

THE GORING PARISH ROOM.

Fifty years ago, on Friday, May 4th, 1900, the Parish Room was ceremonially opened, and a concert given. This event was the culmination of seven years' preparation and the long overdue fulfilment of a much felt need. The idea of a village hall was originally suggested by the Vicar, at that time the Rev. H. W. Littlewood, in 1893, and after a meeting presided over by Mr. Lacey Smith, it was decided to erect a building for the purpose of meetings, religious instruction, choir practices, concerts, entertainments and dances.

Foremost among the supporters of the Hall were General Fife of Clevedon, Mr. Telford Simpson of the Temple, Mr. Lacey Smith, the owner of the business now owned by Messrs. Tylers, Mr. Shoolbred of Thames Bank, and not least, Mr. Saunders, whose boat-house, which now houses the Post Office, was then used, thanks to his generosity, for most of the things for which the Parish Hall was designed. Mr. Shoolbred initiated the fund by presenting the site of the Hall, or rather, the larger part of it.

By 1895 the scheme was well under way, and £200 of the estimated cost of £500 had been subscribed in amounts ranging from 1s. 6d. upwards.

At this point a period of stagnation set in, until, in 1897 there was a renewed appeal for funds, the estimated cost having risen meanwhile to £700, a feature not unusual in human planning.

In 1899 the building was begun, with the fund standing at £550, and the estimated cost of one room only, having risen, in the sober light of reality to £900.

However, owing to the generosity of three unnamed members of the village, the whole building, including the stage and backrooms, was put in hand, and completed. A subsequent purchase of land from Mr. Saunders, and the gift of a strip of land from Mr. Edward Greenwell, completed the rectangular plot on which the Hall now stands.

Mr. Percy Stone was the architect, and Mr. Higgs the builder. A trust fund was created and the deeds of the building were vested in trustees, originally Mr. Telford Simpson, Mr. H. L. Smith, Mr. Saunders and the Vicar.

Such is the history of our Parish Room and it will be seen that the enterprise was essentially a private one, and neither asked nor required assistance from outside the village.

The Hall has been maintained for its original purpose, as laid down in the Trust Deed, that is to say, for the use and advantage of the parishioners, spiritually, morally, intellectually and socially, and we owe our thanks to its original founders, and to our predecessors in the village for providing us with the means to so many pleasant activities and entertainments.