

"THINGS I REMEMBER" I THINK THEY'RE TRUE

"THE MERRY BELLS"

The men's club originated there in 1937. It was used as a school during the war. Dances on Saturdays at 6d. a time.

"THE BOYS CLUB"

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3d. a session which entitled you to a cup of tea and cake and all the mischief you could get into!

"COOMBE WOOD"

Was always open to the public and families spent many hours picnicking and generally exploring.

"LAST CHANCE"

(Railway carriage on wooden sleepers). Some Restaurant!

This was where the lorry drivers stopped for their tea and cake before continuing their journey up and down the country. I remember one teatime a Tate & Lyle lorry caught fire there and tins of Treacle and bags of Sugar were off loaded. I remember many of the public helped themselves before the local 'copper' arrived to restore order but there were no perks left for him. I think the local fire lads had had their share.

"MILITARY HOSPITAL"

The War came and so did the hospital which was built in Holton Park by a firm called Trollope & Coles. One evening a week they had a film show or concert in one of the buildings and we were welcome to go. The Yanks came and took over and from then on it was a very busy place, and they remained until after the war. Then the British Army took over for head injuries. During the war years the American injured arrived by train at Wheatley station, and as kids we would spend many hours watching them arrive and we were also allowed into the hospital to visit the wards. The Americans were also living in tents in the field behind the 'Last Chance Coffee Bar'. One time I remember the Yanks and the British Army, who were stationed up at Shotover, decided to have their own war and from what I remember it was rather nasty and only ended when a truce was agreed. What caused it. I don't know. Women-wine-and song perhaps!!

"BILL BERRY"

Bill owned the Chippy / Greengrocery shop and he also taught boxing to the local boys in the Merry Bells. Bill's chip shop would open for fish and chips on Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday dinnertimes. For 2d. you would get enough chips to last all day, wrapped in newspaper from the previous days.

"CHARLIE SHORTER"

He was the local pig killer and when he was going to do a job word travelled fast and many turned up to watch. We would be thrown the hot trotters and we would have a chew at them, but there was very little to chew at and you could never get fat on them. The pig's bladder would be blown up, knotted and used as a football.

"SERVICE PERSONNEL"

We had a few nationalities around us -

With Americans at the Hospital and behind the Last Chance;

The British Army and Canadians on Shotover Hill;

Along the A40 towards Oxford on the left hand side approx.. 3/4 mile a German Prisoner of War Camp.

"JERRY BOMBS"

Sometime during the War, each night a train load of ammunitions came down through Wheatley Railway station at approx.. 11.30 pm. It was said that the German bombers had eye'd it up, and this was proved right because one night there were some awful bangs and vibrations and "yes" Gerry had tried to bomb the train and thank god he missed. One bomb landed on the railway line about 14 mile south of the station missing the train by about 100 yards so they say - the second landed down by the river and the third one dropped in the grounds behind the Bridge Hotel - nice hole in the ground - no windows in the Hotel - and a few fish in the river suffering from headaches!

"HOLTON PARK"

Just a big parkland owned by the Balfour family living in the big house, and deer roaming around the park.

WHAT WHEATLEY HAD:-

1 BRICK KILN	2 SCHOOLS	2 COUNCIL YARDS
0 2 HOTELS	1 FISH SHOP	1 CHAPEL
8 PUBS	2 MILKMEN	1 CHURCH C of E
1 VILLAGE HALL	2 COBBLERS	1 GRANARY HALL
SWEET/GROCERY	PIG KILLER	COALMEN
6 SHOPS	1	2
1 PAPER SHOP	1 BOYS CLUB	1 SAWMILL
1 DENTIST	1 WINDMILL (14)	4 FARMS
2 BLACKSMITHS	1 FIRE STATION	3 CYCLE SHOPS
1 DOCTORS SURGERY	3 BUTCHERS	1 POLICE STATION
1 UNDERTAKER	3 BAKERS	1 HAIRDRESSERS
2 BUILDERS	1 POST OFFICE	2 TAXI PLACES

Over the years Wheatley has grown much larger in population, many of the businesses and property have long gone - many areas being built on to accommodate the ever increasing population of the village.

One wonders what Wheatley will look like in years to come - a village - a town - who knows?

We must leave that to the future generations and hope it remains what it always had been, a village - my home.

If there are any mistakes or untruths in what I have written - forgive me - but to the best of my memory, I feel confident.

ERNIE PULLEN
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