

Oxford Times.

Jan. 23 1897.

WHEATLEY.

The first sale of the New Year was held, on Thursday when a capital commencement was made with an excellent supply of stock, a fair trade and good company. Messrs Franklin & Jones brought to the hammer 54 fat oxen and heifers, 5 calves and 260 fat tegs, wether sheep and ewes and, with few exceptions, the lots were readily disposed of, finding buyers from Aylesbury, Oxford, Thame, Watlington, Stadhampton, Stanton St. John and the district around.

The market being closed for pigs made a great difference in the appearance of the sale yard, this class being generally well represented.

Jan. 23 1904.

Population last census 1901	873.
previous	920
before that	1000

F. Smith

Left Wheatley in 1888 : unemployment was very bad: 30 men might be seen outside the old post office. Mrs Miller started s soup kitchen at the Merry Bells.

List of subscriptions etc. 1890 – 1891. (Mr Sturges)

‘Excellent free dinners were provided at the ‘Merry Bells’ during the depth of the winter, when many parents were out of work, a pleasure to see effect produced upon the schoolchildren. Many thanks are due to all those who so kindly helped to make the dinners orderly, and supplied willing hands to assist in serving out the soup etc. The ‘Merry Bells’ has never been put to better use. Whatever the sins of the parents may be, the hungry faces and ragged clothes of their poor little children appeal piteously to every Christian heart.’

Voluntary subscriptions were made for the School Clothing and Coal Club, Mothers’ Meeting, Choir Fund, Offertory Fund. There were Provident Clubs and a Shoe Club at both schools. Subscriptions were given towards the upkeep of the Old Churchyard, which was laid out and planted with shrubs under Mr Broadfoot’s supervision.

Mrs A Life

Cooper’s engine with the man and his red flag walking ahead; the great event of seeing a motor car when out for one’s afternoon walk. Mrs Hiller taking her airing in a carriage drawn by a pair of spanking black horses.

Mrs Hanson says in 1905

The doctor has a car; he has just had to have a man from Birmingham for a week to put it in order. The cars are costly cattle. I think in England a carriage and pair a more enjoyable luxury than a car. In earlier days mechanically propelled vehicles had a man with a red flag preceding them as did Cooper’s engine, which greatly excited the children

Mrs Bayley

My earliest recollection is of being pushed about in a high perambulate shaped rather like a tin bath with handles at each end and no hood. Older children were pushed in wooden slatted mailcarts with a centre division and seats facing each way - the children sitting back to back. He (Dr Barns) was one of the first people to own a motor car in the village and it was an object of great interest to us all, for a long time and when we heard it coming we rushed to the side of the read to see it pass.

Sometimes we went to the Chinnor hills by horse-drawn 'brake'.

Milk was brought to the station in horse-drawn milk-carts. In those days the farmers from all the villages round Wheatley used to send the milk to London on the 8.40 train. It was brought in churns in horse-drawn milk carts and the men used to put it on the train and take away the empty churns. They all went down to the Post Office to fetch the papers for the various villages. Very few people took daily papers and the news was passed from one to another. When any great event took place we usually had a copy of the Illustrated London News to see all the pictures, and this was passed around.

When I was twelve years old I went to Oxford to school each day by train. Many others went too. We went by the 8.40 a. m. but could not return until the 6.20 p.m. There was no electricity or gas in the village and the streets were lighted by oil lamps. The roads were very muddy in winter time and children wore high-buttoned boots. The farm-carts made the lanes very muddy and full of ruts and the mud often reached half-way to the hub of the wheels in wet weather.

The stage coach used to run from the *Mitre* in Oxford to London, It stopped at the *King's Arms* and at the *Three Pigeons* to pick up passengers and to change horses and we liked to hear the horn and see the scarlet coat of the driver.

If you wanted to go to Oxford you walked over Shotover Plain.

The men wore thick hoots with nail-studded soles and the women slipped their feet into 'pattens' to keep them out of the mud. These were wooden soles with a leather toe-cap and strap and an iron ring underneath to raise them from the ground. They usually kept them by the door and slipped them on over their shoes when they wanted to go out. On dark nights we carried lanterns to light the way.

On Saturdays, I was sent to Mr Clayton's at the bakehouse for dough. This was wrapped in a clean white cloth and put in a basket. My mother then made a dough cake in a large tin and I went back to the bakehouse with it, and later collected it at 6 p.m. I liked to watch the bakers at work mixing the dough in big troughs and then moulding it into cottage loaves.

At that time tea was 9d per half pound, bread 2½d per loaf, milk 1½ d per pint, eggs 1d each in winter but 20 per shilling when plentiful.

On Saturday nights, the butchers in Oxford sold off all surplus meat as there were no refrigerators. A large joint could be bought for a shilling. Sunday dinners were baked at the bakehouse. The meat was put into a large baking tin and the vegetables placed around it and it was all cooked for 1d or 2d.

The railway fare to Oxford was 8d., and there were cheap returns for 10d. Wages were low only 2 shillings per week, but the cottage rents were cheap 1/- and 2/6d per week. Farm workers were given milk and also a strip of land to grow potatoes.

At Shotover House, five or six gardeners were kept. When the family went to their town house in London, fruit, vegetables and flowers were sent up each week by train. Several laundry maids were kept and it was all done by hand.

Miss Gunn.

Two-wheeled carrier carts with tilts made 2-weekly journeys to Oxford followed a few years later by 4-wheeled vans. No means of getting to Oxford Eye Hospital by 10 a.m. either by train or otherwise. I had to walk from Wheatley to get there for treatment.

The first down train was too late. It used to be interesting to see women start off on Saturday mornings at 7 a.m. or before with huge baskets to walk over the Plain to do their shopping, returning about noon. Milk carts brought the churns from the surrounding farms to be sent to London daily by rail.

Mrs Hanson.

She and Bertie invited me to stay the night but I was glad to walk home after the concert – by moon and starlight

with some Wheatley ladies who had an electric lantern which on a dark night must be invaluable. Tramps are numerous on the roads - one of our companions last night said 'a poor woman with vegets in a donkey cart had been stopped at 9 a.m. by 2 tramps and her fortune (2/6) taken from her lately.

Others found:

1. In the 1880s, families went gleening and winnowed the corn, then took it to the windmill for grinding. The family picked up sticks for fuel.