

David and Roger Croft lived in Oxhey with their mother, who was I think a widow. I cannot remember their address. The Priors lived down Hamper Mill Lane. We knew both sets of brothers from Boy Scouts.

My sister Wendy was friends with 'Tiggy' Rowe (I think that's how you spell it) who lived opposite the Allotment gates. We never knew him really but I believe he worked for the BBC and played the Drums as a hobby, to the annoyance of the neighbours.

Between the 'Colonel' and us lived the Bone family. Allan went to Watford Grammar School and his sister, Frances ran the local Cubs group, and through Allan Mick and I joined too. I think Frances married a Cleric and was a keen churchgoer. Another member of 'Wendy's set' was Kim Peacock who played Paul Temple on the radio, a very popular show. I do not think he lived in Oxhey, but perhaps he and Wendy went to the same school.

Down the Avenue on the left lived Ted Ray, a very famous professional golfer. I believe he was employed by Oxhey Golf Club. When he died, I purchased a set of bone handled carving knife and fork and a very large photograph of him in 'plus two's' with clubs. Later when I worked at Scammell I gave it to a Scotsman who begged me for it.

I remember Keith Julier and John Coleman in Oxhey Street or thereabouts. John Coleman went into the Parachute Regiment – what happened to him? Ronny Phipps lived in Pinner Road – almost opposite the shop – was it by Villiers Road? His father was a scenery carpenter in films. I think Ronny became an accountant in the film industry.

At the Bushey Station yard was a small cooperage making barrels for Benskins Brewery. Down Pinner Road, past the Co-op and Ingram's Greengrocers, were two little shops. One was a sweetshop and Penny Library which I haunted as I loved reading, and the other I think was a Drapers, selling pins and wool – that sort of thing. Further down on the right, up some steps, was a Hairdresser who had a tank of freshwater fish which fascinated me.

We used to go to Oxhey Park, down Oxhey Road to Tommy Deacon's Hill, for fishing in the River Colne and illegally swimming. Wonderful fishing competitions were held there and I once won a small prize of hooks and a reel.

The Gas Works part of the river was where we went to fish for crayfish. A hoop of wire with the top end of a ladies stocking attached – a line to pull it up and a piece of rotting fish as bait. They were small, green lobster like things which turned pink when you boiled them – lovely with brown bread! We caught hundreds.

I would like to write more on our childhood and our wartime activities, but arthritis in the hands does not help. Maybe another time. Oxhey will always be a special place for me.

**David Manders**

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