

FROM VILLAGE SCHOOL TO VILLAGE HALL



BARBY LOCAL
HISTORY GROUP
FEBRUARY
2015



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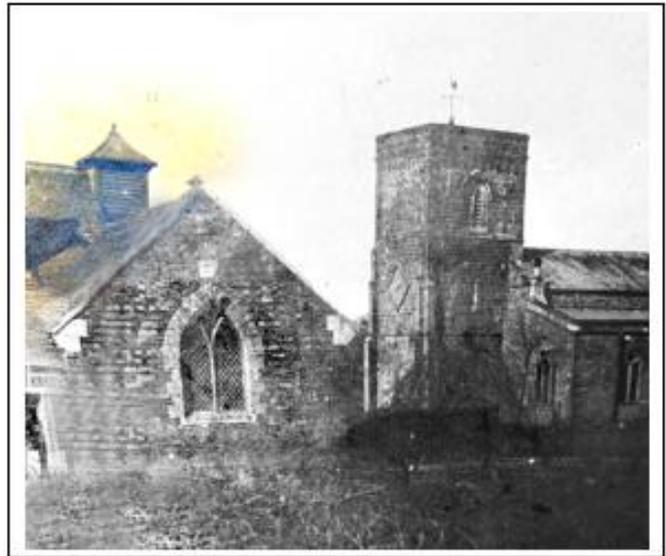
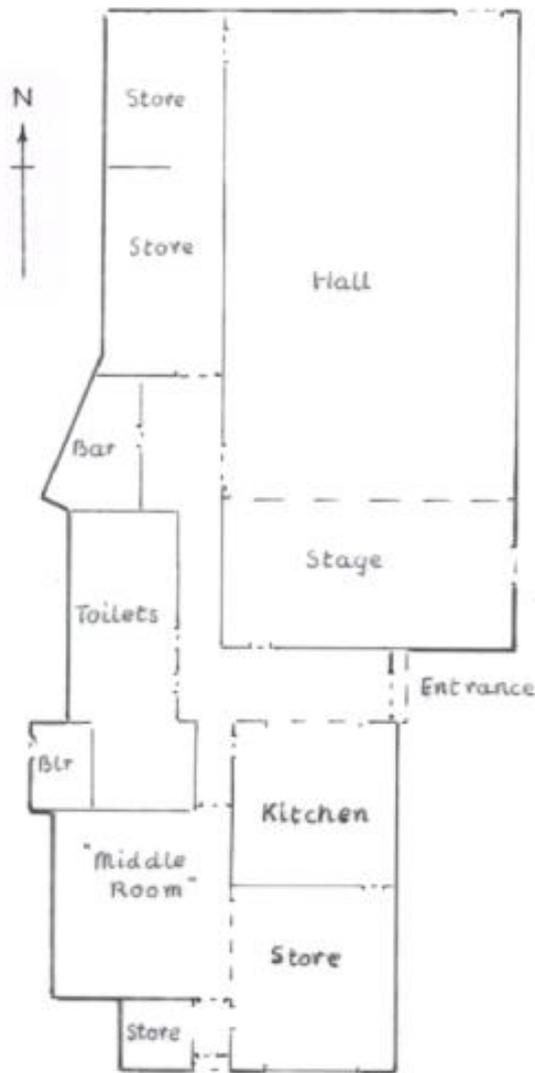
In November 2014, Barby Local History Group published *From Blackboard to Whiteboard: 150 Years of Barby Schools 1865 – 2015*, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the first purpose-built village school. The book launch was held in Barby Village Hall, part of which was the original 1865 school building.

The launch was accompanied by an exhibition of photographs, recordings and other memorabilia, spread over the whole of the Hall, with the emphasis on the earlier years of education being placed in the original schoolroom.

In addition, posters were positioned both inside and outside the building, explaining various points about its history. These posters are reproduced here, in the form of a tour of the building, beginning at the South entrance to the Village Hall car park on Kilsby Road, and ending at the North entrance in Church Walk.



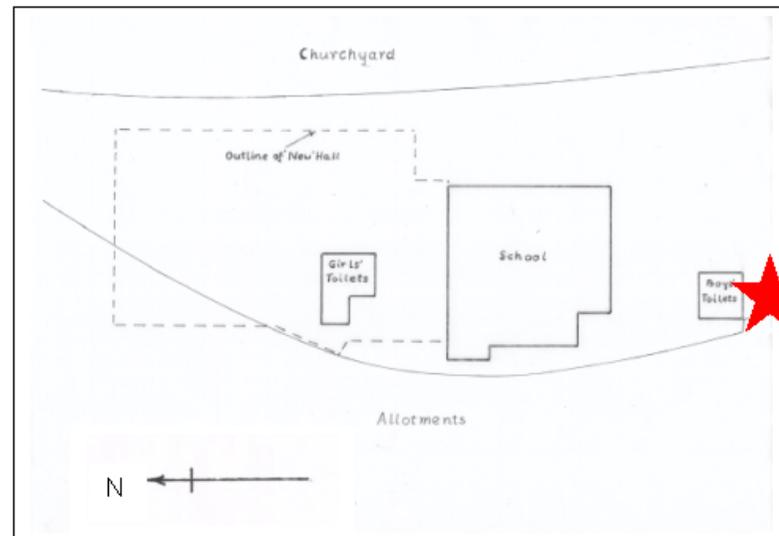
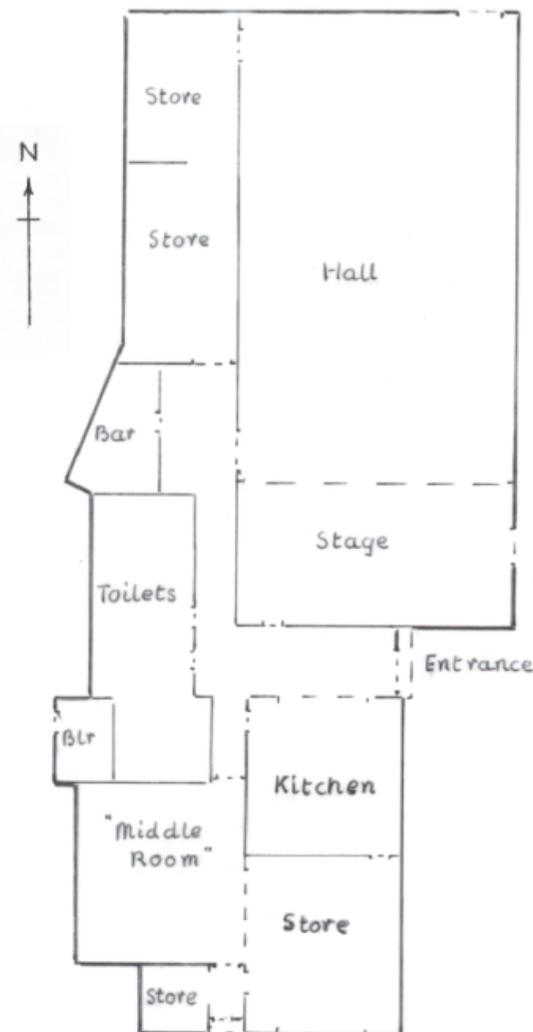
NB Since this tour was devised in 2014, there have been changes to the Village Hall. The text has not been altered to reflect these changes. In particular, Barby Pre-School no longer uses the premises. [November 2021]



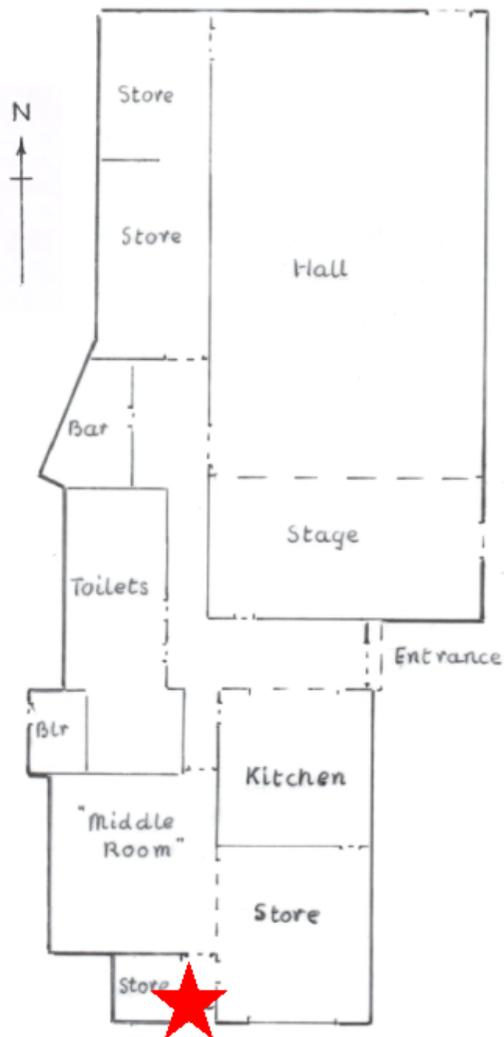
This photo shows the original **SOUTH WINDOW** of the original 1865 Barby schoolroom, built in Gothic style. The photo was used as a postcard in 1905, so the window was probably replaced by the present one in the rebuilding which took place in 1909.

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE BOYS' PLAYGROUND.

 **YOU ARE HERE**

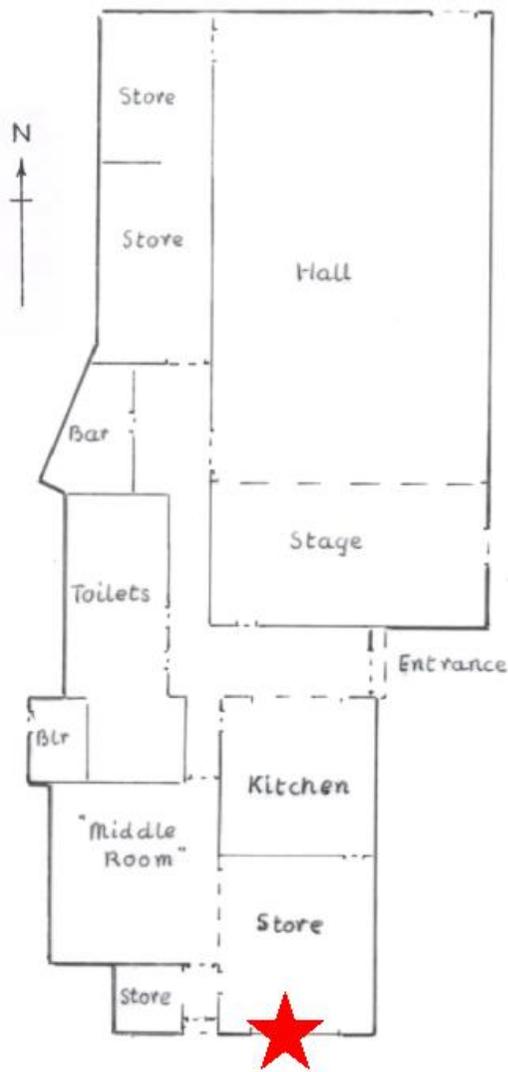


This is where the **BOYS' TOILETS** stood until they were demolished after the closure of the Old Village School in 1967. The land which the village Playing Field now occupies was used as allotments until the extension was built in 1972. When Northamptonshire County Council, as the Local Education Authority, attempted to buy this land in order to site a new school here, the allotment holders protested because they believed they had 'squatters' rights'.



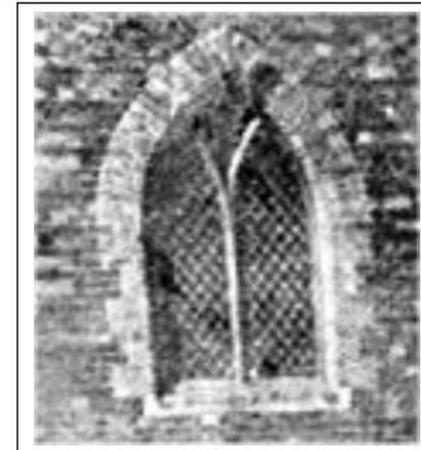
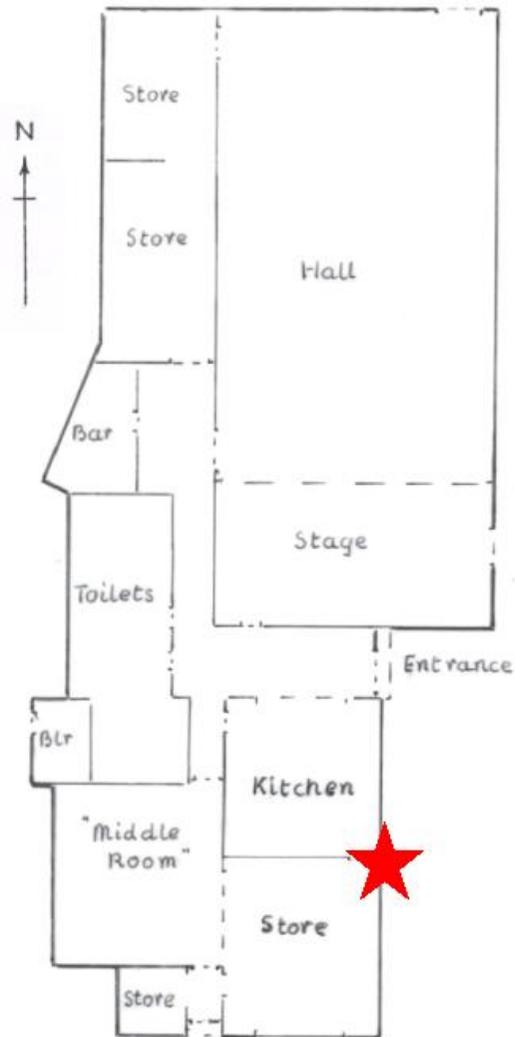
The lobby behind this door was the original 1865 **ENTRANCE** to the school for **BOYS**. It was probably used as a cloakroom, with the entrance door to the schoolroom (now the Pre-School's overnight storeroom) on the right.

The room to the left was added as part of the school extension of 1876. The extension was deemed necessary by government inspectors, because the school could cope with only 78 pupils, whereas there ought to be space for 100. Their calculation of need was based on an estimate of 500 of the 580 village inhabitants being of *the class whose children may be expected to attend elementary schools*.

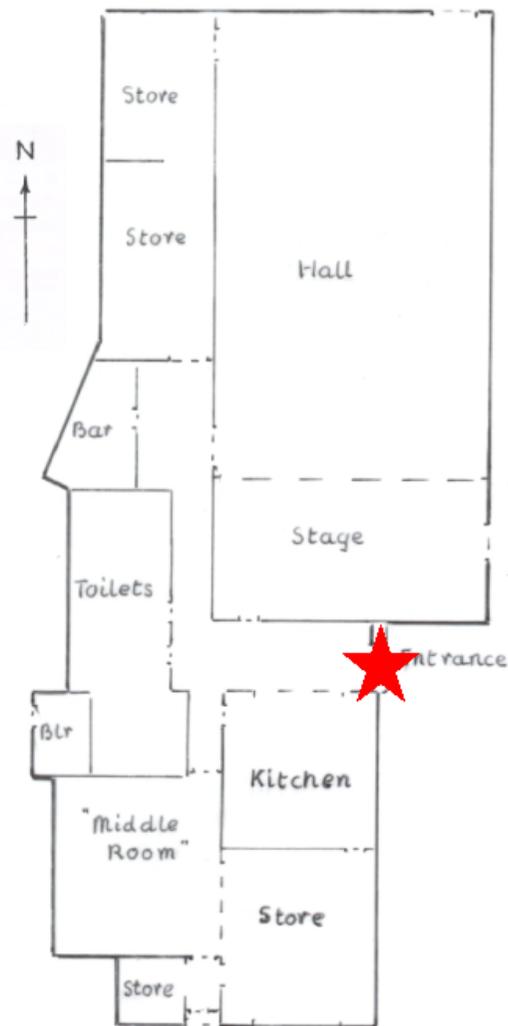


The original **DATE STONE** on the school building, shown in this photograph taken in 2006, was replaced by the present one in 2012, as part of Barby's commemoration of Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee.

The school was funded by public subscription. The official opening took place in September 1866, when £6 was collected to add to the Building Fund.

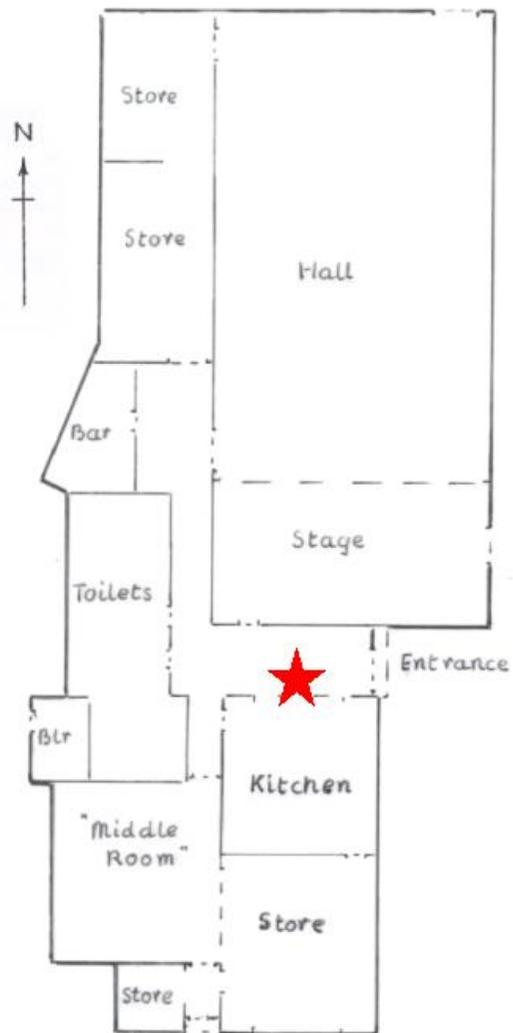


The **FOUR WINDOWS** on this East side of the school were installed in the 1909 rebuilding. They probably replaced much smaller windows such as the one in the South wall of the building shown above – or there may have been no windows on this side previously.

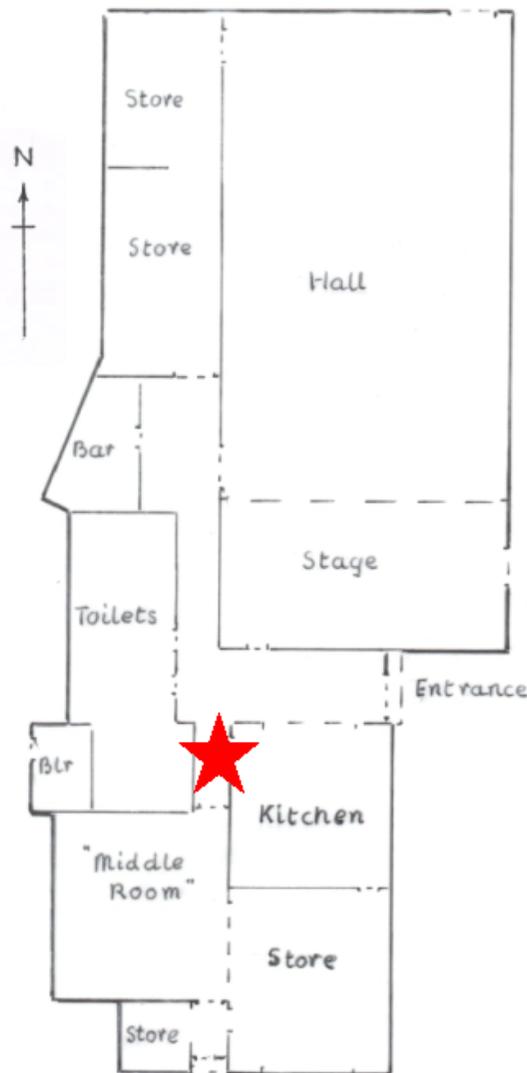


This has been the **MAIN ENTRANCE** to the Village Hall since the Old Village School was extended. The Official Opening took place on 16 November 1972 and was followed the next day by a revue presented by the *Barby Players*.

The old school building was purchased by the Village Hall Committee from the Church Commissioners. The Committee had previously been responsible for the old Village Hall on Ware Road, the former POW camp, which they had purchased in 1952 for £1000. They were negotiating with Mr Jennings of Ashleigh Farm to expand the old village hall on its existing site when the old school became available. Together with Mr Jennings, they sold their plot and extra land, totally 2.74 acres, for £52000, a record-breaking sum at the time, and made way for Ashleigh Close.



The present **KITCHEN HATCH** has replaced the window in this photo. The window at the far (Kilsby Road) end of the original schoolroom can be seen through this window. The house seen to the left of the building is *The Lawn*.



This door was the **ENTRANCE** to the 1865 schoolroom for **GIRLS** and **INFANTS**. It was protected from the weather by a small porch, probably used as a cloakroom.

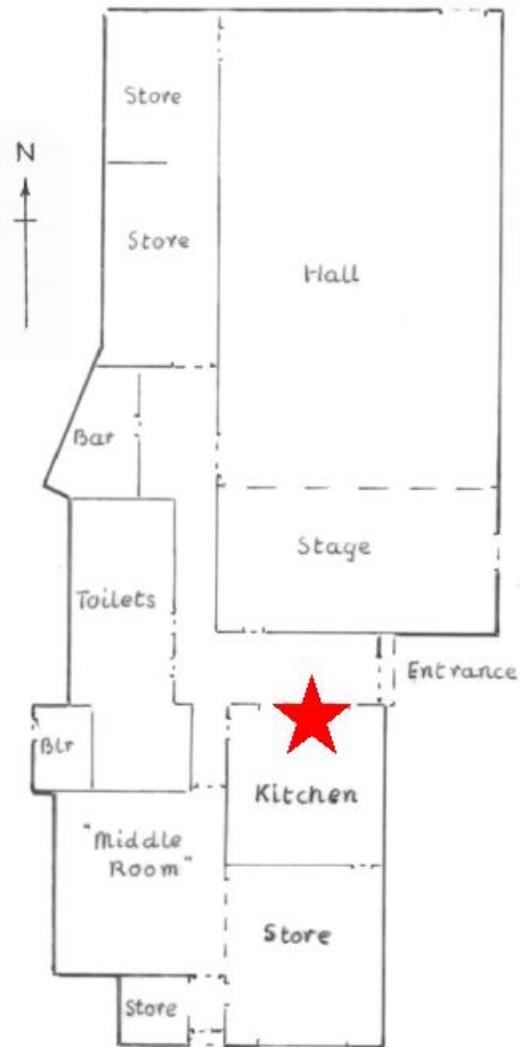
In 1876, this porch was extended to the West to make a larger cloakroom, with a small window in the West wall.

In 1909, the cloakroom was enlarged and the small window replaced by a larger one in the North wall.

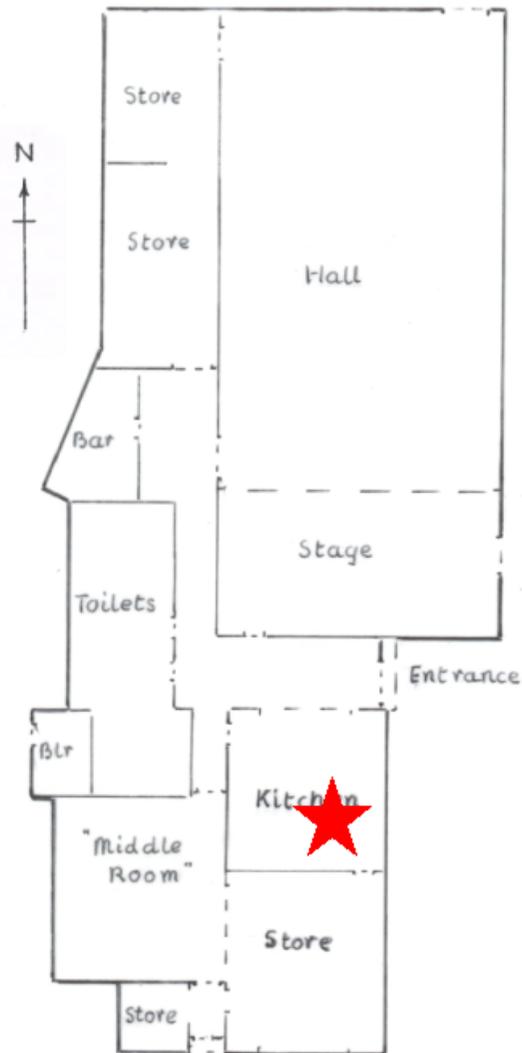
In 1972, the cloakroom became the Gents Cloakroom and the window became a doorway into the Gents Toilets.

In 2004, the toilets were rearranged and the entrances moved to their present positions.

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE ORIGINAL 1865 SCHOOLROOM.



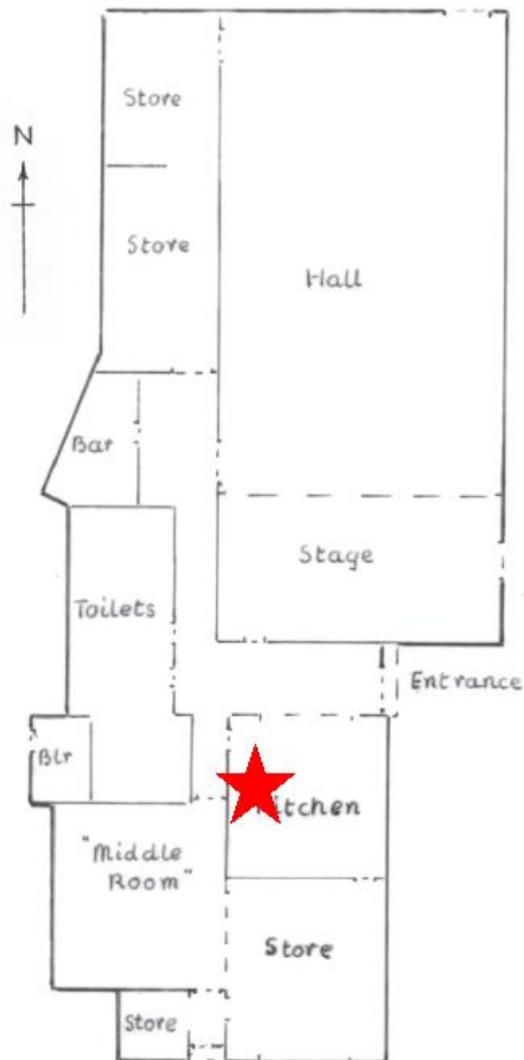
This **HATCH** was installed as part of the alterations carried out in 1972 to create a new Village Hall based on the old Village School. The hatch replaced a window at the North end of the original 1865 school building



There was just a curtain dividing us from the headmaster's classes. Us lads used to shoot corn etc over the curtain; one that I shot must have landed either on the headmaster or his desk. He went mad, but he fortunately never thought it came from just the other side of the curtain.

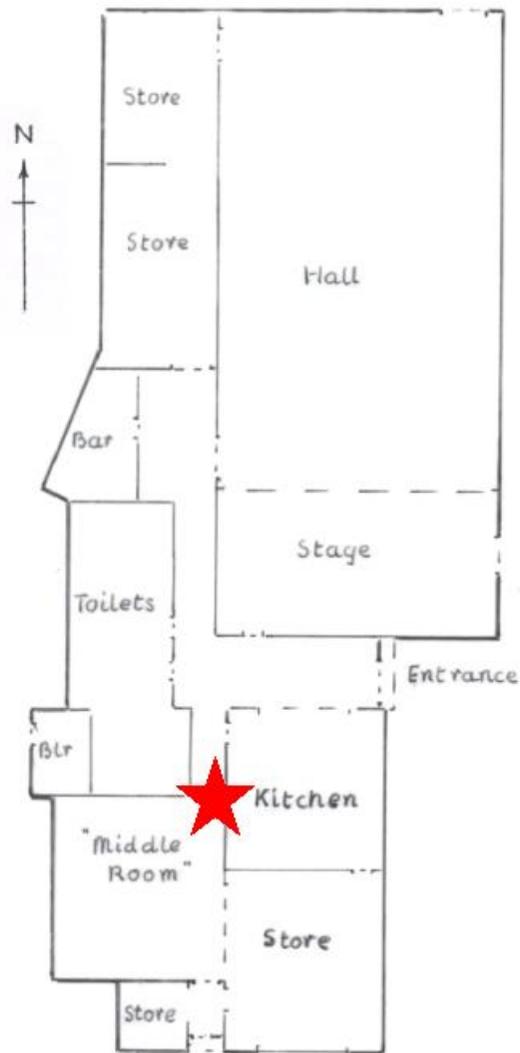
The **CURTAIN** which divided the original school-room into two was installed in 1925. Previously there had been no divider between the Junior and Senior classes. The curtain was moved 4 feet further South, to the middle of the room, in 1931. It was replaced by a solid wall when the School was converted into the Village Hall in 1972.

The door in the wall behind the curtain was installed when the room beyond was redesigned for use by Barby Pre-School.

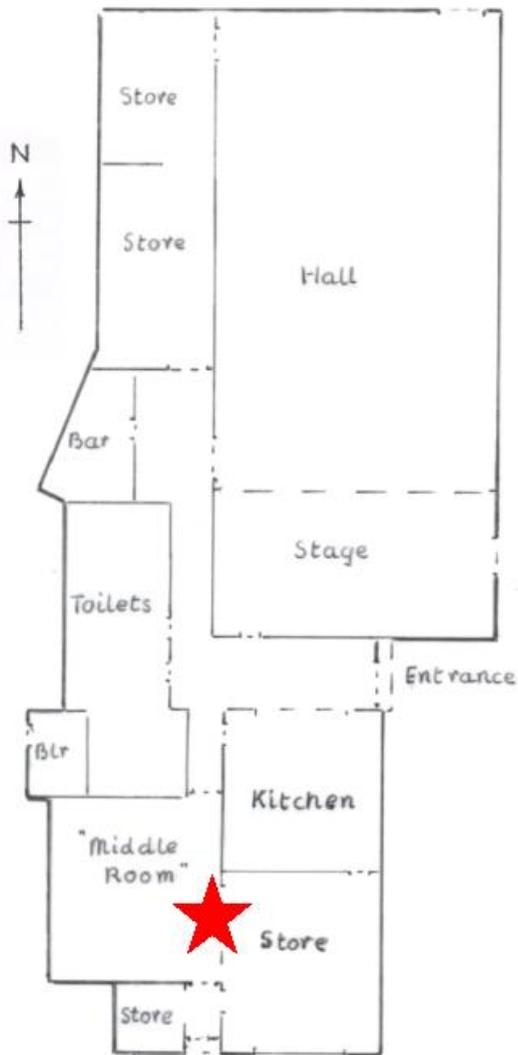


There were 2 **FIREPLACES** in the original 1865 schoolroom, both in this West wall. Keeping the schoolroom warm was very difficult at times, particularly during the General Strike of 1926 and World War II, when the Head Teacher had to *borrow a hod of coal from the Rectory to make fires* for exam day.

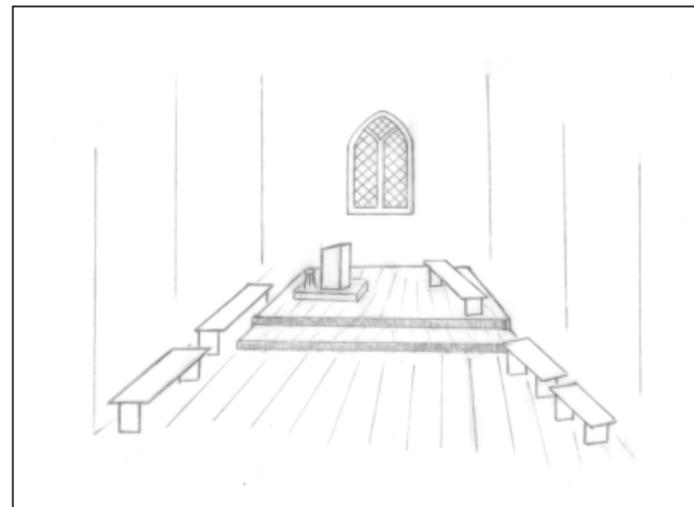
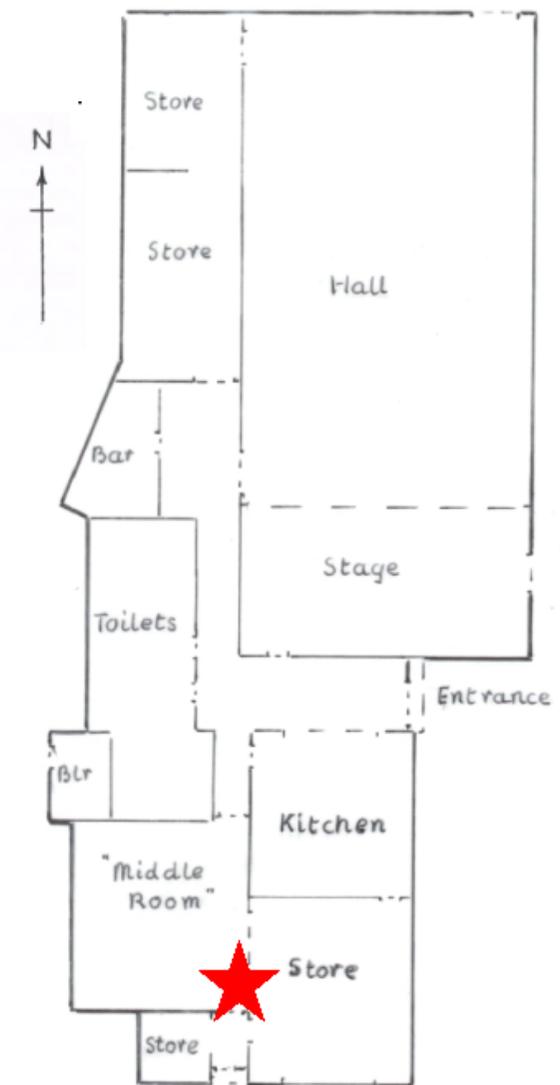
In 2010 the cupboards on this wall replaced the ones seen in the photo above, taken in 2006.



This room, known today as the Middle Room, began life as the **INFANTS CLASSROOM**. It was built in 2 stages. The 1865 school had only one room for all pupils, but in 1876 the school was extended to the West, to provide this second classroom. Access to this room was originally via the main schoolroom. The Infants room was further extended in 1909.

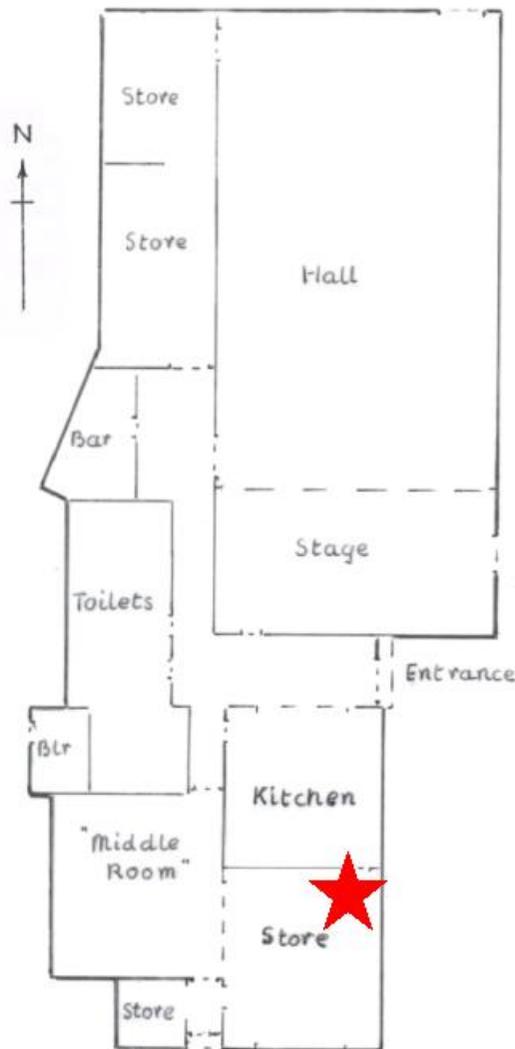


These folding **DOORS** were installed to give easy access between the two rooms used today by Barby Pre-School. They replaced double-doors which dated from the time when doctors' consultations took place in the room beyond. These doors had replaced the single door which was the entrance via the original schoolroom in 1876.



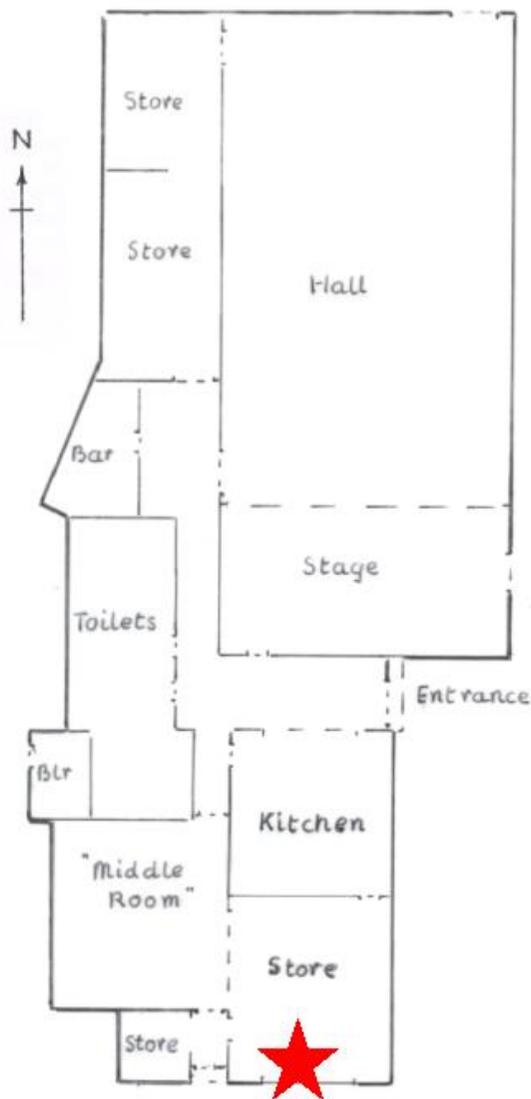
This sketch shows a typical early Nineteenth Century **SCHOOLROOM**. Although Barby's school was not built until 1865, the descriptions we have suggest the room looked like this.

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE SOUTHERN HALF OF THE ORIGINAL 1865 SCHOOLROOM.



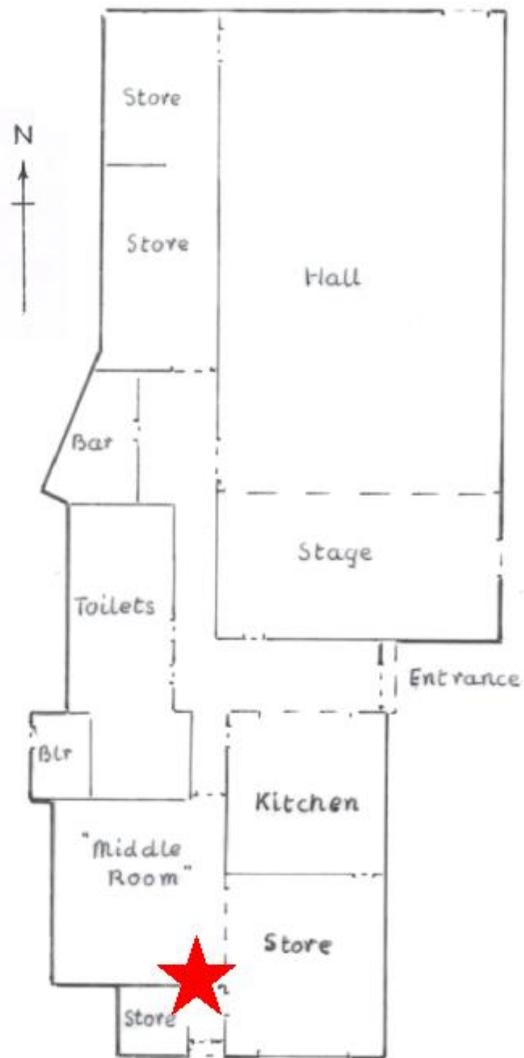
This room was known as the '**DOCTOR'S ROOM**' for about 30 years after the school building was converted into a village hall. This desk marks the spot where the doctor's desk stood, at an angle so that he faced the patient walking in from the door at the opposite corner (the old school entrance for boys). The doctor had previously held consultations at the old village hall in Ware Road.

The desk was also used by Mr Simms (from Lutterworth), who came here on Friday afternoons to receive payment for the newspapers delivered in the village on a daily basis.

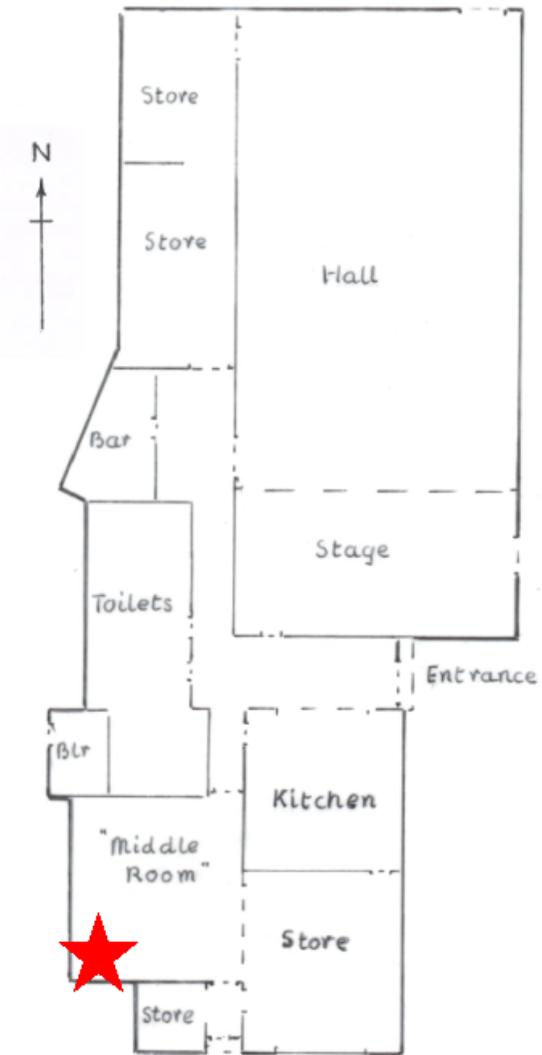


This photo shows **ADHESIVE CELLOPHANE** strips being applied to the window above, as they were during the early days of World War II. The strips were meant to prevent the windows sending flying glass over the schoolroom in the event of a nearby bomb explosion.

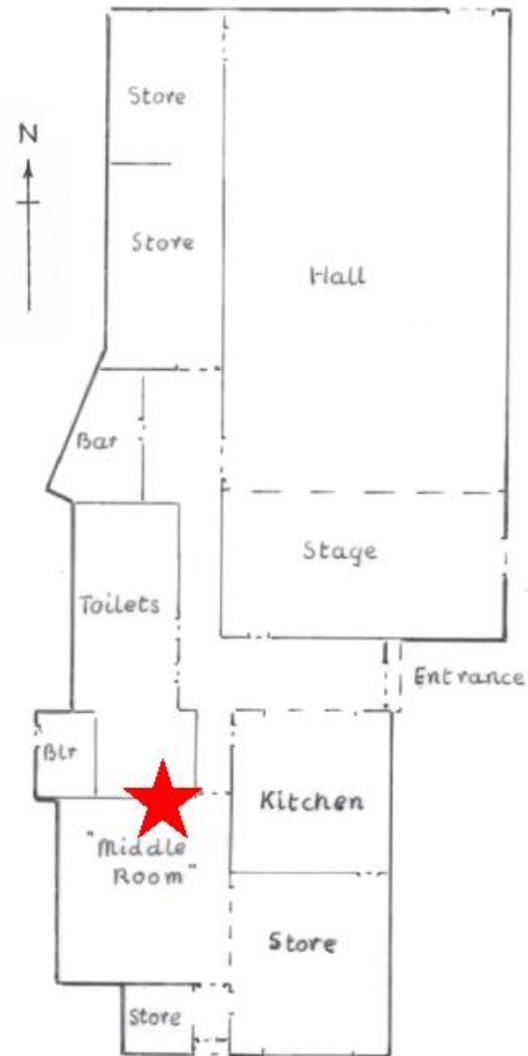
The door to the right was the boys' way into the 1865 schoolroom, and for the doctor's patients after 1972.



This photo was taken in the 1940s. It shows the entrance door to this room, directly opposite. This was the main door into the room until this **FIRE EXIT** was installed in 2010.



For many years, during the 1980s and 1990s, a group of villagers played Whist in this room, which became known, therefore, as the **'WHIST ROOM'**. Photos of some of the key players are displayed here.



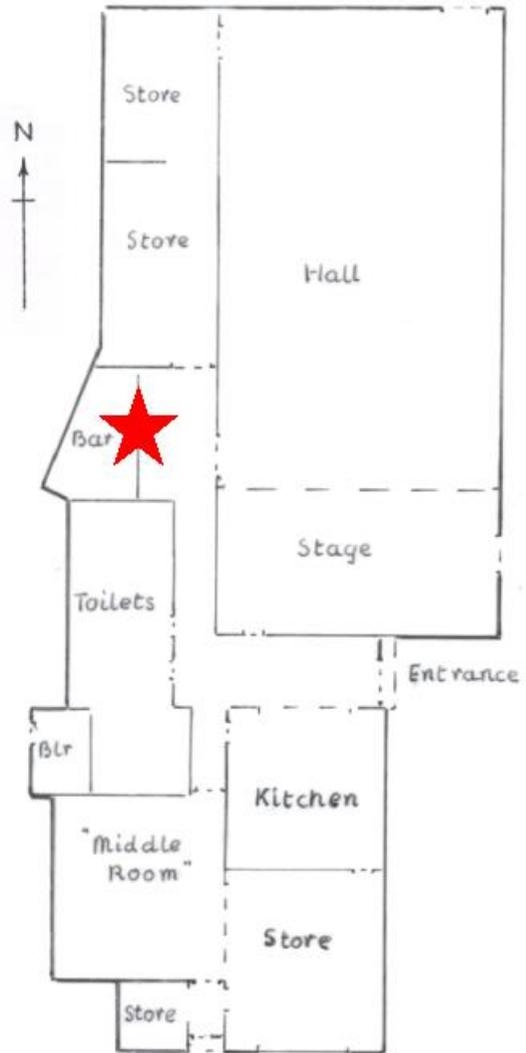
A third **FIREPLACE** was installed in this room when it was enlarged in 1909. The room built in 1876 ended just to the right of the fireplace.

The associated chimney was used as a flue for the boiler when it was installed in the original coal shed after 1972.

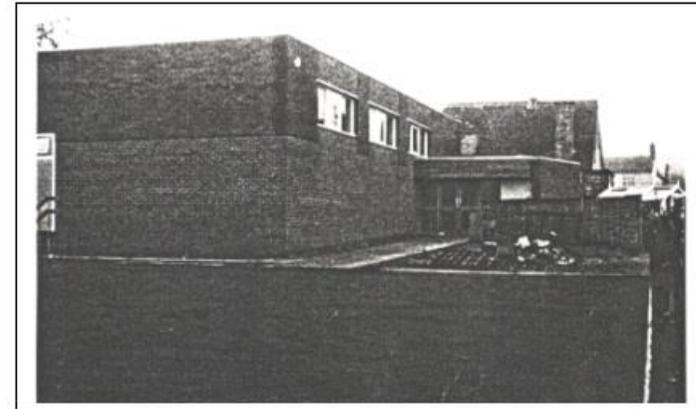
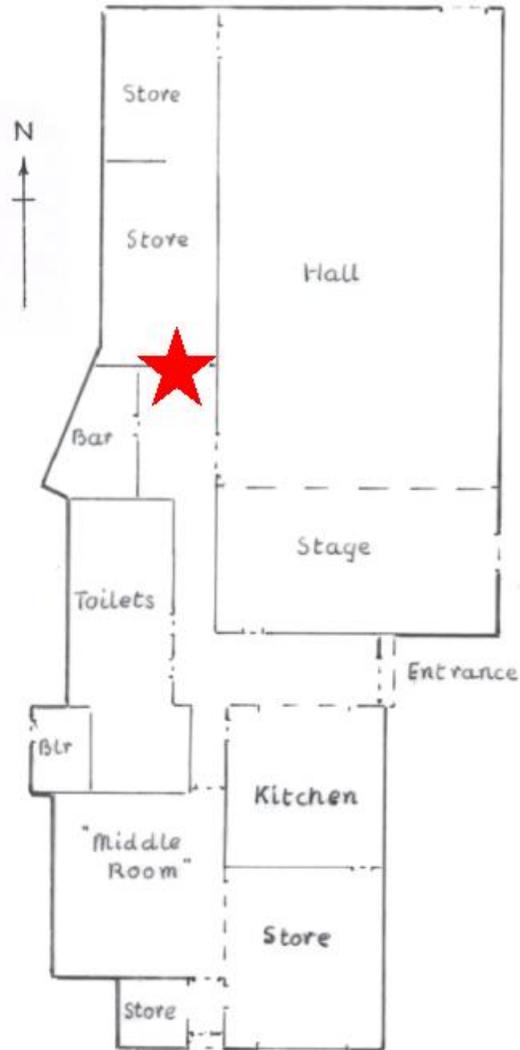


There were no **INSIDE TOILETS** in this building until the Old School was converted into the Village Hall. The job of emptying the privies changed hands frequently. In 1933 the Governors rejected the idea of installing chemical toilets because *the disinfectant was probably of a very poisonous nature and therefore was not safe where there were children.*

The present toilets date from 2004 when they were rearranged to comply with new legislation requiring special disabled facilities.



When the Old Village School was converted and extended in 1972, this area was a store. It was extended and became a **BAR** when the first of the storage areas beyond the nearby door was added, in 1981.

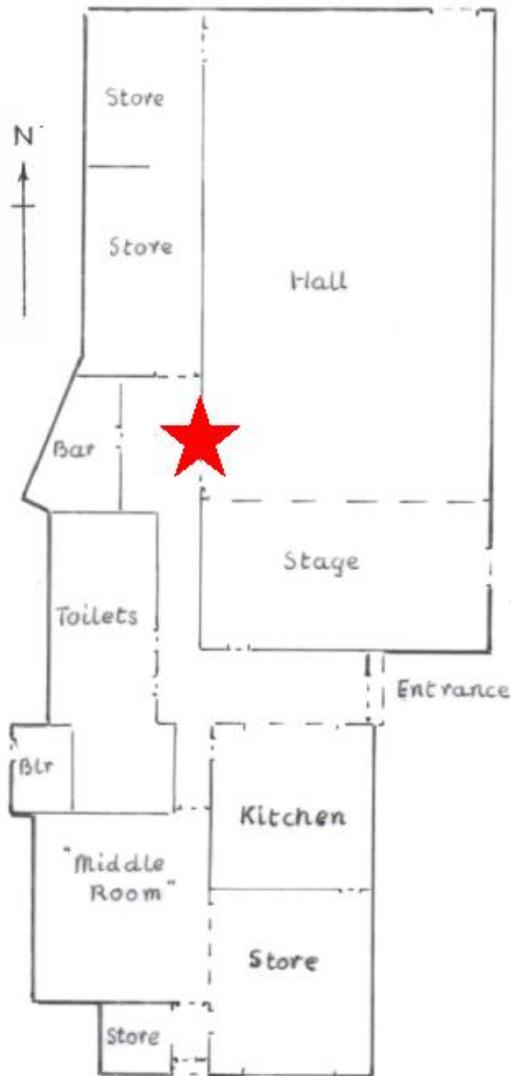


This was the approximate limit of this corridor when the Village Hall was built in 1972 – see the photo above.

The first **STOREROOM** behind the door was added in 1981. It was paid for with grants from Barby Townlands Charity and Daventry District Council.

The second storeroom was added about 15 years ago.

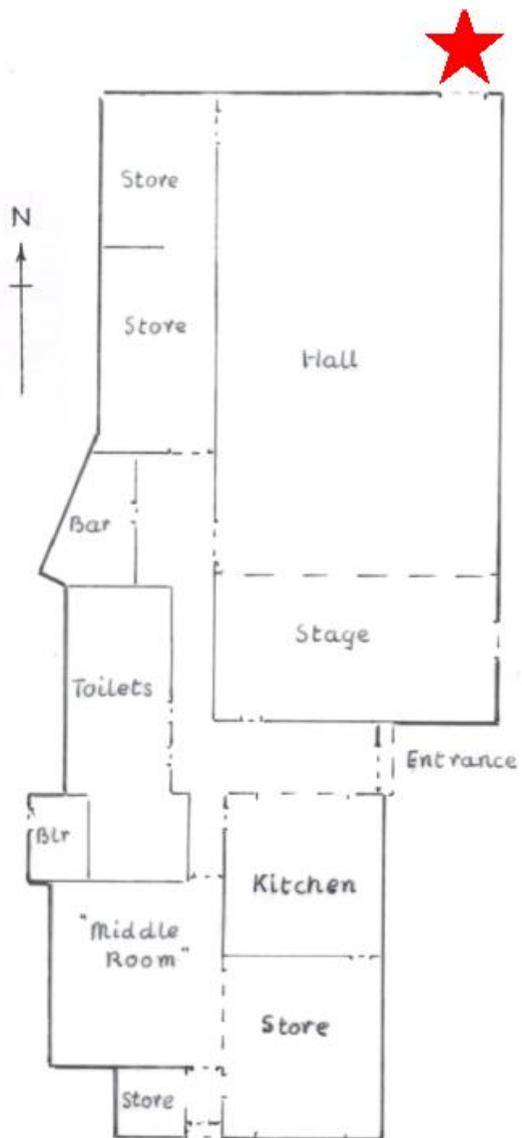
There is now storage space for 130 chairs and 60 tables, besides other 'odds and ends'.



The **MAIN HALL** has seen many celebrations since it was opened in 1972. It was designed to cater for 260 people and was large enough to hold a badminton court.

It was estimated that the cost of conversion and extension of the Old School would be £14500. An additional £2500 was budgeted for *fittings and furnishings*.

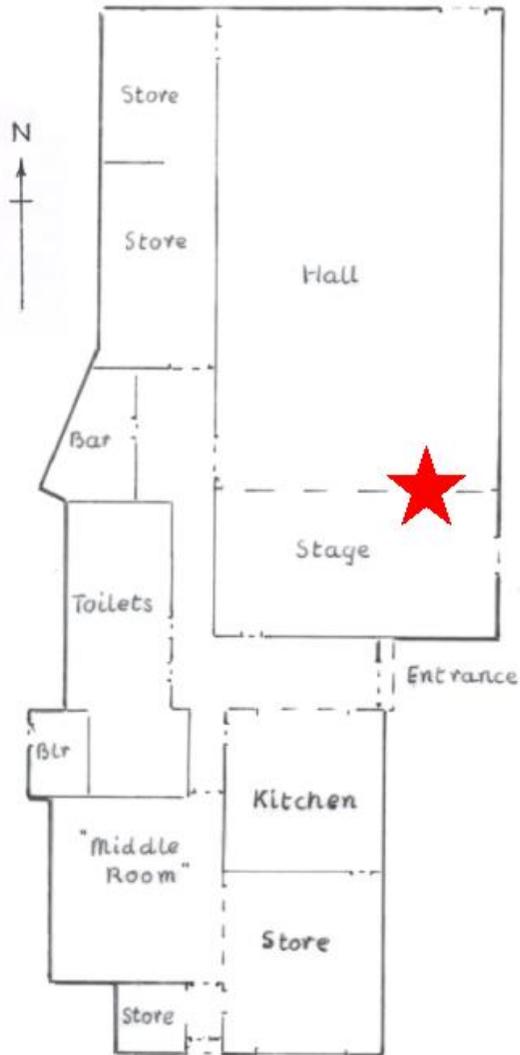
The entrance to the Main Hall occupies approximately the site of the outdoor Girls' Toilets.



This door proves very useful for moving bulky items into and out of the Main Hall.

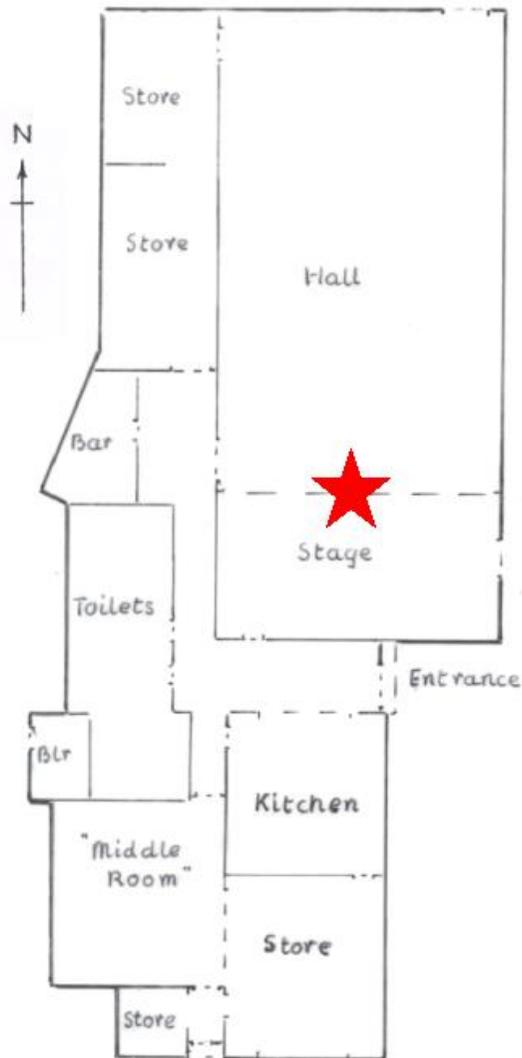
It is also one of the **EMERGENCY EXITS**.

A plan to build a ramp here for wheelchair users came to nought.



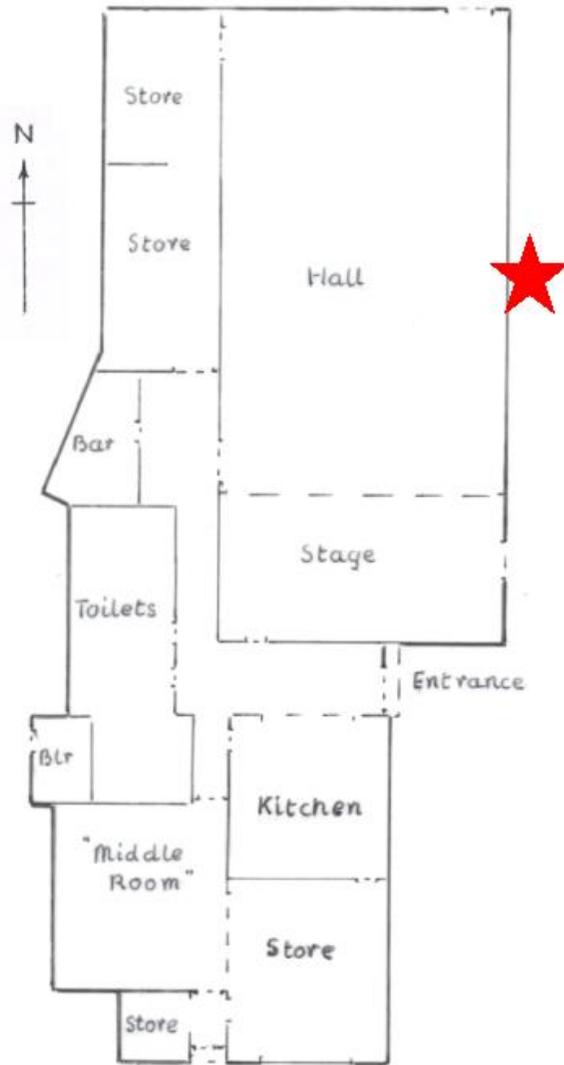
The space under the stage has always been used for **STORAGE**. Forty years ago, mothers of pre-school children formed a *Playgroup* which they ran in this main hall. The organisers were volunteers, and, at 9 am each Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning they unpacked their equipment from beneath this stage, then repacked it at 12 noon.

This photo shows the volunteers and children setting out from the Village Hall on a sponsored walk in 1976.



These young people were some of the Barby School pupils encouraged by Mrs Mitchison (the Rector's wife) into performing plays and revues for the village in the 1940s. They helped form the *Barby Players*, who entertained villagers (and others) for more than 50 years. Many of their productions were performed on the **STAGE** of this Hall.

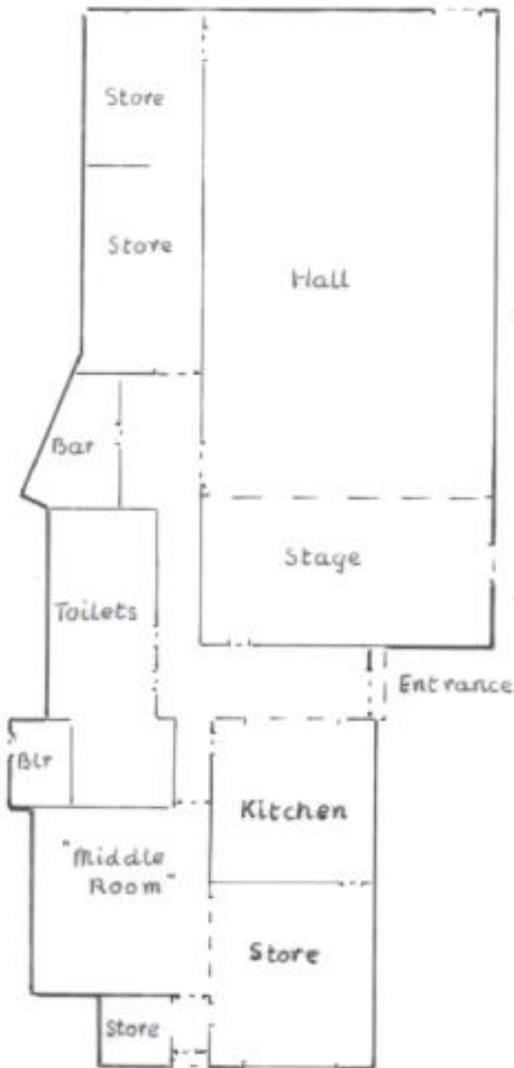
The *Barby School Association* also used the Hall for their fund-raising shows.



In 1972 the Old Village School was converted and extended to create a Village Hall. The new hall was built with a flat **ROOF**.

Twenty years later, it was decided to replace the roof by a pitched one. This was finally installed in 1993 at a cost of about £27000. To cut costs, it was made of tiles rather than slates.

The roof of the Old School was not replaced, but was renovated in 2000, retaining the original tiles.



This photo shows the Old Village School after closure in 1967, viewed from The Derry.

Note the girls' toilets behind the children and bicycles.

YOU ARE NOW LEAVING THE GIRLS' PLAYGROUND.