

0292 OXFORDSHIRE FIRE SERVICE
Station 8B Wheatley

Originally part of the National Fire Service, Wheatley NFS was situated at Mulberry Court and its equipment was a Trailer Pump towed by a car. On 1st April 1948 the NFS was split into areas and Wheatley station became part of the Oxfordshire County Fire Service. In about 1952, the station moved to the site on Holloway. This building belonged to the vicarage, now Morland House, and Bible classes had been held in part of it. When the building was taken over by the Fire Service, the air-raid siren from WW2 (using the all-clear signal) was used to call the firemen. This signal was tested twice a week, on Thursdays at 7 pm and on Sunday at noon. It was said that the allotment holders on the Howe, on hearing the signal would stop gardening and come down to the village for liquid refreshment.

If a 999 call came during the night, this was put straight through to Mrs Slatter, the post-mistress at the time and it was she who pressed the button to sound the siren. This would alert the Officer-in-Charge who would phone her to get particulars of the call. Mrs Slatter would then phone headquarters at Woodstock to tell them about it. As the availability of telephones was much more limited in these times, the firemen made sure they carried some pennies with them so they could always get in touch with head-quarters from a phone-box to give an account of the situation.

The buildings adjacent to the Fire-Station were part of the Lodge of the Vicarage where the gardener lived. In the 1920s, Mr Turner lived in the part of the house called at that time The Firs at the junction of Holloway Road and Church Road. He served petrol from pumps located in the front garden, see record 697.

Wheatley fire equipment had now advanced to a Trailer Pump with a personnel carrier called a H.R.T. (Hose-Reel Tender). The equipment was second-hand having first been used in London. Then, when the service was built up in the country districts, it was passed on to them. After use the hoses had to be scrubbed clean in the road outside. Once clean they were then dried on a bar held between two poles Target practice with the water-jet was carried out with a post to act as a marker in the recreation ground, opposite the fire station.