

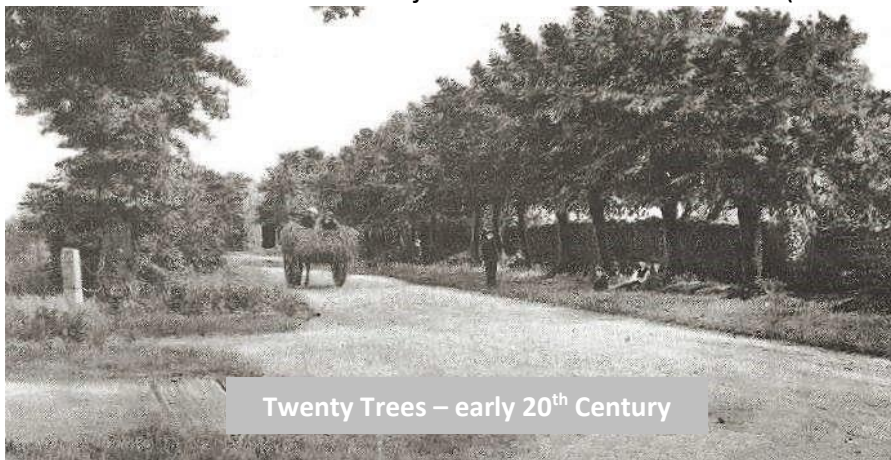
## Memories of Wednesfield with Ray Fellows (published in the Wednesfield Magazine, 2017)

### Twenty Trees & the Cottage Homes

I have received a few letters and emails about Twenty Trees farm.

**Jody Tropper (nee Beardsmore) wrote** - "My grandad often told us about Twenty Trees as this is where his grandmother lived. His Granny was Emma Tonks who I believe ran the farm - the farm itself was owned by a Mr Peat.

My grandad was the youngest of 5 children of Archibald Tonks senior, who was one of Emma Tonks children. He was named after his dad who sadly passed away when my grandad was about 12 months old. Archie junior and Elizabeth Powell (nee Tonks) are still alive (2017)



they are 92 and 98. They have wonderful memories about visiting their Granny, but due to their age they find it difficult to remember some of the details. Grandad remembers his Granny having geese

and being chased by them when he visited. Granny was a strong loving lady but one that the children and grandchildren dare not upset as she was quite strict with them.

We think that Twenty Trees was on the corner of Watery Lane and Neachells Lane but my grandad thinks not - but finds it hard to tell us exactly where he thinks it was. He had an Auntie Lizzie who he said emigrated to Australia with her daughters.

**June Taylor wrote** - "I am a descendant of Emma Tonks of Twenty Trees. She was my father's grandmother. George Tonks passed away February 2003 aged 92. He used to tell me how he went bare-back horse riding on his grandmother's farm with his Uncle Tom and Uncle Harry. Emma used to rear horses for the First World War. He also took me and my sisters Jacqueline and Maria to his Uncle Bill and Aunt Jessie's in Watery Lane where they had a well in their garden with spring water. We used to have a drink from the well as he told us how good it was for us".

**Ray** - apparently the Twenty Trees was the name of a house and its grounds that stood in Neachells Lane opposite the entrance to Watery Lane. It was named after the row of trees that were in the back garden. The house was described as a lovely red-brick building and trees, which were possibly oaks, stretching back to Strawberry Lane.

**John Smallshire in his book 'Wednesfield the field of Woden' wrote** - The Twenty Trees was between the road junctions of Watery Lane and Strawberry Lane, behind which lay ten houses

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and a vacant moat. This area was the 'Meeting of the Ways' mentioned as the home of the Hopes in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when the other families of the area were Wilkes, Hynton and Tomkys. The small square moat may be the original and pre-date the other larger ones.

**R. Jones (nee Sidebotham) wrote** - "I was born in Amos Lane right opposite the Homes in a Bungalow called Derwent and I almost lived over there at Mr & Mrs Daish's from when I was born. Marjorie looked after me a lot. When I was 11, Mom and Dad went to look after No 8 cottage with 18 lads for two and a half years. Mom at the time worked in the sewing room and I was very friendly with the superintendent and matron's daughter, Mary (Beetham). My Dad's brother George Sidebotham used to have the television shop at the end of Amos Lane. He was registered to sell Kolstan brand televisions and he also sold sweets and groceries. At the other end of Amos Lane lived dad's Uncle, William Sidebotham who owned the trap factory in Rookery Street which is now in the Black Country Museum. The house that William used to own was Alexander House and it is still there now".

**B. Platt wrote** - "My elder and younger brothers and myself were taken into the Cottage Homes in 1943/44. My mother was looking after us on her own as father was away in the war and unfortunately, she was taken seriously ill and admitted to hospital. Consequently, we were taken from our home 57 Southbourne Road, Fordhouses to Wednesfield. Sadly, my two brothers have passed away and I have no exact record of when we were there, I do remember being looked after very well indeed, I was given the job of stirring the porridge each morning and finally when leaving, the matron - presumably Mrs Daish - awarded me with a badge which I wore proudly for a long time. On leaving Mom took us to Jerome's in Dudley Street to have our photographs taken where I am shown wearing my badge".