

# History of Dorset Road Allotments

A history in maps and photographs

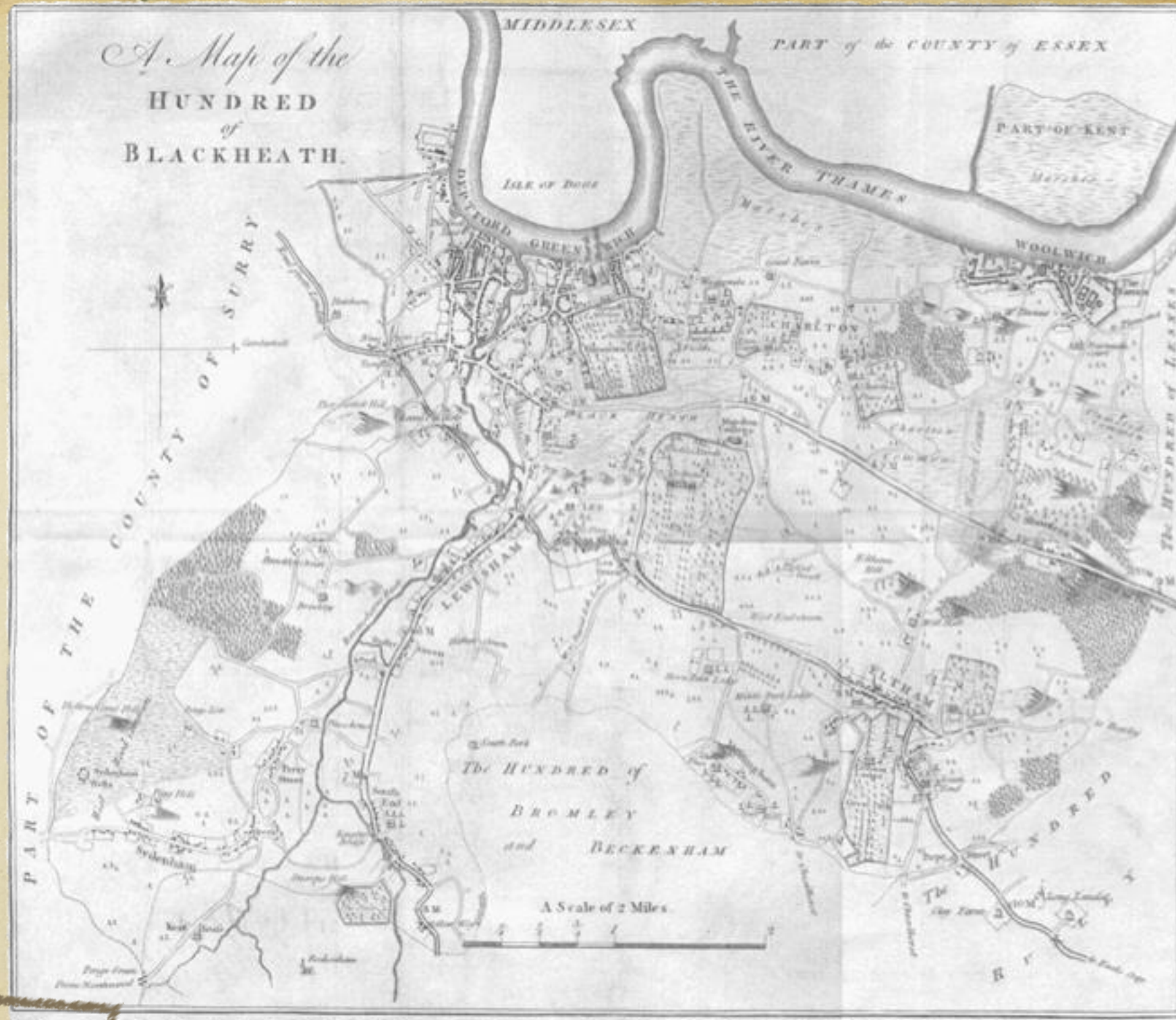


# Once upon a time...

There were fields, woods and common land as far as the eye could see...



Beckenham was  
in the ancient  
hundred of  
Blackheath.

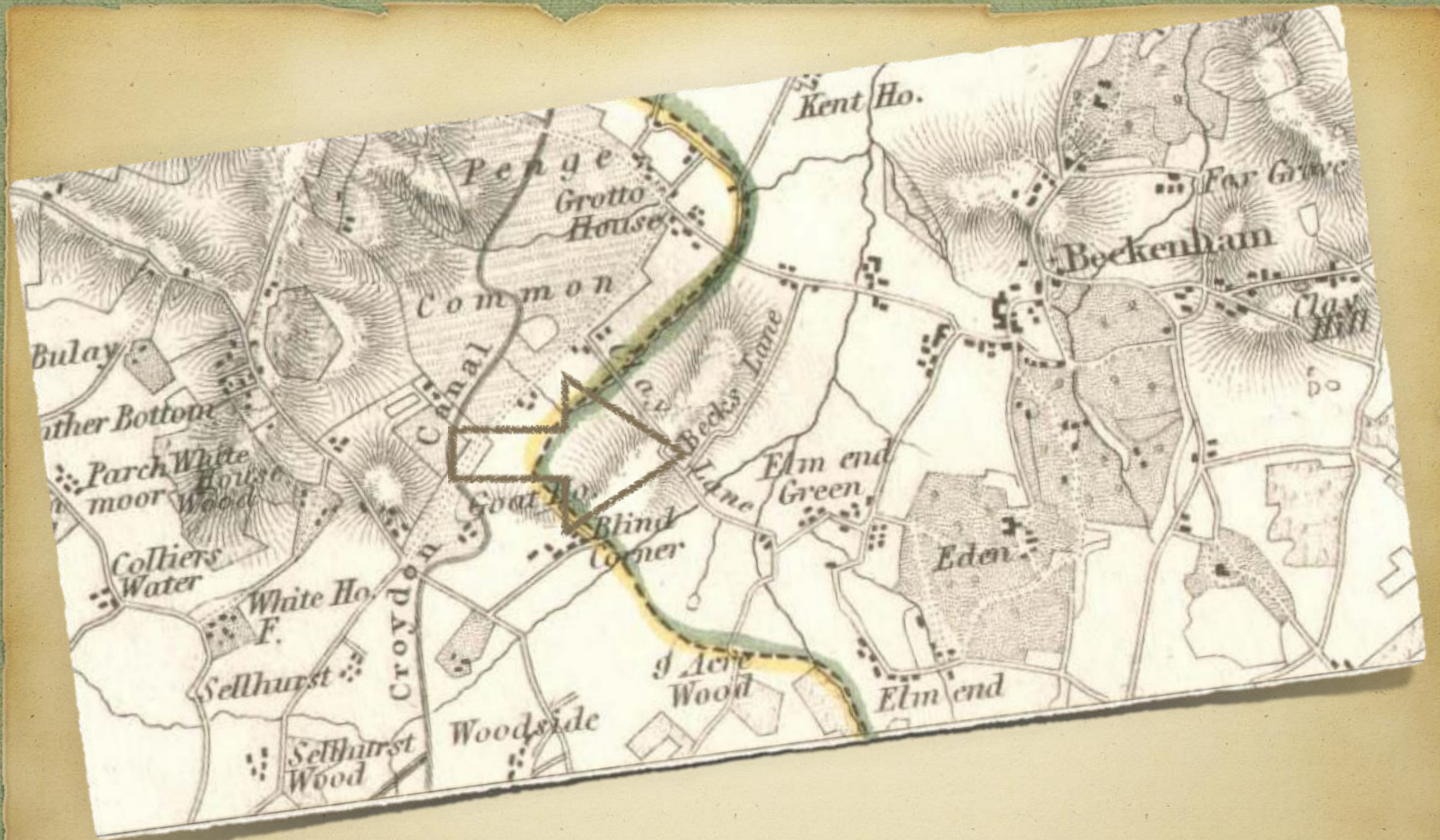






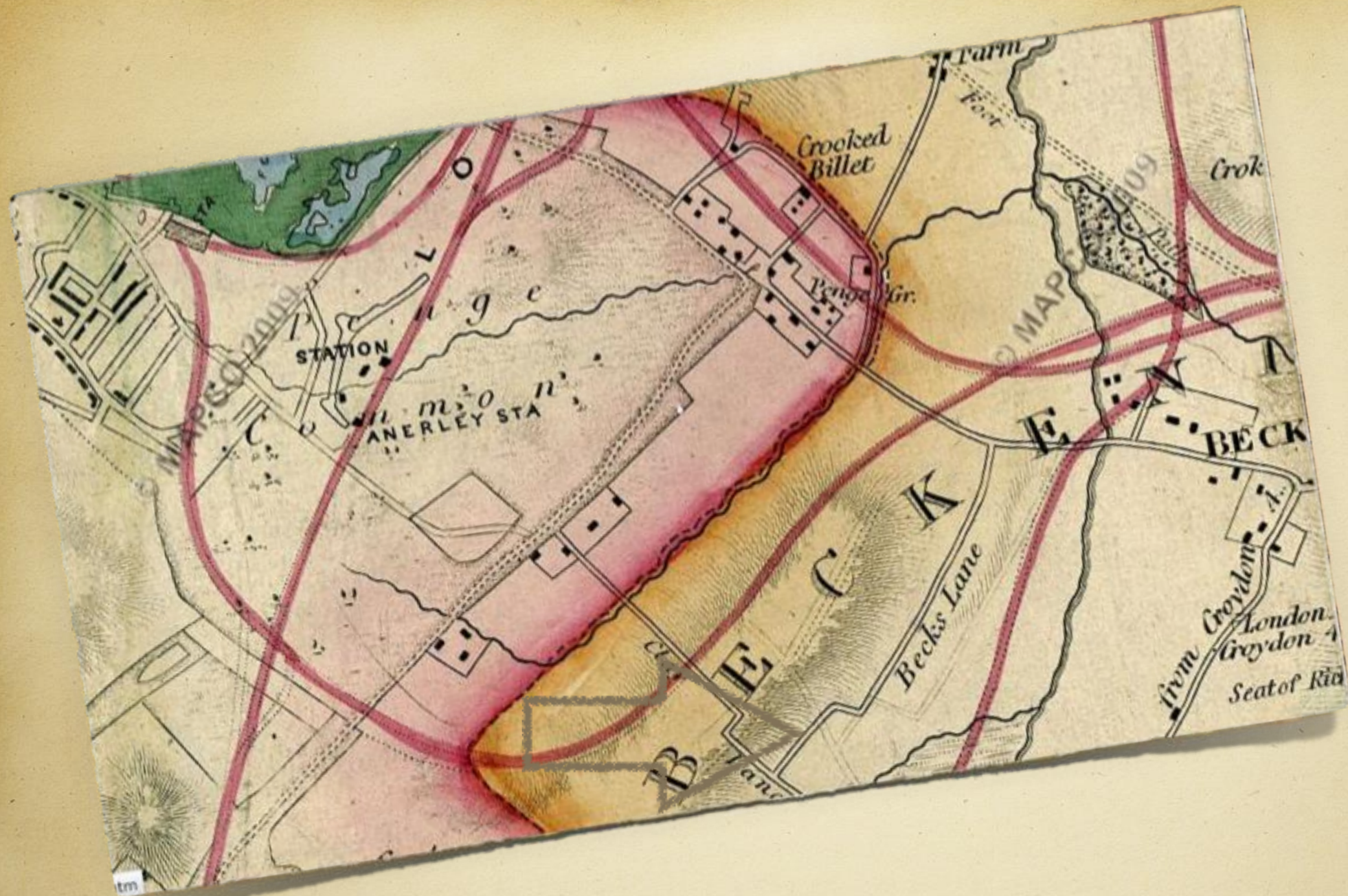
Beckenham in 1799  
Agricultural fields line the river banks





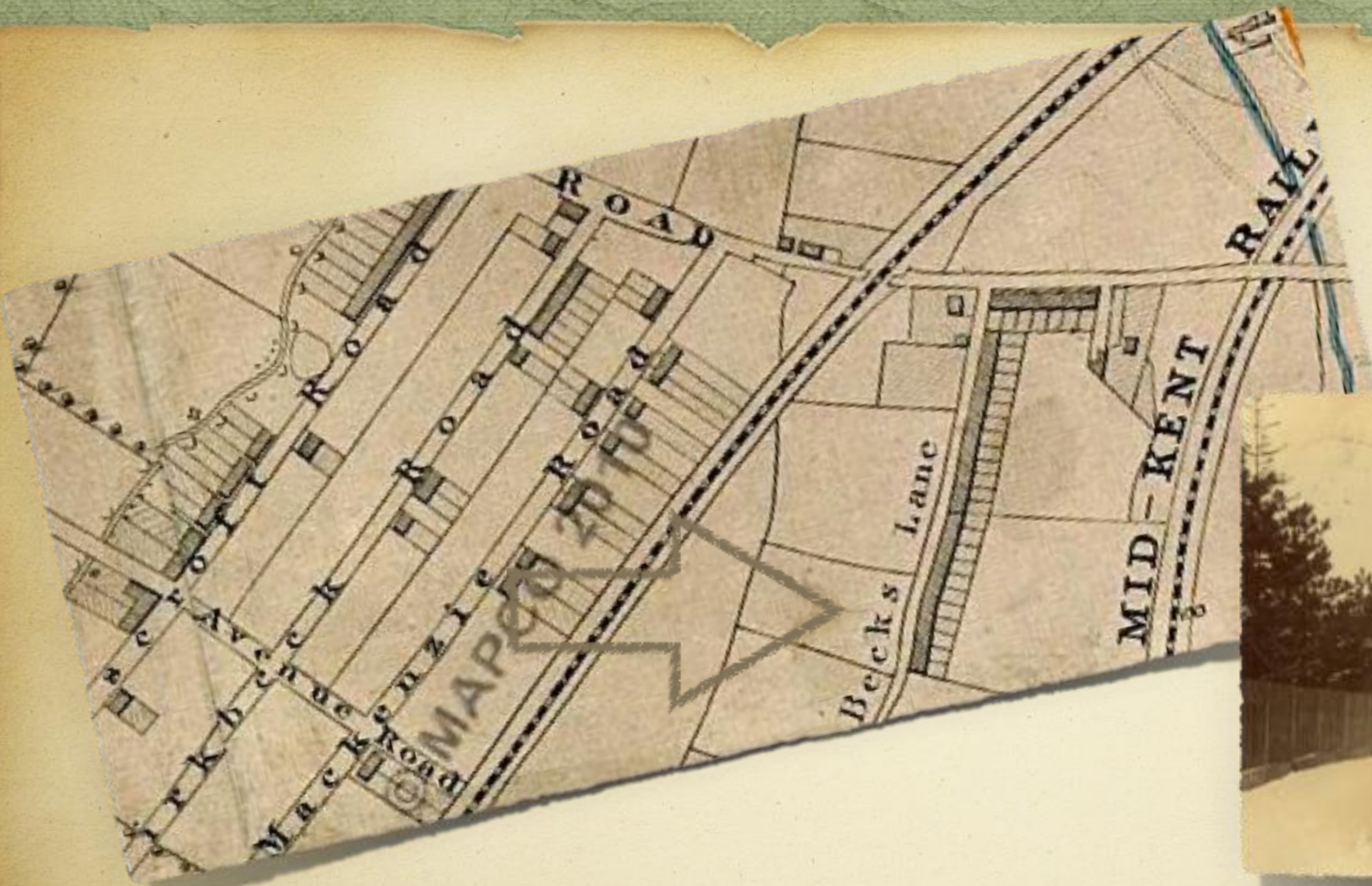
By 1832 Northwood Common has gone...





By 1872 the railway has arrived





Elmers End Road, early 1900s,  
allotment site on right

Beckenham in 1878..  
Houses are built on Becks Lane near Beckenham Lane...





During the WW1 food shortages increased the demand for allotments. This 1917 Punch cartoon shows the family playing golf with potatoes on an allotment.



Elmers End Road, early 1928,  
allotment site on right  
(courtesy of the Beckenham History Society)

The Great War 1914-1918  
Beckenham Council designates the site as allotments





*Your own vegetables  
all the year round...*



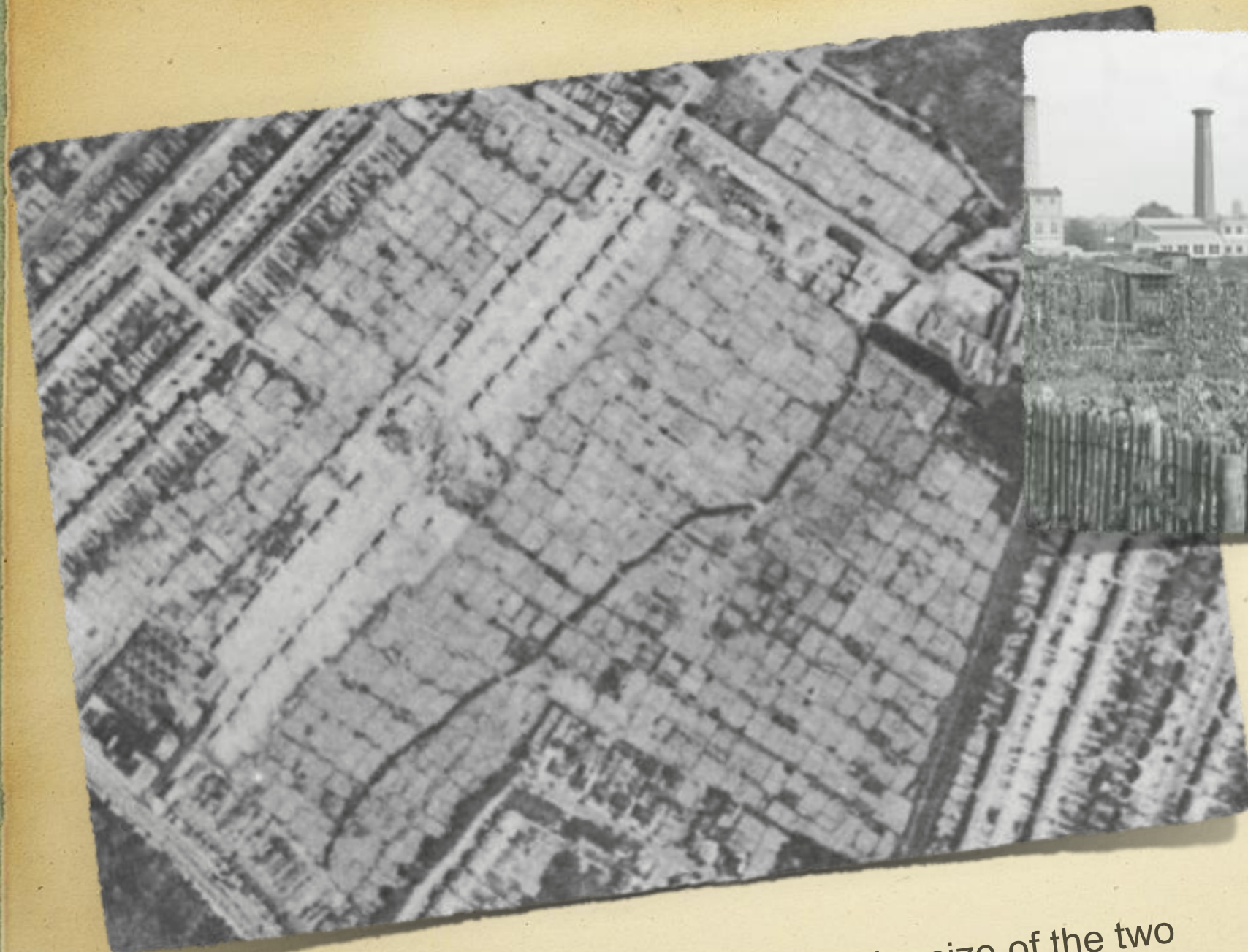
*if you*

**DIG FOR  
VICTORY NOW**

The Second World War and Britain was blockaded again. 'Dig for Victory' encouraged the public to produce their own food and allotment numbers peak at 1.4m. Rationing kept the demand for allotments and home grown foods high until rationing ended 1954.

By 1940 Dorset Road has been built but Beck Lane is a path through allotments





The 1953 photograph is taken from the new Churchfields Road looking across the allotments to the council waste site. (courtesy of the Beckenham History Society)

The aerial photograph from 1950 shows the size of the two allotment sites. Beck Lane site has not changed in size since then, but Dorset Road allotments has shrunk considerably.

By the 1950s new houses divide the allotment site in two





In the 1960s the flats on Dorset Road were built. By the time this picture was taken in 1981 the sports field has been created but the Poplar trees have yet to be planted



In 1986, the bus garage at the junction of Beck Lane and Elmers End Road was demolished and dumped where the orchard now stands.

From 1950 to 1990s  
The allotment site shrinks and is used as a dumping ground

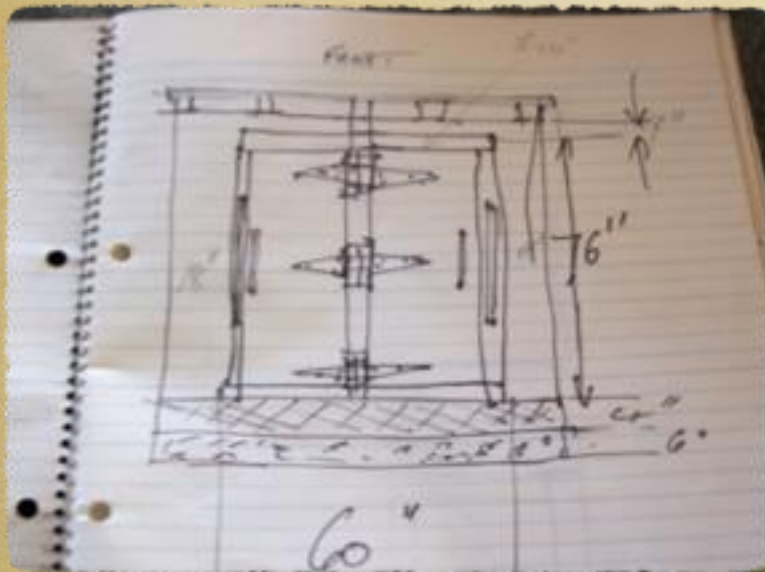




By 1999 the site is much smaller, Churchfields Road school has been built on part of the site and there are large uncultivated areas. But things have begun to change. The site entrance is now in Dorset Road, a self-management agreement and lease has been signed with Bromley Council and the clubhouse (a former changing room from Crystal Palace Park) has been installed.

1999 - under new management





By 2003, the shop is in place and several poly tunnels and greenhouses, but the site is far from full.

The committee start holding open days to raise awareness of the allotments and attract new members.

2003 - toilets and shop in place





By 2013 Dorset Road Allotments is a busy, award-winning site with strong links to the community





In 2017 a new  
Secret Garden is  
built with a grant  
from Tesco's  
Bags of Help  
Scheme and a lot  
of help from  
volunteers.





# What are your memories of Dorset Road Allotments?

- When did you get your plot?
- How has the site changed?
- Do you have any old photographs of the site?
- What do you like most about Dorset Road Allotments?

