

Wheatley Village Study

Index

1. Road names in Wheatley
2. The Manor House
3. Population of Wheatley
4. Shops and shopping
5. The Round House (Lock-up)
6. Schooling
7. Old Wheatley Families
8. Churches in Wheatley
 - a. The United Reformed Church
 - b. Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church
 - c. The Granary Church
9. Wheatley Windmill
10. Inns, Public Houses & Teahouses
11. The Wheatley Railway
12. Wheatley Brook and the Flood of 1910
13. Sketch map of Wheatley

ROAD NAMES IN WHEATLEY

Acremead Road	Acre Mead was the medieval name of a local pasture field.
Ambrose Rise	Built on land formerly belonging to Ambrose Farm
Anson Close	Mr Anson was the first Headmaster of Wheatley Secondary Modern School
Barlow Close	Tommy Barlow farmed a few acres here c.1930 - 1970
Beech Road	There was a beautiful old beech tree on the north side of the road (opp.33)
Bell Lane	Named after the two bells of the medieval chapel-of-ease which stood on the site of the present war memorial gardens.
Biscoe Court	The Biscoe family owned Holton Park 1801-1910
Blenheim Lane	'Blenheim' was a nickname for squatter houses or hovels.
Church Road	This was known as 'Backside', or Back Street, until the Parish Church was built in 1856s
Cooper Close	Named after the Cooper family who owned the brickyard in Littleworth.
Crown Road	Named after the Crown Inn.
Cullum Road	The Cullum Family ran a building firm and wheelwright shop
Elm Close	Not far from Mulberry Court which used to be called The Elms.
Elton Crescent	Rev. Edward Elton was the first Vicar of Wheatley from 1849
Fairfax Gate	Named after Lord Fairfax of civil war fame
Farm Close Road	Land previously part of Farm Close
Frampton's Alley	Joseph Frampton was a beer-maker and cooper in the 19 th century.
Friday Lane	William Friday was a shopkeeper at the end of the 18 th century.
Gardiner Close	The 1809 enclosure map showed that Sir JWS Gardiner owned this land.
The Glebe	This land used to belong to the Church
Hathaways	Land formerly owned by Hathaways the builders and wheelwrights.
Hillary Way	Named in honour of Edmund Hillary's conquest of Everest in 1953
Holloway	A sunken or embanked road.
Howe Close	Close to the Howe and the village allotments
Jackies Lane	Leads to Castle Hill, also known as Jackey's Hill
Kelham Hall Drive	Kelham Hall was the name of a railway engine which used to pass through Wheatley.
Kelly's Road	?
Kiln Lane	The brick kilns were in the area to the north-west of this lane
Keydale Road	Mr Key was the Primary School headmaster, and Miss Dale lived at The Old House
Kimber Close	Mr Kimber was the last station master in Wheatley
Leyshon Road	Mr Rees Leyshon was Headmaster of the Primary School 1891 – 1925
London Road	the old turnpike road from Oxford to London ran along here until c. 1960
Miller Road	Named after the Miller Family of Shotover House
Morland Close	Built on land owned by Morland House
Mulberry Drive	Land formerly belonging to Mulberry Court, which used to be called The Elms.
Old Road	This used to be the main road from Oxford, which joined the turnpike road at Wheatley
Orchard Close	Built on the orchard of Rectory Farm
Park Hill	Stands on high ground outside the corner wall of Holton (deer) park.
Roman Road	This is not a roman road but takes its name from the Roman villa on Castle Hill
St Mary's Close	This land belonged to the Church
Simon's Close	Symons or Syms owned a field here in the 17 th century
Station Road	This led from the High Street to the station at the bottom of Ladder Hill
Sunnyside	Named after Arthur shorter's bungalow and orchard on that site.
Templars Close	In the 12 th and 13 th Centuries, the Knights Templars of Sandford owned land in Wheatley
Tyndale Place	Built on land formerly owned by the Tyndale Biscoe family at Holton Park
Westfield Road	Led to 'Westfield' land owned by the Shotover estate, on the west of the village
Windmill Lane	Leads to the windmill
Wren Close	Miss Wren, head of the Infant School in the 1940's which was on this site.

Although we can not be absolutely sure, the Manor House is probably the oldest building in Wheatley.

HISTORY

Behind the long wall and hedge at the west end of the High Street stands an elegant late Elizabethan mansion. Dates inscribed on the east wing mark the transformation, by 1601, of a medieval hall and detached kitchen.

After the Reformation the house was bought by the catholic Archdales, the first owner-occupiers.

In 1682 the house was sold to the Smythe family who let it to a succession of farmer tenants, one of whom was Thomas Juggins whose threshing machine was admired by the agriculturalist, Arthur Young.

In 1850 the Bishop of Oxford bought the house and land for the site of a Diocesan Training College. When the plan was abandoned, the house was bought by the Henley family of Waterperry House.

In 1882 the property was sold to Joseph Williams and John George Rose who divided the house into four cottages. Many old Wheatley families including the Goodlakes, the Hardings, and the Tombs lived in these cottages.

In 1925 Mrs Leslie Milne bought the house for her nephew and arranged for the rehousing of the tenant families. When, in 1939 her nephew decided he didn't want to live in the house, Mrs Averil Hassall bought the Manor and began its restoration.

Each of the families who lived in the Manor House, Tombs, Shorter, Goodlake and Harding, were offered a quarter acre, on the new London Road 'cutting' by Mrs Milne, to build new homes.

THE BUILDING

The late medieval/Tudor house consisted of two parts: an open hall with a cross passage, service rooms and a first floor chamber; and a separate detached kitchen. The hall was situated to the left of the front door, the service rooms were to the right with the chamber above. You can see the original end of the house in the stonework. The detached kitchen was the present west wing. At an unknown date the hall and the kitchen were joined together. The open hall was also ceiled in and two dormer windows were inserted in the roof. The right-hand dormer was added in 1939.

In 1601 Abraham Archdale added the east wing with its fine battlemented oriel window (see the date 1601 and TA AA with vine-leaf and green man decoration. An empty niche was left for the insertion of a coat of arms. The eastern wall of the east wing, rebuilt in 1939, originally had four large windows instead of the present six. The east wing contains the well of a large staircase and wraps round the southern side of the original hall.

The studded door in the basement at the SW corner of the east wing is the original south door of the hall.

The low range of buildings to the east of the garden were built in 1835 and consisted of a cow shed and a larger cart shed. The northern outbuilding was originally a cottage known as Duffield's.

The pump outside the back door of the west wing, dates from the nineteenth century division of the house into cottages, as do the two small sheds on the terrace garden, which were originally earth closets.

Population of Wheatley

In 1801 the population of Wheatley was 685

In 1851 the population was 1,037

In 1901 the population was 872

In 1951 the population was 1,532

(426 households)

In 2001 the population was 3,905

Why do you think the population of Wheatley has increased so much in the past 50 years?

Why do people want to come to live in Wheatley?

Shops in Wheatley

Dungey's General Stores, 11 High Street
Hyde's Bakery, 39 High Street
Gostick's Stores, 53 High Street
Edward Shepherd, General Stores, High Street
Mr L Emm, Druggist Shop, 62 High Street
Bathard's Store, mainly bakery, High Street
Harris' General Store, 97 High Street
Bobby Green, General Store, in Crown Square
Hollands, behind the chapel, confectioner's, 3 Crown Square
Walde's 47 High Street
Dora Pope, High Street, before going to The Triangle
Keziah Tomb's Store, London Road (1927 - 1951)

1961

Dallimore's General Stores in Littleworth Road
Scott-Dow's 45 Ironmongers, High Street
Mr Walde's Camera shop & Mrs Walde's Drapery, 47 High Street
Newsagents, 48 High Street
Gostick's General Stores 53 High Street
Mr Putt the Shoe-mender 6 Station Road (later he moved to the tiny shop on the south side of the High Street on the corner of Bell Lane)
Gibbs and Nottage, butchers 4 Station Road, (Later West's)
Samuel's butchers, 50 High Street, corner of Station Road
Fish & Chip Shop, run by Samuels, next door in Station Road
Mr Naish's cycle repair shop, now a garage to the west of 65 High Street
Bax's General Stores 67 High Street
Turner's Electrical Store and bicycle shop, 87 High Street
Harris' General Store, 97 High Street
Small shop in Crown Square, at junction with Friday Lane, (later run by Mr & Mrs Blake) now called 113 High Street
Paris' (pronounced Parry's) General Stores in Roman Road
Mr & Mrs Underwood's Hairdressing Salon, Church Road
Mrs Turner's Toy and Gift shop in Church Road.
Mrs Dodd's Bakery in Church Road, opposite the old Primary School
The Co-op Stores in Church Road on corner with Holloway.
The Triangle Stores and Café in London Road, run by Mr George.

The Round House (also known as the Lock-up) and the Stocks.

Wheatley's best known landmark is its six-faced, pyramid lock-up of 1834. This 'round house' or 'keep', a temporary holding place for those arrested before they were taken before the Justices, was built on the parish stone pits where parish 'paupers' earned their living (work fare) by breaking stones for parish roads. In its day it was as much a symbol of class division, social unrest and economic recession, as it was of a village with a drink and petty crime problem. Enclosures had brought unemployment and curbed the rights of the poor to fuel and pasture on Commons land such as that between Littleworth and Shotover. Mechanisation of farming was beginning. Rural populations were on the move as town and city beckoned and the overall population was also increasing. Land-owners still exercised great power at local and national levels. On nearby Otmoor after 1830, serious agrarian riots and sabotage took place. Unrest and a token machine-burning spread to Wheatley. Foot and mounted sworn-in companies of petty constables, including clergymen, patrolled the parish at the request of the gentry. In 1834 Parliament took away from the parishes the control of, as well as direct responsibility for, the parish poor. The old parish workhouse at Littleworth soon closed and a new Poor Law Union house was built at Headington, under the amended Poor Law.

In the 19th century stocks were also in use in Wheatley, 'near Mr Bathard's gates' in High Street, probably near the gated path through the White Hart land. In Holton they were reputedly on The Green under the 'Stocks Tree', probably until the Park estate was broken up in 1913. Nationally, stocks went out of use around 1850, although they were never abolished in law. In 1972 the origin and ownership of the stocks held and claimed by Wheatley were disputed by Holton.

SCHOOLING IN WHEATLEY

MITCHELDENE

The first school in Wheatley was opened in 1818 in the house known as Mitcheldene (35 High Street). Over one hundred pupils were registered in the Mitcheldene National School in 1826. Girls were accommodated in the house, and boys in the large building which still stands at the top of the garden.

BELL LANE SCHOOL

In 1840 an infant school was opened at the top of Bell Lane (in what is now Wren Close), and this continued until the 1960's.

WHEATLEY NATIONAL SCHOOL / WHEATLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

In 1858 the new Big School was opened on the north side of Church Road. The first long-serving Headmaster was Mr Rees Leyshon (1891-1925). He was an effective teacher with wide interests including bee-keeping, carpentry, gardening and music. He was also the church organist. John Key succeeded Rees Leyshon (1925-1956), Glen Evans was headmaster from 1956-1983, and Clive Hallett (1983-2005). The Primary School moved into the buildings formerly occupied by the Secondary School, in Littleworth Road, c.1984

HOLTON PARK GIRLS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

In 1948 the Girls Grammar School moved from Thame into the Manor House at Holton Park, for girls who passed the Eleven Plus selection examination. Boys who passed this examination went to the Grammar School in Thame.

WHEATLEY SECONDARY MODERN SCHOOL (later known as THE SHOTOVER SCHOOL)

This opened in December 1950 under the Headship of Mr Fred Anson. By 1959 academic GCE courses were offered in addition to commercial courses for girls and technical subjects for both boys and girls. The name was changed to Wheatley Bilateral School.

COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION: HOLTON PARK SCHOOL

Comprehensive Education came to Wheatley in 1972 with the amalgamation of the Girls Grammar School and Wheatley Bilateral School, and became known as Wheatley Park School, Upper and Lower. The older students were on the Holton Park site, now Wheatley Park Upper School, and the younger students were on the Littleworth Road site, now known as Wheatley Park Lower School.

When David John became Head of Wheatley Park School, the Lower School and Upper School were united on the Holton Park site, and the Primary School moved into the Littleworth Road site.

JOHN WATSON SPECIAL SCHOOL

This school for children with special needs opened c.1985??? in the south-west area of the Holton Park site (now the Sixth Form Block), but was transferred into larger accommodation adjacent to the Primary School in Littleworth Road in 1991/2



Old Wheatley Families

The descendents of many of the old Wheatley families still live in the village. Do you know any of them? If you do, see if you can find out what life was like in Wheatley when they were young.

Or

Try looking up some of them in the local telephone directory to see how many still live here.

Allen

Avery

Chapman

Clements

Crick

Davis

East

Gould

Gunn

Harris

Horwood

Johnson

Knight

Munt

Naish

Parsons

Putt

Rose

Sheldon

Shepherd

Stanley

Smith

Tombs

White

Churches in Wheatley

How many churches are there in Wheatley? What are they called? How are they different?

Why is St Mary's Church called the Parish Church?

St Mary's Church spire is one of the landmarks of the village. The church was built in 1857, but it was not the first church in Wheatley.

There are records of a place of worship as early as the fifteenth century; this was on the site now known as the Memorial Gardens or Old Burial Ground. It was never a parish church but was a 'chapelry' dependent on Cuddesdon.

- *Go and look at the plaque on the wall of the cottage on the right, at the entrance to the Memorial Gardens*

In 1784 Thomas Sims, of Wheatley, left money to pay for a new church to be built on the Old Burial Ground. So a simple Georgian building was built there and consecrated in 1795.

Edward Elton was appointed to be the first Vicar of Wheatley in 1849. At that time Wheatley was a rough place! There was no 'squire' or resident parson, and there were too many inns and beer-houses. It was described as the 'most bull-baitingest and cock-fightingest of villages'.

St Mary's Church was designed by a famous Victorian architect called G.E. Street and the inside of the church today is very much the same as it was nearly 150 years ago, but at least it now has a toilet and a kitchen area with running water.

- *Go and read the notice board outside the church and find out the name of the present Vicar of Wheatley.*
- *There is a box-file in the Archive Room with lots of photographs and other information about the Parish Church, and another box-file with photographs and other information about the other three churches.*

The United Reformed Church in Wheatley

The Congregational Church (now the United Reformed church) stands at the east end of the High Street adjoining Crown Square. It was previously a tannery belonging to Noah Crook, whose name was adopted by Hughes in *Tom Brown's Schooldays* as that of the kindly old countryman who was Tom's mentor before he went to Rugby.

c.1836 Congregationalists opened a night school (VCH v)

By 1892 Their working men's club had an attendance of 80

Reference book:

Tanning Barn to Church: by John Fox provides a wealth of historical information about the 'dissenting Congregation of Wheatley over Two Hundred Years'. Available from members of the URC price £3 (This also has a list of sources and suggestions for further reading)

See also: Wheatley Records:

Plates 74 (p. 175) and 75 (p.176)

Our Lady of Lourdes RC Church

The small Roman Catholic Church of 'Our Lady of Lourdes at Wheatley', is part of the parish of Corpus Christi in Headington.

It is situated off Crown Road, in a seventeenth century barn which was previously part of Rectory Farm. The conversion was carried out during the 1960's and most of the work was carried out by the parishioners themselves.

Further information about the church is available in a booklet entitled: ????

The Granary Church, Wheatley

The Granary Church, at the west end of Church Road, is housed in a splendid seventeenth century barn which was once the property of the George Inn.

In 1928 Plymouth brethren aquired Granary Hall (Local information - VCH vol.v)

A short booklet containing the history of this evangelical church, and of the building, is available.

Wheatley Windmill

Who was the last working miller in Wheatley? What did he grind? Why did the mill fall out of use?

The history of the Wheatley Windmill we know today is complicated by the fact that for some years there were two windmills on the hill. They stood about three hundred years apart, one on each side of Windmill Lane. Bryant's map of 1824 shows a tower mill and a post mill, as did a watercolour picture owned by the late Mrs Cassie Paintin, who was the daughter of Ezra Cripps, the last working miller.

The windmill we see today is a tower mill, built of local limestone, patched with local brick. It is one of the three surviving stone tower mills in Oxfordshire (the others are in Great Haseley and North Leigh) and is the only one being restored to working order.

Ezra Cripps was the last working miller and he worked on the mill with a single pair of sails until the end of 1904. He ground grain inside the mill and outside it he ground yellow ochre, which was extracted from pits on Shotover. After 1904 many farmers had small steam-driven mills on their farms, so Ezra Cripps only had the windmill working occasionally.

Between the two World Wars the mill was reasonably complete, although not in good repair. In 1939 the mill was struck by lightning. Unfortunately the mill was not insured so nothing could be done to repair it.

By 1963 nearly all the cap had collapsed and the building became too dangerous to enter. By now both Ezra Cripps and his wife were dead and their son Len Cripps inherited the windmill and still owns it today.

In 1976 the Wheatley Windmill Restoration Society was formed: their aim was to 'preserve, restore and open the mill to the public'. Restoration work began soon afterwards - but it has been a slow and expensive process. However, the tower has been repaired and Christopher Wallis, a local millwright, designed a replacement cap which was put in place in 2001. He is now working on the machinery inside the mill, with the intention of restoring it into working order. The last part of the restoration will involve making and fitting the sails.

Inns, Public Houses & Teahouses

Wheatley used to have rather more inns and public houses than would seem necessary for the number of inhabitants! How many of those listed here are still in use today?

The Crown, Crown Road (closed 1938) and, at the other end of the property, The Crown Tap House (Church Road)

The George (High Street)

The King and Queen (High Street)

The Sun (Church Road)

The King's Arms (also known as Facing Both Ways)

The White Hart (two sites)

The Swan (17th century, in Crown Road)

The Bell (on the corner of Bell Lane and the High Street)

The Chequers (in Crown Square)

The Railway Commercial Hotel (Ladder Hill)

The Railway Inn/Tavern/Sandpiper/Common Room

The Red Lion (now the New Club)

The Plough (London Road)

Bridge House/The Bridge Hotel (London Road)

The Cricketers Arms (Littleworth)

The Royal Oak (5 High Street)

The Merry Bells (High Street) was a Temperance Hotel

The Rose and Lily Tearooms

The Bridge Hotel Tearooms

The Wheatley Railway

11.

The railway arrived in Wheatley in 1864 and the last passenger service ended in 1963.

There were five people employed at Wheatley Station: the Station Master; two porters; one signalman-porter who was trained to take over from the signalman when necessary, and a 'lad-porter'. The lad-porter was usually a boy of 14 or 15 who had just left school. One of his duties was to deliver the parcels which had arrived by train.

Until the Second World War, almost all the machinery and materials for the local trades people and farmers were transported by train, rather than by road. Farm animals, too, were moved around in this way, and trains would often stop, by arrangement, between stations, to unload a flock of sheep or herd of cows.

The station buildings at Wheatley were very modest, consisting of no more than a shelter on the down side, with a small canopy, and more substantial building on the up side - but without a canopy. There was a small recessed waiting area at the up end of the main building. At about the time of the Great War, the building was extended and a small goods shed of brick construction was added at the up end of the main building. Apart from the cattle dock and crane in the yard, there were few other facilities.

One unusual feature was the lack of a footbridge. Passengers wishing to change platforms had to use the Ladder Hill road bridge thus going right outside the station and back in again! Not surprisingly, most passengers simply crossed the rails by the goods crossing.

The signal box was on the down side of the line at the up end, just beyond Avery's Sawmill.

In 1962 (the year before the railway was closed to passenger trains and only two years before it was closed altogether) the rail track through Wheatley was re-laid. However, an audit showed that the line was financially unviable, and the following year saw the end of passenger trains, and a year or so later the end of goods traffic also.

Wheatley Brook and the Flood of 1910

Common Brook once flowed as an open stream down the length of the High Street on its way from Shotover to the River Thames. Houses at the west end of the street had the best water, but by the time it reached the eastern end of the street it had usually been fouled by rubbish and waste water.

The brook has now mainly disappeared into culverts, but gratings in the surface of the High Street still indicate its course.

Before the stream was 'culverted' (in 1857/8) there were 'bridges' (single flagstones crossing the stream) including one outside Mitcheldene, and one outside The Chequers.

Opposite the site of the Merry Bells the stream flowed across an orchard, and behind the houses down to Crown Square. Wheatley's tanning industry at this end of the High Street needed water for the bark-tanning vats.

Despite the 'culverting' of the brook, heavy rain still caused flooding. The worst flood was in June 1910. For several days there was heavy rain and on one of those days, over 4 inches of rain fell in one hour. There were hailstones the size of marbles. A two-ton hayrick in Robbins' farmyard (College Farm) was carried twenty yards.

One resident described the High Street as being '...like a river. Houses were flooded and chickens and pigs drowned. Even College Farm's chickens and geese died. Dr Barns rowed down the street in a boat to help the distressed.' Children in school had to be carried home across the High Street. In Cromwell House, a piano floated to the ceiling and Miss Sheldon had to escape through a bedroom window.

The Vicar, Mr Curry, arranged with Sheldon, the coal merchant, to supply coal to those affected. Many people faced hardship with drowned livestock and ruined produce - not to mention the contents of their homes.