

# Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Village Hall

A History: 1943-2026



By Jancis Smith

© Astons History Group. 2026

## Preface

The publication of this history of our village hall marks a significant event in the hall's history, namely the replacement of the original fine teak floor, which has done sterling service since its installation in 1953.

We have been extremely lucky that the hall's records from 1943 until the early 1970s were donated to the Berkshire Record Office (until 1974 the Astons were in Berkshire, not Oxfordshire) and also that the hall committee has over the years preserved many records that might otherwise have been lost, passing them to the History Group for retention in their community archive in the 1990s.

This history also benefits from the many photographs that have been taken by individuals over the years, which have preserved (sometimes inadvertently) features of the hall and its grounds that no longer exist.

I have included as much detail as possible, so that what is scattered between many documents and places is here gathered together, in the hope that they may prove interesting or useful to future readers.

All photos are copyright of the Astons History Group, with the exception of the 1960s party photos on page 18, which Lionel Welch kindly lent to us to scan.

All documents belong either to the Astons History Group or to the Royal Berkshire Archives (as it is now called), in which case this is indicated thus (*RBA*).

The full list of documents held in the Royal Berkshire Archives can be seen in Appendix One.

\*\*\*\*\*



# Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe Village Hall, a history.

1943-2026



## Contents

|                                                                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction                                                                        | 4  |
| The Project Begins                                                                  | 5  |
| The 'Temporary' Hall, 1949-1964                                                     | 14 |
| The 'New' Hall - the Stockwells connection                                          | 22 |
| The Hall's Millennium Project : 1997-2001                                           | 24 |
| The Hall grounds                                                                    | 34 |
| The Kitchen Project: 2008                                                           | 36 |
| Community Space: Astons Post Office and Café: 2009                                  | 37 |
| Community Space: Astons WiFi and Online Initiative: 2010-12                         | 39 |
| Community Space: Library services                                                   | 40 |
| Community Space: The Whitwell Page Archive Room: 2019                               | 41 |
| The new hall floor: 2026                                                            | 42 |
| Management of the Hall                                                              | 43 |
| Appendices:                                                                         | 46 |
| 1. List of village hall records placed in the Berkshire county archive, 1984        |    |
| 2. Summary of trust deed. 1949.                                                     |    |
| 3. Selection of receipts for Nissen hall equipment and services.                    |    |
| 4. Article by Stephen Whitwell in the Astons News. August 1994.                     |    |
| 5. Article about the 1964 hall architect, George Zugic. Astons News. February 2022. |    |
| 6. Stephen Whitwell precis of hall minutes 1949-1976                                |    |

## Introduction.

*'One good thing for the villages came out of the second world war - a national scheme to encourage the building of village halls, with help from the government. (\* see note below)*

*Winston Churchill was quoted as saying that the vigorous revival of healthy village life was the main aim of his domestic policy.*

*The Rev. E.W. Thompson - a retired Methodist minister who lived in Upthorpe and was a man of great energy - formed a committee and persuaded most of the residents to back him. Half crowns, shillings and sixpences were collected weekly . . .*

*The hall itself was a Nissen hut leased for £13 a year, and opened in 1949. A gross of cups and saucers, plates and glasses cost £21.4s.6d. from Selfridges; a Mrs Lightfoot was appointed caretaker at 2/6d an hour, and a Mr. Clements was informed he could hire the hall on Wednesdays to show "non-inflammable films" (a reference to their physical condition, not their subject matter. JS).*

Stephen Whitwell's history "A Portrait of the Astons. 1984.

The project was in fact initiated by the Astons Womens Institute who, having been inspired by a talk on 'Reconstruction after the war,' had passed a Resolution asking the Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Parish Councils (*Upthorpe and Tirrold councils did not meet jointly until 1989*) to call a Village Meeting to discuss and to vote on a proposal to build a village hall for the Astons.

At a Joint Meeting on 14th November 1943 it was agreed that the Clerk should canvas village thoughts on the idea prior to a more detailed discussion, and on March 31st 1944 the Joint Councils voted to set up an Exploratory Joint Committee that could fully investigate all the implications of such a project, after which another Village Vote would be taken.

Their Report was presented to a Joint Council Meeting on 19th May 1944, an amazingly quick turn around. It was truly comprehensive, and was a clarion call to the village.

The report ended:

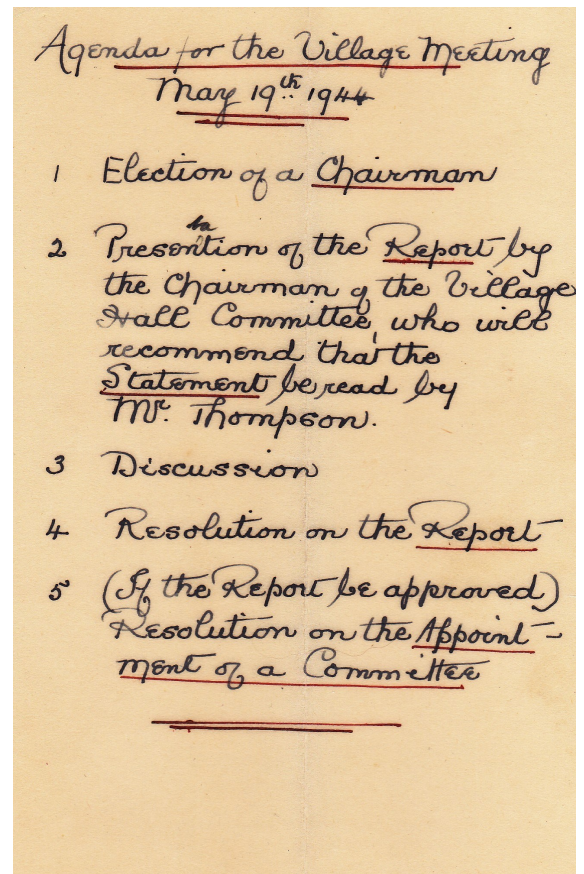
*We owe an incalculable debt to the boys who have fought or are fighting the battle for our liberties.*

*We shall owe a much greater debt to them before this war is over. Some of these will come to us no more. We know we will be creating a worthy Memorial ...*

*Thus our village hall will be Of ALL, By ALL and For ALL.*

\*\*\*\*\*

\*Early project paperwork at the RBA included a scrapbook with several pages of cuttings regarding similar village hall projects around the country. The Astons were obviously part of a nationwide movement.



## The Project begins.

The Village Questionnaire, January 1944. (RBA)

Many people gave more detailed answers on the reverse of the page, and not everyone was in favour of the hall project. One respondent said "My point of view is that before any money is spent on places of amusement attention be brought to the fact that in practically every working man's home in Aston every drop of water used has either to be pumped or drawn from the well, which is often some distance from the house. Wouldn't it be a fairer plan to raise funds so that water can be laid on so that all may benefit." Others suggestions included mains drainage, and a more modern school.

ASTON TIRROLD AND ASTON UPTHORPE 13 JAN 1944

Dear Sir (or Madam),

The Parish Council of Aston Tirrold have been requested and have agreed to canvass the villages of Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe to ascertain whether it is thought desirable to appoint a Committee to consider a plan for the erection, payment and upkeep of a Village Hall after the War.

A Questionnaire is attached which the Council would like you to complete and return to the Clerk in the enclosed stamped addressed envelope by the date mentioned.

Yours faithfully,

P.V. Baker, Chairman Aston Tirrold Parish Council.

V.K. Henderson, Chairman, Aston Upthorpe Parish Meeting.

-----

Please detach here and return the Questionnaire completed in the enclosed envelope not later than 20 JAN 1944

-----

|                                                                           |                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Are you in favour of a Village Hall after the War?                     | 1. <u>YES.</u>               |
| 2. If so, what type of Hall would you like to see?                        | 2. _____                     |
| 3. What purposes do you wish to see carried on at the Village Hall?       | 3. _____                     |
| 4. Would you be prepared to subscribe to the cost of the Hall and upkeep? | 4. <u>ANY ENTERTAINMENTS</u> |
|                                                                           | <u>YES.</u>                  |

Date 20.1.44 (Signed) H. J. Henderson

(Any further remarks may be made on the back if desired).

18

**Extracts from Aston Tirrold Parish Council minutes book: 14th February 1944 (RBA)**

*The Clerk had issued a circular by post to all residents, regarding a village hall for the Astons. The following statement was submitted by the Clerk as to the result of the circular issued:*

|                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| <i>Issued</i>          | <i>219</i>        |
| <i>Replies:-</i>       |                   |
| <i>In favour</i>       | <i>89</i>         |
| <i>Against</i>         | <i>22</i>         |
| <i>ditto unsigned</i>  | <i>4</i>          |
| <i>Returned blank</i>  | <i>1</i>          |
|                        | <i><u>116</u></i> |
| <i>No replies from</i> | <i><u>103</u></i> |
| <i>Total</i>           | <i>219</i>        |

**Analysis of replies received in favour of a Village Hall:**

|                                                             |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Would be prepared to subscribe to cost and upkeep</i>    | <i>65</i> |
| <i>Would be prepared to subscribe to initial cost only</i>  | <i>15</i> |
| <i>Not prepared to subscribe to cost or upkeep although</i> |           |
| <i>in favour of a Village Hall</i>                          | <i>9</i>  |

***Total:*** *89*

*After consideration it was resolved that a joint Parish Meeting of Astons Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe be called and a proposal put forward to that meeting to consider the appointment of a small committee consisting of a representative of the Parish Councils and various local organisations to explore the whole matter generally and to make such recommendations as they might deem advisable.*

**31st March 1944**

*It was resolved that a committee of 7 members be appointed with power to co-opt an additional 4 members. The following were then appointed:*

*Mr. CT Clay (Convener)*

*Mr. H Lugg*

*Mr. JR Scutt*

*Rev. EW Thompson*

*Mr. JH Wheeler (Aston Tirrold P.C.)*

*ditto (Astons Football Club)*

*Representative of the Women's Institute (Mrs Scotter and Mrs Rich appointed August 1944).*

The Exploratory Joint Committee was duly *re-appointed*, 'with powers to raise funds, to consider questions of site and design for submission in due course to another Village Meeting, and also to consider the question of maintenance of a Village Hall ..... A vote of thanks was passed to the Committee for their work in the preparation of the Report and to the Rt. Rev. Bishop Aylen for the use of the Schoolroom for the meeting'.

The Joint Committee was now fully autonomous and could proceed to tackle the many issues involved with such a complex project.

On 23rd February 1945 at the next Joint Council Meeting the Exploratory Committee reported projected construction cost for the new hall would be approximately £2,000 and that funds raised to date were as follows:-

|                            | <u>Promised</u> | <u>Paid</u>           |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
|                            | £ s d           | £ s d                 |
| Donations                  | 133 10 0        | 566.5.0               |
| Weekly subscriptions       | 62 18 0         | 102.0.0               |
| 'Salute the Soldiers Week' |                 | 110.15.6              |
| Entertainments             |                 | 17.13.6               |
| Totals                     | <u>196.8.0</u>  | <u>803.12.5</u>       |
| <br><u>Grand Total</u>     |                 | <br><u>£1,000.0.5</u> |

(By December 1946 this had risen to £1673. 1s. 6d)

The Meeting also discussed a model Trust Deed issued by the National Council of Social Services which detailed three options for charity trusteeship of the land and building - a) The Official Trustee of Charity Lands, b) The Parish Council, or c) Private Individuals as Trustees. Mr. Clay (Exploratory Committee chair) said the Committee's recommendation for adoption was option a) and pointed out that

*'the Official Trustee would take no part in the local administration and management of the hall but that the services of that Department would be available for advice, or questions of principle.'*

*After full discussion Sir Patrick Abercrombie moved that:*

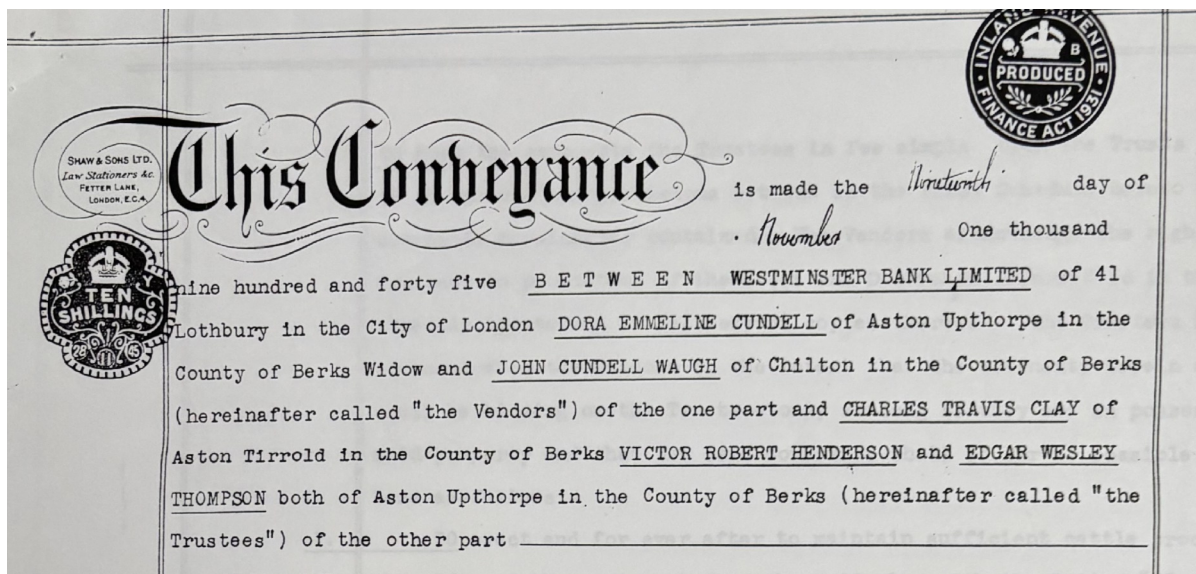
*This Meeting adopts the recommendations contained in the Committee's Report and authorised the Committee to proceed with the purchase of the Aston Upthorpe site and to draft and complete a Trust Deed on the model recommended by the National Council of Social Services vesting the land and building in the Official Trustee of Charity Lands.*

*The proposition was seconded by Miss K Curry, and on being put to the meeting was declared to be carried.'*

The 'Upthorpe site' referred to was part of the Cundell racing estate (see next page) which was owned by Len Cundell's widow, Dora Cundell, Len Cundell having died unexpectedly in 1939 aged only 59.

A final Joint Council Meeting was held on 2nd January 1946 (see pages 9-10) and was the last Joint Meeting to be held solely regarding the village hall project. The full report from the committee is on page 11.





Conveyance extract above, showing Dora and John Cundell as vendors of the hall site, 19 November 1945.



The Cundell estate map, above, was donated to our archive by Ann and Mark Holden. Ann and I can be seen carrying the map from its original position in Blewburton Hall's entrance hall. It was very heavy!

The map extract on the right shows the gap that the sale of the site made between the Cundell owned cottages on Spring Lane and their other lands on Thorpe Street, including Thorpe Farm. The photo below, from the 1940s, shows an array of barns and stables at Thorpe Farm (seen from the direction of Blewburton Hill).





January 1946.

A joint Meeting of Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Parishes was held in the Presbyterian clubroom, Aston Tirrold, on 2nd day of January 1946.

(About 34 residents in Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe were present.)

Chairman

It was resolved that Lt. Col. R. H. Ingham Clark be appointed Chairman of the Meeting.

Minutes

The Minutes of the last joint Parish Meeting held on the 3rd February, 1945 were read, confirmed and signed.

Report of Committee

Mr. Blay, Chairman of the Committee, presented the report of the Committee, copies of which were circulated.

During the course of his remarks Mr. Blay stated that he wished to thank Mrs. Burdell for her willingness to sell the site required, Mr. Slade for the legal work carried out without cost to the Committee, Mr. Henderson for his work as Treasurer and Mr. Thompson for his services as Secretary.

Mr. Blay referred to the grants which it was anticipated would be received from the National Council of Social Service and Berks County Council and stated that it was thought that these grants would amount to at least one third of the total cost.

It was proposed by Mr. Blay, seconded by Mr. Hugg, and unanimously resolved that the Report of the Committee be



approved and adopted.

Re-appointment of Committee.

Arising out of paragraph 6 of the Committee's report, it was proposed by Mr. Lugg, seconded by Mrs. Clark, that the present Committee be re-appointed with power to take all measures necessary for the erection of the Hall.

The motion on being put to the Meeting, was declared to be carried unanimously.

After discussion as to the total estimated of the Hall, it was proposed by Mrs. Blay seconded by Mrs. Bindell and resolved that the Committee be authorized to budget for a total estimated expenditure not exceeding £3,500.

A vote of thanks was passed to Col. Clark for presiding.

---

Chairman.



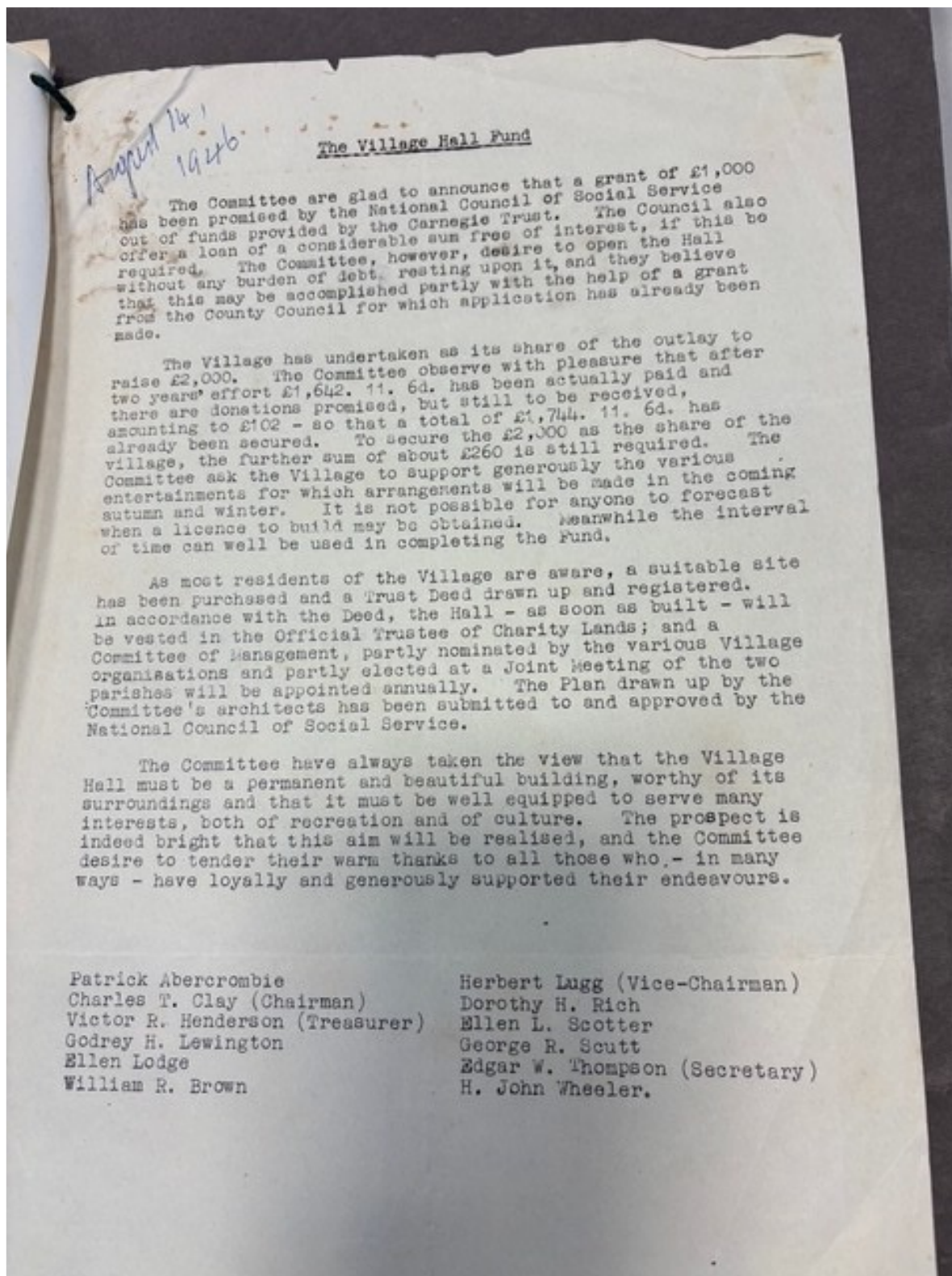
## Report of the Village Hall Committee to the Village Meeting of January 2nd. 1946.

1. The Village Meeting held on February 23rd, 1945, authorized the Village Hall Committee to proceed with the purchase of the Aston Upthorpe site and to draft and complete a Trust Deed on the model recommended by the National Council of Social Services, vesting the land and buildings in the Official Trustee of Charity Lands.
2. We now report that we have carried out the terms of this Resolution. The site has been purchased and vested temporarily in three trustees - Chairman, Treasurer and the Secretary of the Committee, from whom it will be transferred to the Official Trustee of Charity Lands as soon as the Hall is built. The Trust Deed received the previous approval of the National Council of Social Services and the Charity Commissioners.
3. We have continued to raise funds in accordance with the request made to us at the Village Meeting of May 19th, 1944. The total amount of the Fund, in payments and promises, now stands at £1,657.0.0, which sum includes £933.18.0 from 65 donors, and £310.0.0 from 58 weekly subscribers. We have confidence that by further efforts the village will reach the goal of £2,000.
4. In recording this result, which has surpassed expectation, we desire to express our grateful thanks, not only to the contributors themselves, but also to many others whose help and advice have enabled us to bring the scheme to the present measure of success. In particular we desire to mention the work done by those who have organised and taken their part in several entertainments, and the facilities generously given for these entertainments and also the continuous and welcome service rendered by the collectors of the weekly subscriptions.
5. Preliminary designs for a Hall were on view at the last Village Meeting and have served usefully as a basis for modifications. After considering with care and one by one all the proposed uses of the Hall, we are satisfied that, with the exception of the purposes of a club, all these uses would be adequately served by a building on the lines of the plan now submitted by the architects whom we have consulted. In our opinion, the needs of a club will only be met satisfactorily by the erection of an annexe, and we suggest that this be included in the design as an extension for the future.

A building of the dimensions of this latest plan will be considerably larger than the one shown on the preliminary sketch; but happily our financial resources also are likely to be considerably larger than we first anticipated.
6. We recommend that a Committee be now appointed with power to take all the measures necessary for the erection of the Hall, it being understood that before any contracts are signed, the Committee will summon another Village Meeting to present the plan with estimates, both of available funds and of costs, for final consideration and decision.

A letter sent to village residents from the Village Hall Fund Committee in August 1946 (RBA).

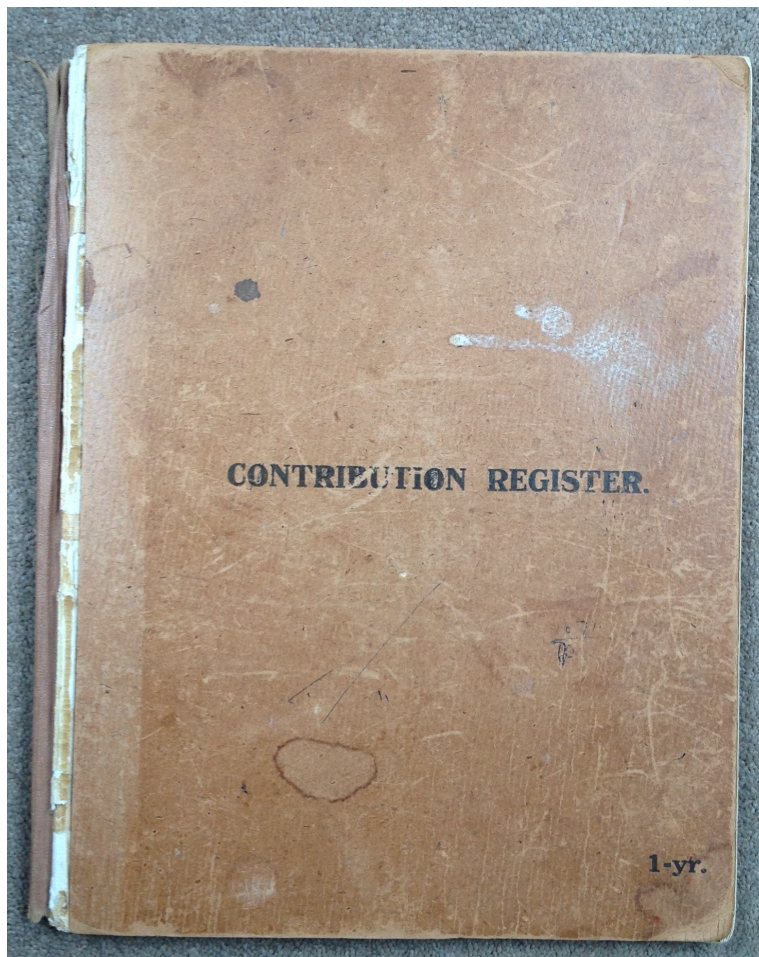
The Committee included a good mix of people, including longstanding village families as well as the 'big house' owners, such as Sir Patrick Abercrombie and Herbert and Paulise Lugg.



Patrick Abercrombie  
Charles T. Clay (Chairman)  
Victor R. Henderson (Treasurer)  
Godfrey H. Lewington  
Ellen Lodge  
William R. Brown

Herbert Lugg (Vice-Chairman)  
Dorothy H. Rich  
Ellen L. Scotter  
George R. Scutt  
Edgar W. Thompson (Secretary)  
H. John Wheeler.





Village Hall Contributions Book. 1947-1972.

Register of weekly subscribers.

Oct. 1948.

| NO | NAME                 | ARREARS | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER | JANUARY | FEBRUARY | MARCH | £ s d | ADDRESS                         |
|----|----------------------|---------|---------|----------|----------|---------|----------|-------|-------|---------------------------------|
| 1  | Mr E Beck            |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "Thorne Farm" Aston Upthorpe    |
| 2  | Miss M A Barnes      |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "Freelands" Aston Tiredol       |
| 3  | Mr M A Barnes        |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 21. Moxton Rd. Aston Tiredol    |
| 4  | Mr M E Baskin        |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | South Down View" Aston Tiredol  |
| 5  | Mr M Englund         |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "The Anchor" 3 Moxton           |
| 6  | Mr K Gurney Resigned |         |         |          |          |         |          |       |       | Aston Tiredol                   |
| 7  | Mr J Green           |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "Magnets" 3 Moxton              |
| 8  | Mr J Green           |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | Springfield House Aston Tiredol |
| 9  | Mr F Green           |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "The Poplars" Aston Upthorpe    |
| 10 | Mr Griffiths         |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | The Street Aston Tiredol        |
| 11 | Mr Griffiths         |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "The Street" Aston Tiredol      |
| 12 | Mr H Hargreaves      |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 3 Moxton                        |
| 13 | Mr A Hargreaves      |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | Aston Tiredol                   |
| 14 | Mr S Hargreaves      |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 22 Moxton Rd. Aston Tiredol     |
| 15 | Mr S Hargreaves      |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | Aston Upthorpe                  |
| 16 | Mr A Moxley          |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "Old Pylas" Aston Upthorpe      |
| 17 | Mr E Ray             |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "Spring House" Aston Tiredol    |
| 18 | Mr Shackbourne       |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "Old Pylas" Aston Upthorpe      |
| 19 | Mr Scott             |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "Baker Street" Aston Tiredol    |
| 20 | Mr A Scott           |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "Street Farm" Aston Upthorpe    |
| 21 | Mr R Thompson        |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 1 Graft Rd. Aston Tiredol       |
| 22 | Mr F Taylor          |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | Barnburton Hall Aston Upthorpe  |
| 23 | Mr W Tappin          |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 2 Aston St. Aston Tiredol       |
| 24 | Mr E Tappin          |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 2 Graft Cottage Aston Tiredol   |
| 25 | Mr Eric Tappin       |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | The Street Aston Tiredol        |
| 26 | Mr W Smith           |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "The Bungalow" Aston Tiredol    |
| 27 | Mr T. Healey         |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | The Hall 3 Moxton               |
| 28 | Mr N Foster          |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 2 Hargreaves Rd. Aston Upthorpe |
| 29 | Mr G. Galloway       |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | Aston Upthorpe                  |
| 30 | Mr L Bicknell        |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "The Skotauts" 3 Moxton         |
| 31 | Mr B. Englewood      |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "Edins" Aston Tiredol           |
| 32 | Mr C. Englewood      |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "Edins" Aston Tiredol           |
| 33 | Mr P. Englewood      |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | "St. Michaels" Aston Tiredol    |
| 34 | Mr W. Wadley         |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 2 Hargreaves Rd. Aston Tiredol  |
| 35 | Mr Barnes            |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | Anchor Lane 3 Moxton            |
| 36 | Mr Weston            |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | Anchor Lane 3 Moxton            |
| 37 | Mr D. Smith          |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 3 Moxton                        |
| 38 | Mr Jones             |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 2 Moxton                        |
| 39 | Mr C. Jones          |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 2 Moxton                        |
| 40 | Mr Hargreaves        |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | The Rectory Aston Tiredol       |
| 41 | Mr P. Hargreaves     |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 3 Moxton                        |
| 42 | Mr Lodge             |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 1 Galloway Houses 3 Moxton      |
| 43 | Mr Powell            |         |         |          |          |         | 2/6      |       |       | 2 Aston Upthorpe                |



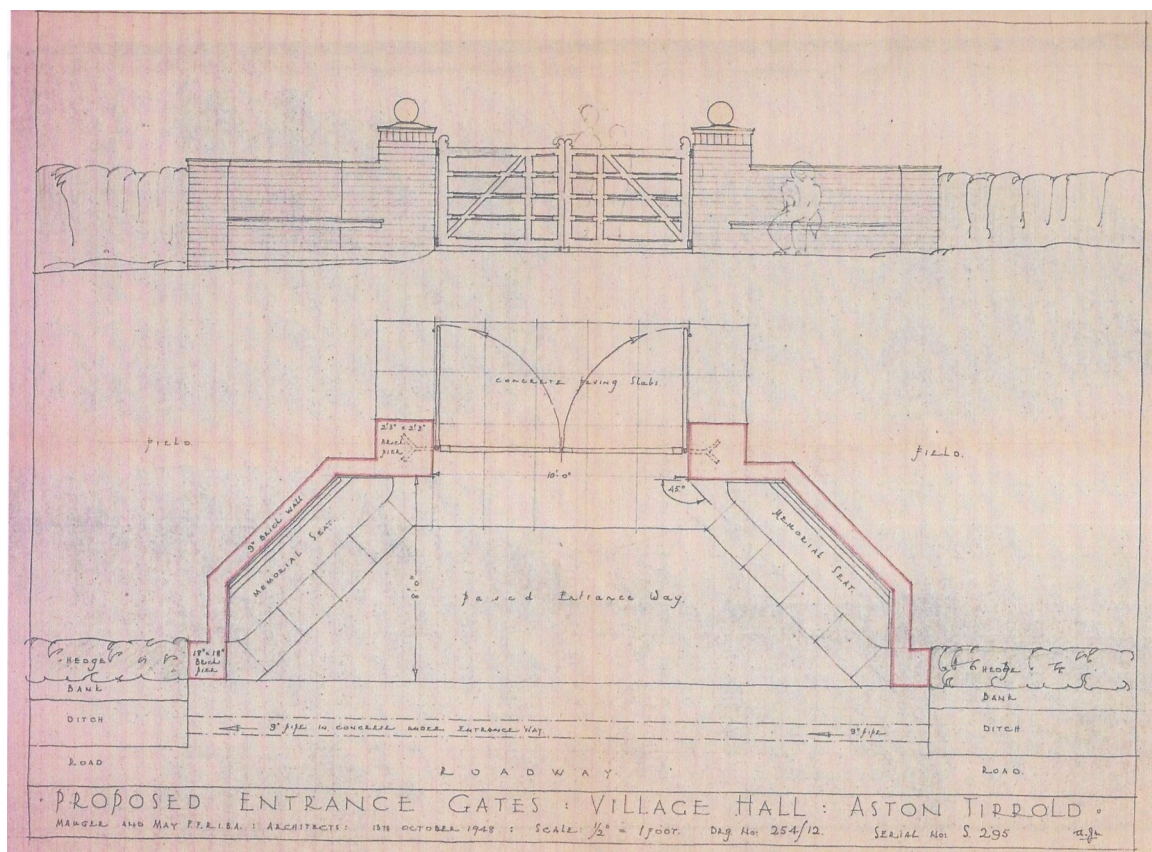
## The 'Temporary' Hall, 1949-1964.

With the confirmation of their remit to investigate all necessary aspects of the project, and with a body of like minded committee members, the Exploratory Joint Village Hall Committee continued to fundraise and to progress the project in detail - and there was a lot of detail to be decided - there was even a Crockery Sub Committee for which, unfortunately, no minutes survive. Such a pity!

The committee chairman, CT Clay (the Librarian of the House of Lord's Library), said at the end of their labours: "I cannot remember being a member of any committee whose members have worked so harmoniously or whose recommendations were framed with so great a measure of general agreement".

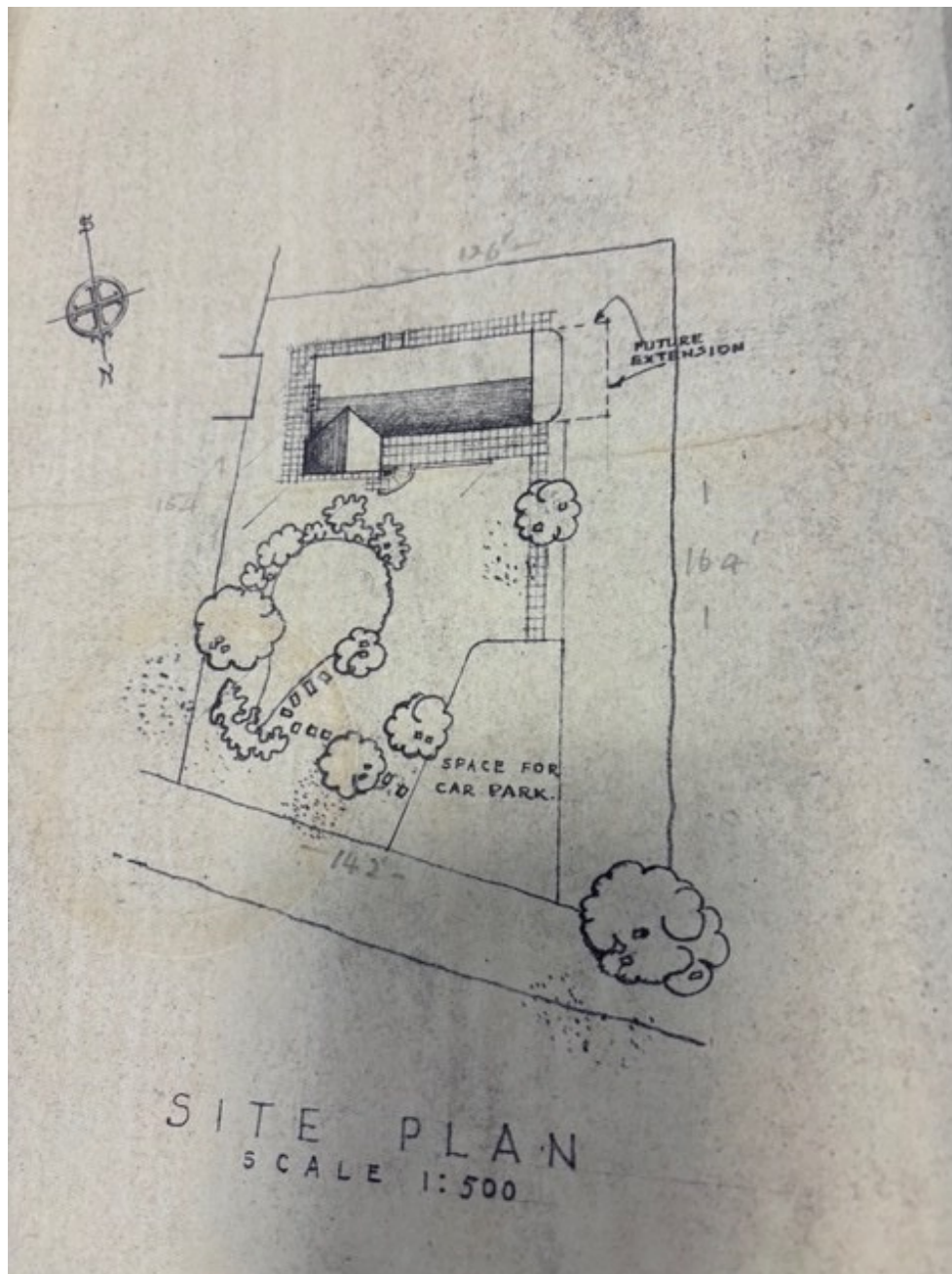
However the rapid increase in building costs meant that the financial goalposts for a Permanent Hall kept being moved, and eventually the decision was made to rent a Nissen hut from the National Council for Social Services (the relevant Government Department - there were, as you can imagine, a lot of Nissen huts available at the end of the war) and the Temporary Hall opened for business in May 1949.

The Committee did not lose faith in their long term plans however, and not only did they engage an architect (Mauger & May of Welwyn, Hertfordshire) to work on plans for the Permanent Hall, they also wisely incorporated elements of the future hall into the temporary hall build, including a superior set of entrance gate and pillars (shown below in these 1948 plans (RBA), and a gentlemen's toilet block - hardly changed to this day.



Gateway plans from 1948.





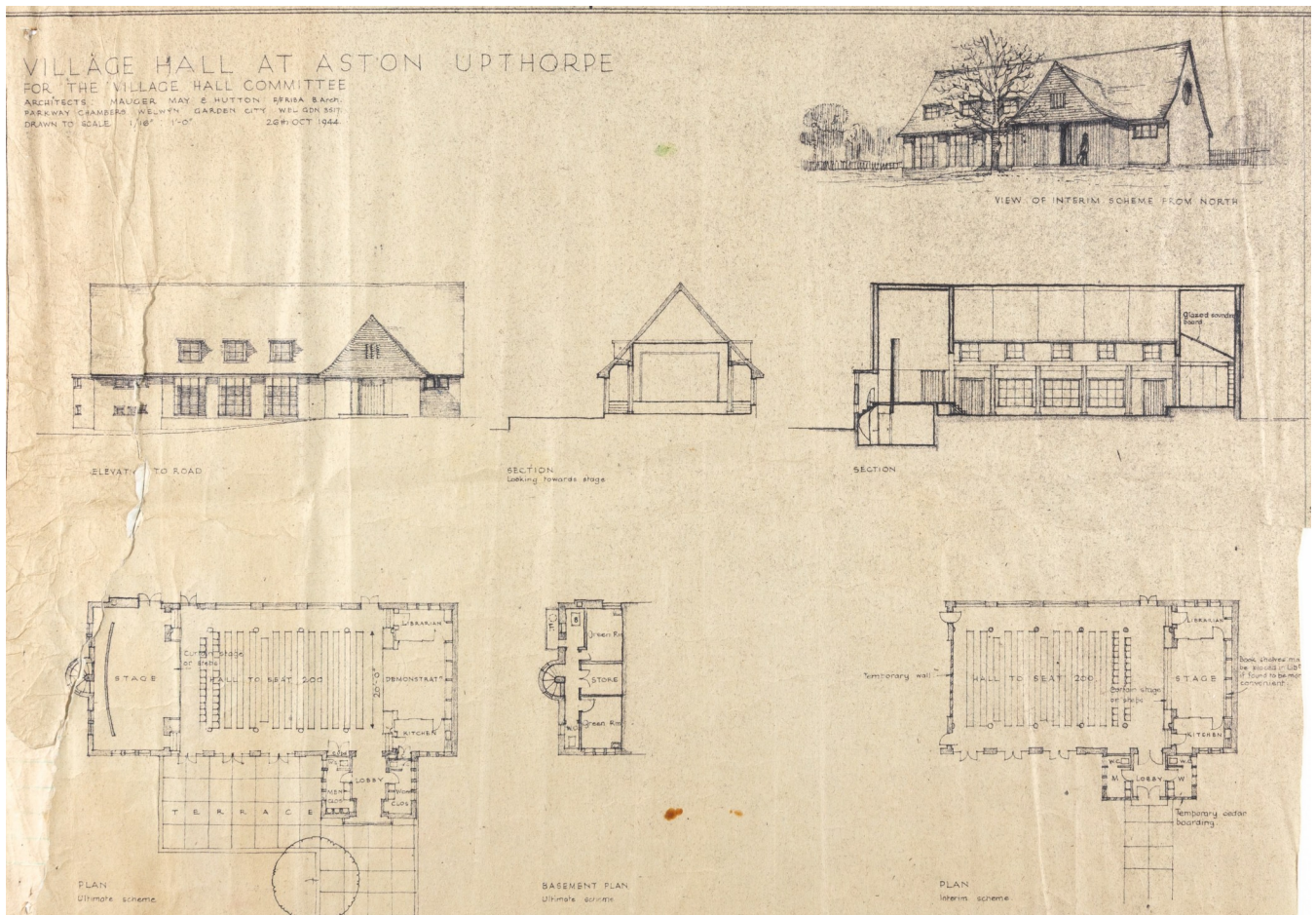
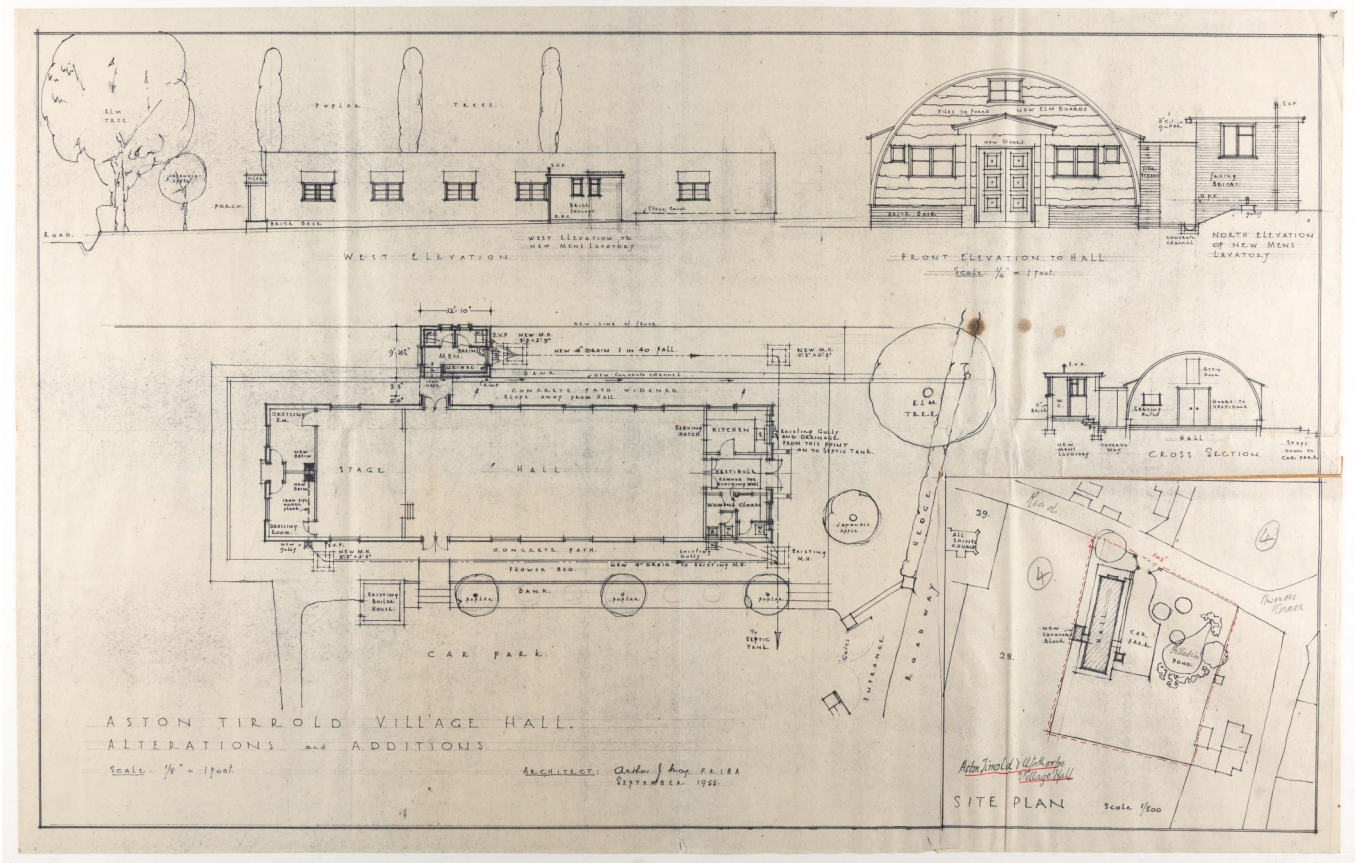
An early plan (RBA) for the hall. Note that the hall is placed at the rear of the site, and that only a small car park is envisioned..

Note also the landscaped pond - the site was prone to flooding!



Early plans by Mauger and May Architects, of the Nissen hall and the 'Permanent Hall'.

Royal Berkshire Archives refs. D/QAH/3-8-001 and D/QAH2/3/1-001





These marvellous photos of events in the Nissen hut hall during the 1950s were lent to us by Lionel Welch (Peter Welch's father) in which you can see the curve of the hut roof.



The hall was immediately immensely popular, with a range of uses including dances, socials, and film shows.

In September 1953 the Committee again engaged their architect to assess the cost of a Permanent Hall, and were advised that the cost had risen to £7k (in 1944 it had been £2.5k). They decided that there was "no chance of putting up another permanent hall for many years."

The Committee therefore drew up a list of improvements (see pages 18 and 19) and presented them to a Village Meeting, which voted to accept the proposals. (These included a new teak tiled floor, which lasted from 1953 until 2026 - a record beaten only by the stage curtains, made for the hall by the ladies of the Astons WI in 1949 and which are still in use today (see receipts for materials etc in Appendix 3, page 51).

Sadly the Committee had decided that all they could do was to make the best of the existing hall, and so in January 1958 they approached the National Council of Social Services and purchased the Nissen hut for £400.



ASTON TIRROID VILLAGE HALL.

PROPOSED ALTERATIONS.

SPECIFICATION OF WORK TO BE DONE  
AND MATERIALS SUPPLIED.

(1)

Two Lavatory Basins  
in Dressing Rooms.

Provide and fix two extra strong lavatory basins 25" x 18" rounded front pattern, where shown in Dressing Rooms, complete with all necessary taps, wastes, brackets, etc., and connect cold water supply.

Provide and fix over each basin a Sadia Storage Type Automatic Electric Water Heater of wall mounting free outlet type, Type "G". 1½ gallons capacity to discharge into basin, and connect cold supply and electric supply as necessary.

Provide waste pipe to run under floorboards and discharge over gully as shown.

Women's Cloak Room.

(2) Remove three foot length of partition between present Mens and Womens lavatories and make good. Cut the door to present Mens lavatory in half and hang the top and bottom halves separately, stable door fashion, to act as Cloakroom door. Redecorate entirely the Womens Cloak and Lavatory to existing standard and colours.

New Mens Lavatory.

(3) Build the New Mens Lavatory as shown in 11" hollow brick walls with a Fletton facing brick and similar externally. Provide bitumenous Damp-proof course. Tile the floor throughout with red quarry tiles and 6" tile skirting. Partitions to be 3" breeze blocks carried to ceiling.

Walls to be rendered and painted throughout.

Provide two high level type W.C.'s and one open type length of urinal approximately 7'6" long with white glazed sides and back and with automatic flushing systems, and one 21" x 21" angle type basin. Connect up to cold supply, to all fittings, and provide and fix all necessary wastes.

The roof to be 4" x 2" joists with 1" Boarding laid to fall slightly to 3' half round cast iron gutter on Hall side. Lay on roof 2 layer built up bitumenous roof in green mineralised felt laid to break joint and with 4" laps, the material to be bedded down and together with hot bitumenouse adhesive. The edges are to be welted and folded over fillet all round to form neat straight edges. Provide R.W.P. discharging into concrete gutter. Provide 3'0" iron gate either collapsible or sliding, to protect entrance.

Decorate throughout to a hard wearing specification. Leave all complete and ready for use.

Lobby from Hall to  
Mens Lavatory.

(4) Fit to door jambs of existing exit doors from Hall two side screens each about 2' 0" wide to protect swing of exit doors and also to provide a covered lobby (without doors)

(1)



between the new Mens Lavatory and the Hall. Form these screens in any strong material of posts and boarding or breeze blocks or bricks whichever can best be fitted. Form flat roof (as for the lavatory roof) clipped under the projection of the sloping roof over the door entrance.

Electricity to New Mens Lavatory.

(5) Take electric supply to three lighting points in new lavatory - one in each W.C. and one to flood the steps and urinal position. Provide separate iron type switches to these three.

(6)

Additional Concrete Path and Gutter.

Extend the existing concrete path running along the West side of Hall to the new Mens Lavatory by approximately 18" width for the full length of the Hall, to fall away from the Hall into a new large 12" x 6" deep concrete gutter at foot of earth bank. Special care should be taken to make a good job of this so as to exclude all surface water from Hall.

Take down and re-erect existing fencing.

(7) Take down and re-erect existing fencing on West side of site to new position in line with back of new lavatory. If on examination this proves impossible, provide new fencing to this length.

Drainage.

(8) The provision of a separate covered porch between the Hall and the new Mens Lavatory and the raising of the floor level of the lavatory up on to the level of the adjoining field will make it possible to clear the surface water and also to give adequate falls to the new length of foul drainage.

Provide the new length of 4" glazed drainage to falls 1 in 40 as shown on drawings complete with new manholes, gullies, vent pipes etc., and connect to existing drainage system.

Provide also the drainage shown to connect the two new basins with the existing Manhole at the front of the Hall. If necessary remove and reform concrete steps from Hall to Car Park beside the Boiler House.

Leave all in good working order and to the satisfaction of the Local Authority.

Front of Hall.

(9) Provide and fix on battens Elm Boarding as shown to cover the front elevation of the Hall together with all necessary weathering and cover fillets. It is realised that the covering and weathering of the outer curve of the boarding presents a difficult problem. For the purpose of this estimate allow for a lead apron worked over a fillet cut to shape. The Architect will later discuss this particular problem with the Builder on the job.

Cover the roof to existing Porch with plain roofing tiles on battens. It is realised that the slope of the Porch roof is not normally adequate, but these tiles are for decorative purpose only, as the Porch roof is already weathered.

Provide and hang with appropriate furniture two new oak panelled doors, as shown on existing frames to detail, to replace the existing batten and boarded main entrance doors.

(2)

The improvements included a fine teak floor, replaced finally this year (2026), and new oak entrance doors - still going strong.



| 1952-'53             |                   |           |                     |                        |                      |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Receipts.            |                   |           |                     |                        |                      |
| Aug. 16.             | Dance.            | 7. 14. 0. | Aug. 16.            | Expenses Dance         | 7-0. 8               |
| Sep. 13.             | Sr. Leger Draw    | 20. 7-0   | Sep. 13             | " Draw <sup>13/4</sup> | 9. 7-0               |
| " 20                 | Dance.            | 8- 1. 6   | " 20                | " Dance <sup>#11</sup> | 5-12-2               |
| Oct                  | Old Tym Dance     | 13 6-0    | Oct.                | " " 2 9 4              | 8 11. 7              |
| Oct 31 <sup>st</sup> | Halloween.        | 16- 6 9½  | Oct. 31             | " " 4 14 5             | 10. 18-2             |
| Nov. 8 <sup>th</sup> | Square Dance      | 7 18 0    | Nov 8 <sup>th</sup> | " " 5-87½              | 3 10. 9              |
| Nov 11               | Dance.            | 8 8 10½   | Nov 15              | " " 4-73               | 6 12 8               |
| Dec 13.              | Dance.            |           |                     |                        | 1-16 2½              |
| " 22                 | Grave-            |           | Dec 22.             |                        | 5- 14- 11            |
| Jan 10.              | Square Dance      | 8. 7. 6   | Jan 19.             |                        | 3. 12-3              |
| " 23                 | Play.             | 6. 14. 9  | 23                  | 4-15 3 13-0-0          | 4. 12-2              |
| 31 <sup>st</sup>     | Dance.            | 6. 13 6   | 24.                 | 12-2-7                 | 8- 1-0               |
| Feb 11.              | Whist Dinner.     | 1. 6. 6.  | 26 11.              | -11-7 6                | 13-5                 |
| " 13.                | Dance (Valentine) | 16. 12. 9 | " 13                | 13-6                   | 13-15-9              |
| Feb 20.              | Square Dance      | 7. 6. 7   | " 20.               | 2-13. 16               | 3. 4-4-              |
| 28                   | Dance.            | 6 17 0½   | 28                  | 4-2-3                  | 6 8 10½              |
| March 27             | Square Dance.     | 4 3 10-   | March 27            | 8-2½                   | 6-13 17 1.           |
| " 28                 | Dance.            | 7 13 8    | " 28                | ✓ 6-13 17 1.           | ✓ 1. 13-11. 5-19. 9. |

Bookings for the year 1952-53 (RBA) show a good variety of events. (RBA)

## ASTON TIRROLD & UPTHORPE VILLAGE HALL

Summary of Accounts for April 1st 1951 to March 31st 1952

| RECEIPTS                             | £ s. d.  | EXPENDITURE                            | £ s. d.  |
|--------------------------------------|----------|----------------------------------------|----------|
| Balance in hand as at April 1st 1951 | 10 15 8  | Crude Oil & Paraffin                   | 37 16 3  |
| By Bookings                          | 105 9 0  | Southern Electricity Board             | 20 14 6  |
| By Entertainments                    | 77 2 4   | Rent                                   | 19 10 0  |
| Covenanted Subscription              | 3 16 3   | Rates                                  | 10 15 10 |
| Sundries                             | 17 4     | Caretaker                              | 43 13 9  |
|                                      |          | Licences                               | 3 7 6    |
|                                      |          | Insurance                              | 5 5 9    |
|                                      |          | New Equipment                          | 12 15 11 |
|                                      |          | Repairs                                | 5 0 0    |
|                                      |          | Printing                               | 2 1 3    |
|                                      |          | Sundries                               | 4 12 8   |
|                                      |          | Cheque Book                            | 4 2      |
|                                      |          | *Balance in hand as at March 31st 1952 | 32 3 0   |
|                                      | £198 0 7 |                                        | £198 0 7 |

\*Of this amount £20 will be paid to the National Council for Social Service in repayment of their loan, leaving a Balance in hand of £12 : 3 : 0 to be carried forward to the Year, 1952-53.



# Aston Tirrold & Upthorpe Village Hall

## RATES OF HIRING

| Maximum<br>Period | ENTERTAINMENT                                 | Rate<br>£ s. d. | Heating extra<br>s. d. |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| 5 hrs.            | Dance .....                                   | 1 10 0          | 5 0                    |
| 5 hrs.            | Social Evening, Party .....                   | 1 10 0          | 5 0                    |
| 3 hrs.            | Wedding Reception, Afternoon Party .....      | 1 5 0           | 2 6                    |
| 3 hrs.            | Concert .....                                 | 1 10 0          | 5 0                    |
| 3 hrs.            | Stage Play .....                              | 2 0 0           | 5 0                    |
| 4 hrs.            | Darts Competition, Boxing Tournament .....    | 1 10 0          | 5 0                    |
| 3 hrs.            | Political Meeting .....                       | 1 10 0          | 5 0                    |
| 3 hrs.            | Other Public Meeting, Lecture .....           | 15 0            | 2 6                    |
| 3 hrs.            | General Meeting of Village Organisation ..... | 5 0             | 2 6                    |
| 3 hrs.            | Whist Drive .....                             | 10 0            | 2 6                    |
| 3 hrs.            | Cinema Show .....                             | 10 0            | 2 6                    |
| 3 hrs.            | Women's Institute .....                       | 5 0             | 2 6                    |
| 2 hrs.            | Committee Meeting, Educational Class .....    | 2 6             | 1 0                    |
| 3 hrs.            | Rehearsal .....                               | 2 6             |                        |

N.B. 1.—There will be an extra charge for the use of the Radiogram, and Crockery.

2.—For Organisations outside the Village, or private persons not resident in it, there will be an extra charge of 10/- on Dances, Social Evenings, Parties, Receptions, Concerts, Plays and Sporting Events.

*By Resolution of the Committee,  
October 14th, 1949.*

O-VH: His. xi

## The 'New Hall' - the Stockwells Connection.

Paulise and Herbie Lugg had, since 1934, staged an annual theatrical production, usually Shakespearean, in the gardens of their home Stockwells, on Thorpe Street. They were also both keenly involved in village matters - Herbie had been on the Exploratory Hall Committee from its inception. and Paulise had joined the Hall Committee in 1952.

Paulise's interest was obviously partly connected to her theatrical activities - in 1953 the Committee had applied for a staged play licence to be added to the hall's licence, and we know that the hall was used for some performances when the weather was unkind, and the 1958 plans for the permanent hall had included 'dressing rooms'.

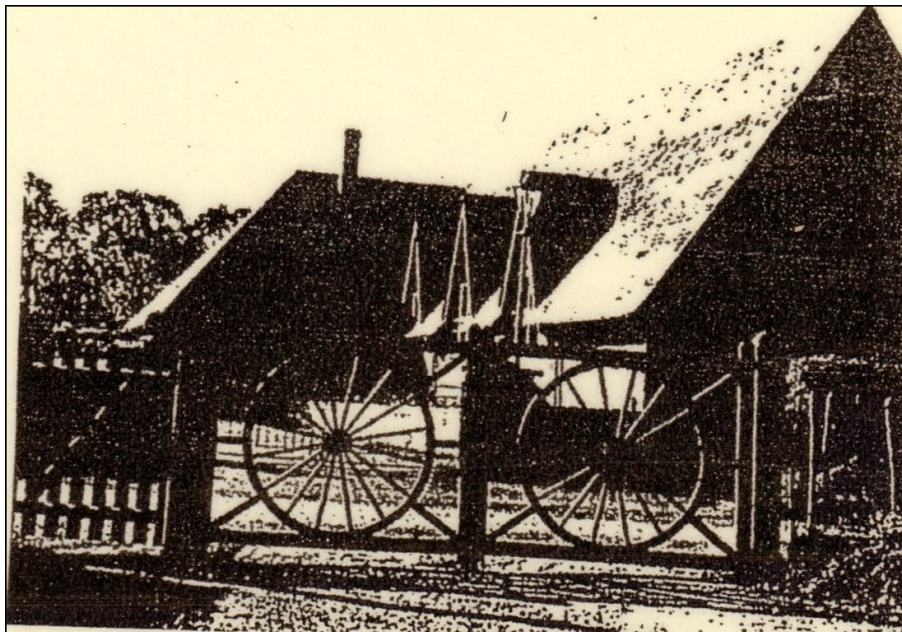
Herbie died in 1961, and at some point after this she made the offer to pay for the construction of the new hall. Paulise chose as her architect a Serbian architect, George Zugic, whom she had met and befriended in London - see Appendix 4 for his story.

She was an extremely wealthy woman in her own right, and was able to fund a distinctive arts and crafts design which included a range of attractive and flexible features - a vaulted hall, a gallery, a small committee room and two rooms at the rear of the stage, designated in the plans as offices but also used as changing rooms during performances. (In addition to construction costs she also created an endowment fund which contributed towards maintenance costs of the building for many years).

The rear 'offices' were also used for the regular doctor's surgery - at that time a weekly session, although after the war there had been three sessions a week.

*(Until recently these rooms were known as the Nurse's and Doctor's Rooms - I remember taking my babies to be weighed by the nurse there in the mid 80s. The surgery ended in 1998 with the retirement of Dr. John Storer, who had run the service for 30 years. JS).*

The hall was opened in 1964 by the local MP Airey Neave - who sadly died in an IRA bombing in London in 1979.



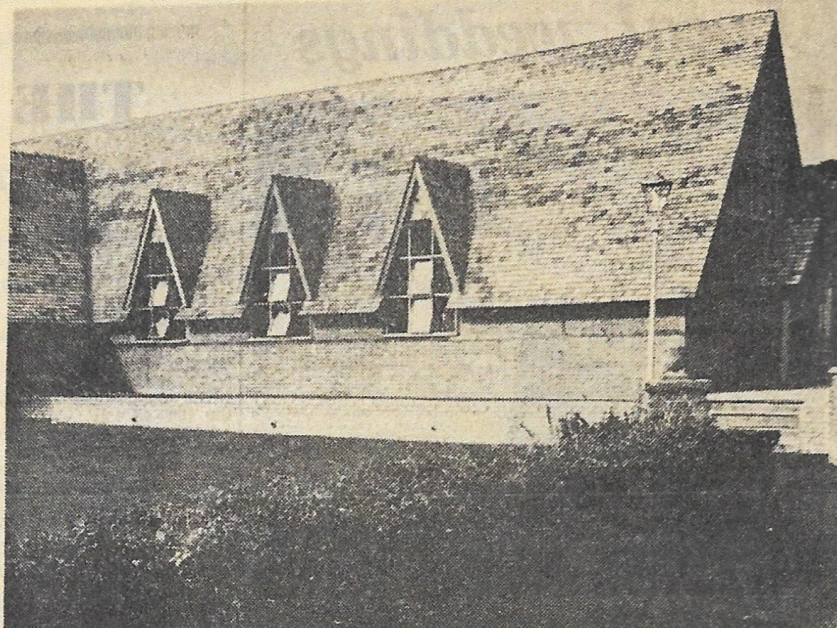
The photo above shows the hall newly built, but still with temporary gate and fencing.



pamphlet  
ASTOc  
725.1

(RBA)

Disc. Her Th Sept 10 1964-4



The new Aston Tirrold village hall, officially opened by Mr. Airey Neave, M.P., on Saturday.

## 'REALLY WONDERFUL' NEW VILLAGE HALL

### Official opening by M.P.

Thanks to the generosity of Mrs. Herbert Lugg (Paulise de Bush) who, with her late husband founded the Stockwells Players, Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe now have a fine new village hall, which was opened on Saturday evening by Mr. Airey Neave, M.P. for North Berkshire, in the presence of a large gathering.

It was, said Mr. Neave, a great day in the lives of everyone in the two villages. The original hall, he said, was erected after the war by public subscription, about £2,000 being raised.

The "really wonderful" new hall, with its improved facilities, was due to the beneficence of Mrs. Lugg, who had created a trust for the new building so that it could be erected, and it would be vested in the trustees of the Paulise de Bush Charity.

The Stockwells Players, who were renowned throughout the district, would no doubt make use of it, many other activities would go on in it, and it would be a tremendous asset to the cultural and social life of the villages.

#### GREAT OCCASION

Proposing a vote of

design the new hall, in conjunction with a friend Mr. G. Zugic, of London, who advised using the sub-structure of the old hall—a war-time Nissen hut designed for temporary use but with substantial foundations.

#### FLOOR RETAINED

The best feature of the old hall which has been retained, was its parquet floor, and also retained are the stage although it has been enlarged and the dressing rooms at the rear.

The design of the new hall is in keeping with the character of the village, blending well with the neighbouring church. The pitched roof 25ft. high from apex to floor, is of cedar shingles, which will mellow with time and the oak timber frame of the walls helps to give the impression of a barn.

The height of the roof has enabled the construction of a minstrels' gallery over the entrance, with seating to make

more room for downstairs activities. The increased roof space has also provided better storage for theatrical equipment over the two dressing rooms, and also over a completely new room built on the side of the hall at the stage end.

#### LIBRARY

This, like the two dressing rooms can serve as a room for small meetings, and it will also house the village library.

The old heating system has been scrapped, and the new one—oil-fired hot air, circulating through floor ducts—will enable the temperature to be raised to the required level in a matter of minutes.

The car park area has been resurfaced and enlarged, and the grass area around the hall is to have additional trees planted.

The builders were Pendell and Spinage, Sons and Co. Ltd. of Stanford-in-the-Vale and the heating and lighting is by Mr. K. R. Cross, of Drayton.



## The Hall's Millennium Project: 1997-2001.

The next thirty years were mainly quiet ones for the committee - apart from ever changing fire and electrical safety regulations - although they made a major improvement by changing the hall heating system from oil to gas in 1992.

Another significant change was made in that decade when the height of the glazing within the distinctive gabled recesses was reduced. The original design meant that curtains could not be fitted and heavy wooden shutters had to be used instead. The poor WI ladies, who had afternoon meetings, frequently had to sit in the dark during winter meetings, as the shutters were too heavy for them to remove.

Luckily a hall committee member, Brian Crawford, took the opportunity of new frames being needed to suggest removing the pointed apex of the windows so that curtains could be installed. Marvellous.

In 1997 however, during an WI meeting, an ominous drip landed on the floor. The hall committee knew that the shingle roof was nearing the end of its life, and obviously the time for a new roof had arrived.

In those days there were limited funding opportunities available, and certainly not for what would be considered foreseeable maintenance costs. Things looked bleak.

But incredibly luckily there were *two new funding sources* that became available at just the right time.

- firstly the local authority, South Oxfordshire District Council, placed the funds from their sale of council houses into a Community Fund for local projects,
- and secondly, the National Lottery, which had been set up in 1994, had a Community Investment funding programme that obviously suited village hall projects.
- a third stroke of luck was that the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act had recently come into force, such that facilities had to provide accessible arrangements for users.

The hall committee was able therefore to draw up proposals including a new roof and a range of accessible features and present them in a village wide consultation - see pages 27-28. The photo below shows how furniture had to be stored on the stage and then lifted down for events - not user friendly!







Hall windows before and after



O-VH/Admin/Mill. i  
(11 of 16)

## ASTON TIRROLD & UPTHORPE VILLAGE HALL USER'S SURVEY : AUGUST 1997

Dear Village Hall User,

Our village hall has now passed its thirtieth birthday and as you may know will within the next five years be needing a new roof.

In order to apply for grants, and especially for Lottery grants, it is necessary to show that any project will be for the benefit of the community as a whole, will add to the facilities already available, and is genuinely desired by the community that the hall serves.

With this in mind the village hall committee has been reviewing the hall's facilities to see in what way they could be improved to meet these criteria and so enhance our chance of success in the Lottery lottery!

It was felt that the main hall and surrounding rooms provided a good mixture for varied uses, especially given the medium size hall also available to the villages in the URC hall, but that where the hall did fall down was in the difficulty of access for older or disabled users, and in the storage of tables and chairs on the stage.

The purpose of this survey is to obtain the opinions of regular and irregular hirers of the hall on these points, so that we can pursue any grant application confident that it is with the support of the village residents.

To that end we would be very grateful if you could complete the following survey and return it to Jancis Smith at the Old School House (850775), or Margaret Morant at 1, The Croft (850895) at your earliest convenience.

### USERS' SURVEY

1. Are you a private hirer or do you represent an group? If so please name the group.

South Moreton School

2. How regularly do you use the village hall?

2/3 times a year.

3. What part or parts of the hall do you use?

Main hall & kitchen.



4. For what purpose do you use the the village hall?

Jumble Sales Social Events.

5. Do you make use of the chairs and tables kept on the stage?

Yes.

6. Do you find this storage area presents problems in setting up your event?

Yes - it makes the job harder - not every one can lift down or carry the tables etc.

7. Do you have other needs, either storage or other, when you hire the hall?

No

8. Does the hall provide adequate facilities for these needs?

9. Do either you or any member of your group experience difficulties with access to the hall or any of its facilities?

No

10. Do you have any suggestions, on any subject, that you feel would improve the facilities provided by the village hall?

Car park also presents problems - could grass at far end be removed to give more space. - As mentioned - ramp access is required - entrance

NAME OF RESPONDENT: Keith Eaton.

CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER: 01235 813110.

agents  
toilet.  
needs to be  
accessible  
to disabled.

WE GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR ASSISTANCE WITH THIS SURVEY  
DO PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PHONE UP IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES

-

## VILLAGE HALL

Following on from last month's entry I'm pleased to say we were successful in our application to the National Lottery Charities Board Millennium 'Awards for All' scheme for a grant towards a new furniture storeroom. We will shortly be receiving £5,000 towards this project.

We have also received the necessary planning permissions required. Our overall aim in all this is to make our hall as user friendly as possible, so if you have experienced any problems when using the hall we are always grateful to receive comments and suggestions. The various elements to date are:

### **(already in place)**

Curtains instead of heavy shutters

Light weight tables

Provision of 'armed' chairs for easier sitting and getting up

Replacement of entrance coir matting with carpeting

### **(in the pipeline)**

'ground' floor furniture storage

Support rails and guidance in toilet and stair areas

Ramp access with disabled parking spaces

Disable toilet

### **And of course a new roof to keep the rain out.**

Speaking of which – you may have noticed that ours is not the only roof in the village that is in need of funds.

While we will obviously be continuing with our various grant applications and fund raising events, we have as a committee decided to hold back on our 'door to door' appeal to the village for a while in deference to St. Michael's greater need - ie. their roof is actually falling in, while ours only lets the rain in.

We hope you will remember this consideration when our time comes!

## **STAGE CURTAINS**

A special thank you to Biddy Hawker and Margaret Morant for renovating our stage curtains recently – they have been cleaned, mended and trimmed so that they now clear the stage floor. The pulley mechanism has also been serviced.

Thanks also to Stephanie le Conte who thought of the hall when needing to do some community service for her Duke of Edinburgh award.

We thought of listing Reg Knight's works – but the editors said they'd need a special supplement.

**Jancis Smith**





The gentlemen' toilets, above

The accessible toilet, below, with a baby changing unit added,  
and sponsored by, the Astons Cafe in 2018





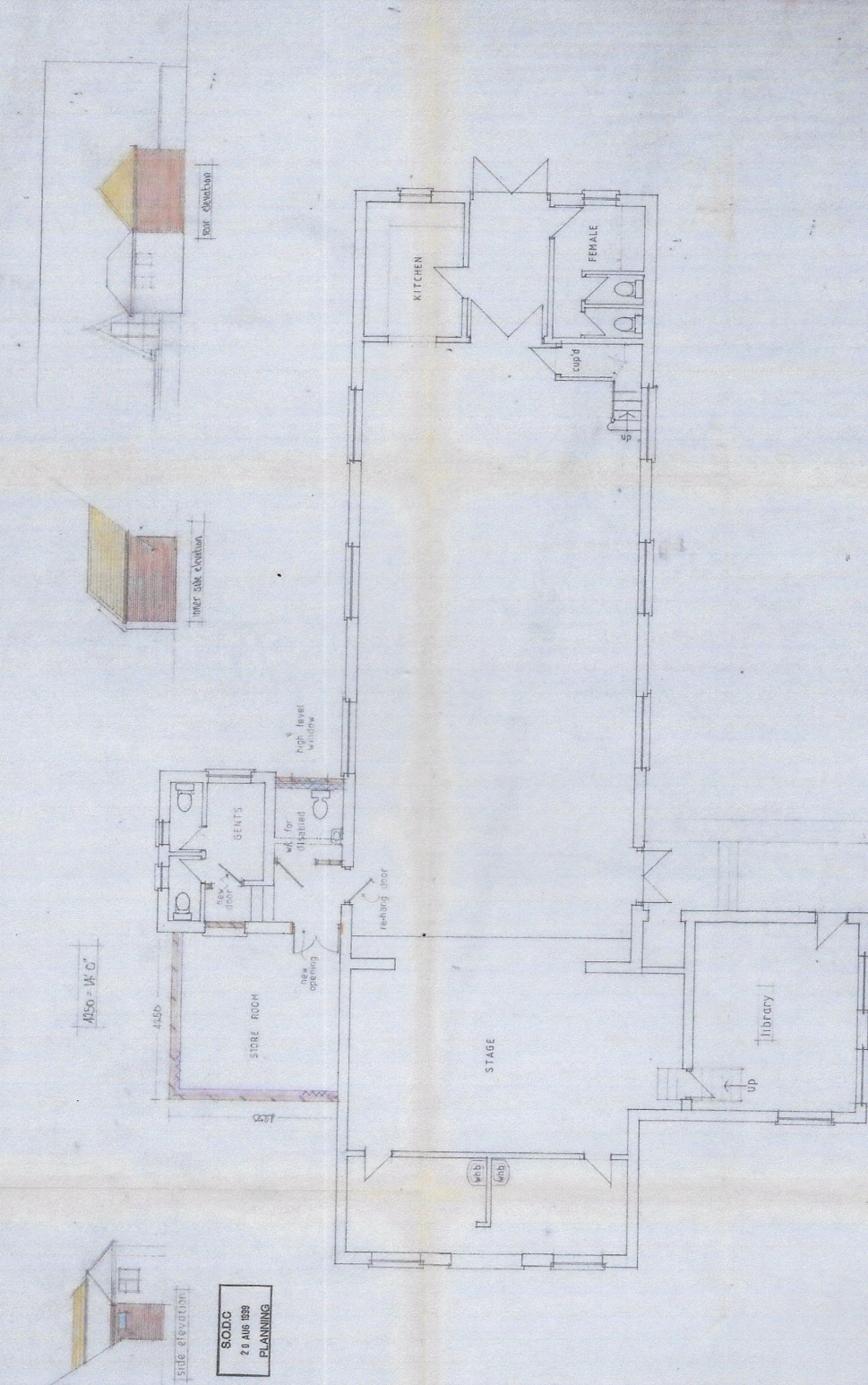
A flowerbed beside the hall, above: note the lamp was to the left of the steps at this point.

The new ramp, below: providing an accessible approach to the hall.

*(The supplying company used photos of the ramp in their promotional materials)*







Village Hall, Aston Tirroch/Uptonhope

Planning 97/Aston Tirroch 1902-3  
Scale 1:100

1/2" sheet of 10A 544 21 2" x 10" sheet 1/2" COMPROMISE REBURY

Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe Village Hall  
A Re-opening Celebration: Saturday 8 December 2001

Back in 1997 we decided we really were going to have to tackle our decaying shingle roof. Today we celebrate a millennium project that not only kept a roof over our heads, but also tackled a range of access and use issues that our initial users' survey back in 1997 highlighted.

The way the hall looks today is visible proof of all the individual and community effort that has gone into the hall, not just recently, but ever since Paulise Lugg first donated this lovely hall to the villages back in 1964.

**MILLENNIUM PROJECT DETAILS:**

- Replacement and redesigned windows, allowing curtains instead of heavy shutters
- Store-room for ground floor furniture storage
- Disabled toilet and ramp access with parking
- Internal access improvements
- Lightweight tables plus chair trolley
- Improved signs and lighting systems around the hall, and

A NEW ROOF!

| <b>SUMMARY OF FUNDING:</b>      | <b>£</b>       |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Lottery Community Fund          | 72,539         |
| Millennium Awards for All       | 5,000          |
| SODC Community Trust Fund       | 48,240         |
| SODC Grant Aid                  | 3,970          |
| Parish Councils                 | 2,000          |
| Village Hall capital allocation | 17,500         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                    | <b>149,249</b> |

**A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE!!**





## The hall grounds

Having completed the hall's millennium project the committee then moved on to thinking about the hall grounds. Below are the thoughts of the 2002 sub committee, which were all actioned. Some of the areas mentioned have been further improved in recent years.

### **Review of Grounds : Sub committee's recommendations:**

#### Entrance area to grounds

**Action:** establish tarmac entrance to hall grounds with setted barrier under gates.

**Benefits:** This will allow gates to be closed during non-use of the hall to improve security.

**Estimated cost@** £2,000

#### Grassed area to front of hall

**Action:** change to paving and generally improve appearance through soft landscaping changes

**Benefits:** This will allow all weather use for overflow from hall events – ie. photo area for wedding receptions etc and create a smoking area for non smoking events (at the moment stubs get ground into the grass!). It will also minimise maintenance of this area.

**Estimated cost:** £4,400

#### Dustbin area

**Action:** enclose area with gated picket fence, and slab the new enclosure

**Benefits:** Protect from animal intrusion that frequently leads to overturning of bins. Improve appearance of key area next to entrance.

**Estimated cost:** £450

#### Car park area

**Action:** increase parking area by extending around two sides. Add edging to gravel area.

**Benefits:** Increase parking available to hall users. Reduce maintenance for currently unused areas of grass edging on two sides. Edging will stop grass and weed creep onto gravel and protect grassed areas from inappropriate parking

**Estimated cost:** £3,000

#### Grassed area at rear of grounds

**Action:** level and remove weeds, re-seed with grass and plant seasonal bulbs in low use areas

**Benefits:** this is an under-used and potentially very attractive part of the hall grounds. At the moment, for example, children waiting while siblings have dance classes have little to do, but this area would be a real alternative play area for them

It would add to the usability of the hall for fundraising events.

**Estimate:** £2,000

Margaret Morant, Lalie Sewell, Catherine Gregg. 22.3.02.





Above left: front area showing grass, and above right: greatly improved paving, 2021.

Below: excellent use being made of the hall grounds.



Community action: bulb planting 2024





## Kitchen Project: 2008

Because of its attractive appearance the hall has always been popular for weddings and family gatherings etc. The only drawback was the small and unmodernised kitchen. To add an extension would be complicated, and expensive, because of the hall's high gabled windows.

Looking at the problem it was noticed that the wall between the kitchen and the hall was set further back than the other side, where the stairs go up to the gallery. It wasn't much, but the gain was enough to give more flexibility in redesigning the kitchen (the photo below isn't very clear, but it's all we've got), and with a doorway rather than a hatchway, creating much better catering 'flow'.



New units were installed, plus microwave, fridge and freezer, convection hob and oven and, most important of all, a dishwasher.

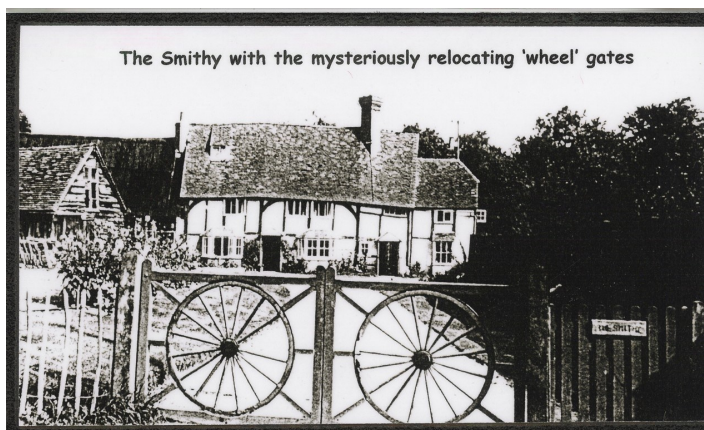
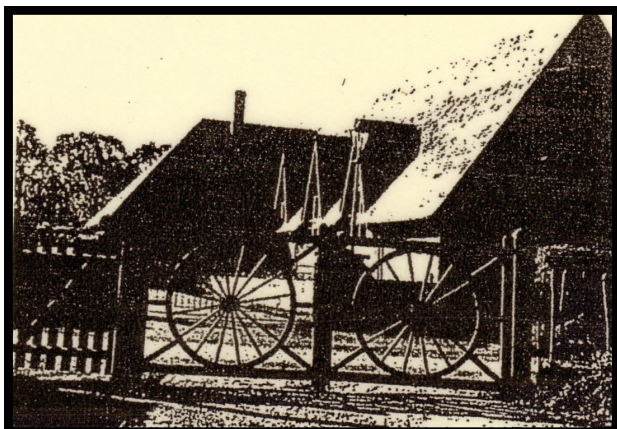
The photo left shows the green WI cupboard just outside the kitchen - they of course had their own monogrammed crockery.

Rather unfortunately the cupboard could not be included in the refurbished kitchen, so it was moved to a stage store room - not an ideal situation, but they bore it bravely - as you would expect.

## The hall's 'wandering wheels':

The photo above also shows suspended wheel light fittings. The wheels were originally the car park's gates, see below left, but were presumably re-purposed once the current gates were installed. However the light bulbs were so often broken by badminton shuttlecocks (the court lines seen in the picture above were removed in 2020) that first the lights were removed and then the wheels themselves - they are now mounted on the gallery railings, see right.

The hall is directly opposite The Smithy, so the wheels were probably supplied by the local smithy, JR Corderoy - see Appendix 2 for his 1950 invoice of works for the Nissen hall.





## Community Space: Astons Post Office and Café: 2009

The Astons had been without a post office since 2006, when the post office in Baker Street had closed on the retirement of Neil and Cynthia Cox.

But in 2009 the Pangbourne Post Mistress, Angela Carter, contacted the parish councils with a view to opening a Postal Outreach service in the village - this was a new initiative by central government to provide rural communities with postal services.

Angela came and viewed the pavilion (newly opened), the Chequers and the Village Hall as possible venues, but the Hall won out by being able to provide the best security and accessibility options.

The kitchen had recently been extended and refurbished, so it was looking at its best. Initially the service operated into the lobby, with a newly installed 'stable' door, but it was soon realised that serving from within the hall was better for both the postmistress and the public, so a second stable door was swiftly installed. (the removed door was stored and 're-purposed' in 2019 - see page 42).

The grand opening in May 2009 was such a lovely village gathering that the option of a community Café to coincide with the post office was suggested and rapidly put in place, and continues to this day.



Cynthia Cox, above, with Angela Carter, opening the new Astons Post Office, May 2009.

Below: Kiddies' Corner.







Astons Café Christmas Fair 2023

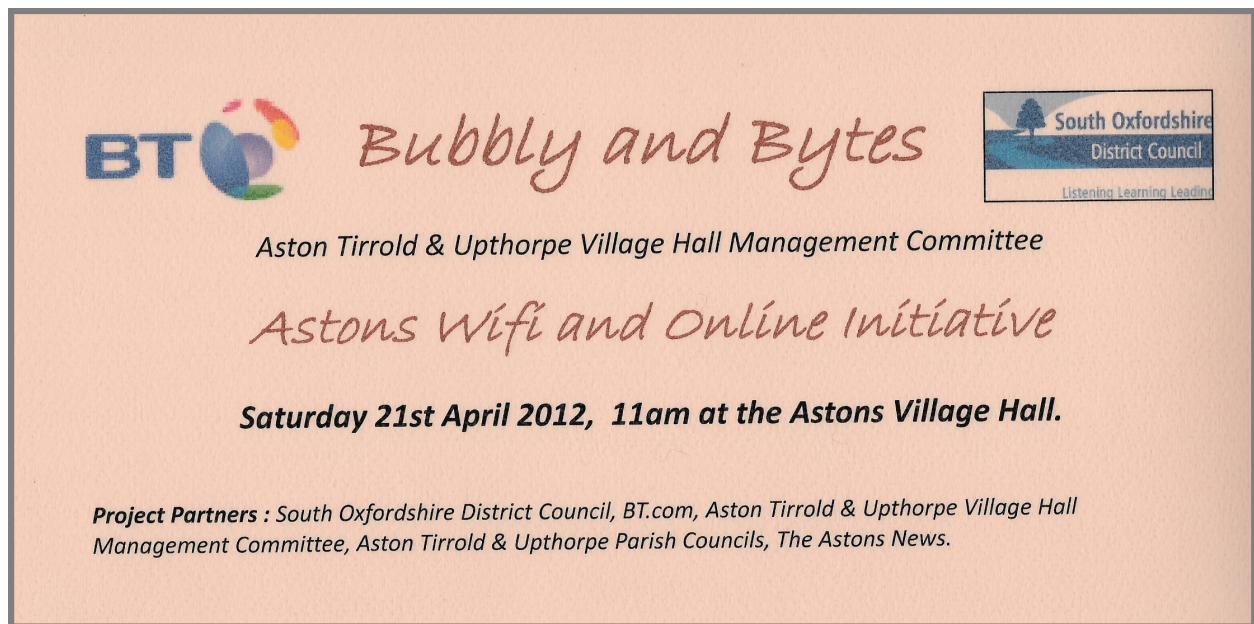


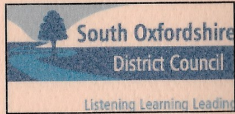
## Community Space: Astons WiFi and Online Initiative. 2012

Another community project that the hall was able to front was this Government and British Telecom (BT) project to encourage local communities to embrace online opportunities.

In 2011 BT had held a competition, requiring maximum engagement from rural areas, and a dedicated Astons project team (with the hall as key partner) secured funding for a range of tech equipment for the village hall, which continues to benefit village social and fundraising events.

A follow on initiative (*Astons Online*) continues monthly sessions at the Astons Café, assisting individuals to deal with our increasingly online world.



**BT** *Bubbly and Bytes* 

Aston Tirrold & Upthorpe Village Hall Management Committee

*Astons Wifi and Online Initiative*

**Saturday 21st April 2012, 11am at the Astons Village Hall.**

**Project Partners :** South Oxfordshire District Council, BT.com, Aston Tirrold & Upthorpe Village Hall Management Committee, Aston Tirrold & Upthorpe Parish Councils, The Astons News.



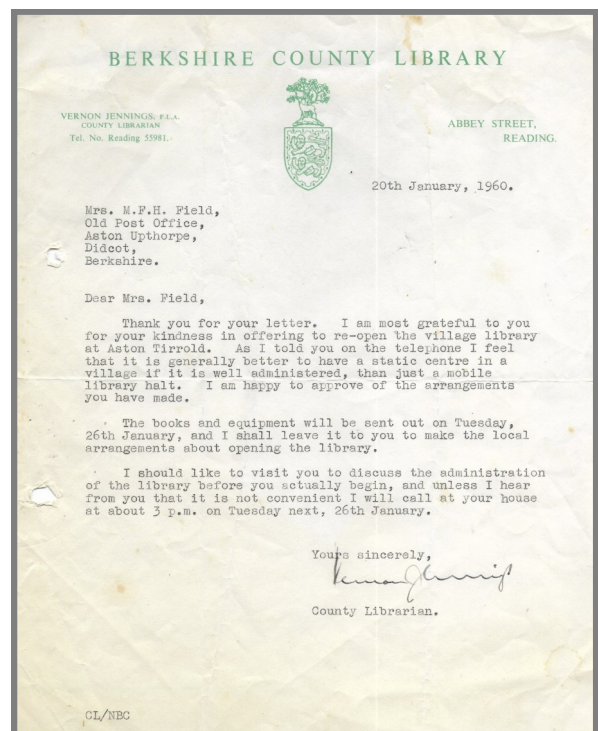
## Community Space: library services

There had been a lending book service in the Astons since the 1870s, organised by the rector, the Reverend John Hoskyns, initially in the Parish Room and then in the school hall.

In 1964 a separate room was provided in the new 1964 hall, manned by a Mrs Field (see letter below) and then by a great friend of Paulise, Molly Hone - see plaque below.

In the 1960s the county service introduced a mobile library service, visiting twice a week, but these were axed in 2016. So the following year the Astons Café applied for a county councillor grant to buy a book trolley which enabled people to borrow, buy or donate books for a minimal donation (see below).

Well, we didn't charge for the (gratefully received) donations!





## Community Space: the Whitwell Page Archive Room. 2019

The generous 'offices' at the rear of the stage had long been used for the archives of the hall itself and those of the Aston Upthorpe Parish Council. The hall also had a loft store room, but this could only be accessed via a ladder, and only had a half height door. A range of infrequent use items were kept up there, plus Astons Youth Club equipment.

At the time of the 2008 kitchen project the grant that was being applied for included a new staircase to improve access to what could become a sizeable space for community storage.

After the stairs installation the hall and both parish council archives were moved up to the new room, freeing up space for regular use items to be stored in the stage store rooms - one locked for security and one unlocked for general use equipment.

The Astons History Group were also able to move their growing archive up into the room.

Part of the 2012 Astons WiFi and Online Initiative project had been to create a digital archive of all village organisations alongside the 'paper' archive, so the newly useable room enabled this project to progress apace.

In 2019 the Astons History Group approached the hall committee wanting to mark the group's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary by upgrading and refurbishing the archive room, to allow better use of the collections. With the hall's support, and funding from the parish councils, county and district councillors, the Village News and two individual donors, they were able to:

- \* Insulate and plasterboard the walls and ceiling
- \* Install a full height door (stored since 2009 when the second stable door was installed in the kitchen for post office use (see page 38).
- \* Install a window to bring natural light into the room
- \* Improve the storage systems to facilitate archive retrieval
- \* introduce scanning equipment to increase digital access to village archives.

The room was named the *Whitwell Page Archive Room*, after two significant village residents, Stephen Whitwell and Mike Page, and has since gone from strength to strength. It now includes the archives of:

- the Astons News, United Reformed Church, Astons Recreation Committee, Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe Parish Council, and the Astons History Group.

Since 2019 the following collections have been donated to the AHG archive by Astons families:

- the Robert Moon Collection, the Tom Powell Collection, and the Stockwells Players Collection.

Below left, the 2019 re-opening ceremony, and right, our first international researcher, Juliet Serre!





## And last, but definitely not least, a New Floor: 2026

Installed in 1953, the teak floor had been carefully maintained with regular sandings and varnishings. But eventually its condition became too fragile and holey and a decision was made to replace it, together with an ambitious 5 year programme of improvements. A Friends of the Village Hall initiative was launched and grants were applied for. In August 2026 the newly redecorated hall was re-opened.



The original floor, lovely but increasingly holey.



The new floor, August 2026





## Management of the hall

In 1949 the hall committee had adopted a Trust Deed on the model recommended by the National Council of Social Services. The land and building were vested with the Official Trustee of Charity Lands in 1950, and the village organisations to be represented on the hall committee were approved (see below).

The wording was very much of its time, and in 2025 the hall committee decided it was time to update its management systems. In 2026 it became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and was registered as such by the Charity Commission on 9th February 2026 - see next page for the committee's statement in the Village News, and the 1949 trust deed on page 49 (Appendix 2).

In June 1960 the committee minutes had noted, 'The hall has been maintained for the use of the village by a minority of enthusiastic and persevering people. It is to be hoped that its welfare may in time become the active concern of the majority.'

I think they would be immensely proud of the hall as it stands today, much improved, and much loved.



### Village organisations listed in the hall trust deed of 1949.

- \* Aston Tirrold Parish Council
- \* Parish Meeting of Aston Upthorpe
- \* Parochial Parish Council of Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe
- \* Presbyterian Kirk Session of Aston Tirrold
- \* Committee of Womens Institute
- \* Committee of Football Club
- \* Committee of Flower Show
- \* Subscribing members of the British Legion, resident in the parishes

# Aston Tirrold & Upthorpe Village Hall.

---

## RULES and REGULATIONS.

---

### The Committee.

1.—The Officers of the Committee shall be the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and the Secretary or Secretaries. In the absence of the Chairman the Vice-Chairman will preside over the Meetings of the Committee, and the occupant of the Chair shall have a casting vote in addition to his ordinary vote.

The Officers shall be elected by the Committee at their first Meeting after the Annual General Meeting.

2.—A Meeting of the Committee shall be held whenever the state of business requires, and three days' notice shall be given.

3.—Six shall be regarded as a QUORUM necessary for the transaction of business.

4.—The Committee may appoint such Sub-Committees as, for example, for Finance or Entertainments, as they may consider advisable.

### The Hiring of the Hall.

1.—Applications for the hiring of the Hall shall be made to one or other of the Secretaries. The Committee has the right to grant or to refuse any application without assigning any reason.

2.—The charge for hiring shall be paid in advance or within a fortnight after the use of the Hall to one of the Secretaries.

3. Any party hiring the Hall is responsible for its proper and orderly use and for leaving it in a safe condition, and will be liable for any damage done to the Hall or its contents, or for any loss of the property of the Hall immediately reported to the Hirer and occurring during the period of hire.

4. No intoxicating liquors shall be bought or sold within the Hall or upon the premises, and no intoxicating liquor may be brought into the Hall or consumed there without the express permission of the Committee.

### The Accounts.

The Accounts of the Hall shall be kept at the Didcot Branch of Barclays Bank Ltd., and cheques drawn on behalf of the Committee shall be signed by the Treasurer and the Secretary, or one of the Joint-Secretaries.





## The Astons Village Hall

Our Village Hall came into being following a talk in 1943 on 'Reconstruction after the War'. The hall stands on land bought by public subscription in 1945 as part of Winston Churchill's postwar village hall programme. In 1945 a Trust Deed was drawn up to define the responsibilities and constitution of the management committee and in 1950 the hall and its lands were vested in the Official Trustee of Charity Lands (now the Official Custodian for Charities).

The hall is an important community asset and to ensure its future ability to serve the community and attract new trustees, the current trustees are in the process of replacing the current (unincorporated) charity with a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). This is an increasingly popular structure to which many village halls have converted. Nothing will change in the way the village hall operates.

The new CIO will:

- ◆ Have the same objects to the current charity – supporting the local community through provision of a community building.
- ◆ Be registered with and under the oversight of the Charity Commission (as at present).
- ◆ Be run by trustees who are residents of Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe or coopted (as at present) or be members of an organisation within the village.
- ◆ Hold meetings at least six times a year and present the hall's report and accounts once a year to an AGM open to the public (as at present).
- ◆ Continue to be run principally by volunteers (as at present).
- ◆ Continue to offer rooms for hire, storage for village organisations and other facilities (as at present).
- ◆ Remain as a community asset, safeguarded by charity law and the Charity Commission.

The trustees of the CIO will benefit from limited personal financial liability (currently it's unlimited) and the hall will have incorporated status which means that:

- ◆ It may find it easier to obtain grants.
- ◆ It will have a modern constitution in line with current charity law and good practice.

The process of transfer from the existing charity to the CIO is:

- ◆ Trustees of the existing charity have considered the options and have agreed to transition to a CIO.
- ◆ The existing trustees have approved the formal application to the Charity Commission and applied to the Charity Commission to register the new CIO and for approval for the assets, liabilities and activities of the existing unincorporated charitable trust to be transferred to the CIO. The Charity Commission approved the application and registered the CIO on 9th February 2026.
- ◆ The trustees of the new CIO (who are in the most part the same as the trustees of the existing trust, except for the normal rotation of roles) will set up new bank and savings accounts as appropriate and inform utilities and insurance providers.

Once the CIO is fully operation, the current charity and its bank and savings accounts will be closed. This change is administrative and will have no effect on the way the village hall serves our community.

**If you have any questions, please contact the committee at [villagehall@theastons.net](mailto:villagehall@theastons.net).**

**To book the Village Hall please e-mail: [astons.vhbooking@gmail.com](mailto:astons.vhbooking@gmail.com)**

## VILLAGE HALL 5 YEAR PROGRAMME OF WORKS UPDATE

Thanks to the wonderful recent fundraising event, direct donations and grants we are going to be replacing the village hall floor in July/August. The hall and stage will be decorated in late March with the woodwork being done once the new floor is down.

We have also been re-taping the joints of the ceiling boards, a mammoth task as the ceiling is approximately 5m/16.5 feet high at the highest point. No mean feat working up that high.

The committee is extremely grateful for the support of the village and individual volunteers. *Nichole West*

## ***APPENDICES:***

1. List of village hall records placed in the county archives, 1984
2. Summary of trust deed. 1949.
3. Selection of receipts for Nissen hall equipment and services.
4. Article by Stephen Whitwell in the Astons News. August 1994.
5. Article about the 1964 hall architect, George Zugic. Astons News. February 2022.
6. Stephen Whitwell precis of hall minutes 1949-1976

Stephen Whitwell is very fondly remembered for his dedication to Astons history.

His precis of the hall and parish council minutes, before handing them over to the Berkshire Record Office, make fascinating reading, and certainly saved me from reading over twenty years' worth of (often illegible) handwritten minutes.





**Appendix One:** List of village hall records placed in the county archives, 1984.

Records of Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe Village Hall,  
1943-1962. (3 vols, 3 files) Deposited in December  
1984 (acc. 3495e)  
Cat: JT 5/1985

|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |        |           |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| 1/1    | Minutes of the Village Hall committee.<br>(Includes copy of correspondence concerning the site of the proposed building, 1945; appointment of various sub-committees and minutes of the Building Sub-committee, 1945; and use of a nissen hut as a temporary Village Hall, 1948.)                                                                                                                                                           | 1 vol  | 1944-1949 |
| 1/2    | Minutes of the Village Hall committee.<br>(Includes summary of trust deed, 1945; opening of temporary village hall, 1949; rules and regulations, 1939; establishment and minutes of Building Fund Committee, 1951; annual reports and summary accounts; purchase of the Village Hall from the National Council of Social Service by Aston Village Hall Trust, 1958.)                                                                        | 1 vol  | 1949-1961 |
| 2/1-4  | Papers concerning the setting up of the village hall.<br>(Includes four sub-bundles:<br>1/1-155: Returns to and analysis of a questionnaire, 1944.<br>2/1-2: Notebook of donations, subscriptions, financial statement, and presscuttings, 1944-1946.<br>3/1-5: Plans of proposed building, 1944-1946 (architects Mauger & May of Welwyn, Hertfordshire).<br>4/1-8: Notices and circulars concerning the Village Hall and Fund, 1944-1946.) | 1 file | 1943-1946 |
| 3/1-22 | Village Hall Committee papers concerning the running of the hall.<br>(Includes regulations and hire rate, 1949; specification and plans for alterations, 1955; balance sheet of Village Hall fete, 1945; and annual balance sheets 1944-1958.)                                                                                                                                                                                              | 1 file | 1949-1959 |
| 4/1-3  | Papers of the Village Hall Entertainments Committee.<br>(Includes three sub-bundles:<br>1: Booklet of accounts, 1951-1952.<br>2/1-22: Correspondence and minutes (mainly concerning vandalism), 1962.<br>3/1-4: Miscellaneous papers concerning dance bands.)                                                                                                                                                                               | 1 file | 1951-1952 |
| 5/1-11 | Correspondence and application for a stage play licence.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1 file | 1951-1953 |
| 6      | Publication by the National Council of Social Service entitled 'Village Halls and Social Centres'.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 1 vol  | 1945      |

**The Official Trustee of Charity Lands and the terms of the trust.**

The site and hall are vested in the Official Trustee of Charity Lands (*from 2004 called the Official Custodian of charity lands*), who holds them for the benefit of the inhabitants of the parishes of Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe and “for the purposes of physical and mental training and recreation and social, moral and intellectual development through the medium of reading and recreation rooms, library, and entertainments, lectures, classes, recreations or otherwise”.

**The Committee of Management.**

The general management and control of the premises and the arrangements for their use are entrusted to a Committee of Management. The Official Trustee of Charity Lands (*see above*) is responsible for seeing that the terms of the Trust Deed are observed but he does not intervene unless they are violated.

**The Members of the Committee.**

The Committee of Management shall consist of 14 members (exclusive of any who are co-opted), of whom 6 are elected at the Annual General Meeting, and 8 are appointed by the following village organisations:- the Parish Council of Aston Tirrold, the Parish Meeting of Aston Upthorpe (*now the Parish Council of Aston Upthorpe*), the Parochial Council of Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe, the Presbyterian Kirk Session Of Aston Tirrold, the Committee of the Women’s Institute, the Committee of the Football Club, the Committee of the Flower Show, subscribing members of the British Legion resident in the parishes - being not less than ten in number, and voting in accordance with Rules made or approved by the Committee of Management.

**Co-opted Members.**

The Committee have power to co-opt not more than 3 members to represent interests not represented by any of above named organisations.

**A General Meeting and Notice thereof.**

A General Meeting consists of residents in the two parishes, and all residents of the age of 18 and upwards are entitled to attend and vote. One week’s notice, affixed to some conspicuous place or places in the two parishes, must be given of any General Meeting.

**The Annual General Meeting.**

An annual general meeting shall be held each year in the month of March or April. It shall receive the Report and Accounts of the past year from the retiring Committee, accept their “resignations”, elect 6 members of the new Committee, and record the appointment of the representatives of the Village Organisations.

All members of the Committee shall retire annually at the Annual General Meeting, and Organisations entitled to appoint a representative on the Committee at any time within one month before the Annual General Meeting.

**Filling vacancies.**

A vacancy occurring among the 6 members elected by the Annual General Meeting, or among those co-opted by the Committee, may be filled by the Committee until the Annual General Meeting; and similarly a vacancy occurring among the 8 members appointed by the Organisations concerned until the next Annual General Meeting.

**New Organisations.**

If a new Organisation be formed within the Parishes “with aims of a social, recreational or educational character not inconsistent with those upon which the Trust Premises are held” the Committee shall have power, by a vote in favour of not less than a two-thirds of all the members, to allow such new Organisation to appoint an additional member of the Committee.



**Failure to appoint.**

If an Organisation entitled to appoint a member ceases to exist or fails to make an appointment before the Annual General Meeting, the Meeting shall decide in what way, if at all, the vacancy shall be filled.

**No Invalidation by Defect.**

The proceedings of the Committee shall not be invalidated by any vacancy among its members, or by any defect in the appointment of a member.

**Committee's Powers.**

The Committee may make and alter Rules and Regulations concerning:

The summoning of its meetings and conduct of its business.

The terms and conditions upon which the Trust Premises may be used, and the sums (if any) to be paid for such use.

The appointment of its unpaid officers.

The engagement or dismissal of its paid *servants*.

The number of members, who shall form the quorum of its meetings (provided that the number shall never be less than one third of the total number of members).

**Bank Account.**

All monies received for the Hall, whether by payment for use or by donation, shall be paid into a Trust Account at the Bank selected by the Committee.

**Use of Monies Received.**

The monies so received shall be applied as the Committee may direct in repairing and insuring the Trust premises or the furniture and effects therein, in paying rent (if any), rates, taxes, the wages of servants and other outgoings, and in providing "furniture, books, newspapers, periodicals and other literature, and means of recreation, and otherwise for the upkeep and improvement of the Trust premises.

**The Trust Deed prevails.**

If any Rules or Regulations made under the powers of the Committee are inconsistent with the provisions of the Trust Deed, the latter shall prevail.

**Appendix Three:** Selection of receipts for Nissen hall equipment and services.

*Duplicate*

(57)

ASTON UPTHORPE,  
DIDCOT, Berks.

April 1950

At Aston Linold Village Hall Cte.

**Dr. to W. J. & G. H. CORDEROY,**  
Carpenters & Undertakers -:- Painters & Decorators

1950

|          |                                                                               |   |    |     |
|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|-----|
| Aug. 6   | 1 1/2 doz. 3/4" screws                                                        |   |    | 4   |
| 31       | Men's lavatory seat 5' x 10" x 1 1/4" x 2 1/2"                                |   |    |     |
|          | of 4" x 1" & fixing                                                           | P | 12 | 6   |
| Sept. 19 | Making new steps to stage & fastenings for same                               | P | 1  | 2 6 |
| 21       | Fixing 2 window stays, cutting hole in cement floor & fixing new bolt to door |   | 5  | 6   |
| 28       | New notice board bolted to 3" x 2" oak posts & fixing name board to same      | P | 2  | 3 6 |
| Oct. 13  | Plugging walls & fixing notice board & holders for 2 fire extinguishers       |   |    | 6   |
|          |                                                                               | £ | 4  | 10  |

3.6-0  
104-10

Permanental  
J. Corderoy

Received with Thanks

April 1950  
W. J. Corderoy



O-VH:His. 22



29  
FREELANDS,  
ASTON TIRROLD,  
NR. DIDCOT, BERKS.  
BLEWBURY 220.

The Secretary  
Village Hall Committee  
Aston Tirrold & Uffthorpe.  
Dear Mr. Thompson.

4-8-49

I enclose

bills connected with making of  
Curtains by W.I. for Village Hall.

Coopers - Curtain Hooks

2-3

Cape Curtain Tape.

10<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>

"

3-6

"

1-9

7-0

Field Hawkins "

1-2.

20-8-49  
16/6 Received with the  
Margaret Barnes

Total £ 16-6

Receipt for the making of the stage curtains by the ladies of the  
Astons Womens Institute in 1949. Reader, they are there to this day!



SUMMERS, DAVIS & SON  
G. W. SUMMERS  
ANTIQUE DEALERS

Antique Furniture.  
China & Glass, Silver, Sheffield Plate  
Licensed Valuers.

MEMBER  
ANTIQUE DEALERS ASSOCIATION  
EST. 1904

CALLEVA HOUSE  
WALLINGFORD  
BERKS

Telephone: Wallingford 2284

March, 18, 1949.

Rev. Thompson.  
Aston Tirrold.

3 hanging mirrors. 10/- 1. 10. 0.  
1 mirror. 1. 8. 0.  
Kitchen Table. 3. 10. 0.  
Antique Oak Chair. 5. 0. 0.  
£ 11. 5. 0.

Settled by cheque. With Thanks.  
March 18, 1949.  
Summers, Davis & Son  
W

(16)

Telephone: WALLINGFORD 2271

Bot. of CHAMPION & CO., LTD.

Wholesale and Retail  
Furnishing and General Ironmongers  
:: Builder's Merchants ::  
ST. MARY'S STREET  
WALLINGFORD

Rev Thompson,  
Aston Tirrold,  
Didcot,  
Berks.

TIN & IRON PLATE WORKERS  
STOVE & RANGE MERCHANTS

AGRICULTURAL SUPPLIERS  
OIL AND COLOURMEN

July 31st 19 49

XXI

for Village Hall.

|      |    |    |                                  |        |                               |   |    |    |   |
|------|----|----|----------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|---|----|----|---|
| July | 18 | To | 10' - 1 1/2" Lead Pipe           | 36 lbs | temporary hut                 | X | 2  | 14 | - |
|      | 26 |    | 4 doz H. & C Hooks               |        | 8/- permanent furniture       |   | 1  | 12 | - |
|      |    |    | 8 " 3/4 x 8 Hd Hd Screws         |        | "                             |   |    | 1  | 2 |
|      |    |    | 2 Wardrobe Hooks                 |        | "                             |   |    |    | 8 |
|      |    |    | 4 sheets 72 x 30 x 22 galvd Iron |        | temporary hut                 | X | 2  | -  | - |
|      | 27 |    | 50 Curtain Track complete        |        | Permanent                     |   | 4  | 7  | 6 |
|      | 30 |    | 26 - 7' galvd Corr Sheets 24g    |        | Permanent for outside latrine |   | 12 | 7  | - |
|      |    |    | 6 lbs Spring head Nails          |        | " " "                         |   |    | 9  | - |
|      |    |    | forward.                         |        |                               |   | 23 | 11 | 4 |



HIGH WYCOMBE 499  
 JAMES MEALING BROS. HIGH WYCOMBE  
 ESTABLISHED 100 YEARS  
**Mealing Bros. Ltd.**  
 Manufacturers of all kinds of Chairs for Churches, Chapels, Halls, Schools, etc.  
 CONTRACTORS TO NUMEROUS EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES  
 13th July, 1949.  
 AVENUE CHAIR WORKS, WEST END ROAD, HIGH WYCOMBE

SOLD TO: REVD. EDGAR E. THOMPSON.  
 ASTON TIRROLD.  
 BERKS.

DELIVERED TO: THE VILLIAGE HALL.  
 ASTON TIRROLD  
 BERKS.

12106

IN ALL CORRESPONDENCE PLEASE QUOTE ABOVE NUMBER

|                |                     |               |            |          |       |
|----------------|---------------------|---------------|------------|----------|-------|
| YOUR ORDER No. | OUR WORKS ORDER No. | No. OF PACKS. | VIA        | CARRIAGE | TERMS |
| 0              | 05801.              | 120 chairs    | OWN Lorry. | PAID.    | NETT. |

| QUANTITY | DESIGN                                                                                 | DESCRIPTION                                                      | RATE     | AMOUNT            |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 120      | interlocking chairs, 14" seats, FITTED WITH PATENT ADJUSTMENT BAR, UNPOLISHED for..... |                                                                  | 14/- ea. | £84. 0. 0.        |
|          |                                                                                        |                                                                  |          | 84. 0. 0.         |
|          |                                                                                        | plus purchase tax charges at 5% (Uplift) plus 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ . |          | 29. 8. 0.         |
|          |                                                                                        |                                                                  |          | <u>113. 8. 0.</u> |

DESPATCHED TODAY PER OWN LORRY C. PAID.

E. & O. E.

ALL GOODS SHOULD BE SIGNED FOR AS "NOT EXAMINED," AND UNPACKED IMMEDIATELY ON DELIVERY. IF DAMAGED, THE RAILWAY COMPANY MUST BE SIGNED FOR WITHIN 3 DAYS, AND THE DAMAGED GOODS RETURNED TO US CONSIGNED "BROKEN IN TRANSIT. DAMAGE FREE." WITHIN 3 DAYS OF RECEIPT.

May. 1949.

Rev. E.W. Thompson,  
Aston Tirrold,  
Berks.

*Summers Davis & Son,  
Wallingford*

VII

(17)

Still with us, and beautifully restored 2025!

|             |                              |       |    |    |
|-------------|------------------------------|-------|----|----|
| 1949.       |                              | £.    | s. | d. |
| April. 4th. | Oak and Elm Refectory Table. | 15.   | 0. | 0. |
|             | Carving oak chair.           | 1.    | 7. | 6. |
|             |                              | £ 16. | 7. | 6. |

13. 5. 1949.

Received cheque with thanks  
 R.P. Summers Davis & Son.  
 Don't forget Summers.

VII

16 7 6  
 11 5 0  
 £ 27 12 6



Mauger & May: Hall architects from 1949 to 1955.

IN ACCOUNT  
WITH

**MAUGER & MAY, ARCHITECTS & PLANNING CONSULTANTS**  
PARKWAY CHAMBERS, WELWYN GARDEN CITY  
Tels. Welwyn Garden 1069 & 3517

Also at: 25 Marylebone Road, N.W.1  
Tel. WELbeck 6437

Our Ref. AJM/ML/254.  
Date 31st May, 1949.

ASTON TIRROLD VILLAGE HALL.

To making survey, preparing drawings  
of the temporary Village Hall,  
securing the necessary approvals  
under Byelaws and Town Planning,  
arranging the details for the  
approval of the National Council  
of Social Service, arranging a  
contract and supervising the  
works.

£35. 0. 0.

*This is the des. by-ref. of  
from a for permanent building, temporary hall, car park & paths,  
say Temporary Hall 24.19.1  
Permanent Scheme 10.0.11  
£35.0.0*

Rev. E.W. Thompson,  
Aston Tirrold,  
Berks.

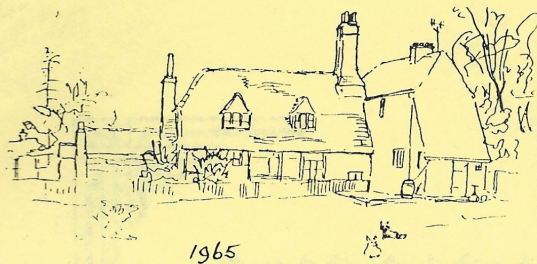
With Compliments.

Received 21/6/49  
cheque value £35/-/-  
pp. Mauger & May  
J. Oliver.

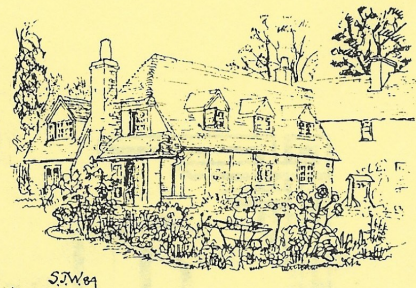


Cheques should be made payable to Mauger & May, and remittances addressed to the Welwyn Garden City Office





**For the record**



### Jervis Cottage and Pear Tree Cottage

I bought Jervis Cottage in 1965. About eighteen months earlier my cousin Barbara Engledue had moved in to the adjoining Pear Tree Cottage, having previously lived in Aston Upthorpe, first at Edlins and then at Upper Thorpe. Our idea was that, although the properties remained legally separate, we should run the gardens into one and have internal access between the cottages. This arrangement persisted happily for 27 years.

But first there was much to be done, for Jervis Cottage was almost a ruin and looked very different from what it does now. Basically it was a timber-framed structure, not later than 17th century, consisting of four rooms, two up (in the roof space) and two down, with a very large brick chimney where it adjoined Pear Tree, and a steep cottage stair. At the east end was a smaller chimney, (which survives) beyond which the line of the building was continued with a substantial wooden shed and a small brick earth closet. It did not seem to have been lived in for years. There was no plumbing. An iron range below the smaller chimney provided the only evidence of how any of the rooms might have been used. Under part of this room there had been a cellar, now filled in, with the floor above at a higher level. This was reflected in the room above where the raised floor formed a large platform, presumably for mattress-beds - a curious arrangement.

Equally curious was the junction with Pear Tree, which is a much later (perhaps about 1800) building, of timber uprights with lath and plaster infilling. Its main room made use of the same large chimney, but no levels corresponded with Jervis and the buildings do not even join at right angles.

Pear Tree Cottage has also much changed. Originally, it extended further south, and one of the old Curry slides, taken about 100 years ago from the church tower, shows the outside wall of Pear Tree flush with that of Jervis on the north side. A new kitchen and bedroom over, built of brick, were added on this side about 1910.

Of their history I have managed to discover almost nothing. I was told that the Aldridge family once lived in Jervis and the Wheelers in Pear Tree. Both cottages belonged to the Manor Farm, and therefore originally to the Fullers and later to the Crosses. The thatched cob wall, the surviving part of which is now listed in its own right, used to stretch much further in both directions. The well at Pear Tree is still preserved.

What I did in 1965-6 to my cottage would hardly be allowed today. I demolished the big chimney, making room below for a kitchen, and built a new chimney to serve Pear Tree. I replaced the outer walls and inserted new windows. I lowered the floor a foot or so, built a new porch and covered over my well with steps down to the entrance. Space was somehow found for a new staircase and landing, and the demolition of the shed and closet made it possible to open windows on the south wall facing the garden. So the cottage is largely new outside, but the old timber frame remains inside. This work was designed by the late George Zugic as architect and built by Pendell & Spinage of Stanford-in-the-Vale - the team that worked for Mrs Lugg at the Village Hall and Edlins Cottages. In one stretch of the north wall are a lot of dark bricks taken from the demolished barn at Edlins.

As for the name, the cottage so far as I know never had one. At my cousin's suggestion I named it after the Jervis family (though they had never lived there) long resident in the village, whose last member was Miss Jervis, a much-loved teacher of the village school.

In 1974 I added an extension to the cottage on the south side. When the district man came to assess this for re-rating he said "I was told there was a new extension here, but I see I am mistaken", so it must have been quite well done.

Stephen Whitwell



## THE ASTONS HISTORY PROJECT

*Discovering and recording the Astons through the ages*

### RECENT CONTACTS:

We have had not one but two people contacting us recently with connections to the building of our village hall. One was the grandson of Paulise Lugg (nee de Bush), who paid for the building of our current hall (replacing an ex WW2 Nissen hut on the same site) who remembered visiting his grandmother during the 1950s and 60s, and appearing in the plays held in Stockwells garden in the summer.

The other was the daughter of the hall's architect George Zugic. I had often wondered what Paulise's connection with him was, and we now know that they met in post war London and had been friends for some time before she gave him the commission for the hall - which was designed very much with her theatrical productions in mind. I give below her initial email contact with us and also her brother's marvellous telling of their father's turbulent early years in pre war Yugoslavia.

"I am the daughter of the architect George Zugic who designed the Astons Village Hall. The hall was opened in 1964 when I would have been nine. I remember many Sundays visiting Aston Upthorpe to see Paulise Lugg/de Bush, who donated the hall to the village.



My parents, George and Ursula Zugic, my brother Thomas, and I also spent many happy weekends at 'Stockwells'. I have vivid memories of the summer open air Shakespearean theatre productions held at Stockwells produced by the 'Stockwells Players'. It is through this connection that my father designed the hall. He also designed six other houses in the area (*see next page*), and extended other existing properties, as his name became known through his connection with the Luggs.

It is serendipity that my partner and I recommended this hall as a venue to our friends Mark Bees and Sarah Clark who run Jive Temptation events. This will be the first of their events at the hall and it feels that I have come full circle, to honour his memory and attend the tea dance. One of my children Nick will also be attending in memoriam, since he never met his grandfather who died tragically young at the age of 55". *Victoria Rew.*



George Zugic. "Our father, George Zugic, was born in Belgrade in April 1920. His father, as an army officer, fought in five different wars and was frequently stationed in different parts of the country, finally reaching the rank of General of Division.

Reluctantly, my father also joined the army as an officer in 1940. In April 1941, he was one of a number of army and air force officers who staged a coup against the pro-Nazi regent, Prince Paul; as a consequence, Hitler launched 'Operation Punishment' against Yugoslavia.

Both my father and his father were taken prisoner – but not before George had been left for dead after an explosion which left him partially deaf for the rest of his life. He took the opportunity, while a POW, to study architecture.

*George Zugic in pre-war Belgrade (left).*

See more on [theastons.net](http://theastons.net) and Astons Villagers Facebook

26

Astons News February 2022 Issue 580





*George in his British uniform, not quite as stylish as his Yugoslavian uniform I think!*

On liberation by the British Army, he joined it as an officer interpreter (he knew six languages) and was a deputy commandant of a DP (displaced persons) camp. In this role, he witnessed the cruel and shameful repatriation of many Soviet minorities to Russia, where the majority of them were immediately massacred. My mother was secretary to the garrison chaplain in Hannover – that is where he met her and where they were subsequently married by that chaplain.

In 1948, they emigrated to Britain, where initially, they were employed as domestic servants in Swansea – amongst my father's drinking companions was one Dylan Thomas.

Finally, they were able to move to London and George obtained employment as an architect. Subsequently, of course, he met up with Paulise Lugg, and his long association with Aston Upthorpe continued up to his death in 1976".



Victoria had once been told that George had designed and built a house for Barbara Engledue in Aston Upthorpe. The only 'new' building I could think of in Upthorpe was Upper Thorpe (above), so I contacted Tom Worthington who used to live there and he confirmed that he had bought it from Barbara. I think you can see an Arts and Crafts influence there, as in the Village Hall design.

Barbara subsequently moved to Peartree Cottage on Aston Street, next to Jervis Cottage where her cousin Stephen Whitwell lived. Stephen of course was the local historian who donated his village archive to the newly formed Astons History Group. ONLY CONNECT!!!

Right: A photo donated by Paulise's grandson, Sean Jack, of Paulise in theatrical costume for one of the Stockwell Players performances. He said that when visiting recently he asked a gentleman at the village hall if he could park there, and was told that his Gran was village 'royalty'.

We have added her to our *Notable Residents* section on the village website. I think donating our lovely hall merits a mention!!



O-V41/His. i  
(2 of 2)

### HISTORY OF ASTONS VILLAGE HALL

These notes provide a pretty detailed history of the Village Hall.

I think the two notebooks are of weekly contribution. Keith Foster who seems to have done much of the collecting, would be able to confirm.

C.T. Clay leased 'Finches' during the war years and until about 1951 or 1952. he was Librarian of the House of Lords – a distinguished civil servant and genealogist.

Mr. Thompson was a retired Methodist minister who built Berrycroft in the 1930s, and lived there.

Steven Whitwell.

Steven Whitwell's precis  
from the minute books of  
the hall's committee.



Temporary Village hall opened on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July 1949 at 8 pm

160 people present

Chair taken by C.T. Clay (Chairman of the Village Hall Committee), and spoke after the national anthem "Our doings during the past five years":

A joint village meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1944 appointed committee, with the idea of erecting a village hall after the war.

Their report was approved at a meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May '44, and the committee re-appointed. They considered a site and design, and held 30-40 meetings.

CT Clay said "I cannot remember being a member of any committee whose members have worked so harmoniously or whose recommendations were framed with so great a measure of general agreement".

They put important points to specially-called joint village meetings - e.g. on 23<sup>rd</sup> February '45, the Committee was authorised to proceed with the purchase of the Aston Upthorpe site and complete a Trust Deed on the model recommended by the National Council of Social Services.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> January '46 this done, the Committee was authorised to proceed with measures necessary for the erection of a hall, but called a meeting before signing contracts.

Finance. We fixed our target at £2,500 "which was approximately double the cost of an attractive hall in the neighbourhood built before the outbreak of war". We expected £500 from the Carnegie Trust, so £2000 was required from the village. The financial success of the scheme has been remarkable. By May 1945 receipts from the village – donations – proceeds of various entertainments – were about £1100 (now over £2000 including PO Savings Bank interest).

"Do's included Stockwells Players; tribute to Mr. Thompson's silver collection. A list of subscribers is being compiled as a permanent record."

Meanwhile costs were going up, and the target revised to £3500. £1000 promised from the Carnegie Trust was "increased to help the total costs or £1850, whichever was the greater" to hold good until 1955.

"As 1946 progressed, and still more 1947, it became clear that a licence for a

permanent hall was fading... so they agreed with NCSS to accept a hut – costing £1400 – leased to us at £13 a year. The permanent work – site, car park, gates – paid for by accumulated funds and would belong to the villages.

QUOTE Tribute to Mrs. Thompson.

Site Bought from Mrs. Cundell – “generous arrangements”. Mr. May (Clay?) “our architect”. Mr. Slade of Wallingford gave his legal expenses free. Gift of table (with “one other”) and chair in memory of Benjamin Slade and George Fuller, first Chairmen of the Parish Meeting of Aston Upthorpe and the Parish Council of Astons Tirrold 1894.

#### Opening speech

QUOTE bit about work done by Hatto & Williams etc. including the Baroness’ piano. Mr. Thompson was presented with a silver porringer. He spoke.

The meeting concluded with some community singing

10<sup>th</sup> August 1949. A permanent building Committee was kept in being. A Management Committee included members from various organisations

QUOTE p. 8

QUOTE note on p. 9 about the erection of a temporary hall

QUOTE p. 10 for rates agreed for hirings etc. on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1949

QUOTE “It was resolved unanimously that no alcohol should be sold in the hall”

26<sup>th</sup> September 1949. Drafted rules and regulations.

14<sup>th</sup> October 1949. Trust Deed applied for, vesting premises in official Trustee of Charity Lands. The Committee would become Managing Trustees. (Earlier Trustees - now discharged - were Clay, Henderson and Thompson). A licence for ‘stage plays’ was applied for. Mrs. Lightfoot was appointed caretaker at 2/6 an hour.

The report of the sub-committee on crockery was introduced by Miss Engledew.

They accept Messrs Selfridges estimate of £25 for the purchase of a gross of cups, saucers, plates and glasses (it cost £21.4.8). it was agreed that Mr. Clements could hire the hall on Wednesdays to show ‘non-inflammable films’ (no special licence was required).

QUOTE rates agreed.



24<sup>th</sup> November 1949. More housewifery, including it was decided to buy for about £1.17.6 a hand polisher of medium weight, Miss Engledew undertaking to make the purchase.

Agreed to meet monthly.

The crockery had arrived, but had not been unpacked. Mrs. Seamark thought the cupboard (bought by Mr. Thompson) was not big enough to hold it. A chest of drawers was bought from Mr. Silver for £5 instead.

12<sup>th</sup> January 1950. Col. Engledew lent a drum for the storage of paraffin. Mr. Silver resigned as joint secretary as he was leaving the village. The water heater was still not working properly.

February 1950. More crockery! WI crockery given to the Hall with a letter from Mrs. Beck. "Freedom of the use of the Hall's crockery conferred on WI." Miss Engledew reported net loss of 9d on the Old Time Dance on 20th January. It was agreed not to restrict the letting of the Hall for entertainment during Lent.

March 1950. Hand towels, saucepan and a kettle were bought.

Committee re-elected each year. Representatives + 6 elected.

QUOTE p.40. Review after one year

[Barbara says that Chalmers Lyon drew sketches of Committee during meetings. Do any survive? S.W.]

Barbara Engledew in charge of entertainments.

Mrs. Tapper willing to organise weekly whist drive.

June 1950. Mr. Burnham of Brightwell allowed to use the Hall on Thursday evenings from September as a cinema. Monthly charge of £2.10

Improvement of grounds. "The suggestion was made that one of the trees should be cut down, of which it was libelously affirmed that it was dead. The Committee adjourned to inspect the grounds outside and appeared to be of the opinion that the tree was useful and ornamental and deserving of being spared."

July 1950 Entertainments for the autumn and the winter. (Miss Engledew, Mr. Slate, Mrs. Lodge, Mrs. Tappin, Mrs. O'Regan.)

Old Time Dance on 3<sup>rd</sup> Friday of the month, September – December

Modern Dance on 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month.

Whist Drive weekly on Thursdays

Tennis tournament Miss Engledew would try to arrange "on the lawns in the village".

100 Tubal chairs to be ordered @ 27/6 each. Rusty red with green canvas from Sam Robbins Ltd. And 100 more bought in August!

The Permanent Building Fund was meanwhile kept in being and should be added to by £50-60 annually; Stockwells players would contribute.

September 1950      Special meeting of Management Committee

To consider complaints about "the character of the entertainment given in the Hall by the 'Merrymakers' on Sat. September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

No details, but resolution "as the village hall is intended for the use of all residents in the two parishes the committee desire the secretary, at his discretion, to request organisations or persons when booking to exercise care to ensure that the entertainments provided by them shall be of such a nature as will not cause legitimate offence to any section of the village community."

October 1950 Wooden floor (£322.4.0) considered prohibitive.

November 1950 Chairs arrived at last. (Miss E. had apparently been to Rugby about them. The Tubal firm had gone into liquidation ) Paid from Permanent Building Fund. The police had ruled that private parties on Saturday nights could continue after midnight. Planting of trees was discussed. Entertainments at Xmas to include Panto by Cholsey children (in the event it was not available).

5 December 1950 Another Special Meeting. Stone thrown through the kitchen window and Mr. Lightfoot assaulted by a Mr. Nairn. Case was taken on 15 December at Didcot. Bound over for 12 months and to pay £5 towards costs. Had apologised to Lightfoot.



February 1951 The balance in hand had almost disappeared – need to raise more income by entertainment.

March 1951 County Council inspection. Certain recommendations for safety re performance of plays. Committee would not have a fireproof curtain. (S.W didn't think they had been asked to). The Entertainments Sub-Committee organised a Sweepstake on the Grand National for the benefit of the Hall. Mr. Thompson said that he did not know this had been done. His feeling was that this was not method of raising money worthy of the V.H. which ought to draw its support for the service it rendered to the village from public spirit! The rest of the members approved the action of the sub-committee. In its second year the use of the hall had not merely been sustained, but had increased. The whole cost of maintenance had been met by entertainments (£95) and booking fees (£75).

p.73 QUOTE

May 1951 Clock bought at Manor House auction for £3.15.0, and placed in the back of the hall in the entrance. Miss E. retired from the secretaryship of the Entertainments Sub-Committee.

June 1951 Miss E. again raised the question of heating. After prolonged discussion it was agreed that she and Mrs. Lugg should consult Mr. Cross the heating engineer.  
pp. 87-88 E.T.'s note 'on the Permanent Building Fund'.

July Heating to be installed, with loan from P.B.F. Some booking rates increased and charges for heating. Efforts to be made to get from something from the Nat. Council for Social Security. Loan still not started in September. Licence going up in October.

October Discussion on bookings: outside organisations might be asked to make a deposit. Half fee agreed – to be kept if less than 3 weeks notice of cancellation.

November The Ministry of Education had made a grant of £116 towards the heating (estimated 1/3 of the cost)

Xmas & New Year entertainments. The Committee were not going to do it themselves (for financial reasons) but offered the hall for any persons or groups who

wanted it. No bookings. (Went to P. Lugg for private party.) N.B. Successful children's party the year before.

Heating Only up to 55° with the help of 4 stoves. Cross admitted there were not enough pipes, and put more in without extra charge.

March 1952 Heating still giving trouble. "At Mrs. Brown's wedding reception the heating had failed to cut out at 65° and there was much water on the floor of the boiler house. The Chairman undertook to see Mr. Cross and also Mr..... (sic) from whom the apparatus was bought

April 1952 Entertainments planned - May 10 Mrs. Lugg's 'Any Questions'

May 17 Mrs. Engledew's garden fete and dance for  
the heating fund (£36.13.6 realised)

Running account £198.0.7 for the year '51-'52. 154 meetings and entertainments  
Thompson gives up after an extra year - no longer 'his baby'. Capt. Dawson elected secretary. Various efforts to get him to stay on - he agreed (but not in any office).  
Cinema started late and made the children late. (Mr. Burnham ran this once a week.)  
Heater still giving trouble.  
Dawson now Treasurer too.

June 1952 A/Cdre Ludlow drew the attention of the Committee to the garden fete to be held in Mr. Beck's garden on 19<sup>th</sup> July to introduce Mr. A.M.S. Neave, the prospective Conservative candidate. Agreed Hall if wet.

July '52 Chairs were lent free of charge to Stockwells Players. (only wooden chairs usually to be hired - £1 a hundred). Breakages 1/- a go - immediately recoverable.

Aug. With regard to the concert arranged by the Br. Legion Womens Section, the Secretary was instructed to ensure that no offence was given to residents by any part of the performance.

Sept '52 Mr. Thompson raised the question of the conduct of teenagers of both sexes - but particularly male - in the vestibule during dances. Suggested a roster of male



members of the committee – opposed by Ludlow – hirer's responsibility (especially Mr. Burnham). "Lack of patronage of entertainments by community".

BLWS Variety Show: complaint of resident of reference by name – held not to be intentional – no action.

Rates up by £10 to £13 because of heating. Objected to (profit for last dance 13/4 , not several £s as before) - £2.9.4 next month.

November Heating out of action again, though Cross had worked on it in the summer.

21 December "Grand Hotel Community Carol Singing" – Mr. Lugg asked to direct the choir. It was poorly attended.

Disturbance in the hall 29 November on the occasion of a Square Dance organised by the Choir Committee – Messrs Matthews & Brady.

Jan '53 AT Football Club asked for a reduction in booking fees – not granted.

Coronation Mr. Thompson was secretary of 1<sup>st</sup> Coronation Committee

Hall to be used for TV broadcast

Dance or Village Party pm

Restricted use of floodlighting.

Meeting no longer every month.

March '53 Burnham's cinema contract ended at his request (poor attendance). [In fact he carried on for another year or so. S.W.]

No heating for BLWS Beetle Drive – owing to misunderstanding.

Heating still giving trouble – gaskets burning out.

Mrs. Lightfoot wanted to resign because it was so much of a worry.

At end of year not enough to pay back any of the NCSS loan – but quite a good year.

Account up to £262 – slight loss. Girls Life Brigade

July '53 Dawson resigned on posting to Egypt. Dando as Treasurer – but resigned almost at once. Money needed. St. Leger Draw. Miss E. asked to organise but could not.

August '53 The Committee viewed with alarm the increasing price that has to be paid for a Dance Band.

Sept. '53 Permanent Building Fund Committee reported that May, the architect, had visited the site. Permanent Hall would cost £7000. Alterations and improvements to temporary hall £2675.

Decided that owing to difficulties of licencing "no chance of putting up another building as a permanent hall for many years". Likely that NCSS would let village acquire existing hall – so recommended improvements.

Called a village meeting, which agreed.

(Thompson back in minutes again. K. Foster had been joint secretary for a short time after Dawson, but had then been called up.)

Oct. '53 Dancing troupe put off because of uncertainty about the floor.

Nov. New floor of teak blocks laid.

Dec. Heating bills still coming in and alterations to lavatory plumbing.

The site slightly altered by agreement with Mrs. Cundell - a strip off the south and on to the west.

Jan. '54 Decision that they were not obliged to pay for Cross's deficiencies in the heating system. £103 paid to WP Brown of Wallingford for roof painting etc.

Burnham carrying on with cinema. (Long minute of Thompson about Cross's inadequacies).

Feb. '54 Report that dressing rooms had been let to Dr. Green for a day surgery 3 times a week. Mrs. Lightfoot resigned owing to illness of her mother. Mrs. Lugg had given 6 lime trees and a copper beech which had been planted. Annual a/c some £245. Annual report – financial anxiety because of defects of heating system (Mr. Baker was auditor for all this time.)

QUOTE p. 193 Presentation to Mrs. Lightfoot

June '54 Cross would pay for ½ what he was asked for (i.e. some £31). John Wilders to do regular inspection.

July '54 Debit balance for first time.



Oct. '54 Clay resigns on leaving Astons. Hugh Smith in place. (Lugg convenor of Management Committee all this time.)

Boiler house to be rebuilt.

QUOTE p. 211 Tribute to Clay.

December '54 Burnham finally decided to discontinue cinema. Excessive electricity charges to be reduced by substituting 60w bulbs for 100w – by agreement with SEB. Later that they were partly caused by an unnecessary cooker. Rays were caretakers then.

March '55 Permanent Committee. Wilders' bill for putting the heating right was £170. Only about 50 cups remained. End of year account only £155. Entertainments down £18. Dance was cancelled because of the election. Improvements continuing – enlargements of dressing rooms by installing basins. Men's lavatory unsatisfactory.

October '55 K. Foster co-opted on his return from national service. Football club had gone ahead and got a licence for their dance without asking the Committee. (Agreed to let it be: Thompson dissenting).

December '55 First mention of Irish Colonial (?) Society, who wanted a licence for their dance. "The Secretary read a part of a printed circular which stated that the first object of the ICS was to provide transport for those who were at a distance from an RC church"

Jan '56 Caretaker reported that an exceptional amount of work was involved before and after the party for the British Legion WS – was granted an extra 5/-.

Feb. '56 Ann Rich would try to run a weekly dance – (then fortnightly). End of year only £151. Appeal for active assistance for the young. (Major Robertson in as vice-chair.) Agreed in '56 that the Permanent Committee be wound up. They were going to buy the hall as it was.

June '56 Irish Colonial Society proposed as appointing member of management committee. (Ludlow had worked hard first on the electricity bills – now rebate of rates). Crockery very deficient and only a small sum had been recovered for breakages.

July '56 Robertson off. Left village .

Sept. '56 Min of Ed. (asked about Irish C.S.) says out Trust deed not valid.

Oct. '56 3 instances of damage by "youths from Didcot or adjacent villages"

A/Cdre to speak to police. They said 'give us warning and we will provide a patrol.

Nov. Condolences on sudden death of Mrs. Dando.

Dec. Death of Mr. Chalmers Lyon reported – condolences and gratitude etc.

Proposal for dance in January dropped because of petrol rationing.

Feb. '57 Caretaker's pay put up from 2/6 to 3/6 per hour. Mrs. Burton resigned on leaving the village

Year '56 – '57 More money owed to builders for heating plant. Deficit for first time. Failed to get rates reduced. Account down to £148.

Sept. '57 John Clements resigned on leaving the village. (?) (He was back on committee 3 years later [S.W]. Formation of Social Club noted – formed by and for young people in village. Could have the hall each Wed. evening. 5/- and 10/- for heating. Mr. Eric Tilley of Didcot allowed hall Oct.-March for dances - after satisfactory enquiries. £3 a month – but he lost heavily and only did it for one month.

Nov. '57 A/Cdre in hospital with a broken leg.

Jan. 1958 The 'Hut' (i.e. the hall) had been bought by NCSS for £400. Year in balance again – just. (getting between £15 and £30 each year from Luggs for play and other entertainments.) "Booking by outsiders have almost ceased". Charity now validated by new Act. Hall vested in New Village Trust. Yearly a/c £162.

See p.304 for Permanent Building Fund Account which wound up, handing on £207.10.6 to Management Committee.

May '58 Presentation to Secretary (he had had a porringer at the beginning) of 3 vols. 'England, its Cathedrals & Parish Churches'. Mr. Porteous (now minister and on committee) was made Secretary. (There is another notable absence of Treasurer's monthly statements – space allowed but not filled!)

Sept. '58 Need for more teacups! (In Dec. more spoons!) P.Lugg paid for 75 cups for £5.5.0.



Feb. '59 Summary of bookings since June '58

|                                                             |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Regulars - surgery, Social Club, WI, British Leg. W.S.      | £38-10-0 |
| Public bookings – RDC (for footpaths enquiry),              |          |
| War Memorial Cttee, Rec. Ground Cttee                       | 2-11-6   |
| Occasional – Football Club, Netball, Irish C.S. Pre. Church | 2- 7-6   |
| Dances                                                      | 4- 0-0   |

May '59 Piano cleaned. P.Lugg paid the bill. RDC now responsible for licensing for plays - but OK. Hillier resigned as caretaker (in fact went in September).

Secretary's report – WI giving annual donation.

It was considered that the(depleted) balance from the Permanent Building Fund should if possible be kept in being as a nucleus of a Fabric Fund. Yearly a/c £283 (but £150 of this from Permanent Fund).

Only 15 present at Village Meeting. (It had been about 30 in previous years – up to 80 or 90 to start with).

July '59 They got the rates down at last – from £26 to £17 (Ludlow's work)

Sept. '59 Entertainments Cttee revived (after several years). Jukes and Eltham. Mr. W. Brown appointed caretaker.

Dec. '59 Trees {What trees?} cut down as roots damaging a drain. Would be put on main drain by Council. [But not done till '61] Electricity still at commercial rate.

April '60 About £30 a year needed from Permanent Fund.

June '60 Annual Meeting. 17 present. Booking similar – but now Scottish Dance practices by Pres. Church. Small fund in being for repair of radiogram.

“The hall has been maintained for the use of the village by a minority of enthusiastic and persevering people: it is to be hoped that its welfare may in time become the active concern of the majority.”

Yearly a/c £267 (so really only about £115).

September '60 Letting charges revised upwards for non-village.

Dec. '60 Mrs. Barnard, now Secretary WI, co-opted.

March '61 Poplars to be removed . Bookings up by 3 dances (Planets Band/Rock Group) at £5 a piece. Annual Report: things up a bit and rates down:

Social and Youth Club run by Fields

Scottish Dancing by Pres. Church , mostly supported from harwell

Rock Dances, though well organised, give rise to 'unpleasantness' – bookings not to be confirmed in future.

Annual Meeting 14 present. A/c about £120 nett. Field new Chairman

Nov. 61 Tribute to H. Lugg. Minutes not signed. Latham writing minutes.

#### New Minute Book

6 Dec. '61 Extraordinary meeting (Latham was writing the minutes). Cleaner's rate put up to 4/6. Hiring charges to be increased – heating also @ 4/6 per hour – charge for time.

Feb. 62 Rev. Timothy welcomed (attended 1 meeting!). Roberts as caretaker. Mrs. Barnard asked part of insuring 'WI crockery'. How to curtail hooliganism at dances? Porteous resigned as Sec. Vote of Thanks. Brown had felled a lot of trees, and was thanked for it.

April '62 A/Cdre reported (at last) arrangements in hand to connect hall to main drainage. Bookings were £28 less than last year – heating and lighting up. Grass to be sprayed with a 'growth retardant' and path with sodium chlorate to minimise maintenance.

4 May '62 AGM. 24 present. A/Cdre resigned as Treasurer. Loss of £28 in year. Bookings lowest ever. There was an anonymous donation of £90 - to cover cost of re-decoration and 5 appliances. Entertainments Cttee reconstituted.

No meeting until April '63 Mrs. Lugg expressed her desire to reconstruct the upper structure of the hall. Thanks. Put plans before the AGM.

May '63 AGM 23 present. Financial position worst ever, (so bad that it does not appear in the book). Field A/Treasurer. Foster appointed.

22 May Letter to all residents in village asking for contributions towards cost of reconstruction. Question of Deeds of Covenant left in abeyance.



2 July Question of houses between church and village hall. Agreed to go ahead. Mrs. Lugg to try to persuade Sir W. Piggott Brown not to make them too nasty. Swapping new houses and car park considered impracticable. More trees to cut!

Nov. '63 Dismal account of bookings. P.Lugg hoped for covenants. Donations had balanced books. Library proposal discussed. Mr. Jennings of Berkshire County Council said that the County was tending to close village libraries, but if by voluntary help a library is well run it provides a better service than a mobile library. Fields complimented on running it. Agreed that room should be used for other things too. K.Foster suggested re-activation of Youth Club.

No meeting till 5 September '64 when it was held in new hall. AGM 53 present. Treasurer – disappointing appeal produced £42-5-0. Did not pay its way.

p.19 QUOTE P. Lugg. H.Beck proposed vote of thanks. Reviewed history. P.L. made Hon Cttee member.

Hall opened by Airey Neave

10 Sept. '64 New Cttee. Bryceson (?) as Sec. Hart Treasurer. How to raise £50 per annum from village (to keep it up to £200). Entertainments cttee again revived. New letting charges agreed.

Monthly meetings again started Oct. '64.

Nov. '64 Chairman said he was glad to see uniformed policemen at the last 2 functions, and hoped there would always be one. Extensive damage to piano.

P.Lugg would have it repaired for £80. 10/- fee in future.

Then both Beck and Bryceson were unwell, and no meetings until –

March '65 Very poor response to appeal for funds and for entertainments cttee's idea of social club. (At this time it was sometimes used by 'Weighing Centre' for 12/6 to 17/6 - what was this? - S.W.)

May '65 3 covenants (W. Piggott Brown, A/Cdre and J.Hannay). Proposal (by Brewerton) for 'Appeal Day' in September. Agreed that an 18" ATCO mower be bought for hall. Hart (Treasurer) said that he wanted paying. (No record that he was.)  
Sept. '65 WI to give garden seat. Pope gave trestle tables. Caretaker (roberts) paid an extra 5/- a week for grass cutting. Draughts in the main hall were a problem – siad to be caused by heating.

Jan '66 Had asked RDC for further reduction in rates but not allowed. Social Club had got going under Mr. Hart (Bingo) – also Youth Club.

May '66 AGM 16 present (First since Sept. '64. Hon Sec. Said he thought V.H. had licence as Civic Centre. Hart on Social Club (Burnett Chair). Bingo more popular than dances . Youth Club on Cttee – Miss P. Didcock.

Nov. '66 Hall already needing redecoration.

July '67 AGM. 48 present. Accounts 'almost balanced'. Insurance raised to £15,000. Personal risk £50,000 (?) [ Bryceson's writing illegible. Minutes not signed etc.] Caretaker Roberts to carry on pro tem. Rich to cut grass. Problem of alcoholic drinks again – someone had not asked cttee before applying for a licence.

|                                  |           |                     |
|----------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
| <u>Jan. '68</u> Insurance – Hall | £15,000 } |                     |
| Architect's fees                 | 1,500 }   |                     |
| Contents                         | 1,500 }   | costs £42 per annum |
| Public Liability                 | 100,000 } |                     |

P. Lugg offered 50 new chairs.

May '68 AGM. 26 present. P. Lugg providing £90 of things etc. for plays. £56 up on the year. Hart retiring. Foster in again.

Sept. '68 It was recorded last. 'The Village Pop Group was accepted a s a Village Organisation.

May '69 AGM Beck retired as chairman. J. Hannay elected.

Aug. '69 New rates of hiring. Garden to be 'de-weeded' – done by Mrs. Belcher.

Shelter for trestle tables. Alteration to gallery proposed by P. Lugg.

Sept. '69 Repairs of 3187 agreed to be done by P & S.



May '70 AGM Bryceson going. Numbers not recorded. Br. Legion closed. It was resolved [for the umpteenth time] not to hire the nesting chairs. £5 to Mrs. Belcher.

Jan '71 It was agreed to hire the nesting chairs after all. Hannay had died. Trouble with football club - ball used in hall had caused damage - - bills not paid. Caretaker got £80 per annum + expenses.

April '71 AGM. 17 present. Caretaker up to £90. Fund to be raised to plant shrubs to commemorate J. Hannay.

July '71 Library had been flooded. Decided not to accept hiring for Mr. R. Evans for bingo - should ex- British Legion members start a bingo club of their own? (This was looked into and nothing came of it). Danish flag + Union Jack to be hung?. Youth Club (G.Harris) on holidays.

Nov. '71 Autumn Dance showed a profit of £21 (You could get 103 suppers for £15)

Jan '72 Youth Club causing damage.

May '72 AGM 16 present. Molly H. said Gcmre(?) going to close the village library. Vere resigned. Crowhurst's Variety Club commended by the Chairman (Crowther). Shrubbery also to commemorate Thompson, Lugg and Beck. Harris pleaded for continuation of Youth Club in spite of damage, which was agreed.

Aug. '72 F.C. would not in future be allowed alcoholic drinks.

Oct. '72 No Halloween Dance because of difficulty of finding band.

Dec. '72 Following promise of a covenant by Dr. Crowther, it was again proposed to 'approach the village'. Senior Youth Club wound up. Troubles. 3 youths named.

Feb '73 There had been a New Year Party on personal invitation, which showed a profit of over £20. Youth Club back under Balkwill(?)

April '73 M. Hone had died. AGM 18 present. No progress on commemoration of previous Chairmen. Idea of plaque in Library. Covenants 'being pursued' Finance - year broke even. Caretaker raised to £102 per annum.

June '73 Hire charges increased by 15% (village), 20% (others). Football Club refused for dances.

Aug '73 Brenda W. objects to M. Burns' boys etc.

May '70 AGM Bryceson going. Numbers not recorded. Br. Legion closed. It was resolved [for the umpteenth time] not to hire the nesting chairs. £5 to Mrs. Belcher.

Jan '71 It was agreed to hire the nesting chairs after all. Hannay had died. Trouble with football club - ball used in hall had caused damage - - bills not paid. Caretaker got £80 per annum + expenses.

April '71 AGM. 17 present. Caretaker up to £90. Fund to be raised to plant shrubs to commemorate J. Hannay.

July '71 Library had been flooded. Decided not to accept hiring for Mr. R. Evans for bingo – should ex- British Legion members start a bingo club of their own? (This was looked into and nothing came of it). Danish flag + Union Jack to be hung?. Youth Club (G.Harris) on holidays.

Nov. '71 Autumn Dance showed a profit of £21 (You could get 103 suppers for £15)

Jan '72 Youth Club causing damage.

May '72 AGM 16 present. Molly H. said Gcmre(?) going to close the village library. Vere resigned. Crowhurst's Variety Club commended by the Chairman (Crowther). Shrubbery also to commemorate Thompson, Lugg and Beck. Harris pleaded for continuation of Youth Club in spite of damage, which was agreed.

Aug. '72 F.C. would not in future be allowed alcoholic drinks.

Oct. '72 No Halloween Dance because of difficulty of finding band.

Dec. '72 Following promise of a covenant by Dr. Crowther, it was again proposed to 'approach the village'. Senior Youth Club wound up. Troubles. 3 youths named.

Feb '73 There had been a New Year Party on personal invitation, which showed a profit of over £20. Youth Club back under Balkwill(?)

April '73 M. Hone had died. AGM 18 present. No progress on commemoration of previous Chairmen. Idea of plaque in Library. Covenants 'being pursued' Finance – year broke even. Caretaker raised to £102 per annum.

June '73 Hire charges increased by 15% (village), 20% (others). Football Club refused for dances.

Aug '73 Brenda W. objects to M. Burns' boys etc.



## ASTONS HISTORY GROUP PUBLICATIONS:

Aston Tirrold and Upthorpe: a history, by Lucy Fuller. *A fascinating record of village life, given as a talk to the Astons Womens Institute in 1921.* An Astons History Group reprint 2005. Reprinted again 2026.

Sir John Leigh Hoskyns: Rector of St. Michael's Church Aston Tirrold 1846 to 1911, by Vivien Biggs. 2006. *The life of a Victorian rector whose 60-year tenure saw many changes in village life.*

Sir John Leigh Hoskyns' Diary of a village. Extracts, selected by Vivien Biggs. 2000.

The Stockwell Players, by Robin Sewell. 2000. *A drama group who performed outdoor productions for nearly thirty years, with early appearances by Prunella Scales and Alan Bates. Forerunner of the Blewbury Players.* Reprinted with extra material 2026.

Wee Joe: From Galloway to Flanders Fields. 2018.

Astons Fallen Soldiers. 2018. *Lives of the sixteen Astons soldiers who lost their lives during WW1.*

The Astons Home Front: the Role of Women during WW1, by Jancis Smith. 2018.

An Astons Journal: The 'diary' of Stephen Elliott and Tom Powell: 1885 to 1984, transcribed and annotated by Judy Barradell-Smith.

The Astons Poor Relief Book, 1788-1821. 2023. *A partial transcript, with research and annotation by Stephen Whitwell (1984) and Judy Barradell-Smith.*

Astons Fallen Soldiers. 2025. *Lives of the ten Astons soldiers who lost their lives during WW2.*

The Forgotten War: Frederick Ernest Ray. 1914-1944, by Judy Barradell Smith. 2025.

Exhibition boards for the WW2 2025 exhibition. 2026.

Aston Tirrold and Aston Upthorpe Village Hall, a history: 1943-2026. by Jancis Smith. 2026.

NB. These publications are available to view on our village website [www.theastons.net](http://www.theastons.net).