

# OXENHOPE

## A Pennine Village



Oxenhope is a Pennine village, consisting of several hamlets scattered over a wide upland valley. The stone houses are in closely built but distant groups: the terraces of Shaw and Marsh are separated by the fields that run down to Moorhouse Beck, and until recently, fields divided Uppertown from Lowertown, as they still separate both from Back Leeming. This characteristic feature, clearly described by Daniel Defoe some 250 years ago, was largely determined by the traditional and continuing major industry of the area - textiles. By the sixteenth century many farmers had begun to make cloth and the workers' cottages grew up around each mill or within easy walking distance across the complex network of foot-paths. Protected by its relative remoteness, Oxenhope has always had a strong sense of its independence and in many different ways, it still displays a living community spirit.

The Oxenhope Village Society was constituted in April, 1973, "to protect and preserve and stimulate public interest in the area comprising the village of Oxenhope, to promote high standards of town planning and architecture in the area, and to secure the preservation, conservation, development and improvement of features of general public amenity or historic or public interest." Membership is open to all who are interested in furthering these objectives and currently numbers about 150. All meetings have always been open to the public and are advertised in the village. The Society has been working towards the creation of this report since August, 1973. In the Autumn of 1974, a highly successful exhibition was on display in the village, which embodied some of the points made below. Both that exhibition and this report are the work of a very large number of villagers, both inside and outside the Society. Reference has been made to the 1971 Census information, to the many reports and studies on Pennine communities, and the region, and to unpublished local material. In addition, well over 200 questionnaires (or some 30% of households in the parish) have been analysed, to supply a valuable body of information on village opinions concerning the village itself, the community and their future. (See Section 6).



# OXENHOPE : A PENNINE VILLAGE

Survey and Recommendations made  
by the Oxenhope Village Society,  
1975.

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## 1. LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY

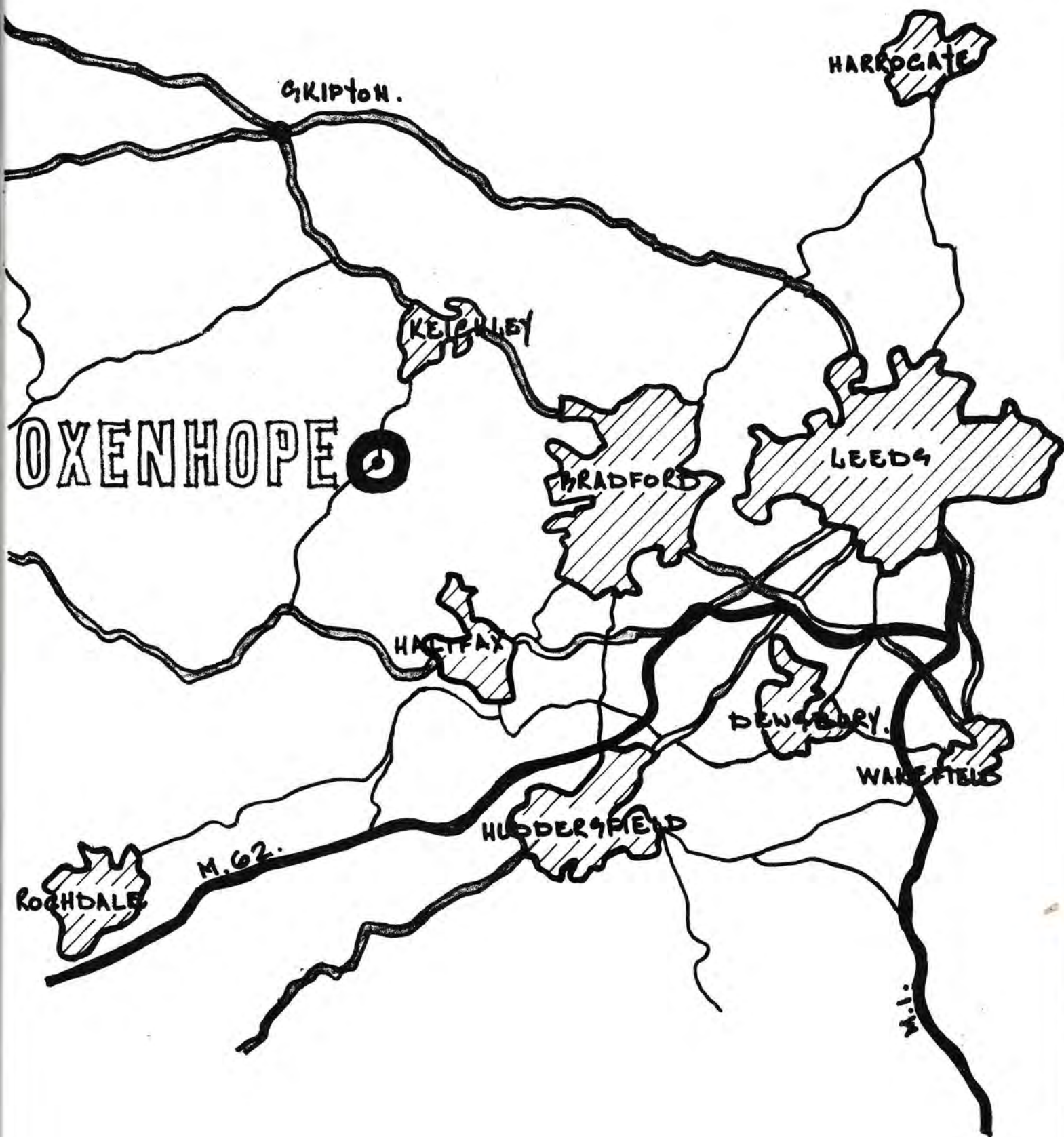
1.1 Oxenhope is a valley community occupying the head of the southern branch of the Worth Valley, about five miles S.S.W. of Keighley, and nine miles West of Bradford. Its nearest neighbour (2 miles to the north) is the village of Haworth. Except in that direction, the valley of Oxenhope (at about 650 feet) is entirely surrounded by almost level moorland summits, stepped at heights of about 1,000, 1,300 and 1,400 feet.

1.2 Geologically the 'hammer-head' to the Worth Valley at Oxenhope is mainly caused by east-west trending faults across the Millstone Grit series, with a sliver of Coal Measures at Sawood. The rocks of the lower land are masked by Boulder Clay left behind by glaciation.

1.3 The most recent geological stratum is the peat of the moorland tops. This was used for fuel until the early twentieth century. The soils of the district are acidic, largely derived from gritstone and leached by the heavy rainfall which prevails. The Boulder Clay holds its fertility better, but the poor natural drainage has never made it ideal for farming.

1.4 The average annual rainfall in Oxenhope is 45 inches, or some 13 inches more than for Bradford. In other ways too, the climate is relatively less benign than for communities only a few miles to the East.

1.5 On the other hand, the relative remoteness and natural beauties of the area offer some compensations to the villagers, and they are well aware of these. (See 6 below). The entire valley was defined in 1947 as 'of great landscape value' and most of it is approved Green Belt. The village lies well within the boundaries of the proposed Pennine Park.





## 2. HISTORY OF THE SETTLEMENT

2.1 Oxenhope has been administratively part of Bradford for most of its history. From the sixteenth century onwards, the village's main economic links were with Halifax, by the paved road over Fly Flat. The construction of the turnpike road between Lees and Hebden Bridge (1816) made obsolete the old road from Haworth through Marsh and over Stairs to Heptonstall, and also brought nineteenth century Oxenhope into close connection with Keighley. This relationship was strengthened by the building of the Worth Valley Railway in 1867 and confirmed by the incorporation of the village in the borough of Keighley in 1938. The recent local government re-organisation has re-established the ancient ties with Bradford.

2.2 The bond with Bradford was real, if perhaps never close, from very early times until only about a century ago. In the eleventh century, and probably long before, Oxenhope was an outlying part of the manor of Bradford, passing eventually to the Duchy of Lancaster along with its parent estate, to become Crown land in 1399 with the accession to the throne of Henry Bolingbroke as Henry IV. Long before then the direct lordship of Oxenhope had been acquired by local families, who seem originally to have come from Heaton and Clayton. They did little more than acknowledge their overlords by the payment of small rents, some of which were still being collected this century. The parish of Bradford originally included the chapelry of Haworth (which also contained Oxenhope and Stanbury), and Oxenhope only became an independent parish in 1849. (See 7 below).

2.3 The name Oxenhope ('valley of the Oxen') is appropriate for a community whose interests were predominantly the care of cattle and sheep until the sixteenth century. At that time some of the farmers began to supplement their incomes by concentrating on cloth manufacture. Since then, the needs of the textile industry have created here the characteristic Pennine pattern, unusually well preserved in Oxenhope, of dense but widely-scattered groupings of stone houses round the mills, and still more widely scattered farms. The whole area is linked by an elaborate network of footpaths and lanes.

2.4 The industrial development of the settlement has also been dominated by textiles, so that factories not devoted to some stage or stages in the manufacture of cloth tend to be concerned with such items as springs or drive belts (see 8 below). The building of the railway in 1867, and the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war, gave a considerable boost to the importance of Oxenhope as a production centre, reflected in the growth of buildings in Uppertown and Lowertown, and of new houses for the prosperous middle classes. (See 4 below).

2.5 The construction in the last quarter of the nineteenth century of the system of conduits and reservoirs that so dominates the landscape of the hillsides, dealt a mortal blow to the upland farming industry, already in decline, but the rearing of cattle and sheep is still an important activity for farms lower down.  
(See 9 below).





### 3. COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 One major road, the A6033 linking Hebden Bridge from the south to Keighley in the north passes through the village. The approach from Hebden Bridge is over Cock Hill, 1,400 feet, and is subject to blockage by drifting snow in winter. The descent to the village is by a long, steady slope ending in a very sharp left-hand bend, scene of the famous 'char-a-banc disaster' in October, 1920. Having passed through Uppertown and Lowertown, the A6033 runs on towards Cross Roads, where it joins the main Halifax to Keighley road, following a winding course high above the river to its left.

3.2 A second major road link is the B6141 from Bradford and Denholme, which enters the village by an even more steep approach, over Bradshaw Head (1,200 feet), and through Leeming to become Station Road. By this route it is possible to reach the centre of Bradford in about 20 minutes even in peak hours.

3.3 29% of the respondents in the survey do not own a car. There is a direct bus service to Keighley (used 'occasionally' by 45% of the survey respondents and 'regularly' by 30%), and an infrequent one to Hebden Bridge. There is no direct bus service to Bradford, although four daily pass to Denholme and back.

3.4 The Keighley and Worth Valley Railway does not operate a service at times convenient to those working in Haworth and beyond, but it carries many thousands of passengers up and down the valley at weekends all year round, in steam-drawn and diesel trains.

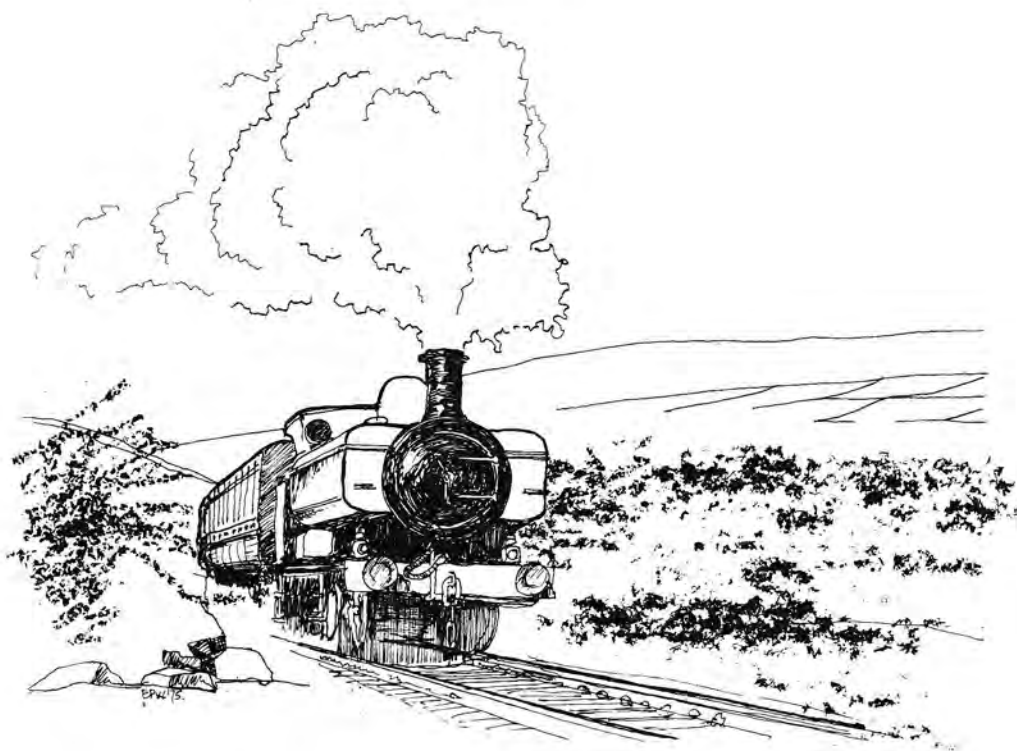
3.5 Summer weekend traffic on all roads has increased considerably in recent years, especially on the two major road links referred to above; regularly there is congestion near the Station, and on Marsh and Upper Marsh, and approaching the outskirts of Haworth. Both the A6033 and the B6141 have been marked as possible 'scenic routes' in the proposed Pennine Park, but in any case the growth of traffic on summer weekends can be expected to continue. A comprehensive survey of the state of the road surfaces in the village and of various traffic hazards was made in 1974 by a Sub-Committee of the Society.

3.6 Pedestrian traffic in and around Oxenhope is as heavy as might be expected of a rural or semi-rural community, with 56% of those responding to the questionnaire using local footpaths frequently for recreation, and a further 24% occasionally. In other words, 4 out of 5 villagers make use of the local footpaths for recreational purposes. From other comments made in the responses to the questionnaire, it appears that some of those who said that they did not use the footpaths for recreation, do so for other reasons (e.g. to get to the shops). This is not surprising since many of the paths were created so that mill-workers could get to and from the outlying farms where they lived. (See section 10.2 below).

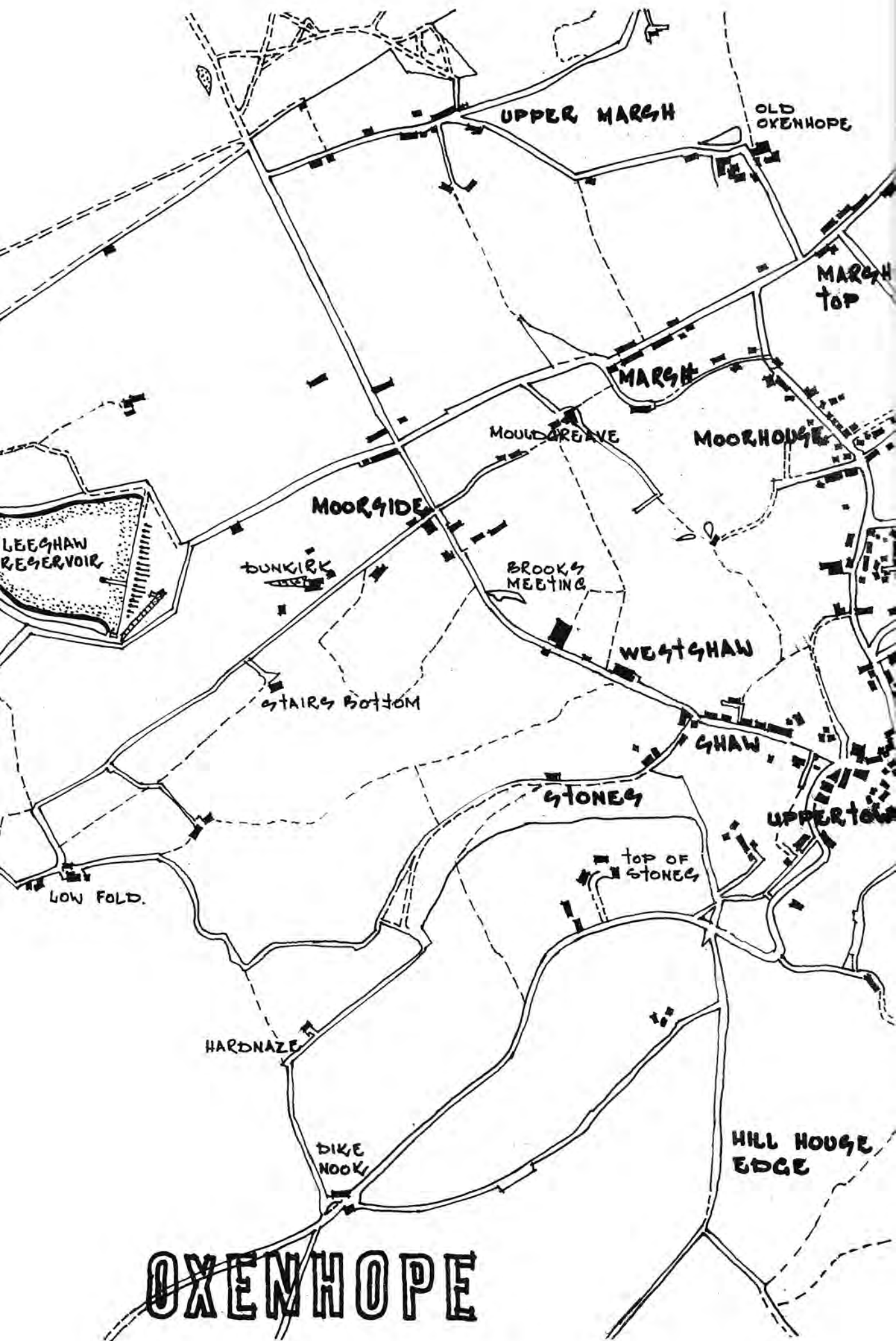


During 1974, a full survey of the footpaths, bridleways and other tracks in the village was made by a member of the Society, whose report is being actively followed by a Sub-Committee and has already been well received by the Highway Authority.

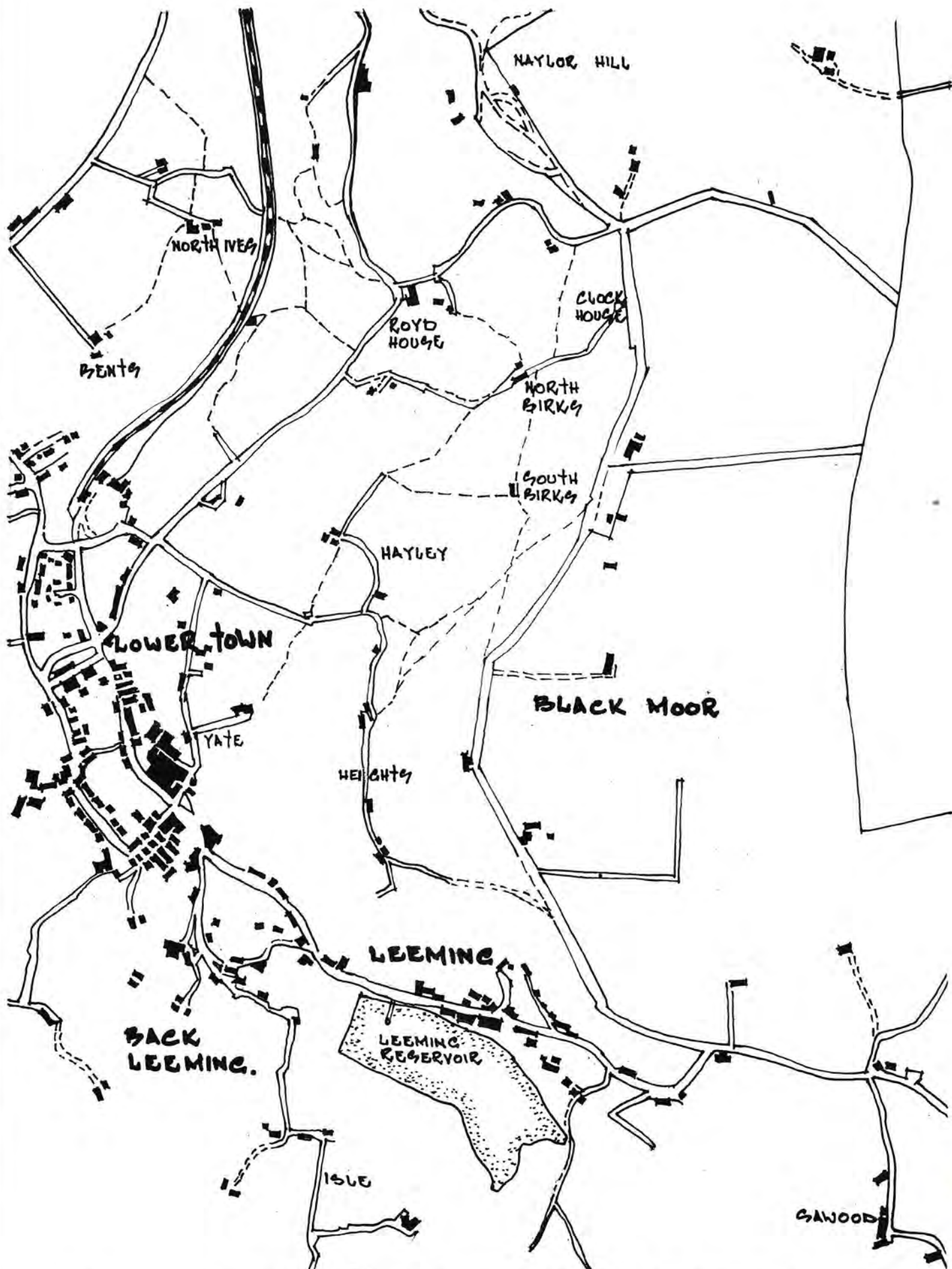
3.7 The several hamlets of Oxenhope are more clearly separated from each other by the steep and varied nature of the terrain than might appear from a cursory glance at the 1" Ordnance Survey map.











# A PENNINE VILLAGE



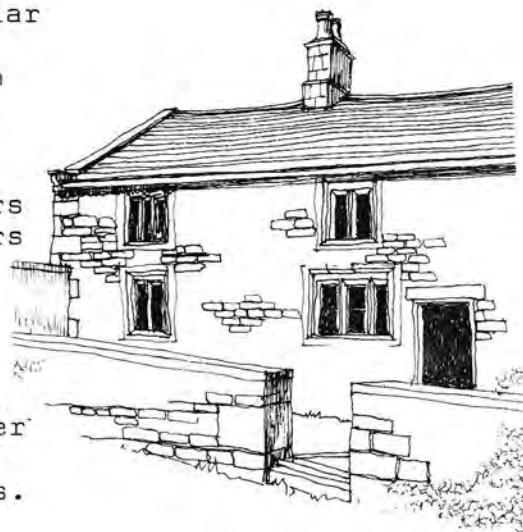
#### 4. BUILDINGS - ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORIC INTERESTS

4.1 There is some archaeological evidence of human occupation of the high moorlands around Oxenhope even from the Middle Stone Age, but no buildings survive which can be dated reliably to any period earlier than the Tudor.

4.2 The earliest permanent settlement favoured the side slopes at about 750 to 850 feet, probably on the favoured south-west facing slope which includes the clearly Tudor-style North Ives, Mouldgreave and Old Oxenhope, a suggestive enough name in itself. East of them, on a westward-facing terrace of the same altitude, lies a group of settlements, including Royd House, the Birks and Hayley farms, and Yate House, whose deeds in most cases go back to the same general starting date of circa 1600. There is documentary mention of one or more of these houses from a century earlier; but the building styles cannot be dated to earlier than the late sixteenth century.

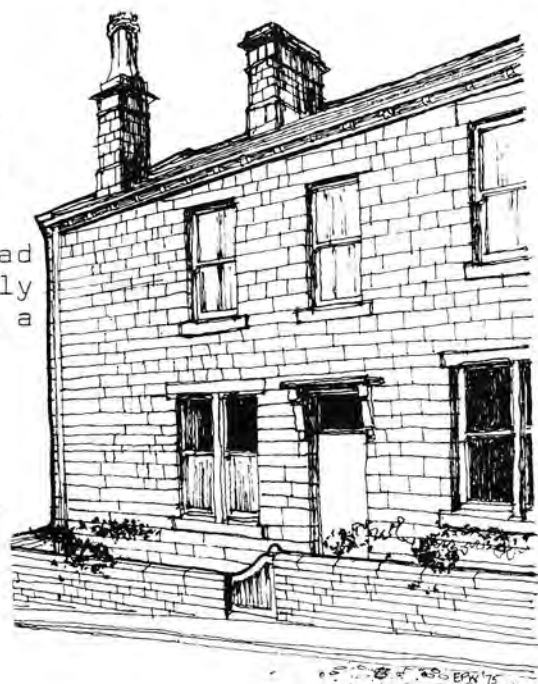
4.3 The last remaining example of a timber framed house is to be seen at Cliffe Castle Museum, Keighley, where a frame taken from Cruck House, Black Moor, is exhibited. The climate is undoubtedly bad for the survival of old timbers, though some may be found in buildings which have been reconstructed at various times in their history. The wealth of the woollen trade, and the abundance of stone in the area, encouraged building in stone.

The houses of the seventeenth and early eighteenth century are of traditional rectangular plan with walls of coursed rubble stone and large quoin blocks. The roofs are low-pitched, tiled in stone. Stone copings at the gables terminate in moulded kneelers at eave level. The low doors have stone surrounds. Chamfered mullions provide more light for the small windows deep-set in the thick walls. The sketch of Low Fold farm shows a smaller farmhouse with low ceilings and single mullioned windows.



4.6 Slum clearance in the last decade has removed some typical early mill cottages, for example, the Holme Mill Row. Holme Mill itself has also been demolished, and most of the mills have undergone many extensions and rebuildings, since their erection. Only a few, notably Dunkirk, have remained relatively unchanged. Most of the older houses have been renovated during the past two centuries, especially during the Victorian period of prosperity. Some, such as Bents and Moorhouse, were transformed beyond recognition and resemble the modest mansions which appeared in the valley after the dual impetus of the arrival of the Worth Valley Railway (1867) and the Franco-Prussian War, which created a major market for textiles.

4.7 The new main roads of the nineteenth century set a framework for future housing development: the turnpike road from Lees to Hebden Bridge (1816) and Station Road (after 1867) were particularly important. The sketch shows a typical late nineteenth century terraced house as found in the Square, in Uppertown and in Lower Leeming. Architectural details include sash windows, small courses of stonework and more elaborate doorways.



Also shown is a middle-class house of this period, with high-pitched blue slate roof, barge boarding at the verges, cast-iron ridge detailing, and high bay windows with sashes.







The sketch of Yate House exemplifies the larger Yeoman's house with transomed mullions and fine architectural details, dating from rebuilding about 1760.

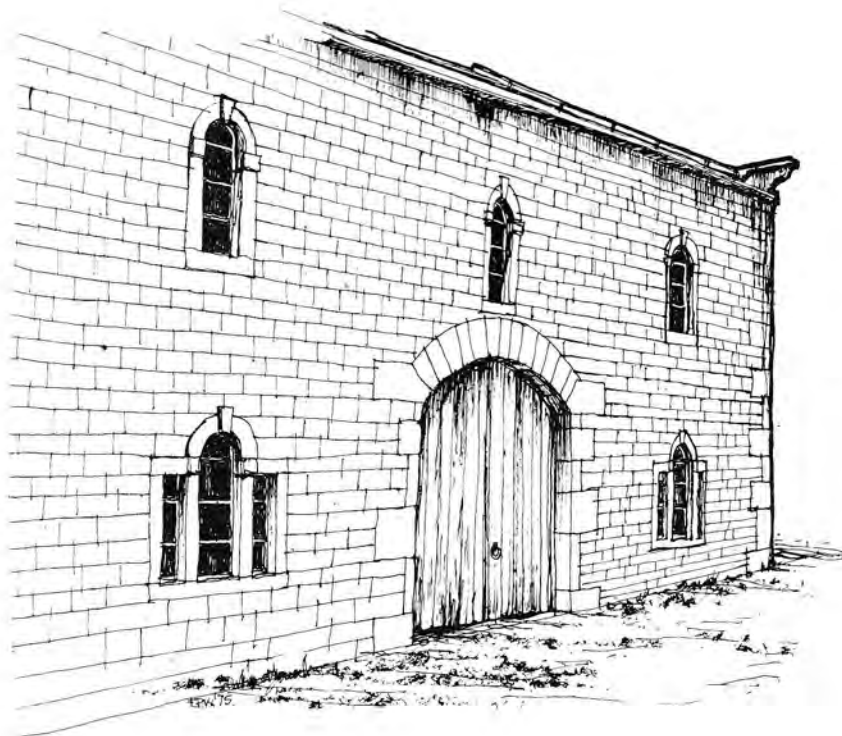
4.4 From the mid-eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, the window style changed to squared mullions with thinner walls and rather larger windows. The sketch illustrates a typical weaver's cottage of this period. In the gable of such buildings, a door at second storey height was used to take out finished pieces of cloth. Many of these can be seen today, usually blocked or incorporating a smaller window. An example is the gable of the Post Office.



4.5 The building of the first mills between 1790 and 1820 encouraged the erection of a cluster of terraces which became Lowertown. The manorial corn mill had been in the valley bottom for centuries and there were a few low-lying farms from an early date (e.g. at Goose Green and at the foot of Yate Lane); but until the streams became a source of power for the worsted industry there was little to attract settlement below the sunny slopes. Shaw had several farms and cottages by 1700, but the in-filling of the rows presumably awaited the coming of Brooks Meeting Mill. Some of Shaw, e.g. Cold Well, was evidently built much later in the nineteenth century. At this time, the traditional style of cottage building began to change, with the loss of the large quoin blocks. Houses at the bottom of Best Lane show the influence of classical styling, as elsewhere.

4.8 The steady growth of settlement in the Victorian era led to industrial stagnation and population stability in the first half of the twentieth century, so that, with a few conspicuous exceptions, Oxenhope escaped the worst architectural abuses of the inter-war years. One small council estate has the look of that period, but was completed later. Recent housing developments in and around the Gledhow estate show some sensitivity in their use of stone facing and their avoidance of red roofing tiles, but still obtrude aesthetically with their very steeply pitched roofs and bright colour schemes. Compared with neighbouring villages, Oxenhope has suffered relatively little, so far, in this respect.

4.9 In 1975 there were nine listed buildings in Oxenhope, namely North Ives Farm and the nearby 'donkey bridge', Old Oxenhope Hall, Mouldgreave, The Bank (Denholme Road), Yate House, 11-13 Yate Lane, 15 Yate Lane and its adjacent barn (illustrated below). Mouldgreave, Yate House and the parish church are also described in Pevsner's 'Buildings of England'.





## 5. LANDSCAPE DETAILS

5.1 A cursory glance at Oxenhope from a local viewpoint such as Black Moor suggests a somewhat bare valley, but a closer examination reveals a large number of trees scattered across the landscape in twos or threes. It is likely that Oxenhope was once a heavily wooded valley, and names like Sawood and Shaw refer to areas of woodland that have now disappeared. Remaining or replanted woods are relatively small and are mainly to be found in the grounds of large properties such as Royd House, Manorlands and houses on Lea Hill; there are also two small but attractive spinneys at Nan Scar and Paul Clough (known locally as 'Paul Wood') and clumps of trees close to the Bridgehouse Beck.

5.2 The vast majority of trees are deciduous, a fact that makes perhaps the largest single difference between the winter and summer appearance of the valley. A typical pattern of planting was a group of sycamores or chestnuts to the windward side of a farm building; on the slopes of Nab Hill and elsewhere at points affected by the nineteenth century farm closures by the Water Authorities, isolated trees remain, sometimes where no other traces of habitation can be seen.

5.3 Certain roads (notably Hebden Bridge Road at some points, Moorhouse Lane and Yate Lane) have had avenues of trees, or lines along one side, planted in the nineteenth century, but there can be no doubt that there has been a net loss in woodland in the past century, as building and other clearances have been carried out.

5.4 The most prominent man-made feature of the landscape is the extensive mileage of dry-stone walling, much of which is now in a poor state of repair. Passage for footpaths is made either through these walls by means of a variety of stiles, or over them up three or four steps formed by large slabs inserted into the wall for the purpose, and down the other side. Hedges are rare, but fine thorn hedgerows may be found on the slopes below Black Moor.

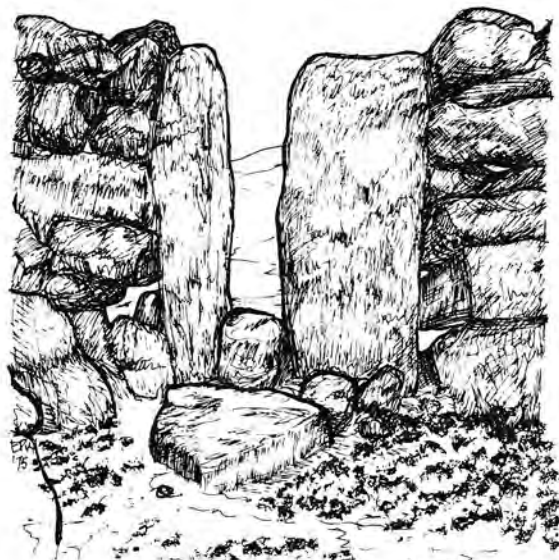
5.5 As described elsewhere, Oxenhope has an unusually extensive network of paths and bridleways. The surface of these varies from the almost impassable (rare) to carefully paved stretches for walkers (e.g. from Hill House Lane to the Church, or from Heights Farm down to Lowertown) or semi-paved bridleway like Limers Gate.

5.6 Three remarkable levels of conduit line much of the valley; to Leeshaw in the West (875 feet) and Leeming in the East (1,100 feet) - both these supply compensation reservoirs - with the highest running through a tunnel to Thornton Moor drinking water reservoir at a height of 1,250 feet. The masonry of these conduits, their tunnels and sluices, form an impressive memorial to the skill and determination of the Victorian engineers and of the immense labour force employed. The line followed by the channels underground is in places marked by curious boundary 'gravestones' inscribed with the water undertaking's initial letters and the year of construction (as at Hill Top, or to the west of Hill House).

5.7 Headstones above doors and windows are sometimes inscribed with the initials of the man who built the house or made the improvements, and the year. Similar 'signatures' may be found on some of the innumerable stone troughs and cisterns at roadsides or beside paths.

5.8 The old road to Heptonstall still has a fine stretch of ancient cobble surface above Bodkin, but the former road to Halifax (Nab Water Lane) has had the indignity of losing its paving in favour of a modern tarmac surface quite recently, apart from a few score yards at the summit. At that point, deeply grooved stones show what heavy traffic once followed this very high and difficult route south.

5.9 As well as the well-known general viewpoints along the A6033, there are spectacular panoramas to the West from Black Moor Road. In clear weather Penyghent and other hills over 40 miles away can be clearly seen. Nab Hill is itself a prominent landmark from the north, and can be spotted from as far away as the hillsides near Menston and Otley.





## 6. THE COMMUNITY IN 1975

6.1 The 1971 National Census shows (Oxenhope Ward, minus enumeration districts A58, A59, A60) that the parish then included 732 households and 1992 persons. There were 816 dwellings (48 vacant), of which 70 have no hot water (9%), 140 no bathroom (17%) and 144 have no interior lavatory (18%). Only 72% of dwellings have all three amenities. These figures compare with the following for the Bradford Metropolitan District area as a whole: no hot water 7%, no bathroom 9%, no inside W.C. 14%.

6.2 The Census figures show an age structure that follows the natural pattern, with more boy children being born than girls, and with women surviving longer than men. Thus only 40% of the 461 villagers aged 60 or over were men, the same proportion as for the whole of West Yorkshire.

6.3. At the end of 1974 a questionnaire was distributed to some 600 households in the village. 217 returns have been analysed to date, or some 29% of all households in the village. These are drawn from a reasonably representative cross-section of area, type of housing, and length of residence, as can be confirmed by comparison with the census figures.

6.4 There were 262 responses to a question about 'place of work'. Of these, 49 (19%) are retired, and eight could not be classified. The remaining 205 were in employment, 37% in Oxenhope itself, 10% in Haworth or Oakworth and 22% in Keighley. In other words, of the 'economically active', as the Census puts it, 141 respondents, or 69%, work in the Worth Valley.

6.5 110 respondents (51%) have lived in Oxenhope for over 20 years, or all their lives. The full figures are:

Over 20 years (or 'always'):	110 (51%)
15 to 19 years:	10 (5%)
10 to 14 years:	26 (12%)
5 to 9 years:	28 (13%)
0 to 4 years:	41 (19%)
Unanswered:	2

6.6 The proportion of car owners was markedly higher in the questionnaire responses (71%) than in the 1971 Census (55%), because of a continuing increase in ownership (see also 3.3 above). 12% of those who commented on what they disliked about living in Oxenhope, complained of the inadequate bus service. In this context, it is significant that the percentage of car-owners in 1971 was already much higher than the percentage for West Yorkshire as a whole (44%).

6.7 The effects of tourism are not very evident in Oxenhope at present, as is shown by the following table of responses:

HOW MUCH DOES LOCAL TOURISM AFFECT YOU AT PRESENT?

Does not affect me/very little effect, etc.:	20%
"No" (or unanswered):	65%
Yes:	11%
A great deal:	4%

However, some concern was expressed about the possible growth of tourism in the future, either that the provision of more facilities was essential (7%) or that such an increase would in any case adversely affect the village (17%). 18% of the respondents were already disturbed by certain aspects of tourism, particularly week-end traffic, which is regarded as too heavy for the local roads. 51% of the surveyed were not concerned or did not answer, and 8% were in favour.

6.8 6 out of 10 villagers are concerned about the prospect of a possible increase in private building. 19% feel that there should be no further building at all ("the village is big enough"), and 29% stress that it should be strictly limited and should be controlled so as not to spoil the character of the older, stone-built properties. A further 8% had no objection to further development, as long as it is 'in keeping'.

6.9 What do people like about living in Oxenhope? 40% of replies stress the rural nature of the surroundings, 16% the 'peace and quiet' of the village. Another 26% refer to the 'friendly people' or the village way of life.

6.10 What is disliked? 53% have nothing to say in answer to this question. Of those who do comment, 14% complain bitterly about the inadequate and declining services provided by the local authority, with resulting dirt and neglect in many places, and 12% criticise the inadequate bus services. The remainder comment on various aspects of life in a Pennine village, (8% lack of urban facilities, 6% weekend visitors from towns, 4% particular other groups of villagers, 4% meteorological and geographical peculiarities).



6.11 Finally, villagers were invited to make comments on their present or future life in Oxenhope. These were not easy to categorise, and tended to echo points already made. The largest group (14%) again emphasized, in various ways, the desirability of conserving the best aspects of the village and its life. On this point, it is worth noting that of the 48 villagers (22%) who had "no objection" to further private building in Oxenhope, 19 (40%) stressed their liking of the rural nature of the village (e.g. 'open views', 'scenery', etc.), and a further 15% the quietness of life in the village at present.

Both these qualities would be seriously affected by the large scale development which the same villagers seem happy to contemplate. On possible improvements to facilities and amenities, there was only one suggestion that recurred frequently enough to merit particular mention: 82 villagers felt that a village hall would be a valuable amenity, despite the availability of both Church and Chapel halls and rooms.

6.12 To summarise, the questionnaire responses confirm and fill out the picture of Oxenhope as a 'living community' with deep roots, a somewhat conservative attitude to modern life and a strong sense of their own independence. This type of community is increasingly rare, and positive planning decisions will be needed to ensure its survival against the twin challenges of large-scale building development and tourism.

## 7. CHAPELS, CHURCH AND SCHOOLS

7.1 It is reasonable to assume that the Cottage Meetings held by Rev. William Grimshaw, vicar of Haworth 1742-1763, and the visits of John Wesley to Haworth from 1747, mark the beginnings of any separate chapels or church in Oxenhope itself. The great "Haworth Round" (founded 1748) of Wesleyan Societies included a Society at Sawood ('Saud') by 1787 (membership 16). The Wesleyan Chapel at Lowertown was built in 1805, and one at Sawood (demolished in 1952) in 1836.

7.2 It was also in 1836 that the Horkinstone Baptists decided to start work on a Sabbath School and Chapel for 124 scholars (and 50 teachers), at the junction of Denholme Road and Black Moor Edge Road. Following demolition in 1927, only the adjacent burial ground marks its site, the new 'Oxenhope Baptist School/Chapel' having been opened in May of that year.

7.3 The Oxenhope Wesleyan Chapel in Lowertown was sold and converted in 1891, a new and enlarged building in West Drive having been opened a year earlier, with every one of its 600 seats 'let'. This Chapel was demolished as recently as 1971, a sanctuary to replace it having been created within the nearby Sunday School (1898) which still serves the community in a variety of ways.

7.4 The Rev. Patrick Bronte appointed the Rev. J.B. Grant to take charge of the Oxenhope part of Haworth parish in 1845. A Church of England school was built in 1846, and Sunday services were held there until the church of St. Mary the Virgin was built and consecrated three years later. A fine ring of six bells, later increased to eight, was installed in 1890; the village has an active society of change-ringers. The school is still in use as an Infants School, and caters for meetings of various societies and associations in the evenings.

7.5 The Hawksbridge Baptist School had close associations with Haworth West Lane Baptists from its foundation in 1832; the old building is now used as a warehouse, having been replaced by a new Chapel-School opened in 1915.

7.6 The origins of Marsh Chapel (1836) can be seen in the record of a fortnightly preaching appointment for Keighley Wesleyan Circuit at the nearby house of Mouldgreave, between 1832 and 1837. The small community of Marsh still supports its own Chapel.

7.7 The children of Oxenhope pass at present from the Infants School, referred to above, to the Junior School (1896), formerly the Board School, at the junction of Cross Lane with Hebden Bridge Road. Most local children thereafter travel by bus daily to schools in Keighley, or to private schools (which also attract middle-class children at Infant and Junior level) in Heaton and Bradford.

7.8 The vigorous spirit of the religious communities is still a very important feature of village life.



## 8. INDUSTRY

8.1 The most obvious industrial activity in Oxenhope is represented by the five-storey textile mill in Lowertown together with its extensive associated sheds. Although this complex visually dominates the village, there are several other notable textile and metalworking enterprises.

8.2 In about 1790, Oxenhope housed the first worsted spinning mill in Bradford parish, at a time when textile manufacture was largely a cottage industry.

8.3 With the advent of mechanisation and the development of factory production, both textile manufacture and metalworking progressed in parallel. At one time the local tanning industry, now no longer in existence, supplied these factories with drive belts.

8.4 From its roots in blacksmith work, and stimulated by the demands of textile machinery makers, there grew up a spring-making industry. The original such enterprise has continued a family business for about 150 years through to the present. It is worth considering the difference between a car suspension spring and the spring in the ignition lock. This illustrates the wide variety of components which are covered by the general term of springs, and nearly any spring can be made in the village.

8.5 The term textile is, of course, a portmanteau description for a variety of activities and the textile work in Oxenhope embraces many processes using both natural and synthetic material with very different products supplying a range of markets.

8.6 This is not the complete picture of Oxenhope industry. Agriculture is dealt with separately but related to it is a significant wholesale butchering activity. Great tracts of land in Oxenhope are devoted to water catchment, with an elaborate system of conduits feeding the reservoirs. The Water Authority is the most obvious employer in the public utility sector, but clearly, the local council and other public services make a significant contribution to employment.

8.7 A survey of industry in the village in 1975 showed that the following 12 firms employed some 360 persons, nearly all living locally. An encouraging factor for the community in an economically difficult year was the fact that no company saw any immediate danger of redundancy.

<u>Name of Company</u>	<u>Product</u>	<u>Employees</u>
Airedale Springs, Ltd., Harry Lane Works.	Springs	58/60
Bancroft & Sunderland, Ltd., Charles Mill. (Main Office: Keighley)	Hand Knitting & Hosiery Yarns (2500 spindles)	40
Bond-A-Band Transmissions, Dunkirk Mill. Ltd.	Experimental Plastic Extrusions	1 (Self- employed)
Fearnley, Ramsden & Co.Ltd., Lowertown Mills	Furnishings (Warp-weave- mend).12 looms	20
R.Green & Co. Ltd., Whittaker & Clark, Ltd. Perseverance Mills	Wool Merchants (Carpet trade)	2
Hield Bros. Ltd., Lower Town Shed. (Main Office: Bradford)	Worsted (Recomb-warp- wind).12 looms	130
Howarth Industrial Saws, Ltd. Hawkcliffe Works.	Saws (Construction and repair)	4
Keighley Spindle Co. Hawkcliffe Works, Hebden Road.	Textile machines (Construction and repair)	3
Ogdens (ICI Fibres) Pennine Polyfibres, Ltd., Sykes Mill, Leeming. (Main Office: Denholme)	Staple fibres (Manmade fibres, crimping and cutting)	25
George Emmott Pawsons, Ltd. Wadsworth Mill	Springs	50
Raisprint, Ltd. Hawkcliffe Works.	Thermographic Printers	4/6
M.H.Tankard, Ltd., Brooks Meeting Mill, Shaw	Worsted (warp-weave-mend). 30 looms	25



## 9. AGRICULTURE

9.1 It is difficult today to appreciate that Oxenhope was virtually self-sufficient in grain until the early nineteenth century. The manorial corn mill is still here, embedded in Airedale Springs Mill, by the railway station. Kilns were used for drying the corn. Cultivation probably reached its maximum extent after the Enclosure Act of the 1770's. This led to the creation of many new farms in the West Field and Black Moor areas, at around 850 to 1100 feet, but attempts to improve the Great Moor (Nab Hill) still higher than that to the south, were eventually abortive.

9.2 Farming in Oxenhope suffered the same as everywhere else from the repeal of the Corn Laws, but much more directly fatal to many local farms was the advent of Bradford Corporation Waterworks, c 1870. A few farms were demolished because they were on the sites of the first conduits and reservoirs built in the following decade, but many more were affected soon after 1900 when under regulations to limit the incidence of bovine tuberculosis the keeping of cattle on drinking-water catchment grounds was prohibited. This took the living out of more than a score of farms on the slopes between Sawood and Stairs, which lay above Bradford's Stubden or Thornton Moor conduits. Thus a wide expanse of farmland reverted to unimproved waste after probably 400 years of careful management in the case of a few like Wildgrove Head.



A large number of farms were no more than small-holdings, the farmers eking a living from the sale of milk, cheese and eggs. With many large families, limited prosperity only came when sons and daughters were old enough to work in the local mills and workshops (see Section 3.6).

The present policy of the Yorkshire Water Authority appears to be to pull down the farmhouses on their land as they become vacant.

9.3 Today there is no arable land in Oxenhope. A few farms may grow the odd field of kale, turnips or potatoes, but the rest is grassland. The emphasis of full-time farming is milk, for which there is a large urban market nearby, and worthwhile 'rounds' for direct sales in the valley itself. The larger units have been formed from land gathered from smaller units over the years. Many of the farms are too small to be viable, and at least one member of the family will have other employment. These are generally farmed by old Oxenhope families with local farming traditions, and concentrate more on the rearing of beef type cattle, pigs and small livestock.

9.4 Farmsteads are now being bought for conversion, and the land rented to neighbouring farmers or used to graze family ponies, etc.



## 10. SHOPS AND SERVICES

10.1 The plan of Uppertown and Lowertown shows some of the shops and services available in the central area of the village. It can be seen that the shops are located in three distinct areas, with no obvious focal point.

The outlying hamlets such as Leeming and Marsh have suffered through the closing down of businesses in recent years, and now only those that are indicated on the plan remain. Amongst those to close were Co-ops. in Leeming and Uppertown, chemist, baker/confectioner, various grocers and greengrocers, a fish-and-chip shop and a newsagent.

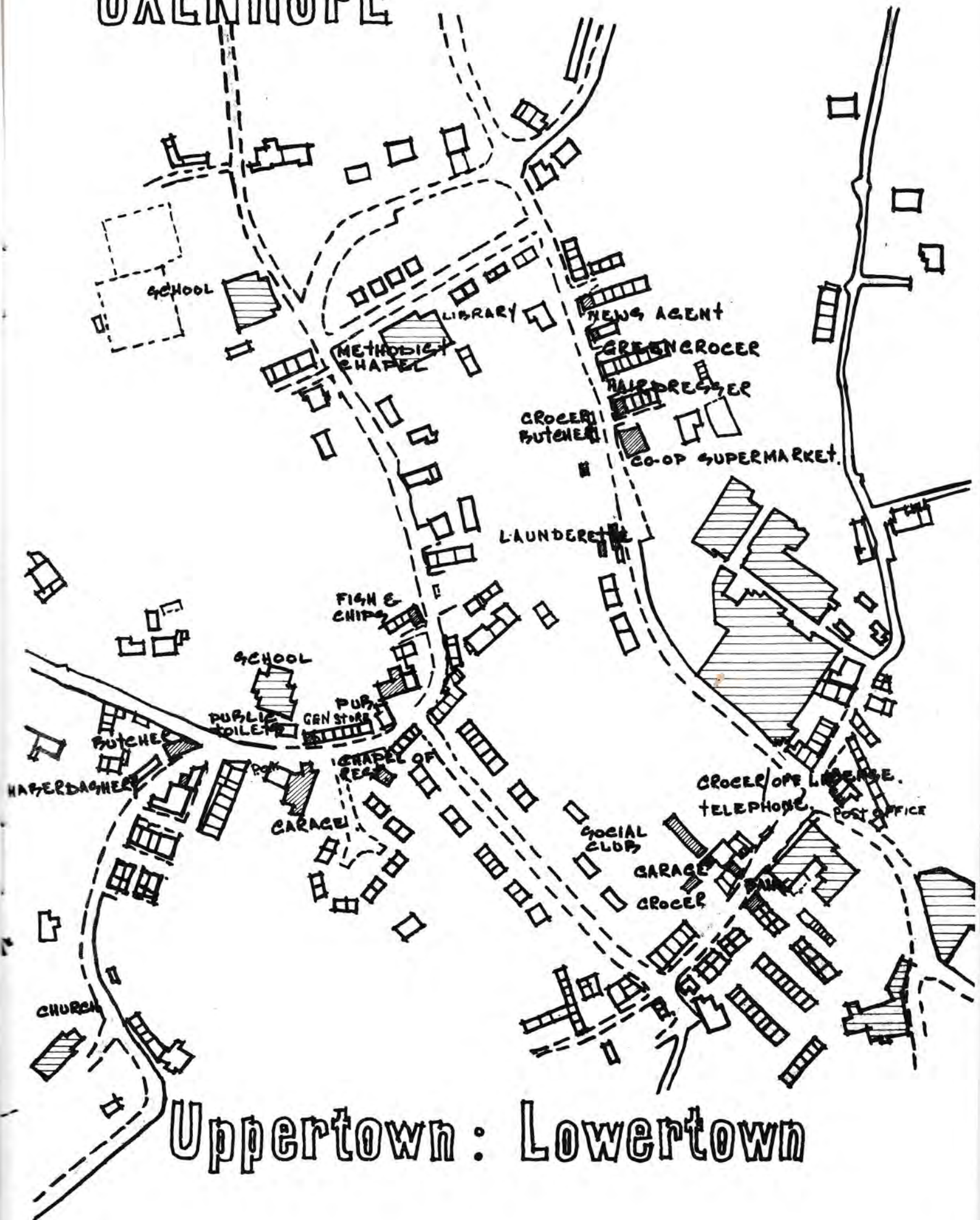
10.2 The main services are again central with post office, bank and library (at limited times), hairdresser, launderette and garages. Elsewhere in the village there are kennels, an abattoir and another garage. Again the closing of businesses has meant the loss of various services, notably coal and builders' merchants in the station yard and the local Doctor's surgery. The survey showed that 7% of respondents felt the need for a Doctor's surgery and 6% a chemist's shop in the village.

10.3 Social services are represented in the village by the private Sue Ryder Home at Manorlands, whilst Croft House, Muffin Corner, has recently been acquired by the Regional Hospital Board for use as a six-bed convalescent home for psychiatric patients.

10.4 Oxenhope, like most villages, has its own local craftsmen and is well served by joiners, painters, plumbers, electricians, general builders and a monumental mason.

10.5 The social and drinking habits of the villagers are catered for by the Social Club in Lowertown and five public houses throughout the village, all of which enjoy a good reputation within the district.

# OXENHOPE



Uppertown : Lowertown



## 11. RECREATION

11.1 There are a number of clubs and activities in the village, some with a long history and tradition of success in local competitions.

11.2 The football club was originally formed in 1890 to play rugby football. It reformed as an association football club in 1912 and has enjoyed considerable success over the years, particularly since 1945. There are two pitches in the recreation ground.

11.3 Adjoining the recreation ground is the village cricket club. This was formed in 1952, uniting the players of the former Oxenhope Wesleyans and the Oxenhope Church Cricket teams. Both had been successful clubs, the Church team winning the Keighley and District League for the first time in 1897 and the Wesleyans the Craven Senior League first in 1904. The present team has had a long string of fine seasons to its credit in the West Bradford League.

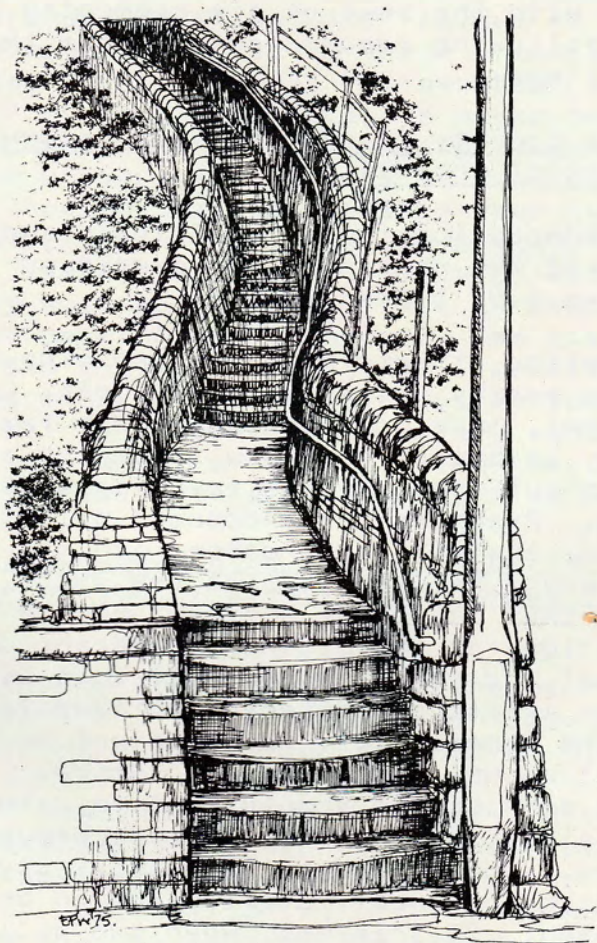
11.4 Pigeon fanciers and gardeners also have a long history and a keen sense of competition. The lofts of the Oxenhope pigeon fanciers (first formed in 1902) are scattered around the valley. Allotments (begun in 1910) are worked in an acre of Corporation land at the bottom of the recreation ground.

11.5 The 5½ acres of the ground also hold public gardens, a bowling green for the well-known and successful bowling club, two tennis courts and a childrens' play area.

11.6 There is a remarkably large and intricate network of footpaths, bridleways and lanes in the parish. 4 out of 5 people responding to the survey use footpaths for recreational purposes.

11.7 The village Amateur Operatic Society (originally formed as a Church Operatic Society in 1929) has a distinguished record of production to its credit and is still active. Evening classes are held in the Junior School. There are a number of church and chapel organisations, an active Women's Institute and a Retired Person's Association.

11.8 The village supports a Scout Troup, Girl Guides and Brownies. A youth club operates in the Methodist Sunday School Building. There is also pre-schooling in the form of two playgroups.





RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTED TO A PUBLIC MEETING,  
15th MAY, 1975, AND PASSED WITHOUT OPPOSITION

The special qualities of Oxenhope as a valley site of unusual attractiveness, and as a living village community, have been touched on at several points above (e.g. 1.5, 4.8, 5.9, 6.) For various reasons these qualities are threatened, not only by the major problems of expanding private development and tourism, but by more subtle factors. The relative remoteness of the village has also meant that in several ways it has suffered from a certain neglect.

The Oxenhope Village Society, after completing the foregoing Survey, having taken expert advice and consulted with the rest of the community, makes the nine following recommendations for the future of the village:

12.1 The Society is opposed to a large-scale development of the village.

This recommendation is overwhelmingly supported by the views of the community, as expressed in the Survey (See 6.8, 6.9 and 6.11).

The shattering effects of large-scale development (as on the nearby villages of Oakworth, Cullingworth and Wilsden), have not been felt thus far in Oxenhope. The valley is one of very few inhabited areas in the region without giant pylons tramping across the landscape. Pressure for increased private building is growing, and will strengthen with the arrival of the new sewage facilities in a few years. It is desirable that any plans approved should show great consideration for the organic character of earlier development, by grouping new buildings within or beside the existing scattered settlements rather than by the creation of 'new estates' or 'isolated dwellings' on new sites. It is desirable that permitted development should include a full range of house sizes, so that a balanced community may be maintained. Wherever possible, local styles of construction and local material should be incorporated; to this end, when old buildings must be demolished, the stone might usefully be stored.

These recommendations are not unique to this report. They are not even new. Such pleas for careful control of siting, style and materials in new development may be found in many plans published by professional bodies as well as by amenity societies. We believe that there is particular reason to stress them in this context. During the creation of this report our original feeling that there was a great deal worth conserving in this valley has received immense encouragement from expert opinion, and from our own researches, but above all from the feeling of the community itself as expressed in the questionnaire responses and elsewhere.

12.2 The village of Oxenhope should be consulted on all local and regional plans concerned with the growing problems of tourism.

Only about 11% of the villagers seem to feel directly affected at present, but the expansion of weekend traffic in and around the village is already a problem. Both local authorities have plans for developing tourist facilities in the area. We welcome these proposals with some caution, recognising that the effect of increasing numbers of tourists on the community is likely to be less harmful if it is planned than if it is unplanned. At the same time we are concerned about the future effects of tourism, because there has been little evidence from past experience that those responsible for decisions bound to affect the village in this context are prepared to discuss their policies before announcing them to the world. For example, the 'Country Park' at Penistone Hill has never been the subject of a public or private meeting in Oxenhope although it is obvious that access to and from the Park will be through Marsh as well as from Haworth itself. Similarly, the Worth Valley Railway's plans for Oxenhope Station were never discussed with the community they were certain to affect by reason of much increased parking and transport. We wish to appeal to bodies such as these to have consideration for the consequences of their policies on tourism, and to show that consideration by a very considerable extension in the amount of consultation they are prepared to organise with a village such as Oxenhope.

12.3 The village should be consulted by the highway authorities before major local road schemes are announced.

Improvement of road lines merely for the benefit of tourist traffic and the heavy goods vehicles already using the A6033 as a route from the M62 at Milnrow to Keighley, would be strongly opposed. The Association of Bradford District Amenity Societies have already expressed concern about these problems and a careful review of the situation by the authorities, in consultation with local communities is to be hoped for, as part of the process of creating the Structure Plan.

The bus service could perhaps be improved without a great deal of difficulty; it is well used, but various minor criticisms were made in the questionnaire responses. Pedestrian traffic in the village is in danger at several points. If it is felt that improvements are necessary, the nature of the characteristic local lanes should not be destroyed by extensive widening or by the building of modern pavements where their appearance would not be suitable; the possibility of siting some lengths of footpath on the far side of the wall from a carriageway along particularly narrow lanes might be explored.



12.4 Action should be taken to preserve mature trees in the village and to encourage further planting.

The conservation of mature trees throughout the village would seem to be highly desirable, since there is little evidence as yet of concerted attempts to replant in the generous way of the Victorians and their predecessors. Some means of encouraging this policy needs to be found, so that future generations may benefit. The planting of trees to the local pattern described in 5.2 would help to integrate new buildings. The planting of trees by the local authority along roads at Horkinstone and Marsh is welcomed, and it is hoped that this will be extended to other public land.

12.5 A survey should be carried out to determine if further buildings of architectural or historic importance require listing.

12.6 Pressure should be brought on owners of neglected or derelict land to carry out improvements or clearance.

Three particularly significant examples may be quoted:

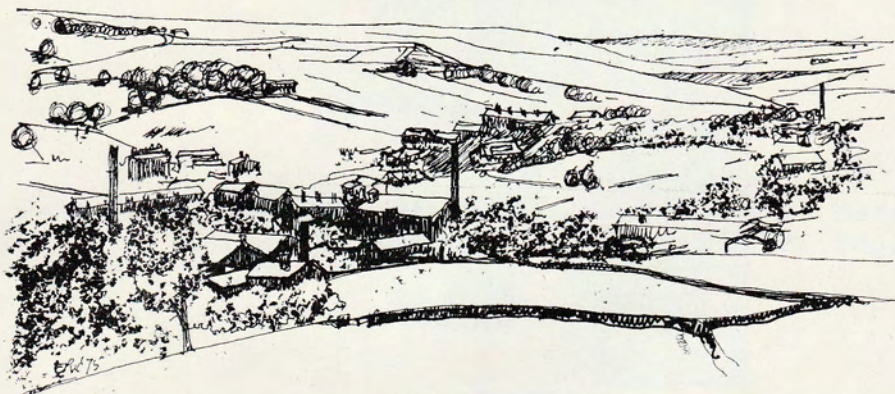
- i. The Lowertown-Station Road area includes many buildings and several tracts of land suffering from neglect. This is a natural centre for the village and has great potential for improvement. Most of the land is owned by local mills.
- ii. The Station area and the footpath to Haworth have been spoiled in various ways. The beck is heavily polluted. Talks have been opened with both the Worth Valley Railway and the Haworth Society.
- iii. The high moorland between Dyke Nook and Bodkin, and elsewhere, has been damaged by Bradford Water Board workmen.

12.7 The footpath network in the area should be maintained and the designation of footpaths in the area kept under review.

12.8 The Yorkshire Water Authority should consult with the village on matters affecting the village.

The Authority owns large tracts of land in Oxenhope. Two topics of common concern should be the subject of urgent discussions between the Authority and the Society: public access to the moors along paths or tracks owned by or adjacent to land owned by the Authority; and the policy of neglecting houses owned by the Authority, so that the buildings may be demolished.

12.9 Oxenhope has many qualities that are now rare in the Bradford Metropolitan District and beyond. The valley has striking beauty and character, and the designation of a Conservation Area or Areas should be explored.





## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Executive Committee of the Oxenhope Village Society wishes to thank most sincerely all those many villagers and other well-wishers who have worked so hard to complete this publication. In particular, we should like to thank E.P.Waddington, ARIBA, for the line-drawings, G.Rhodes, MSAAT, for the sketch maps and A.B.Haigh for the lay-out work. It is also especially important to acknowledge the generous advice and encouragement of A.Holliday, Esq., Chief Planning Officer of Bradford Metropolitan District Council and members of his staff.

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