

Rimington Memorial Institute

Arthur Spencer served in WWI along with 30 other men from the village. As a memorial to the 17 who died, who would all have been known to Arthur, a temporary plain cross was erected on the land in front of where Rufus Carr's workshop now stands. This can be seen on the Peace Day photos.

Arthur and his brother Harry were joiners, having carried on the family business, the workshop being at the bottom of Stopper Lane, later converted into three 3 story houses. Up until the 1920s when electricity came to Rimington, the machines were powered by a very large windmill erected on top of the workshop building. They also owned a plot of land across the road where their pony was kept and grazed in the days of the horse and cart for transport.

After the war, money was raised by the villagers, over a number of years, to build a village hall – this to be in memory of those who had died and to be named Rimington Memorial Institute. The Spencer family rented part of their land to the left of the access road to Rimington School (now Greystones) for this purpose, motor transport having taken over from horse transport, and the Spencer firm built the hall from timber and the interior woodwork is still as you see it today. The original wooden windows were only replaced by plastic ones a few years ago. Prior to this, there was a hut in the corner of this plot of land housing a billiard table which was popular before snooker took hold and this was pulled down to make way for the Institute building. This table is still in use in the Men's Club.

The original building was the main hall with the two cloakrooms and main entrance porch. The only form of heating until the 1960s was a single coke fuelled stove positioned to the left of the doors opening to the extension. At the far end was the billiard table (where the stage is now) and was used most nights when the hall wasn't otherwise required. There was no running water and no inside toilet. There were, however, outbuildings where the washing up was done or water brought inside from there. Annie Carr, Rufus's wife, lived in a cottage across the road and was the caretaker for many years.

Concerts were held here for many years, a temporary stage being erected at the cloakroom end for this purpose. Arthur was an ARP during the 2nd World War and when the siren went off during one of the concerts he had to stop the performance and vacate the hall, as with all public buildings.

There were regular whist and domino drives, the tables filling the hall as it was a popular pastime before the age of television. These were often followed by dancing with the tables moved away and the chairs put round the side and music was provided by a musician; not the disco type of today but the ballroom dances of waltzes, quicksteps, foxtrots etc together with the barn dance, military twostep etc which were danced in a circle and the ladies moved forward to another partner as it progressed. All the boys and girls from the village and even some from over at Twiston and Downham came to these often walking over the fields in warm clothing and wellingtons over their fine clothes and bringing a bag to carry their dancing shoes. The cloakrooms were certainly well used! Some romances even began during these and blossomed into marriage.

In the 1950s, square dancing came over from America and was a common event on a weeknight for the younger people. This was lively music and instructions were given by a caller.

Rimington Women's Institute was formed in 1947 and meetings have been held in the hall on the first Tuesday in the month for the 70 years since. For the first 50 years, the WI held an annual Handicraft and Produce Show when the room was filled with colourful flowers, confectionary and handicrafts which was open to visitors who came from all around.

Ladies' Table Tennis has been played in the hall every week for the past 40 years and also Indoor Bowling which began in 1991.

In the 1960s, health and safety required all public buildings to have indoor running water and toilet facilities. The committee decided to apply for a grant for an extension to form a kitchen and toilets. In order for this to be accepted, it was necessary for the Institute to own the land it was to be built on. Mr Taylor of Greystones also wanted to buy the land still owned by the Spencer family to prevent buildings being erected up to his boundary. A compromise was reached and the remaining piece of land was split between the two and sold. However, instead of applying for a grant and erecting a new building, the committee purchased some second hand buildings and put these up instead, as you see them today, incorporating a separate room for the men to use for snooker and other recreations.