

## The Iron Buildings of Grayshott

03/01/2009 20:47 by neil

The 'temporary' iron building was a popular structure of the late Victorian and Edwardian era. Although usually described as 'temporary', many of these structures survived for 50 years or more. The Boulton and Paul catalogue of 1890 offered a range of buildings from the smallest of sheds to the largest of churches and even railway stations, all with steel framework bolted together and clad in corrugated iron sheeting. An equally impressive range of timber buildings was also available.

Grayshott did not miss out and at least four of these iron structures have existed in the village each serving an important part of village social life.

The earliest recorded example known as the 'Iron Room' or 'Institute' was situated in Stoney Bottom. The exact location has yet to be determined but from the maps I have examined it would appear this structure was situated in the bottom of the garden known as 'Moss Know' and subsequently re-named 'Ensleigh'. It was erected in 1889 as a gift of Miss James. Church services were then held there until the iron church was erected in 1891. The services had previously been held at Grayshott School from 1873 onwards. The Grayshott Magazine of December 1899 reports on a lantern lecture held there and remarks 'A wetter night could not have been. Rain was pouring literally in rivers down the steep approach to the Iron Room. The audience, we thought, was remarkable good, considering the difficulties.' On Wednesday evenings from November 1899 'Boys' Gymnasium Classes' were held there. Various functions and lectures etc. continued to be held there with apparent great success until the much larger and permanent Village Hall was opened in May 1902. The official name for the 'Village Hall' located next to fire station includes to this day the term 'institute', i.e. the 'Grayshott and Hindhead Institute and Village Hall'.

A final reference appears in the Grayshott Magazine of September 1909 - 'The Tower and Spire Fund stands now at £650. Messrs. Chapman, Lowry and Puttick have purchased the iron room, standing in School Lane for £17. 10s, and this sum has been added to the fund.' How it came to be in School Lane and its subsequent fate are unknown.

The next mention of an 'Iron Room' is stated to be in use as the Working Men's Club. This was owned and let by Mr. Moore (he also owned stables) on a site in Grayshott Road (now Headley Road) almost opposite the 'Fox and Pelican'. This has been now redeveloped and today is the site of the Tesco Express store and surrounding buildings. The Grayshott Magazine of November 1898 quotes - 'The Working Men's Club is now open every week night, except Saturday, and arrangements have been made by its Committee, that members may be able to depend on finding there a supply of tea and coffee and other light refreshments. We hope that this will be appreciated, as the want of it was expressed last year. Especially to single men and those lodging in the village; for them the Club ought to be a boom.' Contemporary literature uses the term 'Iron Room' for both the Moss Know and the Moores buildings and on occasions this has made it difficult to distinguish between these structures.

In the October 1899 edition of the Grayshott Magazine the following quote appeared - *'The Iron Room, in the Grayshott Road, is the only building generally available for the meetings of the various clubs and societies growing up among us, as well as for lectures, entertainments, etc. It will be remembered that during the past winters the room, for at any rate five nights in the week, it has been put to the disposal of the Working Men's Club who have ungrudgingly given it their services. We say that our experiences of the last two winters do not entitle the Club to the almost exclusive use of the room which hitherto it has been given. It is the wish of the owner of the Iron Room that it should be made as useful to the village as it possibly can be. The difficulty will be to fit in the various interests that can fairly put in the claim to the use of it. To meet this difficulty we suggest that those who are*

---

# Grayshott Village Archive

<http://www.grayshott-archive.org.uk>

---

*especially interested should meet at 'The Hermitage' on Monday, October 2nd at 6 p.m."*

Use of this Iron Room for the Working Men's club in Grayshott Road would seem to have continued until a permanent building for Working Men was built in Hill Road in 1904.

In 1891 an iron church was erected on ground now to the north of the present St. Luke's church. The building was a gift of Mr. Whitaker and the land that of Miss l'Anson. This building then served the local community as the 'temporary' church until the present St. Luke's church was built and opened in September 1899. Following this the building became redundant and was sold for further use at Liphook for £87 and remained as such until the early 1950's.

The fourth iron building in Grayshott was the church in Headley Road (opposite Wood's restaurant). It was built in 1901 and opened in November of that year being described as a temporary corrugated tin sheet clad building and supplied and erected for the cost of £170 by Messrs. Humphreys of Knightsbridge. It served under various guises of Wesleyan Mission Chapel and Grayshott Methodist Church until finally demolished in the late 1970's.

**The Methodist church, Headley Road, Grayshott, Hants. 1961**

**Interior of the Methodist church, Headley Road, Grayshott, Hants. 1968**

**The flats that replaced the Methodist 'Iron church', Headley Road, Grayshott 2007**

*Author:* Richard Peskett (2007)  
Grayshott Village Archive

*Reference:* Bolton Paul Company Catalogue (1890), Grayshott Magazine (November 1898), Grayshott Magazine (November 1899), Grayshott Magazine (September 1909)