

**Memories of Wednesfield by Ray Fellows
(published in the Wednesfield Magazine, 2021)**

The Hickman Estate

The Hickman estate consisted of New Street, North Street, Cross Street, Charles Street, Cemetery Road, Graisle Lane and of course Hickman Street, although we could possibly add in parts of the Wolverhampton Road. See if you remember the names of some of the shops & traders.

The estate had plenty of shops, three pubs and plenty of businesses. In fact, prior to the 1960s it was not necessary to leave the estate for shopping as it had everything that you needed.

1940

New Street, from the Graisle Lane entrance to the Wolverhampton Road - even numbers were on the left so we had the Star Inn, run by John Morgan at no 68; Mrs Lily Blower, fish & chips at no 64; at 52 James Edwards, shopkeeper and Mrs Maud Edwards, Draper; at 28a we had N. Hancox, Butcher; then the Talbot Inn, run by Jn Arthur Tonks; and Mrs Alice Thompson had the Grocers shop at number 16. The odd numbers were Thomas Lewis, Butcher at 71; Doran Engineering at 55; Frank Foster, key maker at 35; Samuel Dudley, Boot repairer at 33; James Hinton Fruit & Veg at 25; the Albion pub was at 15; and Albert Hulme, Butcher at number 11.

In North Street, some shops and traders were, W Barnes, key maker 52 North Street (Jim Barnes had his dairy there later and I used to help him on his rounds before going to school, half a crown was my pay and that was good money in the early 1960s); George Watts beer retailer at 54; P. Tomlinson, pressings at 24; William Glover Rowland & Frank trap makers at 18; Mrs Lily Brinsdon, shopkeeper at 10; Thomas Davenport, key maker at 47; and William Davenport, key maker at 14 (and also at 53 Victoria Road).

Graisle Lane, Dr Wm Bentley; Mrs Myra Bradley, shopkeeper at 84; Fred Last, Church Institute; Harry Clough, fruiterer at 64; Josph Collins & Sons trap maker 72 Vulcan works, Mrs A. Knowles Hairdresser; Chas Sadler fruit & veg at 42; Mrs Catherine Talbot, baker at 60; Percy Tedstill, cycle dealer & confectioner at 44 (also Rookery Street); and C Stringer, painter.

Hickman Street, Charles Corbett, cabinet lock maker at 7; William Henry Pritchard, trunk maker; and Henry Lane, trap maker at Eagle works.

Cross Street, Albert Davenport, key maker at 7; John Davenport, key maker at 3; and Mrs Enid Perks, shopkeeper at 11.

Wolverhampton Road, Mrs Beatrice Evans, draper; Mrs Harriet Green, confectioner; Harold Moses Pike, fruit & veg at 31; Jack Sephton, boot repairer at 29; and Mrs Jane Elizabeth Swatman, fancy draper at 41.

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The Hinton family lived in New Street and George and John have been in touch to tell us of their memories of living there. "There were 3 of us brothers, myself, John and Jimmy, we lived at number 23 with our mother Bett (Elizabeth) nee Butler, mom's sister was Alice, father's name was George. Next door at 25 was our Nan and Auntie. Father passed away in 1953, he ran a coal business from number 25. Jimmy passed away sometime around 2001/2. Nan (nee Smith), as a teenager worked at the chocolate factory and there were what people called chocolate houses in Well Lane. There was a yard that was between the shop and the house where father used to drive his wagon in; to the left of the yard were the two houses 23 and 25 where we and our Nan and Auntie lived. We all shared the entrance to the yard and the gardens were at the back. The Talbot public house was directly across the Road".



Hinton's fruit & Veg, New Street



The car is outside the Talbot opposite Hinton's fruit & Veg, New Street


Wolverhampton Road - The Police station was in Wolverhampton Road. If you went down New Street and turned right it was about 50 yards on the right, (yes in those days it was yards and not meters) mind you many of us prefer to still use yards rather than the new confangled meters. Anyway, the following information was given by Lily Daish a few years ago.

"The Police station was a large house and the entrance had a window with a hatch to which the general public came for various reasons. The main door led to the 'charge room' which contained a switchboard, radio, sergeant and a civilian clerk, this room was where the officers coming on duty were paraded by the sergeant for their various assignments.



Wednesfield's old police station, late 1960s

The cells led immediately off from this room where any offenders were detained. On the ground floor were two other doors, one leading to the kitchen where the officers on duty cooked their breakfast as there was no canteen in those days. The other door led to the inspector's private quarters where he lived with his wife and daughter.



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Upstairs housed the CID and typist. The rear of the premises had a separate building where the inspector worked along with his secretary. There were also kennels for stray dogs and a couple of vehicles and a motorcycle.

There were two sub-stations, one in Wood End and one in Essington where the officers visited Wednesfield Police Station daily with their reports. Wednesfield Police Station originally came under Staffordshire and was mainly responsible to Willenhall where the senior officers were deployed”.

Around 1968 the station closed and one sergeant was left at the station for a short period to wind things up. Officers and staff were transferred to Bilston or Dunstall Road, Wolverhampton. Wednesfield’s new Police Station in Alfred Squire Road was officially opened on October 8th 1971 by Richard C Sharples Esquire; the building contractors were J. F. Wooton of Bloxwich. Here we are, 50 years on and the new police station is closed to the public. The old Police Station was demolished in the early 1970s. By 1966 the multi-storey flats had been built on the Hickman estate and most of the estate had been demolished, save a few streets.