

Memories of Wednesfield by Ray Fellows
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Pickering Road Community Centre

The people who ran Pickering Road Community Association in 2019, the date this article appeared in the Wednesfield Magazine, were Chairman Les Simmons, Secretary/Treasurer Mrs Rowena Pugh, Associate Secretary Mrs Christine Harris and advisor Mr David Newton.

The building was opened as an old peoples Welfare Centre on September 8th 1956. A lot of people know Les* for the work that he did with Alf and Dorothy Wardley around the Church wall of St Thomas's for Wednesfield in Bloom. They were not frightened of a bit of hard work.

While writing this piece about the it brought back memories of when I used to take my mother there many years ago. My mind then wandered further back to the late 1950s when as a child I went there to the wedding reception of my cousin John Thompson. It was one of those times that I will always remember with fondness, everyone happy and all together having fun with plenty of food to tuck into. Wonderful memories of days gone by.

In the December/ January edition I asked for people to tell us about when and where they delivered newspapers in and around the village, the prize for the best entry was a meal and a couple of pints for two at the Vine. From the entries received the best two were from Ernie Monks and Ann and John Bennett, both entries win a meal and a couple of pints, well done.

Ernie Monks - "I was a paper boy for Pickerings. I started in 1951 and finished in 1954. My round was Well Lane, Bolton Road and Neachells Lane. I took both morning and night papers and on the night round, which was the Express and Star, I took approximately 5 packs - about 125 papers. I can't remember how many morning papers there were. The first house I delivered to was Sammy Hill (everyone knew him as Hill because he worked in the yard of Hill Brothers in Well Lane) and the last house was Arthur Trevor who lived near the canal bridge in Neachells Lane; his wife always gave me a silver tanner if all the weekly papers were delivered on time. Also, the advantage of taking papers for Pickerings was that you got a free haircut and no papers for delivery on Sunday because they did not open. I think I got about seven and six a week but can't be sure".

Anne & John Bennett - "we took papers for Watkins paper shop on the corner of Wednesfield Road and Church Street in Heath Town in 1960-61, which we did for a couple of years. That is where we met, began dating, and have been married for 51 years." John delivered to Wednesfield Road to New Cross on a morning and then sold papers round the hospital wards of an evening and earned 13 shillings and sixpence. Ann delivered Wednesfield Road and the old Heath Town back-to-backs, where you opened the door and threw the paper in (no letter boxes). She earned 17 shillings and sixpence. "I think I earned more than John as I collected paper money on a Saturday morning".

*Sadly, Les passed away in 2023