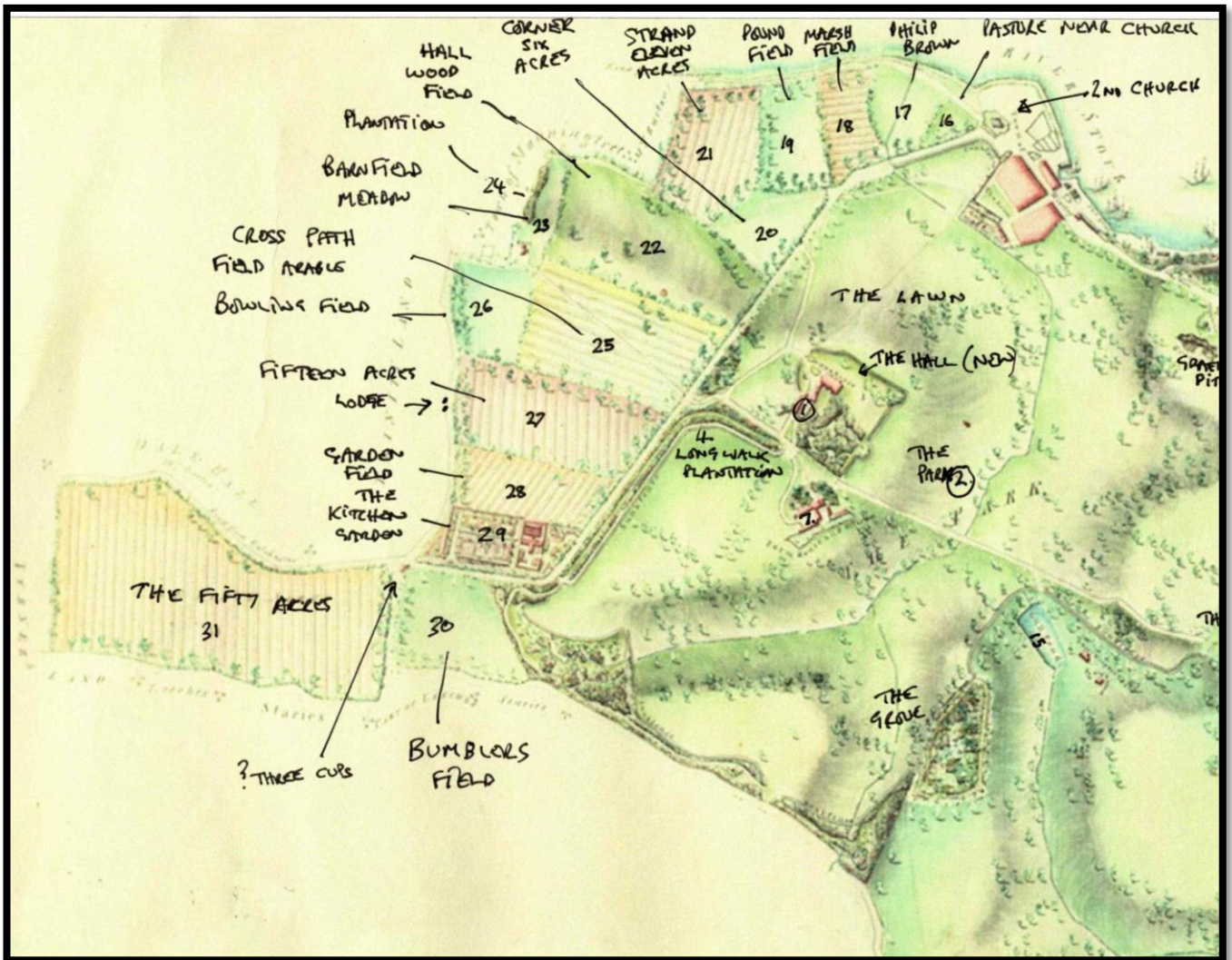


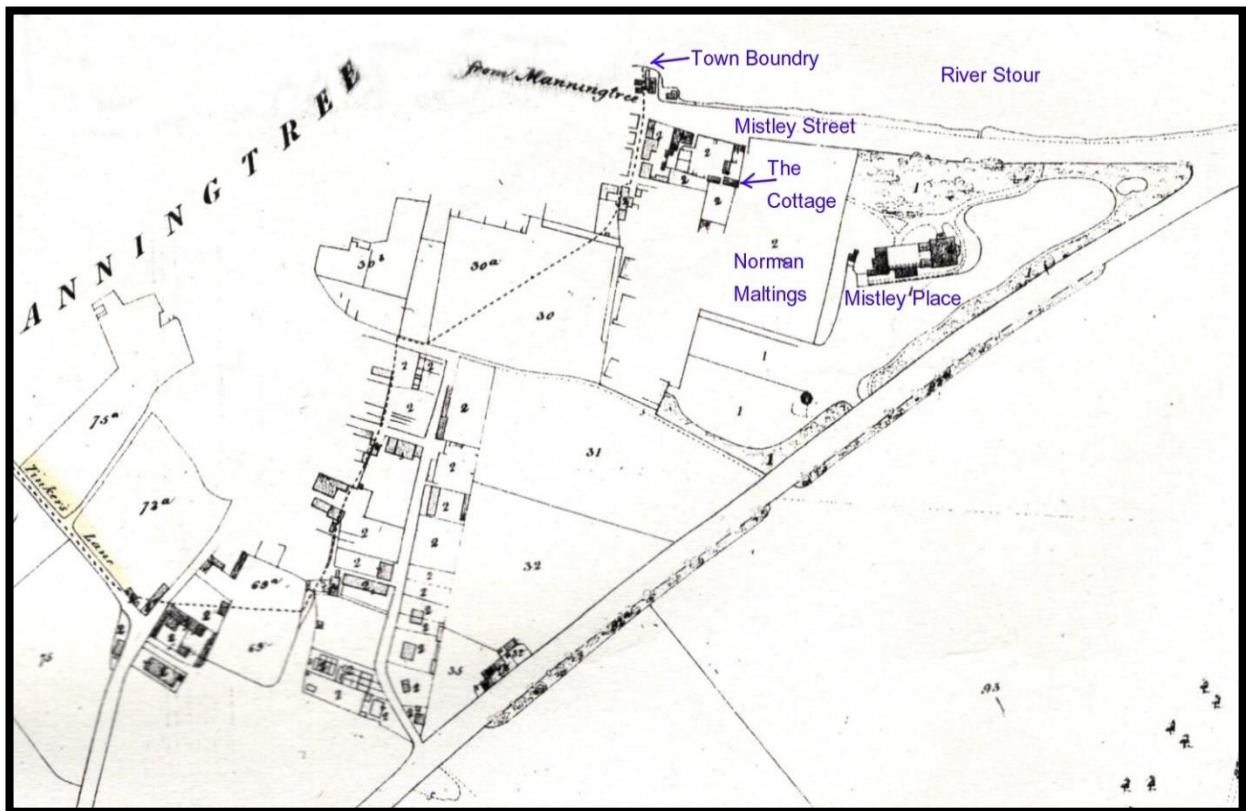
# History of The Foreman's House.

## The Walls, Mistley Street & The Strand.

Mistley Hall Estate Survey 1778 – with field names



There were several properties squashed in between Mistley Place, built by the Norman family, their expanding industrial maltings and the Town of Manningtree. One of the largest of these was first recorded as 'The Cottage' with the mystery of why it later became known as The Foreman's house.



The property is near the Mistley/Manningtree boundary (dotted line in the above), the Town being carved out of the Mistley Parish in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century and in ecclesiastical terms remained secondary until the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The boundary was originally a stream that flowed down from springs near to Trinity farm before being cut through by the deep railway cutting that now borders the Town. Some water still flows underground beneath the road at Wherry Corner, the eastern end of the High Street, originally coming out under what is now the sailing club starting hut, before being moved east along The Walls where it can still be heard flowing out into the estuary.

Whilst the Rigby family owned most of Mistley, their survey of 1778 shows this part, was at that time in the possession of Mrs Burton through family inheritance and a number of marriages. After she died her husband and daughter in 1779 sold most of their holdings to Richard (2<sup>nd</sup>) Rigby, including a three acre plot called the 'Teynterfield' (Tainterfield/Tenterfield) then occupied by John Banks. On the northern side this ran along the river and road, and to the south bordered with 'Hall Wood', part of Mistley Hall (now known as Old Hall)

Edward Norman at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was taking over the business interests of his father Thomas and renting and leasing land for his growing maltings industry on Mistley quay, alongside his shipping interests particularly the import of coal. Starting with four, in 1806 Edward built a complex of eight maltings on the eastern part of 'Teynterfield', leased from Col. Hale-Rigby. To the east of this, on part of the 'Strand Eleven acres', he also leased a plot on which to build a large house for his growing family. This was however after Rigby had sliced through the field to create 'New Road' to take traffic away from Mistley Hall. The road first ran straight down the hill to the river, joining well to the West of Hopping bridge. This created only a small triangle of land on which Edward Norman could build Mistley Place. In 1808 he also purchased Pound Field which was next door across the road further east but was not allowed to use it for any industrial buildings. It took some years to



complete the house alongside the construction of the maltings, but according to the family bible he finally moved in during July 1819. Before this Edward Norman may have lived within the cluster of housing built between the maltings and the Town where 'The Cottage' was to be found.

As part of the development of Mistley Place, at some stage a boundary wall was constructed along the turnpike road to Harwich, previously known as 'The Strand', In some later census records called 'Mistley Street', this may have been the source for the modern name 'The Walls'. The wall may have been extended to enclose Pound field, making it even a longer feature with a wide gault/white brick entrance to Mistley Place where the entrance to Kiln Lane now is. There was a second entrance/exit further along as shown in the maps (see above and below).

When the Rigby estate was finally put up for auction in 1844/5 Edward Norman was able to buy up the freehold of large parts including the house and maltings he already occupied, all of which became known fittingly as Lower Park. He then had the course of New Road re-routed half way down to provide space for a new pleasure garden to the east of Mistley Place, running all the way up to the Church (Towers).

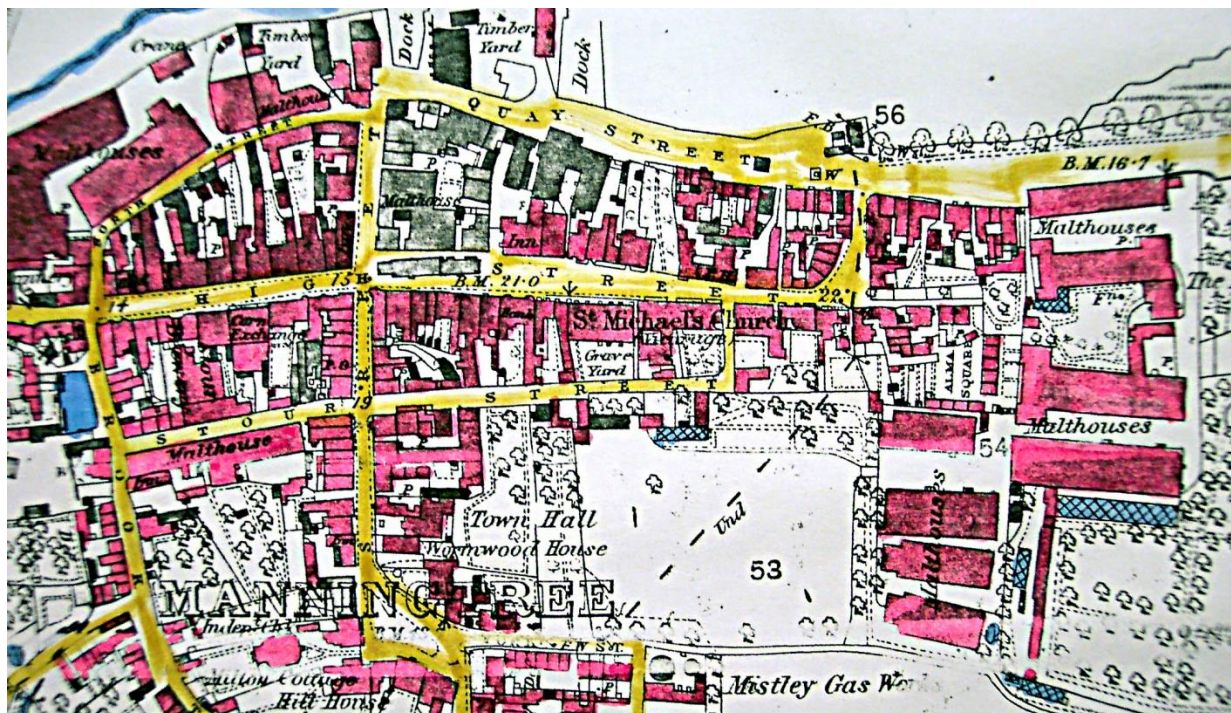
The earliest map is the 1843 Tithe map (above) for Mistley showing some of the residential properties, but not the Maltings, all clearly at that stage within the Mistley Parish boundary.



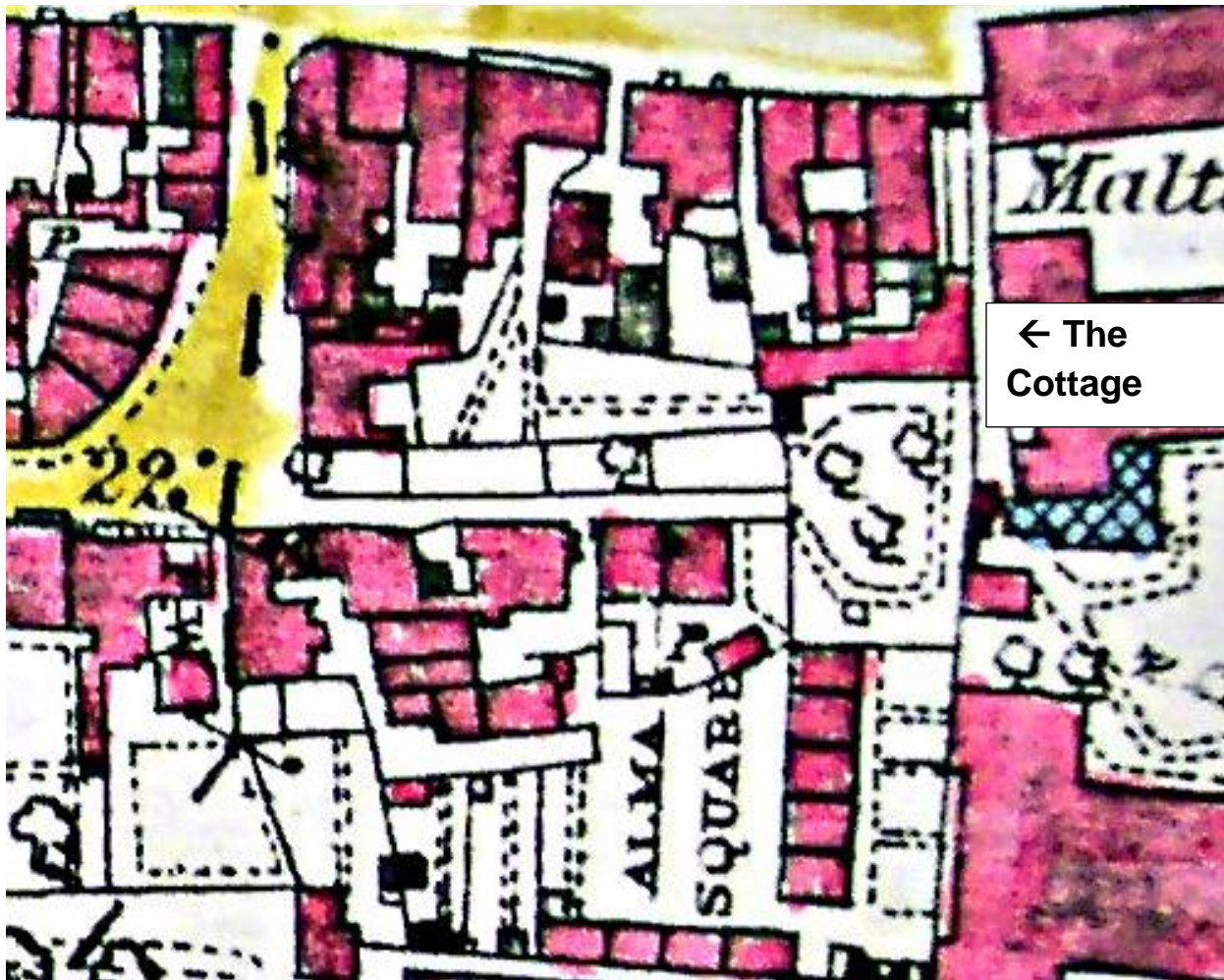
The 1854 survey map( above) for the railway route to Harwich shows Mistley Place, eight Norman Maltings and the associated Cottage(s) in place, clustered just to the east of the Town boundary (line of dot and dash) and still hemmed in by the original course of New Road.



The 1871 Census has William Brooks and large family living in The Maltings. He is listed as both a Maltster and ship owner. His son Robert is still living at home and has taken the profession of Surveyor and architect. He is a widower supported by his sister in law. *The Cottage* is occupied by William Brooks the younger (26 years) Ann Hilton and their two sons William H H Brooks and Joseph B Brooks just 3 months old. Father is a merchant employing 16 men. They have a cook domestic and a Nurse Maid for the baby.



The first detailed OS map of 1897 shows 'The Cottage' already in its dog leg form, with a large open area of garden and direct access to both Manningtree High Street and into the middle of the Malthouse complex.



The 1901 Census of Mistley in sequence records Mistley Place, occupied by Charles F Norman, family and staff. Then Robert Brooks living at 'The Maltings'. William Brooks (& Sons) originally worked for the Normans and gradually took over the running of the maltings, was bequeathed parts of the business in 1863 and may have purchased other properties becoming very successful in his own right as Brooks maltings and animal feed producer. On the census, then came 'Malting Cottage' occupied by George Reason and family who is listed employed as a Maltster and a '**Foreman**'. It is not clear exactly where this was.



Next is 'The Cottage' occupied though by James Sadler. He came originally from

Colchester and was a Patent Leather manufacturer or Currier and an employer. He had before run a boot and shoe warehouse in the High Street and later ran a compressed leather works in Station Road, Lawford. This likely the tannery or Leather factory



by the sea wall where Rose builders are now based. James Sadler had before lived on South Hill and New Road with his daughter who worked with him and also taught Music. The two of them had by 1908 moved off to Billericay and did well there – so may have lived in the larger premises of 'The Cottage' in the period around 1901.

The 1901 list then runs on through eight other houses along 'The Walls' before reaching Russell house, Alma Cut (also known as Cow alley) and Alma Square. No mention at that time is made of English House or Terrace.

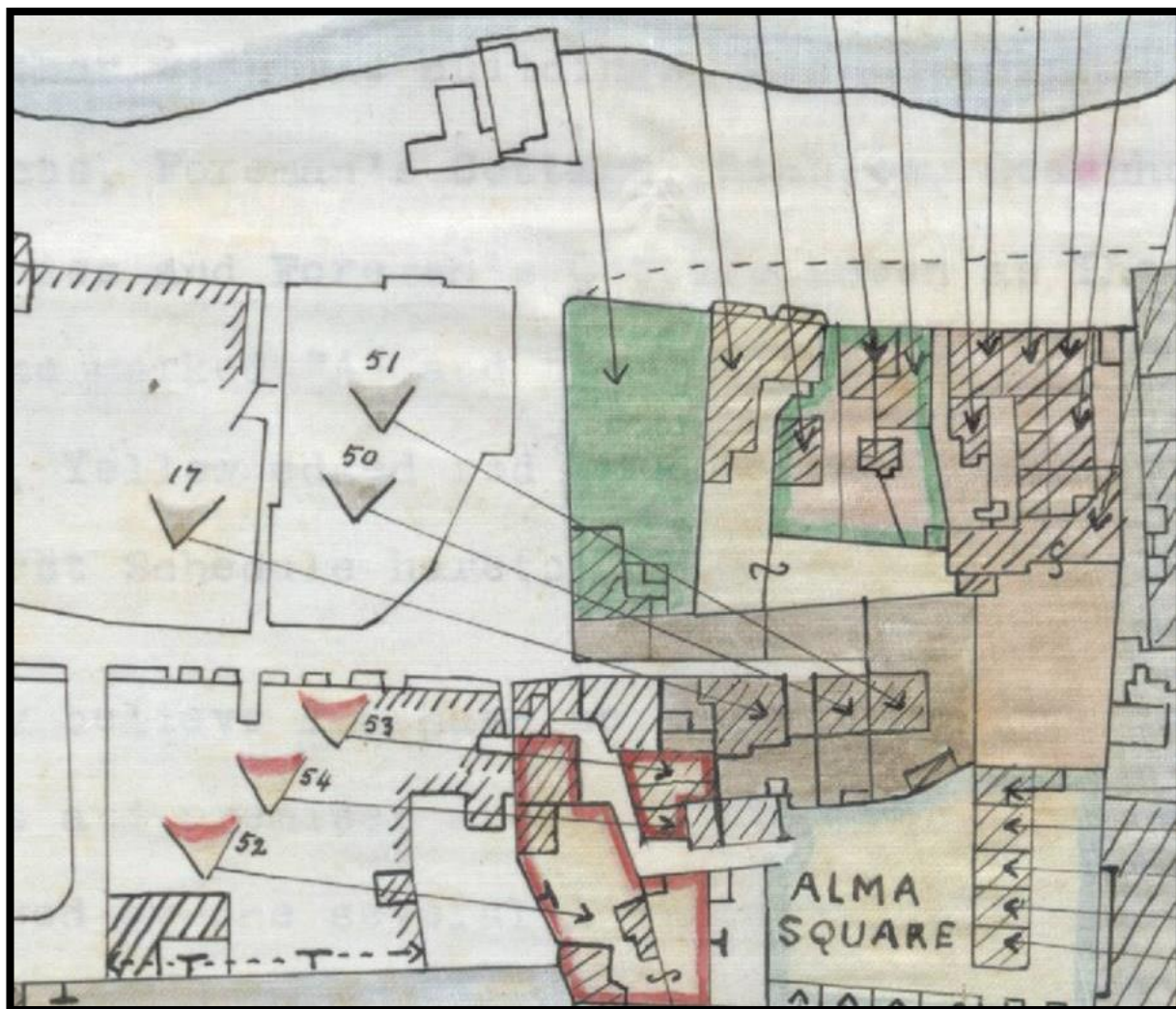
Charles Fredrick Norman (Rev) of Mistle Place, in 1902 then rents out what was called 'The Cottage' to Esther Lundy, the wife of Louis Francis Lundy a physician and surgeon from Ireland. This included a garden and other outbuildings. This is assuming it was the same property that Sadler had used and by then vacated.

It is not obvious why Esther signed the tenancy, as her husband was still alive and running a medical practice in the Town. They had up to that point been living in Manningtree High Street (1901), Louis having joined the local masons in 1900.

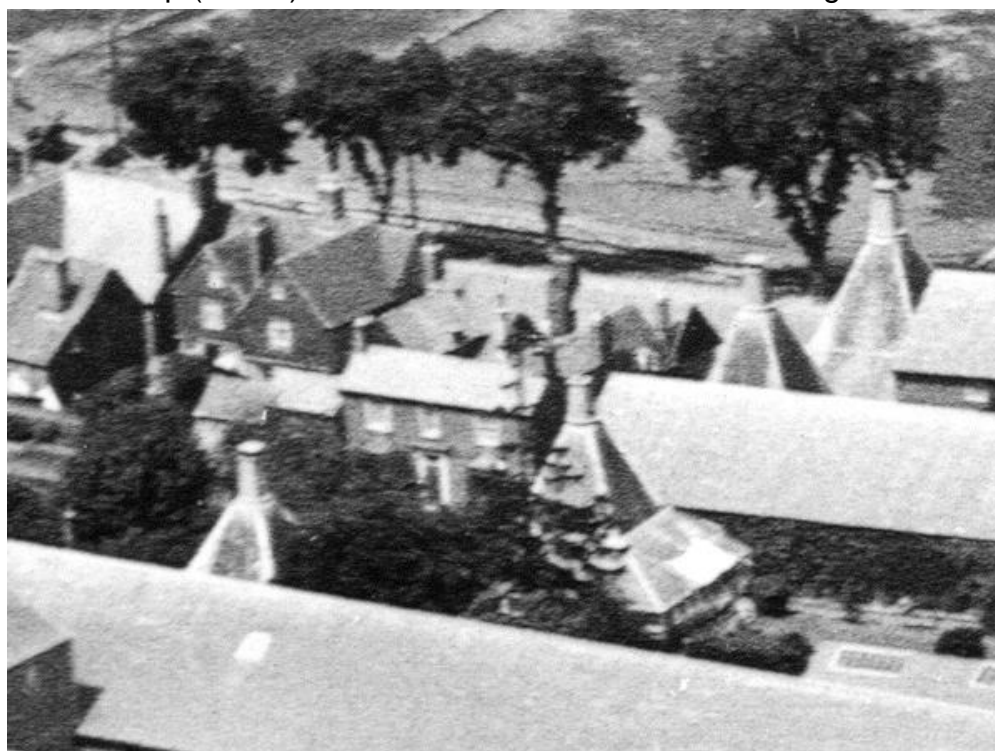
At the 1911 census they are recorded as in Mistle parish, next to the Maltings, whist the Foreman George Reason and his growing family are still next door living in 'The Maltings' and Robert Brooks is similarly listed at the Mistle Maltings. A number of houses are again listed along 'The Walls' before North House, occupied by a Solicitors Clerk, and Russell House on Wherry Corner. Next, still in Mistle, are three households recorded as all being in the old 'Life boat' pub just on The Walls/ High Street. There is again no mention of English House or Terrace.

In 1916 a group of properties next to the maltings are detailed in a sale by the Norman Family to Charles Norman Brooks (from Mistle but by then living in Dovercourt with his wife Gertrude) who was a descendent of the Brooks family mentioned earlier. The sale included Russell House, Wherry Cottage and 3 & 4 'The Walls'. Also 1 & 2 English Terrace on Lifeboat Lane which led up past English House to 'The Cottage' which was also included along with a large garden to the south of the property. Whether the pub was

named after a life boat station or the lane after the pub, is not clear. Cow Alley led separately through to Alma Square, also included. Ellen English a spinster, Junior School teacher, had for many years been living close by, in what may then have become known as English House, perhaps giving rise to the name English Terrace.



The sale map (above) also shows a number of houses filling in the front of The Cottage on the river side.



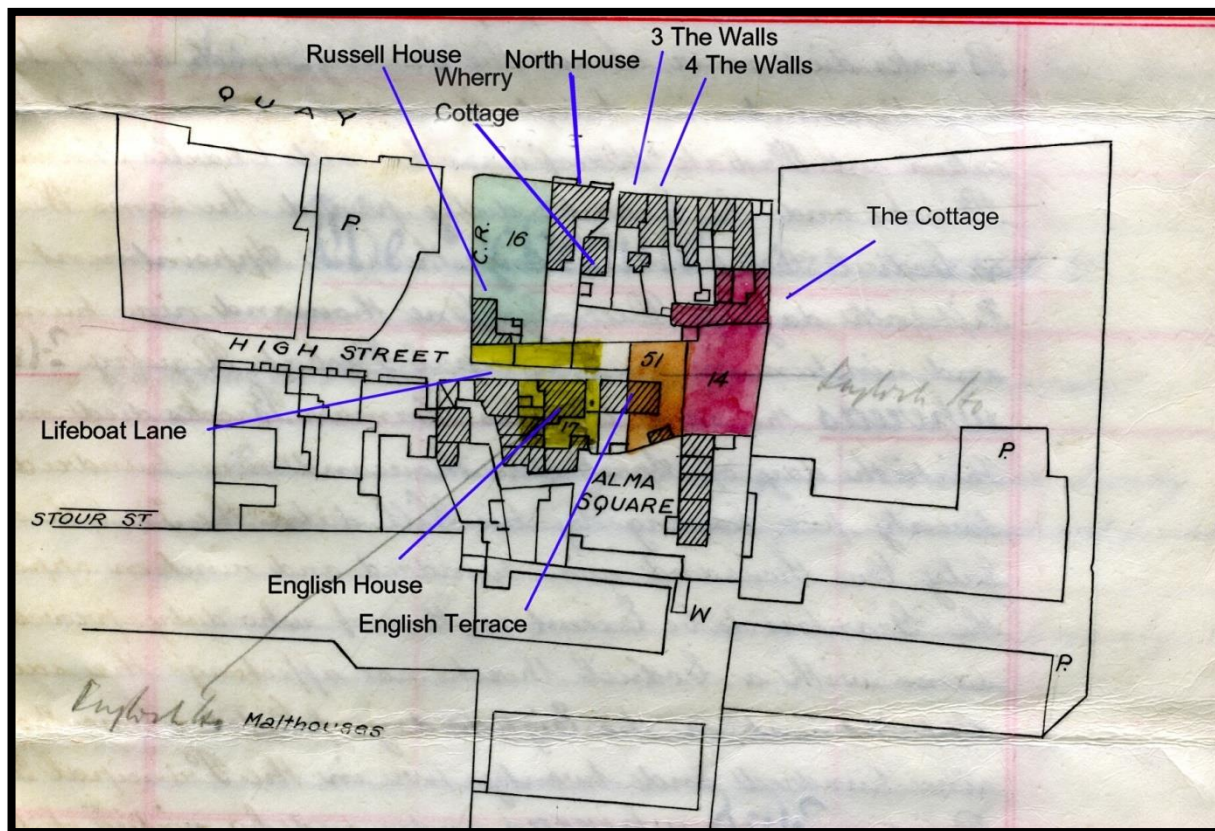
This all confirms that the house fronted on to the lane on the south side.

Image (left) of The Cottage, from 1926.

After the death of her husband Charles, Gertrude Brooks passed these properties on to



the new Brooks (of Mistley) Company being run by her son Charles Attfield Brooks, director in 1929. By which time Esther is still living there alone, Dr Louis having died in 1921.



The 1929 conveyance included Russell House, 2 English Terrace, again detailed on Lifeboat Lane, and also English House whose tenant was now one Edward Bush. He had in 1911 been living in South Street Manningtree but at some point moved into English House and then 'The Cottage' where he is still living at the point when the 1939 registration of the population takes place in the run up to WW2. He was a single man who worked for Brooks Maltings, which had by then diversified into producing cattle feed on Mistley Quay, he was company secretary. It is likely that he was renting 'The Cottage' off his employers and working in the offices (corner of Kiln Lane) and nearby Maltings. He was doing well enough to have a live in housekeeper, Verna Poole.

Mistley Place had by then been sold to the Jackson family who had originally been forced to move their school there at the outbreak of WW1 and were again evacuated during WW2, after which Brooks bought the House/ school and used it for offices, a social centre and for a short period staff accommodation.

There was then still no sign of a 'Foreman' in 'The Cottage'. George Reason had died in 1935 and his wife Emily continued to live at one of the other properties on 'The Walls' until her death in 1946.

Running from Wherry Corner in the west (the Wherry pub first recorded in 1797, long gone by 1878 but perhaps situated on the corner where the electric substation now sits in the garden of Russell House) were North House (No 1 -The Walls and now an Art gallery) then an alley leading to Wherry Cottage at the rear, then numbers 3 and 4 the Walls, still standing and listed grade ii. All three properties are thought to be 18<sup>th</sup> Century, (with Russell house coming later in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century).



As from early on, further along the road front was a terrace of three houses (two closest to Manningtree had one window the third with two. (For reference 5, 6 & 7 ?8) With two other detached houses behind and in between the terrace and 'The Cottage'.



Image from 1950 (left) shows that some form of entranceway is in place to the north of 'The Cottage' to give direct access to 'The Walls' using the door in the two story extension. Perhaps originally a back door.



1950 (Above)

1956 (below)



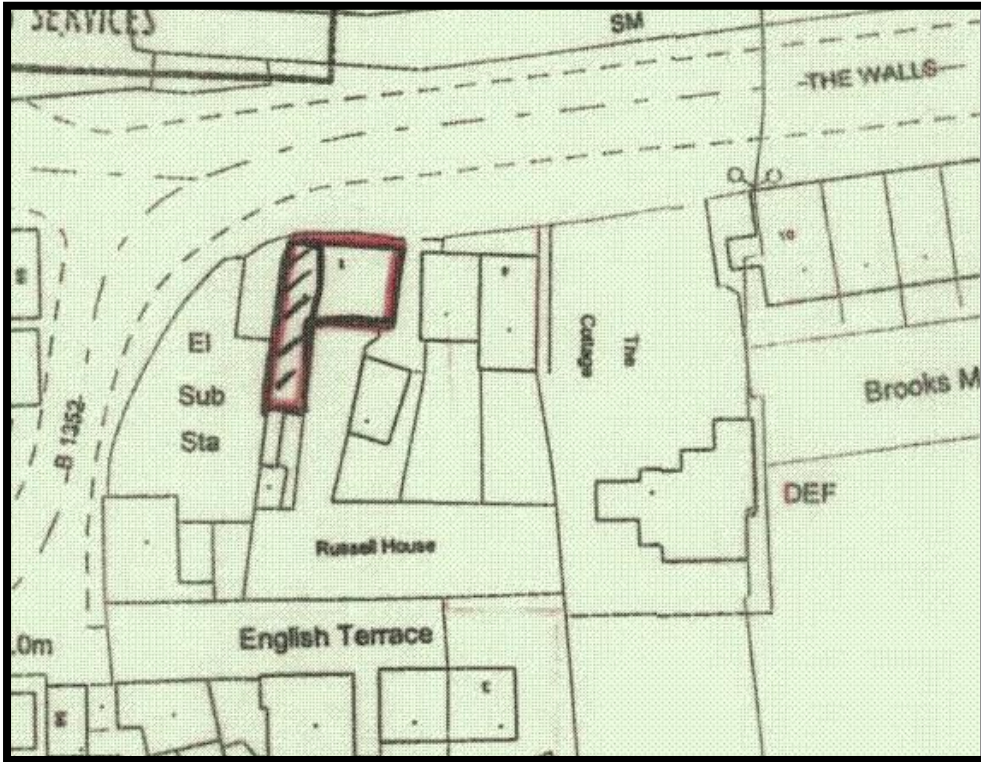




Image of the old terrace (above) from Nigel Klammer. By 1974 the kiln tower (with square louvered cupola) next to 'The Cottage' and one facing onto the main road had been taken down and the terrace fronting onto the road had also been demolished. The area was later used by the Stour Sailing club for dinghy storage (1977) still in the possession of the Brooks family who were still leading members.







On the 2001 OS map (left) used for planning permissions at No 1 The Walls, (North House) shows the house is still recorded as 'The Cottage', but having lost the south garden.

So a bit of a mystery why it became known and called later the Foreman's Cottage. When the Sailing club

started using it in 1977, it was already known locally thus. One possibility is that one of the houses or terraces that stood in-between 'The Cottage' and the road was in fact the home of one of the many foreman, if not George Reason, so the name was more from the curtilage than the house.



Philip Cunningham

**Manningtree Museum & Local History Group.**

**April 2024.**



Mistley Hall Estate Survey 1778  
(Richard Rigby II)

