Goring Village Hall – The Inside Story

The Beginnings

- The original building was called The Church Room later The Parish Church Room and later still The Parish Hall
- Construction began in 1899
    - Architect: Percy Stone of Nuns Acre
    - Builder: Thomas Higgs of Goring
    - There were two rooms separated by a wooden roller blind
    - The Clock Tower was part of the original design
    - It is believed that there was a clock of some sort
- It opened on 4th May 1900
- The stage was added in 1910
- In 1920 a kitchen was added at the rear of the main building

Harry Albert Lacey Smith – 1872 -1925

- At Eastertide 1925 Harry Albert Lacey Smith died aged 53
- Born in Goring on 1st September 1872
- Postmaster, grocer, church warden, church organist, choirmaster
- Devoted his life to village activities
- Made a simple will in 1903 leaving his estate to his widowed mother Ellen
- On 2nd April 1925 Harry added a codicil to the will including *£500 to the Parish Church Room, Goring, Oxon, for the erection of a clock (chiming if possible) to be erected in the Turret*
- On 3rd April Harry died
- The East face of the clock bears the year of Harry's death and his four initials, but this is NOT the year that the clock was installed

Dilemmas and Delays

- In 1925 the Parish Church Room's affairs were in disarray
- The building was also in a state of dilapidation
- In January 1926 a report notes that the turret was letting in rain water
- In March 1927 the Parish Magazine reported that the legacy was awaiting a decision by the Chancery Court
- The Dilemma was that the cost of a clock was less than £150 therefore the Trustees needed the court to vary the terms of the will to allow the remainder to be spent on other improvements
- The Chancery Court approved the variation but on condition that they approved the scheme for other improvements first
- Plans were drawn up for a rear extension to include a gents cloakroom and a scullery costing £310
- May 1929 the final scheme was approved and money released

The New Clock

- Estimates for the clock varied between £108 & £208
- John Smith & Sons of Derby were appointed in October 1927
- Nationally renowned with St Paul's Cathedral on their books

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- The cost, to include black dials with gilt figures & hands and to commemorate the donor plus a 1 cwt bell, was £131. Investigations in 2016 have discovered that the bell was cast by John Taylor & Co. of Loughborough. Apparently it was actually cast for a church in Birmingham but was diverted to Smiths of Derby because they were in a hurry! The 17' diameter bell weighs 1cwt 13pounds and has a note just flat of B.
- Local watchmaker Mr Barrs appointed to oversee the installation
- Mr Barrs was contracted to wind the clock at 15 shillings a quarter
- The clock and the other improvements, carried out by Higgs & Sons, were complete by autumn
- The October Parish Magazine reported that '*It was ceremoniously started in the presence of a few interested people on Sunday September 1st. This was a most fitting date, for it was the birthday of the donor.*'

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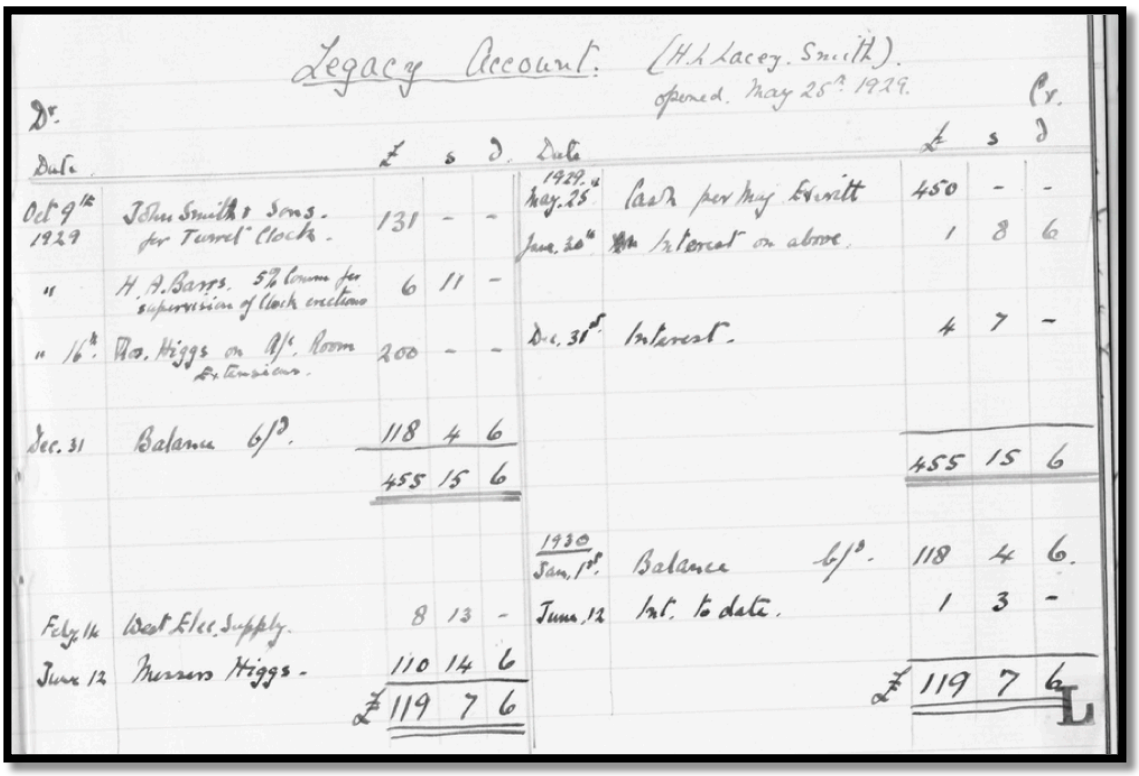
Legacy Monies

Ledger entry of the Legacy Account opened in 1929



Legacy Account. (H.L Lacey-Smith).
opened. May 25th 1929.

Dr.

Date		£	s	d
Oct 9th 1929	John Smith's Sons. per Turret Clock.	131	-	-
"	H. A. Barrs. 5% Comm for supervision of Clock erection	6	11	-
" 16th	Wm. Higgs on A/c. Room Extensions.	200	-	-
Dec. 31	Balance 6/3.	118	4	6
		455	15	6
Feby 14	West Elec. Supply.	8	13	-
June 12	Messrs Higgs -	110	14	6
		£119	7	6

Cr.

Date		£	s	d
1929 May 25th	Cash per Maj Everitt	450	-	-
June 30th	Interest on above.	1	8	6
Dec. 31st	Interest.	4	7	-
		455	15	6
1930 Jan. 1st	Balance 6/3.	118	4	6.
June 12	Int. to date.	1	3	-
		£119	7	6

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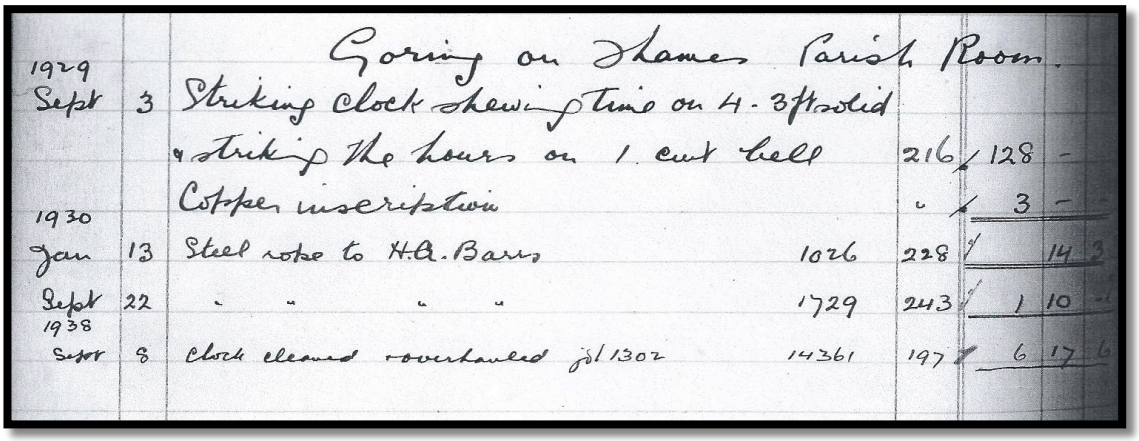
Interim History

Smiths of Derby Sales Ledger showing work carried out after the installation.



Goring on Thames Parish Room.

1929 Sept	3	Striking clock shewing time on 4-3ft solid & striking the hours on 1 cwt bell		216	128	-
		Copper inscription		"	3	-
1930 Jan	13	Steel rope to H.A. Barrs	1026	228	14	3
Sept	22	" " " "	1729	243	1	10
1938 Sept	8	Clock cleaned overhauled j/d 1302	14361	197	6	17 6

Smiths also carried out work in 1938 (shown) and 1986
They were unsuccessful in their quote to install auto winding in 1991

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Interim History of the Hall between 1929 & 1990

- 1938 the Annex was added by Thomas Higgs.
    - We all now know this as the Bellëme Room
    - Believed to have been paid for by Mr Palmer (of Huntley & Palmer Biscuits)
- 1983 The Parish Hall was sold to Goring Parish Council for £25,000 and renamed Goring Village Hall
- 1986 the Kitchen was added by W Hines
- 1988 the Main Hall floor was replaced with Malaysian Merabu
- 1990 the toilet block and front porch were added by Boshers

The 1991 Clock Tower Restoration

- Prior to 1991 there had probably been several projects to renovate the clock and its tower
- The original dials are known to have been black
- In 1990 the dials were a faded blue
- The restorations proposed by Boshers in 1991 included:
    - Repainting the dials
    - Replacement and treating of woodwork, in particular the finials and flying buttresses
    - Refurbishment of the weather vane
    - Removal and replacement of some lead
    - Installation of an electric winding mechanism
- Estimates were sought in January
- Contracts were awarded in May
- Work was completed in November

History 1991 to 2010

- 1993 Main Roof repaired & retiled
- 1995 Main Hall redecorated
- 1996 Kitchen re-equipped
- 1999 Old kitchen removed and replaced with a store room
- 2010 Toilets refurbished by Boshers

History 2013 to 2015

- Main Hall & Belleme Room heating burners replaced
- 180 new chairs purchased
- Main Hall windows replaced
- Main Hall lighting replaced
- On-line Booking System introduced
- Stage and surrounds lighting replaced
- Infinity WiFi installed

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History 2016

- Full internal redecoration
- Lighting upgrade completed
- Remaining windows replaced
- All loft spaces insulated
- Water saving devices fitted
- Crockery replaced
- Stage Flats replaced
- Musical event lighting upgraded
- PA System extended to all rooms
- Projection screens replaced
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Clock Tower Refurbishment Timeline

- 1st December – Scaffolding erected
- 9th to 11th December – Lead removed
- January – Estimates received; Contracts awarded
- 24th February – Clock faces etc. removed for refurbishment
- 16th March – Woodwork commences
- 1st April – Roll Mops replaced
- 7th April – Severe rot found in top post joints
- 11th April – Lead replacement begins
- 23rd June – Clock Faces return
- 21st July – Leadwork complete, clock hands & gearing reinstated
- 25th July – Weather Vane – Final Inspection – SmartWater added
- 1st August – Scaffolding removed
- 4th August – Roof repaired – Project Completion

History 2017

- Remote controlled thermostatic heating controls installed
- External woodwork restoration
- Full external redecoration
- Permanent Projector add to the Main Hall
- Garden Room sound attenuation installed
- Main Hall blackout blinds replaced

Bernard Novell
Chairman of the GVH Trustees 2015-17