

## 5.3 How It All Started In The 1920's

---

### KINGSTON CHRISTMAS PRESENT WORKING PARTY Report 1922 - 1923 Including Summary 1919 - 1922

With a view to helping the decision which, you will have seen from the Agenda, is before this Meeting, the Committee have thought it a good thing to make this year's Report include a Summary of our aims, objects and proceedings since the time when we began making a Village Hall. It is not necessary to go in detail through our hectic career before then but we must recall the fact that the nucleus of this Party originally was the Women's Section of the old Schoolfellows' Association. All the pre-war members of that still in the neighbourhood are I hope he/re to-day as Members of the CP Party since those days. The old Schoolfellows' Association is still in existence and whether or not the Women's Section is working as such, it is out of the power of this Party \*to say what course the Women's Section shall take. That is for the old Schoolfellows' Association to consider well. The Women's Section having during 1912, 1913, and part of 1914 carried on a very fine syllabus of work (much on the lines of the Women's Institutes of present times, and much in the same spirit), at the outbreak of War devoted itself to War work - clothes for Polish Refugees under the late Miss Eden, Classes teaching War Economy Cookery and other things. In 1915 there was a strong wish in the Village to send Christmas presents to all the soldiers and sailors of Kingston, and a proposal came (from Cutley) that a Party should be formed to see it. The Women's Section decided at once to forget that it was a Section of anything, to invite everyone to gather round itself as a nucleus and make a Party, for getting, making and sending Christmas Presents. Hence i incidentally , the name which is now and has been for some years chiefly an embarrassment to us, seeming to try to remind our neighbours most ungracefully of a good turn long done. The name has had to be kept for financial reasons, but, veiling it under its initials, we have hoped that no one will ask questions. "CP" is good enough. Well, Barkis was willing, the whole Village threw itself heart and soul into the job, money rolled in and how folks knitted! 40 of us often crammed into the small Reading Room at the Club, an atmosphere of soap, bootlaces, smokes, knitting and warmth! for all of those things and many others went into the parcels; someone writing addresses on unbleached calico parcels, as likely as not under great difficulties with a cross-legged nib and puzzling over the meaning of the mysterious initials before and after a soldier's name. Then picture to yourself the horror of discovering that among 40 sewn up parcels, one, unknown, contained a pair of socks specially knitted for someone, of undoing corners of parcels till you discovered the special socks! Yes, we had our hard

### 5.3 How It All Started In The 1920's

---

times now and then. Will any of us ever forget the Whist Drive when it "turned to snow", and 27 of us were marooned in the Club hoping first against hope that a few of the large parties expected would break through the weather and turn up. Finally hoping and wishing only that one more might come to complete our 7 tables, and then the Vicar came ^ his first public appearance and what a well- chosen one! The soldiers and sailors presents fund didn't get much that time. But think again of the glorious Christmas Party when 200 people got into the School and tried in vain to dance after the Whist. Think of the Jumble sales where the Tinker's Stall made their ten pounds in an afternoon. To quote the letter Miss Arnold wrote when regretfully retiring from the Vice-Chairmanship. "How I shall miss it all. No more tinker stall and no more other joys which go to make the party such a happy one. May it go on for ever and ever." Well, the War ended but the Christmas present party did not feel that its work was ended. We'd been happy working together: the men had been happy in spite of it all, in being together in a way very new and cheering to people accustomed to occupying a score or so of acres all day with two horses and a plough for company. We wanted to keep it all going, all that part of it, after the War and therefore we must have a Village Hall. On the 4th of March, 1919, meeting at the Vicarage we decided in the words of the Minutes' Book "to remain in being until the Parish Room be built."

From that date the party went (at it) hammer and tongs. In 1919 two Whist Drives, one with a dance attached, two Jumble Sales and a Concert, collected with subscriptions £82.9.9½. In 1920, 4 Whist Drives and dances and 2 Jumbles Sales and in September Mrs Bowering's Bazaar with which the Committee, much reinforced, helped make ..... On Armistice Day, 1920, the WELCOME HOME SUPPER was given to all the Soldiers and Sailors past and present, Kingston men and men resident in the district. In 1921 we had at Easter the famous Fancy Dress Dance, the first of the kind among our efforts and a wonderful success, artistic as well as financial. Other events were a concert given by Mrs Tantum and two Jumble Sales. In October the Piano Fund was started: a Jumble Sale in 1921, a Whist Drive and a Fancy Dress Dance in 1922, were spent in getting materials for a Bazaar but by June, 1922, when the Bazaar was held in the Grange Garden, a piano had been given to the Village, and the Piano Fund went into the general Village Hall Fund. One more Whist Drive and Dance finished the 1922 programme.

We now come to this year's Report. The Annual Meeting for 1922 was held late in October, with a very good attendance. Our plans for the future became a little depressed when it was

## 5.3 How It All Started In The 1920's

---

found that the School floor was unsuitable for dancing and that a Carnival was impracticable unless linked with an opening of a Village Hall. However, we arranged a lot of needlework and when at Christmas the School Floor relented we had a very cheerful; dance indeed with a Whist Drive. At the end of that evening, feeling that this really was our final bow to the long-suffering Schoolroom for that we had a better 'ole nearly in reach, we gave three cheers for the School Managers, the correspondent and the School. On Pancake Day we had a Jumble Sale.

Since 1919, of which (after paying for the Welcome Home Supper, giving the War Memorial Donation and a donation to the DDN A) £355.7.7 has gone to the Village Hall. We have, all told, earned £426.7½. We are beholden to many people for help of all kinds: to the School which still continues to house us until the Village Hall is finished; to Mrs Hawkings who took us in during a cold and coal-less winter; to Mrs Shattock whose hospitality dates back into the War and includes the first open-air Whist Drive; to Mrs and Miss Eden; to Mr Clemow and Mr Norman who have audited accounts; to Major and Mrs Hamilton who have judged Fancy Dresses; to people who have lent pianos, played pianos, and run competitions and given prizes; to Mrs Tantum who has given concerts; to subscribers who paid in to us in the time before the VH C Fund proper; and to many others. We thank them all very much indeed and are happy in the thought that we shall meet in the House we have all helped to build.

We have said good-bye at various times to many regretted members; the Committee has suffered especially from an epidemic of marriage but we hope that when the Hall opens we shall many of us meet there. We have gained many new members and number at the present 43. Those who have left are Mrs G Clarke, Miss E Greed, Miss Hosegood, Mrs Villis, the Misses Westcombe, Mrs Scudamore and Mrs Small, Mrs Pavey.

And now we have to say good-bye to the staunchest supporter of all perhaps Mrs J Turner. Everyone knows that she has been at the bottom of all the things we have been doing and that if they have been successful it was because of the vigour with which Mrs Turner has always gone into the Fray.

And now here we are. I wish we were quite all here. The Committee retiring will not be replaced unless we decide on a plan which; has not yet been discussed or thought of unless in short by the Party's special wish, setting aside the tentative recommendation of the Committee to dissolve on the grounds that the work undertaken in 1919, of helping a Village Hall to be built, now naturally passes into the hands of a Committee

## 5.3 How It All Started In The 1920's

---

for the management of the Hall; to continue individually to support that Committee in all plans for discharging the debt which remains on it, and to join in a body the Women's Institute which will very soon exist in the Village. The Chairman, asking the other officers signing this Report and the Committee to arrest their gaze, would like to say something of the Committee of the Party. The way in which our retiring Vice-Chairman has worked everyone knows. Miss Porter's work has been so far beyond all praise and the job is so obviously next her heart, that it is almost impertinent to say anything about it beyond giving her our warm thanks. To any body of womenfolks looking for a Treasurer, we can recommend our retiring Treasurer, as a very efficient example. It is a tedious task and she has borne it and come through smiling. The fact that the Hon Secretary has never been changed speaks for itself, of her devotion and the value in which we have held her services; we found it hard to part with Miss Bromfield and give our good wishes to Mrs Hunt, sincere though they are. A list of the retiring members is appended.

The Committees who have conducted the affairs of the Party year by year, this year's being no exception, have worked together as Committees should, each one carrying on as if she alone were responsible for the job. We have one feeling among us now probably - we are afraid that when the moment comes that we are actually dissolved, we shall feel as if we have stopped too soon - the Village Hall is built, but IT IS NOT PAID FOR. We must therefore get into the Hall and continue to earn money. More than that, we must not forget our object in building it. We have built our Hall, now we must get into it, live in it and keep it warm.

ELIZABETH KIDNER (Chairman)  
MARY JANE PORTER (Vice-Chairman)  
BESSIE HUNT (Hon Sec)

### Committee 1922 - 1923

Mrs Bedford		Miss Jarvis	Hon Treas
Mrs Hunt	- Hon Sec	Miss Leach	
Miss Bowering		Miss Kidner	Chairman
Miss Brooks		Miss L Palfrey	
Mrs E Bromfield		Miss Porter	Vice-Chairman
Miss Griddle		Mrs Spear	
Miss Carnall		Mrs Turner	
Miss Furzer		Mrs Whish	
Miss Gothard			