

The 10th Anniversary of the new Village Hall. David Ashton's speech at the reception.

Ladies and Gentlemen; It is several months now since Terry Wilson asked me if I would Chair this reception which he explained was to be held in the Village Hall to celebrate the 10th year of the new building. I am very pleased to do this because I have been involved with the Village Hall in one way or another for many years and I have always had a soft spot for it. This evening allows me to look back on the events leading up to what is now a very successful organisation, arranging a very enjoyable function.

Perhaps it is not generally known that the old village hall which stood on this site was an ex-army hut which was brought from Ripon in 1923. This was to provide temporary accommodation for the church after it has been damaged by fire. Subsequently the building was referred to as 'The Hut' and for the next 30 years or so, was run as an annex to the Club. As part of the display this evening there are extracts of the Minutes from the Club committee meetings from just before and just after the Second World War, where reference is made to The Hut. As all the land and buildings in the village in 1923 belonged to the Estate, the land on which the Village Hall stood and still stands belongs to The Estate and the Committee in fact have a 99 year lease on the site. I am told that the boiler for the Club also heated the Village Hall and that there were some difficulties in separating the responsibility for the heating of the two buildings, resulting in a separate Village Hall committee eventually being formed. This committee during the late 1950's struggled to make ends meet and to maintain the fabric of what, after all, was a fairly old building.

The first new houses in the village were built in the early 1960's and the first one was the Richardson's at the back of the bus shelter and then the Thornham's and Oakhurst, next door to the Thornham's. Then there was Escrick Court which Noel Hare built and which won an architectural award and after that there was the slow development of The Glade and Wenlock Drive. So it was, that by the mid 1960's, one or two of the new residents were starting to take an interest in village affairs. I joined the Village Hall committee in 1967 and already by that time there was a feeling amongst many of the committee members that perhaps we ought to be planning for a new Village Hall.

The receipts and payments account for the year ended 31st December 1967 shows total receipts of £355, payments of £143 and £224 in the bank. The biggest single source of income that year was the village garden party and it is interesting to remember that the Parochial Church Council had agreed to let the Village Hall committee take half the proceeds of the annual garden party to assist the Village Hall finances. Over the next few years the money from the Church garden party was a very important source of income for the Village Hall and it was only in 1977, after the new Hall was built, that we were able to thank the PCC for their generosity.

I took over the Chairmanship of the Village Hall in 1968 from Mr Binnie, who was the Headmaster at the village school, and during the next few years the Committee raised nearly £3000. We did this with a variety of events and many of you here this evening will remember the first sponsored walk that we had across the Park through Hollicarrs. I remember Geoff Green setting off on Saturday evening with his artistically painted arrows to direct people through the Hollicarrs and his frustration when we found on the Sunday morning that he had been followed around on the Saturday night by a gang of lads who had taken all the arrows down! Ken Colpas took over Chairmanship from me in 1973 and it was he and his Committee that really took the plunge. What they did was negotiate the

availability of grants from the local authority, an overdraft from the bank which I recollect was over £2000 and placed a £11,480 order with Noel Hare to build a new Village Hall for us. At today's prices that would be at least £34,000. Work started in the late summer of 1974 and as you all know there was a formal opening in 1975.

When I was looking for some of my old Village Hall records recently I came across an envelope of press cuttings about the Selby Coalfield Enquiry. The 12 month period up to April 1975 was a particularly hectic one in the village. In parallel with the work being done for the new Village Hall, the National Coal Board were unreasonable enough to announce the Selby Coalfield in June 1974! In liaison with the Parish Council a Residents Association was formed and whilst the Village Hall Committee were having the final push for raising funds with their 'buy a brick' campaign, which raised over £1300 and other functions, the Residents Association were raising money so that the villages of Escrick & Deighton could be legally represented at the Public Enquiry, the Enquiry taking place during the whole of April 1975.

Tributes were paid 10 years ago to the many people who has been involved in the new building and in this connection I would just say how pleased I am to see here this evening Joan Colpas, the wife of the Chairman at the time the new building was opened. Also I think we would all like to send our best wishes to Ralph Messer who was our Treasurer 10 years ago and who is in hospital recovering satisfactorily after a heart valve operation.

And so 10 years ago, we had a basic building and as the members of the Committee anticipated, with the better facilities available, demand to use the Hall grew rapidly. I estimate that a sum of money equivalent to the original cost of the Village Hall has been raised in the last 10 years, and I would like to list some of the improvements that have been made. There is the hardwood floor, the suspended ceiling, tarmacking of the car park which cost £3,500, the new heating system, the air conditioning, new curtains and the garage outside for storage, enabling us to bring the Committee room in to use properly for the first time. Recently the Hall has also been redecorated. All this is an enormous achievement and the Village Hall Committee are to be thanked for arranging this weekend's activities and for inviting us here because they are justifiably proud of what has been achieved.

On the platform with me is Mrs Gertie Gowthorpe who opened the Village Hall 10 years ago, also Terry Wilson who is the Chairman of the Village Hall Committee. We have had a plaque engraved which is to be placed in the entrance to the Hall and the Committee felt that an appropriate way of recognising this 10 year celebration would be to ask Mrs Gowthorpe if she would present this plaque to the Chairman, Terry Wilson, and I now ask her to do this.



10th Anniversary children's party.