Report on the Waterside Area at Brentford, Hounslow

by Susie Barson

Historical Analysis & Research Team

Reports and Papers 26

2000



Contents

1.	Nature of Request	<i>3</i> 4
2.	Historical Background	4 4
3.	The Coming of the Canal	5
4.	The Case for Conservation Area Designation	7
5.	Taking Stock of Locks and Docks, Wharves and Warehouses	10
6.	Maps, illustrations and sources	
	Historical Illustrations	
1	View of Brentford c.1850	ı t
1. 2.	Views of The White Horse, 1911, 1966	12.
3.	Brentford Lock, various views 1906 -1983	13-18
3. 4.	Grand Junction Wharf, pre 1960	19
4. 5.	Three views from <i>Brentford As It Was</i> (1983)	20-22
5. 6.	Bradbury's warehouse in use, from Edwardian Industries	23
0.	bradoury 5 wateriouse in ase, from barrarate reasonnes	
	Photographs	
1.	The Beehive Public House	24
2.	The former Boatmen's Institute	25
3.	The White Horse Public House	26
4.	The Brewery Tap Public House exterior	27
	The Brewery Tap interiors	28
5.	The Bradbury warehouse	29
6.	Corporation Sewage Works exterior and interior	30
7.	Engineer's cottage and base of chimney	31
8.	Views of Brentford Lock	32
9.	Detail of the toll house and swing bridge	33
10.	Underwoods hay and straw warehouse and setts in Dock Road	34
11.	GWR railway bridge	35
12.	Thames Lock	36
13	Clitherow Lock	37

Nature of Request

Sarah Harper, Historic Buildings Adviser in the London Region, North West team, has asked HART for some historical information to underpin her proposal to designate part of Brentford in Hounslow, a conservation area. This report comprises a brief history of the area, the case for designation, and an itinerary of buildings or structures of historic or architectural interest, some of which are under consideration for listing. Maps and photographs are appended

Origin of Request:

Sarah Harper (Central and North West London Team)

Date of Request: Date of Report: February 2000 12 April 2000

File Number:

Hounslow 105

Brief History of South Brentford

The area under consideration for conservation area designation lies mostly south of Brentford High Street, between Brentford Bridge at the west end of the High Street and as far east as the Waterman's Arts Centre. It includes Brentford Lock and the canalside north of the lock; and south as far as Thames Lock and the Mooring Basin. It adjoins The Butts Conservation Area, St Paul's Brentford Conservation Area and Isleworth Riverside Conservation Area. It is characterised chiefly by the a number of waterways snaking around the perimeter: the River Brent to the west, which runs parallel to the Grand Union Canal, and the Thames flowing broadly along the south-western edge, dividing Brentford from the Royal Gardens at Kew.

From the late first century A.D. Brentford was a settlement on the road from London to the west. By 1635 buildings lined both sides of the High Street as far east as modern Kew Bridge. South of the High Street the whole riverside was lined by wharfs. They were reached by narrow passages such as Smith Hill, Ferry Lane and Spring Gardens, lined with cottages and inns. The surrounding fields were enclosed and built on piecemeal. By 1770 Brentford was populated chiefly by poor fishermen and watermen. Most inhabitants in this area lived in weather-boarded cottages crammed in yards and alleys. At the end of the eighteenth century there was an expansion of grain-based industries as well as clay and gravel-digging, lime-burning, and the establishment of potteries, brick and tile works, and breweries; more cottages were put up to house the potters and labourers. This piecemeal, small-scale development continued into the nineteenth century as new industries, the gas works and the Grand Junction waterworks, grew from the 1820s.

The Coming of the Canal

An Act of Parliament was passed in 1793 to build a canal to link Brentford with Braunston on the Oxford canal, 93 miles away. The line of the canal was cut through Ham Common straightening the river course. The canal was soon bustling with activity as barges brought coal and timber, and narrow boats were drawn by horses along the towing paths at the Ham. At this time a survey was made of the parish of Brentford in order to decide the best way to assess the Church rates. David A. Sharren has made a recent study of the vestry minutes of St Lawrence's chuch, Brentford, and his notes give an idea of the character and topography of the south Brentford area at the end of the eighteenth century:

The Ham was a litter of small buildings and cottages, warehouses, coal sheds, stables, carthouses, and pigsties, ending with Black Boy's ale-house adjoining the church yard. Then came a large house held jointly by a cheese-monger William Prince and William Ward. After that the estate forfeited to the Lord when George Caswell had been executed for murder in 1692. Next came the Pye or Magpie, with a yard and malthouses, followed by a yard and wharf with an adjoining block of apartments fashioned out of the disused Plough tavern. Next door lived John Jullion the clockmaker, adjoining the Rose and Crown, a new alehouse built on the site of the old Wolf. Then came Catherine Wheel Yard and the last house in New Brentford, a tenement and public house called The Still, and several other tenements down the yard called the Still Yard with a wharf at the bottom.' ²

The area was alive with industrial and commercial activity for about 150 years between the begining of the nineteenth century to just beyond the middle of the twentieth. This industry arose because of its position on the confluence of the rivers Brent and the Thames that made it an obvious place to connect with later man-made transport links, the canal (from 1794) and the Great Western Railway (from 1849). During those 150 years the small, single- storey tanneries, cottages and brick kilns were replaced by timber yards and taller maltings, breweries and distilleries with prominent chimneys. A well known example the Grand Junction Brewery established around the Catherine Wheel Yard, from 1826. Later in the century, buildings associated with the

¹ Victoria County History for Middlesex, vol.7 p.100ff

² David A. Sharren *Vestry Minutes of St Lawrence, New Brentford* c.1998 p.38. Located at Chiswick Local History Library.

brewing industry were in turn replaced by wharfage and warehousing of expanding businesses carrying goods such as timber, coal, malt, grain and hay, by boat and rail. Brewers Fuller, Smith and Turner bought the remaining independent breweries and sold off the premises; only the Royal Brewery survived until 1923.³

Soap-making was long established in this region, and by the early nineteenth century Brentford was the major centre for hard soap in the area. T.B. Rowe and Company's soap works occupied a large site between Ferry Lane, Town Meadow and the Thames in 1888. The factory closed in 1933. The Thames Soap works expanded here throughout much of the century before being acquired by Lever Brothers in 1916. The town's largest industry, its gas works, was located from the late 1820s just east of this area, near Kew Bridge. It closed in 1964 and the site is due for redevelopment (April 2000).

The social make-up of the area throughout the nineteenth century was solid working class. Conditions were overcrowded, with little sanitation until the end of the nineteenth century, and a reputation for crime and drunkeness in the area was widespread.

The railways effectively ended Brentford's days as a coaching town. The London and South Western Railway's Hounslow loop line was opened in 1849, when Brentford's first station was opened. The Great Western and Brentford branch line opened in 1859, and was principally a freight line, carrying much of the goods that had previously been water-borne. An area of land south of the canal, just before it joins the Thames, had been purchased from a timber merchant called James Montgomery, who also gave his name to one of the wharves. Here Brunel designed a covered dock where goods could be transhipped between railway and river, so providing a link between the GWR and the Port of London. Brunel's wooden docks were destroyed by fire in 1920 and replaced in 1923 by a steel and iron structure. This survived until 1964, but the area once covered by railway sidings was developed by the GLC Architects Department to create the Tiber housing estate. The development is wrapped around the former dock, the widest part of which was retained filled with water, and the narrowest part infilled. Some brick arches on the retaining walls were also incorporated. The housing estate is pleasant and well-designed, but it is not included within the proposed conservation area.

Thomas Faulkner, an early historian of Brentford, wrote in 1845:

The High Street, in its course eastward is lined along the north side with shops and private warehouses, and on the south side are situated the great wharfs and manufactories of the town. 4

But the once heavily industrial character of the area of the mid- to late- nineteenth century has largely gone, leaving the sense of reversion to the dominance of the waterways themselves. The seventeenth-century fabric of the wharves marked on Moses Glover's map of *New Brayneford* of 1663 has been replaced with concrete, but the pattern of the winding of the River Brent and the course of the late eighteenth century canal hugging the backlands of Brentford survives. The ways running southwards down from the High Street towards the water have been reduced in number and eroded in form and definition in recent years; nevertheless some significant views and routes through to the water still survive: Catherine Wheel Road, Dock Road, Pump Alley and Ferry Lane.

The Case for Conservation Area Designation

If much has been lost, much yet remains. The sense of place of this water-dominated area of London is powerful and unique; no longer smelly, industrious and densely populated, but open, calm, tranquil, picturesque and romantic. Its character eludes tight definition but lies somewhere between urban, rural and industrial. Many people still live and work on boats and barges in this area of low lying land, land covered with light vegetation and scattered with modest boat repair yards and sheds, still in use. The presence of the working and leisure narrow boats and barges, is a strong and positive contribution to the riparian character of this part of

³ R.Canham 2000 Years of Brentford 1978 pp 8 and 9

⁴ Thomas Faulkner History of Brentford, Ealing and Chiswick 1845 p.162

Brentford. Too many waterside areas of London have been sanitised; one has only to think of the recent developments at Docklands. The spirit of historic Brentford, with its modest low-tech industries still carrying on behind the High Street frontage, and the remaining wharves and boat-building yards, has survived this far but is fragile and vulnerable.

Designation of a conservation area cannot but help those who wish to preserve the special character here, (and there are many local people who care about it very much indeed). The aim would be to focus the minds of planning officers at Hounslow Council on the consideration of what is required in terms of use, and what is appropriate in terms of new build (plot size and shape, scale, materials) for this part of Brentford.⁵ The area, a rare junction of historic canal, rail and river infrastructure serving London, deserves this special treatment and consideration before it is too late.

⁵ See: London Borough of Hounslow 1993 Hounslow's Waterside Strategy: River Thames, River Brent, Grand Union Canal.

TAKING STOCK OF LOCKS AND DOCKS, WHARVES AND WAREHOUSES

An itinerary of features of architectural or historical interest in the area south of the High Street Brentford, London Borough of Hounslow.

Currently under consideration for listing:

The Beehive Public House at the corner of High Street and Half Acre, by T.H. Nowell Parr and A. E. Kates, 1907. Beehive-shaped turret, *art nouveau* glass, with blue-green glazed tiles, the pub occupies a prominent position in the High Street. An *art nouveau* grate in the fireplace is the only feature of note inside. A good example of a pub by the surveyor for Brentford from the 1890s, Thomas Henry Nowell Parr. Described in the *Buildings of England* as a 'notable landmark..a small but confident corner pub of much character'.(LONDON NORTH-WEST p.383).

The former Boatman's Institute, The Butts, 1904, also designed by Nowell Parr. This Arts and Crafts-inspired building with a roughcast upper storey and battered buttresses aimed to provide basic education religious instruction and a maternity room for the boat people. The hall was on the ground floor with residential accommodation above. The building is now a private house and there may be little left of the interior, but it is of considerable historic interest.

The White Horse Public House, 24 Market Place

Licensed in 1603, the White Horse building dates from the 18th century, once adjacent to its own malthouse. It has had small alterations on the exterior: a corner entrance created; the lower windows and roof renewed. Needs an interior inspection.

The Waterman's Arms Public House, Ferry Lane

Remnants of an earlier building c.1790 can be seen on the exterior flank wall; the front is Edwardian and is almost certainly by Thomas Henry Nowell Parr: mock Tudor above the ground floor with his hall mark, Doulton glazed tiles and *art nouveau* glass in the windows on the ground floor. Interior not inspected.

Corporation Sewage Works, Pump Alley.

Brentford Sewage Pumping Station: engine shed and house, designed by F.W. Lacey, surveyor, 1883. Cotto and Beasley were the engineers for the engine shed, but there is no machinery left inside. Base of chimney and associated buildings- shed, supervisor's and engineer's cottages- survive, all of the 1880s.

Nowell Parr added new tanks, and a 'destructor' opposite the engine house, as well as the wall piers and gates at the entrance to the works, in 1897.

Frederick William Lacey (d.1916) lived at 62 High Street Brentford in the 1880s. He had been articled to John Wimble, one of the architects of the Baltic Wharf in the City. Between 1879-1880 he travelled in the United States and studied constructional ironwork. In 1881 he began his practice in Brentford and designed the Post Office, Public Offices, and the Castle Hotel, as well as the 'sludge pressing works.' Sewage sludge could be recycled for manure or brick making as it contained a lot of clay and chalk, and could be made into bricks by clamp and kiln burning.

In 1889 Lacey moved to Bournemouth where he became Borough architect and surveyor. He designed many public buildings there, including another pumping station (survival unknown), a college (II), law courts (II) and a fire station (II) as well as a park and pavilions, and carried out major engineering and drainage projects in the town. He became a Fellow of the RIBA in 1898; and was highly respected at his death in 1916 in Bournemouth (RIBA Journal obituary, vol.23 1916 p.215).

The decorated base of the chimney adjacent to the engine shed is a reminder of the many chimneys that dominated the area in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The station was built at a time when there was a desperate need to improve the sewage system in the metropolitan areas of London, and is of some historic as well as architectural interest.

Brentford Lock:

The Grand Junction Canal (renamed the Grand Union in 1929) was authorised by Act of Parliament in 1793. Its construction between Brentford and Uxbridge dates from 1794, and extended in 1805 to Braunston in Northamptonshire, making it 93 miles long. It carried almost all the trade of transporting coal between London and the Midlands, bringing more trade and industry to an already busy working riverside area. Just north of Brentford Bridge a single lock was constructed in 1794, roughly thirty years after the opening of the pioneering Bridgewater canal, and at the height of the canal building boom; it predates the rebuilding of the London Docks at Wapping and Surrey Docks. It was constructed to the designs of James Barnes, resident engineer under William Jessop, at what was to be the standard size for all the locks along the canal, 14' 6" (4.4m) wide, and 80' (24m) long. It is shown clearly on the tithe map for New Brentford 1839, and the OS map of 1865, with a toll house on the nib of the island dividing the Grand Junction Canal from the River Brent. It is still shown as a single lock on the 1894 O.S. map by which time a dock has been created just to the west of the canal. By 1912 the lock had been widened to take a pair of locks and a new toll house was built. The lock was overhauled in between 1955-58: new locks, ram chambers, gate chambers, sluices and a footbridge was constructed. Between 1959 and 1965 the island was developed as Brentford Depot with new warehouses, offices, and much concrete surfacing. This building activity continued into the 1970s with sheds and warehouses, and garages, carparks.

It would take an expert eye (not mine) to find anything left of the lock fittings or kerbs of the 1790s; I suspect little, if anything, survives. What can be seen today probably dates from the widening of the lock around 1911 or from the late 1950s overhaul, and in spite of its history and strategic importance at the confluence of the Brent and the Thames, may not of sufficient integrity to justify listing.

However, the toll house of 1911 is a neat and complete building with a handsome Westmoreland slate roof and is a good candidate for listing.

British Waterways Depot and Durham Wharf, High St., Brentford: little of historic interest here.

Collier's dock, c.1930 has some granite kerbs to the dock but little else of special historic interest.

Fellows, Morton and Clayton Wet Dock, Grand Junction Wharf, Commerce Road, Brentford: a dock and swingbridge survives dating from between 1865 and 1894, the dock shelter, warehouses and offices have gone.

Clitherow Lock, Transport Avenue: an intact, unaltered lock dated 1866.

Workhouse Dock, Brentway: The basin is marked on the tithe map of 1838 and has become a dock on the first edition O.S. map of 1865. There are two nineteenth century buildings and a working slipway here, but little of special historic interest for listing.

The Brewery Tap Public House, Catherine Wheel Road, Brentford 1928 by C.E.Mallows in vernacular style with mock timber framed interior, relatively unaltered. Local landmark and good candidate for listing.

Bradbury's wholesale grocers warehouse, Brentway c 1870, red brick with white brick arches and iron-framed windows. One of the few industrial buildings left south of the High Street, and a survivor of a much larger complex of buildings belonging to Bradbury's which stretched back from the shop at No 108 High Street down to the Grand Junction Canal. There, stables for delivery horses were built (since demolished). In Brentway, the new road constructed after the war, a plaque marking the boundary of Bradbury's premises is bonded into the wall date 1891.

Underwoods Hay and Straw Warehouse, Dock Road, 1881. Erected in the garden of a listed Georgian house fronting the High Street, this handsome red brick warehouse with three gables incorporates the 18th century garden wall. Edwin Underwood, founder of the firm of Messrs Underwood and Son, had been goods superintendent at Brentford Docks station. His firm were pioneers of importers of hay and staw from 1881, and like Bradbury's, had extensive buildings behind the High Street offices. It became a very large business with many continental offices. Possible candidate for listing as, with Bradbury's warehouse, the last survivors of the

industrial and commercial past of this area of Brentford, south of the High Street.

Dock Road leads to Thames Lock, reconstructed in 1958, and then to Brentford Dock.

Brentford Dock.

Built 1859 to connect the river and canal traffic with the railways Brunel's wooden docks, but which were destroyed by fire in 1920 and replaced in 1923 by a steel and iron structure. The whole area built over in 1965 by the Tiber Housing estate by the GLC Architects department, but retaining some original brick arches and evidence of the docks.

Dock Road, with iron posts and horizontal rail, features reused from the GWR. Grey setts in fan-shaped pattern. Dock Road bridge, altered, leads to the bridge between canal lock and island: footbridge of lattice girder construction made of riveted wrought iron, by Westwood Baillie and Co., engineers and bridge builders of Millwall, London. Larger rectangular setts at southern end.

Catherine Wheel Yard

Buildings on the corner with Town Wharf are shown on the map of 1865; those on the east, opposite The Brewery Tap, date from between 1893 and 1912 (O.S. maps). Not listable.

Town Wharf

Shown on O.S.map of 1865, and formed around an existing natural inlet shown clearly on the tithe map of 1838. The Dock on Johnson's Island post-dates 1912 but is in existence by the time of the publication of the O.S. map of 1935.

Brentford Bridge

Brentford Bridge spans the Brent close to the point at which the Grand Union Canal joins the river. The base of the bridge was built in 1824-5 by Robert Sibley in granite, but altered c.1893 when an iron casing was erected by the Grand Junction Water Works Company to carry more water pipes across the bridge. The bridge has been turned down in the past for listing.

Listed buildings in the area

No 60 High Street

Early 18th century, of three bays, altered, but with original staircase and panelling.

No 61 High Street

No 80 High Street

Late 18th century, seven windows a projecting central bay, and Adam style porch with delicate capitals and entablature with urns and garlands.

129 -130 High Street.

Ferry Lane: Peerless Pumps, an altered and extended 18th century house.

Health Centre, Alexandra Road

Fire Station, 53 High Street

St Lawrence's Church

Unlisted buildings of interest not yet under consideration for listing

81 High Street. Appears to be a refronted house of c. 1790 which needs an interior inspection.

131-134 High Street. Four 18th century houses needing interior inspection.

MAPS

Moses Glover Map of Brayneford 1663

Parish map of Ealing 1777

Tithe map 1838

Parish map 1839

O.S. maps:

1865

1893-4

1912

1935

1998

HISTORICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

Views of Brentford Lock, 1906- present day

Views of the White Horse Pub

Views of south Brentford from Brentford As It Was 1983

OTHER SOURCES

Edwardian Industries Chiswick Local History Library

RIBA for info. on F.W. Lacey F.R.I.B.A

Brentford Urban District Council: Report on the survey of disposal of refuse, 1897, with block plan by T.H. Nowell Parr, Chiswick Local History Library

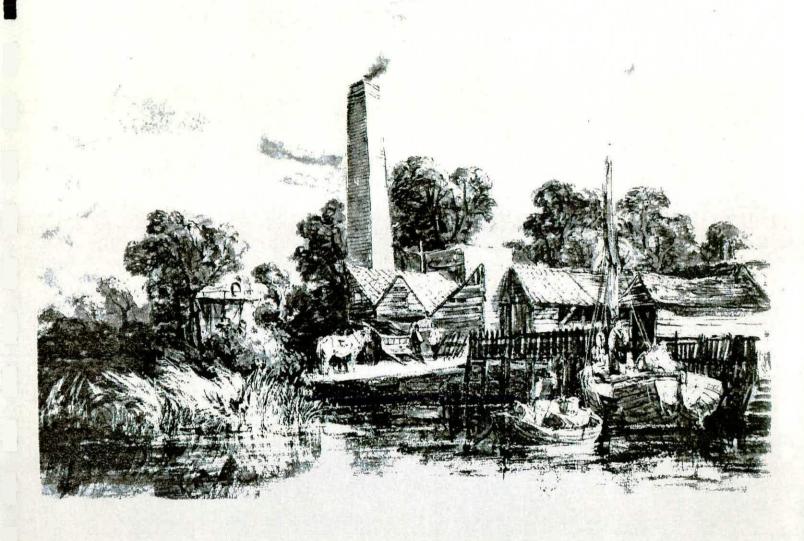
Thesis on Nowell Parr by G. Eke, Chiswick Local History library

The Thames: A Record of a Working Waterway D.G. Wilson 1987 p.82

Brentford as it Was Libraries Dept., Hounslow 1983

An Archaeological and Historical Desktop Assessment of the Town Centre Site High Street, Brentford Norton Thompson Associates July 1998

Brentford Centre Regeneration Scheme Environmental Statement, Vol 1 for Brentford Town Centre Ltd, July 1999



View of Brentford c.1850 by E.J.Niemann
This illustration shows wooden and tiled shacks, a brick tannery chimney, small boats and reeds.



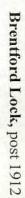
Views of the White Horse 1911, 1966

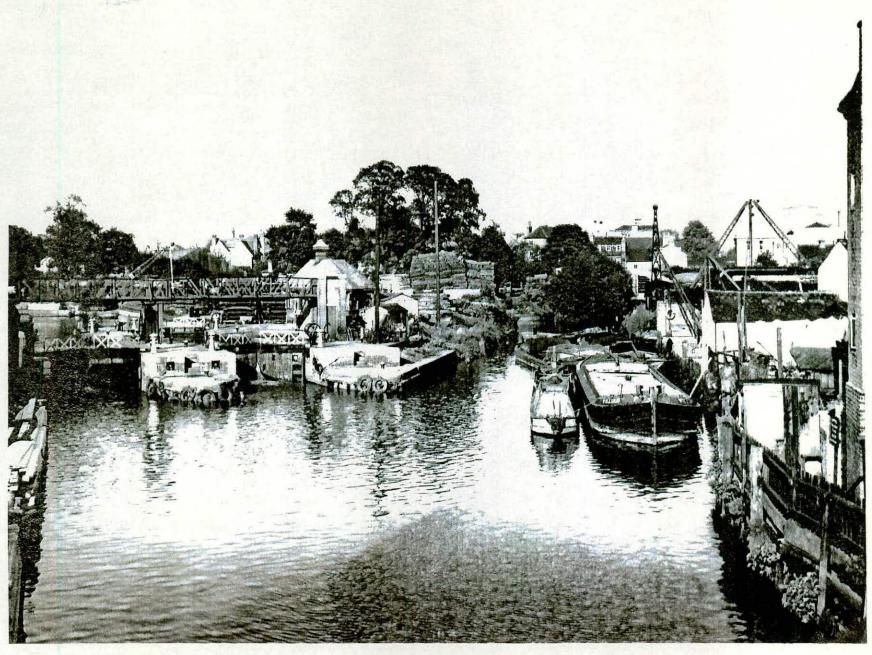




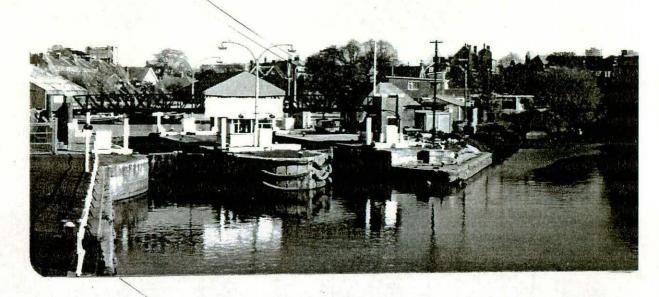


Brentford Lock 1906, before renovation c.1911-12, and various views, followed by views taken in the early 1980s



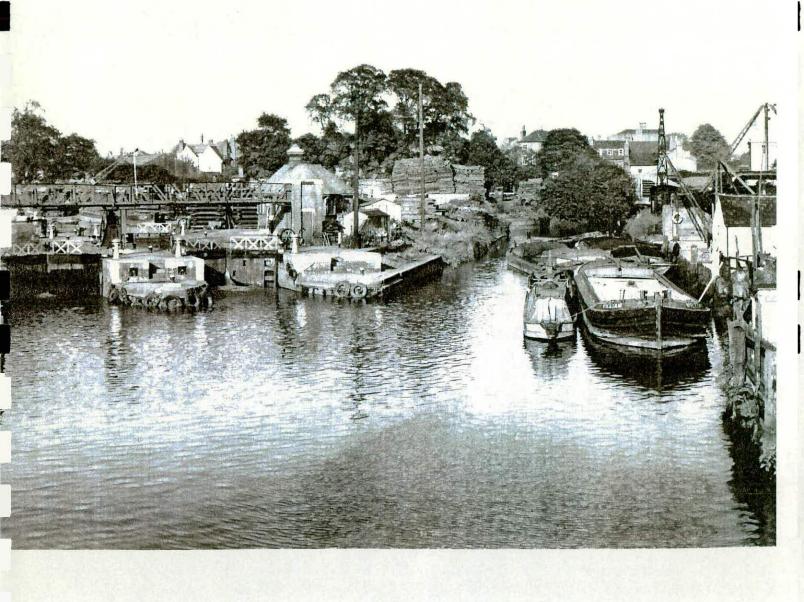








Brentford Lock, early 1980s

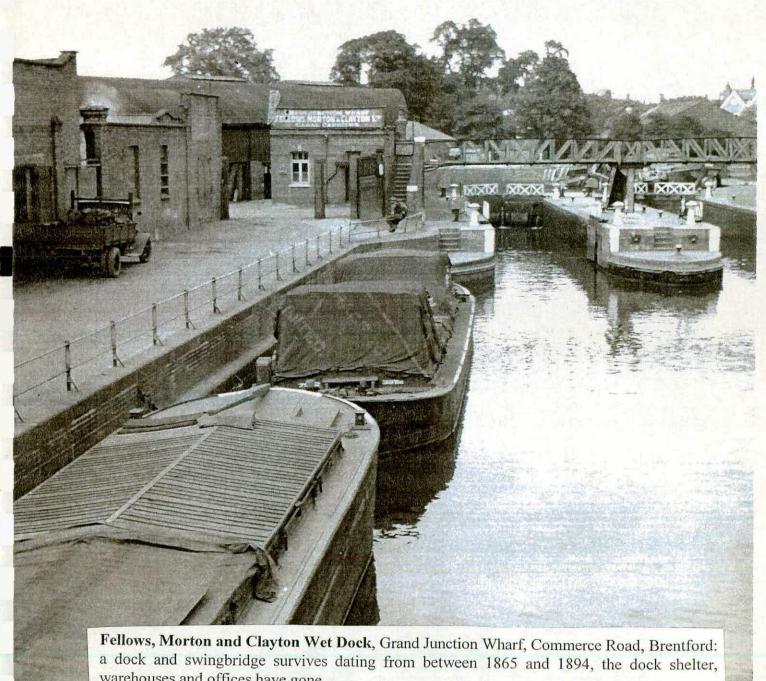


Brentford Lock, 1946



March 1964





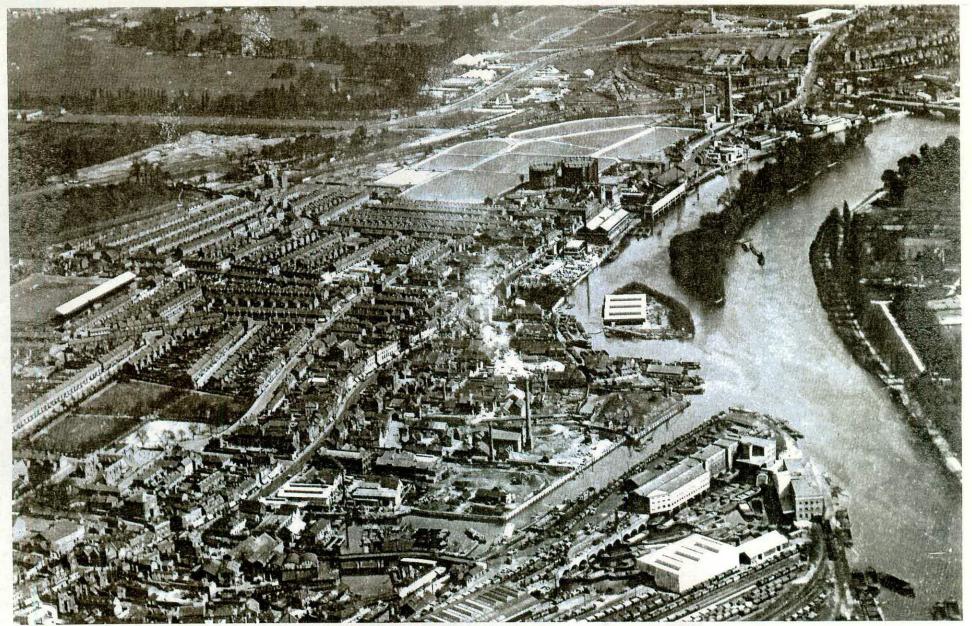
warehouses and offices have gone.



7. Brentford Dock, 1911, seen from the Surrey bank of the River Thames. The warehouses were erected for the Great Western Railway Company early this century and demolished when the Dock closed in 1964. The Brentford Dock Estate now occupies the site. The area, known as 'Old England', has over the centuries revealed late Bronze Age weapons, tools and decorative items.

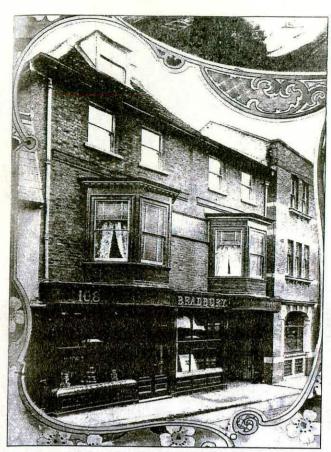


6. This was Jupps Wharf, sited off the canal, photographed at the end of the nineteenth century. The roofs in the distance belonged to buildings in the High Street. The two barges were owned by A. & G. Jupp Ltd., who were maltsters, corn, hay and coal merchants in Brentford from the mid nineteenth century. They owned many wharves along the canal and the River Thames from the Dock to Strand-on-the-Green.



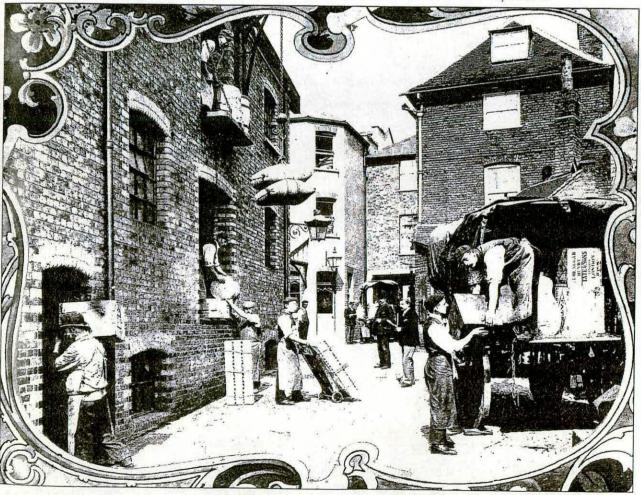
1. An aerial view of Brentford in 1929 showing in the foreground Brentford Dock, latterly owned by British Railways, and opened in 1855. Alongside can be seen the railway line opened in 1859 to provide direct access to the river barges by the Great Western Railway. The railway line and the Dock closed in 1964. A G.L.C. housing estate has recently been built on the site of the Dock. Brentford High Street can be seen follow-

ing the line of the River Thames to Kew Bridge, top right. Brentford Gas Works, seen to the right of the Ait, opened in 1820, and developed on both sides of the High Street over the next one hundred years, until gas ceased to be made there in 1963. The Great West Road runs left to right at the top of the photograph, and north of that can be seen Gunnersbury Park.



Bradbury's wholesale grocers shop at No.108 High Street founded c. 1860. The entrance to their yard can be seen on the right, in the centre of their ninety foot frontage. These buildings have long since gone, but their premises were approximately where Lloyd Brennand are today.

Workmen in Bradbury's yard loading onto one of their vans a consignment of sugar from Henry Tate and Sons – who did not become Tate and Lyle until 1921. This scene probably dates from about 1905, when Bradbury's had a fleet of twenty horsedrawn vans delivering groceries to shops within a radius of twenty miles.



Bradbury's warehouse in its heyday.



The Beehive Public House at the corner of High Street and Half Acre, by T.H. Nowell Parr and A. E. Kates, 1907.

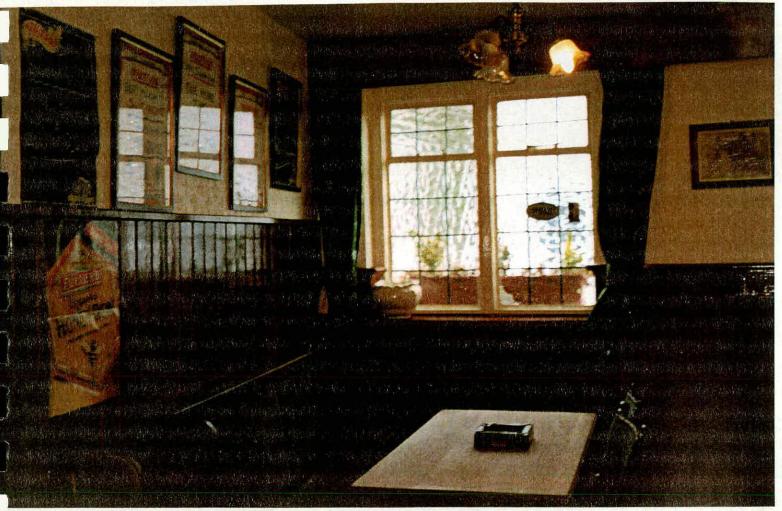




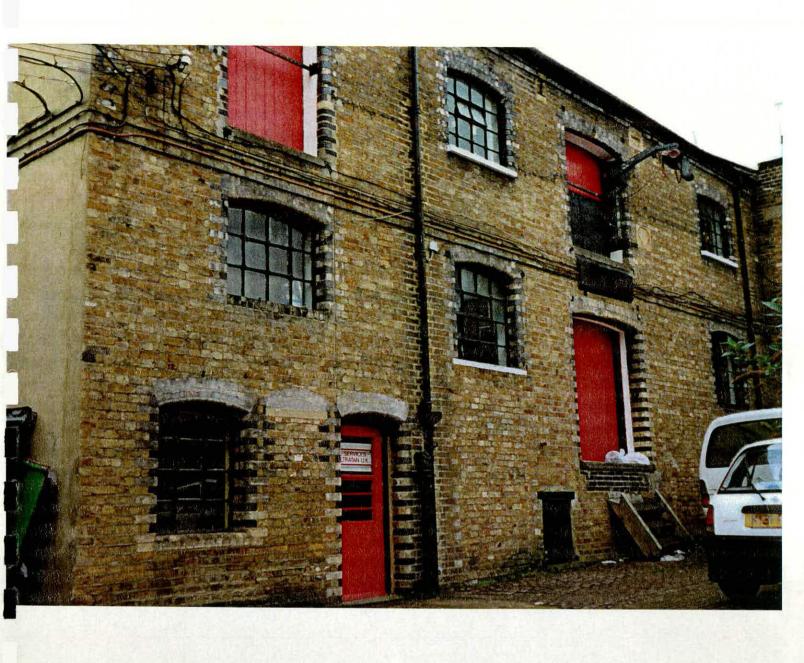


The Brewery Tap Public House, Catherine Wheel Road, Brentford 1928 by C.E.Mallows in vernacular style with mock timber framed interior, relatively unaltered.

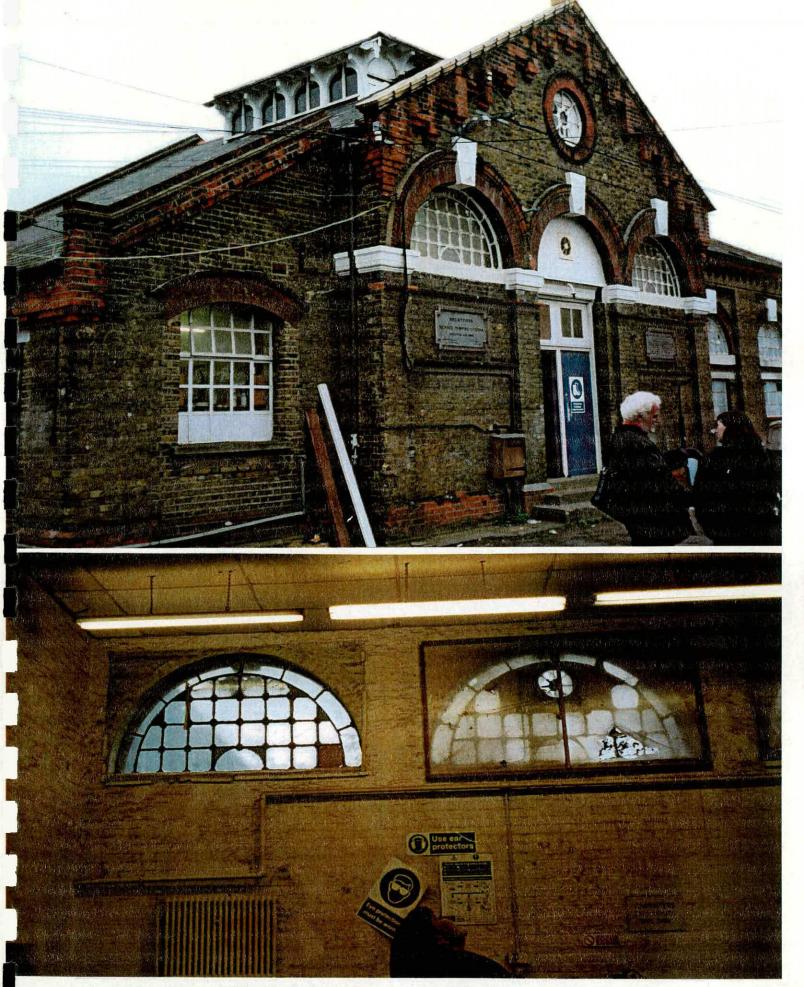




The Brewery Tap P.H. interiors



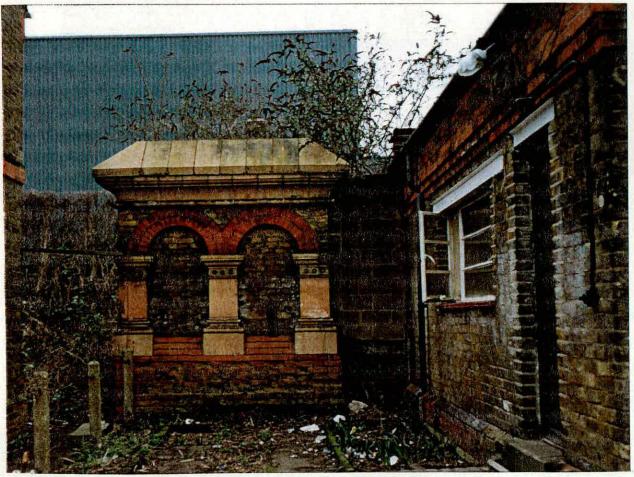
Bradbury's wholesale grocers warehouse, Brentway c 1890, red brick with white brick arches and iron-framed windows. One of the few industrial buildings left south of the High Street.



 ${\bf Corporation\ Sewage\ Works,\ Pump\ Alley}.$

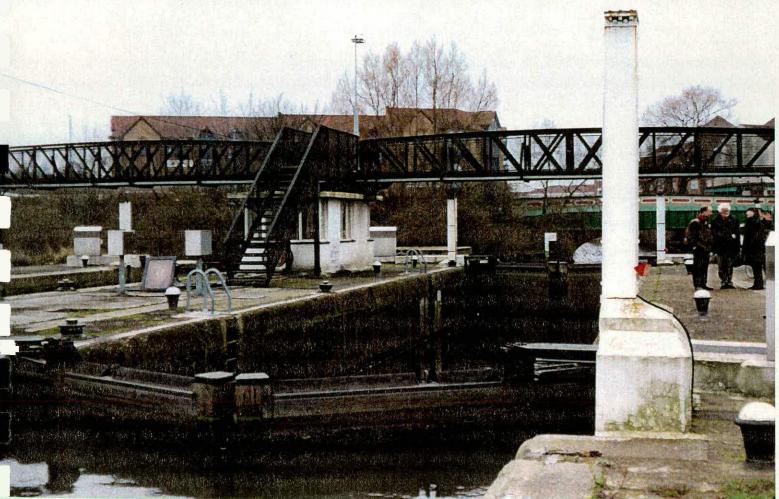
Brentford Sewage Pumping Station: engine shed and house, designed by F.W. Lacey, surveyor, 1883. Cotto and Beasley were the engineers for the engine shed, but there is no machinery left inside. Base of chimney and associated buildings- shed, supervisor's and engineer's cottages-survive, all of the 1880s.





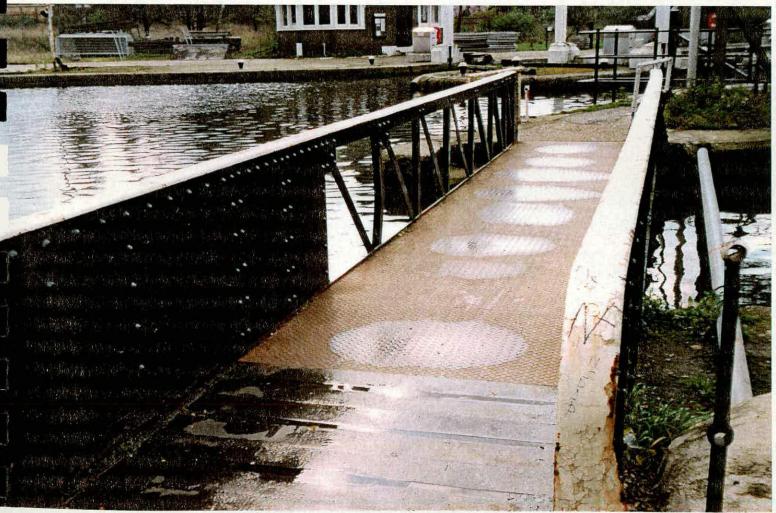
Pumping station: engineer's cottage and base of chimney, F.W. Lacey, 1883.





Brentford Lock, originally built 1794, widened in 1912 and considerably altered early 1960s.





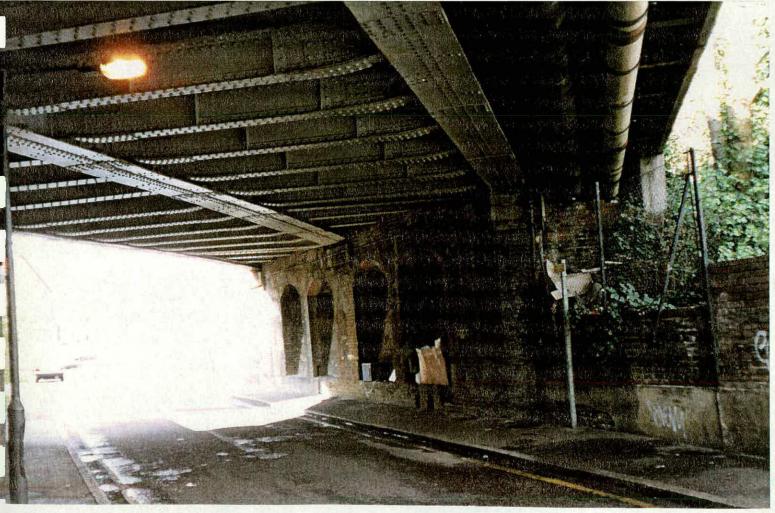
Brentford Lock Toll house, 1912 Swing bridge, c.1870





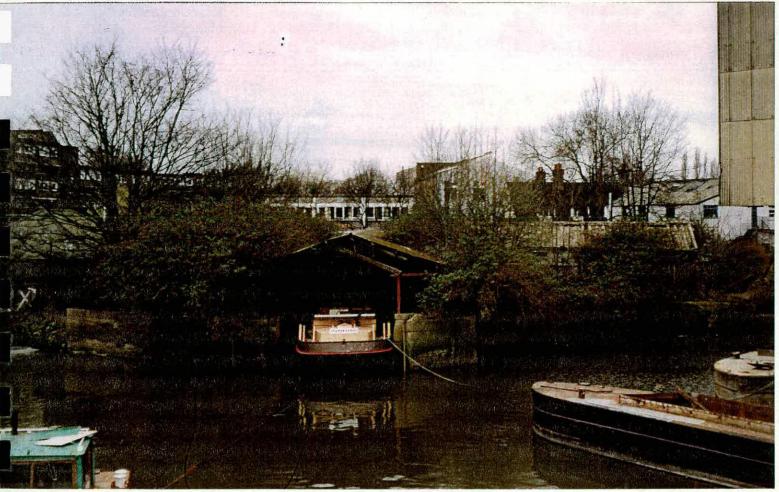
Underwood's hay and straw warehouse Dock Road, 1881, and below: Dock Road, cut through in 1859, with setts in a fan-shaped pattern.





GWR Railway bridge to former Brentford Dock, 1859





Thames Lock, rebuilt after 1958, with the Tiber Estate on the side of Brentford Dock.

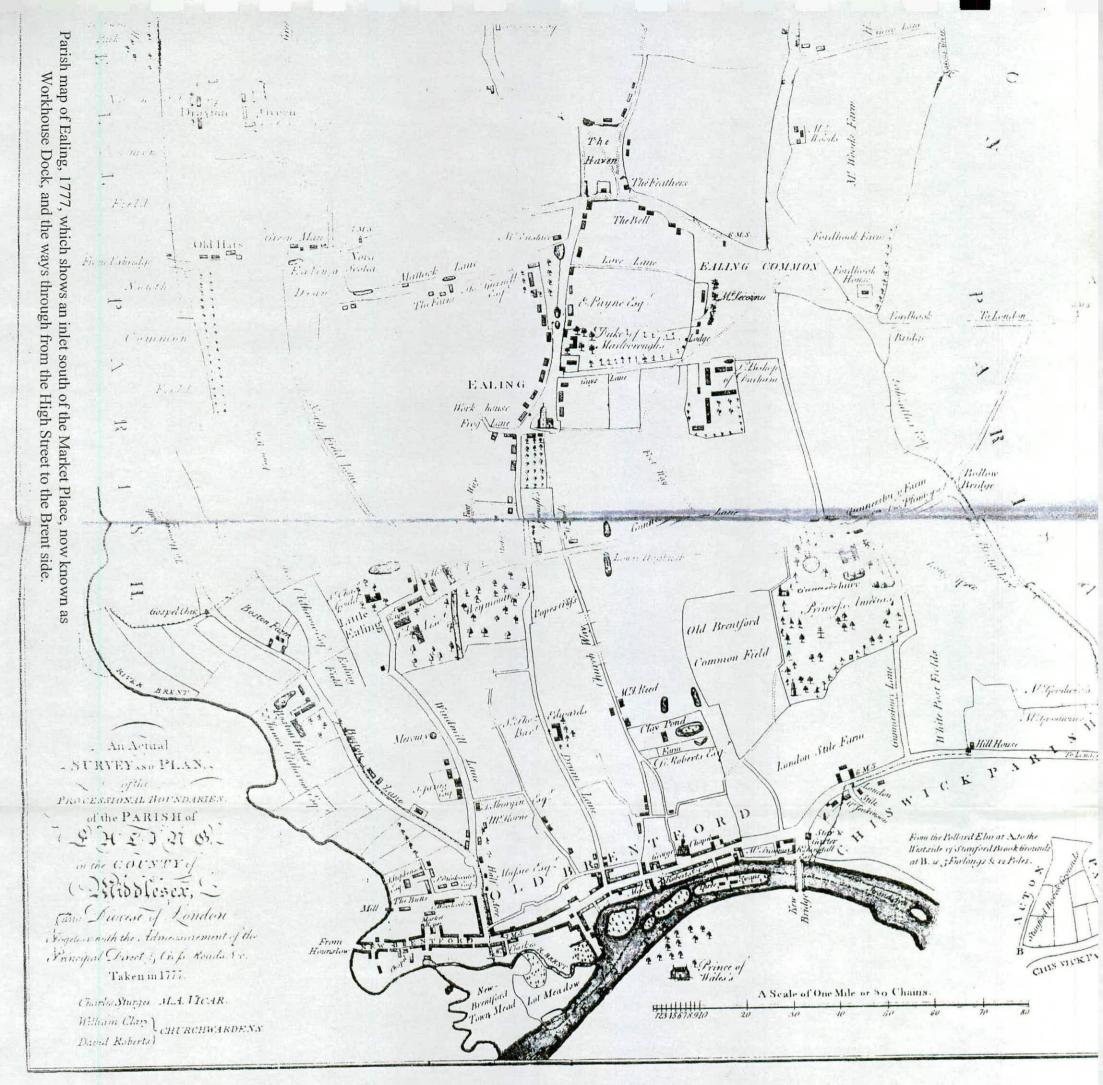
View from the water of **Johnson's Island**, showing 1930s dock, leading to Town Wharf on the right.



Clitherow Lock, Transport Avenue: an intact, unaltered lock dated 1866.



Moses Glover's map, 1663, showing New Brentford, 'which together with the old, is extended one mile, in one street only'. It shows the High Street, a bridge over the river Brent at the Ham, St Lawrence's Church, the Boar's Head Inn, the Pye (Magpie) wharf, Wolfe wharf, Wheel wharf and timber yards where the Brent meets the Thames. The foundations for industrial development were laid by this time.



13. Parish map of Ealing, 1777, drawn to show the boundaries. The occupiers of the principal houses are named, and the contrast between the density of population in Brentford and North Ealing is evident.

