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Perran-ar-Worthal Village Memorial Hall

The Official Opening of Perran-ar-Worthal Village Memorial Hall on Saturday 15th May 1971 was a huge mile stone in the saga of this village hall.

Built at a cost of £22,000 it now goes a long way towards meeting the accommodation requirements for the recreational needs of the district, having under its roof a multi-purpose complex.

The Main Hall, 30'x48' & 17' high is suitable for Badminton, the stage is 30'x18' with beneath it two dressing rooms, equipped with toilets and showers, for use with the stage for drama work or as a secondary use for changing rooms for the local football team who play on the adjacent pitch. Adjoining the main hall is a smaller hall which can be used for seating up to about 50 people and is also used for committee meetings, this smaller hall can also be used in conjunction with the main hall with the provision of sliding partitions. The kitchen is accessible from both halls.

At the south end of the building is another room that houses a full sized Billiards table and subsequent club. All the various rooms can be used independently, which enables more than one letting at a time, thus helping the income of the hall.

Built to Vic Hallams Derwent System, we consider that this sectional type of building has given us a larger area of accommodation for our money than we should have got for the traditional block and mortar method. Further more as the decades come and go tastes will change, so can our building be altered to suit other needs.

Plans were originally drawn up before the second world war, but consequently lapsed. However after the war it was again thought desirable to have a village hall. Up till this time the only meeting place of any size had been Tredrea Barn, but this was becoming unsafe and was soon to be condemned for this purpose. With the help of local people, three ex-army nissen huts were purchased for the price of two and by the early 1950's Perran-ar-Worthal had a village hall and made good use of it too, though its long narrow shape did not make it suitable for sports. Gradually money was raised to pay back the amounts loaned by local people. Still more years went by and some money accumulated which was put into Defence Bonds for future use. The village was most fortunate in having had the land for the hall donated, by 1966 a new Trust Deed was drawn up, which put the Committee onto a firmer footing. By now the "temporary hall" was showing decided signs of wear, the committee felt that the time had come for thought about a new hall. In October 1966 the committee held a special meeting, which decided to look into the possibilities of replacing the hall.

After contacting the Cornwall Council of Social Services the wheels began to turn and in January 1967 John Taylor, Truro (now Marshman Warren Taylor), was appointed architect. He drew up plans from a brief given him, of all the local activities plus others that we thought would be possible. The committee were completely stunned at the first plan with an estimate

of £17,000 and sent the architect away to reduce his ideas to nearer £11,000. In the meanwhile ideas were taken from other halls.

At this point we certainly never dreamt that we would be able to finance a large project. Our local representatives on the County Council encouraged us to seek further advice from the Council as we were a developing area and in need of the facilities that the larger project would give. A local Education Official came along to see us and also urged us to approach the Council for help. So it slowly began to dawn on us that proportionally with grant-aid we could perhaps fulfill our dreams and aim high, we did just that.

Then came the long, long period of applying for grants, with answers to letters to the London Department of Education & Science taking up to six months each time to get replies, this long wait meant that costs began to rise and our patience to flag, but thanks to Miss Hann, who consoled and reassured us, we waited. During this time the £2,000 which had been put in Defence Bonds matured and were withdrawn and reinvested in Local Councils at a high rate of interest, this brought in extra money in a comparatively easy fashion. Other money was needed and a series of Jumble Sales, Whist Drives and the usual small functions was established.

Apathy towards the village hall was apparent in the mid '60s and to help overcome this it was decided to hold a village event, to raise money - yes, but more important to sponsor an event when everyone could enjoy themselves. Thus our village "Hey Day" was born in 1966 now firmly established as an annual event. Proof of its popularity showed this year when all roads leading to Perran-ar-Worthal were crammed with traffic and 3,000 people came to enjoy the revelry, raising another £350 for the funds at the same time. Before the third Hey Day a few ladies thought it might be a good idea to try to get up a concert to end the day, this idea grew rapidly, turning into an exception success story almost overnight. On its way it became an "Olde Tyme" affair, feather-boa appeared, costumes were discovered in attics others made or borrowed, tickets went on sale and were immediately all sold, not wanting to disappoint anyone it was decided to put on another performance again a sell out. After the second performance was over we were all very sad until someone suggested that we should put it on at the Arts Theatre Falmouth, this is in fact what we did and after only two, very hectic weeks, we were stage stars (with a cast of about 50) and very happy too have enjoyed ourselves so much, in raising more money. This "Olde Tyme" was held with various different themes for three consecutive years, altogether raising nearly a thousand pounds towards hall funds.

More money though was still needed, estimates required by the Dept. for Education & Science showed clearly that costs were rising fast.

A Supporter's club was formed to help raise more money, they ran a "200 Club", which has now raised a £1,000 in a little over 12 months, proving the enormous support the project was receiving locally. This club is still organising money raisers but is also starting on some more educational items whilst the hall committee concentrates on the administrative lines with the building programme.

Eventually, after what seemed a life time we were advised to get firm tenders for the project. Tenders were invited from a selected list of firms and the envelopes dually opened with ceremony "over a cup of tea" in the architects office. Again hearts dropped, all prices were rather more than we expected. Not to be beaten, the architects advised to withdraw some items so as to come within our budget. After this we were given four weeks to sign the contract. The big question then was how ever do we get a definite reply from London, so that we would know if this would be acceptable for the grant. Nerve edges strained as the days

went by and time began to run out, once again Miss Hann came to the rescue assuring us that all would be alright and that the reply was in the typing pool! So with her advice to hand and tongue in cheek we signed the contract on August 24th last year.

With that done action was quick, tenders came in for the sale of the old hall, hirers had to be advised of its closure, usable equipment such as chairs, tables, piano, crocks etc had to be removed before the demolition men moved in, storage room had to be found, transport arranged. By October 1st the contractor was 'on site', and work had really begun, we could hardly believe it.

The weather was not too good to the contractor but delays were not too many, then someone wanted to get married, could they use the new hall for the reception? With February 20th the date dare we say yes? Well we did: two days before the wedding no floor in the main hall! Happy ending though as the floor layers and the painters went out the back door on Saturday 20th February as the Bridal Party came in the front. Our village hall was in use.

After all our bills are paid we will have to continue raising some money to repay £2,500 borrowed from the National Village Hall loan fund and £250 to a local resident who realised our urgent need for chairs.

With the building now in use we have a new problem, not enough days in the week to fit in all the functions and activities that we would like. Better to be fully used though than standing idle. Hire charges have been put on a sliding scale, giving regular local hirers the best terms, generally we have tried to make the cost of hiring the hall reasonable so as to encourage people to use it to its full potential. If calculations are correct, then the hire charges will cover all the running costs and a percentage of the repayments in the year.

It does not seem long since we decided to rebuild, but our minds ache when we think that the building could have cost us £5,000 less only three years ago, if only the grant-aid system could have been quicker. However we were privileged to have been awarded it, without it Perran-ar-Worthal would not have a Village Hall to be proud of.

Report supplied by
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