

At this time I joined the Territorial Army at Croxley Green and got all my gunner certificates in the Hertfordshire Yeomanry R.A. On being called up I was sent to the Infantry in the Bedfordshire & Hertfordshire Regiment, and spent all my time trying to get into the Artillery – fighting officers who could not understand anyone who wanted to leave the finest regiment in the British Army! When I was demobbed, naturally the Army sent me to the Croxley Green R.A. Battery for Reserve Service!

I married Patricia from Colchester, Essex, had 4 children and have 11 grandchildren. I became a major in the T.A. RAMC and a Safety Inspector for Mines and Quarries. I am now retired and live in a village in Somerset.

My brother Michael (Micky) was one year younger. He went to Oxhey School too but moved on to London Road School, then Harrow School and joined the RAF on National Service. Apprenticed at Rembrandts, Watford, he eventually owned his own printing firm in Surrey. Married Marion – had 2 children but tragically died of cancer three years ago.

Finally my sister Janet, who had a serious illness when young, necessitating removal of a rib and a lung collapsed. Went to Oxhey School and London road too. Went into the Jewellery trade – married Bob Theobald and they owned shops, ending up at Leighton Buzzard. Retired now but very active.

No. 72 Oxhey Avenue was a large detached, brick house with 4 bedrooms, built after the Great War, with a small front garden but a very large garden at the rear with a garage, backing onto the Allotments. It had a large kitchen, a walk in larder and a scullery with an outside lavatory and coal cellar. It was a lovely comfortable family home. The garden had a terrace, large lawn, fruit trees and vegetable garden. At the end was a tennis court. A typical, middle class, pre-war home. By the fence was a large silver birch tree and ‘on leave’ I would look out of the train to see it and know I was home.

Our neighbours were Mr & Mrs Calvert on the right as you looked at the house and the Thorntons, and later Bradleys, on the left. Opposite were the Fielders and later, at the top of the road, the Taylors. The large house at the end was owned by someone we called the ‘Colonel’. It was a gloomy place with a neglected garden. I hated going there for the hall was full of animal heads and weapons, especially a tiger with snarling jaws and lifelike eyes. His son was a regular Army Officer and I believe was killed in France in 1940. Later Mr Smee, a dentist, lived there and I think the children were Peter, Stella and Laurie.

Adjacent to the Bridge were two cottages called ‘Little Goblins’. The Brennans – an Irish family, lived in one nearest the Avenue. They were a lovely family – Mr Brennan, tall, grey quietly spoken; his wife – small, sturdy, apple cheeked and black haired. She was always working (she did our washing) and always cheerful. Dicky Brennan was the same age as me and we became friends. He had a younger brother Terry, and I think there was a daughter. I lost touch with them when I got married. It was a shock to learn (through your Newsletter) that Dick had died.

Opposite the Brennan’s lived Mr & Mrs Rees. He was a Welsh, Communist, Dustman and he was short, red-faced, wiry and could ‘talk for England’. Rees was always trying to convert us young lads to Marxism. His wife was tall, thin and grey haired and always wore a green beret with a red hammer & sickle embroidered on it.

John Bright, another friend, lived on the Heath, adjacent to the ‘Royal Oak’ public house. His sister was into Amateur Ballroom dancing and I remember seeing her on TV ‘Come Dancing’ one night.