

Freethorpe Sees Dream

Come True

—VILLAGE HALL OPENING

Jan 31 1958
VILLAGERS OF FREETHORPE saw a dream come true on Monday evening when they saw their village hall which they had built with help from people in neighbouring villages, officially opened by the Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk, Sir Edmund Bacon.

The hall, which was designed by Mr. Humphrey Boardman has taken about three years to build by voluntary labour, although it is over ten years since Freethorpe Parish Council first considered building a hall.

COST IS £2375

The secretary of the Village Hall Committee, Mr. A. C. Brock, said that about £2300 had been spent on the hall and towards this cost £2115 had been raised by bazaars, whist drives and a grant of £792 from the Ministry of Education. About another £200 was needed for the hall to start off debt free.

The Village Hall Fund had been started with £304 left over from the Forces Fund, and £783 had been raised by bazaars and over £200 by whist drives. The estimated cost of the hall was £2375, materials costing £1850 and equipment £440.

Mr. Brock spoke of the work in building the hall for which Mr. Alec Alexander had been chosen as clerk of works.

In opening the hall, Sir Edmund Bacon said it was right that the smaller centres of population should have their village halls in which they could enjoy, entertain and educate themselves. In these days, people were rather drawn into the towns and other large population centres, but he thought it would be disastrous if England became a country of town dwellers. It was objects such as the village hall which would help in preventing this migration.

TEN-YEAR PROJECT

The project had been going on for ten years, Sir Edmund recalled, and during that time they must often have wondered whether the dream of a village hall would come to fruition. "You are doing this county a great service in having produced this hall," he continued, in thanking all who had been associated with it and congratulating them on their achievement.

Sir Edmund said there was nothing he enjoyed more than going to the smaller centres of population like Freethorpe to open a village hall or a playing field. Sometimes he went to more expensive and more exalted buildings which were no doubt very useful in their way, but there was not the same feeling as there was at Freethorpe that night, because probably that large building had been built and paid for by the taxpayers or rate-payers.

Dr. Lincoln Ralphs, Chief Education Officer for Norfolk, congratulated Freethorpe on this "magnificent achievement." He thought that life in rural England ought not to be lost by migration to the towns. Believing that, we should agree that the amenities of the town should not be denied to the people in the country and we should not be satisfied with a standard in the country any lower than that in the towns.

Mr. H. Preston, who presided, suggested that it should be recorded that the land on which the hall was built had been given by the Sutton family.

A prayer of dedication was given by the Vicar (Rev. A. E. Searle-Barnes) and votes of thanks were

moved by Mr. Frank Moll, a member of the Hall Committee, and by the Methodist minister, the Rev. C. C. Deeks.

Among those on the platform were Mr. R. J. More, a Norfolk County councillor, the Clerk to the Blofield and Flegg Rural District Council (Mr. A. Hellier) and Miss M. Lewis and Mr. Quarby, of the Norfolk Education Committee. Mr. S. Riseborough, chairman of the Parish Council was unable to attend because of illness.

CELEBRATION CALYPSO

The opening item in the entertainment which followed was a calypso specially composed to commemorate the opening of the hall. "In Freethorpe, happy Freethorpe," was sung and played by schoolmaster, Mr. Ian Muir, with two of his pupils, Eileen Slack and Jill Curtis, dancing and singing. During the song they garlanded Sir Edmund and Dr. Lincoln Ralphs.

Another item in the concert was a "This Is Your Life" feature on Mr. Alec Alexander which included, as well as interviews, tape recordings of a message from his sister in Canada. There was also a recording of an interview with Mr. Alexander's mother about his boyhood. The M.C. for the concert was Mr. J. Webster.

During the evening, Sir Edmund Bacon asked to be introduced to Mrs. Alexander who is 92, and after chatting with her, he put the garland he had been given by the calypso singers round her neck.

A collection taken during the evening and donations raised £40.

A 'modest spot of culture'

4-JUL-1962
AN EXHIBITION of paintings is being staged this week in Freethorpe Village Hall. It has been arranged by the Hall Entertainments Committee, which accepted with enthusiasm a suggestion by Mr. Irving Watson, head of the village school.

His idea was twofold — to give the hall, built by voluntary labour, an extra use and to bring what one committee member described as "a modest spot of culture."

120 PAINTINGS

Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Coman, of Acle, who have several of their paintings on show, helped by getting in touch with artists in the area. So it is that the 120 paintings on view range from the larger canvasses of people like Roland Green, Rowland Fisher, Wilfred S. Pettitt and Owen Waters to modest, not-for-sale contributions by people at Freethorpe, Strumpshaw and other nearby villages.

Calypso for New Village Hall at Freethorpe

28 JAN 1958
A VILLAGE HALL calypso composed for the occasion was the first item in an entertainment which followed the speeches at the opening yesterday of the hall which the people of Freethorpe had built for themselves. The performers were Mr. L. Muir and the Misses Eileen Sack and Jill Curtis.

Ten years ago, when a public meeting at Freethorpe decided to have a village hall, a women's sewing party began a programme which eventually produced more than 500 pinarets, 250 Dutch aprons, 250 cushion covers and many other items.

These were sold at bazaars which realised £783. Whist drives raised over £200 more, and these funds were added to £304 remaining in the Forces Fund which the young men of the village agreed should be transferred.

Having achieved this commendable financial result, the people of Freethorpe, under the inspiration of Mr. Alec Alexander, set about building the hall. Last night, three years after the first brick was laid, the villagers, with neighbours from Wickhampton, Limpenhoe and Southwood crammed the hall.

Sir Edmund Bacon, who declared the hall open, said that it would be disastrous if England became a country of town-dwellers. Such projects as the village hall would defeat that, for it was right that the small centres of population should have places in which to enjoy, entertain, and educate themselves. Achievements such as that of the village of Freethorpe made him proud of his country.

Mr. A. C. Brock, secretary of the hall committee, said they had planned, on the basis of voluntary labour, for a hall costing £2375, including a Ministry of Education grant of £792. Bazaars, whist drives, and the grant had raised £2115, so they needed about £200 to begin free of debt.

Dr. Lincoln Ralphs, Chief Education Officer for Norfolk, described the hall as a magnificent achievement. He said that life in rural England should not be lost by migration to the towns.

Mr. H. Preston, who presided, said that the site of the hall had been given by the Sutton family, and suggested this fact should be recorded in the building.

Volunteers to Build Village Hall at Freethorpe

18 FEB 1954
Mr. P. Martin, advisory officer of the National Council of Social Service addressed a public meeting in the schools, Freethorpe, on Monday evening. The draft of the trust deed was discussed and it was decided to take steps to build the Hall by voluntary labour with Mr. A. Alexander in charge as clerk of the works, and Mr. Broadman as architect.