THE HIGH STREET, TWERTON

AN HISTORICAL SURVEY

Mike Chapman

Published by Bath and North East Somerset Council

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Cover Illustration: Twerton High Street on a Sunday afternoon in the early 1900s, looking east. To the left is Mill Lane, and on the right is the Crown Inn and the Twerton Club and Institute.

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'*The first house on the right hand*' - Fielding's Lodge (demolished 1963) which marked the eastern extremity of Twerton High Street in the mid18th century. The 'spread eagle' (phoenix) over the door can be seen protruding through the ivy

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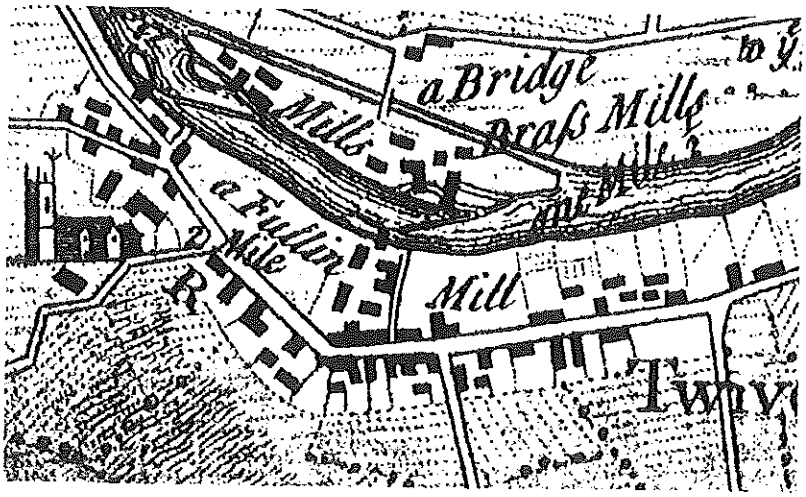
The High Street, Twerton

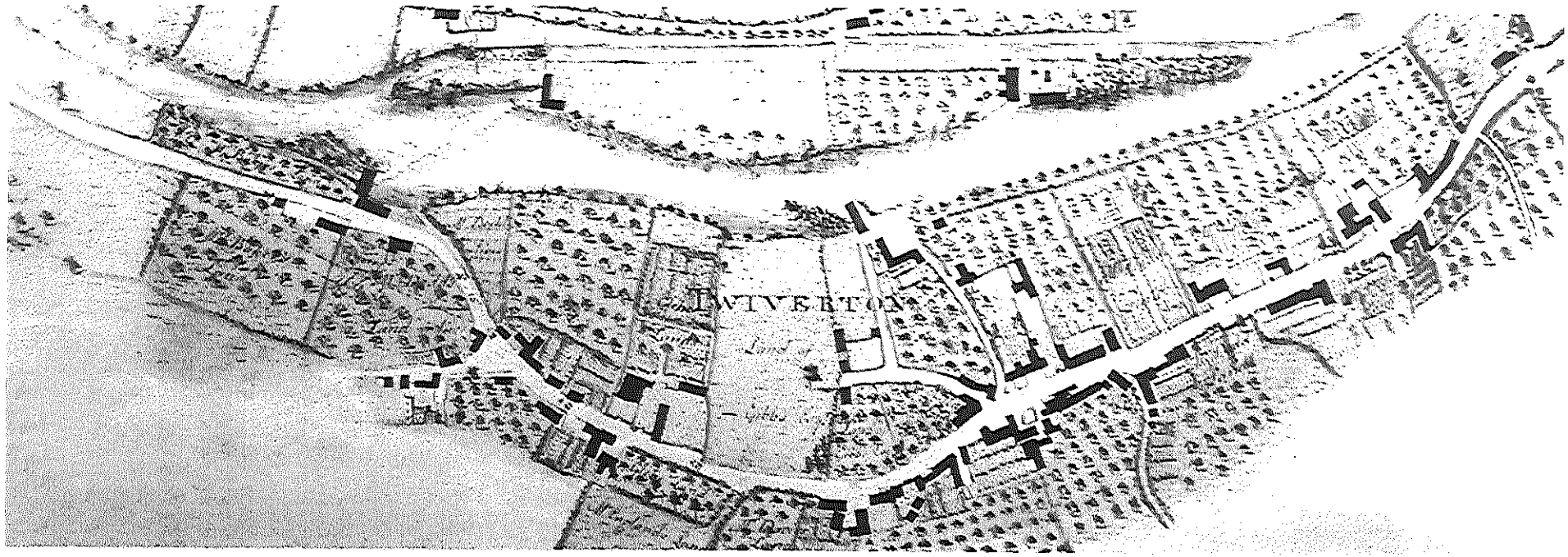
The name of this stretch of road is a reminder that it was once the ancient high street of the former village of Twerton. Richard Graves, in his *Triflers,* written in 1805, states that Henry Fielding, whilst writing his novel of *Tom Jones,* lived for a while at Twerton '*in the first house on the right hand, with a spread eagle over the door, now inhabited by Mr.Williams, a respectable brewer*'. This suggests that in his time the street extended eastward as far as 'Fieldings Lodge' (demolished in the 1960s for the Herman Miller furniture factory) on the Lower Bristol Road, but was later cut off by the Great Western Railway. At the other end of the street, one of the mills became isolated in a similar way. Nevertheless the street as it is now defined, between the eastern railway arch by old Twerton Station, and the western arch below the church, still represents the core of the old village and therefore forms the basis of this study.

From earliest times Twerton village stood on the main road between Bath and Bristol on the south side of the River Avon (the 'Lower Bristol Road'), and the High Street has much in common with other village High Streets in the area (particularly Batheaston) which formed part of the 'king's highway'. Because it was by-passed by alterations in the mid 19th century, the High Street still preserves much of the character of the old road, and provides an interesting example of the radical changes in the transport and industrial systems on the outskirts of Bath that occurred during that time.

These developments can be followed by means of a good sequence of historical maps and development plans of Twerton which exist from the late 18th century onwards, and it is for this reason that the present study concentrates on changes that have taken place since then. Except for occasional references in the Minutes of the Bath Turnpike Trust in the 18th century, there are otherwise few early administrative records relating to the highways in Twerton, and it is regretted that the records of the Bath Rural District Council (to which Twerton belonged in the late 19th century) were destroyed, it would seem, during the blitz on Bath in WWII. Nevertheless the processes of road construction and management commonly employed in North Somerset during this period are now better understood thanks to the Historic Streetscape Surveys recently carried out for the present local authority in Bath and Norton Radstock. A comprehensive picture can therefore be built up in combination with other documentary sources such as postal directories, property deeds, old photographs or illustrations, and of course, the testimony of the inhabitants themselves.



The earliest map showing the village high street in Twerton. From Thomas Thorpe's map of 'Five Miles Around Bath', 1742



The Bristol road through Twerton, taken from the Bath Turnpike Trust map of 1786 by C.Harcourt Masters

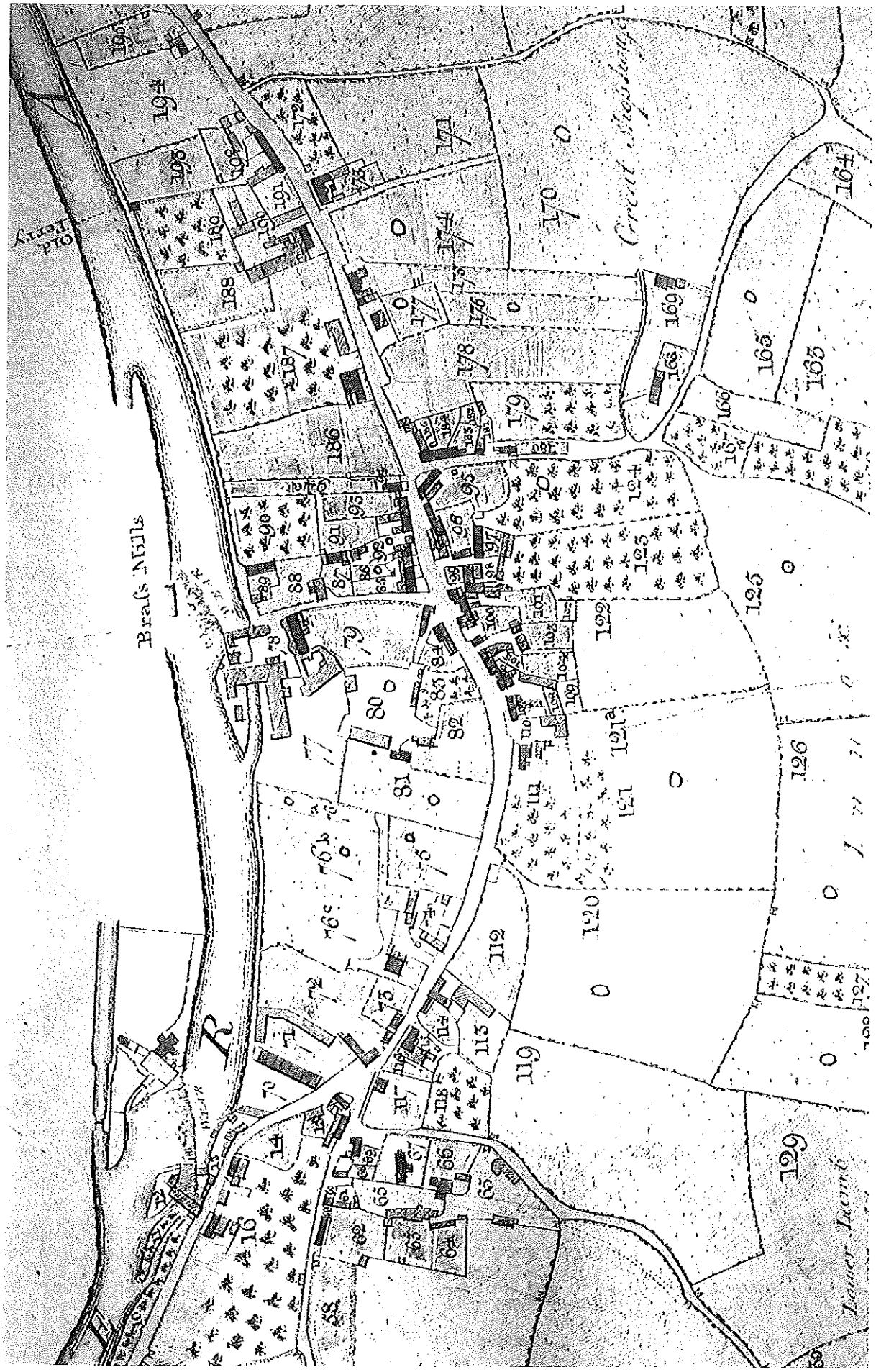
Background History of the Village and Parish

Formerly, the village was more closely associated with the River Avon than today, and it was not until the two were separated by the Great Western Railway viaduct in the mid-19th century that Twerton began to lose its alternative name of 'Twiverton'. According to Eckwall, these names are derivations from the Old English 'Two-ford-town' (as in Tiverton in Devon), an interpretation supported by recent archaeological research. Not only is it now thought that the so-called 'Jurassic Way', a prehistoric route which ran along the edge of the Cotswolds, crossed the River Avon into Twerton, but that the eastern boundary of the parish itself may well have originated as a branch of the Roman Fosse Way. (The postal address, 'Twerton-on-Avon', which came into use about 1876, is thought to have been introduced to avoid confusion with Tiverton.)

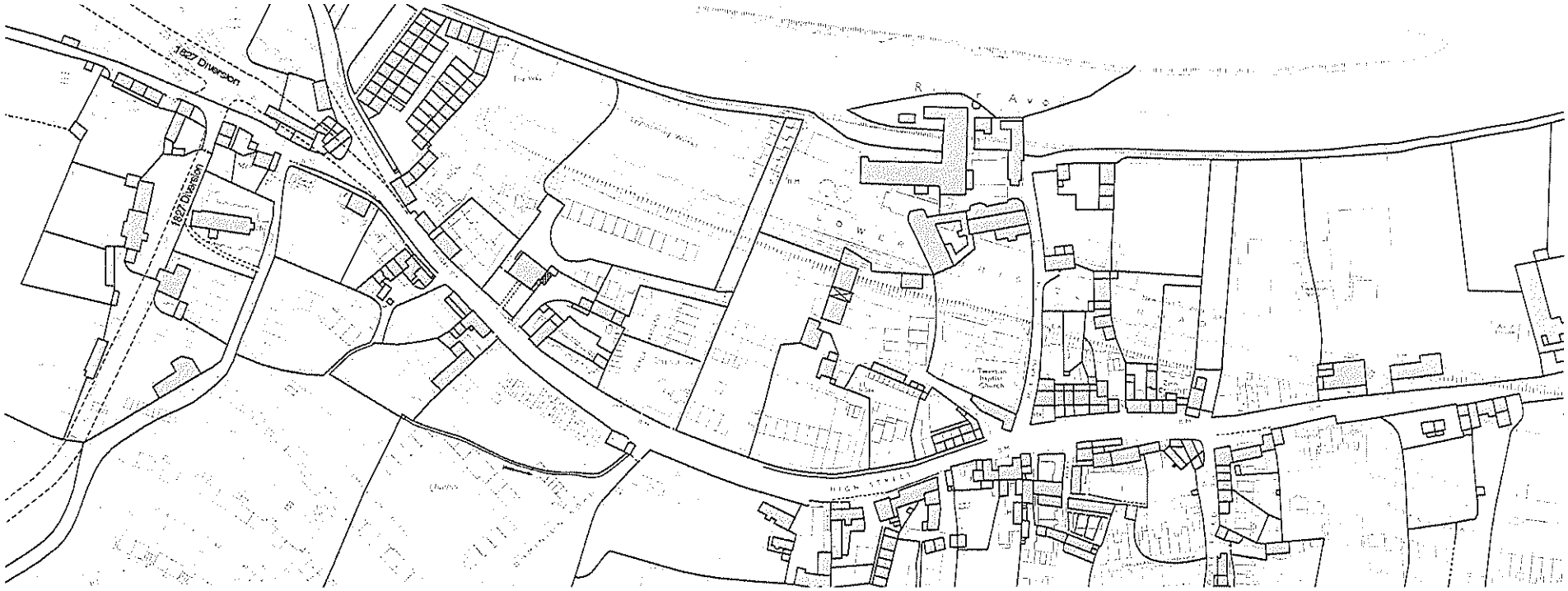
In Saxon times Twerton/Twiverton consisted of two manors (presumably giving rise to the 'dual' title), both of which can be traced as land estates from the Domesday survey through to the early 19th century. Although these manors were superseded by a single unified parish during the Middle Ages, the physical division of the village into two core areas was still apparent until recent times. The smaller of these estates was centred around its Farm at the western end of the village (here referred to as the 'western farm') in the region of the church and the 'lower' (downstream) corn mill by the river. The larger, eastern, manor was centred at the other end of the High Street, around its own ('eastern') Farm overlooking the 'upper' mill. Together, their lands covered a wide area extending in a rough triangle from the Victoria Bridge on the Avon up to the Burnt House on Odd Down and back to the river following the Patley and Newton Brooks. However, the lords of manor were never resident here, a factor which no doubt accelerated the process of enclosure and the disappearance of manorial tenure that was already well advanced throughout this region by the end of the 17th century.

Although there was no administrative connection between Bath and Twerton until the 20th century (Twerton belonged in the County Hundred of Wellow), the growth of the Georgian City in the early 18th century had a substantial economic influence on the parish. In 1707 the main Bristol road came under the jurisdiction of the newly authorised Bath Turnpike Trust, and in 1727 the river was made navigable between Bristol and Bath by the Avon Navigation Company. The village mills, which had already been employed in the 16th century for fulling cloth manufactured at Bath, now found new wealth in the manufacture of fine fabrics and 'fancy goods' (at the upper mill), writing paper and dressed leather (at the lower mill), or (on the opposite side of the river) brass products for the Bristol trade. The land itself also became valuable, and by the end of the century, Twerton came to be the subject of much property speculation from local developers and the new city banks. This however did not result, as elsewhere, in the construction of set-piece Georgian housing (except perhaps, Charlton Buildings on the Lower Bristol Road), but rather in the development of further service industries for the city. A group of large malthouses made their appearance on the edge of the village, and considerable investment (and bankruptcy) was undertaken in cloth production, involving important technical innovations and new factory methods. Nevertheless, although at the forefront of the industrial revolution, Twerton was still regarded as an essentially rural and picturesque village. A favourite recreation for visitors to Bath like Jane Austen (who took a 'very pleasant' walk to Twerton in April 1805) was to take an airing along the riverside meadows to view the curious machinery in operation at the mills.

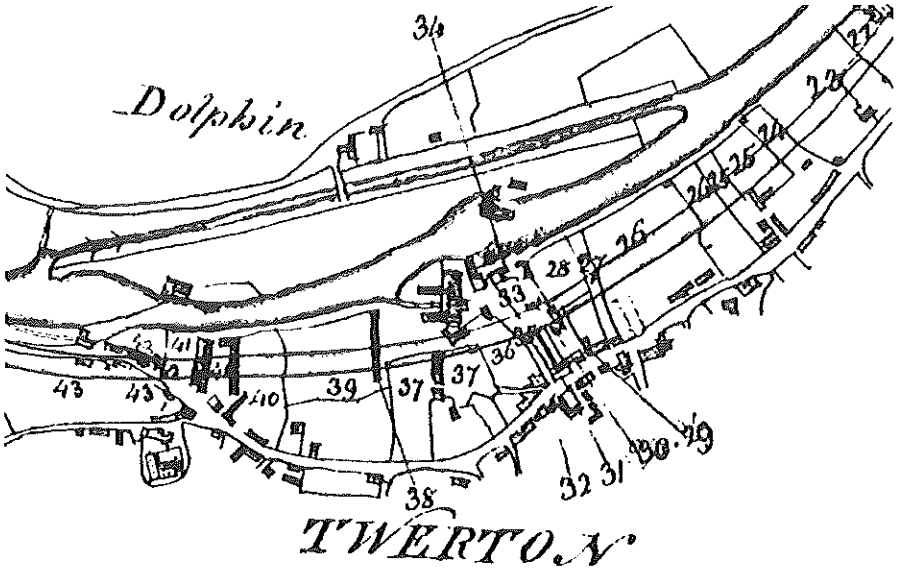
Of greater significance for the village in the future was the proposal in the 1790s for an extension of the Kennet & Avon Canal to Bristol which would have passed through the parish at high level. Initially there was vigorous opposition in the region to this scheme, but in 1809 a new low-level route (to link up with the recently completed Bristol Floating Harbour) was planned, which would have run through the village between the river and the High Street. Although this plan received Royal Assent in 1811 and land in the village was purchased for the purpose, the need for a canal immediately disappeared in the following year when a proper towpath was started building along the river by the Avon Navigation Company. However, the land in Twerton (mostly around the Lower Mill) was retained, later to be sold to the Great Western Railway Company who built the present viaduct along its course instead.



Twerton village in 1807, taken from the map of the parish by Jeremiah Cruse



The outlines shown on the 1807 parish map, superimposed onto modern detail

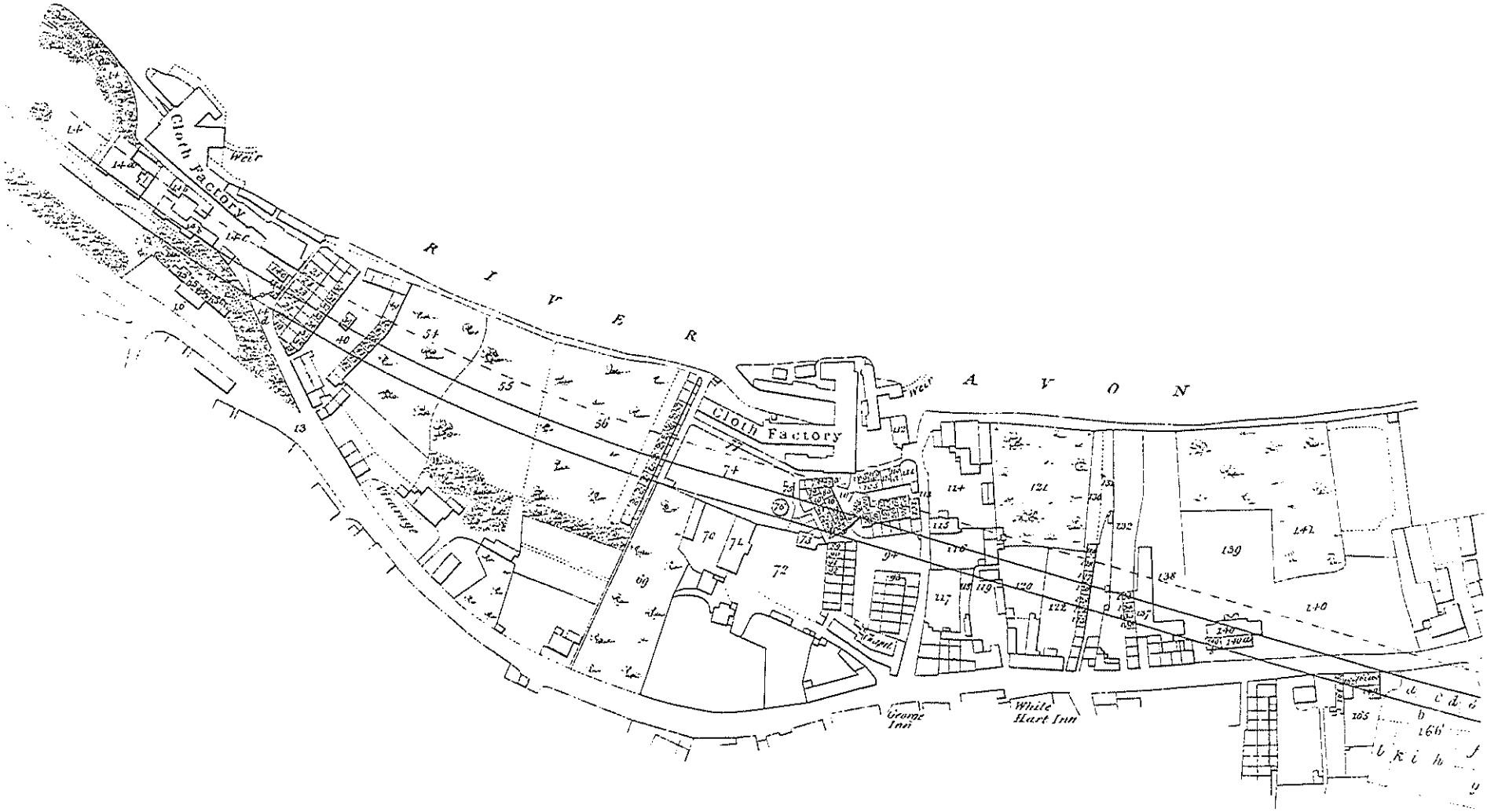


Extract from the K&A deposited plan of 1810, showing the line of the proposed canal extension to Bristol running between Twerton High Street and the river Avon

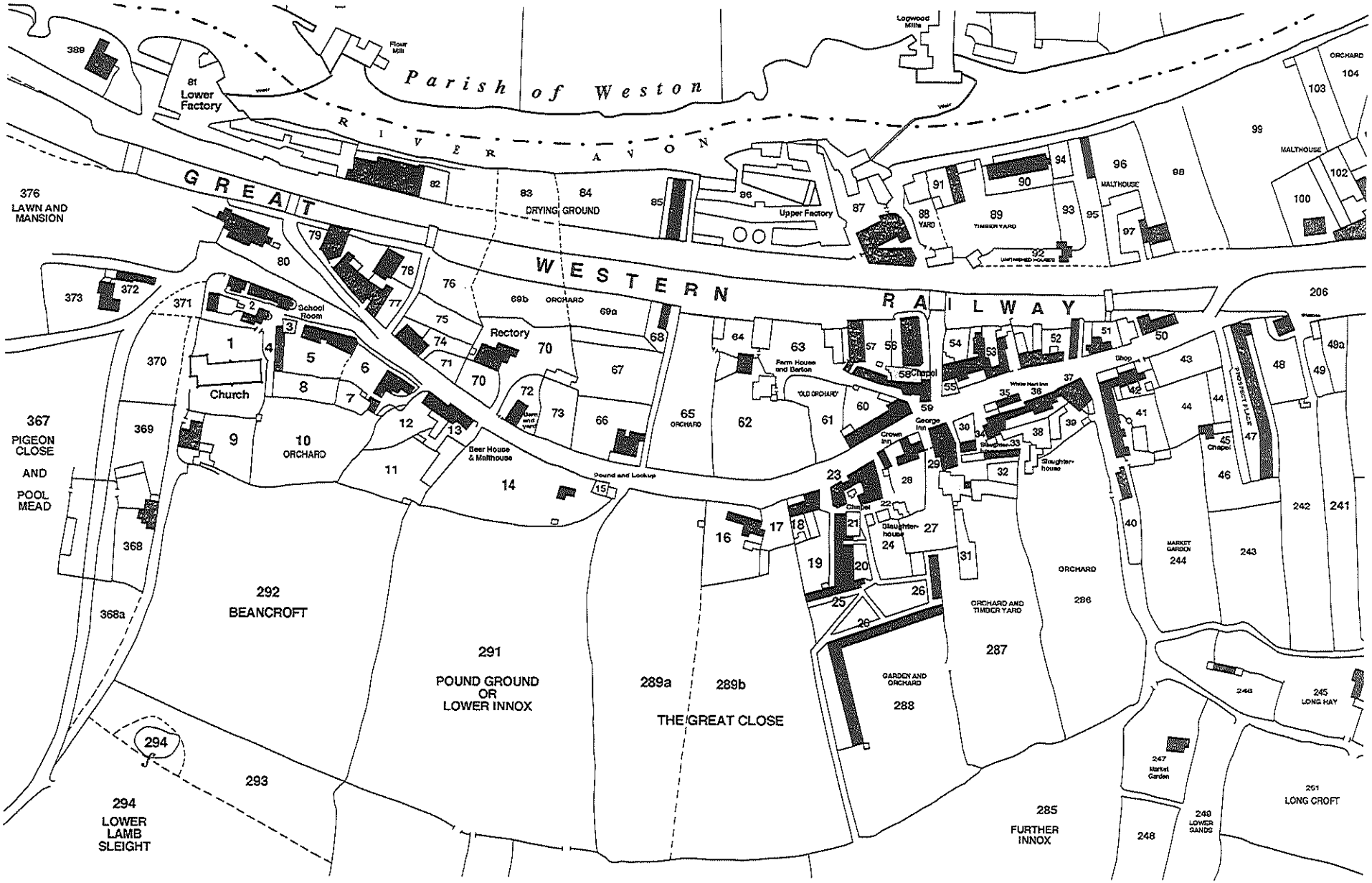
By the time the railway was built in 1840 however, there had been a dramatic expansion of all the mills (on both sides of the river) into large-scale cloth factories, together with the resulting growth in the village population and new housing. A key figure in this was the cloth manufacturer, Charles Wilkins, who by this time had not only gained a monopoly of the all the factories, but had also become the principal landowner in the village. Although the eastern manorial estate had already started to break up in the 17th century, it was not until 1833 that an Act of Parliament authorised the sale of the entailed western estate, most of which was purchased by Wilkins. Both Wilkins and the then Rector of Twerton were prominent members of the Bath & West Society with as much interest in the modernisation of agriculture as in industry. Wilkins himself built a fine mansion house by Twerton Wood (Wood House), and removed the western farm to a more convenient site nearby, leaving space for the enlargement of the churchyard. Beyond the village, he also sank a coalmine (closed in 1874) and opened up a large limestone quarry and limeworks nearby which remained in existence up to WWII. As a leader of the community (he was Captain of the Bath Militia) he also promoted improvements in public works, such as the parish roads, the church, and other social amenities. In 1847 the entire Wilkins estate, including most of the factories, was purchased the Carr family who continued to run village affairs with very little change for the next hundred years.

However, land on the eastern boundary of Twerton (roughly, the present 'Oldfield Park' area) was also being developed into an 'overspill' area for Bath, consisting mainly in the construction of mass by-law housing (not to mention the new city gaol), a process accelerated by the construction of the Somerset and Dorset Railway through the area in 1874. This was accompanied by various 'unwanted' service industries which by the 20th century included a tannery, the city scavenger's (refuse) yard, gas holders for the gasworks, and the city sewage pumping station. More respectable industries followed, such as the Pitman print-works and the Bath cabinet making firms.

In 1911 the parish itself was eventually incorporated into the city, and after WWI housing development, including Council house estates, continued to expand into the southern part of the parish. During WWII a number of houses in and around the High Street were destroyed by bombing (usually from random attacks on the railway line during the Bristol raids), but most of the damage during the Bath 'blitz' of 1942 was restricted to the eastern end of the parish. However, by the end of WWII, the village itself was ripe for development, following the sale in 1951 of the Carr estate to the city council and the imminent closure and demolition of the cloth mills. This enabled new post-war 'model' council house estates to be built on the remaining open land around the village as far as the western boundary of the parish. As elsewhere in Bath, most of the historic buildings in the village disappeared from this time onward, although remnants of agricultural land still remain above the village (used for the community farm) and at the western end of Twerton Wood.



Extract from Brunel's deposited plan of 1833 showing the line of the proposed Great Western Railway through Twerton village



Twerton village in 1840, copied from the parish tithe map

Historical Development of the High Street

The present layout of the High Street originated during the administration of the Bath Turnpike Trust which was authorised by Act of Parliament in 1707. Although it is not possible here to speculate on the appearance of the High Street when it was still under the control of the parish, from entries in the minute books of the Trust it appears to have been somewhat constricted. In 1757, when an extensive programme of improvements to the Lower Bristol Road was carried out, it was reported that the road in front of the George Inn was 'too narrow for two carriages to pass' and that the road 'between the White Hart and the Lane to Mr.Sperrin's [i.e. to his Mill, now Mill Lane]' had been widened. Numerous gardens and orchards were set back, and several buildings, including 'a little baker's shop' and (later) 'a tenement of the Duke of Chandos' (then a prominent landowner in Twerton) were demolished for road widening. At about this time, James Chilcott 'of Twerton' (presumably the builder of 'Chilcott's Buildings' in the High Street) was appointed Surveyor of the Lower Bristol Road for the Trust. There was also a turnpike gate somewhere in the village at the time, but this appears to have become redundant in the 1760s after the Newbridge 'Cross Post' gate was installed at Newton St.Loe.

From details of the road shown on C.Harcourt Master's map, produced for the Trust in 1786, it can be seen that the street layout created by these works has broadly remained unaltered since then. Even the high pavement in front of the present Full Moon is included, where the main road continued steeply down the hill (now Connection Road, known locally as 'Big Hill') towards the Lower Mill and the level stretch beside the river then known as 'Twerton Flat'. There was however one notable difference from today. At the top of the hill, the lane to Newton St.Loe branched away up the slope in front of the Full Moon through the site of the churchyard, where it passed between a complex of buildings before continuing on through the fields. These buildings, known as Church Row, have long since disappeared, except for a rank of cottages at the western end of the Row which still remain on the opposite side of How Hill, their front gardens now occupying the course of the old lane. At a point between the Church Rooms and the churchyard gate another lane turned off sharply left, passing the church below the eastern wall of the churchyard. This lane ('Half-acre Lane' or 'Watery Lane'), led to the church gate and entrance porch (which stood on the south side before the 19th century), before continuing on up through the fields towards Haycombe and Englishcombe.

Connection Road, which runs through a deep cutting, probably originated as one of the many ancient 'holloways' commonly found in the Bath area, created by the combined erosion from downwash and traffic wear. Even today it can be appreciated that this gradient would have presented a daunting obstacle to 18th century traffic (even without the railway arch), and in the 1750s efforts were made to 'ease the ascent and raise the bottom from the floods'. At the bottom, a slipway to the river was also provided to a watering-place next to the mill. The opinion was then already being expressed that this stretch of road should be diverted along an easier gradient. The next large-scale programme of improvements along the Lower Bristol Road was proposed in 1827, under the direction of John Loudon McAdam, who had been appointed Surveyor General of the Bath Turnpike Trust the previous year. This not only included further road widening, but also the deviation previously proposed at the western end of Twerton Village. The new diversion started at the fork between Connection Road and the old lane to Newton, and following the present course of the road towards How Hill, continued straight on towards Twerton Wood on a more gentle slope to rejoin the original line of the road along 'Twerton Flat'.

In the process, the buildings on the north side of Newton Lane in Church Row (including a small malthouse) were demolished, all of which belonged to Charles Wilkins. Characteristically, Wilkins arranged to have the lane at the eastern end stopped up, so that he could build some new dwellings next to the houses that remained on the south side. In return, a new lane was opened up from the new road at the bottom of How Hill to maintain access into Newton Lane in front of the How Hill cottages. It also provided the opportunity to replace Watery Lane with a new route from this junction through the site of the western farm complex past the tower of the church. By this means, the west door now became the main entrance instead of the south porch, which was demolished. Although Connection Road was now made redundant, it was retained as a parish road for access to the Lower

Mill and Wilkin's residence next to it. The rest of the road at the bottom of the hill was then closed off and the space used by Wilkins for an ornamental riverside pleasure ground on the west side of his house.

These arrangements however proved to be temporary, as the act was passed in 1834 for the building of the Great Western Railway through the parish. This not only entailed the construction of the viaduct between the High Street and the river, but provision was also made for a new section of turnpike road to be built along the north side of the viaduct as a village 'bypass'. Three arches were built under the viaduct to connect the High Street with this new road. The main entrance was at the eastern end, where the railway cut directly across the Street, and where Twerton station was built. Another was constructed over Mill Lane, leaving the tail end of the lane (still visible today) leading on to the river on the opposite side of the bypass. At the western end of the Street, 'Big Hill' was reconnected with the new road (hence the title 'Connection Road'), under another arch. The new diversion through Twerton Wood, now redundant, was stopped up and mostly destroyed by the construction of the railway cutting at the approach to the eastern portal of Twerton tunnel. However, the short section leading towards How Hill was retained to maintain access into the lanes to Newton and Englishcombe. In 1838, when Charles Wilkins moved to his new residence in Wood House (his original house by the mill was demolished for the railway) and vacated the site of the western farm, the opportunity was taken to extend How Hill into the farm area in order to replace these lanes (yet again) with the roads which we see today. Newton Road was redirected around the back of the cottages in How Hill, past Hope Cottage, and Watery Lane removed to the west side of the farmyard area which was then sold to the church to extend the churchyard. In the 1870s the turnpike trusts gave way to local authority control, but since the completion of the railway in 1840, the High Street layout has remained unchanged except for alterations to the side roads. The junction with Shophouse Road was widened in 1932 and Dominion Road was opened up for the post-war housing development in 1951. In the early 1970s, the entrance to Clyde Gardens was built opposite.

Materials and Maintenance

Although road surfaces in the 18th century still consisted of broken stone, the drainage and grading of main roads was already much improved by the turnpike trusts. After J.L.McAdam became General Surveyor to the Bath Turnpike Trust in 1826 the main road would certainly have been 'macadamised' with his self-compacting road surfacing (see Appendix), and Twerton High Street could probably claim to be one of the best roadways in the country. Any hard stone material was suitable for this purpose, and Twerton was well endowed with Lias limestone quarries which supplied not only its own needs, but also Bath itself. In 1782, for example, the Trust acquired a half-acre of ground 'for quarrying stones' next to the road below Twerton Wood, which remained in use up to the 1830s. It is likely that some 'foreign' stone was imported at an early stage, particularly Pennant Sandstone brought up the river from the Hanham area, but this was more expensive and used only for high quality paving slabs, bollards, spur-stones and kerbs. However, the tithe map of 1840 shows two stone wharves belonging to the Trust by the river on the outskirts of the village; one next to Avon Bridge at the end of 'Twerton Flat', and another at the end of Feilding's Road on the site of the later Loxbrook footbridge. This would suggest that larger importation had started of the harder 'Black Rock' Carboniferous Limestone from the Bristol Downs which became standard material for macadamised surfacing up to the 20th century.

Early photographs show that by WWI the road surface through the High Street remained much as it was in the 1840s, with macadamised surface and Lias stone gutters and kerbs. However, its relegation to a parish road from this time onward led to a considerable lowering of the standard of maintenance and cleaning. By the end of the 19th century, the village had acquired the unofficial title of 'Twerton-on-Mud', and muddy wheel-ruts are clearly evident on several of the old photographs. Even by the 1930s when tar macadam was already extensively in use in the Bath area, the High Street seems to have merely been treated with a coating of tar over the original macadamised surface. It was not until the end of WWII, when new sewers and service conduits were required for the post war housing around the village, that the High Street was completely remade (with the assistance of Italian prisoners of war) with a modern asphalt surface and concrete kerbs.

Pavements and crossings

It was general practice in the 18th century for frontagers on a street or road to provide their own 'pitched' footwalks (usually constructed of stone blocks or 'setts') outside their doors, although the mention of 'pitching' in the High Street in the Turnpike Trust minute books for the 1750s may also refer to public 'causeways' maintained by the parish overseers. This was already an important feature in Batheaston, for instance, as early as the mid 17th century. However the raised footwalks which are a distinctive feature of the High Street today were evidently part of the road improvement works being introduced by the Trust at that time. A raised pavement has the obvious advantage of protecting pedestrians from spatter thrown up by passing traffic, but their absence in the centre of the village between Shophouse Lane and Mill Lane suggests that this was not the prime reason for their presence elsewhere. The high pavement in front of the Full Moon and Oriel Cottages probably originated as an old causeway built on a natural terrace, but the rest, which ran continuously along the north side between Mill Lane and Clyde House, may have been produced as a result of cutting back the verges during the regrading and widening of the roadway. A raised section which formerly existed between Shophouse Lane and the Station suggests that the paving possibly continued as far as Jew's Lane before it was buried under the railway. Until this part of the roadway was regraded after WWII, the pavement at the end of this section fell very steeply in front of the arch to provide sufficient headroom through to the lower level of the main road. These high pavements were also provided with a series of flat stones projecting from the wall below the footwalk, most frequently near houses (i.e. towards Chilcott's Buildings), which served as steps onto the road or as mounting blocks. These were all removed in the 1970s as a traffic hazard.

The north side of the street seems to have been particularly favoured. By the mid 19th century, the entire length from the Station to Connection Road had a pitched footwalk of some kind, whereas the south side had only short sections outside specific premises, probably built privately. Indeed, until the end of WWII the section between Church Farm and Ivy House, near the pound, merely tapered off like any other country road into the roadside waste. The pitching on the north side was also distinguished by its own attractive pattern of paving, consisting of a central line of small pennant paving slabs supported each side by standard Lias setts. A good example of this can be seen today in the garden path of no.18 High Street. It is noticeable that later modifications to the pavement abandoned this pattern, such as in front of Whitehead's Buildings, built in the late 1820s. Similarly, the sections of pavement on the south side, all installed at a late stage, i.e. at Church Farm (altered in about 1860), the George Inn and the Crown (rebuilt 1835), and the frontage of the White Hart (rebuilt probably in about 1870), had standard Lias setts only.

There was only one pitched crossing, at the top of Mill Lane, which appears very prominently on early photographs as a continuation of the footwalk between Nelson Place and Chilcott's Buildings. This also linked up with a pitched footwalk which ran down the west side of Mill Lane. A gas lamp standard was erected in the middle of this junction of crossings, but such an arrangement would not then have presented much of an obstacle as there was little traffic in the Lane until after WWI. Part of the crossing, at the entrance to Twerton Farm Close, was not removed until the 1970s.

The use of asphalt for pavements instead of stone pitching came into use in this area from the 1880s, and several of the later sections seem to have been replaced or covered over by the 20th century. The pavement on the north side of the road between the station and Shophouse Lane, probably laid out with gravel in the 1830s, appears to have been one of the first, as also the path on the north side of Howe Hill which was probably not built until the 1860s. Other late developments, such as Fernley Terrace (c.1900) and Carlton Terrace (c.1880), which already had raised kerbs but only with only gravel surfaces, were almost certainly asphalted from the outset. The remainder of the pitched footwalks were either replaced or covered over during the 1930s, but several sections, such as in front of the Institute, did not disappear until the 1970s.

Traffic Regulation

Until the building of the railway and the new bypass, the High Street was a busy main road, particularly towards the end of the 18th century with the development of stage coaching and the increase in heavy haulage. It is probably for this reason that most of the properties in the High Street

that did not front directly onto the road were hidden behind high walls. Nevertheless, this route was often preferred to the Upper Bristol Road, which was more likely to be congested with wagons from the Kingswood collieries. After 1840 however, when 'through' traffic ceased, Twerton Village seems to have become a 'backwater'. Even up to WWII, cattle were still driven along the High Street from the fields in Shophouse Lane to the farm behind Mill Lane, or from the Pound Ground into Church Farm. Nevertheless, as a busy community it was well served with public transport, first by the railway station, followed in 1880 by the early horse buses. Neither of these services however operated from the High Street. The entrance to the Station was from the Lower Bristol Road (until a bridge was provided over the line to the down platform in the 1890s), and the buses (replaced by electric trams in 1904) terminated outside the Railway Hotel opposite the Station. The low railway arch is still an obstacle to high vehicles, but in the days when it conducted two-way traffic, its width was also a cause of traffic obstruction.

This situation changed dramatically after WWII as a result of the post-war housing developments around the village, which required an extended and more flexible public transport facility. Instead of the railway (the station had already closed in 1917) or trams (replaced by motor buses in 1939), a bus service through the village was provided by single deck buses (No.5A) which could pass under the railway arch. It was therefore at about this time that the present one-way system through the High Street was adopted, using the Station arch as an entrance, and the Mill Lane arch as an exit. Besides the single-deck bus which terminated at Day Crescent, a double deck bus (No.5) continued to operate for a while on the Lower Bristol Road, terminating opposite the archway of Little Hill. Since then there has been virtually no change to the siting of bus-stops in the street.

Cleaning

No record has been found relating to street cleaning, but it is likely from comparison with other areas that, until the formation of the District Councils, there was no system of cleaning other than the clearance of obstacles to the free flow of traffic. There is record of street watering being carried out in Twerton by Bath District Council in 1906, but early photographs show that although the macadamised surface of the High Street was scraped to remove surface mud and dust (together with horse and cattle droppings), this was only carried out between long intervals. It was not until the introduction of tar-spraying and tarmac after WWI that Twerton would have benefited from mechanised street sweeping.

Drainage

Although the Bristol Road which followed the river through Twerton was subject, like other parishes on the south side of Bath, to periodic flooding until the recent flood prevention scheme, the village itself was, as might be expected, sited on a terrace above the flood plane. Indeed, the High Street rises some 20 feet between the Station and the top of Connection Road, a total of about 32 feet above the river level (the church itself stands on a 'knoll' a further 27 feet above that). However, in the hillside behind the river is a spring-line extending westward from the top of Shophouse Road (in a field formerly known as 'Springfield') to the top of 'Watery Lane' (and 'Poolemead'), which in extreme conditions could cause 'flash floods'. Until the widening of Shophouse Lane and the Hollow in 1932, the torrent flowing down this narrow 'holloway' into the High Street could reach a depth of over 2 feet. Similarly, water flowing down into the opposite end from Howe Hill could make the road above Connection Hill impassable.

Street Lighting

In common with other villages, Twerton probably had some form of street lighting from oil lamps by the early 19th century. These however would only have been sited at particularly significant sites (e.g. the Church entrance, over front doors of Inns, &c.) and were generally provided privately - a situation which would not have altered when the parish was connected to the gas supply system in 1866. Indeed, when public lighting was first proposed for the principal roads in the parish in 1873 it was firmly rejected by the Select Vestry on account of the additional burden on the rates of the householders. When it was finally adopted in 1888, a series of conventional lantern lamps on standards was installed in the High Street, but only along the north side. There were also a few (probably private) bracket lamps attached to structures such as the Institute gatepost and over the Full Moon door, but none over any of the shops (as generally found in the urban commercial centres).

With the arrival of electricity, a more modern 'swan-neck' design was adopted in the 1930s, but there was little alteration in the layout, as the new electrical fittings were merely installed onto the original standards. With the increase in motor traffic, however, the standard at the top of Mill Lane was moved to the opposite side of the road, replacing the Institute lamp, and another by the station arch was moved to the south side by Fernley Terrace. Several of these design of standard still remain in the churchyard. Since WWII the introduction of overhead sodium lamps has resulted in the complete reorganisation of the street standards, and the majority are now located on the south side of the road.

Other Street Amenities

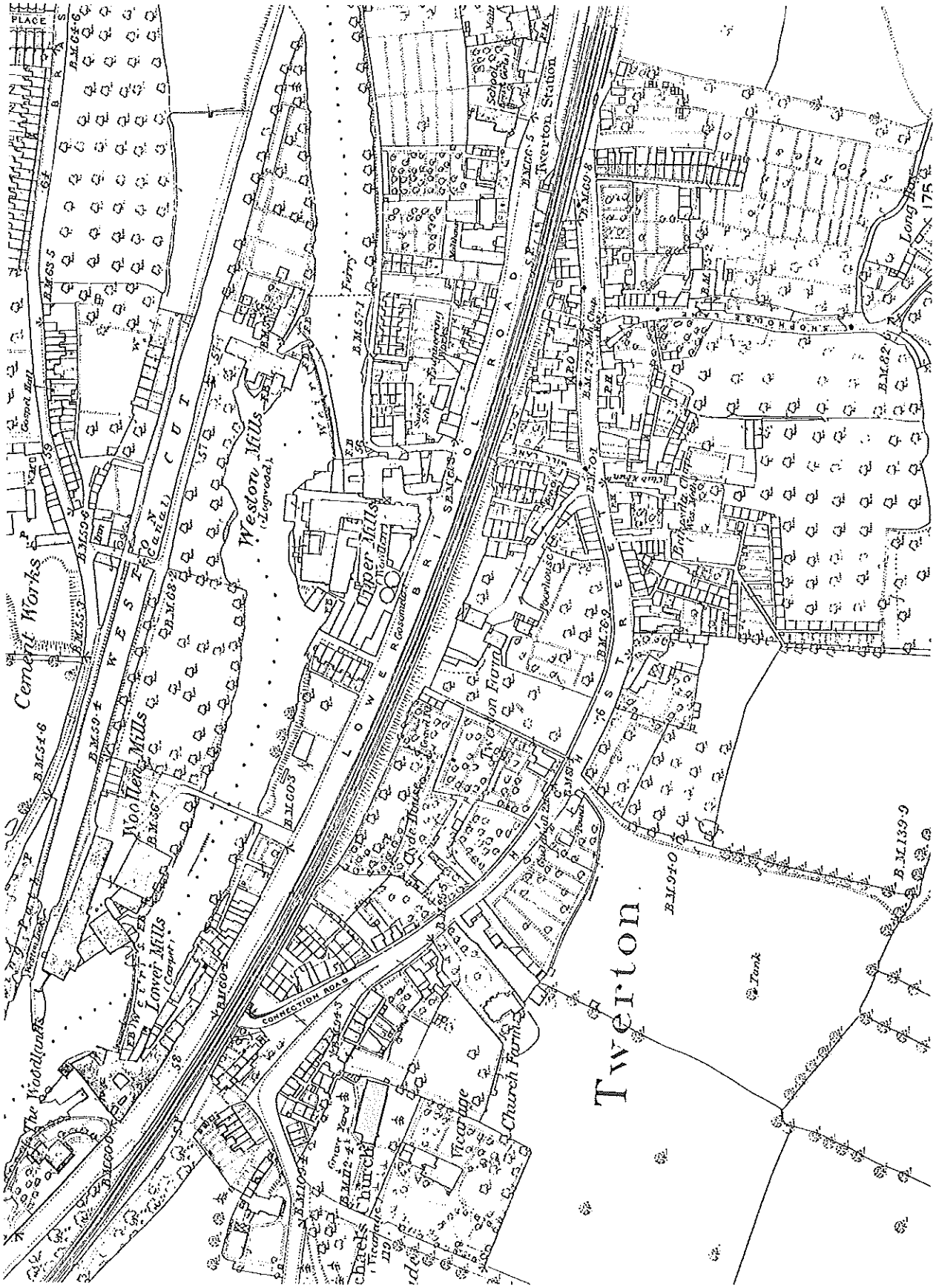
The village had few street amenities, nor is it likely that the parish had a livery of its own. Street name-plates were introduced in the late 19th century, probably when the numbering system was altered in 1891. The old plates on the corners of Mill Lane and Waterloo Buildings appear to be survivors from this period. The only pre-WWII direction post, indicating 'to Englishcombe', was attached to the wall of the house (since demolished) on the west corner of Shophouse Lane. Other old signs include a cast-iron notice prohibiting cycling at the top of Little Hill, and the Turnpike Trust mile stone in the wall next to Rose Cottage. The latter had a distance plate (now missing) marked 'Guildhall 2 Miles', which was still marked on maps of the 1930s, but by 1952 is shown as 'defaced'.

A post-office was established somewhere in the High Street as early as 1811, and in the 1840s and 1850s was run by the Kelson family who appear to have had a haberdasher's shop in Fern House. After 1857 it was located at Newman's drapers shop in Providence Place (11 and 12 High Street) until 1891 when it moved to No.1 Mill Lane, where there was a post-box in the front wall. After 1920 the post office disappeared altogether from the High Street when it was re-located to 'Albany House' on the corner of Jew's Lane on the Lower Bristol Road. In the meantime the post-box was removed to the orchard wall next to Chilcott's Buildings until nos. 26-41 High Street were built on the site in 1963 and it was moved again to its present site in the front wall of Clyde House. The post office returned from Jew's Lane to the High Street in the 1990s (to the Spar store), together with a pillar box. Phone booths have always been installed away from the High Street, in the adjoining residential areas.

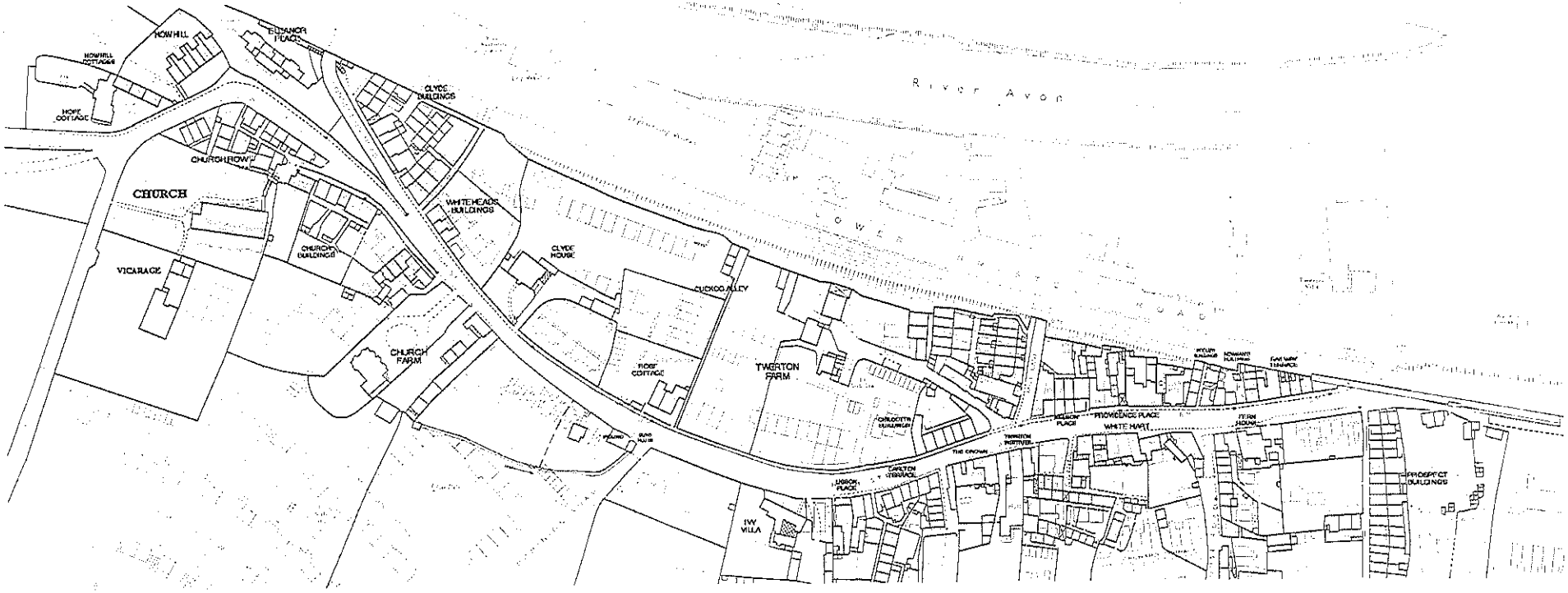
There have never been any fountains, troughs, memorials, or ornamental trees in the High Street, but the public conveniences near the Parade were installed in the early 1950s, and seats have been subsequently provided in front of the Parade and on the corner of Shophouse Lane.

Street Events

Although it is quite probable that the High Street was a scene of activity during the 'Twerton Revels' which took place in the 18th century, Twerton was never associated public events such as markets or fairs. In the late 19th century, Twerton had a high reputation for its flower shows, but these were held in the grounds of Wood House and elsewhere. However, popular events such as funfairs which begin to appear from about that time, were always held in the fields adjoining the High Street, on the Pound Ground, or the land on the west side of Ivy Villa. In the 1930s, a more permanent arena was provided in the field behind Ivy Villa when the Bath City Football Ground was established on the site (below Innox Park) in 1933. In the last 20 years the weekly 'Twerton Market' established on the car park in front of the football ground has also gained in popularity.



Twerton village, from the first edition Ordnance Survey 'County Series' map, surveyed in 1884



The outlines shown on the 1884 OS map, superimposed onto modern detail

Appendix

John Loudon McAdam (1756-1836) introduced a new system of road surfacing which was universally adopted in this country during the 19th century, and is still used throughout the world today where conditions do not favour the use of tarmac. Later referred to as macadamizing, it consists of a layer of small standard-sized stones, about 2 in. diameter, laid onto a well drained sub-soil. Being the same dimension as the average tyre width of a horse-drawn vehicle, the stones automatically compact under the weight of the traffic, while any stone dust (introduced artificially or by vehicular attrition) is washed into the gaps, producing a mortar-like bond. Not only did this produce a flat and stable surface, but required little maintenance and material

John Loudon McAdam did not have the opportunity to apply these principles (acquired from a lifetime of observation) until 1816 when he was appointed Surveyor General of the Bristol Turnpike Trust, but within a year the instant success of his system also led to an offer from the Bath Turnpike Trust. Although his report on the Bath roads was adopted, he did not become General Surveyor of the Bath Trust (in partnership with his grandson) until 1826, by which time the advice and services of the McAdam family were required all over the British Isles. J.L.McAdam himself died in 1836, but his grandson William continued to run the Bath Turnpike Trust until his death in 1861. Macadamizing remained the principle road surface until the early 20th century and the introduction of the motor car

Any local stone was suitable for macadamised roads, but even in McAdam's time it was already evident that the Carboniferous 'Black Rock' limestone found at Clifton (Hotwells) and on the Mendips (Cranmore, Whatley &c.) was more suitable than the local Lias. In 1851, for example, Bath Corporation was ordering '..50 barge loads of Black Rock stones from Hotwells, Bristol, to be delivered to the Corporation stone yard' [City of Bath Act Committee].

The main disadvantage with macadamised surface was that quantities of dust or mud was produced by the attrition of passing traffic. In wet weather this meant that mud had to be scraped from the surface, and in hot weather the road had to be water sprayed or treated with calcium chloride to lay the dust. This became an increasing problem as cars with pneumatic tyres travelling at higher speeds made their appearance, only resolved by the introduction of tar-based surfacing.

Source Maps

Thomas Thorpe, 'Five Miles Around Bath', published 1742, Bath Record Office [BRO]

C.Harcourt Masters, Bath Turnpike Trust road map, surveyed 1786, Somerset Record Office [SRO] D/T/ba 24

Jeremiah Cruse, Twerton parish map surveyed in 1807, copy in BRO [with schedule 1825-1837 in SRO]

Kennet & Avon Canal Extension, Deposited Plan, 1810, SRO Q/RUp 31

I.K.Brunel, Deposited Plan of the Proposed Great Western Railway, 1833, SRO, RUp 120, with schedule. *Note that the railway and new road, as built, takes a course several yards to the south of the proposed alignment shown on the deposited plan.*

Tithe map of Twerton, 1840, SRO D/D/Rt 324, with schedule

OS 1:500 scale, Sheet XIII.8.15.Bath, surveyed 1884

OS 1:2,500 scale (County Series), Sheet XIII.8.; editions 1888 (surveyed 1884), 1903, 1932

OS ST7264 1:2,500 scale, 1952; OS ST7264NE 1:1,250 scale, 1973

Further Reading

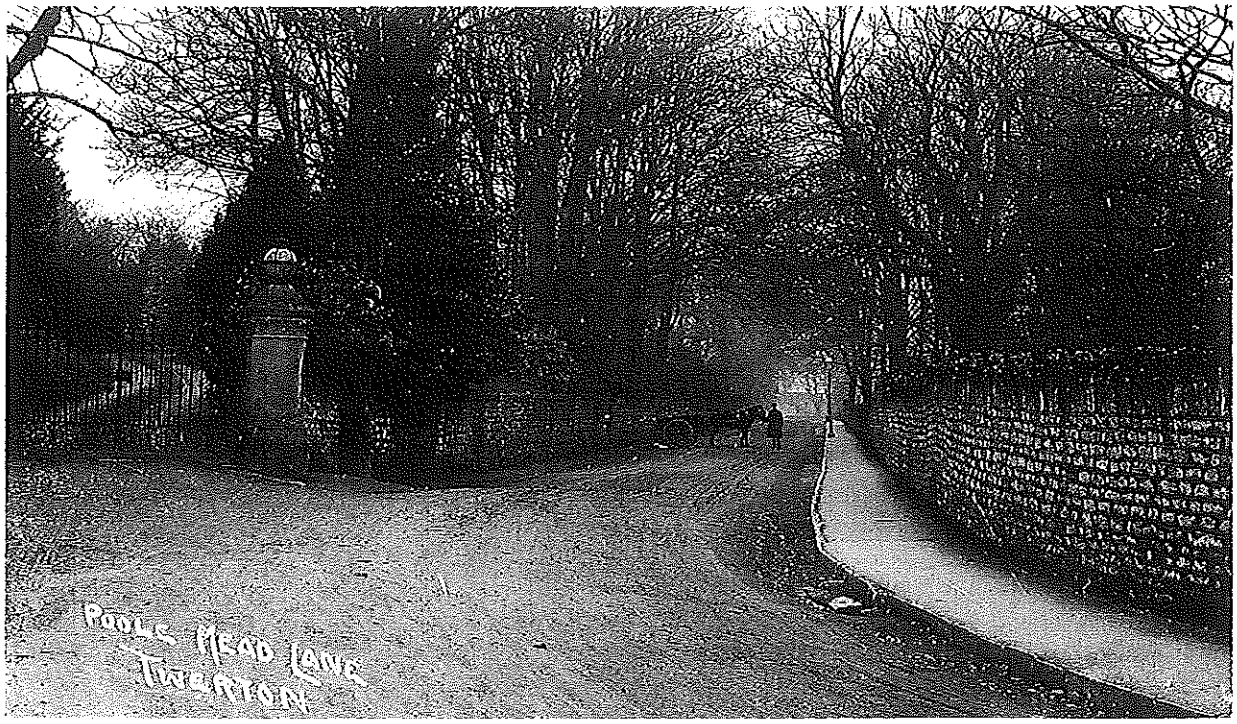
Nicholas von Behr, 'The Cloth Industry of Twerton from the 1780s to the 1820s', *Bath History* vol.VI, 1996, pp.88-107

Kenneth R.Clew, *The Kennet & Avon Canal*, 1968

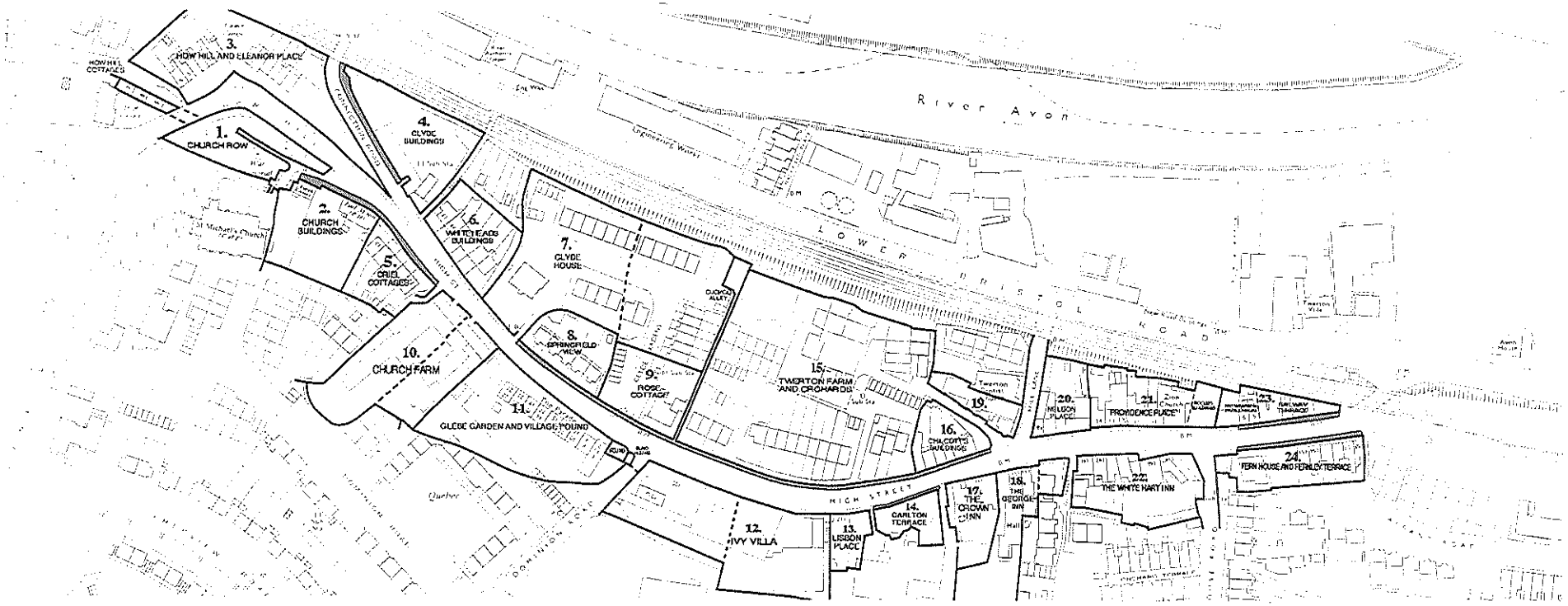
Robert G.Naish, *Twerton Vols I & II* [Bath Central Library: a collection of newspaper cuttings containing a series of articles on the history of Twerton, published in the *Bath & Wilts Chronicle and Herald* in the 1930s]

W.J.Reader, *Macadam - the McAdam Family and the Turnpike Roads, 1798-1861*

D.M.M.Shorrocks ed.,'Medieval Deeds from the Walker-Heneage MSS', *Medieval Deeds of Bath and District*, Somerset Record Society, Vol.73, 1974



The western end of Twerton village. Newton Lane, at the top of How Hill in 1910. To the left is the junction with Watery Lane and the former entrance to Pool Mead House.



KEY to the **Site Descriptions**, indicating the site numbers in the text.

Also shown are the original sections of raised pavement (shaded) still existing up to the mid 20th century

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

1. Church Row (now the Church Yard and How Hill Cottages)

At the extreme western end of the High Street, the road to Newton originally climbed up the slope in front of the Full Moon, into the present churchyard, where it passed between a complex of buildings known as Church Row. Mid 14th century references to '... a certain bakehouse ... in Twerton lying between the churchyard and the way leading towards Newton ...', and '... a cottage with adjoining courtyard called Churchcote there ...' indicate that this site had been occupied from earliest times and is therefore of particular archaeological interest. When the turnpike road was diverted in the 1830s the houses on the north side of Church Row were demolished and replaced with new buildings on the site of the old road next to the remaining houses. However, by 1900 most of these buildings were derelict and after WWI were demolished for the enlargement of the churchyard. The churchyard had already been closed for burials in 1881, so in 1920 the ground was merely backfilled for the erection of the war memorial.

2. Church Buildings (68 High Street - the Full Moon, and the Church Rooms)

The high pavement probably originated in the Middle Ages as an elevated causeway along a natural terrace overlooking the junction of the turnpike road and lane to Newton. In 1786 a single building, possibly a dwelling, is shown on the site of the present Full Moon public house. However, this plot of ground appears to have been redeveloped in the early 19th century, probably at about the time the Sunday School was built in 1816, and by the 1830s the whole frontage had been completely filled in with new dwellings. Some of these became shops, including a small grocer/confectioners and the Full Moon itself (originally a grocer's shop in the late 1860s) which became a public house in about 1872. Steps with rails leading up from the road onto the pavement, outside the entrance, were installed by the 1880s. It was about this time that the whole rank acquired the title of 'Church Buildings'. After WWII the house adjoining the School had become derelict and was demolished in the 1960s, and in the 1980s the pavement in front of this gap was removed to provide access for a car park at the rear of the Full Moon. The steps outside the public house were also removed in the 1960s as a traffic hazard, and railings installed along the raised path for pedestrian safety. However, the pitched paving between the front door of the Full Moon and the site of the steps still remain, and the pitching in the pathway (once known as 'Monk's Walk') in front of the Church Rooms appears to still exist under the asphalt. The ramp and steps next to the churchyard were added when the Rooms were refurbished in the 1990s.

3. Eleanor Place and How Hill (now 1-6 Eleanor Cottages and nos.1-8 How Hill)

When the turnpike road was diverted at the west end of the High Street in 1828, a rank of cottages known as Eleanor Place was built on the steep ground (formerly an orchard) just below the road, roughly on the site of the present Eleanor Cottages. Attached to the back of these, at the higher level facing onto the road, was a another building described as a 'hothouse' belonging to Charles Wilkins. Below the cottages, at the end of their gardens, was a pathway which led in one direction down to the bottom of Connection Road (described below) and the factory area of the Lower Mill, and in the other, up into Twerton Wood. When the railway was built in 1840, the hothouse was replaced by a Jacobean-style house known as Eleanor Cottage, and the lower pathway was realigned alongside the viaduct. The long flight of steps leading down to the road still exists (although now walled up), but the route in the opposite direction, which connected with Wood House and Twerton Wood, was closed off in the early 20th century. All these buildings were destroyed by a wartime bomb. Although a modern house was built on the site of Eleanor Cottage in the mid 1950s, this was later demolished, together with the ruins of the lower rank, for the building of the present row of houses in the 1990s.

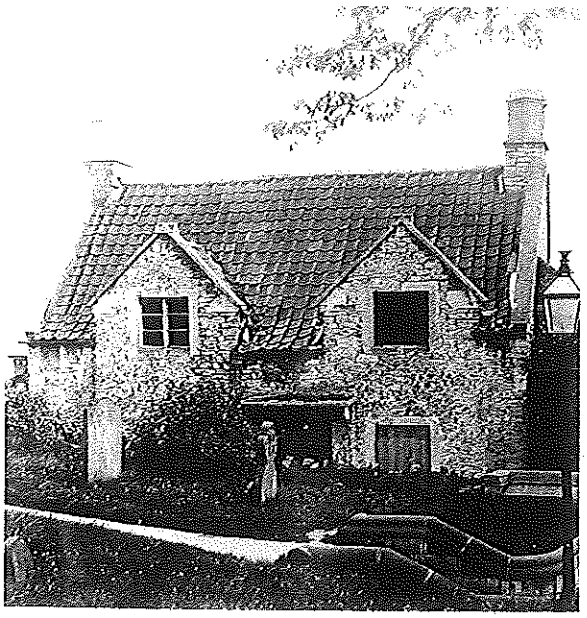
Initially, in the late 1820s, How Hill was laid out merely as a side entrance leading off from the newly diverted turnpike road into the lanes to Newton (in front of the old Howe Hill Cottages) and Englishcombe (past the church). It was not until the late 1830s when the railway was completed and the turnpike diversion abandoned, that it was extended, and the present layout of Newton Road and

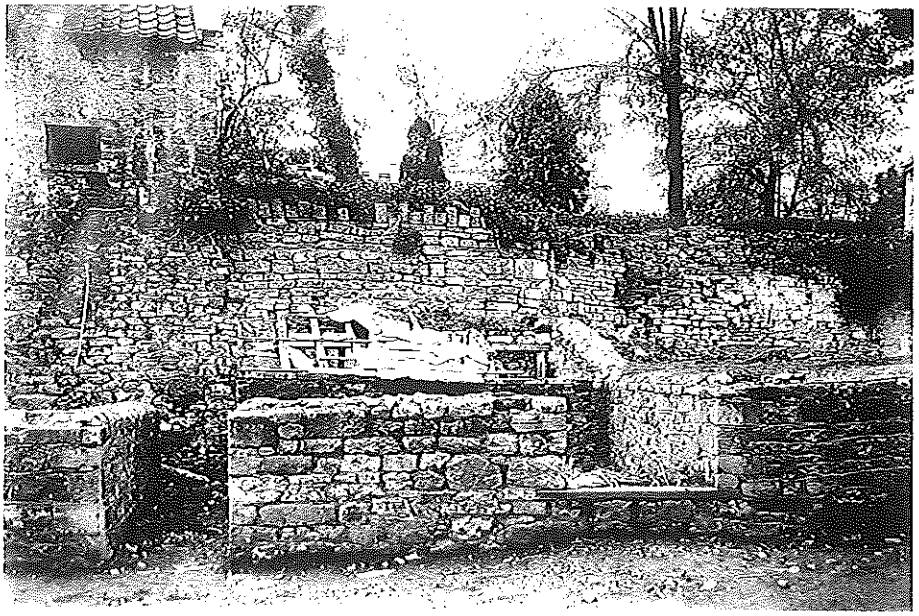
Church Row in the early 1900s

Left: How Hill Cottages, remnant of Church Row, cut off by the How Hill road. The old lane to Newton ran along the front of the cottages

Below Left: The old house which once stood at the eastern end of Church Row, facing into the churchyard. The steps, right, and gravestones still remain

Below Right: Another old house in Church Row, below the churchyard. The alleyway by the garden wall (the photograph is torn here), was formerly part of the old lane to Newton





The high retaining wall between the old houses shown above, together with the back of the eastern house (left) and the garden wall of the other (right). In the foreground is the alleyway, formerly the old road, and in the distance the feint outlines of the church tower is just visible