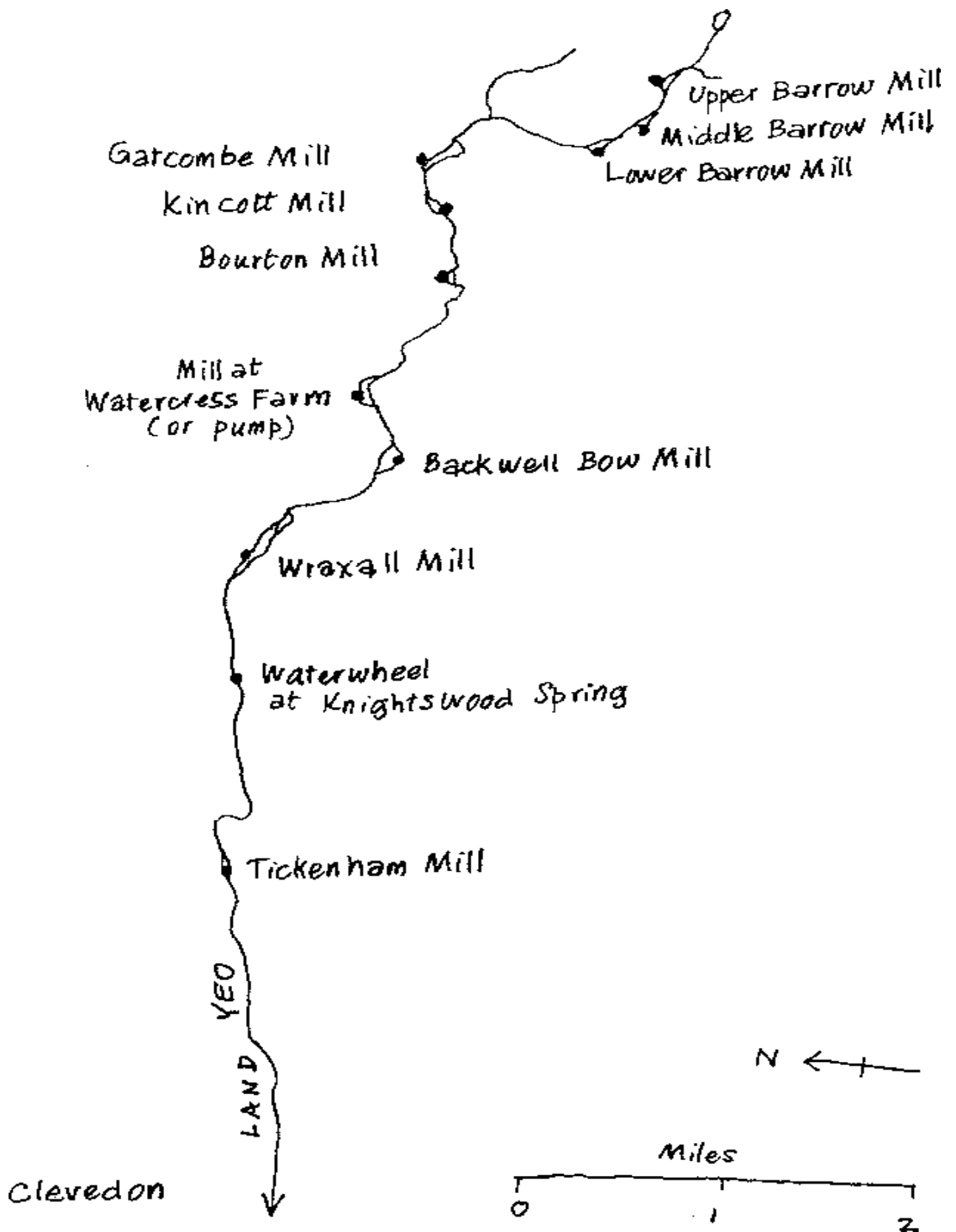


# MILLS ON THE LAND YEO

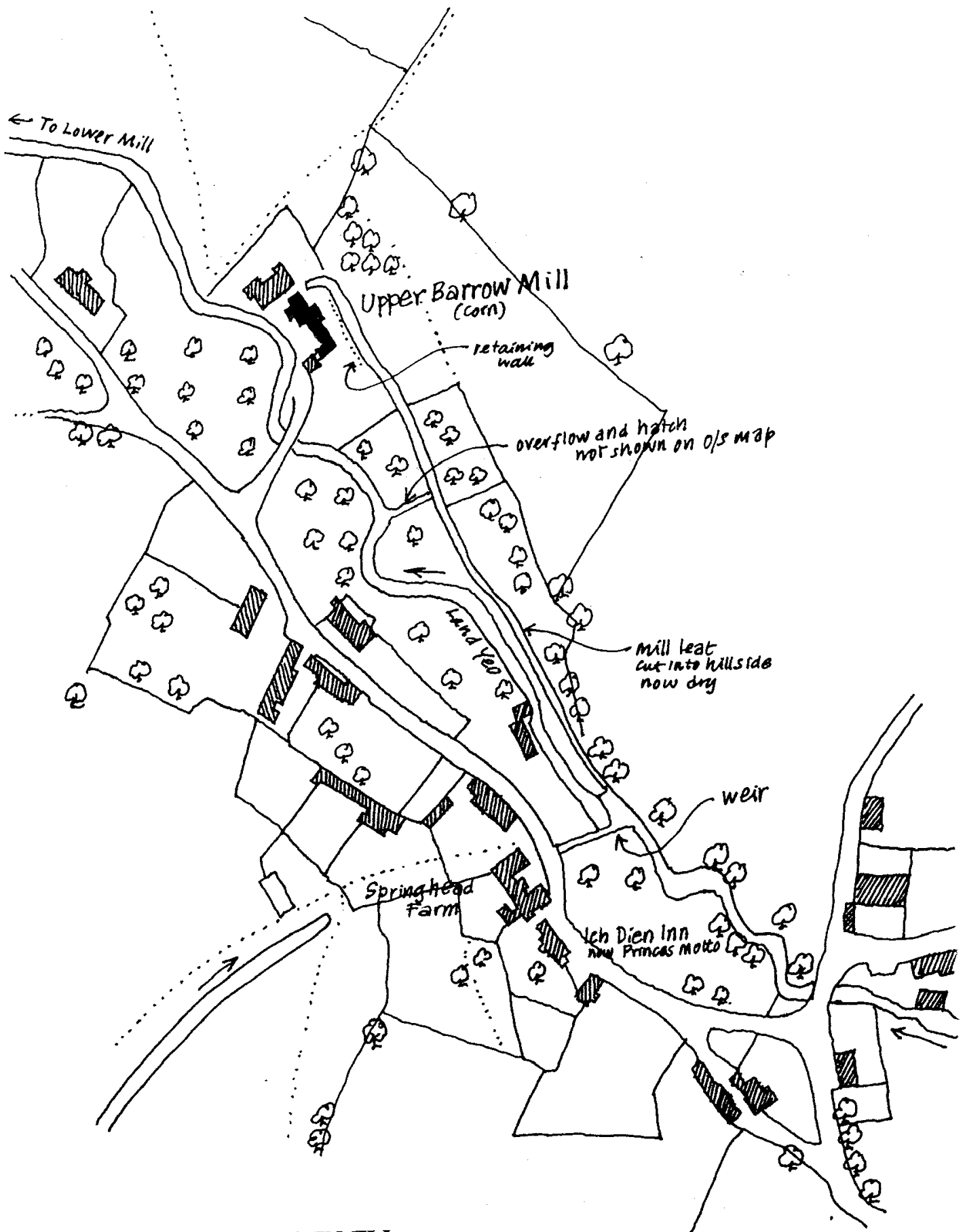
by

**Martin Bodman**





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UPPER BARROW MILL

## UPPER BARROW MILL - BARROW GURNEY

### Location ST 529 681

The grist mill was in operation here in 1839. The mill and millhouse were then owned by Montegue Gore Esq, the Lord of the Manor and occupied by Elizabeth Winscombe.<sup>[1]</sup>

By 1866 Charles Vowles was running Upper Mill as a corn mill. He was listed as miller until 1910 when Earnest Vowles, possibly his son, succeeded him.<sup>[2]</sup> The mill ceased to work before 1935 when Mr Pearce came to the village. He was living here in the 1980s.

The waterwheel appears to have been external

and of the overshot type. It was supplied by a high level leat, now dry. The remains of this leat can be seen cut into the hillside. A weir below the Princess Motto Inn fed water into the leat. The weir was in turn supplied not only by the Land Yeo but by a powerful source above Springhead Farm.<sup>[3]</sup>

This is the highest known mill on the river. Since the construction of the reservoirs at Barrow Gurney the Land Yeo's water is significantly depleted. The spring above the farm is now piped uphill to the reservoirs, for instance.

### References

1. Barrow Gurney tithe Map & Apportionment. Somerset Country record Office D/D/Rt 163 and 163A, 1839
2. Kelly's Post Office Directory, Somersetshire 1866, 1910, etc
3. Ordnance Survey Map, Somerset, 25" to 1 mile, sheet 5.16, 1885

## MIDDLE BARROW MILL – BARROW GURNEY

### Location ST ....

The lease of 1805 refers to mills at Barrow Gurney converted to snuff manufacturer. Peter Lilly had an interest in the mills concerned prior to 1800. Lilly was a tobacconist of Bristol who merged with H. O. Wills & Co to be known as Lilly, Wills & Co from 1791 to 1793 and as Lilly and Wills from 1793 to 1803, when Peter Lilly retired. The mill then appears to have been occupied by Paul Maggs and John Ruddock, also tobacconists, until 1809.<sup>[1]</sup>

Middle Barrow may not have been the mill concerned. Upper Barrow, however, has more the appearance of a farm mill and was described as

a grist mill 1839. It is worth noting that a second member of the Maggs family was at Lower Mill in 1839; perhaps therefore Middle Barrow was a corn mill early in the century.

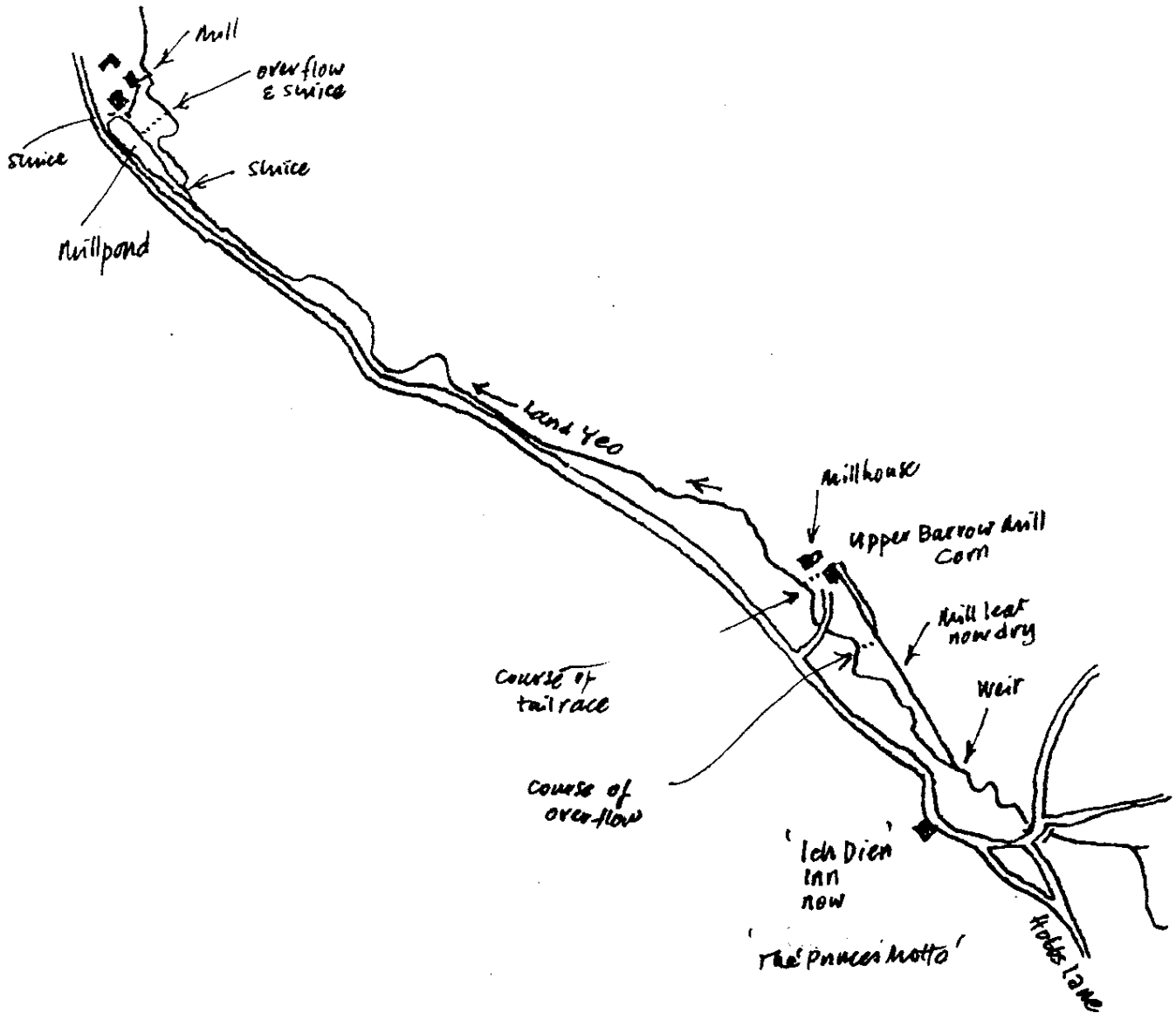
Middle Barrow may have ceased to be a mill by 1839. It was then owned by Montegue Gore Esq and occupied by William Chapell. A leat and millpond was then known as Millmead.<sup>[2]</sup> By 1885 both leat and millpond had disappeared.

The site is now a private residence known as School Farm. A new access drive covers the line of the erstwhile leat.

### References

1. Indentures at Somerset County Record Office DD/GB/8
2. Barrow Gurney Tithe Map and Apportionment. Somerset County Record Office, Taunton. D/D/Rt 163 and 163A, 1839
3. Ordnance Survey Map, Somerset, 25" to 1 mile, sheet 5.16, 1885

## UPPER & LOWER BARROW MILLS



a compensation reservoir was built above these mills.

# LOWER BARROW MILL - BARROW GURNEY

## Location ST 523 686

This is now known as Barrow Mill and is still at work producing animal feeds. The present mill building is a five bay three-storey stone built structure with an additional two storey wing and tiled roofs.

In 1086 Nigel of Gournai held the manor of Barrow from the Bishop of Coutances. There was a watermill in the village, valued at 5 shillings. Lower Barrow may have been the location of this early mill.<sup>[1]</sup>

In the 19th century the mill was grinding corn. In 1839 it was owned by John Blagrove Esq and leased to John Maggs. Maggs sublet to Richard Bay. The property then consisted of house, grist

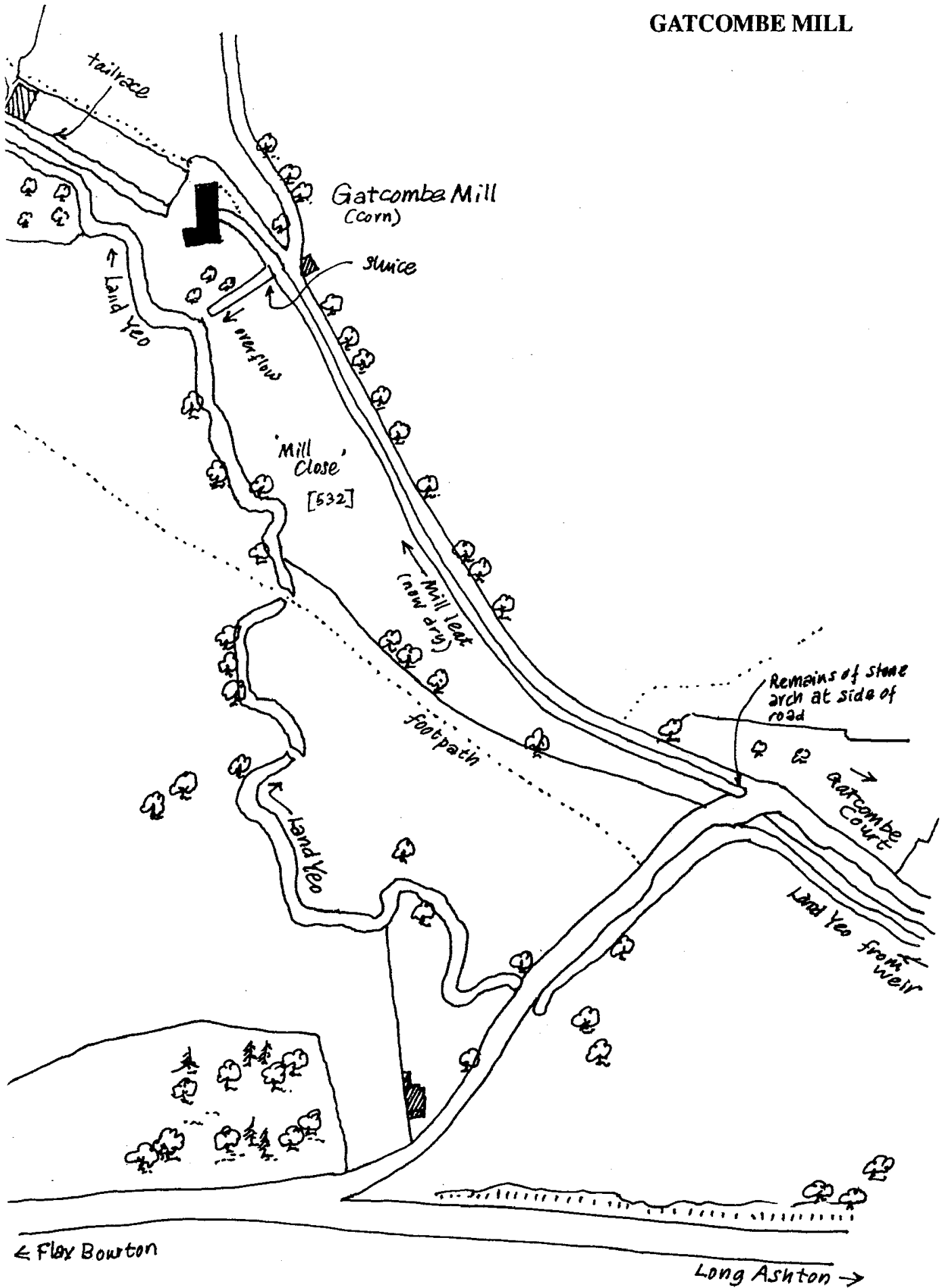
mill, garden pond, yard and outbuildings.<sup>[2]</sup> E Crabb was miller in 1866.<sup>[3]</sup> The mill was then run by the Jones family: Joseph Jones was here from about 1875 to 1889. Daniel Jones ran the mill from circa 1894 to 1919 and Philip Jones from 1931-1939.<sup>[4]</sup> Philip also ran Gatcombe Mill in 1931.

The mill was rebuilt by Henry Martin Gibbs in 1909. An overshot all-iron watermill of 14 foot diameter was installed. <sup>[5,6]</sup> There was steam power as well. The waterwheel was supplied by a millpond equipped with two overflow hatches. Both waterwheel and millpond remain today, though no longer in use.

## References

1. Caroline and Frank Thorn, editors. Domesday Book, Somerset. Phillimore, Chichester, 1980
2. Barrow Gurney Tithe Map and Apportionment, c1839, Somerset County Record Office D/D/Rt 163 and 163A
3. H E S Simmons collection. Somerset Watermills, Science Museum Library, London
4. Kelly's Post Office Directory, Somersetshire and Wright's Bristol & Clifton Directory
5. W J Robinson. West Country Manors. St Stephens Press, Bristol, 1930
6. Joan Day. A Guide to the Industrial Heritage of Avon. Association for Industrial Archaeology, 1987
7. Ordnance Survey Map, Somerset 25" to 1 mile, sheet 5.16, 1885

GATCOMBE MILL





# GATCOMBE MILL – LONG ASHTON

## Location ST 522 700

Here is a mill that survives, albeit not in the best condition.

Gatcombe is a three-storey range, random stone built, with a tiled roof. Much of its machinery is still in place including a 14 foot diameter cast and wrought iron overshot waterwheel within the mill.<sup>[1]</sup> The waterwheel is rusting away in its wheelpit.

The building has been listed, Grade 2, presumably because the machinery has been retained. The mill, built possibly in the early 19th century, is beautifully sited below a ridge and took advantage of a high-level 500 yard long leat running from Gatcombe Court. The leat is now dry and has been filled in near the mill in recent years. A sluice or hatch provided an overflow to the river.

Benjamin Donn's map appears to indicate a snuff mill here in 1769.<sup>[2]</sup> In the early 19th century the area was part of the estates of the Smyth family of Ashton Court and an estate map of 1826 apparently shows a snuff mill let to Veale & Co, on the Wraxall Road, beyond Kincott.<sup>[3]</sup> However there appear to have been other works on the stream below Gatcombe. A copy of a letter dated 1913 refers to tow paper mills, two corn mills and two snuff mills in the Manor of Gatcombe in 1815.<sup>[4]</sup> A sale notice of 1824 adds intrigue:

"To be sold on the premises of the late Messrs R & W Neale, in Black Street [Bristol] ... All the plant of

the above premises and the articles removed from Long Ashton comprising a valuable engine for cutting tobacco; 10 capital Presses with Iron Screws and Brass Boxes; a very expensive Snuff Mill... three large millstones..."

Between Gatcombe and Kincott there are indications today of other water courses and the Ordnance Survey map of 1885 tends to support this impression, although no buildings were extant at that date.<sup>[5]</sup>

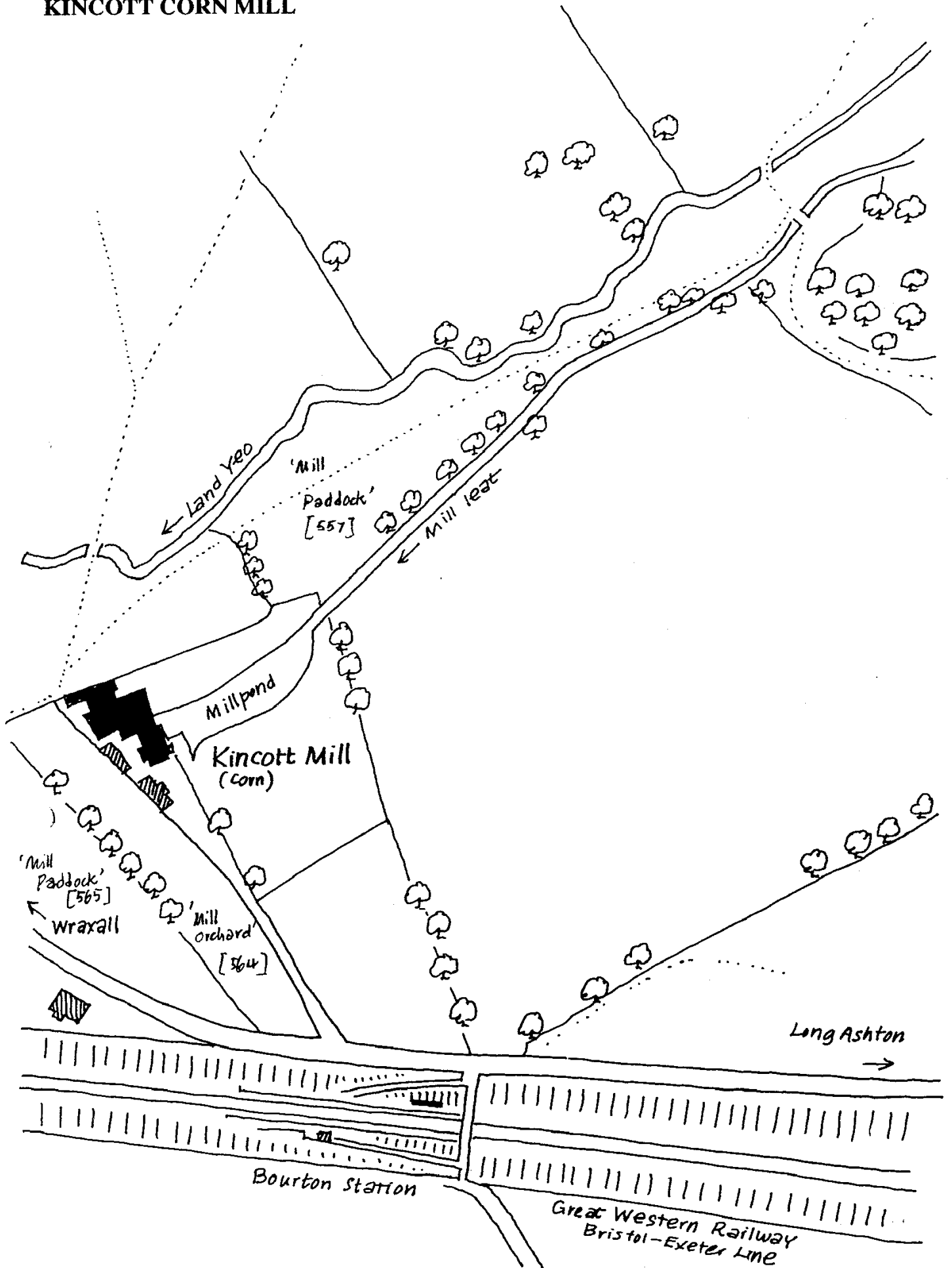
In 1842 the mill was jointly owned by Sir John Smith and Samuel Gough and occupied by John Dixon.<sup>[6]</sup> Dixon had converted Gatcombe to a mustard, annatto and drug mill by 1846. Annatto was a yellowish-red dye obtained from the seed coat of the of the Cariban, a small tropical American tree. Dixon had left the mill by 1851 and re-established business at Woodford on the River Chew.<sup>[7]</sup> John Daunton occupied Gatcombe between 1851 and 1861.<sup>[7]</sup> The mill was probably milling corn in this period; certainly it had been converted to a flour mill by 1874. Edward Box was miller in that year and 1875. Louis Jones followed in 1889.<sup>[8]</sup> The firm was listed as Louis Jones & Son in 1910.<sup>[7]</sup>

Louis's brother Daniel milled at Lower Barrow, the next mill upstream. By 1931 both Gatcombe and Lower Barrow were run by Philip Jones.<sup>[7]</sup> In later years a steam engine and an oil engine were used to augment water power.<sup>[7]</sup>

## References

1. Joan Day. A Guide to the Industrial Heritage of Avon. Association for Industrial Archaeology, 1987
2. Benjamin Donn. Map. 11 Miles Round the City of Bristol. 1769. City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, map 21
3. M L Bonnington. Long Ashton – Our Village. Privately published, 1980
4. Papers at Woodspring Museum, Weston-super-Mare
5. Ordnance Survey Map, Somerset 25" to 1 miles. Sheet 5.12, 1885
6. Long Ashton Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1842. Somerset County Record Office, Taunton, D/D/Rt 459 and 459A
7. Kelly's Post Office Directory, Somersetshire, 1851, 1861, 1910 and 1931
8. H E S Simmons collection, Somersetshire Watermill, Science Museum Library, London
9. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal 14 August 1824

KINCOTT CORN MILL



## KINCOTT MILL – LONG ASHTON

### Location ST 516 698

There was a mill at Kincott or Kencot in the 13th century. Walter Gylle and Elyas de Barewe paid 10 shillings rent per annum in those early years. It was recorded as Kencotsmylle in 1449.<sup>[1]</sup>

Prior to 1817 the mill was part of the manor of Ashton Lyons.<sup>[2]</sup> In that year it was advertised to let:

"to snuff manufacturers, tobacconists and oilmen."

Clearly Kincott Mill had been used to grind snuff in the 19th century.<sup>[3]</sup>

By the 1830s a steam engine had been installed and Kincott was operating as a flour and corn mill:

"To be Let with immediate possession. KINCOTT FLOUR and CORN MILLS, situated at Long Ashton... They consist of a Steam Engine and waterwheel, which can be worked either together or separate; 3 pair of stones, smutting machine, wire machine for dressing; ditto for bolting cloths and a small machine for Grist. Dwelling House, Garden and Paddock. For particulars apply to Mr Edward Peters, Long Ashton."<sup>[4]</sup>

Another advertisement appeared in 1839 referring to the proximity of the Bristol and Exeter Railroad, although it was two and a half years before the railway was opened.

In the tithe apportionment of 1842 the mill was listed as owned jointly by Sir John Smyth and Ann Peters, the latter also occupying the premises. Ann was probably the widow of Edward Peters. The millpond covered an area of 1 rod and 6 perches.<sup>[5]</sup>

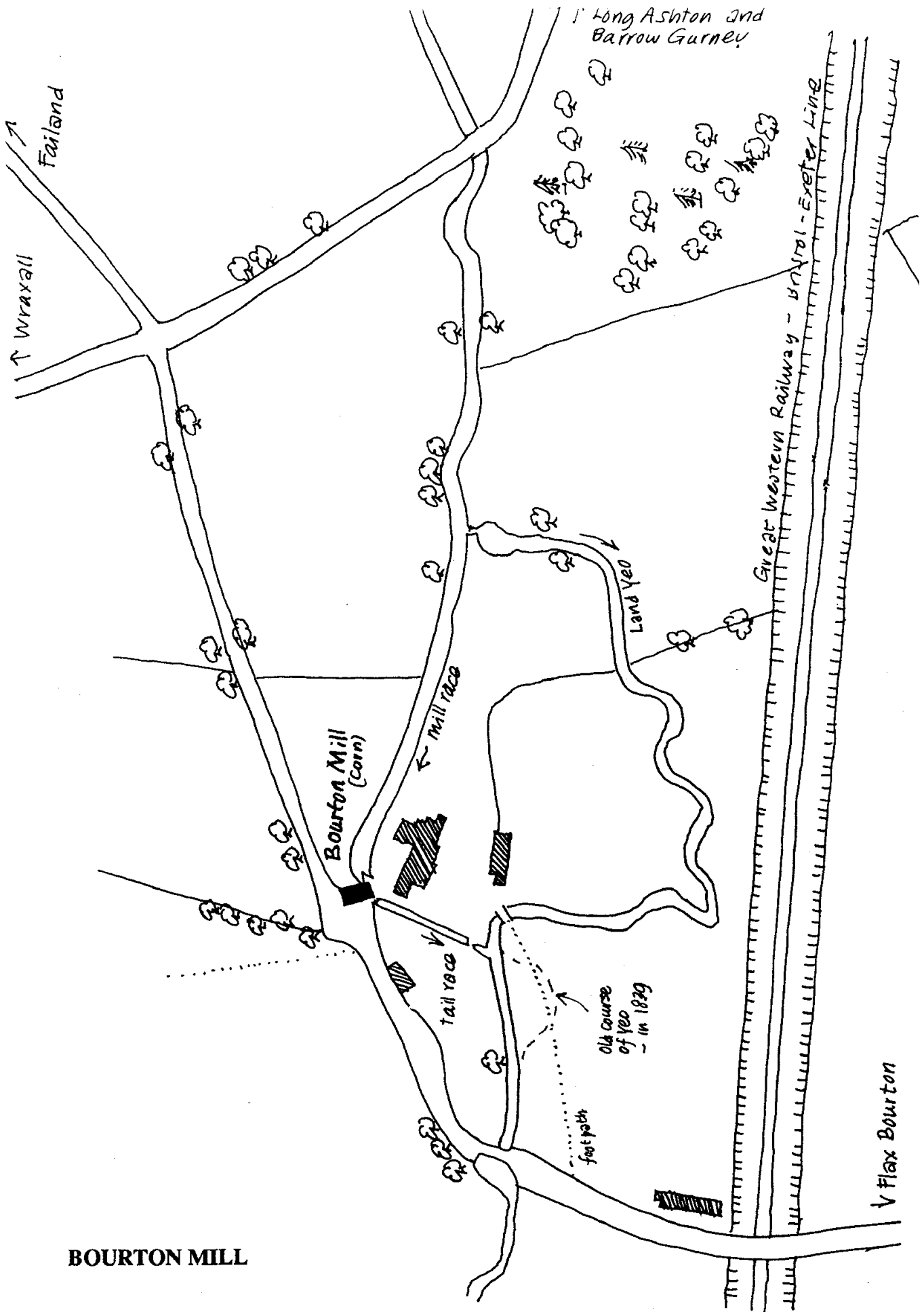
In 1844 the mill was offered for sale; the lease was for 99 years with a yearly rent of £100. The steam engine was rated at 12 horse power.<sup>[6]</sup> In the following year the mill was auctioned.

William J Gregory, an iron founder, was established at Kincott in 1861 and his company was still listed in 1910.<sup>[7]</sup> He made edge tools and other farm implements. It was Gregory who constructed a cast iron water wheel to replace an old wooden wheel at Stratford Mill, West Harptree, in about 1870.<sup>[8]</sup> An iron waterwheel, built by Gregory, survived until 1928 at West Mill, Congresbury. In 1875 a sale notice appeared advertising surplus stock including mill gear such as a 6 foot spur wheel and two 5 foot crown wheels, an iron drag mill for grinding flint and other items including steam engines.<sup>[9]</sup>

The waterwheel at Kincott was supplied by a leat and millpond. Both are now dry; the leat is just discernable and the millpond has been partly built over. The main building appears to date from Gregory's occupation and now forms the centre of a caravan park. Cast iron gear wheels are in evidence by the entrance to the house.

### References

1. B J Greenhill. The Story of Long Ashton. Local newspaper, 4 June 1960, 2 June 1962 and 1 July 1964. Weston-super-Mare reference library
2. M L Bonnington. Long Ashton our villages. Privately published 1980
3. Felix Farley's Bristol Journal 23 August 1817
4. The Bristol Mirror 10 November 1838
5. Long Ashton Tithe Map and Apportionment, 1842. Somerset County Record Office, Taunton. D/D/Rt 459 and 459A
6. The Bristol Mirror 6 July 1844
7. Kelly's Post Office Directory, Somersetshire, 1861 and 1910
8. A J Spence. Watermills of the Chew Valley. Unpublished paper, 1983
9. The Bristol Times and Mirror 5 June 1875
10. Ordnance Survey map, Somerset. 25" to 1 mile. Sheet 5.12, 1884



**BOURTON MILL**

## BOURTON MILL – FLAX BOURTON

### Location ST 511 698

The mill building survives in a truncate form as the garage of a private residence. It is sited hard by the road leading from Flax Bourton to Belmont Hill and has been reduced from its original three stories to one storey. Flax Bourton was part of the Manor of Wraxall at Domesday, so that it is possible this was an 11th century mill site. Wraxall had two mills worth 12s 6d in 1085.

The nearby house, Mill Farm, is in part believed to date from early 15th century, with early 16th century improvements. [2] Until recently the property belonged to the estate of the present Lord Wraxall.

The mill leat has now largely been filled in, although the course of the tail race is still evident [1989]. Between 1839 and 1885 the river was diverted into the tailrace, eliminating a bend.[2,5] Mill stones stand by the wall of the converted mill.

Bourton Mill was shown on Benjamin Donn's map of 1769[1] and indicated on the tithe award of 1838. [2] Mr James Coombs occupied Mill Farm in 1844.[3] John King was farmer and miller of Flax Bourton in 1861.[4] The farming stock was for sale by auction in 1865 as Mr King was intending to leave the neighbourhood.[7] Bourton was still a corn mill in 1885.[5] Joseph Atherton occupied the mill in 1899.[6]

### References

1. Benjamin Donn. Map: 11 miles around the City of Bristol. 1769. City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Map 21
2. Ilea and Whites Avon archaeology 1984 in Bristol & Avon Archaeology 1985, Volume 4, p64
3. The Bristol Mirror 17 February 1844
4. Kelly's Post Office Directory of Somersetshire, 1861
5. Ordnance Survey Map, Somersetshire. 25" to 1 mile Sheet 5.11, 1884
6. Wright's Bristol and Clifton Directory 1899
7. The Bristol Times and Mirror 18 February 1865

## MILLS AT WATERCRESS FARM – WRAXALL

### Location ST 500 706

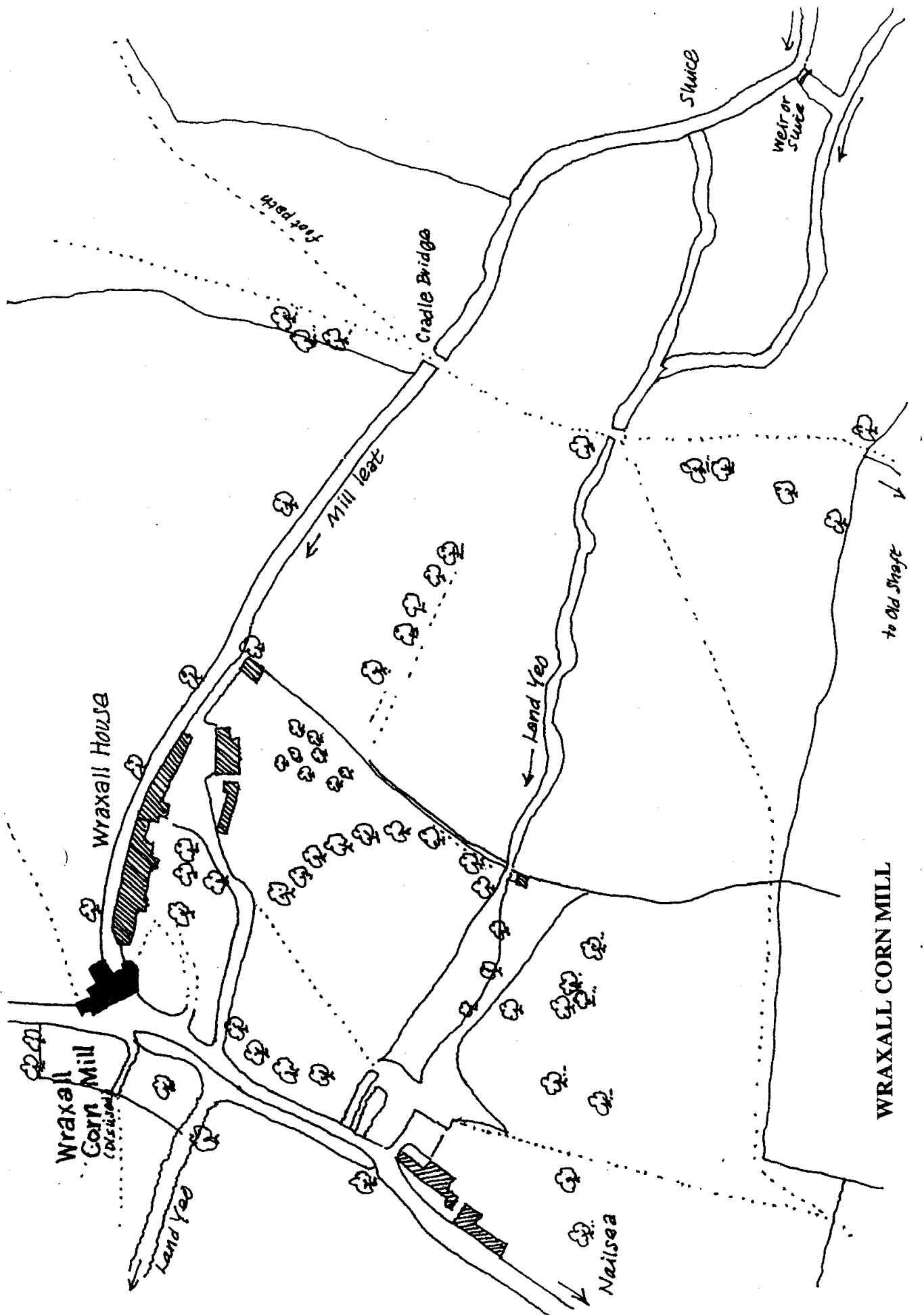
The only waterwheel still operating on the Land Yeo is at Watercress Farm. It is an iron overshot wheel of about 6 foot diameter, housed in a small brick structure no larger than a railway platelayers hut. This building existed in 1885. [3] A millpond below Gable Farm feeds a well maintained fast flowing leat. The mill wheel is believed to be used as a water pump. Nearby is the derelict three storey Watercress Farm which was occupied by Thomas Vowles in 1844[1]

and Thomas Nochols in 1861.[2] The lands are part of Wraxall estate.

Public footpaths from Wraxall, Flax Bourton and Backwell Bow coverage at the farm, which together with the extensive leat system may suggest that there was once a more substantial mill here. The path from Backwell Bow makes a pleasant walk in summer.

### References

1. Bristol Mirror 16 March 1844
2. Kelly's Directory, Somersetshire, 1861
3. Ordnance Survey Map, Somerset. 25" to 1 miles. Shet 5.7, 1884



## BACKWELL BOW MILL – BACKWELL

### Location ST 493 706

There is nothing to see at this site today. A pasture of two acres known as 'the mill' was listed on Backwell's tithe map in 1840. <sup>[1]</sup> The mill was apparently shown on an 1812 estate map. <sup>[2]</sup>

A short stretch of the Land Yeo below Water-

cross Farm falls within the parish of Backwell and this is where the mill once stood. Although Backwell had a medieval mill near the source of the River Kenn, the Land Yeo would have provided a more effective source of water power.

### References

1. Tithe map apportionment. Somerset Record Office. D/D/Rt 395 and 395A, 1840
2. Records at Avon County Council Planning Department referring to the Longleat Papers.

## WRAXALL MILL – WRAXALL

### Location ST 484 716

Like many north Somerset manors, Wraxall was held by the Bishop of Coutances in 1086. The manor then had two mills which paid 12s 6d per annum. <sup>[1]</sup> In the 11th century Flax Bourton was part of this manor. Thus this mill at Wraxall Score, on the Wraxall-Nailsea Road and Bourton Mill were very possibly the two sites at work 900 years ago. The only other contender in the present day parish is the mill at Watercross Farm which is considered to be too remote from the villages to be a probable site.

According to one source the medieval village of Wraxall was sited south east of the mill and not grouped around the church. <sup>[2]</sup>

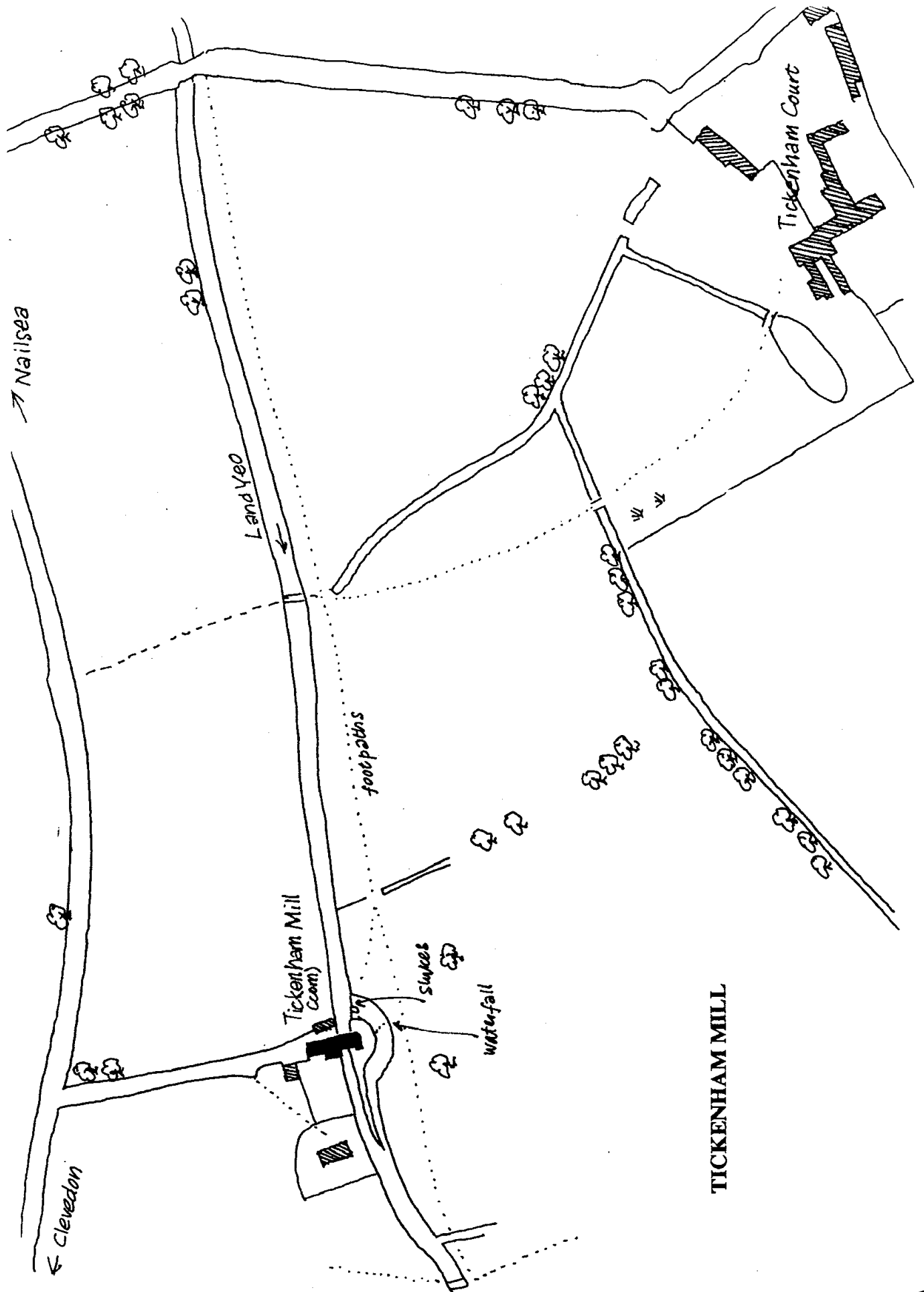
In the 18th century the mill was run by generations of the Emery family. <sup>[3]</sup> The waterwheel was under-shot and fed by a leat a little over 100 yards long. <sup>[4]</sup>

In the 19th century Mr Yendole opened a steam powered mill in Nailsea High Street. <sup>[3]</sup> In medieval times Nailsea, like Flax Bourton, was a satellite of Wraxall Manor. With growth of coal mining and the development of Nailsea glassworks, Nailsea expanded. The old Wraxall mill may have proved inadequate for the burgeoning population.

In 1785 the mill was leased to William Curtis. In 1846 William Vowles was tenant. <sup>[5]</sup> John Day was miller at Wraxall in 1858. <sup>[6]</sup> By 1885 the mill was disused <sup>[7]</sup> and by the beginning of this century Mrs Griffiths and her son Alfie lived here. Mrs Griffiths sold sweets and tobacco from the mill cottage while Alfie undertook shoe repairs in the mill. <sup>[4]</sup> The mill building was a ruin in the 1950s. Its crumbling walls remain today by the entrance to Wraxall House.

### References

1. Caroline and Frank Thorn, editors Domesday Book, Somerset. Phillimore, Chichester, 1980
2. Phyllis Horman. Wraxall – I Knew it Well I was born there: in Around and About. Nailsea and District Local History Society, 1984
3. Margaret Thomas. The Book of Nailsea. Barracuda Books, Buckinghamshire, 1984
4. W L Rew. Memories of Wraxall. Nailsea & DLHS, 1981
5. Papers at Woodspring Museum, Weston-super-Mare
6. Avon County Council Planning Department listings
7. Ordnance Survey Map, Somerset 25" to 1 mile, sheet 5.6, 1884



TICKENHAM MILL



## WATER PUMP AT KNIGHTSWOOD SPRING – NAILSEA

### Location: not known at present

A brewery was established at Nailsea in the 1740s. Thatcher, the firm's proprietor, had a water wheel constructed in the River Yeo to supply water to the Friendship Inn. The wheel and

pipeline cost £200 to install. In 1905 the Bristol Water Works Company provided a main supply and the old plant which had served the village as well as the brewery was redundant.

### Reference:

B J Greenhill, Old Nailsea, Somerset, privately published, 1959

## TICKENHAM MILL – TICKENHAM

### Location: ST 455 717

Tickenham did not have a mill in the 11th century.<sup>[1]</sup> It was a small insignificant manor compared with its then powerful neighbour, Wraxall. Nevertheless this is an ancient mill site. In 1148 the Canons of the Abbey of St Augustine, Bristol – now Bristol Cathedral – were granted the patronage of the living of Tickenham by Robert Fitzhardinge. The Canons established the mill, which is sited to take advantage of a fault in the otherwise generally flat moor. The fault provides perhaps as much as a 12 foot fall of water.

In the late 17th century, Lady Glanville, the eccentric 'Lady of the butterflies' in Denys Forrest's history of the manor, on occasions reputedly walked down to the mill at midnight with the intention of moving the mill wheel to Tickenham Court.

From about 1801 to 1921 the mill was part of the Ashton Court estate and belonged to the Smyth family. From 1927 to 1937 the mill pumped water from a well on Court Farm.<sup>[2]</sup> George King was miller here in 1861 and Clement Bishop ran the mill from at least 1883 to 1903.<sup>[3]</sup> The mill race is short and the overflow is now a waterfall feature. On the approach to the mill the stream is canalised between stone walls. The mill wheel was internal and probably high breastshot or overshot.

The mill has now been converted to a private house. Bill Reynolds, a long time resident of Wraxall and a Water Authority employee lived here in 1973.<sup>[2]</sup> The mill was more recently occupied by Dr Miller.

### References

1. Caroline and Frank Thorn, editors. DomesdayBook, Somerset, Phillimore, Chichester, 1980
2. Denys Forrest. The Making of a Manor. Moonraker Press, Bradford-on-Avon, 1975
3. Kelly's Directory Somersetshire, 1861, 1883, 1903
4. Ordnance Survey map, Somerset. 25" to 1 mile. Sheet 5.5, 1884

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