

Shipton Parish Hall 1939 to 1945

THIS ARTICLE was prompted by the references to the use of the Beaconsfield Hall and the New Beaconsfield Hall in No.5 of Volume 19 of "The Wychwood", which included a programme from their early post-war years.

Following the declaration of war on the 3rd September 1939 normal village functions continued to be held in the Parish Hall although some of the evening events had to be curtailed due to the restrictions of the "black-out". September 3rd had also seen the arrival of evacuees which caused some overcrowding at the local school and extra accommodation was found for school use at the Red Triangle (The YMCA building which stood near the present entrance to Courtlands Road). However, by the beginning of October the Red Triangle was considered by the authorities to be unsuitable due to poor light and ventilation. As an alternative the school provisionally took over the Beaconsfield (Parish) Hall. But that too was only a short term measure as on 23rd October, the Head, Mr Horne notes in the School Log Book that "The Hall has been commandeered by the military". All children, both locals and evacuees, had to be crammed into the existing Shipton C. of E. School (not then called St. Mary's).

The members of the first military unit to use the Hall were from the Northumbrian Division who were in this area for re-equipping and battle training before embarkation for France. Very little can be recalled of other units of the military which had

use of the Hall but it remained requisitioned for the duration of the war.

Alternative sites had to be found for village meetings and events. The Shipton Parish Council held its last meeting in the Parish Hall on the 11th October 1939, and, although the Parish Council owned the Hall it was not allowed to use it, and the Council had to find other venues, usually the Red Triangle. At these meetings the PC still kept an eye on its property. In July of 1940 three dozen more chairs were needed, and it was noted in 1941 that "some furniture and chattels were missing". Various claims were made to the Army Pay Office for the rent (of the Hall) and for the cost of goods "removed". In 1941 the Parish safe was removed from the Hall to the home of Mr. George Wiggins for "safe keeping", and in 1943, the Clerk to the PC (not then a local person) was asked to "get out all old papers, vouchers, and counterfoils and dispose of them for salvage".

By 1945 it would appear that the Hall was very little used by the military as the Parish Council were now making numerous requests for de-requisitioning of the Hall, whereas no similar requests had been made in the previous five years.

Apart from the minutes of the Parish Council the only known documentary evidence of the Hall's use by the military is this programme for a revue presented by members of the 22nd VRD. These were some of the military personnel from the 22nd Vehicle Reserve Depot where

hundreds of military vehicles were hidden away among the trees in Cornbury Park. The vehicles were driven from all parts of the country to Cornbury where they were kept until required elsewhere in the country. The military personnel, both men and women, were billeted in and around Charlbury.

The connection between the 22nd VRD and Shipton Parish Hall is unknown, although it is known that after the war, thousands of redundant military vehicles were auctioned off. Those needing transportation by train were taken, not to Charlbury station, but were brought to Shipton station as it had a derrick crane for loading onto the railway waggons.

Can anyone supply any other information on the connection? Was it the Wychwood Sports Centre? If so, where was it? Or should it read Wychwoods Social Centre?

The programme is dated 1st March 1945, which is the time that Shipton PC were making their many requests for the Hall's de-requisitioning which were met with responses of "in the near future" and similar being made by the military.

However, at the meeting of the Parish Council on 18th October 1945 it was announced that the Hall had been de-requisitioned on the 12th of that month and that parishioners were already using the Hall again.

In aid of the Wychwood Sports Club.

A GRAND
90 MINUTES
REVUE

(by kind permission of Major Fowle, O.C., 22 VRD)

★

Producer:

MR. MACKINTOSH

(late of the B.B.C.)

★

BEACONSFIELD HALL
Shipton-under-Wychwood

THURSDAY, MARCH 1st, 1945

SOUVENIR PROGRAMME

Presented by *Wychwood Sports Club*
to

W. G. Smith

in appreciation of your efforts
on behalf of the Club

★

CAST:

A.T.S.—L/Cpl. B. Bundy; Ptes. J. Musson, M. Fenton,
H. Hayes, G. Keyes, D. Pratt, P. Andrews,
J. Andrews.

R.A.O.C.—Cpl. L. Wells; L/Cpl. J. Thompson; Ptes.
Cartledge, L. Batton, B. Joyce, G. Dodd,
C. Croucher.

Prompter:

Pte. G. Reeve, A.T.S.

Entertainments Officer:

Lieut. Tasker.

The PC now busied itself with the appointment of the first caretaker for five years, and making claims from the Army for "War Damage", and finding firms to repair said damage and to supply new equipment. Chairs were still in short supply as the Hall had to hire them from the Red Triangle where the Parish Council was still holding its meetings.

In fact, it was not until 29th May 1946 that the Parish Council was back in its own Parish Hall (AKA The Beaconsfield Hall) for its meetings.

(The Programme cover and one inside page, reproduced much smaller on the opposite page, was supplied by Barbara Pearce (née Smith))

**Bridewell Organic Gardens
FESTIVAL OF FUN and GARDEN OPEN DAY**

**SUNDAY JUNE 27th from 12 noon to 6 pm. FOLLOW THE SIGNS
FROM THE A 4095 between Long Hanborough and North Leigh**

Come and enjoy our Festival of Fun and Garden Open Day – music, storytelling, games, stalls, BBQ, Morris dancing, cream teas and lots, lots more in beautiful surroundings.

Bridewell Organic Gardens (reg. charity no 1069878) is based in a walled garden in rolling countryside at WILCOTE near North Leigh. We provide horticultural therapy and the opportunity to learn rural crafts for people in West Oxfordshire who are living with health problems.

For more information ring 01993 868313.

Two concerts by The Burford Singers

conductor Brian Etheridge organ and piano Christopher Tadman-Robins

Saturday June 12th 7.30pm Sherborne Church

The Burford Singers Small Choir (about 25 singers) will present a varied selection of sacred and secular music, ranging from church motets, madrigals and solos with organ, to folk songs, spirituals and popular songs.

The audience will be invited to bring their own picnic from 6.00pm and enjoy the surrounding churchyard with views of the River Windrush.

Tickets will cost £5 and can be bought at the door or in advance from the Burford Gallery (telephone 01993 822305).

Proceeds from the concert will be donated to Macmillan Cancer Relief.

Sunday June 13th 7.30pm Bruern Abbey School

The Singers will repeat the Sherborne programme, but this time a light supper will be provided for the audience from 6.30pm, together with the opportunity to explore the beautiful gardens.

Tickets will cost £12.50 which will include the refreshments and a glass of wine, and can be purchased in advance from the Burford Gallery (telephone 01993 822305) and from Jane Oldridge (01608 658495)

Proceeds to Arthritis Research