

# Memories of the Memorial Hall

The recent event celebrating the formation of the Goxhill Memorial Hall Committee was a very enjoyable affair and prompted me to recollect my own memories of 'The Hall'. I have only a vague memory of the original structure, a wooden pavilion, perhaps a rather grand description for such a simple building. Tall trees grew on both sides of the road, forming a tunnel effect, which to me as a small child was a frightening place.

I was born and lived in a small cottage down Willow Lane and had to walk through the trees whenever I went into the village. One day when I was walking home during a violent storm, which turned the day almost into night, I remember I dared not walk into the darkness, under the trees, and I stood there getting soaked until the storm passed over.

The trees on the south side had to be cut down to make way for the present building. Thankfully the large beech trees at Spring Garth remain. On the day of the official opening we assembled at the school. We were waiting in the cloakroom when Sir Berkeley Sheffield, the opener, walked in. He stood and talked with us for a while and I recall how he impressed us with his easy manner and how ordinary he seemed. Our headmaster Mr. E W Ridge then trooped us off from Thorn Lane on the short walk to the Memorial Hall. I have seen the photo of us all in hats and coats, smiling on the steps but sadly I can't remember anything of the event except that the whole village turned up for it.

During the 1920s about ten of us girls were involved in plays and shows at The Hall. These involved after-school rehearsals led by Miss Buckley and Miss Fanthorpe who were teachers at the school. The Hall is of course a place of many varied functions, but in the 1930s and 40s the Saturday night dances stand out in my memory as much as anything. They attracted people from miles around; the music was provided by some of the best bands in the area.

The organizations within the structure of The Hall have all enjoyed many years of success; the Bowling Club and the Women's Institute are to name just two. When I look back and remember this village institution has been active for ninety years and is still going strong – run by unpaid but dedicated people, I think it is quite something. A real achievement, I would say, particularly in these troubled times when household names are going under and highly paid people are part of this downfall! Yet The Hall goes on..... Let's look forward to the centenary.

*Madge Austin (95)*

## The Short Award

Nominations for the 2009 "Short Award" were – Miss Hannah Guggiari, Mr. M. Gathercole, Mr. R. Parker, Mr. D. Carnell, Mr. M. Gorbitt and Mr. G. Girdham.

Congratulations to Geoff Girdham, who received the most votes for his many years voluntary fund raising efforts, especially his outstanding contribution to the Lincolnshire Old Churches Trust with his sponsored cycle rides. The award was made at the Memorial Hall A.G.M. and Geoff received a B&Q gift voucher, presented by the Hall Chairman Mr. Charlie Leaning.

**The Gander would love to share your memories of the Memorial Hall or any other village institution or event; even better if you have photographs we would be able to copy and print.  
If you can help, please contact us in the usual ways.**