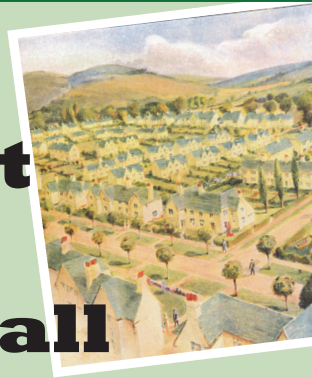


50 Years of Memories at Rhiwbina Memorial Hall



By Ivan Gibson

In the autumn of 1945, shortly after the end of World War II, a group of Rhiwbina residents felt that there should be a tangible reminder of the ultimate sacrifice that many had made during the war. They also considered that Rhiwbina was in need of a focal point for the village's social, sporting and educational activities.

To those ends, a public meeting was organised in the Rhiwbina School on 26th November 1945 and the Rhiwbina Memorial Hall Committee was set up. The meeting elected Councillor T Pugsley to be its first chairman. Its primary activity at that stage was fundraising.

Several concerts were organised by Mr Aspinall - the manager of British Nylon Spinners factory in Ty Glas Avenue - mainly in the factory hall.

One concert was held in the Scout Hall in Heol y Bont, when a new young singer offered his services for free. He was most enthusiastically received and went on to become the world famous tenor and member of The Goon Show – Sir Harry Secombe.

One of the main sources of income became the Annual Rhiwbina Fete, held each year on the Rhiwbina School playing field. There was a Fete Queen with attendants and a long carnival procession wound its way from Tyn-y-Parc Road, up Heol y Deri to the Deri Oak

Tree, and back into Heol Uchaf and into the school playing field where local notables including Stan Stennet and Jack Peterson, the boxer, performed the opening ceremony.

The Floral Society ran an autumn flower show and the Townswomens Guild also raised funds by putting on drama productions (this was probably the catalyst for the present day Rhiwbina Amateur Theatrical Society, or RATS as it is now known).

By 1951, the Memorial Hall Committee considered that the organisation should be put on a more formal basis so that applications for Grant Aid could be made. On 14th March 1951, a further public meeting was held in Rhiwbina School and the Rhiwbina Memorial Hall and Community Association was convened. Mr. Edward Lewis was elected Chairman.

A site on the corner of Ty Wern Road was first considered. It was vacant at that time but subsequently became the Monico Cinema - now a block of flats. The Committee wanted a more central location for the Hall and a site near Rhiwbina School was preferred as it was considered that Rhiwbina would expand to the North towards Pantmawr Farm.

A generous offer was made by the Rhiwbina Garden Village Association to lease a site located on an allotment garden opposite the Rhiwbina School at a peppercorn rent. This was gladly accepted.

Fundraising activities continued and by 1953 the Fund

stood at £327.15.11d.

During 1953, Dr Alwyn Lloyd produced plans for the Hall and planning permission was obtained from the local council. There was during this period, dissention by some members of the Garden Village Company who wanted to locate the Rhiwbina Library on the site. However nothing came of it.

At the 1954 AGM, Mr. Geoffrey Ashe was elected Chairman. A provisional estimate for the cost of the Hall build came out at £8000. The Council wanted to incorporate the local clinic in the Hall. A board giving details of the planned Hall was erected on the site.

By 1956 the Fund stood at £2,126. Grants had been sought and approved from the Ministry of Education (£3,000) and from the Rural District Council (£3,300). The revised building cost now stood at £10,000 leaving a shortfall of nearly £2,000. It was decided to make a public appeal to each Rhiwbina household to donate £1.

The building work was about to commence in 1956 when due to tightening Government restrictions on Grant Aid, the grant from the Rural District Council was phased at £500 per year over several years. Urgent means had to be thought of to cover the resultant shortfall, which was subsequently funded by interest free loans granted by several Rhiwbina residents, so that the building work would not be delayed. Activities held during 1956 had raised £249 in total, from which £166 was