

West Dean Village History Trail

THE LENDING LIBRARY, THE READING ROOM OR "THE HUT" AS IT WAS OFTEN CALLED

No 20

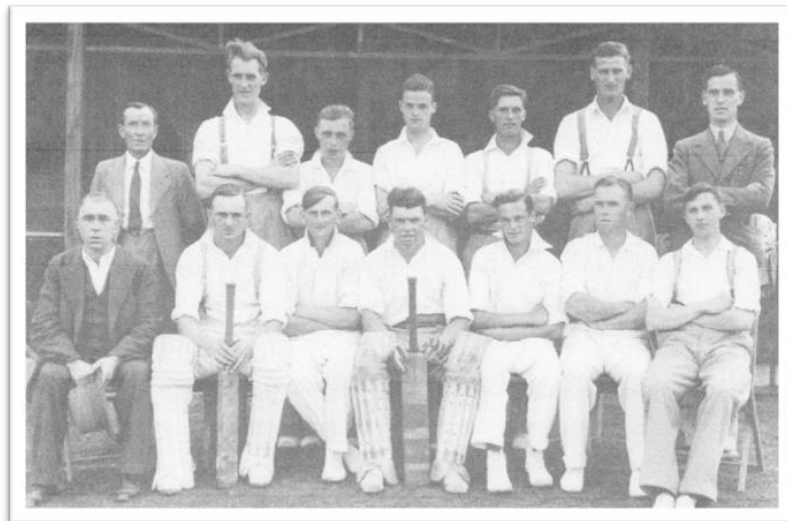
The Reverend Wells, rector of West Dean from 1886 to 1919, established a lending library in this green corrugated iron shed. Later it became a reading room and in the 1920s the Reverend Percy Dale, rector from 1920 to 1938, provided a supply of newspapers.

The Football Club held some of its annual general meetings here and when these were moved to King George's Hall in 1932 the club continued to hold committee meetings in the "Hut", as their minutes referred to it. In the 1930s the Cricket Club followed the same pattern for its meetings. The "Hut" was also used by the Football Club as a changing room and by the Cricket Club for cricket teas.

In 1938 the Cricket Club decided that the Hut was in need of repairing and repainting to which end the club spent £3 on materials and its members volunteered and did the work. **Some of the teams who used the "Hut":**



WEST DEAN FOOTBALL TEAM 1928-29



WEST DEAN CRICKET TEAM 1935



WEST DEAN FOOTBALL TEAM 1956-57

During the Second World War both clubs suspended their activities. This was initially because so many of their players were serving in the forces that they could not put a team together. Later in the war the field in which the Hut stood, which belonged to the Rectory but was generally known as The Park and had provided the pitches for both clubs, was taken over by the American forces and a camp of Nissen huts and wooden-framed asbestos buildings constructed on it. After the end of the war some of these buildings were sold off and at least one survives in the village today as a garden shed.

When football and cricket team activities began again after the war wartime restrictions still applied and in 1948 the Cricket Club had to apply to the Food Office for a catering licence to supply teas at matches.