

A letter regarding 17 Bell Lane from the Wheatley archives.

Dear...

I am unknown to you.

My name is Florence Mary Pryer (nee Cullum). My father was our Arthur Edmond Cullum, who was Chairman of Wheatley Urban District Council for some years, and a Justice of the Peace for thirteen years until his death in 1946. Cullum House and road are named after him.

He was a builder in partnership with his brother Francis William Cullum on the site which is now called Hathaways. In conjunction with the building business they owned a sawmill on the site of what is now Simon's Close. The stabling for the timber horses was here also, and Howe Close, known to us as the Top Field was where the horses grazed. At the building business the wheelwright's shop, which is now two garages was largely for the repair of farm wagons and the making of wheels. Opposite to this was a blacksmith shop, Harry Chandler was the blacksmith, which was largely engaged in shoeing the timber horses and making the metal tyres for the wheels.

I suppose no photo or record exists of the ancient way of tiring. There was a large circle of stone or cement with an iron spike in the centre between the two workshops. Holifield would place a new wheel on the circle, and Chandler would bring out the red hot tyre which was hammered into place by both men working at speed and soused with water. This is a dying craft, and a great pity if there is no recurred of it in Wheatley.

You will wonder why I am writing to you.

On Saturday 16th November I elder son and I spent the afternoon in quickly looking at all the changes which had taken place in the last 14 years, since the last Cullum, my sister Barbara, left Wheatley, after selling the land and house in Westfield Road. Templars Close is built on what was the tennis court, flower and vegetable garden and orchard. The two blocks of Town Houses stand on ground my father let as allotments.

We were delighted to discover the Exhibition by a firm Wheatley Society, and I told several people of my connections with the village. On stating that I had a family tree I was asked if I would send a copy to you. The Cullums can trace their ancestors back to 1641, when the family lived at Wantage and they moved to Long Hanborough to the north of the county. From there they moved to Wheatley, and I enclose a copy of the family tree from that time. Won a the Cullum women married a month, and emigrated to Australia. In the records of Wheatley, a copy of which the Bodleian Library obtained for me the "De Muntz" were Norman and one of the oldest families in Wheatley.

On page 16 of the booklet on Wheatley schools the Mrs Hunt was Martha Hunt, who was my great, great aunt, and her tombstone is with those of the Cullums at the back of Wheatley Churchyard.

We had a photo of the horse's bringing in the timber along Church Road, and if you're interested I could get you a copy. Also one of Westfield Road prior to 1908 and one of the garden before Templars Close was built.

With best wishes to the Wheatley Society,

Yours faithfully,

Florence Prior they have done the way Please excuse his exercise lined paper, but my sight is somewhat poor.