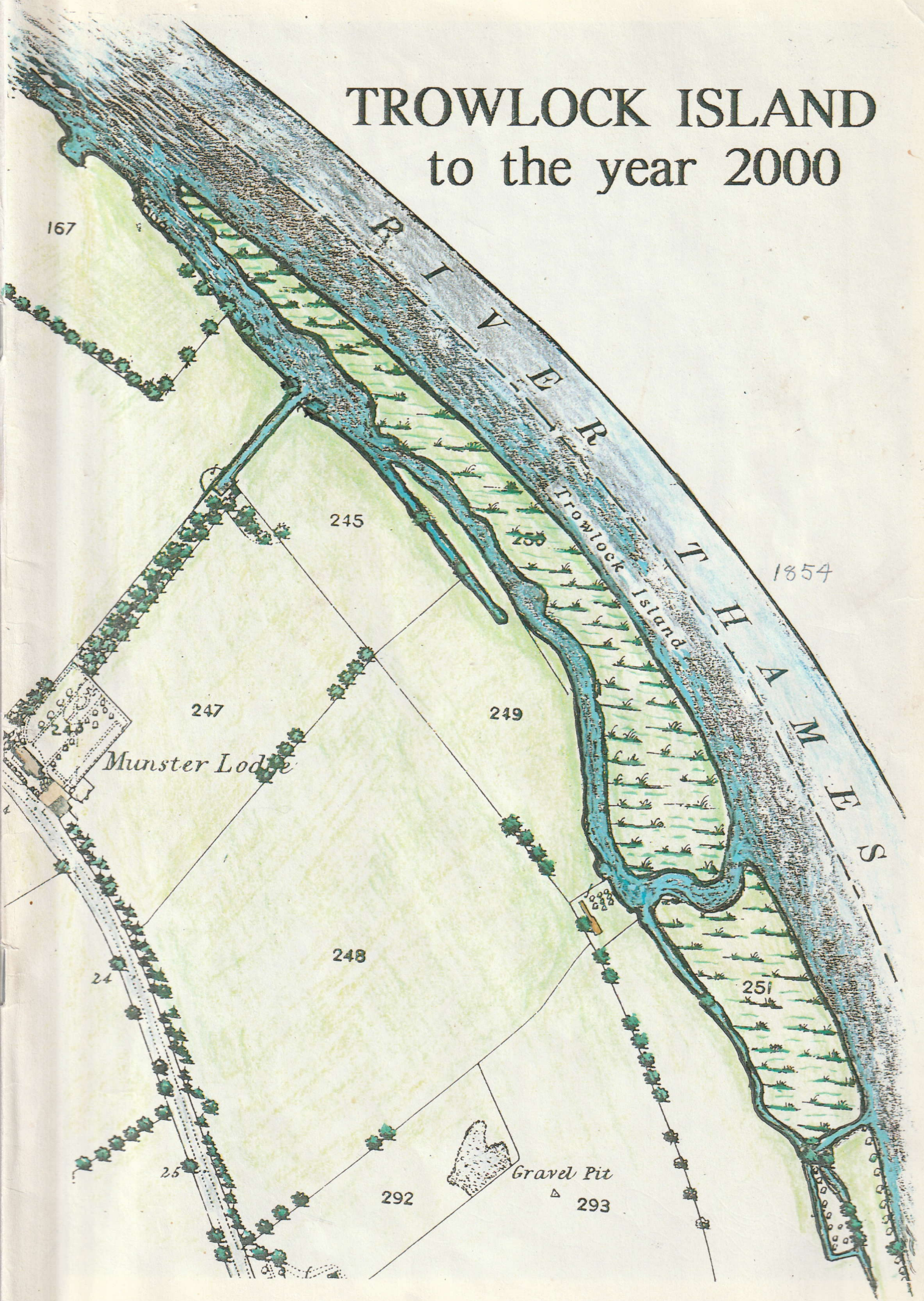


# TROWLOCK ISLAND to the year 2000





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Most of the introductory history section was contributed by John Bazalgette interspersed with other bits of information and research.

Old photos were lent by: Josie Street  
Julie Windsor  
Sally and Eric Philps  
John Lavington  
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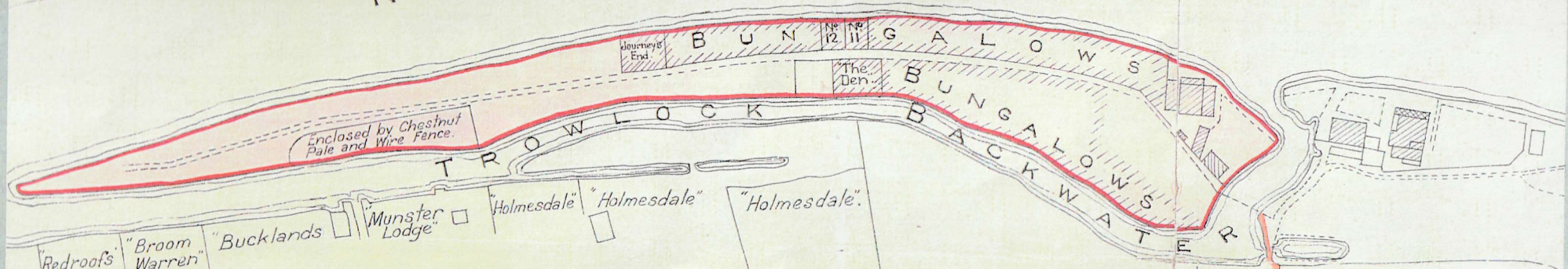
The book really put itself together as most people wrote their own contributions, but Jenifer Wyatt took some photos, sorted things into pages and stuck them down.

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# TROWLOCK ISLAND TEDDINGTON.

R I V E R T H A M E S



enclosed by Chestnut Pale and Wire Fence.

Houneys End

12

11

The Den

TROWLOCK

BUNGALOWS

BUNGALOWS

BACKWATER

Redroofs

"Broom Warren"

"Bucklands"

Munster Lodge

"Holmesdale"

"Holmesdale"

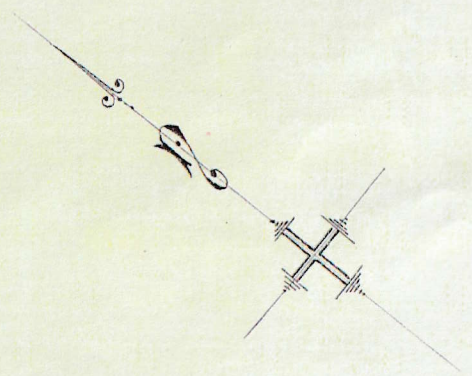
"Holmesdale"

Broom Road

From Teddington.

BROOM ROAD

To Kingston Bridge.



## TROWLOCK ISLAND to the year 2000

Trowlock Island takes its name from a type of Thames barge, a trow, which is used to carry loads between 50 and 60 tons.

It was originally two islands known as Swans Nest Ayte. They may have partly consisted of rubble dumped after the Great Fire of London in 1666. When they were clearing up afterwards material was distributed on various aytes, aits, eyöts and islands as far upstream as Marlowe.

The first part of Teddington Lock was constructed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The redundant earth, gravel and stones were dumped on the islands, creating one long, thin island. Presumably the infill was brought from the lock on a trow.

But there was also house named "The Trowlock" close to the end of what is now called Broom Water. This is marked on an 1894 map.

The tenure of the island and land along the backwater was held by the owners of two large houses nearby, Sir George Metcalf of Munster Lodge and Edward Allcard of Holmesdale, which had a large garden on part of the land where Teddington School now stands. There was a sewage works alongside Trowlock Way.



The island was formed by a stream that ran across what is now the recreation ground. It came past where the more modern brick boathouse now stands (built by BP in the early 60s) and joined the backwater opposite No.38. Access to the ferry was gained along the right of way which crosses the property of the old boathouse and then over a small bridge. The bridge and the stream disappeared when the the 'new' boathouse was built.



Land along the backwater was leased to Harry Gibbs who ran a boat-building business from 1910 and plots on the island were rented out for people to build weekend bungalows. These were not allowed to exceed 13' in height measured above Plot No.4. They do not seem to merit being registered as proper dwellings as they are not marked on some early ordnance survey maps although they were definitely there as they were photographed in the last century.

It has been said that the early bungalows were planned as holiday chalets where actors and opera singers kept their mistresses during the summer. Perhaps the fact that in the late 1990s we still have people involved in the media is a sign that the artistic culture lives on.



Until 1948 the right to run the ferry was in the hands of the owner of the boathouse, who up till then was a man called Whipsey who charged 2d for the trouble of rowing people across to the island. The present design of ferry went into place in 1948 and the first ferry lasted in service until the late 60s when it was pensioned off and became used for transporting furniture and heavy goods when people moved house or were rebuilding. Passers by on the towpath were once surprised to see someone playing a piano among a pile of furniture as he was slowly towed along by another raft..

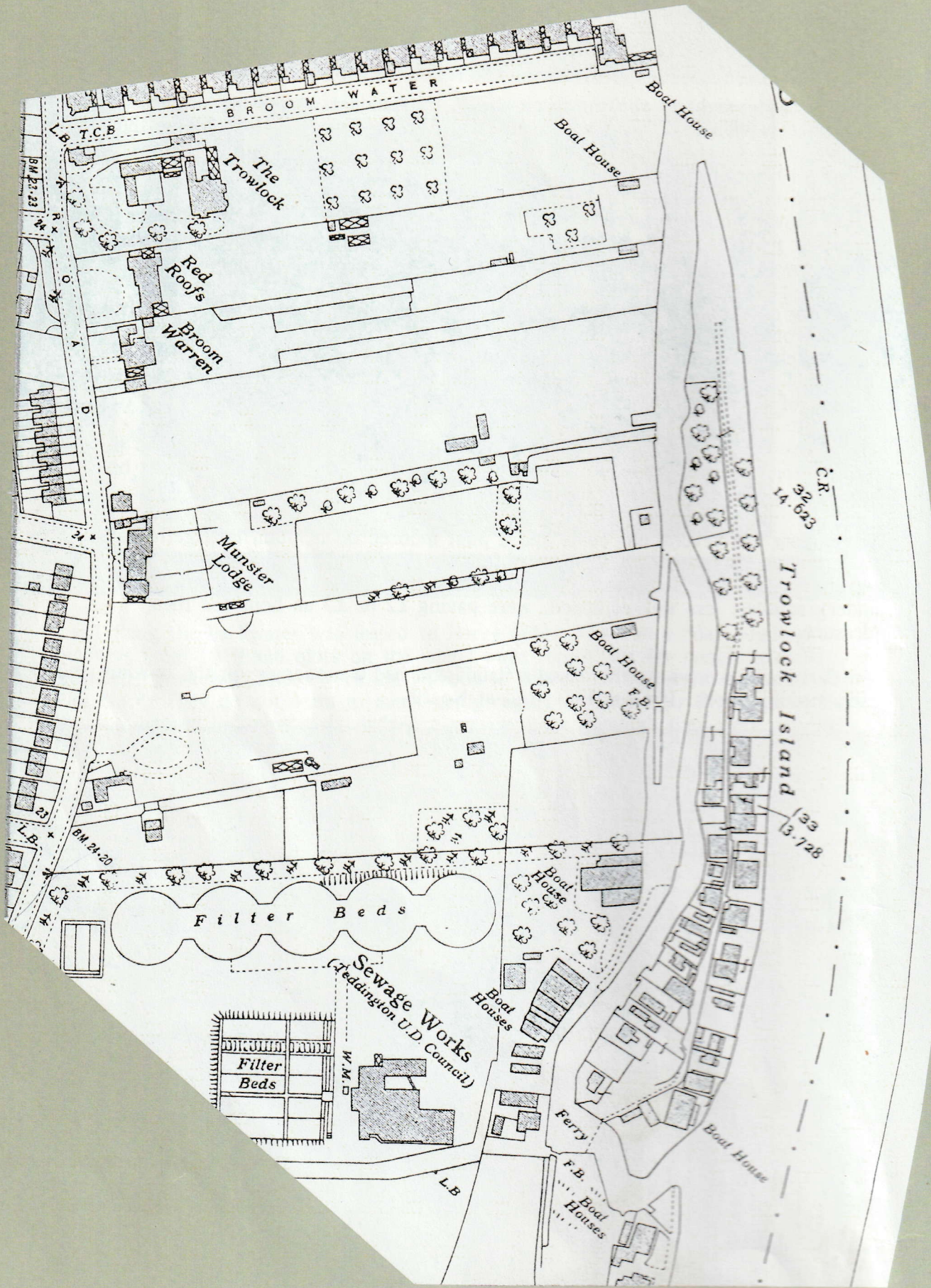
The ferry once sank in the early '60s. A pleasure steamer had sunk on the shallows just in front of the Canoe Club. Large numbers of journalists came in hoards to photograph and report on the incident. Ignoring the warning notice - as the press often do - they grossly overloaded the ferry which sank with them all on board. As a result of their embarrassment, neither event was actually published.

There was a rumour going round more recently that an unlucky resident had piled paving stones all on one side of the ferry so it tipped over and sank and he had to quickly hire a crane to come and rescue it.

The stream had several old boats and a punt moored on it. John Bazalgette bought the punt for £3 from Vic Carter, who followed Whipsey into the old boathouse. He repaired it and took it up to Oxford where he had 3 years of free punting. Other undergraduates, less well equipped, were paying £2 or £3 an hour for their pleasure.

Vic Carter was known as the island's Bailiff and had a monopoly on the building and campshedding work. His son Ken lived at No.29.





In a history of the area by Ken Howe, a Mr Stanford gives his opinion that the chalet bungalows on Trowlock Island "do nothing for the view: they and similar ticky-tacky will be a blot on the landscape to Staines".



## THE COMPANY

In 1932 the tenants got together to form Trowlock Island Ltd and the two owners agreed to sell the whole island to the new company. £5000 was paid and the documents were signed by John Roberts who lived at the Ferry House. It was not until the late 1940s that moorings began to be let and the Company began to have an income over and above the Service Charge.

Denis Baker, the Company Secretary at the time, negotiated a favourable deal with the Inland Revenue about the income which has stood the islanders in good stead ever since.

There was a long list of rules for the new freeholders. Some of the things they were not allowed to do were:

- Own more than one dog and/or cat
- Erect showbooths, roundabouts or swings
- Expose washing publicly on a clothes line
- Allow their buildings or gardens to become untidy
- Store more than two gallons of ignitable fuel
- Play the pianola or gramophone after midnight
- Run a ferry across the river for profit

The first house to be lived in full time was The Cabin, No.34. It was not until the mid 60s that the majority of the houses became occupied all the year round. At the time, with few exceptions, the occupants were upper middle-aged or elderly because it was not possible to get a mortgage on what were deemed "temporary dwellings". There were very few children on the island. Indeed, it was not until the 1970s that the local Council became reconciled to the fact that the island dwellers were permanent and it began to give planning consent for changes people wished to make. Nowadays financial lenders such as the Abbey National and Northern Rock are happy to produce mortgages for timber framed buildings.

In the 1950s and 60s there was a small group of islanders, who were very 'upper crust'. They lived in Nos. 2 and 4 (yachting blazers and naval caps). One of them, Claude Russell who lived at No.4 was a close relative of the Duke of Bedford. He, Eric Freeman (see No.2) and others constituted a strong group who ran the island's affairs through the Board of Trowlock Island Ltd for many years. They were sticklers for keeping the covenants and caused many upsets and strong feelings among the residents.

*1955 The Barzgelter Wad. Is. family moved into No 10*

In 1956 Jose and Lee Street moved into No.31; they were professional dancers. The house had been burned down in the only serious fire on the island some years before they arrived. The owners were away at the time of the fire and the Woodhouses next door had to preserve their own house from burning by throwing buckets of water over it. No.31 was then rebuilt in its present form.

Richard and Venetia Kay, both actors - he with the National Theatre - lived in No.37 during the late 60s to early 70s. At this time Glynn Edwards, famous for his part of Dave the barman in the long running TV series 'Minder', and his wife, Christine Pilgrim, who was a not inconsiderable music hall performer, moved into 'Cingalee', No.28. Glynn was a dedicated naturist and visitors had to knock loudly before entering the garden in order to avoid embarrassing themselves (he was quite unconcerned).

## LIFE ON THE ISLAND

Living on Trowlock Island in the 1950s was not simple. Most of the houses were only lived in during the summer and then just at weekends. Almost the only permanent residents were the Woodhouses, Mrs Westers, Arthur and May Rowbotham and the Bazalgettes who moved in just before Easter 1955.

The only main service to houses at the time was gas. Houses had gas lighting and, of course, heating, since solid fuel was banned by the covenants. Fresh water was collected from a standpipe by the ferry. Water for washing and bathing was pumped up from the river. The semi-rotary pump on the front of No.10 has been kept as a reminder of days when family members took turns to do 100 strokes of the pump till the tank on the roof was filled (100 gallons). Waste water flowed into the river along with water off roof tops and from baths, basins and sinks. In 1955 electricity was brought and in the late 50s fresh water was piped to all houses.

There being no sewers, houses had chemical toilets which were emptied by the Council on Mondays and Fridays. A large bucket on wheels, holding some 50 gallons or so of a mixture of sewage and chemical, was then trundled along the path and over to the mainland where it was emptied into a tanker which removed it from the locality. Several houses still have the remains of a little door on the side of the house through which the 'Buckety Bill' men used to extract the Elsan to empty it. More than one unwary islander was caught 'with their pants down' when their bucket was whipped away! There were periodic accidents when the container over-balanced and spilled its contents on the path, calling for desperate cleaning up operations.

Various efforts were made to do something about the toilets. Bob Oram who lived in No.9 was a property developer and he felt that using such primitive facilities did his image no good, so he began agitating on the Board for a change. The major problem was to get the material from its low level up to the main sewer in Broom Road, given that one had to collect it by running a drain past all the properties. This seemed to mean that the cost of the deep sump needed and then the power of the necessary pumps made the whole scheme out of the question. Bob's first attempt at a solution was when he asked the Board to test a device he had come across in Canada. This was called the Destroilet, a machine that was connected to a gas fired nozzle, lit by an electric spark. This mechanism came into play as the lid was closed after the loo had been used, blasting a flame of great heat at the residue and burning it all up. The noise was comparable to Concorde on take-off. The smoke and emissions were pumped up a chimney and all the world knew when the loo had been in use.

Since this was an expensive machine it was decided to ask the Bazalgette family with their 5 children to test the device. They did and reported back after 3 months. Their report pointed out that the noise was such that the children, aged from 2 to 10, had been terrified and had almost all reverted to using pots. The smell that went up the chimney and then hung around along the path was vile. Not only that, but ladies who had come to use the loo soon after someone else had been there, generated a cloud of steam from the red hot pan which resulted in at least one severe scalding. In addition, the heat was such that the metal pan had degenerated over the 3 months and would have needed to be replaced. They did not recommend the general introduction of Destroilets.



*Buckety Bill door*

In 1972 Bob Oram found an engineer who came up with a solution for a system that would not need such a deep sump as had been imagined. Starting at the middle of the island between No.10 and No.33 the sewer ran northwards into a sump opposite No.15. The effluent was then pumped up to just below the surface and fell by a gentle slope back southwards, picking up junction pipes from No.9 onwards. It flowed into a sump on the 'spare plot' between the last 2 houses at the south end of the island, across to another sump beneath the police club whence it was pumped up to the main sewer. It was ingenious and effective: it has worked almost without fault for over 25 years. The engineers who built the system and sumps were called Sloggetts - a name which seemed to suit the job.

Persuading islanders to take part in the scheme was a tougher job than one might expect. The Company paid the bulk of the cost but each householder was asked to contribute £450 to be joined up. The Company negotiated with the Council for a mortgage to anyone who needed it but in the end only one taker called in that support. Tom Monk was the able Treasurer of the scheme. All freeholders had 2-3 Board Members to visit to explain what would happen. It may seem unbelievable but there were several who did not want to take part. One islander, who had lived on a boat for many years, shouted at the visiting Board member that he had been sitting on a bucket for a generation and saw no need to change now! Another believed that the scheme was a way for Board members to fleece islanders. In the end, only one person (see No.16) felt unable to take part. It was not until Bill Johncey bought that house and installed the link for himself that all houses became 'modern'.

The mid 1970s were not a happy time on the island. A loss of confidence in the Board led to accusations being made against Bob Woodhouse, the Chairman, and Denis Baker, the Secretary that led in the end to the whole Board resigning in protest. Until then the Company affairs had been run in a low key way with the AGM as the only time that people came together. If present islanders think that our AGMs are unusual they would not believe what the old AGMs were like. Mayhem was an understatement. Threats of writs flew back and forth: wives challenged each other to fights, husbands restraining them. Some people, unable to take the whole thing seriously, would fall about laughing at the bizarre behaviour.

Such conduct is apparently not restricted to Trowlock Island: enquiries about how other inhabited islands carry out their business informed us that this also happens on Thames Ditton Island. It seems that being part of a small community carries with it both good and bad things. After all, the things most closely linked to our deepest feelings of security - our homes - are entwined when one lives so close together and it is easy to feel unsafe and threatened by thoughtless behaviour. Once the touch paper is alight the rocket goes up!

Anyway, in 1976 a new Board was elected and efforts were made to heal the rift and to change the culture of the community. Where Company AGMs had simply been a business meeting, the new Board started a tradition of having a drink together after business was over. It was also felt that a Christmas party and other events would make for better relations between us all. In 1977 they organised a big party to celebrate the Queen's 25th Jubilee. A cherry tree was planted by Louise Woodhouse, wife of the previous Chairman, in the area north of No.17 to mark the occasion.



SIMON

PAPA



The previous Boards had done little to make life on the island easier, so the decision was taken to put lighting on the path and buy barrows for carrying shopping from the mainland to one's house. Time and trouble was taken to keep people up to date with what was happening and for a while a half yearly newsletter was circulated. It was decided that moorers deserved more for their money than a shed with 2 bucket toilets in it, so water was laid all along the north end of the island with stand pipes at intervals and a power cable led to points from which moorers could use small hand tools to work on their boats. Security lighting was also installed. Where previously the AGM was simply presented with the annual accounts, a Chairman's Report now brought the year together and explained what the policy was for the next year. This tradition has been kept up ever since.



## FLOODS

Of course flooding is part of life on Trowlock Island. The highest recorded flood was in the winter of 1947. The level of that flood is marked on the old boathouse by the sliding doors. Just beneath that is the record of the flood of January 1990. There is a marker between Cheyne Cottage and Cingalee which also marks the highest flood levels.

Almost everyone has stories of what happened in floods. When Chris Marsland and Susanne lived in Sonoma, No.26, the house had not been raised. One flood night they were awoken by plaintive cries from their cat. Surprised to find the floor of the bedroom covered in water they paddled through to the living room to find their cat floating around on their expensive Indian rug; an aquatic form of flying carpet.

On another occasion Christine Pilgrim was returning from a tour of Texas with her music hall troupe. She arrived at the ferry carrying her huge suitcase to find the area flooded and an American wanting to come across to visit someone, with the ferry on the other side. Standing back from the water rising over the land, he asked her "Can I get to the ferry? How deep is it?" "Yes" she said and marched forward in her jet-lagged state towards the winch. She zig-zagged a bit and went over the edge with her bag in her hand, finishing up neck deep in the river. The American was effusive with gratitude at the fullness of her answer to his question but insisted that a verbal response would have been more than adequate.



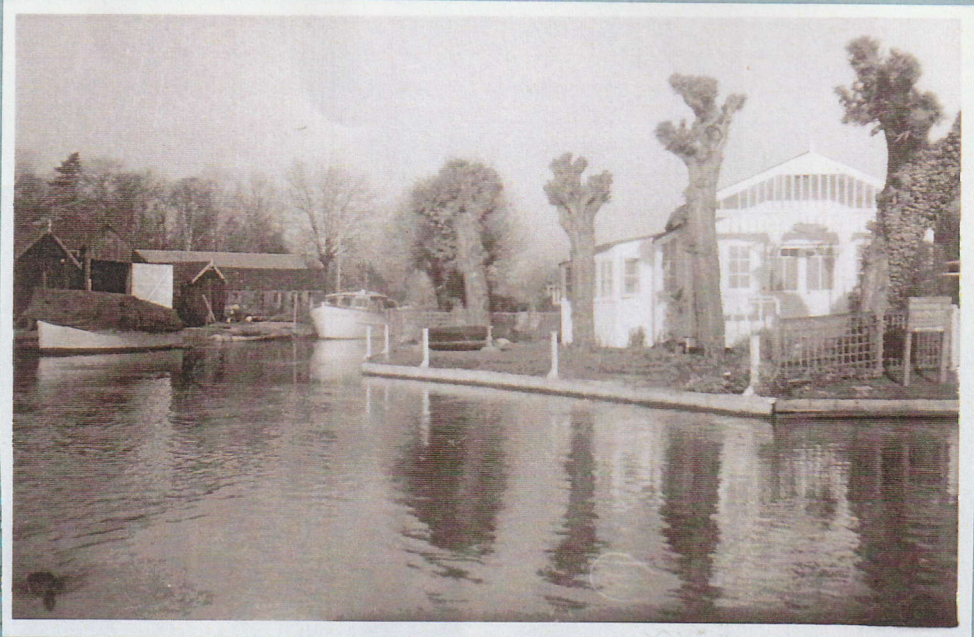
1929

today



12

13



No 10  
1914

The Bungalows, Trowlock Island, Teddington

A.S. No 445



1927

Trowlock Island, Teddington

A.S. 4732



the Royal Canoe Club

south end garden







Mack McKinney who looks  
after the communal gardens





## No 2

Residents: Mrs Helen Harris and son William

The original house existed in 1932 and the first freeholder was Josephine de Weert.

Among various owners, two past Commodores of the Royal Canoe Club occupied the house. One was Eric Freeman, a talented sailor of sailing canoes and his name appears frequently on the Honours Board at the Club over many years.

In 1956 the original house was swept away during severe floods, but was rebuilt and the owner stayed on until 1974 when it was bought by Jean Stewart, a member of a well known Thames-side family. Her son Ossie is an Olympic yachtsman having won a bronze medal at the Barcelona Games.

The present resident bought the house from her in early 1999.



**No 3** now called "Mofie's Roam" after cats Mo and Alfie who love roaming  
around

Residents: Janie Lovelady - owner  
David Messer - partner

Since moving into the property in 1993 a full renovation has been completed. These island houses are wonderful as one can keep the shell of the house and re-design the interior to one's own taste.

Living here is a joy as each day is different on the river. We love watching the cygnets grow into majestic swans. Glorious sunsets and wild thundery nights. The variety of boats passing by finds you looking at the river instead of the television. I wonder how many people have danced by on party boats.



## No 4

Now owned by Roger and Vivienne Mathias, who lease it to a tenant.

When Trowlock Island Ltd was set up Plot No.4, just the site, was bought for £166 10s. by Harry Fife who sold 2 years later for £466 10s to Mr Statham who erected a property on it. The 'datum point' against which the restriction for building roof heights is measured is the path outside the gate of this property.

It was next sold to Mr Harrington for £625 in 1937 and then on-to Miss Pamela Griffiths for £900 in 1943.

Mrs Beryl Pettitt lived there until the end of last year. She was associated with the Tamesis sailing club, where she and her husband held flag officer positions.



**No 6** RIVERDALE

Residents: Mary and Roger Boon and their 4 children  
Paul, Andrew, Helen and Rachel

Roger is the Chairman of Trowlock Island Ltd

This is his advice on campshedding:

Not long after we had moved into No.6, I decided that the campshedding needed renewing. I measured up for materials i.e. interlocking steel sheeting and lengths of 2"x8" timber and ordered them. When all the materials were on site I started removing the old capping, which took one day. The next morning I could not believe what I saw. The old campshedding, which was Anderson Shelter corrugated iron, had bowed outwards into the river and a huge pool of water had formed and it looked as though the bungalow was slipping into it.

Fortunately it looked far worse than it was and when I drove the new steel sheets in place and backfilled with dredgings the frontage became really solid and secure. The moral of this story is to put in your new campshedding before you remove the old.



**No 7** RIVERSIDE

The first freeholder in 1932 was Charles Orton

Current owners: Pat and Alan Bolding, who bought it from a Mr and Mrs Sweet

This is the only house on the island which is not regularly occupied, but has a useful-looking boat moored.



sailing skiff



## No.8

Residents: Valerie Carr and Nick Cocking

The first freeholder was Archibald Dennis Baker, a local government clerk, who purchased the house in 1937 for £500. It was named "Treetops".

The Baker family, father and son, owned the house until the mid 70s but never lived there. Between them they took the role of Company Secretary until 1976. They are commemorated on a bench near the burning pit.

Prior to buying No.8, Val has the unusual history of having owned and lived in two other properties on the island, No.33 and No.3.  
Who says women are indecisive ???

She bought this bungalow in 1992 and she and Nick had it practically rebuilt and extended in 1997 using the good services of Seamus, Pat and Mick.



## No 9

Residents: Matthias Wiessler and Lucy Stapley, their 2 children, Oscar(2.5) and Freya(11weeks) and Mixie the cat

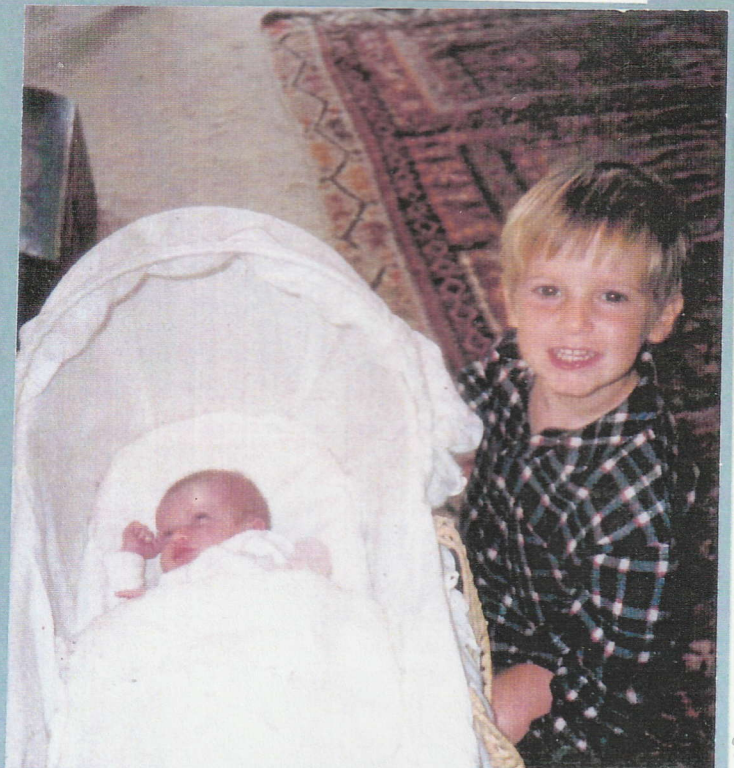
Registered in 1950 as the Log Hut to Gillian and John Callcott Reilly of Broom Road, Teddington.

Robert and Eileen Oram purchased the property in 1964 and raised it from ground level.

Neighbours recall that in the early '60s No.9 was rented to a group of "gipsy " looking people, suspected by the police of a link with the Great Train Robbery. They were watched for some time from across the river and undercover police made several visits to the Island.



the youngest islander →







the path

across the  
mainstream





**No 10** Originally called "Mayfair", this is the house that has had black and white stripes since early in its history - see the postcards

Residents: Jane and John Bazalgette

The first owner of the house after the formation of the Company was Mr H Barnes. It was bought from Mr Peter Callcott-Reilly in the spring of 1955 by Jack and Jo Bazalgette, who passed the house on to their son John and his wife Jane in 1969.

When Jo and Jack moved in, there followed a period when their family of 4 children was poorly fed. The kitchen at the time faced on to the path and Jo, never an enthusiastic cook, was always watching the activities on the river. Meals were left to go hang. At the time the whole of the front of the house was an open verandah. The decision was quickly made to close the verandah space in and create a kitchen and dining room as they now exist. From then on the family began to put on weight again!

One of the consequences of this replanning is that the parents' master bedroom became a room entirely closed in, with no outside windows and capable of being completely walked around in a circuit of the house. It constitutes the literal centre which gives great delight to anyone of a psychoanalytical inclination.

In the winter of 1959 the house was flooded and a further development decision was taken to raise the building another 18". This actually took place during December 1960. The family - 4 offspring plus 2 cousins permanently billeted on the island - passed a cautious Christmas since the house was balanced on 48 jacks which were lifting the house inch by inch. The contractors who did the job were the Weavers, father and son, who also connected the mains drainage to the houses in the 1970s.

Jo and Jack converted what was a tool shed between the house and the neighbours into a bedroom/study. That use has continued to this day, though the Council when checking the building for rating purposes was surprised to discover the discrepancy between their plans and actual use.

John and Jane moved onto the island in August 1969 and it took 7 men from Bentalls Removal Service to move them from their previous home in Hackney and get them into the house. Apart from extending the balcony towards the river no further modifications have been made - yet! They have brought up their 5 children there. The house became home to numerous guinea pigs, hamsters, cats, a budgerigar and numerous fancy rats, about which many a tale can be told. Various visitors were brought into the house by the cats including ducklings, baby thrushes, bats, a frog and an eel.

Though not at all large in floor space, the house has 6 bedrooms, some no bigger than a broom cupboard but enough for each child to have its own private space.



1988  
Jane, Simon, Justin, Jill, Elizabeth, Pippa, John  
& Jack & Cat.



## No 11

Residents: Brian Harper-Lewis and Liz James

In 1931 Edward Allcard (father of first single-handed round-the-world yachtsman) and Walter Westhead sold Plot No.11 to Trowlock Island Ltd and they in turn, four months later sold it to Arthur Beecham. Undoubtedly many of the plots began in a similar way.

At this time they added a covenant stating "no gramophones wireless loudspeakers piano pianola or any other musical instrument...to be played between the hours of 2pm and 8am". Something we assiduously uphold today! Although it has not always been the case for all, as it is said that in the '80s a neighbour was known to play his guitar sitting on his roof at night.

Mr Brookes owned No.11 in 1955 and he holidayed here with his wife and daughter in what was a true chalet, having only a single large room, toilet and kitchen. He sold it to Arthur and May Rowbotham, who had till then lived in No.12a but wanted a smaller property. They extended the house back to the path. They were probably amongst the first people to live here all the year round. Arthur looked after the moorings and Diane McKenna, now living at No.16, remembers taking the boat fee to this kindly gentleman when she was about 8. Arthur died in the early '70s.

After several years Ken Downham moved in with May and they were together until May died. In fact she died in the arms of her neighbour's daughter, Jill Bazalgette. Ken then inherited the house.

Paul Sparks bought it as a family holiday home in 1992 and modernised it by adding central heating, refitting the kitchen and redecorating, adding the wrought iron twiddly bits. He then rented it to Brian who was working down river at Teddington Studios and who bought it a year later in 1996. Currently he and Liz are enjoying life on the island (and also trying to keep the noise down).



## No 12

Residents: Jenifer Wyatt, semi retired theatre designer/artist  
and son Joe Broughton, computer programme writer  
2 cats

The small central part of the house is marked on an early map. It was "raised" rather unevenly and extended in the 1960s and '70s. At one time it was named "Derry Down".

The first freeholder, in 1932 was Henry Clarence Abrahams, Gentleman of Mount St Mayfair. In the Second World War he was classified as an Enemy of the People and the house and No 27a, which he also owned, were confiscated by the government.

Sir Ernest Fass, the Custodian for England of Enemy Property sold it in 1943 to Cecilia Cooper for £375.

Jenny and Joe moved here in 1996. The house had been owned by various members of the Clements family in turn for about 25 years.

The house is remembered as once having had a car parked on its riverside patio. Some former tenants paused last year while rowing past to remark that it was surprising the floors had withstood the parties. One of them also owned up to being the person who played his guitar on the roof. There is a little tower on the roof which encloses our cold water tank. This anonymous person also extended the tower with a fence to enclose his roof garden where he cultivated cannabis plants.



the north end







## No 12a

### THE SWAMP

Residents: Charlie and Cheryl Street, daughter Gemma and son Todd

From Cheryl Street: Hi, we are the Streets and we live in the Swamp. I don't know the entire history of the house, but I do know of some of the previous occupants. First of all, Arthur and Mary Rowbotham (who arrived in the 50s), rather an apt name for living on the river, don't you think? Talking of names the Swamp was the original name for our house and back then probably very appropriate. Arthur and May changed it to the Haven and the Haven it stayed for many years until we changed it back.

My mother-in-law, Josie who also lives on the Island at No.31, and now has been in residence the longest, recalls jolly evenings playing billiards in the living room at the Haven. There wasn't a lot of room left after the billiard table was up but that didn't seem to bother anyone. She also remembers the odd lively and heated Board meetings being held there, nothing really changes.

The next family to move in were Patch and Peter Storm-Clark and their daughters Fran and Troy. Now they were an interesting family, both Patch and Peter were pilots in the war. They were real characters and party animals, so the fun and laughter continued in the Haven living room. There were a number of things that one could say linked our family to theirs. Charlie, my husband and Troy were childhood sweethearts for a while and also Patch and Peter left the spell of their adventurous lives in the house as Fran went sailing around the world when she grew up and Charlie rowed the Atlantic after we had moved in.

Following the Storm-Clarks into the house was Mr Stone, who was Julie Windsor, our next door neighbour's father. Sadly he died about 6 months later. We never met him but of course we know Julie and her son Simon very well and eventually bought the Haven, soon to become the Swamp, from them.





Since we have been here it has changed a lot, though we loved it just the way it was, we needed more room and storage space so the house today is completely different. Gemma and Todd our children love the Island and Charlie and I see ourselves growing old here as we couldn't imagine living anywhere else. I suppose you could say Charlie came home because it's a magical place that he spritually never ever left.



there are 2  
resident dogs



## No 14

Residents: Julie Windsor and her son Simon  
1 cat, 1 terrapin, 1 cockatiel

from Simon: THE WINDSOR FAMILY

We arrived on Trowlock Island in the summer of 1983. After unsuccessfully trying to purchase another house on the Island the previous year, No.14 came up for sale, at the time owned by a lovely elderly couple, Tom and Dot. Heaven only knows how many cups of tea later on, at the first viewing, and being told what a wonderful place the Island is to live, that Sunday afternoon we did the deal. Yes we were now the proud owners of a leak ridden, woodworm infested wooden deathtrap we now called home. Oh yes I forgot, the central heating system was condemned as it was too dangerous to use and I (Simon) had no bedroom so had to sleep in the hallway, which, by the way, was a badly constructed extension giving me nightly showers when it rained.

Now when I say we I mean John, Julie, Simon, Sara, the cat Jim and the terrapin Terry. Sadly as I write this, John and Jim the cat have passed on, but on the brighter side Sara my sister has moved out - peace and quiet at last. I have to say that since then we have a new resident, Basil, the unbelievably noisy cockatiel and a new cat, Tabitha.

We lived in this hell of freezing cold winters, ever rising floods and frequent bed baths for me for a further 2 years from moving in before we decided to knock it down and rebuild. I felt my parents left it this long hoping I would move out - oh no I am still here 17 years on. Dismantling and reconstruction took 2 weeks in the summer of 1985. I would like to say it was a terrible 2 weeks but considering the previous 2 years it was a blessing. The house we built is the house you see today. Of course the internal decoration took more than 2 weeks but I had a bedroom and that is all that mattered.

At this time my father was drafted onto the board of Trowlock Island Ltd, a job he was to find out later was for the deeply committed (or deeply disturbed), I am not sure. Yes by this time we were devoted islanders and here forever. Sadly 2 years later, 1987, is when John died suddenly from a heart attack and is missed by everyone who knew him. Unlike the cat Jim who died 2 years further on, who used everyone's flower beds and Bill Johncey's greenhouse as his own private toilet.

Julie then decided she would enter the world of being an island committee member which she did for 9 years, as head of gardening, leaving the position in 1998. She, like a number of other long termers on the island, also put in considerable work on island parties which happen twice a year, to the great enjoyment of others. I must say at this time that these parties also contribute to the wonderful sense of community on the island, which we as a family have felt from day one, and will always help to preserve. This is a feeling you do not get living in a normal house in a normal street.

As for me, well I have not left because I love it. What more can I say other than the view is great and the fish are large. How many people can say they fish from their sitting room and catch carp to nearly 30 pounds without missing one episode of Friends or ER on TV. So I hope there are many years to come unless Julie finds a way to get rid of me or I find someone to take me away (can't see that happening). So I hope this gives you a better idea of who lives at No.14 and their history on Trowlock Island.





## No 16

from Bill Johncey:

Some 45-50 years ago, Dora and I moored our first boat "Bido" alongside Trowlock Island. "Bido" was a metal lifeboat from the German passenger ship, "Bremen" which we converted into a motor cruiser on the tideway at Putney.

During our frequent weekend visits to the backwater of Teddington Lock we spied a beautiful wooden boat at Tough's yard. "Maori" was in a pretty poor state and took in 18" of water at each tide, which fortunately drained out again at each tide, keeping the boat fresh and the planks damp. We negotiated a price with Mr Bob Tough and finally the "Maori" became ours. A chap who said he admired "Bido" made us an offer so we reluctantly disposed of her.

Two years later, after dedicated hard slog, "Maori" was watertight and seaworthy. We have travelled the continent in her, and had some good and bad times. Her two old taxi engines which we marinised are still working well. She is in good shape and tied up alongside us at No.15. I hope in the near future to sail her on a nice round trip as a grand finale.

We rented a mooring on Trowlock Island before we came to live here. Soon after buying "Maori" we again bought something very dilapidated, this time a bungalow from an elderly lady, Mrs Westers, the widow of a Dutch sea captain. She had 12-18 cats and 2 dogs. Fortunately John Bazalgette, chairman at the time, with the help of his family, bagged up and disposed of most of the accumulated rubbish and gave permission to burn much more on the site.

The conception and planning of a new No.15 were my own idea. It involved collecting and breaking up hardcore for 90 tons of concrete, which was piped and poured to form a raft for the foundations. The complete materials to build a 3 bedroom bungalow were all delivered at one time by a barge.

The coordination point at Kingston took some working out, but it all came to fruition and paid us a dividend. A point of despondence was carrying 5000 tiles up onto the roof. But we have brought up our family on a lovely island in a lovely environment.

The current residents of No.16 are the Johncey's daughter, Diane, her husband George McKenna and their son Oliver.

from Diane: We have lived here for more than 12 years. It is a timber construction with fibreglass cladding that has fooled council officials and double glazing salesmen alike into thinking it was a white brick bungalow. This initially put our rates up by 2 bands. The timber bungalow has a keel of a boat as part of the original floor. We have raised the floor to avoid flooding.

We celebrated our daughter Claire's 21st Birthday here in 1999, having had Diane's sister's here in 1978 (the year Claire was born) and with luck our son Ollie's next year. A 3 generation home, with family ties for over 35 years, we now consider ourselves 'Islanders'. We are not sure of the bungalow's early history, but understand from longstanding Islanders that it has a very colourful past.



## No 15

from Dora Johncey:

How about this for a 60th birthday present - tons and tons of building material arriving by river - in fact enough to build a bungalow. This is what greeted me in October 1984 - the start of No.15. Bill had retired and couldn't face the boredom or the gardening so he decided he would build a bungalow next to No.16.

Two years later, lots of hard work and we were ready to move in. Unfortunately we chose the weekend of the hurricane and our house warming was put at risk. Nevertheless we went ahead and invited 70 islanders and relations to help us celebrate. To our delight and surprise everyone was able to get to us.

Here we are nearly thirteen years later.



Claire helping Granddad  
with the roof tiles

Claire and Oliver "topping out"



Oliver now 19, Claire 21

(from Bill again):

Mrs Westers was very fond of dancing. She would regularly come down to my mooring to chat and keep me informed about island news and other things, then she would go home, doll herself up, wait at the gate for me to go home and then cadge a lift into Kingston. I often used to wonder how she got home again.

The reason she left so much rubbish is because anything of use taken to the burning pit would be brought back by her and stored round No.16. Among other things there were lots of old doors and window frames.

The house used to flood at very high water before the Thames Barrier was built. After the water had drained away Mrs Westers would lay down newspapers to soak up the last of it, but as she did not ever take them up again they turned into papier mache which we had to chip and shovel off. We raised the floor approximately 7½" during rebuilding.

(and on the same subject ... a contribution from John Bazalgette):

Underneath No.16 is the keel of a boat which had been the original dwelling. When Mrs Westers first arrived she had a pet monkey she kept there. She was a keen and very successful competitive ballroom dancer, still competing when she was in her 70s. She was often seen going off the island in her finery. Her dancing partner was never allowed on the island.

She died in 1976 and it was then discovered why she had never let anyone into the house. Unable to afford to have the house raised to deal with the floods, she had covered the floors to about 18" above the boards with newspapers. The animals had taken advantage of the setting, so the smell and filth had accumulated.

Clearing the house took a solid fortnight during which the burning pit was alight all the time. In many of the drawers there were packets of meat still wrapped but rotting away. All through the house were cheques which had obviously been sent to Mrs Westers regularly over the years but which were never cashed.

The cats and dogs - all except one tom - were caught and handed to the RSPCA. The last one terrorised the island for weeks: It was immune to poison laid for it. The final solution was that the Council's vermin controller should come and try to shoot it, but the poor cat almost seemed immune to a double-barreled shotgun. The Exterminator swore he had hit it with both barrels, bowling it over, but it simply disappeared. Some weeks later a smell was noticed under No.26 and the body was finally located.



## No 17

Resident: Patrick Nagle

The first freeholder in 1933 was Norah Kelly.

Dr Scott, Scottie, lived here for many years. He did not get on well with his neighbour, Mrs Westers, at No.16, who would not permit him to have access to the side of his house for painting and maintenance. Scottie had the whole house raised and rolled along, where it ended up rather out of line with the path.





**No 26**

SONOMA

Residents: Caroline and Kris Nisson  
2 cats



**No 27**

Resident: Peter Rixon

The first freeholder in 1932 was Eileen Hatch.

This is thought to be one of the oldest houses on the island. Peter has renovated it in its original timber-framed style.



## No 27a

Resident: Tim Garnham

Originally there was a small detached annexe owned by the same person as the house opposite, No.12, and also confiscated during the Second World War because it belonged to an "enemy".

The annexe was presumably bought by the owners of No.32 and was in their garden during the '50s and '60s. After a change in ownership the annexe was knocked down and the present much larger house was built across the garden.



## No 32 THE DEN

This house has had a succession of residents as it is now rented out by the owner, Sven.

(from John Bazalgette)

For many years John Bidlake and John Lupton lived here and tended the most delightful garden on the island. Because it was a double plot it was able to have a central bed with a small cypress tree in it, giving the whole a sense of peace and quiet.

When John Lupton died (John Bidlake had died some 5 years earlier) The Den was sold to Charles and Meg Stretton. Charles was a kind of architect with ideas, but little skill in executing them. Among his innovations was an attempt to insulate the floors by attaching fibreglass wool to the underside with chicken wire. Unfortunately the attachment was not very secure and a particularly high tide soaked the wool which then hung down like stalactites in a cave. Another was to economise on the pipes to carry water into his newly built 'sauna'. Charles used curtain rods rather than copper piping, which finally failed to do the job.

Charles and Meg often had noisy arguments which could be heard by any passer by. One thing residents learn is to keep arguments at a low key if they don't want their gorier details to be generally shared.



## No 33

The first person to buy the freehold on 23 March 1932 was Maude Alice Bagley

Residents: Mary Newing, software engineer  
Clive Higginson, computer consultant  
4 chinchillas

They moved here in August 1997 and bought the house in June 1998





## No. 36

### CHEYNE COTTAGE

Residents: Eric Philps, formerly an engineer and his wife, Sally, formerly a professional hairdresser.

The first owners of this and No.34a in 1932 were Mr and Mrs Douglas who sold the freehold to Dulcie Bryning, a cellist in 1936.

The next owner was Irene Bremner of Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, who named the bungalow "Cheyne Cottage".

The property was originally two plots. Another bungalow, presumably No.34a, stood on what is now the garden. Sally and Eric bought the site in 1963 and spent the following 14 years gutting and re-building and finally occupied it in 1978.

The redundant slipway on the opposite bank of the backwater has become a haven to wildlife which includes foxes, herons, nesting moorhens, coots, kingfishers etc.



## No 28

The first freeholder in 1932 was Ernest Cronk.

This house is known as "Cingalee" - "a brilliantly successful musical comedy" first performed at Daly's Theatre 5 March 1904. A magician/actor (?) with the name of "Cingalee" lived in the house around 1941.

Glynn Edwards who played Dave in the TV series "Minder" lived here in the late '80s to mid '90s.

Currently it is occupied by two persons and a larger than life cat called OSCAR



## No. 29

Resident: Jack Perman, architect

He bought the house in 1973 for £12,000 from Jean Gillett, an artist who had not lived in it, but used it as a studio. It was liable to flood and leaked like a sieve. The Gas Board declared that the ancient Ascot heater was unsafe. Jack lived in his wooden shed while the house was rebuilt in brick by him and "slaves". Only the best slaves were used, German and Japanese. Jack maintains that his is the only house on the island that properly conforms to Building Regulations. He once worked in the Borough Planning Department.

Jack was brought up in India but returned to York in 1938 and fought in various campaigns during the Second World War, losing his right eye at the Rhine Crossing in March 1945. After being demobbed he studied architecture at Liverpool University, worked as an architect and then added a Town Planning qualification.

Jack's island life has been relatively peaceful compared to earlier times. He has an adopted family and visits them often in Germany. He has worn the purple toga as a member of the Board, being the Firechief, for which he wore a special German fireman's hat.



Jack in late 1981 making  
a roof truss -the  
Building Inspectors put  
him through it... 17 of  
these at 2' intervals

at one of  
many parties







## No 30

Residents: Ann and Tom Monk and their son Robin.

This house has been rebuilt in brick by the present owners who arrived here in the 60s. Tom was Treasurer of Trowlock Island Ltd at the tricky time when negotiations had to be carried out with all the islanders to share the cost of introducing a modern sewage system.

Tom sadly died, after a long illness, very shortly after millennium day, when we were still compiling this book.





## No 30a

Residents: Diana and Peter Duggan and from time to time their son Glyn and their daughter Glenda

The first freeholder in 1932 was Cissie Underwood.

Peter is an engineer turned salesman, turned Company Director who after many successful years in the electronics field is now in his second career in the film/TV industry working out of Teddington Studios. Diana is retired but still works on a part time basis for a local estate agent. Previously she was in the IT industry. After being General Manager/Management Services for British Airports Authority she went into Consultancy.

We bought our house from the Lockstones, who although they had already moved out came back and cut the lawn and the hedges for us before completion. A great start to a wonderful life among the friendly people on Trowlock Island.

Previous owners of the house included Mr Sevitt, Mr Ali (who owned the property for a while but never lived in it), the Nicoliens, (who made significant improvements to the house) and a Miss Tidy who coincidentally was a distant relative to the plumber who installed our central heating boiler. It transpires that Miss Tidy previously worked in Hollywood mainly with Esther Williams.



## No 31

Residents: Jose Street, retired actress/dancer and her granddaughter Sarah Douglas, television PA.

This is understood to be the only house on the island which was ever burnt down. It was rebuilt in its present style by a builder who never lived in it himself.

from Jose: Lee and I moved into No.31 in 1956 with my son Charles aged 4 and my daughter Susan aged 14 and I have lived in this house ever since - 43 years.

The house, originally named "Kismet" was built by a local builder in the early '50s on the site of the original house which was burnt to the ground when the former resident left a candle burning in the airing cupboard. The builder decided not to move into the house as he had originally planned and we bought it instead.

My husband Lee and I married in 1935. We were both in show business. Lee was a musician and led the Blue Rockets orchestra during the war years and I was dancer. After we met we formed a dance act and worked together.

In 1936 we appeared at the Wintergarten Theatre in Berlin, Germany, and were selected to appear in a special concert for the Olympic celebrations by the Chancellor, Adolph Hitler. After the concert we were both presented to Hitler and needless to say it was a meeting I shall always remember.

My daughter Susan has followed us into the business and is an actress.

My son Charlie and his family moved into The Swamp, No.12a Trowlock Island in 1995.



## No 34            THE CABIN

Residents: Roger and Vivienne Mathias

The entry on the Proprietorship Register shows Emma Amelia Wilkinson, widow, paying £130 for No.34 on 11 August 1938. Thence on to Leonard Arthur and Louise Germaine Woodhouse for £900 on 5 June 1946.

The Woodhouses utilized the large garden area to grow vegetables, fruit etc and became virtually self-sufficient from the nutrition point of view. Mr Woodhouse died in 1994 and the executor sold to the present owners.

The Cabin was the first house on the island to be lived in full time. This was by the Woodhouses in 1938. Perhaps they rented it to begin with. Louise came from the western suburbs of Paris, and had been an artist.



**No 37**      BEGGARS ROOST

The first freeholder was Cecil Bickley in 1932

Jack and Win Green lived here until their recent deaths. He was a retired regular soldier.

After leaving the forces Jack became a professional gardener and was employed by the Board of Trowlock Island to maintain the gardens. After purchasing the bungalow from Richard and Venetia Kay, who were actors, he and his wife planned and cared for the communal gardens at the South End from 1964 to 1988.

Jack regularly took the part of Santa Claus at the Christmas parties and in 1985 arrived at the Royal Canoe Club on John Lavington's boat with John Windsor dressed as an admiral standing on the fore deck. The petrol ran out between the Club and John's bungalow on the way back.





John Windsor



islanders at No. 38





**No 38**      THE FERRY HOUSE

Residents: Babe and John Lavington (current Secretary and Ferry Master for Trowlock Island Ltd)

The first freeholder of the house, in 1932, was John Roberts, who was Secretary of Trowlock Island Ltd at the time the island was bought by the company.

Pat and Roy Peters owned the house for 2 years and Roy, who was a building instructor at a college, added the brickwork around the property.

The Lavingtons arrived in 1985 shortly before John was due to retire. Both river lovers, John had earlier lived on Thames Ditton Island while his wife had a summer retreat on Ash Island.

In 1988 the house was extended and extensively renovated to provide additional accommodation for elderly parents. John's mother lived with them for 2 years until her death in 1991



an earlier version of No. 38







the backwater



ice skating  
on the path



can't recall if i sent this one ... swan upping on trowlock ....



there are some good holes near the banks, and on to Kew bridge, above which there is a good deep hole, and, when the tide serves, many good Roach are caught; at the back of Brentford town, in a field called Old England, there is good, deep water, and steady swims, and Barbel, Roach, Dace, and Chub are caught; opposite Isleworth church is a deep hole, called, by Anglers in the neighbourhood, the Barbel hole, this is a famous place in the Barbel season; many London fishers call this Prideux's Folly, an Angler of that name having frequented this spot so often, when, from the state of the weather or water, success was perfectly hopeless. Along the barge path, and on to Richmond bridge are several good swims, and near the bridge are fine shallows for whipping for Dace; above the bridge there are capital deep swims, and much sport may be expected in the season; the shallows on to Twickenham deeps will afford sport to the fly fisher. Twickenham deeps are much resorted to, and good sport often met with; near Teddington lock there is good angling, but the willow bed about a mile above, called the **Trowlock**, is a most capital spot, this can only be approached by a boat, which may be had of a fisherman named Mace, living in a hut better than half a mile on the London side of Kingston bridge, he will boat you over, find you clay, and bring you back again for sixpence.\* Kingston has been long famous

\* He will also provide you with beer and breakfast, but the latter is certainly very homely.

for large Barbel, but since the  
removed, the fish have been  
path above Kingston bridge,  
and good swims, and in the  
side, opposite, there is a cha  
Swan at Ditton is a house muc  
lers, and the punt proprietors  
fine weather; Ditton Deep's co  
water gallery near Hampton C  
place above which there is goo  
bling bay, for Barbel, and in t  
there are many good swims, or  
as Lady Young's hole, has ad  
from this swim, and others in t  
company with an old friend a  
more Barbel than we could c  
by a third person, we were ver  
our sport at Brentford. Ha  
known as famous for Roach a  
Hampton meadows there is c  
Roach in the Winter; on tow  
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and patience, and at Walton  
Barbel fishing; Roach, Dac  
taken below the bridge, wher  
of the name of Rogerson, wh  
a punt, and other accommod  
the banks and osier beds opp  
very good Chub fishing, and  
heads are taken.

Still searching for the diver photo john .. came across this one ....Mace sounds like a bundle of fun ... (read note at base of page)

beer and breakfast for sixpence !!!

there are some good holes near the banks, and on to Kew bridge, above which there is a good deep hole, and, when the tide serves, many good Roach are caught; at the back of Brentford town, in a field called Old England, there is good, deep water, and steady swims, and Barbel, Roach, Dace, and Chub are caught; opposite Isleworth church is a deep hole, called, by Anglers in the neighbourhood, the Barbel hole, this is a famous place in the Barbel season; many London fishers call this Prideux's Folly, an Angler of that name having frequented this spot so often, when, from the state of the weather or water, success was perfectly hopeless. Along the barge path, and on to Richmond bridge are several good swims, and near the bridge are fine shallows for whipping for Dace; above the bridge there are capital deep swims, and much sport may be expected in the season; the shallows on to Twickenham deeps will afford sport to the fly fisher. Twickenham deeps are much resorted to, and good sport often met with; near Teddington lock there is good angling, but the willow bed about a mile above, called the **Trowlock**, is a most capital spot, this can only be approached by a boat, which may be had of a fisherman named Mace, living in a hut better than half a mile on the London side of Kingston bridge, he will boat you over, find you clay, and bring you back again for sixpence.\* Kingston has been long famous

\* He will also provide you with beer and breakfast, but the latter is certainly very homely.

for large Barbel, but since the old bridge has been removed, the fish have been disturbed; on the tow path above Kingston bridge, are fine Roach deeps, and good swims, and in the meadows on the Surrey side, opposite, there is a chance by dipping. The Swan at Ditton is a house much frequented by Anglers, and the punt proprietors reap a good harvest in fine weather; Ditton Deepes contain many fish. The water gallery near Hampton Court bridge is a famous place above which there is good fishing; at the tumbling bay, for Barbel, and in the meadows to the right there are many good swims, one in particular, known as Lady Young's hole, has afforded me much sport; from this swim, and others in the meadows, I once, in company with an old friend and Brother Bob, took more Barbel than we could carry, although assisted by a third person, we were very glad to leave some of our sport at Brentford. Hampton Deepes are well known as famous for Roach and Barbel pitches; in Hampton meadows there is capital bank fishing for Roach in the Winter; on towards Sunbury there are many places that will repay the Angler for his time and patience, and at Walton bridge there is excellent Barbel fishing; Roach, Dace, and Bream are also taken below the bridge, where there resides a person of the name of Rogerson, who will provide you with a punt, and other accommodation if required; from the banks and osier beds opposite his house there is very good Chub fishing, and many of these Loggerheads are taken.

## John Bazalgette

---

**From:** Liz James [lizis@ukonline.co.uk]

**Sent:** 10 March 2009 19:07

**To:** Paul Boon; John Bazalgette; Caroline Nisson; Brian Harper-Lewis; Kris Nisson

**Subject:** Now I'd never thought about be stranded through 'drought'

Hi folks,

Did you know about this.....?

*'Concern ran high at the end of October 1940, when a bomb landed on the apron of Teddington Weir. The breach caused by the bomb's detonation created a reduction in the depth of water at Teddington Reach by six feet, making navigation impossible except at high tides. Those dwelling on Trowlock Island were marooned temporarily. Full navigation of the Reach would not be restored for seven weeks.'*

[www.twickenham-museum.org.uk](http://www.twickenham-museum.org.uk)

Liz

# Trowlock Island

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

**Trowlock Island** lies in the River Thames, just upstream of Teddington Lock and close to the Middlesex bank.

Trowlock Island is home to 29 bungalows as well as the Royal Canoe Club's clubhouse and gym. Trowlock Island is approximately one-third of a mile long with a path running down the middle and houses on either side, beyond the last house is wooded area with moorings on both the main river and the backwater. Access to the island is by way of a hand wound chain ferry. All vehicles except bicycles must be left on the mainland. It is part of the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

**Trowlock Island Limited** manages the shared infrastructure of the island and its board of directors is elected by the shareholders — each bungalow or plot of land carries with it a number of shares so that all houseowners plus the Royal Canoe Club collectively own the company.

The island and its environs are home to numerous species of wildlife, the following can be seen on a regular basis:

- Mallards
- Herons
- Great Crested Grebes
- Coots
- Moorhens
- Wood Pigeons
- Crows
- Magpies
- Jays
- Jackdaws

- Rose-ringed Parakeets
- Greenfinches
- Chaffinches
- Sparrows
- Blue Tits
- Great Tits
- European Robins
- Wrens
- Long-tailed Tits
- Blackbirds

- Thrushes
- Great Spotted Woodpeckers
- Bats
- House Martins
- Black-headed Gulls
- Herring Gulls
- Cormorants
- Swans
- Canada Geese

Less frequently spotted are:

- Kingfishers
- Mandarin Ducks
- Wood Ducks
- Sparrowhawks
- Egyptian Geese
- Black Swans
- Bar-headed Geese

Heard but rarely seen!

- Tawny Owls

## External links

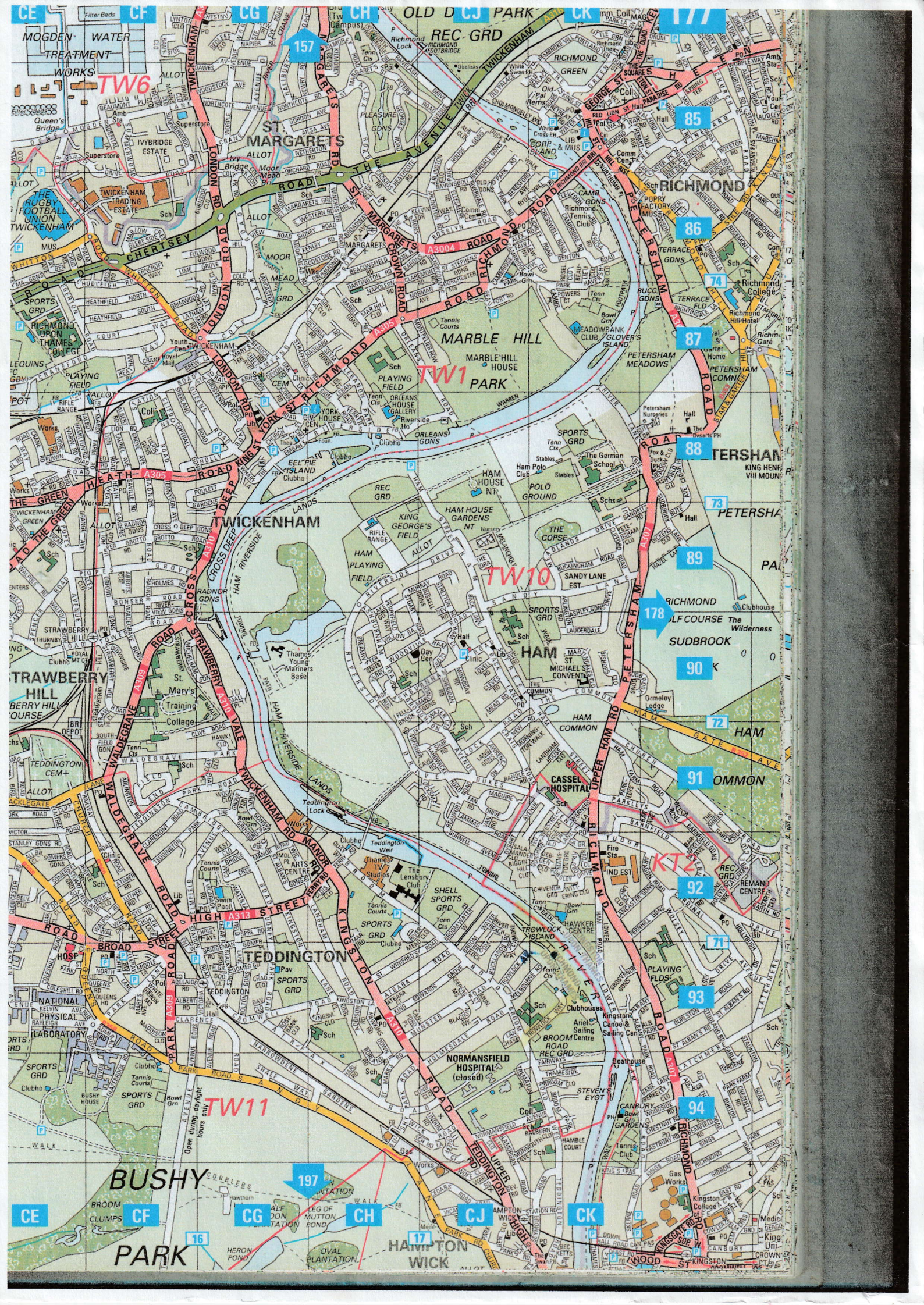
- Map sources ([http://www.rhaworth.myby.co.uk/oscoor\\_a.htm?TQ176708\\_region:GB\\_scale:100000](http://www.rhaworth.myby.co.uk/oscoor_a.htm?TQ176708_region:GB_scale:100000)) for Trowlock Island

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Categories: Islands in the River Thames | Districts of London

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Filter Beds  
Mogden Water Treatment Works  
TW6

Whitton  
The Rugby Football Union Twickenham  
St Margarets

Richmond upon Thames College  
Heathfield  
Sports Ground

Twickenham  
The Green  
Sports Ground

Strawberry Hill  
Berry Hill Course  
Teddington CEM

Strawberry Hill  
Berry Hill Course  
Teddington CEM

National Physical Laboratory  
Sports Ground

Sports Ground  
Tennis Courts

Bushy  
Broom Clumps  
Pond

Park  
Heron Pond  
Oval

157  
St Margarets  
Moor Mead  
London Road

St Margarets  
Moor Mead  
London Road

St Margarets  
Moor Mead  
London Road

Twickenham  
Ham House NT  
Ham House Gardens

Twickenham  
Ham House NT  
Ham House Gardens

Teddington  
Teddington Lock  
Teddington War

Teddington  
Teddington Lock  
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Moor Mead  
London Road

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Ham House NT  
Ham House Gardens

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Ham House Gardens

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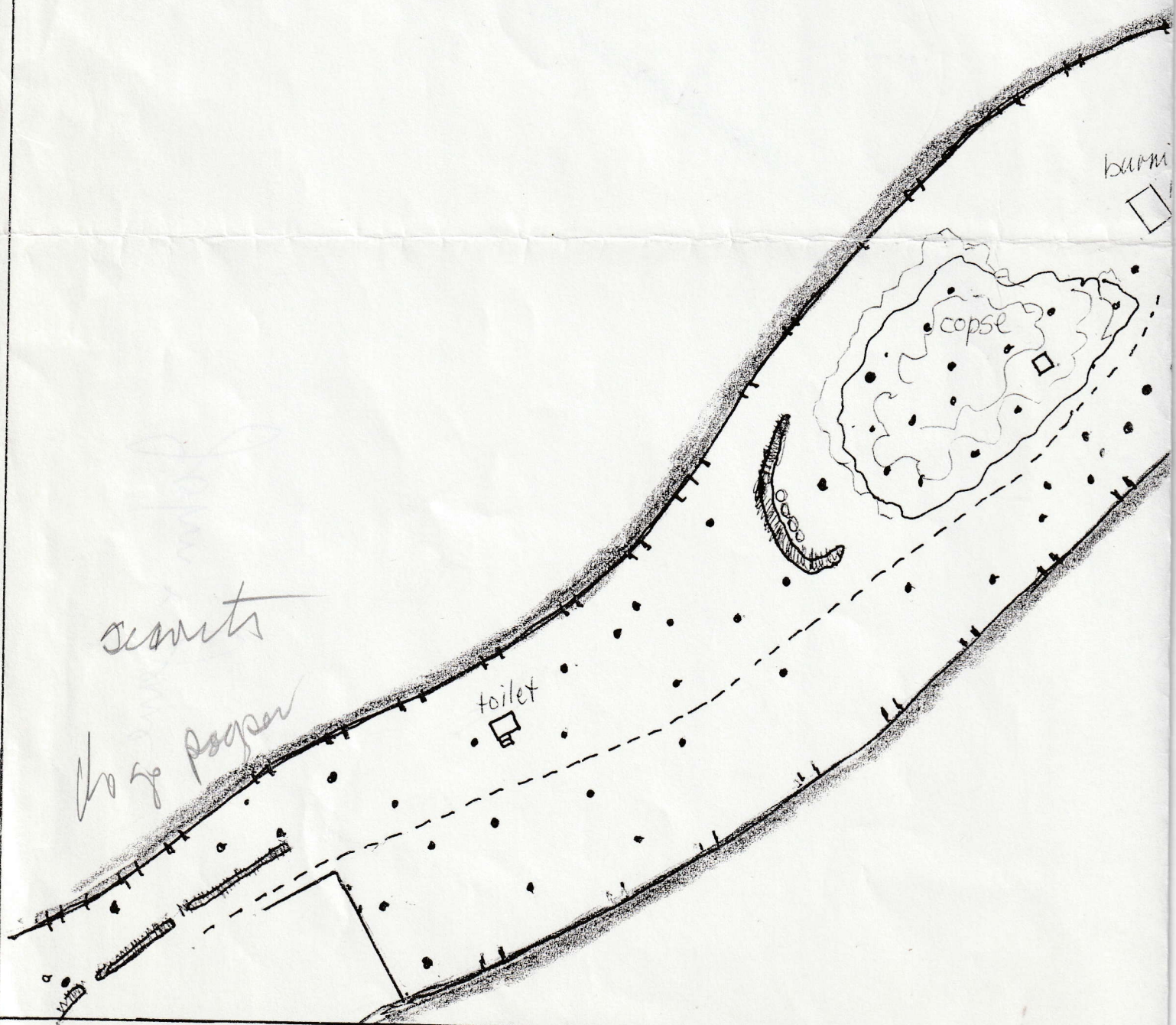
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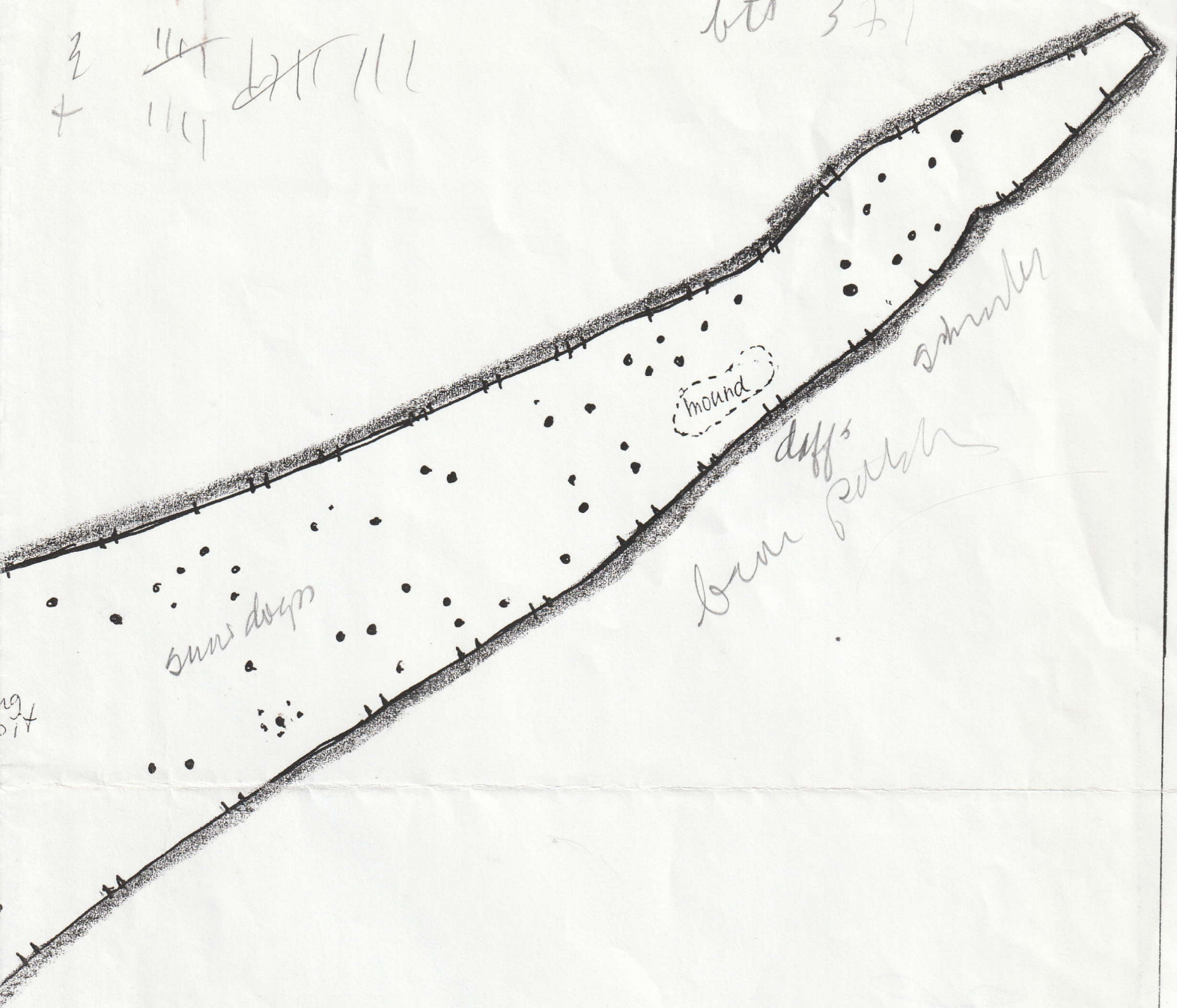
# Trowlock Island - North End

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# BRICKS



THE TIMES

Facts, figures and fantasies from the world of property 20 AUGUST 2004

FRIDAYS

# AND MORTAR





## **UNDER LOCK AND QUAY**

A TEN-MILE DRIVE DOWN THE RIVER FROM LONDON LIES AN UNGATED COMMUNITY FREE FROM BURGLARY FOR 50 YEARS **12-13**

[www.timesonline.co.uk/bricks](http://www.timesonline.co.uk/bricks)

**04 HOUSE OF LANCASTER**

**06 CUSHY NUMBER**

**08 VIVE LE ROSBIF**

**20 BUYERS MARKET**



**Boat people: there are 29 houses on Trowlock Island and they rarely come up for sale. Residents such as John Bazalgette, left, who has lived there since 1969, reach the mainland in a variety of vessels**

# CRAFTY ART

This simple Voysey house radiates star quality, says **Marcus Binney**

HOLLY MOUNT is as perfect and complete an example of a small Charles Voysey house as one can hope to find, little altered since it was built. Even the tall oak garden gate in its freestanding frame remains – in a fragile state admittedly. The slate paving stones are exactly as Voysey laid them, set three wide on the main garden path leading from the road. Over the door is the exquisitely lettered slate name plaque, carved with sprigs of ivy and the date of completion.

Voysey liked to give his houses a thick, enduring coat of harling to ensure that they remained cosy and warm in all weathers. Colour comes from the warm golden stone with which he dressed the windows. It is smooth and without blemishes or mouldings of any kind. The drip courses above the windows, preventing the stone from staining, are formed of level rows of brick tiles with a little skirt of render above to throw off the rain.

The front door is a delight – a large 16-pane porthole under its own hooped drip mould with the original tiny letter-box. A Voysey signature is the use of green-tinged Westmorland roof slates, and here they are carefully graded, becoming gradually larger as

with tiny handles in the form of perfectly shaped dewdrops.

In an article in *The English Home* in 1910 Voysey set out his views: “We must shake off the fashionable convention of obedience to style.” In place he set quality of “repose, cheerfulness, simplicity, breadth, warmth . . . harmony with surroundings, absence of dark passages or places, evenness of temperature”. Warm houses, he said, called for solid floors, avoiding the presence of damp, cold air beneath. Fireplaces must be fed with air through small flues direct from outside to avoid draughts under doors.

Voysey rooms have no cornices and only minimal skirtings. He abhorred high ceilings: excessive height made rooms gloomy and narrower. “A predominance of horizontalism in any room is conducive to repose.”

Holly Mount has a typical Voysey stair with tall, white-painted banisters creating an effect like harp strings. On the first-floor landing the corner or newel posts are continued up as columns with his typical flattened capitals at the top. Throughout, the doors have latches and long blacksmith hinges running like arrows across the door. Another feature is the

# LAND

## ites from Oxford Street

London sewer system — has called it home since 1969. Dave from *Minder* used to live here, though I'm not sure exactly what that explains.

Houses here — they are all single-storey, but the term "bungalow" doesn't do them justice — come up for sale, on average, every five or six years. There are 29 in total, nearly all built in the first three decades of the last century, all in keeping with a chalet character but all vastly individual. This diversity is exemplified

'There hasn't been a burglary on the island since 1954'

by Roger and Vivienne Mathias, a pair of retired Bricks and Mortar disciples who own three properties on the island, the first decorated in a loftish style, the second with a grandly English feel, complete with First World War plane propeller (rescued by Vivienne's dad from the aircraft in which he was shot down), and the third somewhere in between.

Pat Nagle himself arrived on the island in

the mid-Nineties, first as a tenant, after being involved in a car crash that killed his wife. "I came here, and everyone looked after me," he explains touchingly, and it's easy to see how. Everywhere you look on Trowlock there are smiling faces and laid-back manners. In summer a barbecue is held on the island's west side, with a Sixties rock band (Ronnie Wood from the Rolling Stones and Status Quo's Rick Parfitt have attended as punters in the past). Usually, however, this end of the island remains utterly peaceful and provides roaming ground for Trowlock's large population of cats and dogs. "We're actually two thirds unpopulated," Pat Nagle explains. "It's tempting to build at the far end of the island to generate some more profit, but I think a lot of people would oppose it."

"I'd oppose it, and I don't even live here," I tell him. Perhaps I'm getting over-enthusiastic, but there's a hypnotic lull to the place that reminds me of the bit in *Withnail and I* where you see the MI in the Sixties, all empty and slow-moving. The houses may be close together, but there's space here to think — to create, too, you suspect. "I often don't leave here for four days at a time," Pat Nagle says. "It would probably be longer, if we had a shop."

Sadly, I'm not so lucky, and I have to take a train back to Central London, ten miles away. Then I have to take a bus, followed by a taxi, then another bus. You wouldn't exactly call this a dream commute. It's raining and the journey is excruciating, but as I stand in the bustle of Oxford Street it seems like a tiny miracle that the magical place where I've spent the afternoon is only an hour and ten minutes behind me.

they descend the roof with a band of narrower slates just before the characteristic splay at the bottom. On the garden side — in another delightful quirk — the rainwater gutter is carried across in front of the dormer windows supported on leggy iron brackets, like a miniature canal on an aqueduct.

The house was built near Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, in 1907 for C. T. Burke and has since had only four owners. It is now on the market after 27 years at £1.5 million.

Voysey was a rebel with a cause. He loved the simple domesticity of the English cottage. He hated the rattle of sash windows and the accompanying draughts. Here virtually every window is a Voysey original — sturdily formed in lead with a long latch that can be fixed in three positions — closed, wide open and a little less than halfway. Voysey's bottle-green tiles survive on every inner sill. Equally handsome are the blue-grey slate floors: dark but with a sheen that reflects the light almost like a mirror.

All the main rooms retain Voysey fireplaces with arches of brick tiles. In the kitchen is a built-in Welsh dresser

distinctive black cast-iron fireplaces, tall and narrow with tiny coal grates and inbuilt shelves. In every room the ornamental ventilation grilles survive. In some rooms are reproductions of Voysey wallpapers.

## The dresser has handles shaped like dewdrops

The one major alteration is that two extra bedrooms (making six in all) have been created in the attic with roof lights that sit awkwardly above Voysey's dormers. But the views over the garden to the country beyond are delightful. "We have covenants ensuring nothing can ever be built here," says the present owner. Holly Mount is set on quite a busy road, but it is shielded by high hedges and is in a residential area that has kept its tranquil and leafy sense of seclusion.  Knight Frank 01494 675368, £1.5 million

MARTIN CHARLES



overlooking the sea. Both these groups look down on the most recent interlopers, the new money from places such as Romford who have enough bling-bling jewellery to sink Mersea back under the sea.

The loveliest part of the island is the east, untouched by development and retaining the charm that is being eroded in the west. (It all went wrong when the island got a Co-op 15 years ago.) Only a couple of dozen houses are there, and you can walk along the sea wall and pick wild samphire — delicious when sautéed in butter — or blackberries from the hedgerow without seeing a soul.

Mersea thrives on the sea. The oysters are world-famous and there is an excellent seafood restaurant, the Company Shed, on the front. It is a good venue for sailing, with a large summer regatta that culminates with mud-wrestling and a “walking the greasy pole” competition. And while the beach is more mud and shingle than sand, it was always popular with families who wanted to bathe across the bay from the now decommissioned nuclear power station at Bradwell. Well, it did mean you came in with a healthy glow.

**PATRICK KIDD**

[WWW.MERSEA-ISLAND.COM](http://WWW.MERSEA-ISLAND.COM)



cal retiree's position. “Oh, you'd be surprised, he replies. “The biggest issues around here tend to be about the length of the grass. It's a very mellow existence. We make £35,000 a year from mooring rights, but we've only made a total net profit of £56,000 in the past 20 years. Like I said, nothing much happens. There hasn't been a burglary here since 1954.”

Arriving at Trowlock by means of a small wooden raft — there is no vehicular access to the island — is an utterly enchanting experience. In one way it feels like walking into a truly

# ON PLEASURE ISLAND

Tom Cox visits a sleepy community on the Thames that's just 70 minutes from London

modern type of living, with all the advantages of a gated community — security, familiarity, communality — but none of the drawbacks (pressure to socialise, sense of being hemmed in). In another, it feels like walking into the funkiest retirement settlement on earth. In another, it feels like walking straight into the Fifties — the Fifties of northern California and Ken Kesey, to be specific. The first time I came here, to a speedboat party at the house of Will, a record label exec, I watched as a normally practical friend of mine, Sue, fell into a kind of trance and pledged to leave her nine-to-five job at the Royal Mail and join an artists' community to “paint and draw”. The place has that kind of effect on you.

Will is a great example of the diversity of residents at Trowlock: he is in his thirties, but still lives with his mum, for the understandable reason that he'd find it very difficult to find something as special as this if he moved out. Across the way lives Mary Newing, who moved to the island with her husband, Clive. When they split up, she simply moved next door, since neither wanted to leave Trowlock. They still share a dog. When people move to Trowlock, they tend to want to stay. This probably explains why John Bazalgette — heir to the creator of the

