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21⁵¹ February
2007

Dear Liz,

It was with delight and surprise that I received your letter of the 16th instant regarding the Wheatley Archives.

My maiden name is Gillian Powell, and my home, 'Chez Nous', was built in 1932 by my late father, Alfred Powell. He paid £80 for the plot of land which he bought from Alderman William Tombs, and this was the first house to be built in Church Road, on what were then allotments. My father had a £262 mortgage, and my mother, Dorothy Powell, said they had a great struggle to repay this. My father was a Master Plasterer and, with his brothers Harry of London Road and Baden of Horspath, built 'Chez Nous' only having the help of a builder to get the footings and pipework in.

I am 72 years old, and sleep in the bedroom in which I was born! I worked in Oxford as a legal secretary. My father died suddenly in 1949 from a coronary thrombosis, and my mother received one guinea a week as a Widow's Pension, plus 7s 6d for me as I was then 14 and still at school.

No. 65 Church Road, next door to me, was built by a Mr Bates, who ran a bicycle shop from his front room. The present residents, Joy and Edwin Turner, used to run a gift shop from the same room, and later Stanley Underwood ran a ladies' hairdresser there. No's 69 and 71 Church Road were built by Alderman Tombs and are at present owned by Margaret Berwick and Terry Coleman respectively.

Dr Fleury, who lives nearby, told me that I should write all my memories down, as when I passed on no-one would know about them. This conversation was held at the Wheatley United Reformed Church Fete in his garden, and I was able to tell him something about his garden which he did not already know!

I know so much about Wheatley that I could tell...

Do you know what scheme at the C. of E. school turned us into 'entrepreneurs'? I do!
Do you know why children at this school were occasionally given the day off and told to stay indoors? I do!

Do you know where a bomb was dropped in Wheatley and made a large crater? I do!

I hope this is helpful, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely.

Gillian Herring (Mrs)