

Hello David

Sorry for the delay in responding to your request. I was away and then lost your e-mail so had to get in touch with Mark again.

I think the Society started in 1973. I then lived at 84 High Street and stayed there until 1982. I should explain that I am an architect/planner and had drawn up a plan for Wheatley Parish Council in 1968 (about).

My memory is that I was talking to my next door neighbour - Priscilla Chevenix-Trench - about the history of Wheatley and conserving its character and environment. The discussion quickly involved a group of people such as Mark Bannister, Caroline Dalton and others who were politically Liberal (now Lib Dem). We were concerned that the Parish Council was in the hands of a group of Conservative cronies who ran the village as a fiefdom. "King" of that group was Peter Audley-Miller. I and others like Mark decided to stand for the PC in 1973/4 and won seats. A larger group then formed the Society which created groups representing various interests such as history and theatre.

I then persuaded 10-12 politicians to stand at the next election (1978?). We really organized ourselves and campaigned as Village Concern and won an overall majority. Unfortunately my election papers were "lost" by SODC so I was barred.

I do remember my days on the council and the rousing debates we had in council, and the excellent ones that followed in the lounge bar of the White Hart.

It is good to know that the Society is still going strong. I enjoyed its efforts very much, especially the plays and musicals written and performed by local talent. I also remember being very involved in producing a history of the High Street in 1977 for the Queen's jubilee.

We had some great characters.

I have not been back for quite a time. I do remember the last time I came was when Kathy Keene invited me to a meeting of the Society when the postmaster talked about his twenty years in Wheatley. It was in the Village Hall. I was late and the room was full. I crept in only to find myself greeted by nearly quarter of the room. I had left Wheatley before the postmaster came.

I will try and remember more, though I suspect it would come easier if I am sitting down in The Sun or King and Queen or with old friends and a pint or two.

Best wishes

John Minett