

OXHEY VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT GROUP

December 1996

History Sheet No.9

Lawrence Larcombe

24 Upper Paddock Road

I was born in Northwood in 1913, but moved to Harrow soon after - where we lived through the years of the First World War. I have a good memory and can remember running for shelter from an air-raid in Harrow in 1916 or 1917. My father did a milk round in Harrow - with a barrow - but because he was a Watford man, we moved to Oxhey (or New Bushey, as it was then called) in September 1918 moving into 26 Upper Paddock Road.

Paddock Road area had been a large orchard and was split up into building plots. Our house was on one of these plots and we had another two plots as garden. These plots were originally sold by Auction on 19 October 1861 when they were described simply as Paddock Road - no Upper. A document dated 17 June 1892 refers to the road as South Paddock Road. On 5 May 1915 it became Upper Paddock Road, Parish of Bushey. The first document showing it as Upper Paddock Road, Oxhey is dated 15 February 1929.

Having been originally an orchard, the house that we came to - No. 26 - had a large garden, with over 30 fruit trees - apples, pears, plums, cherries, and many soft fruit bushes. At the bottom of the garden there was an old pigsty, which we used as a chicken house, and beside it was a large area of horseradish where the hens used to lay their eggs in summer - rather than using their nest boxes.

At the other end of the garden was a large brick building, which contained a copper, a fireplace, and something that looked like a baker's oven. We used this building as a coal shed, a cycle store, and, on bath nights, a spacious bathroom. The building suddenly collapsed one evening, leaving my father's cycle a 'funny' shape. Fortunately, no-one was having a bath at the time as there could have been serious consequences. The chicken house also fell down and the remains of both buildings were made into very pretty rookeries.

We shared the garden with many animals - ducks, rabbits, bantams, pigeons and Rosie, a Shetland pony.

In 1919, I started at Oxhey School. This was a mixed school but boys were transferred to London Road School at the age of seven. I had not started school till I was six because of illness, and then I contracted Scarlet Fever, which in those days was a serious complaint, so I was away for three months, resulting in a very short time there.

In 1920, I went to London Road School and stayed there until the week I reached my 14th birthday, but I learnt enough there to enable me to work for the same employer for 47 years.

While I was still at school, I did a paper round for Mr. Longhurst of the paper shop in Capel Road (now a hairdressers). It was a widespread round: Eastbury Road, Kingsfield Road, Oxhey Road and as far as Hampermill Lane.