

The White Hart

The first known reference to the White Hart is in 1612 when John Robinson held the White Hart Inn with ½ a yardland and 6 acres on a 40 year lease from Robert Powell of Forest Hill. John Robinson, the younger, had to bake one bushel of wheaten bread for the poor every Good Friday. He rang the bells at Holton church for the Horsman's death (1624-5). In 1630, a messuage in Wheatley, called the Taverne, and grounds belonging to the White Hart' were granted to John Robinson. In 1677, Jane Robinson inherited the White Hart from her father. In 1700, William Juggins was the inn-keeper. In 1763, it was sold by auction

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it played an important part in Wheatley life - many large auctions took place there and the Turnpike Trustees used it regularly for their meetings. The post office was there until 1788. In 1764 the Bullington Hundred Court was held there.

From 1845 to 1862 the licensee was James Robbins, who left behind a series of working notebooks which throw great light on his many and varied activities. He was a carpenter, a jobbing builder, an agent for timber as well as a licensee. He was apparently treasurer of the Wheatley Friendly Society (the Club) for several notebooks contain records of members' subscriptions and the accounts for the annual feast.

There is evidence (from one handed-down recollection) that the White Hart stood on the site of the existing (2018) Language School until it was burned down in the 1860s and re-built on the later site further along the High street, now (2018) re-developed as two houses and Cinnamon's restaurant. No documentary proof of this has been found.

In 1907 the White Hart was owned by Morrell's Brewery and the licensee, William Spearing was a job-master who let out 'landaus, wagonettes, brakes, etc. at moderate rates'. In 1927 Arthur Bates repaired cycles and sold second-hand furniture in the club room. In 1980 an old resident recalled - The Tavern boys called it the Rampant Cat. The landlord (Phelps from London) used to trade in cats. He was suspected of stealing them.

Licensees known are as below

1630	John Robinson
1677	Jane Robinson
1700	William Juggins
1780	John Bassett
1783-1787	William Hall
1791	Benjamin Stockford
1796-1812	Lydia Stockford
1821-1822	George Crook
1845-1862	James Robbins
1863	John Sutton
1868-1883	Edward Woods
1891	Alfred Hodgkins
1899	Arthur Bathard
1907	William Spearing