

Memories of Wednesfield by Ray Fellows (published in the Wednesfield Magazine, 2022)

The old Lichfield Road School & other stories

Sybil Garton wrote to say - "I always enjoy reading your column in The Wednesfield Magazine and was delighted that in the April/May edition you put in an article about the old Lichfield Road School.

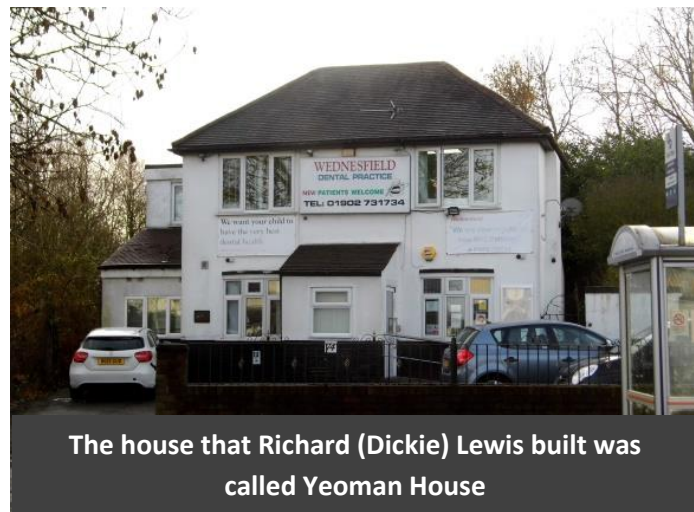
I was a pupil at the school in 1948 and the room that you mentioned opposite The Vine was the Domestic Science Room. Also, you mentioned a ruin on the land. I believe where the ruin is there used to stand a house. This was at the back of the old Drill Hall leading into the field at the back. Sometime after the war it was turned into a Nursery for children so that their mothers could return to work. When I was about twelve years old, I was one of the pupils chosen to go and help in the Nursery. On Remembrance Day we used to stand facing a carved plaque on high where there was a list of names of all the young men who didn't make it home from the war. I remember the last name was that of Cyril Wallbank. His name stands out in my memory as he was known to our family. It would be interesting to know what happened to the plaque.

You have mentioned the Lancaster Plane [that crashed]. I remember the day it happened and yes it did come from the direction of St George's Playing Fields. I recall playing on a swing in one of the gardens in our street and, because my Grandparents lived over the other side of Wards Bridge, when I saw the smoke, I thought it had hit their house.

A couple of things you might find of interest. There was a Mr George Jones who was Wednesfield's Chimney Sweep and lived at Number 1 Wood End Road. He went from house to house with his bike on which he carried his ladders and brushes and had a little dog which could only walk on three of his legs. When he cleaned the flue, he would ask any kids in the house to "Shout when the brush comes through!"

There was also a fellow called 'The Rustler'. He would paint cows before making off with them, else they could be recognised by their owners and more than likely praying that it didn't rain!! He used to come along the canal with some ill-gotten gains.

Living in Lewis Grove we enjoyed the privilege of playing with Ann and John Lewis whose father Dickie Lewis owned the farm. We would help out collecting the beet and generally enjoying ourselves. The dentist's, which stands opposite Lewis Grove, was originally built by John and Ann's Grandparents. One of the long-standing workers at the farm was Gertie and her main chore on the farm





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was being milkmaid. Every day she would be seen pushing her green trolley down the Lichfield Road towards The Albion. She would go from door to door selling the fresh milk, ladling it into the buyer's jugs. Gertie would only ever be seen wearing wellies excepting a Tuesday evening when she would sport a pair of shoes for a night out at The Regal and that night she looked lovely.

I remember so much about Old Wednesfield and at 84 my memory, thank goodness, is still really good.