

Wheatley Football Club

Founded in 1902 by a group of young men in the village, Wheatley Football Club has continued to progress and flourish for well over half a century, and in recent years has been well to the fore in Oxfordshire junior football.

Five of the founder members still live at Wheatley. They are Messrs. W R Cox, E. Chapman, G. Cooper and W. Sheldon, while Mr Cox who captained the village team when it first came to prominence by winning the Cuddesdon Senior Cup then known as the Morrell Cup - in 1908-9 - is now the club's president.

In the early days, the club ground was on the Littleworth Road, where the new Secondary Modern School now stands, and this has provided several problems. Dick Greaves who, for many years now, has loaned them a ground and it is difficult to see how the club could manage to play its home fixtures without his co-operation. In addition, the club receives valuable help from the Commanding Officer of the Military Hospital, who has given permission for Wheatley to use the hospital ground when their own pitch is unfit. This liaison and co-operation between the village and the hospital has resulted in a number of Servicemen playing with the Club over the years. One particularly remembers outside left Bob Deathers, a stalwart with Wheatley until his parting overseas last year. He is hoping to return to the Oxford area on his discharge from the forces.

Wheatley was out of the limelight for a spell during the 1920s, but they came back strongly by reaching the final of the Oxfordshire Junior Shield in 1934-35, only to be beaten by Kingham all Blacks. In the same season they won the South Oxfordshire Charity Cup and were runners-up in the South Oxfordshire Junior Cup, which was the first year of this competition.

After the war things gradually got going again, but in 1950-51 Wheatley provided the Cuddesdon League with the first woman club secretary of neighbouring Littleworth FC. The 1953-4 season saw Wheatley begin their main run of success and it reached a climax in the 1957-8 season when they won the Cuddesdon Senior Cup after a , , memorable local 'derby' with Forest Hill, to add to the Cuddesdon Senior League title. A season later they won both the senior and junior divisions of the Cuddesdon League, the South Oxfordshire Junior Cup and were losing finalists in the Cuddesdon Senior and Junior Cups and the South Oxfordshire Charity Cup.

Last season Wheatley moved into Oxford City Junior League. Premier Division, and took the title without losing a game, while they also won the Ron West Memorial Cup.

Like all small clubs, Wheatley owes much to the backroom boys, and special mention must be made to Mr G.A.J. (Jack) Smith and Mr G. A (Bonny) Martin, who have been associated with the club for many years, not only serving on the committee when necessary, but also making themselves responsible for the onerous task of marking out and maintaining the pitch.

John Parsons (Copied from a cutting from one of the local newspapers)