

This village of Wheatley has changed very much since the days of parents and Grandparents. Many houses have changed from thatched to tiled and slated roofs and small lattice windows to larger ones to give more light. An open brook ran down High Street, some people crossed over the stepping stones to be married in our present Church.

Usual Sunday attire a clean print dress touched the ground about 4-7 yards wide, cross over shawls and bonnets for ladies. Smocks and round Billy hats for Gentlemen. Later period capes for ladies length and bonnets with ribbon strings and shaking jet ornaments. Nearly always buttoned or elastic side boots and often white stockings. Kittens were much to the fore in winter.

Fashions changed again to very high crown hats, used to be called Chimney Pot Hats, bound underneath with coloured velvets. Nearly everyone wore veils about 60 years ago. Many lace man les were also worn, some with hoods similar to the present day mackintosh head hoods and some with long ends down the front - many shapes to form a setting for ones arms. The fashion of grandma's dress 60 years ago were three or four ruching frills and bustle and smart cap in the house with ribbons hanging over the ears for Sundays and high days.

No machinery for field work. Harvesting was carried on with scythes, ripping hooks and with wide wooden rakes. Pitch forks and so on. Ladies worked hard with skirts pinned up hessian aprons and sunbonnets and when leaving took com home to be sent to the mill to be ground for flour for home use.

Wheatley roads were mud roads especially after heavy rain or snow. The men were out with road scrapers, shovels and barrows to wheel it away; later it was mixed into mortar with cement and used for building sheds etc. People's shoes were very muddy even to the tops of boots. The Road cleaning tools used to be kept in the Round House and the Children's Playing field was a stone quarry used for road making and building.

Late Cullum's premises near the Station was a wheelwright's, many carts and waggons built there - very interesting to watch the wheels being made and fires for the iron tires to be shaped. Several blacksmiths and clock menders here at one time.

Butter making at the wee farms used to be sold at id a lb. all the year round and eggs sold in the district at 24 a shilling and skim milk 2d a gallon. Brickmaking took place on a large scale 50 years ago, faggot making also. The huge wood pile was stored in your present Primary School Playground, Churchyard end. Morland House field at back of playground was lent for Flowershows etc. The Church allotment was a lovely little field, ponies put in to pasture.

Houses beyond The Kings Arms is new Wheatley. The old stage coach used to run from London to Oxford, change horses at the stables at back of Kings Arms, the bugle was almost like a clock for time.

Farm labourers wages 8/2d per week, milkers 10/- per week.

A Salvation Army Band paraded the village each Sunday with flag, singing and preaching, sold Warcry papers. Many Mission services were held each year in the upstairs room of The Merry Bells. 8.p.m. on Sunday for Church and Chapel people to attend if liked, one of our late Vicars used to attend.

The schools used to make a large garland, choose a King and Queen and parade the village singing at most houses and given a nice tea with friends. School children were taken to Shotover House sometimes and given a tea by the late Mrs. Miller, who built the Merry Bells.

All horses and carriages and pony 4 wheeled carriages in those days and liveried servants to sit behind with folded arms. Cart horses for farm work and lovely pairs of horses for driving out. Hunting has taken place through all the long years.

Very exciting to see old caravans arriving for feasts and fairs between 60 and 70 years ago, erecting stalls under the trees near the Alderman's House, sometimes on the path opposite the White Hart Club room. Sold glittering china, rattles, dolls, wheel barrows, sweets and even the gingerbread snaps. Coconut shies, peep- shows, dancing booths with a local fiddler. A butcher used to come from Oxford to cook sausages; all gas flares to light up at night. One amusement called sea on land the aged people had a ride and made them ill. Once we had a wax-works and a huge wild beast show. Men used to come with dancing bears, also a music man with five instruments working at once, bells on a trumpet shaped hat, drum, cymbals triangle etc.

Carriers carts, Milk floats, etc., now changed to motors. Many old pitchings have been taken up. Women used to wear pattens for swilling down. Many families kept pigs and cured their own bacon\* 60 Years ago people used to have a huge boiler hung on a chain fires on the hearth and cook a nice dinner all in one boiler. 50 years ago about 50 families used to take their dinners to the Bakehouses to be cooked Sunday mornings in a divided tin, with potatoes, batter pudding and joint on a stand. Charged 2d to bake the dinners.

Men used to work 12 hours a day for under £1.00 per week.

Babies were wrapped in head flannels, hardly saw day light, or taken out for fresh air for six weeks. Boys and girls both dressed in frocks and petticoats, many in Holland pinafores bound with red braid till they were six years old. Prams made like wicker basket with three iron wheels, really no comfort.

Ladies dresses 50 years ago were long with wide sashes tied at the back with long bows and ends to the hem of skirts, deep lace collars and lace to fall over the back of hands. Ladies hand embroidery and needlework most beautiful all homemade garments. Nightcaps for ladies all frills and men's nightcaps long down the back with tassels. All four poster bedsteads with curtains all round to draw. No labour saving.

Hope this information will be of some use.