

CELEBRATION OF
GULWORTHY PARISH HALL CENTENARY

1897 - 1997

HELD AT GULWORTHY PARISH HALL ON
SATURDAY 23RD AUGUST 1997 AT 2.30PM

Commemorative speech by John Gillett of Gulworthy Farm

Chairman and Trustees of Gulworthy Parish Hall,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I consider it a great privilege and honour to have been invited by the Trustees and Management Committee to speak on the occasion of this great, and first Centenary Celebrations of Gulworthy Parish Hall, known originally as Gulworthy Parish Room.

Let us first take a peep at a somewhat impressionist scene of 900 years ago, at the time of Abbot Wymund of Tavistock Abbey. Gulworthy, known in those days as Golyaworthy, was mostly open down and forest with access to Morwell Down, Morwellham and Bere Ferrers by an ancient track way - beyond the cross roads above here.

The 15th Century survey showed the only farmland of any importance in the Parish were at Golyaworthy (now Gulworthy), Rumonsleigh (now Hartshole), Newton (part of which now Colcharton) and the Hams beside the Tamar at Morwellham.

All this area was under the powerful influence of Tavistock Abbey until Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries around 1540 when very large areas of land came into the possession of the Duke of Bedford. Around the year 1400, we would have seen farmer Walter Page of Golyaworthy (Gulworthy Farm) who lived in a croft size holding, the little house and barn of which were situated where the Perkins family used to have their grass Tennis Court, grazing his live stock on Golyaworthy Down. Likewise, the farmer at Rumonsleigh (Hartshole) would have been grazing his stock on Luscombe down.

Gradually over the following Centuries the farms took in more and more of the down land as agriculture developed and became an ever expanding major industry.

Although from earliest times mining has taken place throughout the area, it was, however, the startling increase in mining activities around 1840 that revolutionised the Parish of Gulworthy. Its pervasive effects were felt profoundly in all sectors of the community - Economic, Social, Cultural, Education, New Skills, Religion, Health and employment.

By 1836, the mines were responsible for radical changes in the road systems of this area in order

to facilitate movement of ores, supplies and equipment to and from the mines to Morwellham Quay and latterly to and from the Railway Stations at Tavistock South and Tavistock North.

By the middle of the last century the population in this Parish had increased enormously due to the influx of miners and their families, with many children needing education. This was accelerated by the discovery in 1845 of the thirty feet wide copper lode in the mine called Devon Great Consols at Blanchdown. This situation led to the building, by the Duke of Bedford, of St Paul's Church and the urgently needed Primary School in 1854 and 1855. The Parish Room was completed in 1897 after the then Vicar the Reverend Petty collected £50 from parishioners, many of whom pledged materials, transport and labour towards the building. The Duke of Bedford paid off a debt of £180 and contributed to furnishings. All this took place 100 years ago. Incidentally, further furnishings were brought up from the Mission Hall at Hartshole.

At around that time there was a temporary big influx of men to the Parish working on the construction the Railway Viaduct, built of stone, at Mill Mill over the river Lumburn. A large force of craftsmen and labourers were involved and it appears that the new Parish Room was the venue for a Working Men's Club.

In 1915, the Reverend Petty conveyed the Room to an independent body of Trustees with the deed, originally approved by the Duke of Bedford, which stated the responsibilities and conditions to be observed by the Trustees for perpetuity. And that is how it is today, now in the hands of responsible Trustees and Management Committee.

It was in July 1929 that the then Trustees called a meeting of parishioners of **Gulworthy Only** in order to dispel misunderstandings concerning a lease to Gulworthy United Sports Club and its funding of extensions to the Parish Room. Such were the tensions the Chairman of the Trustees - the Reverend J Sharp who was the Rural Dean and Rector of Bere Ferrers - found it necessary on three occasions to ask the Reverend J Crum - Vicar of St Paul's Gulworthy - to "sit down and observe the Chair!". It appears that Reverend Crum, a vociferous gentle man, was deeply concerned about possible erosion of the Authority of the Trustees by the rather powerful Sports Club who had been granted a lease by the Trustees and had raised a big sum of money for extension to the Hall. By the end of that crucial meeting, chaired so wisely and fairly by the Rural Dean, it became clear that the use of the Hall remained absolutely secure and under the full control of the Trustees and not in the hands of any other group or body. The Chairman confirmed the Deed's ruling that St Paul's Church, Gulworthy would always receive prime consideration in regard to requests for bookings of the Hall.

We in the Parish of Gulworthy are extremely fortunate in having such very responsible Trustees in charge then and now, supported by a dedicated and hard working Management Committee who give a great amount of their own time and work to keep the Hall in such excellent order for the benefit and enjoyment of the Community. I am sure that most of us here today have had many extremely happy occasions in this Parish Hall.

The Present Trustees are Mr Peter Hoyle, Mr Winston Lake, Mr John Edwards, Mr Bob Baker and Mrs Primrose Lake.

We see with our own eyes their achievements over the recent years in the great improvements

and efficient maintenance to the Hall. The result of much personal commitment and quiet generosity on the part of the team who have at heart the welfare of the Community - whether it is Education, Church events, Sunday School, Lectures, Concerts, Parish Council Meetings, Light Entertainment, Social Events, Charitable Events, Wedding Receptions, Young Farmers, Clubs, Mother and Toddlers Groups, Whist Drives, The Women's Institute and Various Exhibitions.

Long live Gulworthy Parish Hall for another 100 years and beyond!

Mr Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a lady near to me here who was born in this Parish at Devon Great Consols. Her parents were born in Gulworthy and also her Grandfather and Great Grandfather. In fact her father, Grandfather and Great Grandfather had a workshop business at Newshop situated at Three Oaks between her and Chipshop. Her father was for many years Secretary of Gulworthy Social Club based in the Parish Hall here.

It is with much pleasure that I now invite Mrs Muriel Symons to officially open Centenary Celebrations on this happy day by cutting the ribbon. Thank you.
