

# Richard Digance in Coal Aston

**On Saturday 24 March Coal Aston Village Hall was the venue for an Evening with Richard Digance. Tickets had been sold out weeks before and the packed audience was not disappointed.**

Richard told amusing stories, read his own poems and sang his own songs accompanying himself on guitar.

Richard is perhaps best known for his regular appearances on Channel 4's Countdown, but his career spans several decades. He was a scriptwriter for The Braden Beat and the children's programme Basil Brush, amongst others, and the Coal Aston audience soon realised that he is not only a talented raconteur and storyteller, but also an accomplished musician. Add to these the fact that he has written several books, two films and three plays and you get some idea of his all-round talents.

His contribution as an all-round entertainer has been recognized by his peers. In October 2003 he received the Gold Badge Award from the British Academy of Composers and Songwriters. He has received a BAFTA nomination for British TV Entertainer of the Year and has won Radio Awards for his musical contribution to various radio documentaries.

It was an evening which those lucky enough to order their tickets early will remember for a long time.



## CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

The Village Hall continues to be in demand by regular users and hirers for private functions. One of our aims is to provide a varied programme of entertainment from Folk to Jazz and Brass Band concerts to lectures. In addition there is a range of other activities open to the public. These are always well attended, so we are obviously providing what the community wants, and we are always looking into introducing new activities.

The only area where interest has fallen in recent months is with the Chesterfield College IT courses. A few years ago these courses occupied every day of the week, but for some reason demand has fallen and the future of this facility needs to be looked into.

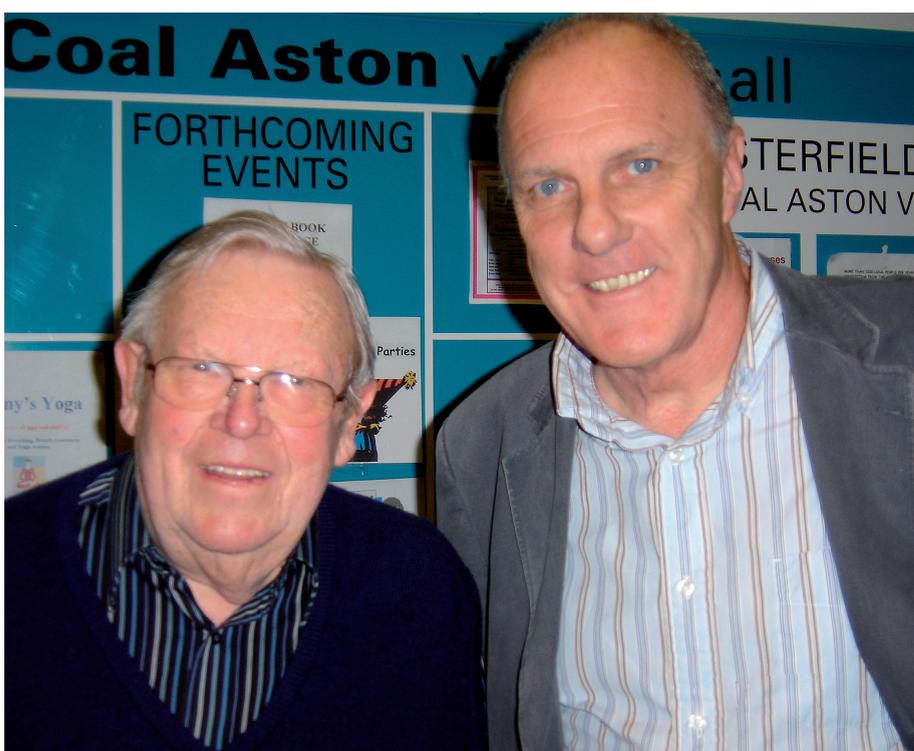


As you will have seen, the public car park behind the Village Hall has been resurfaced. Security and safety have been improved by the addition of flood lighting, dedicated parking bays and a footpath between the car park and the Village Hall. Twenty four hour CCTV coverage is also in operation. We have been able to contribute towards the cost of these improvements.

Further improvements are planned for the Village Hall, including new curtains for the windows and the stage, as the existing ones have faded over the past years, and new floor covering for the foyer.

Ron Hubbard

Chairman



**Monday**

Ladies Keep Fit  
Two classes 18.45–21.00  
phone 0114 2746480

Jenny's Yoga evening classes;  
phone 0114 2691474

**Tuesday**

St John's Marching Band  
18.45–19.45 hours  
  
Dronfield Band  
19.45–22.00 hours; phone 0114 2351175  
  
Short Mat Bowling Club  
19.45–22.15 hours (membership list full)

**Wednesday**

Norton Players  
19.30–22.00 hours; phone 0114 2746124

**Thursday**

Yoga classes with Josy Wood  
phone 01246 419832 for details  
  
Ladies Keep Fit in the Main Hall  
18.45–19.45

**Sunday**

Norton Players  
19.30–22.00 hours  
  
Dronfield Band  
18.00–22.00 hours

**Other regular users**

**Tuesday**

Violin lessons. For details phone 0114 2748234  
  
Wednesday WI meeting on the second  
Wednesday each month 19.15–22.15

**Sunday**

Antiques and Collectors Fair first Sunday each  
month \*\*  
Stamp Fair third Sunday each month \*\*  
\*\* See notices in foyer for confirmation  
of dates  
Chesterfield College have a selection of other  
courses, including Spanish, creative crafts, etc.  
See the College brochure for details.

LET US HAVE YOUR NEWS, VIEWS AND  
EDITORIAL ITEMS

The Village Voice is issued by the Management  
Committee of the Village Hall and we welcome  
your news, old photographs, views and items  
for publication in future issues. Send these to  
the sub-Committee at the Village Hall, using  
the post box outside the main door or by post  
to Coal Aston Village Hall, Eckington Road,  
Coal Aston, S18 3AX.

# Village Voice Briefs

**Mrs Dorothy Grimley**

We are sad to report the death last June of  
Mrs Dorothy Grimley (nee Back). It is some  
years since she left Coal Aston to live in  
Leicester but some of the older residents  
will remember her and she clearly had  
happy memories of her time in the village  
as she has left a generous bequest to the  
Village Hall in her Will. This is the third gift  
Mrs Grimley has made since the Village  
Hall was renovated and she was one of the  
people nominated to lay the foundation  
stone for the 'old' Village Hall in 1958. Her  
bequest will be invested in the Hall in a  
way that we hope she would approve of.

**New Premises Supervisor**

We are delighted to report that Miss Emily  
Lomas has been appointed our new Premises  
Supervisor, under the current Licencing  
Legislation. Emily will be the only provider  
of a bar, when required for private and  
public bookings. Emily and the Management  
Committee also have to be advised of all  
occasions when alcohol is consumed. This  
includes events where hirers and patrons  
'bring their own' alcoholic drinks.

**Hire rates increased**

Hire rates for the Village Hall have been  
increased taking into account inflation.  
For the current rates and available dates  
please telephone 01246 418573.

**Lectures**

The Friends of the Village Hall have  
arranged a series of lectures during 2007  
on a wide range of subjects. On October  
12 Pollyanna Pickering will speak about  
her recent experience with Snow Tigers.

Readers will also be interested to know  
that Andy Firth's lectures will resume in  
the autumn on September 29, October  
27 and November 3. Further details will  
be displayed on the foyer notice board.

**A Night at the Music Hall**

The Vulcan Varieties presented A Night at  
the Music Hall on Saturday 17 March. The  
evening of old time songs, dance and humour  
was a pleasant reminder of a past theatrical  
experience and enabled the audience to join  
in some of the traditional favourites. This was  
a new venture for the Vulcan Varieties, being  
their first visit to the Village Hall and we hope  
to welcome them again in the near future.

**Then you have Jazz**

The Friends of the Village Hall organised a  
concert by the Heart of England Jazz Band.  
This was a splendid evening with one of the  
country's most popular jazz bands on stage in  
front of a packed house. Thanks to Mr and Mrs  
Widdowson for organising another successful  
evening, in association with Live and Local.

There will be another evening of jazz  
on Saturday 20 October, when Dave  
Brennan's Jazz Band will make a  
welcome return visit. Book early.

MEET THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Member: Steve Barnett

Steve first became involved with the Village  
Hall when he was asked to help out with the  
organisation of the annual gala. That was in  
1991 and he's been an active member of the  
Management Committee ever since. He was  
inaugural in helping out with the 'sketch' design  
proposals for the new Village Hall when it was  
rebuilt a number of years ago and more recently,  
for the side extension and the proposed new  
pedestrian access from Eckington Road.

He is also a member on two other sub committees  
at the Village Hall as well as being acting  
chairman of the local 4th Dronfield (St Paul's)  
Scout Group.

He was a pupil at Western Road Infant and Junior  
school at Crookes where he continued to live until  
marrying and moving 'over the border' to Coal  
Aston.

On leaving school, Steve had three enjoyable years  
playing for Sheffield United F.C. before becoming

one of the  
many who can  
claim to have  
'almost' made  
it. He continued  
playing football  
for Hallam F.C. in  
the old Yorkshire  
League during  
which time he  
represented the  
County F.A. on  
a number of  
occasions.



His only involvement these days is shouting  
'encouragement' from the sidelines when he goes  
to watch his son Alister play for Dronfield Town.

In between popping down to London to visit his  
daughter Katie, he works as a landscape architect  
for Rotherham Borough Council where in addition  
to his normal duties, he is an active member of  
the Council's Emergency Response Team which  
thankfully isn't called into action all that often.

# Old Coal Aston

## The Origins of our Village Hall

.....the Vendors convey to the Trustees all that plot of land situate at Coal Aston aforesaid fronting the main road from Coal Aston to Eckington containing in the whole four acres three roods and thirty two perches or thereabouts.....

An early Gala programme editorial reads:

"In the 1930's, Coal Aston was caught up in the national depression, unemployment reached the highest figure ever and men walked the streets and country lanes simply passing time, with nothing to do, nowhere to go and no money in their pockets. Running through the minds of a few citizens of Coal Aston were thoughts of better days. They dreamed of something to do, somewhere to go, to meet each other and talk, perhaps to learn to do things, repair shoes, mend furniture and toys, to create interest .....

The dream in the hearts of a few individuals was sparked into life by a talk on the radio one day in 1933 and a Committee was formed, a Village Hall fund was started and Coal Aston was on fire with enthusiasm – whist drives, galas, village queens, fancy dress parades, bazaars, field days – all for the Village Hall."

Then came the war years, which put everything on hold, but peace saw the beginning of a mightier effort for the Village Hall. On 25 August 1948 a Conveyance was drawn up and the four Trustees purchased a piece of land for £830. Many meetings of Coal Aston Community Association (CACA) then followed, and strenuous efforts were made to raise the total of £3,400 needed to build and furnish the hall.

Gala days (with full dress rehearsals!) were held and Xmas fairs encouraged the men to give £1 each and the ladies to contribute "a pair of nylon stockings for the raffle". a McDougall's were approached for information on cake competitions, and the cakes were sold afterwards at 2/9d (14p), though the owners could buy their own entries for a knockdown price of two shillings (10p). It transpired that the field behind the site was being used illegally as a tipping ground, some 500 tons of rubble having been dumped there. Ever keen to exploit an opportunity, the committee located the tipplers and requested 5 shillings (25p) per load "as a reasonable price."

Not all meetings were driven by the same urgency. The Minutes of the meeting of 8 January 1958 read "Nothing had been heard about commencing the building of the Hall, so very little business was done. Instead, we enjoyed a little gossip (friendly of course) and indulged in cups of tea and refreshments."

But soon there was further progress and a Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony took place on 23 August 1958. Mrs Dorothy Grimley and Mr Kidd were both proposed and the voting was equal. The Vice Chairman had to use his casting vote and the decision went in favour of Mr Kidd, who was later presented

with the ceremonial trowel. (Shown in the photograph. Engraving reads "Presented to G. KIDD ESQ by C.A.C.A. September 1958 on laying Foundation Stone of VILLAGE HALL")

And so the Village Hall, or Community Centre as it was more popularly known, was erected, and the Committee now had to face the task of fitting out the building before it could be used. A second-hand piano was found for the sum of £12, but back word was given on this "as we have had two given to us." Such measures were crucial to eke out the limited funds, and when Mr Knowles said he could get an electrician to install the light fittings free of charge, the Committee were "highly satisfied".

By 30 June 1959, all was ready to receive bookings and the Committee held their first meeting in the new Hall. Later, at its meeting on 1 September, the Committee looked unsympathetically on a request from a resident, and "instructed the Secretary to write to him.....refusing permission to hire the Hall for Tombola Games".

There was to be a Dance at the opening night and there would be no charge for refreshments, but there would be "collecting boxes in various places in the Hall." The Great Day was 12 September 1959.

Pending a Public Meeting on Tuesday 6 October 1959, a draft Constitution was tabled and agreed by the committee on 22 September. Gestetner stencils and some paper would be obtained and "Frecheville Community Centre would be asked if we could use their (duplicating) machine to produce handbills for delivery door-to-door and meeting papers." At the meeting, a show of hands fixed the fee at 3 shillings and 97% of those present immediately joined the Association.

The first Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on 6 November 1959. The Community Association and the Community Centre were now up and running. The dream, which had started some thirty years earlier, had been realised.

This article is based on information collected from our archives by Philip Bradburn.



## 07.07.07 IS GALA DAY

This year's Annual Gala and the Blessing of the Well will be held on 7 July. The Gala will be opened at 13.00 and the Blessing of the Well will take place at 13.45.

There will be something for everyone, especially the children. We have a visit from Punch and Judy, up to their usual mischief, Kimmo will be entertaining our younger visitors from 13.30, and there will be children's races later in the afternoon. And there will be lots more to keep them occupied, including a Fancy Dress competition and a Make Your Own Scarecrow competition.

The Dronfield Band will play a selection of favourite tunes and the children from Lenthall Infants School will, once again, perform their maypole dances, which were so popular last year. Other attractions are still being planned but one that has been confirmed, subject to suitable weather conditions (it is sure to be a glorious day), is a flypast by a Spitfire of the Battle of Britain Flight, which has been secured by our friends in the Dronfield Civic Society. As the Village Voice goes to press we have not been advised of the time the Spitfire will arrive. This is a 'flypast', so you will 'see it only once'!

Whilst you are waiting for the flypast and the featured entertainment, there will be plenty of stalls for you to visit.

### Evening Concert

The Gala will be followed by a Concert in the Village Hall. Details are contained in the Diary section of this Village Voice.

### Arts Exhibition

On Sunday 8 July the Royalist Art Group and local wildlife photographers will hold an Arts Exhibition in the Village Hall. Pictures and photographs will on sale and light refreshments will be available. Entry to the Exhibition is free. See Diary section.

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Friday 1 June**

**DRONFIELD BAND SUMMER CONCERT**  
Doors open 19.00 for 19.30  
Tickets £4.00, including light refreshments  
from 01246 412427 or 412554

**Saturday 9 June**

**COAL ASTON FOLK**  
Featuring 'Please Y'self' in concert  
supported by Scuppered  
Doors open 19.30 for 20.00  
Ticket information from  
01246 411526 or 410611

**Wednesday 27 to Saturday 30 June**

**NORTON PLAYERS** present **Cash on Delivery**  
A farce by Michael Cooney  
Curtain up at 19.30  
Tickets £5.00; concessions £4.00  
To book your tickets telephone 0114 2372326

**Saturday 7 July**

**COAL ASTON VILLAGE GALA**  
An afternoon of fun and games,  
including a Flypast by a Spitfire  
from the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight.  
Official opening 13.00  
BLESSING OF THE WELL 13.45  
The GALA will be followed by  
AN EVENING CONCERT featuring  
Lookin' Back, Scuppered and local artistes  
Doors open 19.30 for 20.00  
Tickets £4.00 on the door

**Sunday 8 July**

**ARTS EXHIBITION**  
Featuring the Royalist Art Group and local  
wildlife photographs by  
Norman Lock ARPS and Norman Crowson.  
Open from 11.00 until late afternoon.  
Pictures and photographs will be for sale and  
refreshments will be available.

**Saturday 22 September**

**COAL ASTON FOLK**  
See notice board in Foyer for more details.

**Friday 12 October**

An illustrated talk by Pollyanna Pickering on  
Snow Tigers  
Doors open 19.00 for 19.30  
Tickets, including light refreshments  
£4.00 at the door or in advance from 01246  
412427 or 412554

**Saturday 20 October**

**DAVE BRENNAN'S JUBILEE JAZZ BAND**  
An evening of traditional jazz  
Doors open 19.30 for 20.00  
Tickets £6.00 from 01246 411526 or 410611  
Coal Aston Village Hall is now one of the district's  
most popular venues for live entertainment.  
There is always a big demand for tickets. To avoid  
disappointment our advice is to book early.

**Quiz**

Joint Winners of the caption competition in the last issue of Village Voice (the two boys watching the Lord Conyers Morris Men) were Mr R Gillott of Rawlins Court, with 'When are they going to start fighting?' and Mrs L Long of Hazel Court who had one lad asking his friend, Joshua, 'Did you make all this noise when you brought down t'walls of Jericho?' Our congratulations to them both.

Sudoku was our most popular competition, so here's another for you to complete. Entries please to the Village Hall by Wednesday 4 July, so that we can announce the winner at the Gala Concert.



1				6	9		5	8
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	7	2				8		3
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3		4				5	1	

**Norton Players present**

**Cash on Delivery 26 - 30 June (excluding Friday)**

Norton Players present this hilarious production at Coal Aston Village Hall. Michael Cooney's riotous farce has all the ingredients for rib-tickling hilarity! Eric has pocketed thousands of pounds through fraudulent DSS claims and when the DSS Inspector arrives, mayhem follows! The fast paced comedy offers a colourful selection of character roles.

For tickets please contact 0114 2372326

COAL ASTON VILLAGE VOICE, INCORPORATING THE VILLAGE HALL NEWSLETTER, IS PREPARED AND PUBLISHED BY THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE OF THE VILLAGE HALL

Coal Aston Village Hall, Eckington Road, Coal Aston, NE Derbyshire, S18 3AX [www.coalastonhall.org.uk](http://www.coalastonhall.org.uk)

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Items for inclusion should be sent to the Editorial Sub-committee c/o the Village Hall.