

# BARBY'S WAR MEMORIAL HALL



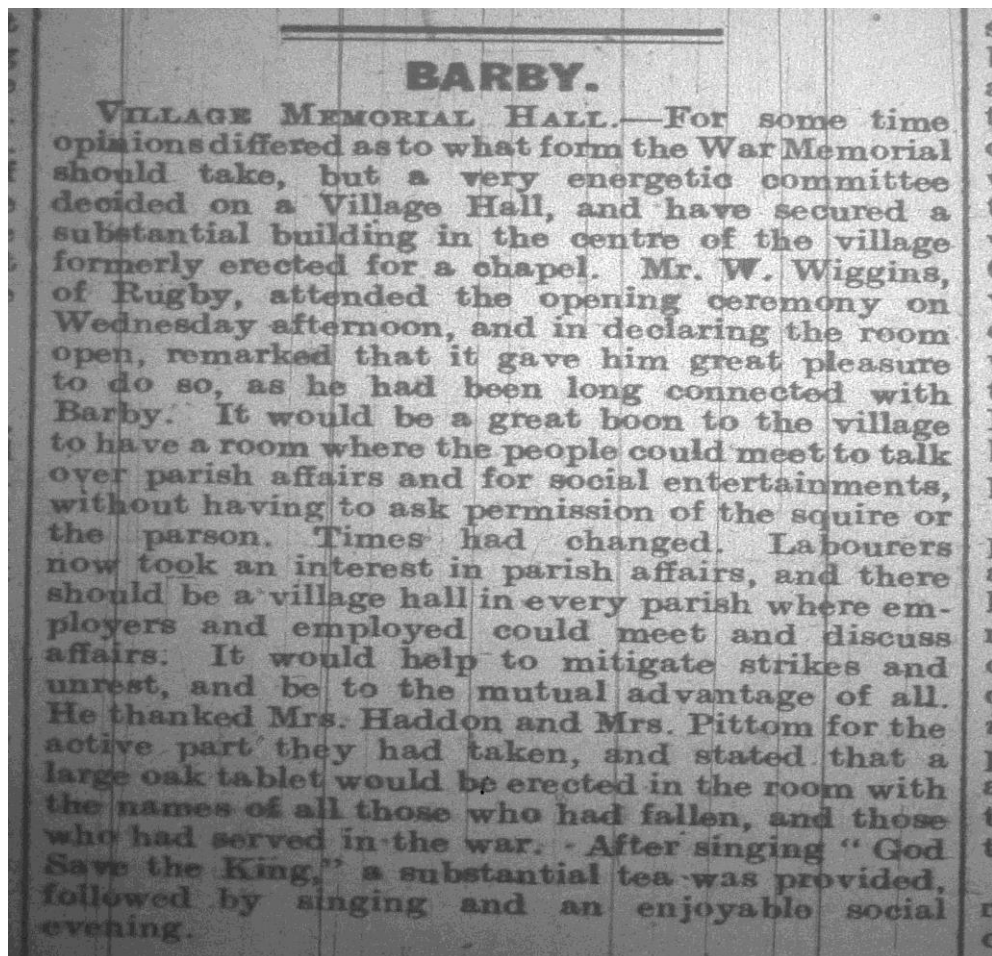
BARBY LOCAL  
HISTORY GROUP  
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This building, now named as Poppy Hall by its present owners in deference to its previous use, was originally a chapel, built in the late 1840s by members of Kilsby Independent Chapel, many of whom lived in Barby. It cost £200 to build, a sum which was cleared by subscription within twelve months, although a further £13 was needed within a year to repair the roof!

The 1851 Ecclesiastical Census records that it was "a separate and entire building used exclusively for worship, with room for 120 standing". The average morning attendance was 100. The return was signed by the Minister at Kilsby, James Rhys Jones.

It had fallen into disuse by the late nineteenth century, the last service being held in February 1915, when only one chapel subscriber, Joseph Foster, was still alive. According to papers given to Barby Local History Group (BLHG) by the present owners, after the First World War it was decided to dedicate it as a memorial to those Barby men who had fought in the war. Thus the property was conveyed in February 1920 by the Chapel Trustees to a number of Barby residents acting as Trustees for the new hall.



Report of the opening ceremony in the *Rugby Advertiser*, 5 February 1920

There seems to be no record of this decision or how the hall was renovated for its new purpose, but the *Rugby Advertiser* of 5 February 1920 announced the opening of the hall. It tended to be used for meetings and dances instead of the schoolroom, which was under the control of the Rector. The remarks by Mr Wiggins at the opening show how attitudes had changed from before the war. Sadly the oak tablet and its list of combatants does not appear to have survived.

Reports of several local political meetings and other gatherings appear in the local paper over the next couple of decades. But by the late 1930s the hall was falling into disrepair, one local resident recalling that the floor wasn't safe.

The hall was then used for storage of building materials by Bill Cockerill after the Second World War, and after his death it became totally derelict, remaining empty until it was bought by an architect and completely renovated and extended 2005-6.



*The old chapel in 1999 (BLHG P4/032)*

[This photo was taken as part of the History Group's Millenium photo project when members recorded places, buildings and quirky things to be found at that time in Barby village.]

The new owners also renewed the original plaque which was placed in its previous position above the double doors onto the road frontage.

During the renovation, the back wall collapsed while damp-proof footings were being put in, so it was decided to rebrick the outer skin entirely.



The external appearance of the hall itself with the addition of extra windows and the side extension in 2007 (BLHG 2006 P13/117)