

December 12, 1913

## WESTBURY VILLAGE HALL

### Successful Opening

After over four years' vain endeavour to obtain the village schoolroom at Westbury-sub-Mendip on the occasions of concerts, entertainments, etc., the villagers held consultations as to the desirability of building a village hall. Such a proposal met with hearty support from the time it was mooted, and the idea was taken up with enthusiasm. "In a village where millionaires are not plentiful," according to one farmer, the expense of such a building was no small matter, but the villagers were not to be beaten, and concerts were held at intervals in the small Temperance Hall, the proceeds of which were devoted to the Ladies' Sewing Class in order that material might be purchased for a future sale. The ladies worked hard and the present inhabitants and those of future generations will owe them much for their untiring efforts in providing material for a sale, the takings at which it was hoped would go a long way towards meeting the expenses of the new building. Their work having accumulated to such proportions that there was plenty of material for the first sale it was decided that a hall should be built. The necessary land was purchased, and three months ago Messrs. Dennis Bros. of Westbury, commenced the work. Rapid progress was made and on Wednesday afternoon the opening ceremony was performed at the same time as the first sale of work was held. Too much praise cannot be bestowed on the ladies of the sewing class for their work, for it is mainly due to their efforts that the hall has been erected. The ladies connected with the class include the following: Mesdames A. Glanvile, Keen, H. Dennis, A. Dennis, W. Lee, W. Tyley, J. Stott, Curtis, Hanning, and Bacon, Misses M. Sealy, Tyley, M. Hale, A. James, Light, C. Weeks, and Bacon. At a committee meeting four months ago the following gentlemen, who have also lent valuable assistance to the scheme, were appointed trustees of the new hall: Messrs. A. Glanvile (treasurer), F. Glanvile, R. Keen, H. Masters, Edmund Stott, J. Stott, W. Tyley, C. Curtis, and W. Lee.

The hall, which is erected on the north side of the lower road to Wells, is centrally situated, and built of stone with a red tiled roof. The main entrance door faces east, and there is a side entrance on the south-west of the building, which contains a long room with an inside measurement of 50 ft. by 22 ½ ft., a refreshment room, and ladies' and gentlemen's cloak rooms. The boarded roof gives a finished appearance to the interior. The cost of the land and the building amounts to about £350, so the villagers have entered on no light task in striving to clear off this amount.

Mr. and Mrs. Graves-Knyfton, of Uphill Manor, kindly consented to open the sale of work on Wednesday afternoon, and at 2.30, in the presence of a large company, Mr. W. Lee introduced Mrs. Graves-Knyfton, and asked her to open the hall and the sale of work.

Mrs. Graves-Knyfton then opened the main entrance doors and passed into the room, which had been gaily decorated with bunting and small flags, and looked pretty with this decoration and the various colours on the stalls. Those present included: Mesdames Tyley (Rodney Stoke), Hill (Draycott), G. Dennis, H. Masters, H. Sealy, Board, F. Young and E. Weeks (Easton), Sage (Knowle Farm), Coleridge-Smith

(Rodney Stoke), E. A. Crosse, S. F. Goodall, S. T. Richards, J. Tate, G. Vincent (Wells), Misses Perkins (East Court, Wookey), Hill (Draycott), E. Phelps, J. Dennis, Toomer, Lee, I. Cox, D. Lambert, Fear, Tyte; Messrs. W. Sage, J. Lovell, H. Horlock, J. Carver, H. Sealey, E. Weeks, E. A. Crosse, S. F. Goodall, In addition there were the stallholders and all the trustees.

### **The Opening Ceremony**

Mrs. Graves-Knyfton said it gave them great pleasure to come over to Westbury and open that hall, and she was sure they were all anxious to see it free of debt. They deserved every success, and she hoped the sale would prove very successful in every way. She had much pleasure in declaring the sale open.

Mr. E. A. Crosse, in moving a vote of thanks to Mrs. Graves-Knyfton, said it was rather a wonder to him that there was a necessity for that hall to have been erected, because in 1887, when the new schoolroom was built, it was understood it would be used for parochial purposes. He remembered that at the time there was a public meeting, and he then suggested whether they would have a new school under the School Board with probably a 1s. or 1s 6d rate for all time, or whether they would have a 1s. rate for one year for the purpose of building that school. He had the balance sheet of that school in his hand, and it was interesting to know two things. First of all that Mr. J. T. Knyfton, an uncle of the gentleman with them that afternoon, was a magnificent donor of £100, and secondly that the voluntary rate produced £117 8s. 5d. One would have thought under those circumstances that the school would have served the purpose, but it appeared to be otherwise. Apparently it was not so, and he supposed he must take it that the progress of that village was so great that entertainments were tumbling over one another that one room was not enough to take them all. (Laughter.) From all he saw he thought they were going to have a very successful sale. He suggested that a source of revenue would be to have the trustees' deeds of the old school on show, and a charge of 6d. per head be made to see it, and take a fair shot at it. (Laughter and applause.) They had now got a room which was a credit to the village, and he hoped they would have very many successful gatherings in it. (Applause.)

Mr. Goodall seconded, and said he knew something about the education question, and he thought if there were two objectionable parties one was the County Council Education Committee and the other was a Board of School Managers. He was a manager himself (laughter), and he thought the most objectionable person connected with a Board of Managers was correspondent. He was a correspondent. (Laughter.) Westbury had been "very badly done by officialism," and he alluded to the manner in which the old village inn, which had a club room, had been closed, in spite of the fact that the villagers were unanimous in asking that it should remain. (Applause.) One heard a great deal about people deciding things, but he thought the people of Westbury had very little knowledge of the matter and had not been consulted in any way. With regard to the school, they thought the school belonged to them but it appeared it was not so. He knew, as a correspondent, that he was pestered by the Somerset Education Committee as to whether a school had been used for any private meetings, independent of education, and, if so, then they had some forms sent down and had a notification to pay 37-45ths, whatever that was (laughter), of the expenses of heating, cleaning, and the wear and tear of the schoolroom. He dare say there were

little difficulties in the way there, but the people of Westbury were determined that they would not stand that sort of red tapism (hear, hear), and said, "We will have a hall of our own independent of any Education Committee or Board of Management." With plenty of pluck they had put their heads and purses together, and had now got that hall. (Applause.) The name of Graves-Knyfton, he added, had been known in the village for generations, and he was sure they were pleased they had got such landlords and not the County Council to manage their affairs. Tenant farmers were unanimous that they preferred landlords to County Council, who had got neither souls to be saved nor bodies to be kicked. (Laughter and applause.)

The motion was carried with acclamation.

The company then proceeded to patronise the various stalls, which were laden with many useful and fancy goods. The stalls and stall holders were: Fancy stall, Mrs. W. Tyley and Mrs. W. Lee; plain needlework stall, Mrs. A. Glanvile, Miss Tyley; produce stall, Mrs. Curtis, and Miss A. James; refreshments, Mrs. Keen, Mrs. J. Stott, and Miss C. Weeks; bran tub, Mrs. H. Dennis; pottery stall, Mrs. A. Dennis and Miss May Sealy. Mr. C. E. Curtis acted as doorkeeper.

During the afternoon the ringers rang peals on the Church bells.

The takings at the sale realised £54 1s. 6 ½d, and this has been placed in the hands of Mr. Albert Glanvile (treasurer). With a view to augmenting this sum a social will be held in the hall on Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, from 7 to 11 p.m. The charge will be parishioners, 6d.; non-parishioners, 1s.