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# Victoria Hall, Sutton Scotney.

1897 - 1997



# Victoria Hall, Sutton Scotney

"At a public meeting held in the Schoolroom, Sutton Scotney on Saturday Feby. 20th 1897. H.Nicoll Esq in the chair.

(1) Proposed by Mr. Nicoll and seconded by Mr.Milsum that Dr. Griffiths be appointed Hon. Treasurer and Geo. Monks Hon. Sec.

Carried Unanimously.

(2) Mr. Geo. Judd then read the Subscriptor list to the meeting.

(3) Proposed by Mr. Nicoll and seconded by Mr. Geo. Judd that the following gentlemen be appointed to act as a Building Committee, to discuss the question of a site and purchase same, also to discuss the particulars of Building and erect same.

Building Committee:

Mr. H. Nicoll	Revd.C.P.Hutchinson
Mr. Humby	Mr. F. Wheeler
Mr. R. Wickham	Mr. W Permain
Mr. I. Milsum	Mr. H. Bailey
Mr. J. Smith	Mr. Armswood
Mr. Denton	Mr. W. Witts
Mr. F. Small	Mr. J. Shepherd
Mr. Foster	Mr. S. Harvey

Carried unanimously.

4. The following scheme was then read to the meeting by Dr. Griffiths

That the Hall be erected in Commemoration of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee and be called the Victoria Hall, for the benefit of Sutton Scotney and neighbouring parishes, and be used for such purposes as the Trustees shall approve."

Thus reads the first page of the Minute Book of the Victoria Hall. It tells so much and, then again, leaves many questions unanswered.

Who were these 'gentlemen' who took on the prodigious task of finding land, designing and erecting a building all in the space of seven months ? The Hall was officially opened on Thursday, 23rd September 1897, a truly Olympian effort.

The Chairman lived at Bullington House and a plaque hanging on the stage in the Hall is inscribed: "In Affectionate and Grateful Memory of Henry Nicoll Esq. Founder and Chairman of this Hall who died October 1923. This tablet was erected by his Co-Trustees. July 1924."

Henry Nicoll was a magistrate on the Andover County Bench taking his seat for the first time in July 1896. He became a County Councillor and Chairman of the Parish Council of Wonston. Boundaries have changed since then! He was a trout fisherman and an article he wrote for the 1916 edition of *Salmon and Trout* contains an amusing story of a council of war on the Giddy Bridge, Wonston one Sunday (no fishing on Sundays in those days) with a fellow fisherman, having failed to get the trout to do more than look at any fly tried the previous day. A visit to the 'jovial village butcher' on Monday supplied the answer with some extremely smelly gentles which the trout could not resist. He apologised for 'such a shocking offence against fishing morals' but pleaded great provocation and that it had been many years ago.



The other plaque on the Hall stage, erected on May 1st 1911, commemorates "William Arthur Griffiths MRCS LRCP through whose efforts this Hall was built for the well-being of Wonston and the neighbouring Parishes".

Dr.Griffiths, as Treasurer, appears to have shared the main burden of responsibility with Mr. Monk, the Secretary, for all that had to be done in such a short time. He features on a number of early photographs of the village football team as President, and it is interesting to note that there is a carved chair in the chancel of Wonston Church given in his memory. Clearly he was a man of many interests and much involved in village life.

Dr.Griffiths lived at Brook House, Wonston from 1895 to 1911 and ran his medical practice from there. Brook House remained the 'Doctor's house' with first Dr.Todd (1911-1921) and then Dr Farrant(1921-1951) succeeding him. The footpath from Sutton Scotney to Brook House was well used. "Going to see the doctor" meant quite a walk for many people.

George Monk, appointed as Secretary, owned Monk's 'Grocery and Provision Merchant' shop, situated where Hydewood bungalows now are and across the road from where the Hall was to be built. Copies of accounts in the 1960's show "A. Monk" still supplying the Hall with cleaning materials, light bulbs and the like. Monk's was one of numerous shops in the village where, in 1897, one could buy bread, meat, groceries, haberdashery, bicycles, toys, stationery and most of people's day to day needs. Pictures of Oxford Road at the time reveal a busy street, bustling with people, and The Square with the White Swan Inn and the Coach & Horses - both Coaching Inns - at the centre of activity.



In April 1949, recording the death of George Henry Monk the last of the original Trustees, it was said, "He will always be remembered for his happy and cheerful disposition, and his practical help in anything connected with Victoria Hall." Over 50 years service is certainly an outstanding contribution. His son Arthur was made a Trustee in his place.

Of the other members of the Building Committee, family names appear which will be familiar to some. The Permain lived where the Edmunds now have their Picture Shop and Mr. Witts, a bricklayer and Methodist lay-preacher lived in the cottage beside the Hall. James Smith, father of Dick and Jim built *Amara* and *Canberra* on the Oxford Road for the two brothers - the family working as carpenters, wheel wrights and blacksmiths. How stange that their yard should now be called "Miller's Yard" - the one trade that was not carried on there !

The Rector of Wonston, the Reverend Charles Hutchinson, was here to see the Hall built being succeeded the following year by the Revd. R.F.H. Bigg-Wither.

The Hall was vested in fourteen Trustees, to be resident within four miles, who were nominated and elected by subscribers of £1 and upwards, at the rate of 1 vote for each £1 subscribed. On March 5th 1897, the following gentlemen were elected as Trustees:

Mr.John Milsum, Wonston Manor - farmer  
Mr.Herbert Bailey, Norton - farmer  
Revd.Charles Hutchinson - Rector of Wonston  
Mr.William Foster, Sutton Scotney - Station Master  
Mr.Henry Nicoll, Bullington House - merchant  
Mr.Frank Small, Sutton Scotney - Relieving Officer  
Mr.John Shepherd, Sutton Scotney - farmer  
Mr.Gilbert Diddams, Sutton Scotney - coal merchant  
Mr.Samuel Harvey, Sutton Scotney - labourer  
Mr.Richard Wickham, Sutton Scotney - grower  
Mr.Walter Permain, Sutton Scotney - shopkeeper  
Mr.James Smith, Sutton Scotney - carpenter  
Mr.Charles Humby, Sutton Scotney - gardener  
Mr.Frank Wheeler, Sutton Scotney - carrier

Dr. Griffiths and Mr. Monk were ex officio members. It was agreed that the Trustees meet annually and appoint five of their members to act as a committee of management for the current year. (later changed to seven).

The land was bought for £25 from Lord St. Leonards (the Right Honorable Edward Burtenshaw, Baron St. Leonards) who had inherited the Sutton Scotney Estate which was mortgaged, from his father. An absentee landlord, he lived in Anglesey.

The Tithe Map of 1838 shows two open areas in the centre of the village - The Square and a triangle to the south. Originally it may have been one large market place and there is a suggestion of medieval town planning in the layout of the market place and building plots. The Hall was built on the triangular piece of land, some 700 square yards in size, thanks to the tenant for life, Mr.C.H. Taylor, foregoing his tenancy. The Trustees held the freehold until 1988 when the land was vested in the Official Custodian for Charities.

By the end of March it had been agreed to employ an architect for the building of the Hall, the fee not to exceed £10.00. A Mr. Colson of Winchester was appointed and drew up plans for a building to be either 45 or 50 feet x 23 feet inside with a retiring room 16 x 22 feet, the main entrance facing south, the side buildings to be on the east, also a door on the west side. A space was to be allowed for a clock.

The following gentlemen were invited to estimate and tender:

Messrs. Grace	of	Winchester
.. Talmash	of	Wonston
.. Goater	of	Sparsholt
.. Beale	of	Andover
.. Gilbert	of	Whitchurch

At the beginning of May, Mr. Grace's tender of £295 and £5 for tiles was accepted subject to any reductions in terms which could be obtained. A sub-committee was then

appointed "to negotiate with some Public Body for raising any sum which may be required"

Work commenced on May 7th and in July Mr. Grace was paid £100 on account. It was agreed to raise any money required by mortgage - it seems that the the approach to "Public Bodies" had not been successful and Mr. Nicoll advanced the sum of £140 at 3%

Records of decisions taken during July and August:-

"The sum of £2-10-0 be paid to Mr.Witts for garden seeds.

The letters V.R. and figures 1837 and 1897 be worked in the front of the Hall, the sum not to exceed £2 for same.

A sub committee be elected to settle the question of a grate in the Hall.

The well outside the Hall to be filled in .

A sub committee be elected to draw up the programme for the opening of the Hall and that this should be undertaken by the Rt. Hon. Earl of Northbrook on Thursday, September 23rd at 2.30 p.m. An illuminated address was drawn up to be presented to him.

Charges for admission to the Opening were agreed as Reserved Seats 2/6, second ditto 1/-, third 3d, and that the Public Tea with music be 6d.

The Chairman for the day was to be Mr.Nicoll; the Lord Bishop of Guildford and Mrs. Sumner to be invited as guests.

Messrs. Diddams, Witts, Wheeler & Humby undertook to arrange the tables and seats for the Opening Day, Dr. Griffiths the lamps, Revd. Hutchinson the flowers, Dr. Davison Decorating the Hall and Messrs Diddams, Foster, Small and Monk to take charge of the door.

Thirty shillings be paid to the Wonston Band for services during the opening of the Hall."

Jubilee 'hysteria' was high, with a whole year's celebrations taking place. In July 1897 Queen Victoria, travelling on the newly built Royal train stopped at Winchester railway station en route to Osborne House on the Isle Of Wight. 3000 people were said to have gathered at the station to see Her Majesty.

The building and opening of the Victoria Hall was Sutton Scotney's contribution to the general celebrations. Subsequent royal occasions were to provide the stimulus for extensions and improvements to the building, continuing until Elizabeth II's Silver Jubilee.

The *Hampshire Chronicle* records the opening of the Hall in every detail, the account taking up 108 column inches of small type. The opening paragraphs and other passages are quoted -

"The residents of Sutton Scotney and the district adjacent are to be congratulated on the gratifying result of their determination to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of the Queen by providing a much felt want, viz., a public hall at Sutton Scotney. The effort, too, is the more praiseworthy in that the funds have been raised voluntarily, and without any demand upon the rates, and although the hall is not of pretentious character, it is admirably adapted for the purposes for which it has been erected. Moreover it is undoubtedly a great improvement to the village, for it has done away with what of late years has been a most unsightly corner.

The building is situated on a triangular plot of ground at the junction of the main roads, and is near the railway station, the mission church, and adjacent to the cottages and farm buildings, of which the village is principally composed. The hall is 48ft long by 22ft wide, with a height of 10ft to the eaves and 22ft to the apex of the roof. The floor at one end of the room is raised 2ft and forms a platform projecting 12ft into the room. A retiring room about 16ft by 12 ft adjoins the platform end of the room and is fitted with a copper and a fireplace. The walls are of cement concrete - rough stuccoed on the outside and, and lined on the inside with matchboarding 3ft high above which the walls are plastered and coloured. The roofs are open timbered and matchboarded on the inside and are covered with patent Roman tiles. The end gable is surmounted by a flagstaff. The hall is well lighted from windows at the side and gables and is heated by ordinary fireplaces. The whole, although

simple and modest in every way, forms a bright-looking and effective building, and is illustrative of what can be done by the use, as far as possible, of local materials and labour in providing at a comparatively small cost a roomy and not altogether unattractive building, suitable in every way for the purposes required of it.  
.....

The total cost has been not far short of £400 of which £225 was raised in subscriptions, £140 was borrowed on easy terms on the security of the hall, leaving about £30 which was more than met by the receipts on the opening day .....

The hall is vested in the following as the Management Committee: - Mr. Hy. Nicoll, the Rev.C.P. Hutchinson, Mr. Herbert Bailey, Mr. W.J. Foster, Mr. J.D. Milsum, Mr. C. Humby, Mr. G. Diddams and the Hon. Treasurer and the Hon. Secretary (ex officio). In addition to the use of the hall for the customary general purposes, it is intended to open it each week-day evening as a club and reading room." Later in the proceedings the use was referred to as "... a place for entertainments and for meetings, for friendly societies to give their dinners and would also be used as a reading room and village club."

"Present on the platform was the Member of Parliament, Mr.W.W.B.Beach & Mrs. Beach, Viscount Baring, Mr. Wm. W. Portal, Mr. Spencer J. Portal & Mrs. Portal. The Bishop had been unable to attend but was described later as 'not one of those Puritanical kind of bishops, but one who liked to see people happy and enjoying themselves - it was known that he wished them well.'

Mr. Geo. Judd in proposing a vote of thanks to the visitors for their presence that afternoon said that they had been very fortunate in having the support of many outsiders in helping them in the building of that very beautiful room ....There were various reasons why Sutton Scotney should be glad to have the assistance of those outside. To begin with Sutton Scotney was a poor parish; they had no mighty landowner, no noble lord with unbounded wealth to help them (laughter), and with regard to the land itself it was a poor country - he had it on authority ...that the outlying district of the parish was a Sahara, which meant desert, and they could not expect a very civilised people to live in a desert place ( laughter and applause). They therefore saw how necessary it was that those from more favoured places should come and assist them as often as possible."

Comparisons were made with Shawford, whose Hall, erected earlier that year, had been paid for by the rates, and with Whitchurch, who hadn't yet got one and were encouraged to copy Sutton Scotney.

The Chairman, in thanking Dr. Griffiths and Mr. Monk - Treasurer and Secretary - without whom they would never have had the hall, told the story of the porter on the Great Western Railway, whose duty it was to call out 'Slough, change for Windsor', and who said it so often that it became almost part of his nature and, when at a christening of his son the godparent was asked to name the child the porter replied 'Slough, change for Windsor' (laughter). In the same way if their hon treasurer's son had been christened this year ( instead of last) he was afraid that there would have been some risk of his being called 'Victoria Hall' by mistake (laughter and applause).

After the formal proceedings most of the audience adjourned to the schoolroom where a jumble sale in aid of hall funds took place. This was followed at half past five by a public tea, the arrangements for which were carried out by the ladies of the village and surrounding district. During the tea there was a programme of music, taken part in by several ladies, Mr. Rupert Pitter, and others, Miss Hutchinson being the pianist."

With all the excitement of the opening over, the Management Committee had to concentrate on the running of the Hall. They met a week later and as well as agreeing £2 be paid to Mr. Grace for laying out the grounds and deciding that a fence and coal shed be erected, they settled the charges as follows :

For County Council, or election meetings	1-1-0
For Balls (all night)	1-0-0
For Concerts etc	15-0
For .. .. to Parishoners	7-6

And an extra charge of 2/6 for the use of the Piano.

The piano seems to have had a hard time as it was agreed to move it back to the School until the walls of the Hall were dry but that it should then come back and remain in the Hall unless the School required it for any entertainment - thereupon the cost of moving it between the Hall and the School was to be divided between them. One wonders what the tone of the piano was like with all this upheaval ! Described as the 'old village piano' it was finally sold in 1906.

At the end of the first year £50 was paid off the loan and and the balance of £90 was paid in September 1899. The minute of that meeting - underlined in the book - 'the mortgage deed was then destroyed in the presence of the Trustees assembled', reveals the pleasure at this event.

Two years later, in April 1902 the Coronation Committee proposed to erect a tower and clock at the south end of the Hall in commemoration of the coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII, and this was accepted by the Trustees. This meant some alterations - a sliding door was proposed at the south end of the Hall and a new approach to the Hall opposite the west door. The cost of the clock tower was £54.17.5.

At this time it was agreed to purchase for use in the hall 8 forms, 3 tables 10ft long, 6 trestles and a lamp of 70 candle power. Some of these items are still with us !

In 1904 the Trustees accepted some land and cottages adjoining the schools, to be held at their discretion for the benefit of the Parish of Wonston in general and for the use of the Hall and benefit of the schools in particular. The Trustees agreed to take over the property once free from debt. Mr. Cave lived in one of the cottages, Mrs. Silcock in the other, and rent was paid from September 29th 1904. A new approach to the School was thought necessary and the rents appear to have been used for this purpose in the first instance.

The cottages were sold in 1911, for £140 and it was agreed that the School approach and portion of playground be let to the School Managers for 1/- a year.

More building was proposed in 1906 - a new anteroom at the back of the Hall was planned and a fund set up to meet the costs. The Chairman and Major Courage each promised £5 towards the same. The land at the back of the Hall was purchased from Lord St. Leonards for £15 with legal costs of £2.14.0

A new path and fence were required and an agreement was drawn up with Mr. Taylor for the lease of the ground for 2/6 a year. A Mr. Hampton designed the plans for the new building and later gave £25 towards the costs. The building was to have hollow brick walls instead of concrete, the rough cast to be applied in the Spring. Mr. Goater was awarded the contract by 9 votes to 4 at a price of £125

The new anteroom was opened on April 17th 1907 and in December that year it was agreed to procure and plant suitable trees on the space at the north end of the Hall to form a screen.

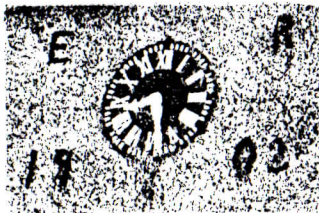
An entry of December 1907 started the long and interesting saga about 'Sanitary arrangements'.

"A letter received from the Revd. Sumner (curate at Wonston Church), re the want of Sanitary arrangements at the Hall was read by the Chairman. Resolved that no notice be taken

of same beyond the official acknowledgement already made by the Hon. Treasurer."

Not deterred, the Revd. Sumner wrote again asking permission to post the correspondence on the subject of the sanitary condition of the Hall to the local press. He was again brushed off, it being "Resolved that no answer be returned to this letter."

It was not until 1911 when the Trustees themselves proposed to tackle what must have been a much felt need - "the addition to the Hall of Lavatories", at the same time providing a store room and undertaking general repairs. The project, costing £130 and undertaken by Mr. Goater, was carried out as a "suitable commemoration of the coronation of His Majesty King George V"!



### The Clock

First mention made of winding the clock was in 1906; 1/- a year was to be paid to Mr. Everett. In 1915 Mr. Monk was employed to undertake the task. A reference is made in January 1935 as follows:

"That Mr. Betteridge be paid £1 for winding the Clock and that he be asked to wind up the clock placed in the Hall by the Women's Institute and that he be paid £1 per annum in the future."

In 1947 Mr. Ernest Smith became the clock winder and he, followed by his son Arthur Smith, have between them wound the clock for over 50 years. This voluntary service is to be recognised by a presentation to Arthur Smith at the Centenary celebrations.

Made by W.H. Bailey of Manchester and erected in 1902, the clock has had at least two major overhauls - in 1969 by H.A. Phillis of Winchester and in 1996 by Mr.C.E.Hebden of Barton Stacey.

### Early Lettings

An approach was made for use of the Hall as a miniature Rifle Range and after discussion it was agreed that it be let to the Rifle Club at 2/6 a night, Dr. Smith holding himself responsible for the same. However, a request to let the hall for a Sixpence halfpenny (commercial) Bazaar was refused. In 1906 the Football Club were allowed to use the Hall as a dressing room at 1/- a time.

In September 1907 the Working Men's Club applied for use of the Hall for games etc. and for the sale of refreshments (including two pints of beer per member per night). This was refused.

In October, however, it was agreed to let the Club the anteroom until Dec 31st. Presumably this was to see how matters developed. The charge to be 3/- a night with fires, lights and use of caretaker when both rooms were occupied and 2/- a night when the small room only was occupied. The following additions were made to the byelaws

- : No political discussions to be allowed.
- : Refreshments for visitors be paid for by the member introducing same.
- : No beer to be sold at less than charged at the local public houses.

On discussion as to whether one pint of beer in bottle should be allowed a vote was taken with seven for and five against.

Memories of the 1830's when Sutton Scotney was the centre of a popular radical movement may have influenced the Trustees in their somewhat draconian rules forbidding political discussion.

1908. The Working Men's Club expressed a wish to become a Benefit Club in association with the Reading Room. Vote taken on allowing draught beer. Negative result.

Other entries in the Minute Book reveal the varied uses that took place. e.g.

"Cooking classes organised by the County Council - charge reduced by 1/3rd."

"Use of hall for roller skating was discussed." This was allowed but a sub-committee was set up to watch the effect on the floor! Charges were agreed of 6d a person from 10am to 1 pm and 2pm to 5 pm, and 3d from 6pm to 9pm.

1908. Mr. Wickham applied for use of hall as gymnasium for one evening a week at 1/- a night.

"Agreed to let Boy Scouts use hall free of charge for the purposes of instruction."

At the beginning of the First World War - which had such a devastating effect on the village, the War Memorial bearing witness to the great loss of life - agreement was given to billeting of troops in the Hall. Nothing is recorded as to whether this took place.

#### 1920 - 1939

June 4th 1920. "Proposed by Mr. Wells, sec. by Col. Courage that the District Council be allowed to fix a Lamp and Finger Post in the corner of the Hall grounds. carried."

The meeting agreed to the request of the Parish Council, to place a captured Field Gun in the Hall ground, but the Trustees would not accept any responsibility in looking after same, also that the Parish Council should remove it, if requested.

A copy of a photograph of the lamp and finger post has been framed and hung in the Hall as part of the Centenary celebrations. There is no record of the Field Gun so the outcome of these negotiations is not known.

Also in 1920 the cups and saucers with 'Victoria Hall' printed on them were purchased. An example is preserved in a display cabinet in the back committee room.

#### The Fire

November 28th 1921. "A lighted candle fell into some rubbish in the lamp room. The damage resulting from the fire is to doors, windows, partitions, ceilings, roof and flooring necessitating, in most cases, replacement. The village carpenter is of the opinion that to put the parts of the building into their former condition will cost from £75 to £100, but that it is impossible to give an exact estimate.

But for the prompt assistance rendered by the caretaker, Mr. George Witts, Mr. Hart, H. Hatten and Mr. Monk (the Hon. Secy) the whole building would have been destroyed."

November 6th 1931. The Trustees expressed themselves "willing to agree giving a piece of the ground at the corner turning to Wonston for widening the path if the County Council will do the necessary work "

Some entries in the Minute Book retain a familiar ring today, for example, "October 1933 - That Mr. Smith attend to the repair of the roof at South End of Hall where the water is at present coming though."

Other entries mark landmarks such as that in July 1935 when electricity came to the Hall and the many references to lamps and candles in the Minute Book cease. This was followed in March 1937 by a recommendation from the Trustees meeting to the Coronation Committee that part of



the money collected and given for the Coronation Celebration be kept and used as a permanent memorial of the event to take the form of heating by radiator for the Victoria Hall. This was later undertaken for the sum of £115.3.6

Despite the coming of electricity and central heating Miss Wickham, in May 1939, had reason to complain "that on different occasions the Hall had not been properly prepared with tables etc. The Trustees feel very strongly that the caretaker has much less to do, than before the Electric Lighting and Heating were installed. The Secretary be instructed to write to the Caretaker, stating that tables etc should be got ready to meet the requirements of different functions."

#### **The Hall in War Time**

September 1939. A meeting was called to discuss important business, arising from the use of Hall by the A.R.P. Miss Wickham read a letter from Mrs. Thompson expressing her views on the subject, especially stating that now is the time when the Hall ought to be at the disposal of the Village.

Miss Wickham informed the meeting that she had seen the Senior Air Raid Warden, Capt. Fox, and that the Hall would not be required except in the case of an Air Raid, but he asked that V.A.D equipment should be stored in the back room of the Hall. War Risk insurance was thought to be unnecessary. It was decided to replenish fuel supplies before restrictions were imposed.

Mr. George White recalls moving to Sutton Scotney with J. Arthur Rank as one of the young clerks, the day after war broke out. After London, the village offered little other than the pubs for amusement. The Victoria Hall was much in demand for sing-songs and such like.

At the outbreak of hostilities, Mrs. Paul of Egypt Cottage painted some "very lovely flower pictures" on boards to be used as black outs. (In time they faded and in 1977 Mrs. L.A. Powell of Stoke Charity painted the Queen's Beasts

on the same boards - used today as decoration and to protect the windows when ball games are played.)

In September 1940 Mrs. Thompson explained to the Trustees the talk she had had with Col. Bishop regarding "the take over of hall by the Military .. a charge to be made of £1 a week .. and if heating was required during winter, they should supply fuel, for same." Mr. Monk brought before the meeting that the Black Out curtains were inadequate. Mrs. Thompson asked permission for the use of the kitchen for the Produce Stall for one afternoon a week during bad weather (a market stall was held in The Square throughout the war).

"Mr. Samways proposed and Mr. W.C. Taylor sec. that £1 be sent as a donation to the *Spitfire Fund*"

April 1941. Mrs. Thompson spoke of the dirty state of the Victoria Hall owing to occupation by Military. A letter had been received from the Medical Officer of Health stating that under present conditions it was impossible to hold the Welfare Clinic in the Hall, but he appreciated the difficulties.

In October 1942 A special meeting was called to discuss the possibility of the Military giving up the hall and to give an exchange for the Home Guard for use of hall four nights a week - 6 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Mrs. Thompson proposed from the Chair that the use of central heating of the Hall should be abolished till after the war. The Secretary was told to order coal for use in grates, as required. By November 1943, due to a "strong feeling in the village the central heating was reinstated."

The sanitary arrangements of the men's Cloakroom came under discussion. The Trustees agreed that it was impossible to do anything in the matter till after the war. This seems to have been a useful excuse for delay in solving what was a difficult problem. In November 1946 a minute reads "Still trying to find a solution to Gent's lavatory"!

The District Peace Committee held a dance on Peace Night in the Hall.

**The Post War Years -**  
extracts from the Minute Books.

1946.

The Headmistress of Wonston School wrote asking to use the Hall for physical training for the pupils for one hour twice a week. (The School's use of the Hall rose to twelve hours a week at one time and continued until March 1978, proving to be a long and happy association).

It was decided to paint the outside of the Hall - brown and cream. Mr. Smith was paid £22.18.0 for the work.

Cinema performances were arranged weekly with Sound Services Ltd.

The Treasurer reported that despite record bookings of the Hall the balance at the bank was only £3.5.0. - the expenses had been very heavy.

1953.

It was decided to ask Mr. Smith to replace the weathervane.

The Sutton Scotney and District Coronation Committee made a gift to the Trustees of £150.0.0 for the improvement of the Victoria Hall. The improvement to be a new floor in commemoration of the the Coronation of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second. The gift was made with two conditions. Firstly that the work should be done as soon as possible. Secondly, that a plaque should be put in the Hall with suitable wording.

An estimate from Mr. Howard was accepted for £186.00, with an additional sum of £25 for spraying to prevent rot.

November 1955

The Chairman opened the meeting by paying tribute to Mr. W.C. Taylor who had passed away since the last meeting of the Trustees. Mr. Taylor was the oldest Trustee. Mr. Gray from the Chair proposed that Mr. F. Taylor should be elected a Trustee in place of his late father.

Miss Cowley asked for permission to have a cupboard in the hall for Girl Guide property (agreed).

1956

Mr. Howard offered to prepare specifications for repairing and painting the outside of the Hall and Messrs Mason's estimate of £169 for the work was accepted. As there was only £2.2.3 in the funds it was decided to borrow £170 from the National Provincial Bank.

1959.

A Trust Deed was drawn up placing the Trust on a charitable basis. It was agreed that the "Parish Hall should be administered and managed by a Committee of Management consisting of the Trustees and not less than four nor more than eight persons resident in the Parish and selected by the Trustees as representatives of any one or more of the following organisations:

Women's Institute, Parochial Church Council, Mothers' Union, British Legion, Sutton Scotney Village Club, Wonston Parish Council and the Sutton Scotney Methodist Church."

The Trustees at the time were :

Myrtle Willis, Norton Manor  
Rosslyn Cowan, Pipers Hill  
Alfred Howard, Wonston Cottage  
Margaret Edelsten, Wonston Grange.

July 1959. Major Cowan proposed that the "splendid gift" by Dr. & Mrs. Edelsten of new stage and back curtains should be recorded in the Minute Book. Also the gift by the Women's Institute (with a contribution from the Women's section of the British Legion) of new window curtains. (The stage curtains are still in use.)

Major Cowan wished it recorded in the Minutes that Mr. S. Taylor should be thanked and congratulated on his 21 years as Secretary to the Trustees, also Mr. Cave who had been a Trustee since 1927 and Treasurer since 1937.

## 1960 onwards

March 1960. A special meeting was called to discuss Lord Rank's generous offer to defray the cost of elaborate improvements to Victoria Hall. The offer was accepted unanimously, with thanks. The foyer, cloakrooms and furniture store were formed by front extensions to the building. These provided valuable accommodation but unfortunately were built at a time when flat roofs were in vogue, the extension not adding to the outside beauty of the building and causing problems from time to time as is the wont of flat roofs.

1961. The Trustees decided to reduce charges by half to Youth organisations, Scouts, Guides, Cubs and Junior Red Cross.

Mrs. Willis informed the Committee that the Sutton Scotney Band had offered to give a concert in aid of Hall funds,

The National Provincial Bank asked to use the entrance rather than back room for their weekly bank session.

1962. Mr. Cave was given a propelling pencil for 25 years work as Treasurer, and Mr. E.A. Smith took on the post.

Mrs. Edelsten gave details of the dance and barbecue held at Wonston Grange which had realised between £80 and £85. The money was to be used on tables and chairs.

1967. Further Hall extensions were undertaken by Messrs Wheeler of Romsey and again paid for by Lord Rank. An upstairs club room and a cloakroom were formed. A plaque on the stairs reads "This room to be used by the young members of the Sutton Scotney Club was presented to the Trustees of the Victoria Hall by the Rt. Hon. Lord Rank LLD., DL., JP. 1967"

Mr. Dick Kitson, Agent for the Estate, carried on the tradition of help to the Hall following Lord Rank's death in 1972, both as a Trustee and Vice Chairman of the Committee.

A dinner was arranged on November 17th 1970, in the Coach & Horses, to mark Mr. Monk's retirement on leaving the district. All Trustees and members of the Committee were present.

1972 Carnival Week and Fete. The Hall and Club again agreed to combine their efforts not only to raise badly needed funds, but to continue to provide a week's enjoyable activities for the community. Proceedings started with a Fete at Pipers Hill on Saturday, June 10th and the Carnival Procession took place on the following Saturday, 17th June. Other events took place throughout the week - about which 'Full publicity will be given'.

This is just one example of the many Carnival weeks which took place during the 1960's and 1970's. Also popular were the St. George's Days Whist Drives and Sales and the many pantomimes produced by Mrs. Ayres and which involved casts of up to 50 people.

1977 Lorry accident. On Saturday, April 23rd at about mid-day, a Ford 7 ton articulated lorry approaching the village from Winchester went out of control after descending Winchester Hill and the driver was unable to follow the course of the road and ended up with the nose of the lorry buried in the northern end of the Hall. Fortunately the Hall was empty at the time and the driver was also fortunate to escape injury. The piano was smashed and the toilet at that end of the Hall badly damaged. Repairs cost over £8000.00 and the Hall was out of action for fourteen weeks.

Mr. Kent offered facilities at the School for small evening and weekend events and the Methodist Church accommodated the Playgroup. Bookings for Wedding receptions, discos and the like had to be cancelled. Following this accident the somewhat ugly metal barrier was installed. ( This is now being 'greened' by planting honeysuckle to cover it.)

Later that year it was recorded that the Youth Club was using the back room as well as the Club room and that up to 53 young people attended on some evenings.

An unusual and exciting fund raising event in support of the Victoria Hall and A.R.C. (Arthritis and Rheumatism Council) took place on the new A34 By Pass, the day before it opened to traffic in the autumn of 1981. The village which had suffered for many years with increasing traffic congestion - many will remember the Bank Holiday queues - was to have a new lease of life and curiosity brought many people to the fete held on the new road. £948 was raised for the Hall.

Another fund raising event was the exhibition of old photographs arranged by Mrs. Jane Gray. The 'Historical Wonston' Exhibition gave rise to much local interest.

Yet more building work took place in 1981 when the lock up Bar room was created by filling in the space between the foyer and the kitchen. This provided the means of running a bar at social events and also gave another small room useful for committee meetings and the like.

1986. Refurbishment costing £14,000.00 was undertaken. A 50% grant was received from the District Council and 25% from Wonston Parish Council. The work included a new flat roof on the foyer and toilets, renewal of the drain from the Hall to the cesspool on the far side of the Wonston road, extension of the bar area and erection of glazed screen and door and taking down the un-used chimney in the main hall.

#### 1993 - 1997

With only one Trustee remaining in office in 1993, matters were at a low ebb. After two public meetings a new committee was elected with a brief to introduce a more modern style of management. A new constitution was agreed by the Charity Commissioners providing for three elected members and representatives of all user organisations to comprise the management committee, all becoming Trustees for the year of office. This widened the burden of responsibility from four individuals to the full committee.

A programme of work was put in hand to bring the Hall up to a good standard by 1997 and the 100th anniversary of its opening. This included the repair and redecoration of the outside of the Hall, the installation of a 4,000 gallon cesspool, improvements to the toilet accommodation and refurbishment of the kitchen. All of this work whilst grant aided by the County, District and Parish Councils was partly paid for as a result of many fund raising events and generous donations from local residents.

Photographs of the tank being lowered into an area of the car park provide a record of the very high level of the water table (it was not long after 'Lake Victoria' had formed in Dairy Meadow). The kitchen was transformed by the removal of the large chimney breast and the lowering of the serving hatch. This work was undertaken by Ropers of Whitchurch and Dick Bulpitt, who hacked out the old concrete walls, can testify to the solidity of the original building.

Finally, a quote from the the 1996 Annual report which aptly sums up the present position:

" The Hall has been very well used during the year and the improved facilities, most notably the alterations to the kitchen, have proved popular with regular users and have undoubtedly helped attract new customers. It is good to be able to report that as we enter the 100th year of the Hall's existence there is an active Management Committee - largely drawn from member organisations - and the varied use shows what a valuable and important amenity the Hall provides. Whilst situated in Sutton Scotney it is important to remember that the area of benefit is the whole of Wonston Parish and that it belongs as much to Stoke Charity, Hunton, Norton and Wonston village as to Sutton Scotney itself. Much voluntary help has been given from residents throughout the Parish during the year and to all those who have contributed in whatever way this Report offers an opportunity to acknowledge and thank them for their interest and involvement."

### **The Centenary.**

Celebrations planned for the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Hall's opening include an afternoon programme of events, contributed by organisations who are regular users of the Hall, and an evening Barn Dance with a 'Victorian' theme.

**Victoria Hall  
100th anniversary of opening  
September 20th 1997**

- 2 p.m. Basing R.B.L. Band plays in Square and then outside Hall.
- 2.30 Committee members gather for photographs.
- 3 p.m. Mr. Mark Ferguson O.B.E. Chairman of Parish Council opens the proceedings & Chairs afternoon. Vote of thanks by Mrs. Lyla Ayres, Hall Chairman. Presentation to Mr. Arthur Smith (Clockwinder). Vote of thanks to Band by Mr. John Saunders, Vice Chairman.  
Vote of thanks to W.I. & R.B.L. Women & other contributors by Sue Lane, Secretary
- 3.15 "Happy Birthday" Card, Candles & Songs by the Playscheme and Beavers.
- 3.30 "1897, The Opening Ceremony".  
Written by Mike Edwards & cast by the Drama Group.
- 3.45 Memories and Tales from the Hall's history - by members of the Sunshine Club.
- 4.00 "2097, The Hall of the Future".  
Written and cast by the Youth Club.
- 4.15 Tea, provided by the Royal British Legion, Women's Section.

Floral decorations & Banner by the Women's Institute.

Many final improvements were put in hand before the 100th anniversary including new flooring in the bar room, an entire overhaul of electrical works and much decorating. Work over several years in the car park and grounds - planting trees, shrubs and roses has been designed with the Centenary in mind.

This short history of the Hall has been compiled by the Secretary from Minute Books, deeds and other records. Following its publication it is planned to deposit the records in the Hampshire County Record Office where they will be available for all to consult.

**"SUCCESS TO THE VICTORIA HALL"**

**Victoria Hall Centenary Celebration  
Sutton Scotney**

Saturday, 20 September, 1997

**Dance Evening**

with the "Woodsidiers Barn Dance Band"

Dress; 1897ish (posh or country yokel)

Bar open at 7.30 and dancing starts at 8.00

Light supper served at 9.30

**Ticket £7.00 (concession £5.00)**

No. 100.....

## Appendices:

i)	Chairmen
1897 - 1923	Mr.H. Nicoll, Bullington House
1923 - 1933	Col.R.Courage, Sutton Scotney Manor
1933 - 1947	Mrs. E. Thompson, Norton Manor
1947 - 1949	Miss P.M. Wickham, Lavender Mead, Wonston
1950 - 1952	Dr.C. Farrant, Brook House, Wonston
1952 - 1956	Mr.J.H. Gray, Wonston Manor
1956 - 1977	Mrs. M. Willis, Norton Manor
1978 - 1982	Mr. A. Howard, Wonston Barn
1983 -	Mrs. L. Ayres, Witts End, Sutton Scotney

ii)	Caretakers
1897 - ?	
1906 - ?	Mr. Silcock
1913 - ?	Mr. & Mrs. Andrews
1920 - 1925	Mrs.G.Witts
1925 - 1932	Mrs. Hawkins
1932 - 1958	Mrs. F. Benham
1959 -1962	Mr.F. Fishlock
1962 - 1982	Mr. & Mrs.A. Bell-Tye
1983 - 1984	Mrs. S. Glasspool
1984 - 1987	Mr. N. Fishlock
1988 - 1996	Mr.E. Kimber - acted as a volunteer.

An Amelanchier tree has been planted in the grounds in memory of Ernie Kimber

Caretaker's pay is first recorded in 1906 as 10/- a year. By 1920 it had risen to £15 a year and to £20 in 1946. The pay was £3 a week ( £150 a year) in 1962 and in 1984 it was £12.50 a week (£625 a year).

As elsewhere, the role of caretaker is not always easy to fill. In the many gaps between paid employees and almost entirely in recent years, officers and members of the management committee divide the duties between them.

iii)	Treasurers
1897 - 1911	Dr. W.A. Griffiths
1911 - 1914	Dr. H. Smith
1914 - 1923	Mr. J. Whatley
1924 - 1937	Mr. F. Wheeler
1937 - 1962	Mr. G. Cave
1962 - 1984	Mr. E.A. Smith
1984 - 1992	Mr. L. Blackman
1992 - 1993	Mrs. S. Hall
1993 -	Mrs. A. Dudley

iv)	Secretaries
1897 - 1927	Mr. G. Monk
1928 - 1937	Mr. F. Wheeler
1938 - 1963	Mr. S. Taylor
1963 - 1974	Mr. J. Bourne
1974 - 1979	Mr. G. White
1979 - 1992	Mr. A. Bell-Tye
(1990 -1992)	assisted by Mr.Blackman, due to illness)
1992 - 1993	Mrs.S. Hall
1993 -	Ms. S. Lane

### Trustees and Management Committee, 1997

Chairman	Mrs. Lyla Ayres	(Sutton Scotney Club)
Vice Chairman	Mr. John Saunders	(Royal British Legion)
Secretary	Ms. Sue Lane	(elected)
Treasurer	Mrs. Alice Dudley	(elected)
Members:	Mrs. Maureen Edwards	(Women's Institute)
	Miss Sandra Fishlock	(RBL, Women's Section)
	Mr. Don Grant	(Sunshine Club)
	Mr. George Gray	(Wonston Parish Council)
	Mr. J.J. Heath-Caldwell	(Drama Group)
	Mrs. Dawn Hough	(elected)
	Revd. Tony Jardine	(Wonston P.C.C.)
	Mrs. Rachel Paton	(Youth Club)
	Mrs. Sarah Rouault	(Toddlers Group)
	Mrs. Julie Tabbitt	(Beaver Colony)