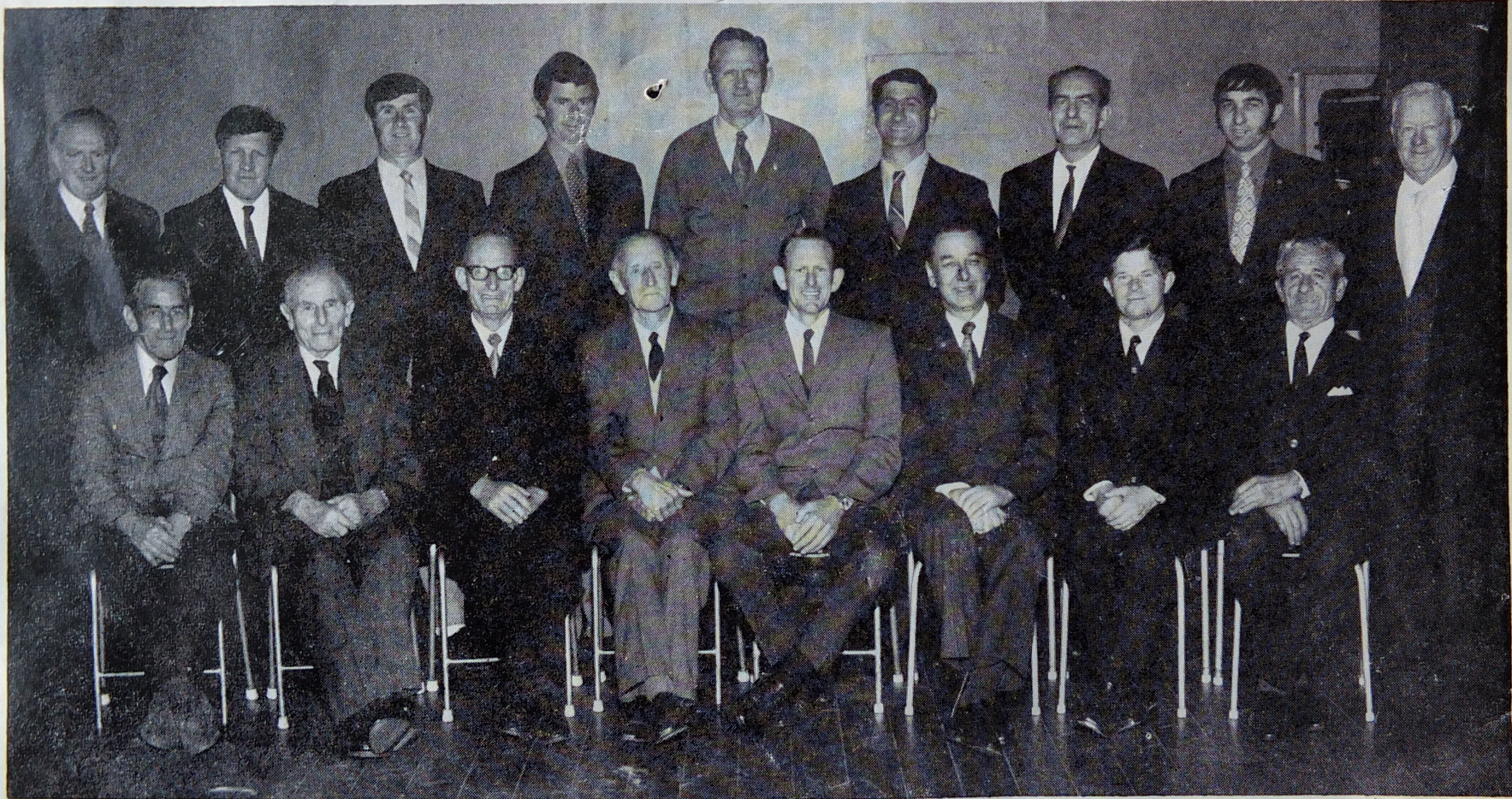


# AVALON PUBLIC HALL SOCIETY INC.

## 50th Jubilee Committee, 1972



Back row from left: E. Wilson, D. Bognuda, P. Cusin, R. Norman, S. W. Wyper, S. Battiston, A. E. Jenkins, G. Barr and W. Smith. Front row from left: E. Ferretti, F. Ferretti, C. W. Hewer (Chairman), C. B. Hodgins (Trustee), L. I. Searle (Deputy Chairman), W. R. A. Garrett (Secretary), D. T. McMurray (Treasurer) and P. Battiston. Absent, F. S. Hewer.

50th JUBILEE – 1922–1972

AVALON PUBLIC HALL SOCIETY INC.

**Patron:** Mr A.F. Westbury

**Trustees:** J. Searle, G.E. Gorrie, C.W. Hewer, C.B. Hodgins  
**Committee:** Messrs C.W. Hewer (Chairman) L.I. Searle (Deputy-Chairman), W.R.A. Garrett (Secretary), D.T. McMurray (Treasurer), G. Barr, P. Battiston, S. Battiston, D.J. Bognuda, P. Cusin, E. Ferretti, F. Ferretti, F.S. Hewer, A.E. Jenkins, R. Norman, W. Smith, E. Wilson, S.W. Wyper.

PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 21 October 1972

5.00 p.m. ... .. Cocktails

6.30 p.m. ... .. Dinner

ROLL CALL

8.30 p.m. ... .. Social and Dance  
(Music supplied by Mr Billy Stolz)

SUNDAY 22 October 1972

2.00 p.m. Informal Get Together and Indoor  
Bowls, followed by afternoon tea.  
Refreshments will also be provided.

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

**Chairman:** H. Foley (1922)  
F.S. Hewer (1923-44)  
E.J.B. Matthews (1945)  
C.W. Hewer (1946-72)

**Treasurer:** F.S. Hewer (1922)  
C. Alsop (1923-41)  
J.H. Butler (1942-43)  
A.F. Westbury (1944-61)  
D.T. McMurray (1962-72)

**Secretary:** R. McGregor (1922-24)  
V. Pemberton (1925-38)  
E.S. Hewer (1939-43)  
C.E. Bertelsen (1944-60)  
W.R.A. Garrett (1961-72)

**Long Serving Members** (over 20 years)

F.S. Hewer (Snr.), J. Searle, G.E. Gorrie,  
F. Ferretti, A.F. Westbury, A.E. Jenkins,  
C.W. Hewer, E. Ferretti, D.T. McMurray,  
A. McArthur.

**Jubilee Sub-committee 1972:**

Messrs D.T. McMurray (Convener),  
W.R.A. Garrett, A.E. Jenkins, C.W. Hewer,  
L.I. Searle, S.W. Wyper.

### **From the Hall Archive – Outline of History of Taita Public Hall**

The first steps taken towards the provision of a publicly owned Hall in Taita was an informal meeting of a few residents convened by Mr R. Bartosh and held at Taita Store on June 7, 1922. An interim committee was formed and members were asked to approach residents for financial support. At the first meeting of this committee, held two days later, it was reported that the sum of five hundred pounds had been promised among the residents plus a section of land for the building site. It was decided to call a public meeting for which Mr F. Kitchener drew up a provisional plan of the proposed building. This was presented to the public meeting held at Taita School on June 19, 1922. The meeting congratulated Mr Bartosh on instigating the movement and it was decided to elect three trustees and a committee of 12 members to be formed into the Taita Public Hall Society. Messrs A. Gadsby, F. Westbury, J. C. Mabey, were elected trustees and the committee elected comprised Messrs H. Foley (Chair), R. Bartosh, F. S. Hewer, R. McGregor, E. Hall, J. Bentley, A. Evans, H. V. Horlor, C. Alsop, V. Pemberton, T. Foster, F. Kitchener. Mr F. Bertelsen was later elected following the resignation of Mr Evans. This committee was to be elected annually at a public meeting of residents of the district.

The Society was incorporated under the “Libraries & Mechanics Institute Act, 1902.” A canvass of residents was at once instituted and no less than seven hundred pounds was received by donations. Many old Taita and Hutt Valley names figured in the list of over 160 subscribers, notable among these being the names Westbury, Mabey, Bartosh, Gordon, Cottle, Buck, August, Gadsby, Strand, and many other well remembered names. Support was also forthcoming from business people with whom the residents dealt. Such names are included as Wellington Fruit Brokers, Feist & Co., F. Cooper Ltd (Seed Merchants), T. Twomey (Blacksmith) and B. W. Bird (Saddler). A Bank account was opened and a loan arranged to cover the balance of the building costs. The section was surveyed and fenced and an early start made with the building. Mr F. Kitchener was appointed working foreman over a working bee of voluntary labour, some skilled and many with the fundamental knowledge which a man on the land acquired. All cartage of materials was performed free of cost by the owners of the first motor trucks in the district. Sashes and doors were obtained from buildings being demolished at Trentham Camp. During the rest of the winter the Hall progressed until early October saw the completion of the task, just four months since the first residents’ meeting had given the idea its birth.

A Social and Dance for all who had assisted was held on October 12 and the Official Opening took place at a public dance on October 14, 1922. The Opening Ceremony was performed by the Prime Minister, the late Rt. Hon. W. F. Massey and music for dancing was provided by the Hutt Band. Although the Hall was not mean in size its capacity was taxed to the limit on this night and on many occasions during the following years.

Owing to the interest taken by the residents in the Social Functions held in the Hall from that time onward, the amount owing was gradually reduced until the building was made entirely free of debt after maintenance, improvements and additions to fittings had been faithfully carried out.

With the advent of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Great War, and the entry of Japan making New Zealand conscious of danger, the Society gave up the Hall to the Reserve Bank of New Zealand for three years as it was felt that the Bank’s records and certain irreplaceable machinery would be safer here than in Wellington. At the end of this term extensive alterations and additions were effected to the building, involving the Society in expenditure which necessitated an overdraft being arranged. This has, however, been steadily reduced, until at the present time the Hall is once again free of debt.

With such an asset as this present building, owned debt free by the elected representatives of the residents of the old Taita area, great credit is due to those who pioneered the venture, the trustees who have safeguarded the property through the years, and the members of the Society who have throughout given of their time and energy in carrying out all the cleaning and caretaking work on an entirely voluntary basis.

From about 1940 a major change took place in the district.

The Hutt Valley rail-deviation was being extended from Waterloo through to Silverstream and Government houses which had been built on most land available in Waterloo and Epuni, began to be erected in a large development scheme embracing the Waddington, Naenae and Taita areas and the large new population in these new areas made the provision of new schools, churches, recreation areas, shopping areas and halls desirable. A scheme for building large new halls to be called Community Centres was put forward by the Government and the City Council and a strong committee formed to implement the scheme which called for large contributions by Government and City Council plus the raising of a loan of some two hundred thousand pounds on which the charges were to be met by a special rate of one shilling per week on all households.

As public feeling in the area surrounding the Hall (now known as the Avalon area) appeared to be against the rating proposal, a public meeting was held in the hall in March, 1948 at which the Civic authorities were requested to exclude the Avalon area from the special rating proposals on the grounds that local residents had already provided themselves with a hall by their own efforts and therefore felt that they should not be forced to further contribute to the provision of halls for the population of the State housing areas. As a result of this meeting, at which the proposals were fully explained by members of the Community Centre Committee and the local position explained by the Hall Society, the area was finally excluded from the special Community Centre rating area.

Shortly after this the name of the hall and the Society was changed to the Avalon Public Hall Society and the boundaries changed to exclude most of the State Housing areas. With the population growth the hall came into much greater demand and in 1954 rent receipts reached £622.

Many of the founders were now passing on, Mr C. Alsop who had been Treasurer for 18 years died in 1941 and 1953 saw the death of Mr F. S. Hewer, chairman for 23 years and in 1957 the passing of Mr F. Kitchener who had been in charge of the building work and had served over 20 years on the committee. By 1970, with the death of Mr H. V. Horlor, all members of the original committee had passed on.

On October 26, 1957, a function was held to mark the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the hall opening and was attended by 125 past and present members and their wives, who came from as far as North Auckland and Timaru. A tape recording of the speeches was made and is held in typewritten form.

The Society was in 1945 exempted from income tax payments by the Commissioner of Taxes and in 1951 an approach to the City Council resulted in City rates being refunded each year.

Among the numerous long term tenants of the Hall, the Taita Rugby Football Club and Avalon Tennis Club will shortly be celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> Jubilees. The Avalon Country Womens Institute recently celebrated its 38<sup>th</sup> birthday and have been continuous tenants of the Hall since their formation. The Avalon Community Kindergarten has used the supper room for its activities since 1959 and the rear section has been laid down as a play area.

The interior of the hall has been extensively renovated and decorated over the past five years and the Society continues to provide a service to the district, following the example of its founders, with the fine support of the residents, together with the voluntary caretaking duties of the Committee.