

THE FLAXTON VILLAGE HALL PROJECT

March 1922 to November 1928

Timeline Summary Only

1st September 2025

V1.0

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Introduction and Background

The Flaxton Parish Hall, now known as Flaxton Village Hall, was opened in October 1928.

The development of the Hall took seven years and was managed by villagers who formed several committees to run different aspects of the Project.

Mr John R Robinson was a prominent villager who presided over many of these committees and played a very active part in developing the Hall.

He also played an active part in local government in the area including holding the office of Chairman of the Flaxton Rural District Council which was disbanded in 1972 after a re-organisation of Local Government.

John's grandson, Brian Robinson, who currently lives in the village kindly loaned a hand-written minute book that John had kept during the time of the Project covering the period from 1922 until the end of 1928.

Purpose of this document

This document presents abridged transcripts from the minutes of the recorded meetings to provide an insight into the Project from inception to operation and, with some certainty, answers the original question posed by the Flaxton Community Hall Trustees– “Who provided the land for the Hall and who does the land belong to?”.

Content of the minutes

Every motion discussed by each of the committees usually includes a record of the proposer, seconder and the committee's vote on the motion. However, for brevity only the proposer is recorded herein. All motions can be assumed to have been agreed unanimously unless a split voting record is noted or if the motion was explicitly rejected. Some motions are rescinded by a later minute sometimes in the same meeting.

The handwritten notes, most recorded using a fountain pen, have been challenging to interpret. There are several gaps in their translation, but these do not detract from the overall story of the Project.

Two pages from the minute book are shown in Appendix I. These are from the record of the meeting in September 1928 when the opening ceremony was planned.

There are a few inconsistencies in the dates recorded for the meetings and the chronological sequence in which they appear in the minute book. These anomalies are noted at the appropriate point.

The 1928 Flaxton Parish Electoral Roll published in October 1928 helped to interpret the names of over 60 individuals recorded in the minutes and has been reproduced in Appendix II. The Roll contains the 170 names of those villagers over 21 years old who could vote. Interestingly, this was the first register produced following the July 1928 Equality Franchise Act when women were granted equal voting rights to men.

Several committee members are not recorded therein as they had probably left the village by this time, lived outside the village, died, or were simply too young or ineligible to vote.

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The 1928 Flaxton School photograph in Appendix III from villager Sheila Walker showed 41 children with their surnames which helped to interpret the handwritten surnames of their parents and relatives recorded in the minutes.

Project Timeline

A summary of the key events and their timing derived from the minutes is presented below.

March 1922

The Project to erect a Village Hall in Flaxton started on Saturday 4th March 1922 with a public meeting in the Flaxton School where the need for an Institute for the village was agreed.

A Working Committee was formed at the meeting and around thirty villagers were elected to the Committee.

A first task was to name the proposed building with “The Flaxton Recreation Room” winning the vote from “The Liberty Hall” and “The Flaxton Village Institute”. After much debate the building eventually opened as “Flaxton Parish Hall”.

The Working Committee set to work three days later and during March 1922 had established a Building Committee tasked with finding a suitable site and a Finance Committee responsible for raising funds. These two committees held their first meetings in the Schoolroom on 11th March 1922.

The minutes from these and later meetings suggest that the Building Committee had identified two sites, one at the Primitive Wesleyan Chapel next to The Kell, and the second, a field off York Lane owned by William Jackson.

The Primitive Chapel site was found to be too small unless more adjoining land could be purchased so Mr Jackson’s field was probably more in favour at that time. The owners of the Chapel and its garden were keen to sell the land as the Chapel had fallen into disrepair and eventually closed in 1925 and was then sold in 1930.

April 1922 to January 1928

The minute book then ‘leaps’ from March 1922 to February 1928 suggesting that for some reason the project went cold after a month of vigorous activity.

The Treasurer held a balance of £79 on 23rd February 1928 which suggests that some fund raising may have taken place in this unrecorded period. The Schoolroom appears to have been the main place where fund raising events were held.

February 1928

The Working Committee re-formed on 10th February 1928 as the General Purposes Committee with combined responsibility for the site, building and finance activities.

A Working and Ladies Committee was also formed to plan and run fund raising events with the first being a Whist Drive planned for Shrove Tuesday (12th February 1928).

The General Purposes Committee decided to set up a Bank Account and again started looking for a site and called a meeting with the Green Owners to see if they could lease land from them.

March/April 1928

The Working Committee reported making £8 18s 1d from the Shrove Tuesday Whist Drive and started organising a Whist Drive and Dance for Easter Week (Good Friday fell on 6th April 1928).

The General Purposes Committee reported that they had found four potential sites including one from a benefactor, a Mrs Holtby, who was considering offering a plot in a field occupied by her tenant Mr John Thomas Smedley. The Chairman was asked to meet with a Mr Brown (presumably a surveyor) who was going to value the plot of land which the Working Committee had suggested needed to be a square of 25 yards.

Mrs Caroline Tinsley Holtby (nee Casswell) who was born in 1844 lived at Lilling Hall on the outskirts of Flaxton and was the widow of Robert Holtby, a respected Solicitor and Gentleman who had run a Law Practice in York. Mr and Mrs Holtby had previously lived at Flaxton House.

Robert had provided The School House (now The Homestead) in Flaxton to accommodate a married couple suitable for positions of master and junior teacher at Flaxton School. He died in Bournemouth in April 1911 aged 71.

May 1928

Mrs Holtby confirmed that she was willing, with conditions, to let the Committee have a piece of land in Mr Smedley's field and asked that a Trust be formed to which the deeds could be conveyed. Trustees were elected and their names and occupations provided to Mrs Holtby's solicitor.

The land was purchased for £50. Curiously, the deeds were not signed until 16th October 1929. The selling and buying party were "The Holtby Trustees" (which included Mrs Holtby's daughter Margaret and son-in-law, Garnham Roper) and "The Club Trustees".

June 1928

Following the 'conveyancing' of the land measuring eighteen by twenty-seven yards, the Trust's building plot was enclosed by a low-cost fence.

Now knowing the plot's dimensions, the General Purposes Committee discussed the design and materials for the building and the appointment of a qualified architect to draw up plans.

The Chairman had estimated the cost of a 50' x 20' wooden building to be around £225. He had also been presented with a plan and estimated cost of £430-450 for a brick-built building, a construction type the Committee favoured ahead of a wood-built one, but only subject to being able to afford it.

Six General Purposes Committee members who became known as the bondsmen offered up £25 each as a surety for a £150 Bank Loan from the Midland Bank, York. One bondsman also investigated the possibility of a loan from a Building Society which was declined.

The bondsmen were given power to advertise in the press for tenders and to then accept a tender to have the building built.

July 1928

Three tenders were received and two of the tenderers, a Mr Pollard from Thirsk and a Mr Butler from Leeds, attended separate meetings of the bondsmen.

A tender for the sum of £290 to erect a wooden building was accepted from Mr Butler.

There is no mention of the third tender from a Mr Pearson of Sheriff Hutton.

The informal tender (presumably the one received earlier by the Chairman) for a brick-built building was discounted on cost grounds.

August 1928

There is no written record of the building work apart from a total payment of £369 7s to Mr Butler recorded in the 1928/29 accounts. This sum, however, included the cost of him making wooden forms (seats) with back rails which were ordered soon after the opening ceremony.

The Working Committee must have seen good progress on the building at this point as they turned to planning the content and timing of events for the opening ceremony.

September 1928

The General Purposes Committee met on 20th September and received the sad news of Mrs Holtby's death (12th September 1928, aged 83) and decided to write to her daughter, Jane Margaret Roper, and family to offer their sympathy; all marked by a standing silence.

The Committee then set a date and time of Wednesday 10th October 1928 at 2.30 pm for the Hall Opening Ceremony and finally agreed on "Flaxton Parish Hall" as its name.

The timing of the day and night's events and admission prices were agreed along with roles and responsibilities involving most if not all the Committee members. This included those who would provide whist and dance prizes, loan a piano, seek loan furniture and crockery from the church, build a shack hut, and perform key roles such as opening the ceremony, acting as door keepers and masters of ceremony for the different events etc.

October 1928

Final arrangements were made for the Opening Ceremony including begging a ham for the Public Tea and hiring some tables from Sheriff Hutton Memorial Hall.

There is no story of the Opening Ceremony itself. However, at the next General Purposes Meeting held on the Saturday after, a profit of £94 4s 1d was reported.

With this new capital available, an extensive Hall shopping list was prepared including a tea urn, tables and chairs, crockery, cutlery and a piano. The purchase of a piano at the right price proved to be a hard-fought undertaking.

The need for a caretaker was identified and his/her terms of employment were detailed including the weekly wage (which differed between Summer and Winter quarters). Pay rates for 'extras' requiring the caretaker to work overtime such as

Saturday dances were detailed. A villager, Mr Francis Tennant, was appointed from the four applicants.

The Hall devised a membership subscription model for which a quarterly pay in advance, seasonal, fee structure was established along with a very rigorous set of membership rules.

A programme for future events was also prepared.

November 1928

More events were organised, and two heating stoves were purchased. A committee was formed to purchase a billiard table which was acquired and then paid for in instalments.

Financial Accounts

November 1928 was the final entry in the minute book. However, a folded, typewritten set of accounts for the build and first year of operation of the Hall was found inside the minute book. These accounts are presented at the end of this document.

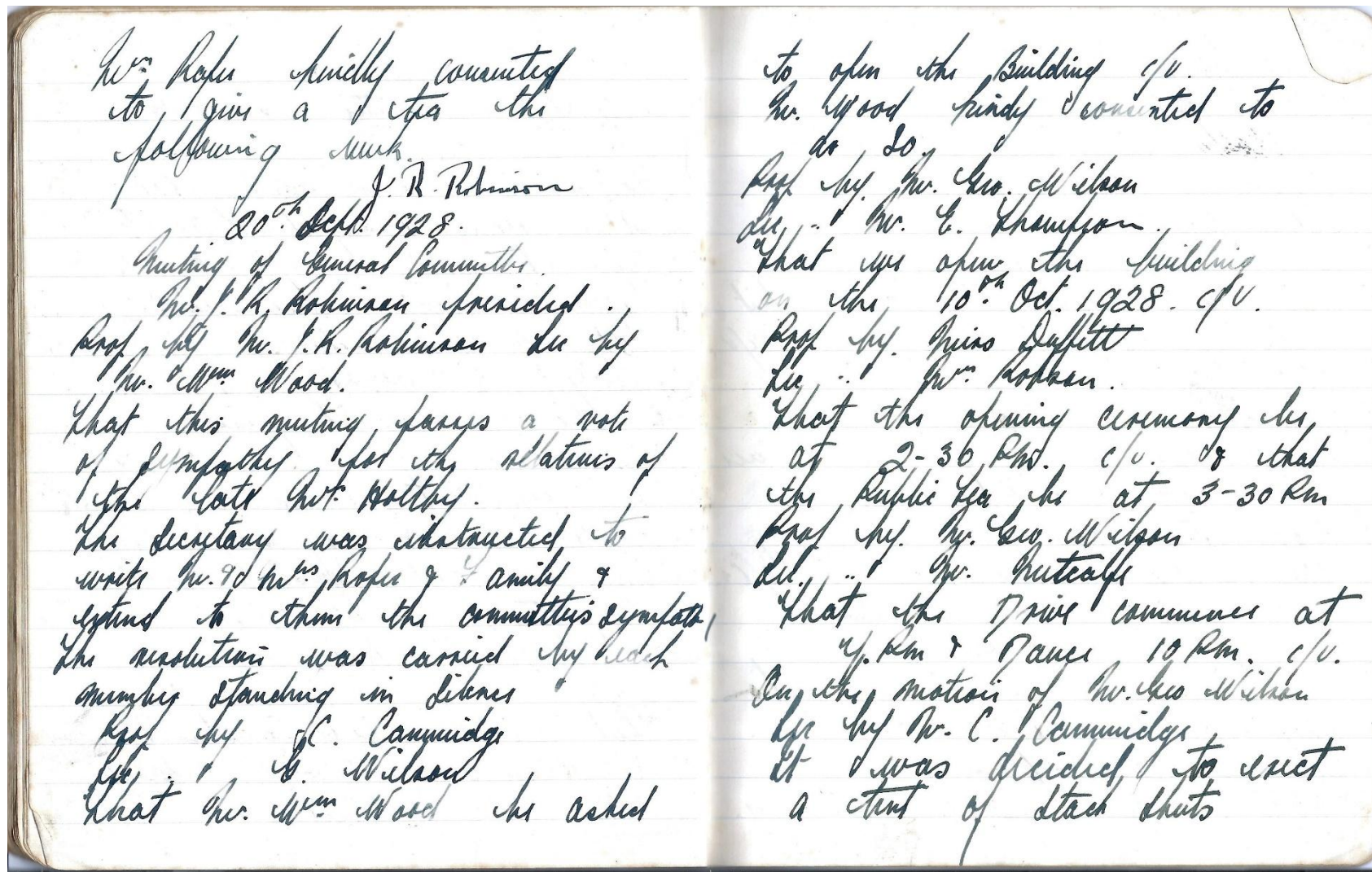
The accounts detail the expenditure for the building, fitments, staffing, and operation of the Hall between February 1928 and October 1929.

- I. In February 1928, the Treasurer held £79 comprising (assumed from minute references to be):
 - a. £25 donated by a committee member,
 - b. £40 loaned by two villagers,
 - c. £14 event proceeds.
- II. The Hall cost approximately £486 comprising:
 - a. £290 for the building,
 - b. £186 for the contents including heating stoves, tables and chairs, piano, crockery, cutlery and billiard table etc.
- III. The Hall income was approximately £440 comprising:
 - a. £244 from events such as dances, concerts, whist drives and teas,
 - b. £102 from the proceeds of the opening day,
 - c. £61 from member subscriptions (there were about 130 members based on the subscription rates),
 - d. £30 from billiards,
 - e. £3 from hire of the Hall and drums.
- IV. The Hall first year operating cost was around £83 comprising:
 - a. £57 for coal, newspapers, consumables, insurance etc.,
 - b. £26 for a secretary and caretaker.
- V. The build was partly financed by a £150 Bank Loan guaranteed by six committee members and possibly by further loans from villagers in addition to those held by the Treasurer in Feb 1928.
- VI. At the end of October, 1929 the balance of these loans was £122 comprising:
 - a. £39 owed on the Bank Loan,

- b. £83 owed to “Sundry Creditors” presumed to be villager loans.

The following section provides the minutes used for the event summary, along with the initial accounting statements.

Appendix I – Illustration from Minute Book Pages



Appendix II – 1928 Flaxton Parish Electoral Roll

Roll No	Basis of right to vote, HO = Husband's Occupation, O = Occupation, R = Residency	Committee Member?	Surname	Name & Forenames	Juror = J, Special Juror = SJ	Residence or Property occupied and abode of non-resident occupier. (Flaxton if blank)
116	O		Abbey	Jane		
117	R		Allan	Robert William		
118	R		Almond	Robert Arthur	J	Glebe Farm
119	HO		Almond	Susan Eveline		Glebe Farm
120	R		Anderson	George		
121	HO		Anderson	Laura		Birkers Farm
122	R		Ashton	Sedman		
123	O	Y	Avison	Elizabeth Hannah	J	
124	R	Y	Avison	John Charles		
125	O		Banks	Rachel Jane		
126	HO		Black	Eliza		
127	R		Black	John James		
128	R		Black	Reginald George		
129	R		Brabbs	James	J	Stugdale Farm
130	HO		Brabbs	Mabel Jane		Stugdale Farm
131	R		Brown	William		
132	O		Buckton	Annie Elizabeth		
133	R		Buckton	James Alfred	J	
134	R		Butler	Harold		
135	R	Y	Cambridge	Charles	J	
136	R		Cartwright	William Edward		Woodlands
137	HO		Cartwright	Elizabeth		Woodlands
138	HO		Cattley	Annie Elizabeth		Elm Tree Cottage
139	R		Cattley	Robert		Elm Tree Cottage
140	O	Y	Child	Ada		
141	O		Cooper	Mary		
142	O		Cox	Frances		
143	HO		Cox	Hannah		
144	R		Cox	Jepson		
145	R		Crowther	Thomas Frederick		
146	HO	Y	Dawson	Emilie		
147	R		Dawson	Tyson		
148	O		Drew	Lillie		
149	R		Duck	Frank		
150	R	Y	Dunn	Alfred		
151	R		Dunn	Hugh		
152	R	Y	Dunn	John		
153	R		Dunn	John Henry		The Hollies
154	HO		Dunn	Mary		The Hollies
155	R		Ellis	Thomas Frederick		
156	R		Esh	Arthur Richardson		
157	R	Y	Farrow	John Ellis		The Rectory
158	R	Y	Foster	Charles		
159	HO		Foster	Mary Annie		
160	HO		Fletcher	Elizabeth		
161	R	Y	Gilling	Charles William		

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162	HO		Gilling	Maria		
163	O	Y	Goodwill	Elsie		
164	R	Y	Goodwill	James William		
165	R		Gorwood	George		
166	HO		Gorwood	Susan Eveline		
167	HO		Grice	Lily		
168	R	Y	Grice	William		
169	R	Y	Guy	Vivian		
170	O		Hall	Amelia		
171	R		Hall	Charles		
172	HO		Harness	Anna Jame		
173	R		Harness	Charles		
174	R		Harrison	James		Stugdale Farm
175	R		Hartas	Robert		
176	R		Hawkin	Frederick William	J	
177	HO		Hawkin	Rose		
178	-		Heslop	John Thomas		Land (Lived Thornton-le-Clay)
179	R		Hicks	Reginald George		The Grange
180	R		Hill	Arthur Richardson		
181	HO	Y	Hodgson	Betsy		The Lodge
182	HO		Hodgson	Catherine		
183	R		Hodgson	John		
184	HO		Howe	Clara		
185	R	Y	Howe	Robert		
186	R	Y	Howe	William Harker		
187	HO	Y	Jackson	Betsy Helen		
188	R	Y	Jackson	William		
189	HO	Y	Lucas	Ada		
190	R	Y	Lucas	George		
191	HO	Y	Lund	Jane Elizabeth		
192	R	Y	Lund	John Henry	J	
193	HO		Kirby	Alice		Thornton Railway Gates
194	R		Kirby	Frank		Thornton Railway Gates
195	O		Mansfield	Agnes		
196	R		Mason	James		
197	R		Mennell	Cecil James		
198	R	Y	Metcalfe	John George Alonza		
199	HO	Y	Metcalfe	Mary Jane		
200	R	Y	Metcalf	Robert Bruce		
201	R		Mills	Edwin Arthur		
202	HO	Y	Mills	Annie		
203	R		Mills	John Alwyn		
204	R		Milner	Charles Edward	J	
205	HO		Milner	Hannah Mary		
206	R		Milner	John Goulden		
207	R		Mullinger	Thomas James Free		
208	R		Nelson	Joseph		
209	O		Nelson	Sarah		
210	R		Nelson	Wilfred		

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211	O		Nendick	Lilian		
212	R		Outhwaite	Herbert		Blacksmith's Arms
213	R		Pearson	George Purdy	J	
214	HO		Pearson	Lucy Annie		
215	R		Pepper	Albert William		
216	R		Pickering	Harold		Leckby House
217	O	Y	Piercy	Theresa		
218	R	Y	Piercy	Thomas William		
219	HO		Raper	Annie Elizabeth		
220	R	Y	Raper	Christopher		
221	HO	Y	Raper	Martha Anna		
222	R		Raper	William		
223	R		Renton	Charles		
224	R		Robins	Austin Joseph		Post Office
225	R		Robins	George		
226	R	Y	Robinson	John Robert	J	
227	HO	Y	Robinson	Mabel Annie		The Grange
228	R	Y	Robson	Harrison		
229	HO	Y	Robson	Sarah Helen		
230	O		Rowlay	Elenor		
231	R		Rowlay	Buttery		
232	R		Rowlay	Malcolm		
233	R		Rowlay	William	J	
234	HO		Saville	Rebecca Dennis		
235	R		Saville	Walton Henry		
236	R		Scarr	Francus Robert		
237	R	Y	Smedley	John Thomas	J	
238	HO	Y	Smedley	Rosanna		
239	HO		Smee	Catherine		
240	R		Smee	John Robert		
241	R		Smith	George		
242	R		Smith	George	J	Gennell Farm
243	HO		Smith	Mary		Gennell Farm
244	HO	Y	Snowball	Ann		Leckby Farm
245	R	Y	Snowball	Ernest	J	Leckby Farm
246	HO		Snowden	Annie Elizabeth		
247	R	Y	Snowden	John Robert	J	
248	R		Snowden	John Robert junior		
249	HO		Snowden	Lily		
250	R		Snowden	Tom		
251	R		Stannard	Dick Charles		
252	R		Stannard	Thomas Henry		
253	HO		Stead	Alice		
254	R		Stead	John Henry		
255	R		Stevens	Henry		The Bungalow
256	HO		Stevens	Lavinia		The Bungalow
257	R		Stevens	William Henry	J	The Bungalow
258	R		Stockton	William		
259	R	Y	Sturdy	Robert		

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260	R	Y	Tennant	Francis		
261	R		Tennant	Richard		
262	R		Tennant	Robert Barnatt		
263	R	Y	Thompson	Benjamin		
264	R	Y	Thompson	Ernest		
265	HO		Thompson	Marian		
266	R	Y	Thompson	Robert Maurice		
267	R		Thompson	Thomas Edomndson		
268	HO		Thornton	Mary		Flaxton Station
269	R		Thornton	Richard		Flaxton Station
270	R	Y	Thurloe	Ernest		Elm Tree Farm
271	HO		Thurloe	Florence		Elm Tree Farm
272	R		Thurloe	Henry	J	Elm Tree Farm
273	R		Thurloe	Richard William		Elm Tree Farm
274	R		Towse	Charles Fewston George		
275	R		Vokes	George		Red House
276	R		Walker	James		
277	R		Watland	John		
278	HO	Y	Wood	Mary		
279	R	Y	Wood	Wiliam	SJ	
280	HO	Y	White	Dorothy Mary Gladys		Woodlands Farm
281	R		White	Thomas		Woodlands Farm
282	HO		Wray	Ada Annie		
283	R		Wray	Robert Cusson		
284	R		Wray	William		
285	HO		Wiley	Mary Ann		

Appendix III – Flaxton School Photograph 1928



Back Row	E Cattley	A Goodwill	P Lockwood	V Lucas	M Dixon	J Almond	A Cattley	D Smedley				
Third Row	T Smith	R Dixon	G Wray	G Lucas	O Wilson	M Harness	A Matson	E Smith	C Hall	P Harness	B Hall	
Second Row	E Smee	B Smee	M Smee	K Wray	J Almond	B Smith	V Harness	D Cammidge	R Grice	J Wray		
Front Row	A Pickup	A Howe	C Robson	B Drew	P Guy	W Mullinger	W Thornton	A Lucas	W Grice	M Guy	R Pickup	J Binks