

February / March 2020

YOUR Wheatley Village Archive

The archive team continue to be busy with visitors, research and projects. Have you visited the archive room to find out about your part of the village? Thursday afternoons upstairs in the Merry Bells, 2pm-5pm with disabled access kindly provided through the library and also on the 25th January and 29th February, 10am-noon.

All of our calendars have been sold, thanks to you all, including the local businesses who sponsored it and sold copies. We hope you are enjoying the 'Then and Now' photographs on each page.

The dispensers with leaflets for the Wheatley Heritage Trail have needed to be regularly filled so obviously many of you have enjoyed reading about the village and hopefully following the trail with friends and family especially over the festive

period. If you haven't completed the trail yet, kindly funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Wheatley WI, then as the days lengthen and, hopefully, warmer weather comes, you'll have a closer look at many buildings of interest in the village.

The Archive History Group have their next talk on Tuesday, 4th February in the Merry Bells at 8pm. Deborah Hayter will be telling us about some 'Hidden Villages in Oxfordshire' Do come along, whether you're a member of the history group or not. (Members - £3, non-members - £5). Our first self drive outing will be on Monday, 11th May to see the beautiful, medieval wall paintings in St Mary the Virgin Church in Chalgrove. Add the date to your diary.

See you soon.

Steph Cox

April/May 2020

YOUR Wheatley Village Archive

Wheatley Village Archive are proud to announce the publication and release of a book about Wheatley. Called 'Bygone Wheatley' it is written by Michael Heaton on behalf of YOUR Village Archive.

While there have been many specialist publications over the years, this is the first history covering all aspects of Wheatley and its village life over 2,000 years. The book has an introductory overview of Wheatley's history, then takes a walk around the village followed by chapters on the railway, stone quarrying, brickmaking, the Windmill and a newly-researched farming history. Information has been drawn from the extensive archive backed up by the encyclopaedic knowledge of its volunteers and many others. To this, Michael has added much new research and his own interpretations from a fresh viewpoint as a relative newcomer to write a fascinating, and very readable, history of YOUR village.

There will be a launch of the book

at Wheatley Library on 29th April at 10.30 where copies may be purchased at a discount rate of £10 (full rate then £12) and Michael will talk about the book. Then there will be a chance to pick up a copy at the Village May Day celebrations on Friday 8th May. So do come and see us there or pop into YOUR Village Archive any Thursday afternoon (2-5) or the last Saturday of each month (10-12).

The Village Archive History Group have an afternoon self-drive trip planned on Monday, 11th May to see the beautiful medieval wall paintings in St Mary the Virgin Church, Church Lane, Chalgrove, OX44 7SD. Do join us there at 2.30pm to see examples of these rare paintings which once covered the walls of most churches in the country and which were obliterated in many during the Reformation.

Steph Cox

June/July 2021

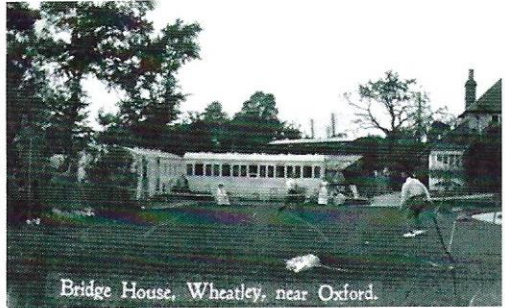
YOUR Wheatley Village Archive

The archive team have been busy during the nation's lockdown researching the local newspapers for interesting items connected with Wheatley and, in response to a request in the last newsletter, for names of Wheatley residents who might have been actively involved in WW2. Over 400 names were found.

An item found in the Oxford Weekly News from 1926 relates to the Bridge Hotel, Wheatley, now better known as the Harvester and Travelodge, near the Asda store. Do check out the archive website on www.wheatleyarchive.org.uk for more information and photos.

In February 1926, an application for a liquor licence at the Bridge Hotel was made by Mr Arthur Foster and Mrs Fanny Foster. The hotel was recommended by the RAC and the Cyclists' Union. The hotel could accommodate 28 people in in the hotel and the bungalows, and the application stated that the nearest licenced premises, at the Plough, lacked the specialist cycling facilities and sufficient accommodation making the absence of a licence extremely inconvenient. The proprietors did not intend to erect a bar in the hotel, only to serve alcohol to diners.

However representations against the application were made by the Princes Risborough Licensed Victuallers' Protection Society which stated that more than half of the sleeping accommodation consisted of converted railway coaches – there were only five bedrooms in the house and that previously the place had been a tea garden for some 15 years, having been a hotel for only the last four years, with the recommendations only in place for the last three.



The applicants, however, who had been at the hotel for four years, had great difficulty in getting the drinks that were required – having to send out to the Plough for a limited choice. The other several licensed houses within a mile and a half were stated to be “not of the same class” as the Bridge.

One resident, Major Starling, who had been at the hotel for two years, gave strong evidence in support of the application as did Andrew Graham Bell of Rectory Farm. The RAC also supported the application stating that the Bridge was “very well conducted”.

The application was however refused and subsequently the proprietors of the Bridge filed for bankruptcy at the end of 1926.

Remember the Wheatley's Heritage Trail leaflet is an interesting and absorbing hour's walk around the village which can be undertaken whilst socially distancing. The leaflet can be downloaded from:

www.wheatleyarchive.org.uk/wheatley_heritage_trail.pdf and will be in the holders again as soon as life returns to 'normal'. The launch of our book 'Bygone Wheatley' and the visit to Chalgrove will happen when restrictions allow.

♦ **Steph Cox**

August / September 2020

YOUR Wheatley Village Archive

"I had no idea there was so much information on the website and shall now spend hours browsing, when I'm not in the garden!"

What a fantastic quote about the website from a long time Wheatley resident to start our article in this summer issue. Have you looked at the website yet?

Many new records have been recently added, from research and kind donation, during the lockdown weeks, including the early history of the Merry Bells, built as a Temperance Hotel, which has recently come to light. We now know that it ceased to be an hotel in 1932, 44 years after its opening and, of course, in 2020 it's 50 years since it was acquired for the village. A volunteer at the archive has been busy looking at the Kelly's Directory and has added where nearly all those listed in 1911, 1920 and 1939 lived in the village to the website. An account of living in Wheatley during the COVID-19 shut-down has also been created and added for future generations to know what life was like here in 2020.

'Bygone Wheatley' a new history of Wheatley written by Michael Heaton on behalf of the Archive is on sale on Friday and Saturday mornings from 10-12 outside the Merry Bells, weather permitting. It is a 160-page full-colour book which covers almost every aspect of Wheatley's history for the last 2000 years, and sets itself apart from the specialist publications, which have previously been published, as the only complete history of our village. The first two

chapters are dedicated to an overall history and to the age and evolution of Wheatley's buildings and enterprises including its shops. The other chapters describe our industrial businesses, stone, brick, and the milling of wheat and ochre, which created the wealth in the village, and on farming and the railway. There is much new history never before revealed! The book ends with a nostalgic chapter on our traditions, entertainments and sports. The book is very fully indexed for ease of reference. It sells for £12 and credit card payment is preferred, but cash is fine too.

The website has had a thorough review over the last few weeks during the lockdown and the website www.wheatleyarchive.org.uk is even easier to use. The search process has been much enhanced and is now better than Google! It is no longer necessary to put a search such as Hughes Bakery in double inverted commas as the search engine will find any document which has Hughes and Bakery in it. Try it out!

The History Group talk in September has been cancelled, but the one on 22nd November by Liz Woolley will be streamed at no cost to members.

Finally, the Wheatley Village Archive wishes to pay tribute to the late Martin Tims who devised the original database for all the artefacts in the Village Archive nearly 20 years ago and upon which the new website is based. Thank you, Martin, for all your work.

Steph Cox

October/November 2020

YOUR Wheatley Village Archive

During lock-down, work has continued to improve and add to the archive records at www.wheatleyarchive.org.uk. Do check it out regularly to see updates.

A plea to you all - there have been many sets of postcards of Wheatley over the years and the archive is very keen to add to the 11 numbered postcards that we have from the set taken in 1927, see some examples here:



You can see all 11 that we have on the website above.

If you have others, please contact Michael Heaton on 01865 425909 or scan and send to michael@wheatleyarchive.org.uk so your village archive can have a complete set.

In addition, a guided walk around Wheatley, as it was in 1950, is underway and will soon be available as a video held on YouTube.

Regular opening of the small archive room (on the first floor of the village hall at The Merry Bells, 89 High Street, Wheatley, Oxford OX33 1XP) must remain suspended for the time being. Visits by appointment can, however, be made by contacting Michael Heaton on 01865 425909, and you can also purchase any of our publications on the website, along with tea-towels or notelets depicting the village. 'Bygone Wheatley' (£12) will continue to be available outside the Merry Bells from 10-12 on Friday and Saturday mornings, weather permitting. Copies are also available from Wheatley Estates in the parade of shops. A new publication by an ex-resident is now available for £6 also outside the Merry Bells. Christine Tombs was born just before the Second World War and, in the 1970s, she put together her very extensive memories, now an 80-page book of absolutely fascinating insights into her childhood in Wheatley during and soon after that war.

Finally a plea to residents of the 'Tudorbethan' houses in London Road and The Avenue. Does anyone know the name of the architect of this development? Please get in touch if you do!

Steph Cox

December 2020/January 2021

YOUR Wheatley Village Archive

As we, hopefully, come to the end of another lockdown (will it be the last?) and you're 'stir-crazy' here's a mystery photo from the Wheatley Archives for you. Can you spot this distinctive gate somewhere in the village while out for a walk?

The Archive History Group sadly decided to cancel the last talk for the year by Liz Woolley but talks are planned for the new year and depending on government restrictions will be via Zoom.

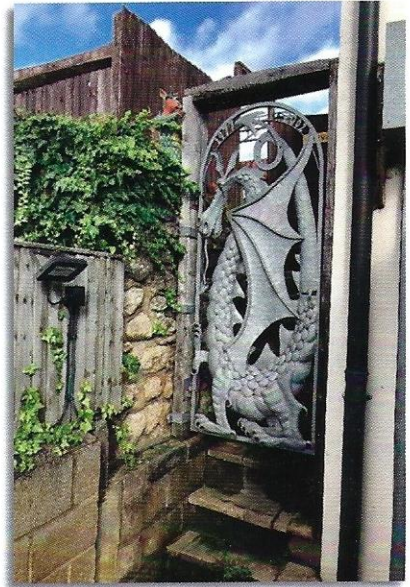
Your Wheatley Village Archive have been busy in this very strange year adding to and fine-tuning its website. www.wheatleyarchive.org.uk

Researching life in Wheatley in 1911 will transport you back over 100 years through a Zoom (likely) talk to learn of the trades, occupations and names of people in the (largely) self-sufficient village of Wheatley.

If you've attended a talk before you will receive notification of 'what and when' by email or contact michael@wheatleyarchive.org.uk.

Hopefully sometime in 2021 we will be able to meet face to face in the Merry Bells for our talks and the Archive room can re-open on Thursdays and Saturdays (monthly).

Although there has been no calendar



published for 2021 the Heritage Walk has continued to be popular with villagers and visitors and is a candidate for an award from the Oxford Preservation Trust. Have you done it yet, judges from OPT have!

The two recent publications – “Bygone Wheatley” by Michael Heaton and “On Parallel Lines” by Christine Jackson (nee Tombs) have been very successful. Copies are still available and make ideal Christmas presents at £12 and £6 respectively either at 48, High Street (425909) or Wheatley Estates.

We would like to thank all the villagers for your support and wish you a very Happy Christmas and an improved year in 2021. Stay safe!

Steph Cox