

AN ADDRESS

OF WELCOME

from the

BRAUNTON PARISH COUNCIL

to the

BRAUNTON PEOPLE,

at the OPENING of

THE PARISH HALL,

26th JANUARY, 1927.

•••••

Here in this Ancient Village now at last
This Hall we have—all difficulties past
About the size and shape, and on which spot
To build it, whether near Cross Tree or not.
So here to-day we're holding, not a meeting—
May Heaven forbid—but just a friendly greeting
From Braunton Councillors to all their Friends
The Braunton People—for on them depends
The making of Success, or its unmaking
For this our Venture, this new undertaking.

That little Room, where we have always met,
There is not one can leave without Regret,
Whichever way in Politics inclined,
Nor cast a longing, lingering look behind
At those warm precincts—made warm by Debate
Much more than by the Embers in the grate.
In there for ages more than Man can tell
Within the sound of Organ or Church Bell
Was done the Village Business of all sorts,
In those days greater far by all reports.

These simple Annals many a page can fill
Of Duty done with Patience and with Skill;
Of how a School was started, and the Poor
Were cared for here at Home, and I'm quite sure
Were just as happy as in Towns and Cities
With all their grand Officials and Committees.
The Roads were made by Us—and better far
For Horse and Man, of local stone, not Tar;
And thanks to Feasts with Cakes and Parish Beer
We sometimes had no Rates for a Whole Year.

And then beneath this Room we stored the Arms
In case of Trouble or of War's Alarms,
The Bows and Arrows, later on the Pikes,
The Cutlasses, the Harness, and such likes
For us to go to Cornwall, and no doubt
We lent a hand to keep the Spaniards out.
That's when the John of Braunton crossed the Bar
To serve Queen Bess with Barum's men-of-war,
Just as we helped the other day to beat
The Kaiser's Army and his precious Fleet.

And so these old Traditions here we bring
To this Foundation new, still wondering
How quickly Time moves on!—to keep abreast
With Slippery Roads and Cars, and all the rest,
'Phones, Busses, Railways, Wireless—all busy—
Electric Lamps, Street Numbers—turns one dizzy.
Yet may our Blessings of Earth, Sea, and Air,
For Pleasure, Health, or Sport beyond compare,
With Fertile Fields for Cattle, Sheep, and Corn,
Still smile on Generations yet unborn,
While Young and Old within these Noble Walls
Come here when Duty bids or Pleasure calls.

W.B.I.W.