

History of Spaxton Village Hall

As you read this we will be approaching the 75th Anniversary of the opening of the hall, although the idea of a hall was first raised some three years earlier.

In early 1937 a meeting was held in the Rectory Rooms, now a house, to discuss how to celebrate the coronation of King George VI. At that meeting Rev L Bush suggested any money left over from this celebration could be put towards a fund to build a village hall. Therefore following the coronation a committee was set up to look at other local halls and investigate the possibility and cost of building a hall suitable for Spaxton, with land for the site having been generously promised by Mr Geoffrey Woodhouse of Court Farm.

At a meeting in November 1937 a working committee of 20 people was elected to raise funds for the project, having £104 in hand from the coronation celebrations. The secretary elected was Mr Leonard Upham who served as hall secretary until his death in 1966 and the treasurer was Mr William Law who worked hard to raise funds to build the hall. In addition an Entertainment Committee was elected to assist in fundraising, including Miss Marion Knight, Mrs Dorcas Harris, Mrs Bessie Upham, Mr Bob Knight, Mr Steve Harris, Mr Bert Harris, Mr Leslie Horn, Mr A Wilkinson, Mr Bill Geen, Mr Cyril Ingram and Mr Jack Waterman.

The first three fundraising events raised a total of £28 8s 4½d, leaving a huge challenge to raise the contract price of £1086 16s for building the hall! A summer fete was then organised for 1938 which raised a total of £68 6s and following this Dr Lyon-Smith generously offered to give £550 to the fund in memory of his son Harry, who died aged 15 in June 1938.

After overcoming many other difficulties the building was completed in the autumn of 1940 and an opening ceremony was organised for 12th December with a social and dance and Mrs Lyon-Smith was invited to perform the opening ceremony.

SPAXTON VILLAGE HALL			
SCALE OF LOCAL CHARGES			
DANCES and CONCERTS			
7 p.m. until 10 p.m.	-	-	15 0
7 p.m. until Midnight	-	-	25 0
Dances	-	-	30 0
HIRE OF PIANO 5/- Extra			
HIRE OF PIANO (Dances) 10/- Extra			
WHIST DRIVE 7 p.m. until Midnight			20 0
MEETINGS IN MAIN HALL			
Up to 3 Hours without Light or Heat			10 0
Up to 3 Hours with Light and/or Heat			15 0
Meeting in the Committee Room	-		1 6
Charges for anything not shown above will be decided by the Finance Committee on application			
All Bookings apply to Hon. Sec.— L. J. Upham, Four Forks, Spaxton.			

Looking back it is fascinating to see the scale of charges from this time and to remember that the duties of the first caretaker, Mrs Short, were to fill and trim the lamps, lay and light the fires as well as keeping the hall and surrounds clean and tidy. Arthur and Myrtle Short were to carry out the role of caretaker for 23 years until 1963.

At the beginning of 1947 the hall's debts, including the loans for building, had all been paid and it was decided to purchase an electric light plant powered by a generator. In 1954 mains electricity came to the west end of Spaxton and the hall was connected, a great relief to those who had struggled to maintain the heating and lighting of the building. Also in 1954 the hall was extended by the provision of a permanent stage, dressing rooms and storage space. This was funded through the work of the war memorial committee who had £855 4s 6d left over