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CHARLTON HORETHORNE VILLAGE HALL

WEDNESDAY'S OPENING CEREMONY

MAJOR WINGFIELD DIGBY'S ADDRESS

POSSIBILITIES OF TRADE WITH COLONIES

SUGGESTED TELEPHONE INSTALLATION

Wednesday evening was a memorable time for the villagers of Charlton Horethorne, for it was then when the new village hall was formally opened, that they saw the completion of a scheme which had occupied their energies and minds for the past eighteen months. A social centre of this kind has been badly needed for years, but the progressive spirits of the parish who now see the consummation of their ideals have had many difficulties to contend with apart from the financial obstacles. On the other hand, they have been encouraged in their efforts by the support of many prominent residents – the gift of land by Major F. J. B. Wingfield Digby D.S.O., the donation of about £60 from the Seymour Estate, the admirable work of the Women's Institute, and of countless others who have been generous subscribers and have assisted at the annual fete and other functions to raise funds. But the chief stimulus was the realisation of the need for providing facilities for the healthy recreation and amusement of the great majority of the villagers and deepening their interest in communal life.

Perhaps the man most gratified at the completion of the hall is Mr W. Hole, who has been in the forefront of the movement, and has given unsparingly of his time and labour in the cause he has so much at heart. Major Galloway, who has been the Chairman of the Committee, has been an energetic leader, while the Committee, which included, in addition to Mr. Hole, Messrs S. Creed, J. Doe, M. Hellyar, F.C. Best, J. Brine, H. Rendall, and C. Tout, jun., with Mr A.W. Packe as the capable hon. Secretary, are also to be congratulated on what they have been able to accomplish for the village.

An Army hut was first purchased, and so improved and arranged as to form the substantial and convenient building it now is. The hall is 90ft long by 30ft wide, and has a main hall about 50ft long, and capable of seating over 200 people, ladies' and gent's dressing-rooms and cloak-rooms, with kitchen and offices. The cost of the building is about £400, of which £323 has already been raised, while other sums have been promised. A further substantial sum will be needed to complete the equipment of the building. It is hoped shortly to start a Village Club in the hall.

The Opening Ceremony

The Hall was nicely decorated by the Women's Institute and others for the opening ceremony, which was performed on Wednesday evening by Major Wingfield Digby. The hall was packed. Major Galloway presided and was supported by Mr G. R. Read of Milborne Port (who came in place of Mr Bernard Southcombe, who was detained by a pressing business engagement), Mr W. Hole and Mr S. Creed. Colonel H.M. Ridley, of Maperton, who has taken a deep interest in the scheme, was unable to be present.

Major Galloway, in opening the proceedings, said the idea of building the hall was conceived five years ago, at the time of the peace celebrations, but nothing could then be done, and the scheme remained in abeyance until about twelve or eighteen months ago, when it was taken up seriously. He referred to the gratitude felt to Mr Hole for all that he had done and to those who had so generously subscribed and worked in the endeavour to realise their ambitions. He spoke of the state of the finances, and said that a meeting would be called in the near future to elect officers and Committee to manage the Hall.

Major Digby's Address

Major Digby, in declaring the hall open, expressed his appreciation of their kindness in asking him to open the hall. He congratulated Mr Hole who had been the moving spirit of the scheme, on the work he had done, and hoped he was satisfied with the result. (Applause.) Proceeding, Major Digby said he only wished that every village of the size of Charlton Horethorne could have such a hall, which he believed was the finest thing that could happen in a rural district. Those halls and clubs helped to broaden the minds of the villagers and give them facilities, if they took advantage of the reading-room, of looking at things from every point of view and of getting a better understanding of what was going on in the country and the world.

Continuing, he referred to the meeting of the Colonial Prime Ministers in London. He was not, he said, very fond of politics, and he felt that much good would be done if they put politics on one side for a time and concentrated on the solution of Imperial difficulties and the development of trade with the Colonies. They had heard much about the British Empire showing a united front, and if only they could achieve that, he felt that wars in the future would be more difficult to bring about, because any nation would think twice before attacking the British Empire. (Applause.)

Major Digby also spoke of the desirability of linking up Charlton Horethorne by telephone with Sherborne and other places. Wincanton, after having talked about it for many years, were at last going to have the telephone. It would cost a lot of money to bring the telephone to Charlton Horethorne, but he thought the difficulties might be overcome. They wanted to "ginger up" the Post Office, which did not always consider the benefit of the public. Other countries were ahead of Great Britain in telephone development. In Ireland, for instance, which was a wild country without railways, almost every house was connected with the

telephone, yet here, in the most civilised country in the world, a telephone in a house was a comparatively rare thing.

Concluding, Major Digby said he believed there had been some friction in the village over the hall, but he hoped that it would now ease, and that everybody, whether for or against it, would support it, so that it might become a real benefit to the village. (Applause.)

Mr G.R. Read, in a short address, said a village hall and club was a blessing to any place, because it helped to brighten the lives of the inhabitants, and gave them somewhere to go when the day's work was done. Some of the adventurous and enterprising young men and women would always go to the town, but they wanted to keep the rural population in the villages and make things as happy as possible for them. (Applause.)

Mr W. Hole, in proposing a warm vote of thanks to Major Digby for opening the hall, said in these enlightened days, every village should have the facilities for recreation which they had provided in Charlton Horethorne. They had to think of the rising generation and the opportunities given to them would, he believed, be of benefit in the days to come. He referred to the differences which had arisen over the scheme, and said that he would never have had anything to do with it if he felt it was going to bring harm to the village. If he found that it did he would do all in his power to get the hall closed down. (Applause.) He was confident it would not be detrimental in any way.

Cheers were raised to Major Digby and "For he's a jolly good fellow" heartily sung.

Major Galloway was also warmly thanked for presiding, on the motion of Mr. Mitchell.

An enjoyable concert was afterwards held, those contributing to an excellent programme being Mrs Lake (Wincanton), Miss Chubb (Sherborne), Messrs J. Shaw and B. Overhead (Sherborne), instrumental selections, and Messrs F.R. England (Sherborne), Parsons (Wincanton), Best (Charlton Horethorne) and G.R. Read, W.H. Dyke, A. Stickland, T.E. Vaughan and H.T. Dike (Milborne Port)

Last (Thursday) evening there was a dance and other festivities.