**Victorian Watford information sheet**

It was the early 1800s, which saw the greatest and most rapid changes to the town. The Grand Union Canal brought goods not easily available before. Even more significant was the opening of the railway in 1837. With its links to London, the west midlands and Lancashire, it encouraged new industry here.

The traditional agricultural industries had been supplemented in the 18th century by brewing and the preparation of raw silk, and printing had started on a small scale. The development of paper making along the local rivers led to the manufacture of the machinery it needed from this grew other types of engineering. By the early 1900s Watford was an established industrial centre.

The 19th century also saw a rapid expansion in housing as people moved to the town for work. Most of the streets in the town centre were laid out in the second half of the 19th century and by 1900 the Earl of Essex had sold most of his farmland to the west and north east of the High Street for housing. Cassiobury Park remained undeveloped while his family owned the house.

Please see our photo collection for further information and photos.

<https://www.watfordmuseum.org.uk/photo-collections>