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We would like to express our gratitude to the late Mrs Vera Boote,
whose generous legacy made the recent refurbishment of
Rudolf Steiner House possible.



THE BUILDING OF RUDOLF STEINER HOUSE | 1925-2010

BEGINNINGS

Why was Rudolf Steiner House built on its present site? Did those whose responsibility it was at that time have some intuition that this site was particularly auspicious, as Rudolf Steiner himself did with the site of the Goetheanum, or were there other, more mundane considerations at work?

I have often pondered on this question, as indeed many others may have done. What follows is the result of some preliminary researches. These researches showed that the choice of the site, if not the resolve and effort in building and financing the new building, appears to have been a response to necessity.

After its founding, in the presence of Rudolf Steiner, the Anthroposophical Society had established itself in rented premises at No.46 Gloucester Place. But by 1924, these premises were proving to be inadequate to the demands of the society. As the matter was put to

the members by the then Secretary General, Mr H.Collison, "It has become necessary to provide a lecture hall and premises for a School of Eurhythmy (sic) for the reason that the room at 46 Gloucester Place is no longer large enough to accommodate members and others when lectures and general meetings are held, nor can Eurythmy performances be given without hiring a hall at considerable expense". Collison then went on to outline the vision behind the project: these were bold indeed, for in addition to providing accommodation for Eurythmy performances and training, the society proposed to

The Theatre as originally constructed (Note decorative treatment by Arild Rosencrantz)



acquire a site which would eventually be able to house all of its activities in London, and it was intended that what was built in this initial stage should provide the basis for further extension in the future. A further incentive was that the lease for the premises at 46 Gloucester Place was due to expire in 1932. At the same time as outlining the Society's plans for a new building, Collison also proposed the formation of a Trust Company (The Anthroposophical Association Ltd) to deal with all the financial and legal matters associated with this new venture. He also let members know that "The details of the scheme have been submitted to Dr. Steiner and he has expressed his most emphatic approval".

The Site

Whilst a site had in fact been found by the time Collison communicated the new plans to the membership, it had not been an entirely straightforward matter. The first site to be investigated was in New Street Mews (now Chagford Street, just south of Rudolf Steiner House and running parallel to Gloucester Place). However, the then tenant of half of the proposed area was the owner of an old established basket factory and unless they could come to terms with him, or her, vacant possession would not be possible. This they failed to do and so were obliged to look elsewhere. Help came from the surveyor of the Portman Estate, the landlords of most of the property in this area at that time. It was he who proposed the present site. But there must have been misgivings for, describing the event in later years, Montague Wheeler, who was to become the architect of the new building, and later chairman of the Society itself, wrote thus: "I agreed

that we should be well placed there, but thought the scheme suggested seemed quite beyond our means. Then he said something which had great weight. 'A Society', said he, 'which has faith in its future should not be afraid of a good site in a main road; you ought not to be content with a mews.' That saying was one of the first threads in the weaving of the picture and it is still being worked in the pattern. That is how we came to buy the site." According to old maps of that time, the site was, or had been, a warehouse.

The Finances

In his communication to members, Collison put the cost of the new building "at about £8,000." This is approximately £285,015 in current monetary value, though it should be remembered that the cost of land and building have greatly increased since then. In addition, there was an annual payment of £500 ground rent. (The ground rent was subsequently bought out by the Society.) A later estimate, provided by Montague Wheeler in minutes of that time (18/9/26), put the overall cost at £19,254 (£685,960 in current monetary value). This was a large sum of money for a relatively small society to find. Members were therefore invited to make loans, or debentures, to the Association over a period of fifty years in return for a fixed rate interest of 5% per annum. Part of the funds to pay the interest was to come from rent from the Eurythmists, and part from the Society's own funds in lieu of costs which would otherwise have been incurred from hiring halls for meetings. Nevertheless, the Association still had to take out a mortgage of £10,000 to cover the shortfall between costs and debentures. Great emphasis was therefore now

placed on letting the hall for dramatic performances to generate income. So it is not surprising that, soon after the hall was officially opened, The Mayfair Dramatic Club announced the production of *Fanny and the Servant Problem* by Jerome K. Jerome. Tickets cost between 7/6d and 2/4d.

The Building

Not long after Rudolf Steiner had given his approval and good wishes for the Society's scheme, Montague Wheeler travelled to Dornach. Unfortunately for him, Steiner was by then too ill to see him. But he was able to consult with Marie Steiner. Of this meeting he wrote: "She told me how she wished the stage to be planned and accepted the necessity of letting the Hall until such time as we were strong enough to be financially independent. She hoped that I would design the building, in so far as I was able, in accordance with the Doctor's architecture at Dornach." He was also able to meet with Dr Wachsmuth "who gave me a motif" and with the chief architect, Herr Aisenpreis, who "enabled me to understand how to approach the work".

The Opening Ceremonies

On June 1st 1926, the Hall was officially opened

by Albert Steffen, the then President of The Anthroposophical Society. He was accompanied by Frau Marie Steiner and the other members of the Central Executive. Delegates from many other countries were also present and many were the telegrams of

greetings and good wishes from friends all over Europe.

A week of celebration followed which included a rich variety of talks and on the Sunday morning Albert Steffen read from a 'class lecture' by Rudolf Steiner which was ably translated by George Kaufmann (later George Adams). There were four evening and matinee performances of Eurythmy directed by Marie Steiner. These were enthusiastically received, as well they might be, since few could have seen the Dornach artists perform before.

Writing about these ceremonies afterwards, Albert Steffen refers to the 'cordial hospitality' which he and others received. And he

observes that the name of Rudolf Steiner is printed outside for everyone to see. He continues "The man in the street knows nothing of this leader of humanity. He stops and looks at those who are streaming into the Hall, and questions. Before very long, the attention of many will be called to this oasis in the stony wilderness of this great city."

"She told me how she wished the stage to be planned and accepted the necessity of letting the Hall until such time as we were strong enough to be financially independent. She hoped that I would design the building, in so far as I was able, in accordance with the Doctor's architecture at Dornach"

THE BUILDING GROWS



Since acquiring the site in Park Road, it had always been the Society's intention to enlarge the building further. The original building had been relatively modest – compared, that is, with the present one – consisting of the theatre and ground and first floor only. Even at the time of its construction, a larger building was envisaged, one which would eventually be able to house all of the Society's activities in London.

Towards the end of 1930, matters were becoming more urgent. The lease on number 46 Gloucester Place would expire in 1932, at which point a new 28 year lease would have to be made, or the Society's offices relocated elsewhere, or in an enlarged Rudolf Steiner House. With great boldness, it was decided to extend the house, even though not all the debts from

the first phase of building had yet been met. So it was that the architect, Montague Wheeler, was able to report that building work would begin on 1st February 1932.

The Proposed Extension

In his original (1924) appeal to members, Collison outlined the possible 'ultimate' requirement for the building. This included offices (including a typewriting room!), library, meeting room and lecture room, a room for the General Secretary, Council & Executive meetings, as well as a refreshment room, cloakroom facilities and accommodation for a caretaker. By 1931, the proposal had changed and was to include a bookshop on the ground floor. The intention then was to locate the bookshop in the old house, No. 35 Park Road, with the Society's offices above. The scheme also provided for closing in the gap on the frontage between the existing building and the old row of houses adjoining, and also for the construction of one new storey over the whole frontage (i.e. the building would be three stories high). Presumably the intention was to demolish No. 35 and then rebuild as proposed. Describing their intentions in January 1932, Montague Wheeler wrote: 'In this old house, we shall make a bookshop on the ground floor with a window suitable for showing the books. The little grass patch in front with the old wall and dilapidated railings will be transformed into a paved forecourt open to the street.' If the original

intention was to construct a three storey building, there was still the hope that it would be four storeys. However, there was the question of cost. Help came from the Arts Club, in which Gladys Mayer was a prominent figure. The club undertook to find the money for the construction of the third floor in return for their accommodation in it.

Nevertheless there was a setback. There were insufficient funds to install the lift, though presumably its central well was constructed, and it was not possible fully to realise the intentions with regard to the new extension. For reasons which are not clear from our records, Montague Wheeler was obliged to report to members in April 1932: 'The building cannot even now be finished, because we cannot yet rebuild No. 35 Park Road.'

Nevertheless, even if the Society could not rebuild it, they seem to have acquired the premises, for he refers to a bookshop and secretary's office in the old house. The upper floors were let for accommodation. This 'old house' is clearly visible in the accompanying photograph, as are the 'dilapidated railings' and, possibly, 'the little grass patch.' I wonder what the lettering over the front of the building says? It is from this period of building that our

wonderful staircase was constructed. Writing after Montague Wheeler's death in 1937, George Kaufmann (later Adams) refers to 'the

beautiful staircase as an instance of the free and plastic treatment of concrete, using this modern material – as Rudolf Steiner himself had often said – according to its real potentialities.' It remains a mystery to me as to why this staircase was never completed to the ground floor until 1990. It is during this period too, that our current lecture room (second floor) was built. Describing his intentions for it in January 1932, Montague Wheeler wrote: This room 'will be irregular in shape, but will hold in an emergency a hundred and fifty people'. One wonders what that 'emergency' might have been, and



“ ... the beautiful
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whether people were generally smaller at that time, since it is difficult to envisage such a number in that room now.

The Finances

As has already been mentioned, at the time of deciding to embark on the new building work, the Society was still not free of its debts from the original construction. Nevertheless, with considerable boldness they went ahead. Early

in 1931, Montague Wheeler reported that the cost of building would be 'about £12,000' (£649,128 in today's monetary value). There was a further £2,455 required to clear the bank debt (from the previous construction work), making a total of £14,445 (£781,929.30 in today's monetary value). He reported also that there was an offer from a member of £9000 on mortgage. He did not disclose the name of the member. However, later in the same year, he reported that the 'cost of the present extension will be about £6000'. It is not clear from our records whether this lower price was on account of the mortgage referred to, or because the Arts Club was finding the money for the top floors. It seems probable that the higher price was the correct one, since in a minute of 11th October 1932, it is stated that the amount already paid for the building was £8,600. As with the previous building programme, it was proposed to raise the necessary money by means of donations and loans in the form of debentures on which 5% interest was paid. As was pointed out in various communications to members, this was not a bad investment. And the success of Miss Fredman in managing the letting of the hall, 'had made our debentures secure. Without that help, it would have been far more difficult for us to have enlarged our building'.

Whilst the financing of this initiative was a real and pressing concern, it was not the only consideration. For as Montague Wheeler himself observed: 'Much of our money has come from members who have staked the best part of their capital, often very small, in the Hall. When advised to consider the risk, they have added a smile. Those smiles have not been the least of the contributions received, for they would remain if the money were

lost.'

The Opening Ceremonies

In 1932, D.N.Dunlop, the then General Secretary, invited all members to a weekend gathering over the weekend of Friday October 7th to Sunday October 9th. The programme of activities was in celebration of the 'opening of the new home of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain' and of the new medical centre. The latter had been established at 10 Kent Terrace, which is located just north of Rudolf Steiner House in a terrace of Regency houses. Both buildings were to have been opened by Dr Ita Wegman. Unfortunately, at the last moment she was unable to be present; nevertheless, the event took place as planned, with Dunlop taking her place. The gathering included the opening of both centres, addresses by Wheeler, Dunlop and Kaufmann and representatives from the work outside London, speech choruses and a performance of eurythmy on Saturday evening. The proceedings concluded with a lesson of the first class on Sunday morning, and a public lecture given by Cecil Harwood on Sunday evening on the subject of: 'Aristotle and Alexander: the birth of a new culture'.

Owen Barfield wrote an account of these proceedings for the News-Sheet. For me, two of his observations stand out. The first, in an account of George Kaufmann's talk; he refers to his words that: 'To live in the Michael Age was to feel oneself a citizen, not of this or that race, or nation, but of the world'. The second, from Daniel Dunlop's closing words where he referred to words of Rudolf Steiner, given in a lecture of January 20th 1923: 'Morality first begins when we form in our own astral body the lines of care and trouble that are on the forehead of our fellow-man'.

THE BUILDING IS COMPLETED

The society had always intended to enlarge the building yet further. In 1932 a new extension had been built and opened and the society had also acquired No. 35 Park Road, into which had been moved a bookshop and offices. But this was never intended to be more than a temporary arrangement. Indeed, the original vision, as outlined by Harry Collison in November 1924, had included a 'bookshop and publishing office with a shop window on a public thoroughfare'



Rudolf Steiner House as it appeared in 1938

So it was that in October 1936, the society's Council agreed a recommendation to rebuild No. 35. In the summer of 1937, permission was sought from the relevant authorities to construct a new extension which would incorporate a book-store, packing room and boiler chamber in the basement, a bookshop on the ground floor, a library on the first floor, residential accommodation on the second floor, and a eurythmy room on the third floor. Work began in the closing months of the year. Those familiar with the house will recognise that this is much as the house is now.

The distinctive 'eyebrows' over the bookshop window were a part of Wheeler's design (see image on front cover). The bookshop frontage was remodelled in the 1980's, and the current 'eyebrows' are the designs of David Austin. Few, I suspect, will have seen the original caretaker's accommodation (now used as offices); the original bath is still in situ, and would surely not be out of place in the V&A museum!

A further addition which belongs to this phase of building is the chimney, designed by Wheeler for the new central heating system. It is a pity that it is not more visible, and can really only be seen to advantage from the other side of the Park Road. It is both elegant and unusual. Next time you visit, have a look.

The Finances

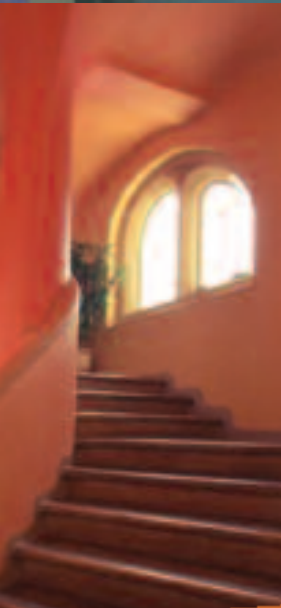
Montague Wheeler's original estimate for the work was £3,500. Looking through the various communications to members and committee minutes of that time, it becomes

clear that finding the necessary funds to finance the work was a major preoccupation. The society was already paying off debts (mainly interest on debentures) from earlier building work, and now had to find more. Further, due to a number of unforeseen circumstances, which are explained below, the costs escalated, so that by the time the building was finished, the final costs were £7478.00 (about £363,646.66 in to-day's monetary value). So it is not surprising, in addition to a major appeal to members in 1937, that in May 1938, Cecil Harwood, who was now the Chairman and who had temporarily taken on the task of Treasurer, was again appealing to members' generosity in the form of gifts and donations.

If we do a rough computation of all the costs of building the house, we arrive at a figure of £1,831,535. Whilst this is an approximate figure, and the true costs were probably higher, one cannot but be awed by the amount of money the society had been able to raise. This is the more remarkable when one learns that in May 1938, Harwood reported that the membership of the society stood at 588 persons. It is doubly remarkable when we learn from that same report that of the 588, only 216 members had so far contributed to the building fund. Whilst it was Harwood's earnest wish that the new extension should be opened free of debt, it seems unlikely that this proved possible. A minute of October 1938 records that the decision had been taken to let some of the rooms in the house.



Views of the magnificent Staircase



The Building is Completed

Writing in the May 1938 issue of 'Anthroposophical Movement', Cecil Harwood announced that the 'new wing' was now completed. It was a fitting tribute to its architect, Montague Wheeler, who, sadly, had died in September 1937 at the age of 64. Nevertheless, the building had been completed to his designs.

Harwood explained why the costs were much greater than originally estimated. A particularly expensive item was that "the LCC (London County Council) suddenly insisted on the underpinning of the existing building in view of the excavation for the bookshop basement...". As a result, the basement had to be made deeper than originally planned and this work led to the discovery of an underground spring which meant that the walls had to be water-proofed. Many economies had been made, not least that the walls of the new eurythmy room had been left unfinished. Some members will remember that the walls of the present eurythmy room were for a long time incomplete. I believe that they were to have been clad in cedar wood, but that the advent of the second world war prevented the wood being delivered. The present panelling dates from 1991 and was designed by Robert Lord.

The opening ceremonies were held on St John's day and over the weekend of 24th-26th June 1938. The actual ceremony on St John's day itself took place in the new eurythmy room at the top of the house and included music, eurythmy and the reading of

a passage on St John's day by Rudolf Steiner and the Christmas Foundation Meditation. A homely touch was provided by the builder's foreman, who was called upon "to drive the nail into the wall" on which was hung a picture of Rudolf Steiner. The new wing was formally opened with these words, spoken by Cecil Harwood:

"By this act we dedicate the work of this house and the Society to him whose portrait we have here hung. May that Spirit for whom he lived and worked, live and work in all that is here felt, spoken and done".

Epilogue

For the Society, it was the end of an era. It was now solidly incarnated in its long-willed and worked-for home. It was the closing of another era too. Already in March 1938 the Stuttgart Waldorf School had been closed on the orders of the Nazi government. Within fifteen months, England would be at war with Germany. One could say that the building was completed just in time.

Looking back on the story of its inception and construction, one cannot help but marvel at the commitment and will of those early members. They were truly inspired.

It is at this point too that we come into the realm of living memory, which enables me to close this short account on a lighter note. I am reliably informed by an older member that when the lift was first brought into use, users were expected to make a donation towards its cost in a small box provided for that purpose.

MONTAGUE WHEELER

*The architect of
Rudolf Steiner House*



Were you to visit Rudolf Steiner House for the first time, your first thought might be “what a remarkable building!” and your second thought, “who designed it?” For it is, as Nikolaus Pevsner writes in *The Buildings of England* (London Vol.2, p353), notable for its ‘organic curves’; elsewhere it is described as the only example of ‘expressionist’ architecture in London. Rudi Lissau observes in an article in ‘*Anthroposophy Today*’ (Vol.23 Autumn 1994) that ‘there was no comparable building in existence’ and that it was the ‘first Rudolf Steiner House in the world’.

Montague Wheeler (1874-1937), whilst being the creator of this remarkable building, had a conventional career for a man of his epoch. Educated at Marlborough College and Trinity Hall Cambridge, where he read history, he seems to have come only later to

architecture which he studied at University College London and Tufton Street and South Kensington Arts schools and became an articled pupil to Edward P. Warren where he met Edward Hoare. In 1898 they formed the partnership of Hoare and Wheeler, which lasted until his death. He was elected fellow of the RIBA in 1918, having commanded the 2/4th battalion of the Royal Berkshire regiment during the First World War, a command which took him to France and Salonica, an experience which, according to his grand-daughter, left him a convinced pacifist who felt he could never again order men into battle to face such slaughter.

His obituary in the journal of the RIBA describes him as a ‘versatile’ architect, a description which is borne out by the breadth and variety of his work. This included a number of churches, including



The Victoria Cinema,
Cambridge

Holy Trinity War Memorial Church in Jesmond, Newcastle, the construction of Wellington Court in St Johns Wood London, the rebuilding and restoration of several historic houses, and new building and restoration at Trinity Hall, Cambridge. In Cambridge also, he was responsible for the building of the new Victoria Cinema. This cinema, which opened in 1931, seated 1,430 persons and was described as Cambridge's biggest screen when it finally closed in January 1988 having been sold to Marks & Spencer.

This building is of particular interest to us, since it was designed and opened in-between the first and second phases of the building at Rudolf Steiner House and, as with the theatre at Rudolf Steiner House, the

interior decoration was undertaken by the artist Baron Arild Rosencrantz. It is clear from descriptions of the time, that many of the ideas developed in the design and decoration of the House were incorporated into the design of this cinema. A 21st birthday article in the Cambridge Evening News refers to "eurythmic cinema coming of age". A later comment explains that "the term referred to the absence of traditional influences on architectural design and décor. For example, there were the huge glass ceiling panels which could bathe the interior in 8,000 shades within seconds."

The invitation to the formal opening of the cinema by the Mayor of Cambridge comments in some detail on the colour and

architecture of the new building “which is a development of the design adopted by the same designers in the case of Rudolf Steiner Hall, Clarence Gatethroughout the scheme colours play together in a variety of tones and shapes, the forms now free, like clouds and now like rock formations”.

He was a committed anthroposophist who was both treasurer and architect for the society, and its chairman from the death of Daniel Dunlop in 1935 to his own death in 1937. It is not clear from our records when his interest in anthroposophy was first aroused. It may be that he came to it through Theosophy, but one suspects that it must partly have been due to the artistic impulse which Rudolf Steiner brought to the construction of the first Goetheanum. In an article in *Anthroposophy* (Easter 1926) “True Style in Architecture”, he outlines the decline of imagination in late nineteenth and early twentieth century architecture and draws attention to Steiner's unique imaginative contribution to the art. Commenting on the Goetheanum, he observes “every part and every detail was in harmony with what went before, and what went after. Every form underwent a metamorphosis in its

development. There was no repetition without a certain change. It was a great and true work of art in which architecture, sculpture

and painting all played a harmonious part...”

Commenting on his own work at Rudolf Steiner House, he writes: “To say that it is built in the style of Steiner's buildings would be to claim far more than has been achieved or, in a sense, attempted. Certain principles, however, have been borne in mind. No forms have been employed for the sake of tradition, and the materials used have been shaped in the manner in which their nature seems to suggest.”

There is clearly something notable about a

man who could both command a regiment in the First World War and share in the initiation, design and building of Rudolf Steiner House and other remarkable buildings. Of his personal qualities we know very little, beyond what his life's achievements tell us. He seems to have been a gentle and kind man. His grand-daughter remembers him fondly, the cuckoo clock bought back from Switzerland, the bright red rag doll from Dornach, and how he took her outside to look at Orion in the sky.

“ *Every form underwent a metamorphosis in its development. There was no repetition without a certain change. It was a great and true work of art in which architecture, sculpture and painting all played a harmonious part ...* ”

A NEW LEASE OF LIFE

In the spring 2005, a notable event occurred. It took the form of a visit from the fire officer in the course of his statutory duties. Having thoroughly inspected the premises, he concluded that they no longer complied with existing fire regulations; a formal letter outlining his requirements was received some time after his visit. These requirements had the force of law: And the requirements were quite extensive. Unless they were completed within a reasonable span of time, the premises would have to be closed. Whilst this news came as something of shock to those responsible, it nevertheless coincided with embryonic plans to construct a disabled toilet; another statutory requirement which needed attention.



So it was that in 2007/8 the house underwent major works of reconstruction and refurbishment. To comply with current legislation, and the fire officer's demands, the work included complete rewiring, provision of disabled toilet facilities, a new fire alarm system, a new kitchen and eating area and a complete reorganization of the fire escapes. The Anthroposophical Association appointed the architect Nicholas Pople to design and oversee this work and he built up a team that included the architect Helen Springthorpe, whose particular responsibility was conservation, and the structural engineers Giffords Ltd under the leadership of David Tasker. The construction work was undertaken by ITC Concepts Ltd. Of particular note is the new café area, where the architects were aiming to create a

mood of light. This space, that was formerly occupied by fire escapes, a redundant theatre dressing room and those awkward bits of unwanted space created by the many additions to the building, presented, because of its asymmetrical shape, a considerable challenge to the team, particularly concerning its roofing. In conversations with them, they revealed that one of their inspirations for the solution they eventually settled on was the shape of the humble rhubarb leaf! This delightful wooden structure creates a polarity with the brick and concrete around it, and the wooden beams echo the forms of the original Goetheanum in Switzerland. The central supporting wooden pillar has inserts in it of the seven planetary woods. (Ash/Sun, oak /Mars, sycamore /maple/Jupiter, hornbeam /Saturn, cherry/Moon, elm /Mercury, birch /Venus.) The

new café roof received a commendation in the Structural Awards ceremony of 2009. The judging panel of 12 commented: 'the close collaboration between the architect, structural engineer and timber specialist fabricator (Gordon Cowley of Cowley Structural Timberworks), has resulted in a beautifully detailed roof that blends perfectly with the original architecture.'

Elsewhere in the building, the design team were working with the picture that the building would be very public on the ground floor (outer work) and become increasingly private towards the top. Thus the offices, which were formerly on the third floor, were moved to the first floor, thus allowing the original configuration of the third floor space to be revealed as the studio it was originally designed to be. Of particular note also, is the original terrazzo floor (previously covered over) leading to the theatre, whose metamorphic design reflects the motifs behind the original building. Many of the spaces including the foyer, staircase and theatre were redecorated under the sure hand of Gary Chippendale using a technique known as 'lazure', which uses water based plant colour pigment. Colour glazes are applied to a textured surface to give the impression of movement and light.

The Finances

Not every cloud has a silver lining, and the requirements of the Fire Authorities were not only a shock, but could well have been terminal for the continuing viability of the house. But what could have been a disaster was turned into a positive opportunity. That this was so was due to the energy of the then treasurer, Roger Pauli, the foresight of the Council of the Society, and a

generous legacy from a deceased member that provided the lion's share of the funding. So it was that the house was equipped for the 21st Century and assured of a viable future. The overall cost of the project was in the region of £1.5m.

A Celebration

In May 2008 the building and refurbishment works were complete. To mark the occasion, the Society invited all those who had participated in the work to a celebratory lunchtime concert and buffet lunch. The building glowed with the warmth of human company and its new found elegance.



Postscript

As part of the building programme the terrazzo floor in the foyer was uncovered and restored.

This 'paving' is made of blue and white marble chips set in concrete, the design being based on that of the original pillars set either side of the main doors. It led the audience to the theatre, accommodating the possibility of a brief stop at a ticket office on the way! Montague Wheeler explains its importance in 'The Architect', 15th Oct 1926.

'On entering the doors the motif is developed in the design of the paving, getting more complicated as it proceeds, and then reverting to simplicity according to the true process of evolution'

“ One of their inspirations for the solution they eventually settled on was the shape of the humble rhubarb leaf! This delightful wooden structure creates a polarity with the brick and concrete around it, and the wooden beams echo the forms of the original Goetheanum in Switzerland ”