

Personal Recollections of Wilfrid Sheldon

Wheatley in the 1890s was very much more restricted than today. In the west it finished at "Blenheim" and Kiln Lane and in the east at Crown Road, few houses beyond the "Crown". Opposite "Wayside" stood a large stone barn with farmyard behind it and another barn stood in front of "Ambrose" farmhouse. Only one house beyond that and then "Muddy Lane" which was almost impossible to use in the winter months.

The timing of the summer holiday varied with the state of the harvest. If it was an early harvest we might break up in July; if a late one then not until August.

Much of the corn harvest was still cut by hand so whole families would move into the cornfield. Father would cut the corn, Mother would make bands and tie up the sheaves. The children would glean in the fields as they were cleared. The work they did was paid for at so much an acre, so that a family working together could earn more than the usual weekly wage. But at the end of the century many of the farms were using a mechanical reaper and only on small farms and holdings was the corn reaped by hand. Still talking about corn, I can remember clearly as a schoolboy seeing Cripps Windmill working - a very pleasant sight.