

1900 July 17th

The Executive Committee of the Twentieth Century Fund instructed Mr R W Perks, M. P., to take all necessary steps to secure the site of the Royal Aquarium at a sum of £4 per sq. foot or thereabouts.

1901 April 23rd

The newly appointed Trustees authorised the Officers of the Twentieth Century Fund to acquire the freehold of the Royal Aquarium, Westminster for £333,000 or thereabouts. A deposit of 10% of the purchase price to be paid.

1902 June 20th

A draft agreement to purchase the Royal Aquarium site was accepted subject to approval after examination by Mr Percy W Bunting.

1902 October 7th

Trustees authorised to complete the purchase of the Royal Aquarium site on January 31st, 1903.

1902 December 11th

Trustees recorded their profound sorrow on learning of the death of Rev Hugh Price Hughes who had been one of the chief advocates of erecting a Connexional Hall. They also agreed that selection of Architects for the Connexional Buildings should be by competition.

1903 June 16th

Royal Aquarium building sold to Housebreakers for £1,600 – site to be cleared by the end of July. Organ in the Royal Aquarium purchased for £200.

1904 - 1906

1904 March 21st

Mr Perks reported that he had retained the services of Mr Aston Webb as Trustees' Adviser for the new Connexional Hall and Buildings for a fee of £300.

1904 June 24th

It was reported to the Trustees Meeting that 223 Architects had applied for "Instructions."

1904 December 6th

Mr Aston Webb, now Sir Aston Webb reported an excellent response of 132 sketch designs had been submitted. He recommended that the Trustees invite the authors of 9 of the designs to take part in the final competition instead of 6 as originally contemplated and that each of the authors should receive an honorarium of 100 guineas. He commended designs numbered 19, 27, 60, 67, 72, 89, 117, 118, and 122.

1905 June 6th

After carefully inspecting the nine designs received, the Trustees unanimously agreed with Sir Aston Webb, to adopt the plans submitted by entry number 27. The Trustees were then informed that these plans had been prepared by Messrs Lanchester & Rickards of Vernon Place, Bloomsbury.

1906 April 26th

The sub-Committee approved acceptance of the tender from Messrs Dove Bros of 15 Studd Street, Islington at £2,844/15/6 being the lowest of seven tenders received to excavate the site for the new Connexional Hall.

1906 June 11th

The Trustees agreed to a request from the Secretary of the Westminster Hospital to inspect plans of the Hall to see if the lighting of windows of the Hospital facing Princes Street would be affected by the Hall.

1906 September 4th

The Trustees agreed to sell surplus freehold land adjoining Caxton Buildings to Messrs Holloway Bros for £100,000 plus an annual ground rent.

1907 - 1908

1907 March 12th

The Trustees invited 8 firms to submit tenders to prepare foundations for the Hall.

1907 May 2nd

The Trustees unanimously accepted the tender of £12,255 from Messrs Dove Bros from 7 tenders received.

1907 November 19th

The Trustees recorded their sincere sorrow on the death of Rev. Albert Clayton, Ex-President of the Conference and Secretary of the Twentieth Century Fund since it was initiated at the Conference of 1898. Rev. Marshall Hartley was appointed as his successor. It was agreed to instruct Messrs George Trollope & Sons, Auctioneers, to offer for sale by auction "The Imperial Theatre", the lease of which was due to expire on November 30th, 1907 with a reserve price of £85,000. A letter of complaint from the Westminster Hospital stating that their light and air would be interfered with by the new Hall was referred to the Trustees' Solicitor.

1908 May 7th

The Trustees having failed to sell the Imperial Theatre as it stood sold it for £2,000 to clear the site. They also agreed to let to the London City & Midland Bank the corner office on the ground floor for £1,500 for 10 years.

1908 July 13th

12 tenders had been received for the erection of the Main Building – all in excess of the resources of the Trustees. Sir Robert Perks [knighted since the last meeting], Rev. Dr. Pope and Rev. Marshall Hartley were instructed to make substantial reductions to the plans. The Trustees

also agreed unanimously that the new buildings should be called "Victoria House."

1908 October 15th

Proposals to reduce the plans by £18,261/5/6 were approved with 2 exceptions totalling £7,267/3/3. The lowest original tender submitted by Messrs Dove Bros was accepted. The revised tender now totalled £146,580/17/9.

1909 - 1911

1909 February 9th

The Trustees decided to call the new buildings "Central Buildings" and the Methodist Hall "Central Hall" as there was already a Victoria House in the neighbourhood. A writ had been issued by Westminster Hospital regarding their rights of light – the Trustees agreed to resist the claim.

1909 December 17th

Sir Robert Perks reported that agreement had been reached between the Trustees and Westminster Hospital over rights of light. The 2 towers in the original design would not be built for the present resulting in less seating in the Great Hall and a saving of £9,000+ in building costs.

1910 November 9th

The Trustees agreed to invite Rev. John E. Wakerley to commence work at Central Hall after the Conference of 1911.

1911 March 13th

The Trustees' Meeting recorded receipt of a letter from Rev. John E. Wakerley accepting the invitation to be minister at Central Hall. The Trustees agreed to obtain estimates for an organ up to a limit of £2,500.

1911 November 8th

The Trustees were informed that Messrs W Hill & Son of Islington had been awarded the contract to erect an organ on the Tubular Pneumatic Principle for £2,367.

1912

1912 June 11th

The Trustees were informed that lettings of offices already totalled £2,502/10/- p.a. Total expenditure on Central Hall to date totalled £ 353,029/0/9 and it was estimated that a further £34,000 would need to be expended to complete the work.

E.G. Haycraft was appointed Caretaker at a salary not exceeding 40/- per week + rooms, light and heating. Arrangements for the opening of the Hall were outlined.

1912 September 20th

The Trustees recorded their sincere sorrow and regret at the deaths of Revs Dr Henry J Pope, Dr Thomas B Stephenson and Dr Thomas Allen since the last meeting. A Managing Committee for the Trustees was appointed comprising Revs John E Wakerley, Simpson Johnson, Enoch Salt, and Marshall Hartley and Sir Robert W Perks, Rt Hon T R Ferens, William Middlebrook and William J Davey. The Committee was empowered to consider questions relating to the whole range of buildings including the scale of charges for lettings, forms of Agreement with Hirers, appointment of additional staff and relations between the Westminster Mission and the Trustees.

1912 September 27th

At the first meeting of the Managing Committee, it was agreed that no meetings of a Political nature would be permitted. A head porter would be employed to be on duty at the Main entrance when the Great Hall was in use. Policemen to be engaged at the Hirers' expense. A telephone to be installed in Mr Wakerley's Room.

1912 October 8th

The Managing Committee agreed that a room adjoining the Platform Room was to be provided for the use of the Organist and a piano [not to cost more than £20] and furniture to be provided. Applications for hiring were considered: British Medical Association – declined; Daily Mail Dolls Show for 2 weeks – approved; United Methodist Church Committee meetings – approved; "Pass the Bill" Committee – approved. Lecture by Col. Cody – declined!

1912 October 25th

The Managing Committee reported that the charge for the "Daily Mail" Dolls Show was £300. "Pass the Bill" meeting had been transferred to the Opera House following a conscientious objection by the Archbishop of Canterbury. It was also reported that Messrs Hill & Son had lost money on the erection of the Organ – agreed that Messrs Hill & Son maintain the organ for 30 guineas a year for the year commencing January 1st, 1913. Also agreed that the premises should be open for inspection by visitors on any weekday between 2.00pm and 4.00pm by arrangement with the Hall attendant, and to purchase a piano for the Small Hall - not to exceed £20.

1912 November 14th

The Managing Committee reported that the 2 pianos purchased by Mr Meale had cost £11 more than had been sanctioned. It agreed to pay the increased cost on the understanding that in future the limits fixed by the Committee must be adhered to. Furniture and equipment for the Tea Room was authorised – 70 trestle tables, 500 chairs + plate, cutlery and china.

1912 December 4th

The Managing Committee authorised the erection of a Permanent Notice Board to advertise the Services of the Westminster Mission in Tothill Street. It agreed lettings to the Salvation Army, Parents National Education Union, Barclays Bank Choral Society, Plymouth Brethren Foreign Missionary Society, Federation of Boy Scouts and the Devon and Cornwall Festival. It also agreed to provide Rev J H Wakerley with a Master Key and to grant £2/2/- to Rev A Woodward Brown whose overcoat had been stolen during the opening ceremonies.

1912 December 31st

The Managing Committee agreed lettings to the London Grand Division Sons of Temperance, National Union of Women Workers, Commercial Travellers Christian Association and the Free Church Council Temperance Council. It agreed to extend public viewing of the Large Hall from 10.00am to 4.00pm daily and to rope up the doors leading to the offices and private parts of the buildings during those hours.

1913

1913 February 5th

The Managing Committee accepted an estimate of £88/10/- from Messrs Goodwin & Sons to install a 1,500 gallon Fire Tank in the Dome. It also accepted plans and an estimate from Messrs Sage & Hess to provide a Bookcase to contain the Historic Roll. Further lettings were agreed for the Nonconformist Choir Union, Falmouth Road Presbyterian Church, "Regions Beyond" Missionary Society and Penrhos College Old Girls' Reunion.

1913 February 25th

The Trustees were informed that a Building Agreement to let at £1,800 p.a. of the Imperial Theatre site had been signed and that there was a possibility of letting the remaining 10,000 feet of land at 2/6 – 3/- per foot. The Trustees were informed that Westminster Hospital was seeking a Parliamentary Bill to erect on their site Buildings of any height or to grant leases for any purpose such as Theatres and Hotels. All the Trustees agreed to sign a petition opposing the Bill should that be necessary. Mr George D Perks was authorised to lead the Trustees opposition to the Bill.

1913 March 5th

The Managing Committee agreed to erect an additional Notice Board at the Front entrance and to advertise the availability of lettings in the "British Weekly Christian", "Christian World" and in Methodist newspapers. Also it was agreed that the Visitors' Book presently used to record the names of searchers in the Historic Roll should be used by the Mission on Sundays, and at other meetings.

1913 April 2nd

The Managing Committee approved lettings to the National Physical & Recreation Society, National Association for Befriending Young Servants and the Boy Scouts Association. The wages of the cleaners and liftmen were increased from 18/- to £1 per week.

1913 May 7th

The Managing Committee agreed to advertise the Halls in "Engineering" and "The Architect & Builder" for one quarter. A hire charge for crockery of 10/6 for each 100 persons or fraction of 100 persons was approved. It was agreed that the doors of the Historic Roll Book Case should be kept locked and a notice displayed stating that the keys could be obtained at the Housekeeper's Box.

1913 June 4th

The Managing Committee approved letting the Halls to the National Association for the Prevention of Consumption but refused an enquiry from the Women's Freedom League. A welcome meeting for some Methodist Teachers from Australia was allowed free of charge.

1913 July 8th

The Trustees were informed that London County Council had secured certain amendments to the Westminster Hospital Bill. Agreed that no further action be taken. The Trustees agreed that the Westminster Mission should not be expected to make a contribution for the first year of occupation, but would be asked for £700 for the second year [to include the Organist's stipend]. The Trustees agreed to accept an offer by Mrs Adams Acton of the original plaster cast of the Wesley Memorial in Westminster Abbey at a cost of £30. Sir Robert Perks was thanked for donating a portrait of His Majesty the King which had been recently unveiled. He then outlined plans to administer a Supplementary Roll to the Historic Roll if approved by the Conference. A sub-Committee was set up to advise on the retention or sale of the collection of books sent from the Allan Library.

1913 August 6th

The Managing Committee approved a letting for the London Meeting of the Wesley Deaconess Institute but refused an application by the Society of Journeymen Stewards.

1913 September 10th

The Managing Committee approved lettings for the Evening News Dolls Show and rooms to Mr Percy Alden M.P. representing the British Institute of Social Services. It agreed to unpack and sort the Allan Library and employ Mr Chambers at 35/- a week to do this. Revs Nehemiah Curnock and Dr Davison were asked to advise on the value of the collection when unpacked. A Circuit Index of the Historic Roll had been completed and would be made available to visitors. The purchase of 2 ten gallon tea urns at a cost of £3/15/- was approved.

1913 October 21st

The Library sub-Committee met to discuss plans for the Allan Library and agreed to consult Mr Guppy of the Rylands Library, Manchester.

1913 November 5th

The Managing Committee agreed to increase the wages of the Stokers to 35/- and 33/- a week. Lettings applications from the Board of Agriculture for an International Veterinary Congress and the International Christian Police Association were approved. An estimate of £165 from Messrs Sage & Son to provide a Book Case for the Allan Library in Committee Room A was accepted.

1913 December 3rd

The Managing Committee accepted an offer of Plaster Busts of 5 distinguished Wesleyan Ministers from Mrs Adams Acton at a cost of £10/10/-.

1914

1914 January 20th

The Trustees resolved to borrow a further sum of £10,000 from the London, City and Midland Bank as and when required in addition to £50,000 already borrowed. An application from the Welsh Presbyterian Church, Falmouth Road, S.E. to hold an Eisteddfod was approved subject to the event finishing by 11.00pm.

1914 March 4th

Sir Robert Perks reported to the Trustees that Mr Waddilove had purchased the picture of the meeting of Wesley and Whitfield for £400 and would present it to the Trustees in due course. Following a suggestion earlier from the Wandsworth Circuit for a memorial to Rev Charles H Kelly, Sir Robert reported that he had received £70 towards a picture and he proposed to put the work in hand. The meeting also approved the purchase of a floor cleaning and polishing machine at a cost of £25.

1914 April 21st

The Trustees approved the payment of the final building account to the contractors for £1745/14/3 and expressed their appreciation of the services rendered by Mr Lanchester, the Architect and Mr Corderoy, the Surveyor. The meeting approved the purchase of an original model of the Bust of Rev William Arthur offered by Mrs Adams Acton for £3/3/-, and her gift of the Bust of Sir Francis Lycett. A portrait of the late Rev Hugh Price Hughes was to be unveiled on May 1st.

1914 June 3rd

The Managing Committee accepted a quotation from Messrs James Butler, Wilks & Co. to supply coal for the year commencing July 1st 1914 - Nottingham Steam Cobbles at 20/6 per ton. It was also agreed that the portraits of John Vasey and John Bedford should be repaired and hung in Committee Room B.

1914 June 29th

The Trustees received a statement showing gross liabilities of £131,027. They agreed to favourably consider any offer for the remaining land belonging to the Trust as a rise in land prices appeared unlikely. Mr Waddilove was thanked for presenting the Trustees with the picture of the meeting of Wesley and Whitfield.