

## **A POTTED HISTORY OF THE FERRY BOAT INN**

**1591** Inn documented as originally part of the estate buildings attached to North Fambridge manor which Queen Elizabeth I granted to Christopher Osborne, MP for Helston.

### **1590s The Infamous Ferry Boat Crossing**

Captain Thomas Cammock and Frances Riche of Leeze and Rochford courting in secret, agreed to flee her parent's disapproval by riding off towards South Fambridge to take the ferry boat to Maldon. With her father on their heels, they reached the bank of the River Crouch to find the ferry on the other side. On horseback, the lovers entered the dark and stormy water, struggling against the tide. On reaching halfway, a servant in hot pursuit arrived at the bank and his horse whinnied, on hearing it Cammock's horse tried to turn back and with great difficulty the lovers prevented it from returning. They reached the north bank and rode on to Maldon. On seeing the strength of their love Lord Riche accepted the union.

**1594** Thomas Osborne, gentleman of North Fambridge, assigned the residue of a 21 year lease to John Bastwick from Writtle. This comprised of part of the land called 'the Ferry howse of Northfambridge, and the ferry called 'Northfambridge ferry'.

**1596** John Bastwick, a yeoman (farmer) of Burnham, referred to "my lands in North Fambridge and a tenement called the Ferry House, with passage, lands and boats thereto belonging called Fambridge Ferry."

**1750** Glanfield, of Essendon, and Miller and White, both yeomen of North Fambridge, purchase the freehold for £425 5s which included a range of assets such as two messuages (properties), two tofts (homes), two orchards, 30 acres of land, 20 acres of pasture and the 'Fambridge ferry'.

### **Mid 1700s The sad story of Witchy Dame**

A male and female resident of Rochford were suspected of witchcraft in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century and subjected to trial by water. Suspicions were raised after tales of a woman floating on top of the rough waves, and appearing in gardens with a large white-headed poppy. After relentless persecution from older neighbours, the couple were taken to the river at the North Fambridge ferry crossing, tied to a boat and dragged into the river. The male was judged to be innocent once he had almost drowned. The female floated which, to the belief of a crowd spectators, proved her guilt. She was sentenced to death.



**1807** An estate in North Fambridge called 'Derriwells and Hemmens' (or Hemmings), including approx. 52 acres of "excellent sound corn land", auctioned in 1807 with buildings including "a very good, substantial Public House, in excellent repair, known by the sign of the Ferry Boat and Punch Bowl, and ... now in full trade".

The 'Ferry Farm' or 'Ferry House' was already operating as an inn, despite being described only as 'Ferry Farm' in the 1840 Tithe Award.

**1813** North Fambridge is now a small parish of 11 houses and 86 inhabitants.

**1832** Thomas Curd, alias Jones, a "notorious horse stealer", stole a valuable mare from "Mr. Palmer of Fambridge Ferry" in June 1831, eventually apprehended the following August. Fleeing into woodland near Sevenoaks Weald, Kent, whilst being transported to gaol. *Essex Standard*, 25/8/1832

**1834** William Palmer of the Ferry Boat, was fined 40 shillings and 10s 6d expenses for serving alcohol on a Sunday. *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 26/7/1834.

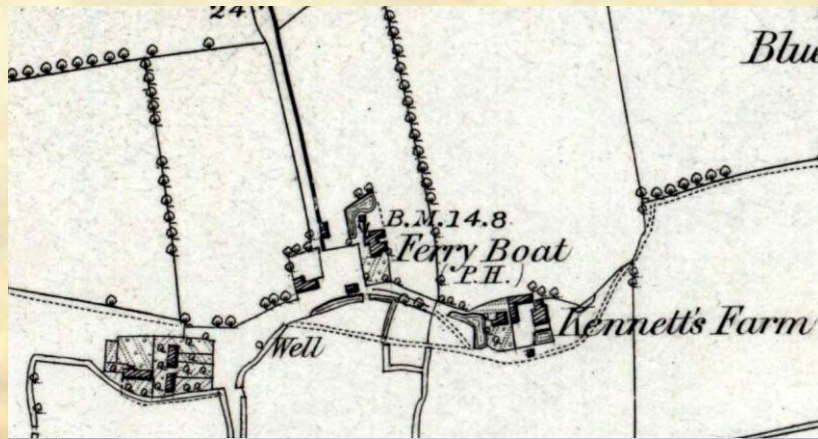
**1840** The North Fambridge estate and manor were put up for sale which would have included the ferry and inn. (*Essex Standard* 4/8/1840). A year later, William Palmer is recorded as running a public house known as the "Ferry Boat". He and his wife and three young children and four servants. It was later noted that Palmer had five children and he was also a farmer. All told, the Palmer had been in occupation for over 150 years until the licence was transferred in 1888.

**1850** Thomas Pawsey, a labourer, stole Palmer's pony after drinking with him at the Inn. Palmer found the pony in Saffron Walden a fortnight later and several witnesses testified that they had seen Pawsey with the pony, muddy and injured. Because of previous good character, Pawsey's sentence was reduced from transportation to 12 months' hard labour, the first and last week spent in solitude. - *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 3-1-1851

**1861** D. W. Collier's *The People's History of Essex (Meggy and Chalk, Chelmsford, 1861, pages 448-9)* records that there was once a bridge spanning the River Crouch and gave its name to the parish, but "it disappeared long ago."

**1873** The first Ordnance Survey mapping North Fambridge shows the "Ferry Boat (P.H.)





Ordnance Survey, Essex LXII, surveyed 1873-74 (National Library of Scotland)

**1894** The Ferry Boat Inn becomes HQ for the newly established Fambridge Sailing Club, set up by a group of yachtsmen, quickly gaining “a large number of influential members” with plans for their first regatta.

**1897** Frederick H. Bedford, landlord of the Ferry Boat Inn, summoned before the Bench for being drunk whilst in charge of a horse and cart, but failed to appear. Later found by witnesses at Burnham-on-Crouch, sitting in the cart “very drunk indeed”. A farmer woke him, whereupon Bedford “sat up, struck the pony, and went galloping off towards Burnham.” Bedford was fined £2 16s. – *Chelmsford Chronicle*, 3/12/1897

**1898** Bedford faces an action against a Maldon auctioneer to recover a debt of £3 17s 6d. Bedford failed to appear in court and subsequently, due to losing a pocket book containing his licence, he was temporarily removed from the Ferry Boat Inn.

**1899** Edwin Longstaffe, from Rotherham, became the innkeeper and lived with his wife, Lottie, 5 children and niece.

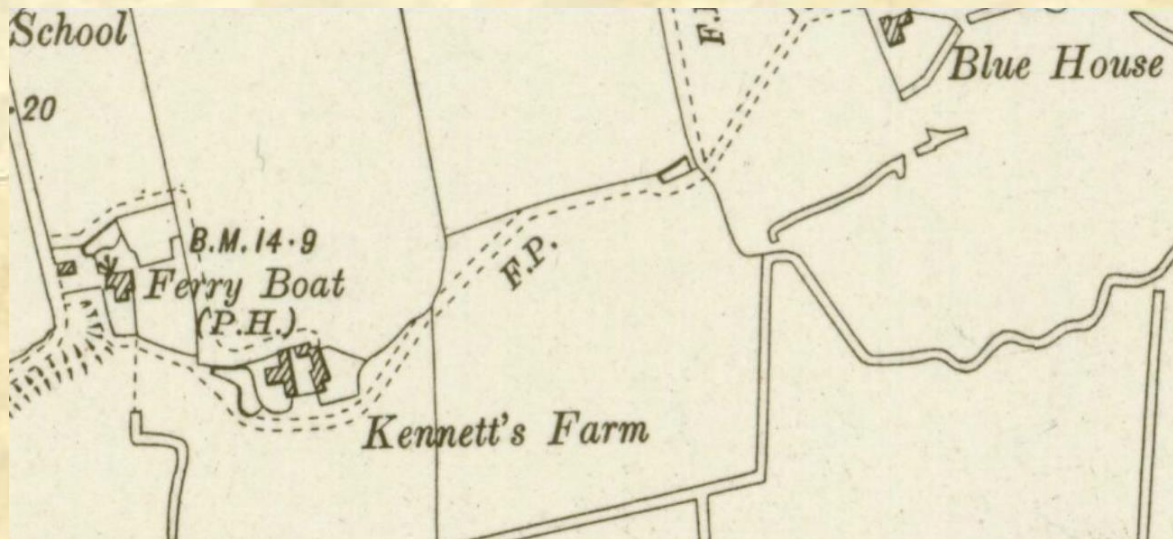
**1902** Longstaffe was charged with having a dangerous dog after a report from a labourer claiming to have been bitten and had obtained injuries on his thigh.

**1904** Herbert W. Tompkins’ book *Marsh-Country Rambles* (Chatto & Windus, 1904) paints an idyllic picture of the scenery surrounding the Ferry Boat Inn:

*“...I rambled once again as far as to the ferry, pleased beyond expectation with every aspect of this picturesque country: the craft upon the winding waters of the Crouch; the smell of the weed upon the ooze at low water; the boatmen, in their blue jerseys, loitering outside the Ferry-Boat Inn and the Yacht Club; the diversified scenery of the opposite prospect, sloping upwards to the south...At North Fambridge, even to-day, the sentimental traveller will find himself as wholly out of touch with the ‘herd’ as heart can wish.”*

**1911** Now under the licence of George B. Osborne of Burnham-on-Crouch (*Chelmsford Chronicle*, 13/3/1903), the pub is reported to have “six principal rooms”. That year, the “freehold, fully-licenses house, the Ferry Boat, North Fambridge” was put up for sale and purchased by London & Burton Brewing Co. Ltd for £1700 (*Chelmsford Chronicle*, 13/10/1911).





1920 revision of the Ordnance Survey map

**1943** When war put a stop to yachting William Foyle, MD of famous Foyle's Bookshop (the largest in London at the time) spent his weekends at the Ferry Boat Inn, sometimes accompanied by his daughter, Miss Christine Foyle, infamous for her pre-war literary luncheons (which continue to this day!).

**1977** In an article in the Essex Countryside (Vol 25, No 247, August 1977), the Ferry Boat Inn is described as a "rambling, weather-boarded hostelry" on the edge of the River Crouch's salt marshes. It described the pub being popular with yachtsmen, although the ferry service to South Fambridge had "ceased several years ago". Landlords Dave and Wendy Farley are credited with taking "great pains in restoring the picturesque interior" including a log fire, antique beams and pin panelled bar.

**1981** The Ferry Boat was taken over by Violet and Bill Noyce who began cooking fresh food and expanded the pub's dining offering.

**1986** The inn was added to the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest at Grade II on 30<sup>th</sup> May, described as an 18<sup>th</sup> century building with 19<sup>th</sup> century additions. Although evidence suggests that much of the existing timber framing either survives from, or was recycled from, a late medieval building, possibly the original 'Ferry House'.

**2012** After 31 years of ownership by the Noyce/Fassenfelt family, Yacht Havens Group, who own and operate Fambridge Yacht Haven, proudly take over the Ferry Boat Inn.

**2021** The team are thrilled to reopen the doors to the public, excited to share this renovated and extended version of The Ferry Boat Inn.