

History of the Memorial Hall

Between about 1890 and 1920 the children of Y Felinheli received excellent tuition in such things as singing, recitation, playing musical instruments etc. outside school hours by knowledgeable and dedicated people. Choirs were started in the chapels and churches but it was necessary to use these same buildings to both practice and perform.

A 'hall' of a kind constructed of wood and zinc was bought for £100 immediately after the First World War and this was used as a village hall to stage various activities. The condition of the building was rather precarious and its size was small. There was therefore a desperate need for a purpose built hall.

Again, following the end of the war, there was much discussion amongst villagers about the most suitable memorial to those men from the village killed in the war. Some thought that a clock would be most suitable whilst others were of the opinion that a hall with a special room in it would be best. The village was split in two over this. Both suggestions had their merits - the clock in the main street could be seen by all every day whilst there was a desperate need for a hall which would be much more beneficial to the village generally.

Because of this split eight years passed following the end of the war before it was decided to build a clock. The other faction carried on with their plans to build a hall.

A 'Grand Bazaar' was held in the Vaynol Park on the 2nd and 3rd of September, 1925 to raise money towards the clock fund - it was called in the Bazaar's programme 'The Port Dinorwic and District War Memorial'. By this time a site at the foot of the station hill had been donated by the Vaynol Estate and the Directors of the London Midland and Scottish Railway Company or the IMS as it was better known.

Land was obtained to build the hall in 1924 and the start of the building work was much welcomed by the villagers. During the building work and in the middle of a storm of heavy rain and gale force winds one of the walls was blown down.

The foundation stone was laid by Sir Michael Duff during a special service on Saturday, October 31, 1925. The hall was called 'The Public Memorial Hall - Port Dinorwic'.

Saturday, July 17th, 1926 was decided upon as the day of the official opening but this had to be moved to the following day Sunday, July 18th, 1926 as Sir Michael had to attend his sister's wedding on the Saturday.

With the opening of the hall it became possible to hold eisteddfodau, concerts, dramas, dances, youth clubs, whist drives, badminton clubs etc.

Before finishing mention should be made first of Mr. H.O. Roberts, a villager who had emigrated to America some years previously. He owned a plot of land where the hall stands now and which he gave as a gift to the village. The slates for the roof were donated by Sir Michael Duff. A special word for the final person, a Mrs Mary Thompson who, with her husband, moved here from England to eventually live at 7 Terfyn Terrace. Part of her will in 1901 read as follows.....

..'To the Parish Council of Llanfairisgaer two thousand pounds for the purpose of supplying Port Dinorwic only with water or of making and constructing waterworks in

connection therewith provided the same be completed within two years from my death..... To the same Parish Council one thousand pounds towards the costs and expenses of erecting and completing a Public Hall at Port Dinorwic within which Hall a Room is to be set apart for and used as a free Library Room with a suitable inscription placed on some part thereof to commemorate the happy days I have spent at Port Dinorwic and also the many kind friends I have met and associated with there.....'