

AVERY'S SAWMILL (Extract)

Ref: 'Princes Risborough - Thame - Oxford Railway , by Richard Lingard, published by Oxford Publishing Company 1978 p. 119

Wheatley Station provided an excellent example of how much faith and reliance was at one time placed on the railways. William Avery was in the home timber trade at Naphill in Buckinghamshire until 1893 when he moved his business to Wheatley. He did so because he possessed that typical Victorian quality, enterprise. He wished to establish himself away from his competitors in the Wycombe area, and he saw his opportunity in buying land and founding his factory next to the GWR at Wheatley. In fact, the firm's notepaper carried the legend 'Adjoining GWR Station' throughout its life. Nationalisation made no *difference*. The competitive value of setting up the mill opposite the railway goods yard was to remove entirely cartage rates to and from the railway. With a monopoly, being away from Wycombe, on timbers in East Oxfordshire, the firm's own carriages hauled by steam traction engines by Burrell and by Foden brought the trunks into the mill. Dealt with, they were similarly hauled to the station yard - there was a level crossing at the down end of the platforms for this purpose - for dispatch in GWR wagons to the manufacturing trade in London, Birmingham and Bristol. Pit props were also supplied to the coal mines of South Wales and the Midlands.

The family tale is that the land for the sawmill was bought as a result of an intended train journey from Wycombe to Oxford. As the train stood in Wheatley Station, Avery looked from his carriage window and saw the land by the station. He left the train, asked the stationmaster who owned the land, and where he lived. He walked to the village, knocked the man up and clinched the deal. The result not only brought success to his business but also increased traffic to the GWR.