

Avalon Public Hall Society 75th Anniversary 1997

From the Hall Archive – Newspaper Article titled Hall has given 75yrs' service

The search is on for former committee members associated with the Avalon Public Hall, which reaches its 75th anniversary in June. Long-time caretaker Dave McMurray says around 200 people are expected to attend a 14 June function, which will be addressed by Henry Horlor, whose father built the hall.

Originally known as the Taita Public Hall, the first step towards building it was taken on June 7, 1922 with an informal meeting convened by Mr R. Bartosh in the Taita Store. An interim committee was formed and members were asked to approach residents for financial support. Two days later the first meeting of the committee was held, where it was reported that a sum of five hundred pounds had been promised, plus a section of land. A few days later three trustees and a committee of 12 were elected.

The hall was built within four months of the first meeting, with the official opening and public dance taking place on October 14. Many of those first associated with the hall such as F. Westbury, J. C. Mabey, T. Foster, F. S. Hewer and J. Gordon, were well known in the area, and today have streets named after them.

Over the years the hall has had many users, including for television for filming of episodes of *Close to Home*, numerous weddings, and a host of community organisations from square dancing to youth groups. Clubs that have used the hall include the Taita Rugby Club, the Avalon Tennis Club and the Avalon Country Womens Institute.

Dave McMurray has earned a reputation as a tireless worker for the hall and most days he is to be seen tidying up or doing a spot of renovating. A life member of the Avalon Rugby Club, Dave is proud of the hall's history and association with the local community. As well as photos of the early committees, he has also maintained the records.