



**Memories of Wednesfield by Ray Fellows
(published in the Wednesfield Magazine, 2019)**

The Orchard buildings and the Rickyard

Orchard Buildings

Orchard buildings was a small compact estate on open ground near to Church Bridge in Graiseley Lane. The buildings ran right through to the top of Duke Street. The buildings dated back to the mid-19th century and the estate consisted of about 37 houses. The site was a hive of activity. There were small workshops at the back of some of the houses; some made locks, another made chains (McConkey's). Towards the 1970's part of the site was used as a car dismantler yard.

Mr Edward Evans of 81 Hart Road owned most of the houses. Residents of the houses were given notice to leave in 1937 as the site was going to be cleared. Some of the residents of the houses back then were as follows:- at number 10 Orchard buildings was Fredrick Wallbank and on the 12th April 1937 he left and moved to 24 North Avenue; at 11 Orchard buildings lived John Wedge and at 12 lived F Simmonds, these latter two were found existing council houses; J Wallbank lived at 13 and moved to 36 North Avenue; at 14, W. Petford moved to North Avenue; at 15 J. Jenks moved to 34 North Avenue; at 17 W. McConkey moved to 26 North Avenue; at 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 and 23 Orchard buildings, the families were also moved to North Avenue. Most of the houses on the estate were demolished by September 1937, the remaining few - numbers 6 to 9, were demolished by September 1955. Mr Edward Evans was paid £350 for the whole area.

The Rickyard.

The Rickyard consisted of 8 houses and the address for them was High Street. At the rear of the houses was Barn Bridge and from there you could cross over the bridge to gain access to Orchard buildings. In 1937 the tenants were as follows:- at number 1 Rickyard was Thomas Smith with a total of 6 occupants; at 2 was George Arthur Moore total occupants 4; at 3 was Samuel Nicholls total occupants 4; at 4 was John Lawrence Watkins total occupants 8; at 5 was Thomas Keay total occupants 5; at 6 was George Horace Brown total occupants 5; at 7 was William Nicholls total occupants 4; and at number 8 was Harry Ames total occupants 5. All the buildings were owned by Purshouse and Gregory of the High Street. The families were given a date of displacement of 1938 and all of the families bar Thomas Smith were rehoused in Bolton Road. Thomas and his family provided their own accommodation. The houses were demolished in July 1939.