Week St. Mary Parish Hall

March 1968 a few parishioners held a meeting with a view to rousing enough interest to build a new parish hall. The existing building was very outdated with few modern amenities - we all remember the limited facilities! It was perceived that within a short while the building would become unusable by virtue of being condemned for such public use.

A committee of 14 was convened. This eventually rose to 22 as various bodies elected representatives to join the committee.

After approaching various landowners the current location was acquired from Mr. Donald Sandercock, along with a suitable parking area.

In 1971 the following open invitation was published.

WEEK ST. MARY PARISH HALL APPEAL FUND

TO THE PARISHIONERS, EX-PARISHIONERS AND ALL WHO HAVE AN INTEREST IN OUR VILLAGE

It is now 3 years since a Parish Meeting formed our Committee and entrusted to us the task of providing a Parish Hall worthy of Week St. Mary.
The Hall is to be round in shape and of a very modern appearance, and one the Committee Members feel the Village will be proud to own.
The Village so far has raised over £3,750 since the project was first started and this, together with the Grants from the Department of Education and Science £7,238 and the County County Council £1,800, on a total expenditure of £15,383.
This price includes everything, the Land, Solicitors' and Architects' Fees, building the Hall and the equipment needed for the light fittings, right down to the doormats.
This leaves us with approximately £2,600 to raise. A start has now been made on the Hall, and naturally the sooner it is built the sooner we will have somewhere to hold again, the many activities which usually take place in the Village.
We now appeal for funds, either as gifts or as interest-free loans, which can be sent to any Committee Member or direct to the National Westminster Bank Ltd., Launceston, Cornwall.
Thank you for your support

(SCANNED SIGNATURE) Alfred Sandercock

Chairman: Mr. A. Sandercock, Clifton House, Week St. Mary, Holsworthy, Devon
Secretary: Mrs. R. M. Orchard, Plymswood, Week St. Mary, Holsworthy, Devon
Joint Treasurers: Mrs. K. Uglow, Goscott, Week St. Mary, Holsworthy, Devon
Mr. P. Gubbin, Brendon Barton, North Petherwin, Launceston, Cornwall.

There was a small fund of some £200 in the bank, raised for such a venture before WW II but left unused due to lack of local support.

Last Friday……
During May 1971, Mr. Arthur Cleave, of Bude, was asked to cut the first turf and a second was cut on behalf of Mr. Smale who was too unwell to perform that task but gave a contribution of £100 towards the fund.

During the following July there was a large crowd at the site of the new parish hall to see the foundation stone being laid by Mr. Walter Dennis, of Launceston. Mr Metters (architect) presented a silver trowel to Mr Dennis with which to lay the stone.

Bricks were auctioned and after being signed by the purchasers were cemented into place by two bricklayers.

Altogether the cost of the project was in the region of £15,000 including all associated costs such as professional fees, curtains, furniture and plants. Cornwall County Council and the Department of Education and Science together gave grants in excess of £9,000 towards the project, leaving the remainder to be raised by the villagers.

Fund-raising was forever evident throughout the village with a variety of activities: Whist Drives, film shows in the Methodist schoolroom, fancy-dress activities such as a pram race created much amusement and, more importantly, money!
A 10-mile sponsored walk took place with participants ranging in age from 7yrs to 73yrs. The route was from Week St. Mary to Marhamchurch and back to the village via Titson and Hannaford's Mill - first man home was Graham Orchard with Roy Cobbledick second. Over £450 was raised at this event.
A successful 'Banger Race' was held near Langdon by kind permission of Mr. Ellis, helped to contribute to the funds.
Gala Day at Plymswood was a major fund-raising event culminating with a real 'barn' dance, raising several hundred pounds for the appeal.
On the 3rd Gala Day (1970) a fancy dress parade for the under-11's was held and winners were: 1st Prize 'Off to the Moon' Stephen Martin (PHOTO), 2nd Prize 'Cornish Pixie' Teressa Edwards and 3rd 'Mrs Mop' Rachael Horrell.

Saturday 8th April 1972, at 2.30pm the new parish hall was opened by Alderman K. Foster, Chairman of Cornwall County Council. It was allegedly a bright sunny day with a chill wind. A good crowd was there to hear the Alderman praise the villages for their efforts and emphasise how important it was to have a place of meeting in such an isolated village. He further added that he was sorry to hear that the school may soon be closed with the pupils having to travel to nearby Jacobstow. (See Local History - School). In excess of 400 people sat down to a tea in the new Hall that afternoon.

Opening Events were:

Opening Ceremony by Alderman Foster - 2.30 pm
High Tea in the hall 3.30pm - 6.30pm
In the Marquee, Punch & Judy shows at 4pm and 5pm
Sideshows and Stalls along with H. Johns and his electric organ

7pm - Concert in the hall by the Whitstone Male Voice Choir and others
8pm - Dance in the Hall (Admission 50p) with the Texans Dance Band

Sunday 9th April at 8pm - Thanksgiving Service with St. Gennys Silver Band
Thursday 13th April - Bumper Whist Drive
Friday 14th April - Dance with Johnny Pett at 9pm - 1am
Saturday 15th April - Beagle Meet at the Green Inn - 2pm

During the afternoon a peal of 5,040 changes in Plain Bob Major was undertaken at the parish church and a special thanksgiving service occurred on the following Sunday, conducted by the Rev T. Simpson.

By the time the hall was open only a small amount had to be found, some £850 which was soon realised by future events.

During the first few months of use of the new parish hall the bookings were encouraging. The doctor used it for a surgery; there were skittles teams using it; social functions and outside interests helped to swell the coffers to cover the running costs.