

HISTORY SHEET NO. 15 - RECOLLECTIONS OF OXHEY BY MRS DORA DUNCAN

I came to Oxhey in December 1944, when the War was just finishing, and we moved into Paddock Cottage, at the end of Upper Paddock Road. This is an old house built in 1867. It had been a sort of smallholding, and the land from it was bought by a builder, a Mr Maxwell. He built thirteen houses on it, which is now Maxwell Rise. They have the gardens, with apple trees and so on which would have been from Paddock Cottage. Paddock Cottage is at the end of Upper Paddock Road Road, facing down towards Villiers Road. There was a little shop in one of the rooms in the cottage, a general store.

When we moved there there was a little alleyway that ran from Upper Paddock Road round to Sherwoods Road – we used to call it the 'Piggery' because there was a pigsty in it and one or two pigs. During the war several of the neighbours clubbed together to buy a pig, then had it killed, and shared it out. Further down this alleyway, there was a stable – a Rag and Bone man used to keep his pony and cart there – a Mr Narroway, who lived in Lower Paddock Road. Now of course this alleyway is called Field End Close. But it was a pretty little lane, with a five barred gate. I painted this alley, as it was.

In the summer after we came to Oxhey, there was a street party, in Upper Paddock, for Victory. All the children were there, and everybody gave something, like biscuits or jellies.

Not many people had cars in those days, and petrol was short anyway, so Bushey Station was busy, morning and evening, because so many people commuted to London by train. We used to walk down to the station in the evening, if it was nice, to meet my husband – so many people got off the train! Men, not women. Women didn't go out to work much in those days. Bushey Station was a friendly little place then, where we could sit and wait, and look at Holiday Posters, and leaflets about excursions. The platforms were beautifully kept, with lovely flower beds, which were kept by the porters. But the last time I was there, it was bare, and unfriendly.

I did most of my shopping in Oxhey, I wouldn't buy food in Watford. I only went there for clothes and that sort of thing. Oxhey used to have at least five grocers, now I don't think they have one! There was one at the corner of Field Road, and of course Palmer's was always a nice grocer. Then there were two greengrocers in Capel Road – Brown's and Turner's. On Saturdays there were long queues at both.

When I did go to Watford shopping, I would take the pushchair (pushchairs were much heavier ►

