

TALES FROM THE VILLAGE FOLK: Margaret Axford
Memories of the past from people of Wheatley 1846 – 1992

This sixty-eight page booklet records interviews by the author with fifteen notable Wheatley characters:

1. WILFRED SHELDON, blacksmith, church warden, Show Secretary for Village Produce Association.
2. ROSIE JEFFS, b.1906, tells about her schooldays in Wheatley.
3. PHYLLIS COX (née Smith), b.1916, tells about her father and grandfather who were stone masons, and her own work as piano teacher and church organist of St Mary's for thirty years.
4. MARION WHEELER, b.1909, tells about their builder's business in the High Street, which also had a funeral service, and the severe winter of 1947, and the shock of going bankrupt.
5. EVAN and EDITH BAX (née Parsons) recall the shops in the High Street in the 1920's and 1930's
6. PHYLLIS SHEPHERD (née Washington) b.1907. Her father used to work in the lime kiln in Westfields. She still regularly came to St Mary's Church in 2004.
7. BOB and DORIS SHORTER. Bob was born at 3 Shotover View, Littleworth, in 1910. He joined the Territorial Army in 1939 and writes about his wartime experience. They are both ardent supporters (and Standard Bearers) for the British Legion.
8. EVA DAVIS (née Smart) b.1909 worked for Lord Elton's aunt in Oxford. Married in St Mary's church in 1934. Lived in one of the council houses in London road for thirty years. When they first moved in, there was no water, electricity or gas. He son is Roy Davis, the plumber.
9. GEORGE (BONNIE) MARTIN b.11/3/1919 in London but came to Littleworth in June 1920 tells about Rex Powell, Jim Munt & Ken Harman. He worked at Morris', and at Pressed Steel, and was in the army for six years. Later he worked in the stores at the Military Hospital in Holton. Also includes info. on the Home Guards, and brickmaking in Miss Dale's garden before it moved to Littleworth.
10. MAURICE ASHFIELD (known as Modge) b.1915. Worked in Avery's saw mill for many years.
11. FRED ANSON was Headmaster of the Wheatley Secondary Modern School in Littleworth Road (later called the Shotover School) from 1950 – 1972. He was very active in the Village Produce Association and also served on the Parish Council, The Merry Bells Committee, the Howe Trust, and Wheatley Charities.
12. LILY LUCKETT's née ILOTT b. 1907 Her family moved to Wheatley in 1918 when she was eleven years old. Her father was a wheelwright and originally came from Burford. He got a job at Cooper's brickyard in Littleworth, where he put the metal trims on the cart wheels. Her husband, George, was a farm-worker, then worked in the brickworks, and finally at Morris's for about 35 years.
13. DOROTHY TOMBS was born in 1916 at College Farm. Her father was a market gardener and worked in Shotover House gardens. He worked on the county Council for about thirty years and was given the title 'Alderman'. (NB reference to Office Lane.)
14. GEORGE HANKS was born in Idbury, Glos.in 1918. His father was a farm worker. He went to Wheatley C of E Primary School and won a scholarship to Lord Williams Grammar School in Thame. He writes of the terrible class distinction there at that time: 'All the masters were down on scholarship boys'. He joined the Territorial Army and was involved in the D Day landings. He records many old residents and village characters, including the local policemen and gypsies.
15. HARRY STRINGER born in Idbury, Glos.in 1911 (brother of George Hanks – but brought up by his Granny and took her name), He records vivid and colourful memories of his time working for Avery's: tree-felling in winter and back in the saw mill from March. He was also a talented poacher!