

Baxter House Youth Club, Fisher Lane

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

It all began during a game of "hop and barge" at the weekly meeting of the No. 1 Troop Boy Scouts at their Den in Station Street, when, in his enthusiasm, a boy put his foot through the floor. This had happened before and there were numerous patches to mark the spots, for the floor, after years of yeoman service, was past its best.

At the next meeting of Troop Officers and Parents, the S.M. suggested that, in view of the state of the floor, it would be advisable to seek other accommodation, and the matter was duly discussed; but apart from suggesting a visit to the Town & Country Planning Office in order to find out if any provision for youth was contemplated in the near future, nothing was done.

But something happened which offered a way out of the difficulty. Mrs. Mackay, as she walked across the Market Place with Nev. Jacques and Eric Green, suggested that property in Fisher Lane, owned by her father Mr. Baxter, might possibly be used to solve the problem of accommodation. The two men, who were members of the local Branch of Toc H, discussed the matter and decided that, although the property was in a terrible state of repair, it had possibilities, and bearing in mind the fact that the then Toc H Branch were already desperately in need of accommodation of any kind for youth work, they decided it would be a good idea if the Branch agreed to accept the offer at the earliest possible moment.

The next thing to do was to bring this idea to the notice of the Branch, and at the next meeting they did so. The proposition was studied from every angle. The difficulties were numerous, but they decided that the need for accommodation for the youth of Bingham was so great that these problems should not be allowed to stand in the way.

Mention must be made here of Nev. Jacques. He was fully aware of the difficulties and the hard work involved, but to his everlasting credit he was amongst the most enthusiastic advocates in favour of the scheme, and, as time has since proved, the most ardent worker in its application. The scheme was formally adopted and the Branch decided to give its meeting on Monday evenings over to the work of preparation. The owners of the property were also duly notified of our intentions and promised to give every assistance and make every effort in facilitating the speedy transfer of the property.

At one meeting an old friend of the Branch offered to get a plan drawn up' and his offer was accepted. The plans were drawn up and duly presented at the next meeting of the Branch and then at a special meeting of the Officers and Parents of the Troop and the meeting was told of the ideas and suggestions of Toc H and agreed that, with the special qualifications possessed by their members, backing and blessing should be given to this venture. There are in the Branch a foreman builder, a bricklayer, a master plumber, and a decorator, and, with these forming the spear-head of their attack, Toc H decided to make preparations for the onslaught.

The Local Council was approached, and promised to do all in their power to expedite matters. The scheme was duly presented in Council and the plan was accepted. In the meantime, a member of the Branch suggested that he should make a film of the job and he, with another, was deputed to make the arrangements.

FINANCE

Finance was next discussed, and it was felt that opportunity should be given to all sections of the community to share in the work. Notices were duly sent out notifying them of the coming meeting, called with a view to soliciting the help of all in what was considered to be a worthwhile job. The meeting was an unqualified success. After the scheme had been outlined by the Chairman, the meeting responded with suggestions and promised to notify their own Committees as to what had been discussed that night.

This Committee met again 14 days later. The Toc H members had made enquiries regarding grants and got in touch with the Rural Community Council, also the County Education Committee, but Bingham proved once again her willingness to help and to give to what was thought by all to be a worthy ideal.

A loan of £50 was offered to meet immediate expenses and was accepted.

A target of £300 (later raised to £400) asked for by Nev. Jacques was reached within three months.

The public subscription list brought in £111, 8s. Od., a really handsome response.

The following events were organised especially for this cause and the sums realised are a sufficient indication of the hard work done by the organisers and the whole hearted support

given:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|----------|----------|
| Women's Institute | 50 | 10 | 0 |
| Evening Institute Concert .. | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Pioneer Club Dance | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Girl Guides (May Day)... .. | 102 | 4 | 6 |
| Bingham C. Club | 37 | 8 | 3 |
| Sale of Tiles | 8 | 6 | 8 |
| Boy Scouts'Dance | 21 | 8 | 0 |
| Carol Singers ... , | 23 | 13 | 0 |
| Concert (Mrs. Alien) | 17 | 10 | 0 |
| Sale of Lamp | 1 | 10 | 0 |
| Rangers' Dance | 7 | 14 | 1 |
| Whist Drive (Mrs. Baxter) ... | 14 | 12 | 6 |
| Sale of Brooches (Mrs. Coy) ... | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Public Subscriptions | 111 | 8 | 0 |
| Total Subscriptions | 446 | 5 | 0 |

CONSTITUTION

The matter of Trusteeship was considered, and it was decided, as it was desirable for the building when completed to be the property of the village, to have the deeds invested in the names of four members, and not to invest them in any definite organisation, thus facilitating the transfer to a public body when the time was opportune. Three of the four to act were obvious choices. The builder, plumber and decorator, but the fourth place was more open. After a member of the legal service had turned the offer down, it was eventually accepted by the Pilot of the Branch, as much of the preliminary work had been passed on to him for action.

The names were Nev. Jacques, Tom Cooper, Donald Taylor, and Eric Green.

The constitution was discussed, and it was decided to have two bodies — one to be known as the General Representative Body, who were to be called together from time to time and acquainted with the progress of the scheme and to help in matters of raising funds to finance the work; the second to be known as the Building Committee, and to be responsible for the actual work, the obtaining of licences, etc. Mr. R. Collins was elected Chairman, Miss E. Taylor. Secretary, Mr. R. Heafford, Treasurer, and Mr. Nev. Jacques, Clerk of Works, and time has since proved the wisdom of the decisions made that night.

A visit was made to the Lawyers and some delay was experienced due to probate with regard to the transfer of the deeds, but eventually the work began.

THE WORK BEGINS

Only those who have taken part in demolishing an old building can fully appreciate the dirt and dust associated with such work, and the uninitiated soon realised why men engaged in such work drink pints and pints of whatever it might be. Fortunately, Mrs. Jacques and her helpers realised this too, and supplied generous quantities of tea, a permit having been obtained. The first job was the clearing away of the old tub lavatories (something which only lives in the imaginations of many folk), and the first Saturday afternoon we came away feeling that at last a start had been made.'

The pulling-down process occupied a considerable amount of time and on one occasion 17 people turned up to do their bit, including the lady who first made the offer.

Each evening the roadway had to be swept clean of debris and everywhere tidied up. This proved to be quite an obstacle to rapid progress, setting up each evening and Saturday afternoon, and tidying up again after we had finished.

The Clerk of Works was Nev. Jacques, the builder, and all agreed to obey instructions to the letter and in the spirit. The team spirit was remarkable and, although fellows gave up football and cricket to do the work, they were to a large extent compensated for it by the excellent feeling present amongst the chaps.

The general feeling of the public was that the job wouldn't be completed, but those working on it knew in their own minds that they would be proved wrong.

The only accident of any note occurred to the man least expected, the Clerk of Works, Nev. He tumbled from the first floor during the demolition and fell on a 5" steel chisel. He spent the next few days in bed considering himself a very lucky man for escaping so lightly. Then, after the horse had gone, the Committee locked the stable door and took out an insurance policy.

The working party soon fell into line. Each evening's work was planned ahead and it was dealt

with section by section. All useable bricks were stacked ready for cleaning, all rubble was heaped, and local farmers contacted to fetch it to use for filling in gateways. Girders and window frames had to be "scrounged". Each night was "Amami Night" to rid oneself of the fine brick dust and real filth.

One job was the removing of thousands of birds nests comprising sack upon sack of hay and grass which had accumulated over the years.

Those working on the job, who had rarely lifted anything heavier than a pen or cricket bat, soon found their hands as hard as iron — blisters became a thing of the past and they became fully-fledged builder's labourers.

The moving of rubble presented a difficulty, as did many other details which cropped up from time to time, but somehow at the very last minute a way round was found. Even the weather decided to be on our side and rarely were operations held up on this account.

It was not difficult to pick out those who were not used to the work; many a barrow load was tipped up, and once or twice bricks were dropped from the upper stories and fell on fellows working down below, but this newness eventually wore off, and apart from the accident mentioned no real damage was done. It was not possible to get timber, so concrete floors had to be put in; the concrete was mixed in a builder's yard 50 yards away, wheeled up to the building and taken upstairs in buckets. As each floor had to be completed in an afternoon it meant that two or three fellows had to work until midnight.

A retired carpenter came along to become one of the real stalwarts. Every day found him there, and all the woodwork, doors, cupboards, etc. were under-taken and completed by him. The electric wiring was supervised by a local electrician. The local plumber, one of the Toc H Trustees, looked after the plumbing, ably assisted by an apprentice plumber, also a Toc H Branch member.

The quality of workmanship was good, nothing was skimped, everyone taking a pride in his own particular job.

The decorator, also a Trustee, and an ardent cricket fan, promised to carry out the decorating in the off -cricket season and give every help he could in the evenings. This promise was kept, and with the help of two or three of his friends, the decorating proceeded in good style when the time was ready.

All this time Nev. kept the job moving. He was tireless and an inspiration to everyone.

OPENING - MAY 21st, 1949

During all this time the Committee were meeting at regular intervals, and the time came for the Opening to be discussed. The constitution for a suggested Management Committee was drawn up, discussed at a subsequent public meeting, and accepted. The opening date was chosen, the Duke of Rutland was asked to officiate and duly accepted.

An Opening Committee was chosen to prepare all necessary details for the opening and to ensure that everything went off smoothly.

Sir Miles Graham (Chairman) was specially invited to attend the Opening Ceremony.

It was decided to have a parade of the Youth Organisations and that the local Toc H Branch should also participate. The Bingham Band promised their support and were included in the opening programme.

A Committee consisting mainly of the Youth Organisations was chosen to provide entertainment and diversions for the rest of the day, and then it was decided to show the film of the work done in a place to be decided later.

In conclusion, mention should be made of the work done by the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the Scheme. All carried out their work with an admirable spirit and nothing was too much trouble. It meant attending meetings at all hours of the day and night and when one remembers that apart from this work they were each heavily committed in other directions, their endeavours are all the more commendable.

They even found time to give assistance in the pulling down and in the building up of the Centre and the tribute which is their due is here paid to them.

Baxter House

THE NEW
BINGHAM YOUTH
CENTRE

OFFICIAL OPENING

by

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF RUTLAND

Chairman:

Maj.-Gen. Sir Miles Graham, K.B.E., C.B., M.C.

Souvenir
Programme

1/-

Saturday,
May 21st,
1949

AT 2.30 P.M.

Programme of Day's Events on Rectory Lawn

(By kind Permission of Rev. John Reay, M.C.)

ENTERTAINMENTS

by the following

YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

- 3. 0—BROWNIES
- 4. 0—CUBS
- 5. 0—GUIDES
- 6. 0—RANGERS
- 7.30—CAMP FIRE

OTHER ATTRACTIONS—

STALLS :: BRAN TUB
NUMEROUS SIDE SHOWS

BUFFET SERVICE will be provided from 3.30 p.m.

Admission to Lawn: 1/- Adults;
6d. Children

BINGHAM BAND in attendance

Other Events

PONY RIDING

MARKET PLACE
During Afternoon and
Evening

BAXTER HOUSE

Open for inspection from
3.30 to 7. Admission 3d.

FILM SHOW OF YOUTH CENTRE SCHEME

From 7 o'clock. Admission
Adults 1/-. Children 9d.

WHIST DRIVE

W.I. HUT. 7.15 p.m.
Tickets 2/6.

DANCE

CHURCH HALL
8—12 Admission 2/-

MINIATURE RAILWAY

Children 3d. Adults 6d.

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