

The Round House (also known as the Lock-up) and the Stocks.

Wheatley's best known landmark is its six-faced, pyramid lock-up of 1834. This 'round house' or 'keep', a temporary holding place for those arrested before they were taken before the Justices, was built on the parish stone pits where parish 'paupers' earned their living (work fare) by breaking stones for parish roads. In its day it was as much a symbol of class division, social unrest and economic recession, as it was of a village with a drink and petty crime problem. Enclosures had brought unemployment and curbed the rights of the poor to fuel and pasture on Commons land such as that between Littleworth and Shotover. Mechanisation of farming was beginning. Rural populations were on the move as town and city beckoned and the overall population was also increasing. Land-owners still exercised great power at local and national levels. On nearby Otmoor after 1830, serious agrarian riots and sabotage took place. Unrest and a token machine-burning spread to Wheatley. Foot and mounted sworn-in companies of petty constables, including clergymen, patrolled the parish at the request of the gentry. In 1834 Parliament took away from the parishes the control of, as well as direct responsibility for, the parish poor. The old parish workhouse at Littleworth soon closed and a new Poor Law Union house was built at Headington, under the amended Poor Law.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century stocks were also in use in Wheatley, 'near Mr Bathard's gates' in High Street, probably near the gated path through the White Hart land. In Holton they were reputedly on The Green under the 'Stocks Tree', probably until the Park estate was broken up in 1913. Nationally, stocks went out of use around 1850, although they were never abolished in law. In 1972 the origin and ownership of the stocks held and claimed by Wheatley were disputed by Holton.