The History of and Allen House Quorn Men's Institute

Today most of us know 99 Meeting Street as Allen House or ‘the Scout Hut’. But what were its origins? We can trace this through memories and newspaper articles.



Allen House today (November 2026)

The plot of land on which the hut stands, was originally part of the estate of the Cradock family who lived at Quorn Court. After John Davys Cradock died in 1921 the estate passed to his nephew Corbett Cradock, who in 1924 sold a large portion of the land to Edward Thomas Allcock, architect and surveyor of Loughborough. This firm sold a large area consisting of what is today Spinney Drive, Cradock Drive, Elms Drive, Beacon Avenue and the lower part of Warwick Avenue – but a plot of approximately 957 sq yards on Meeting Street was sold to the trustees of Quorn Men's Institute.

Leicester Evening Mail - Friday 2nd October 1925

QUORN SOCIAL CLUB

A general meeting of the Men's Social Club was held at the Mills Institute last night, Mr W. S Green presiding. The secretary Mr A. Peach in his report announced that the sum of £179 12s. 6p had now been given or promised. £90 had been paid for the land and £73 balance remained in the bank. Plans of the of the proposed building were handed round. The approximate cost of the proposed premises was £500. Mr F. Heighton [Highton], one of the trustees, announced that he had been in communication with the Rural Community Council, from which it hoped that a grant might be obtained. The club now had 33 members and it was decided to make application to the Adult School [83 Meeting Street] for the continued use of the school premises in Meeting Street in the coming winter.

© Quorn Village On-line Museum, www.quornmuseum.com. Information for personal/community group use only. Copyright forbids further publishing, distributing, copying or transmitting. See copyright info on www.quornmuseum.com.

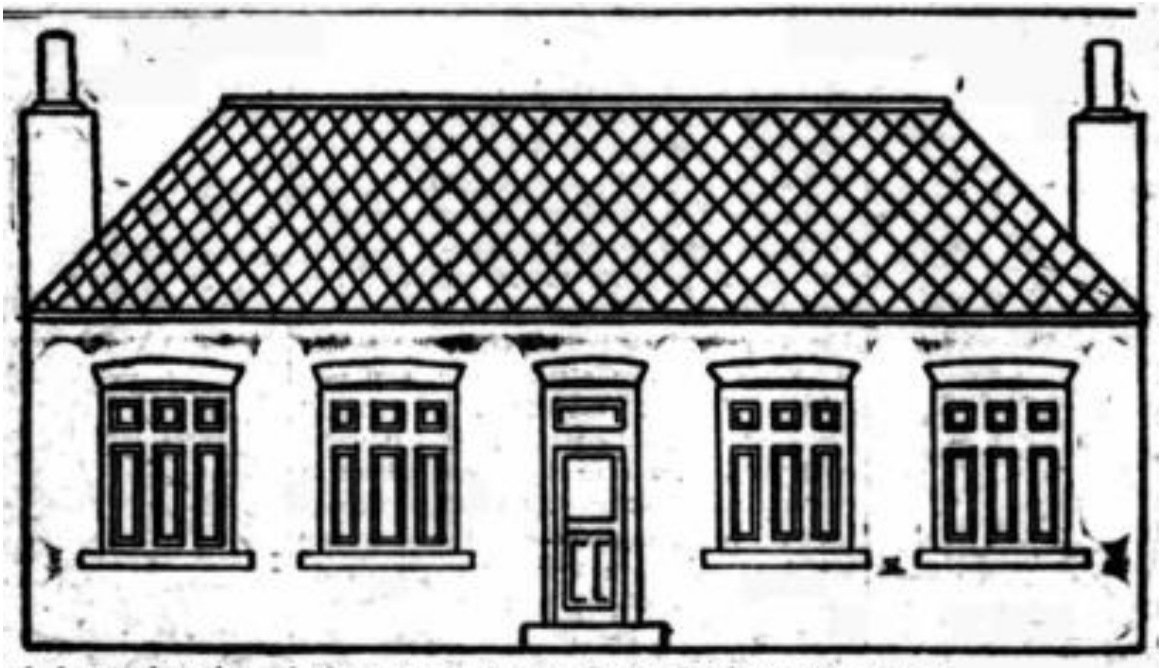
30th November 1925 – From the Allen House deeds

Edward Thomas Allcock sold the land to the trustees of Quorn Men's Institute, ie George Francis Farnham, Francis Vernon Hewitt, Frank Highton, Frederick Draper and Alfred Ernest Sisling.

Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 3rd October 1925

A QUORN PROPOSAL

I am priviledged to publish on this page a front elevation of the proposed Men's Institute for Quorn to be erected in Meeting Street. The money for it, I understand, is being raised by local subscription and the room will be used for social recreation. The building is one storey in height, and is 40ft long and 20ft wide. It is to be of red brick, with a red asbestos tiled roof. There is a kitchen with outhouses, and at the rear of the building there is ample land for the expansion which it is hoped will one day take place. As regards cost, it will be approximately £600, of which £200 I am pleased to hear has been raised. The management will be in the hands of a committee, elected by the members. There has been a Men's Social Club in the village, by the way, for the last 18 months, and its membership has greatly increased since this scheme was broached.



A front elevation of the proposed new Men's Institute for Quorn.
(See Notes in second column)

Leicester Evening Mail - Saturday 2nd January 1926

REVIEW OF OLD YEAR – ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENTS THROUGH THE YEAR IN THE DISTRICT -QUORN.

Attached to no religious or political body, the Quorn Men's Institute, which hopes to finish building by the end of March, is assuming an important position in the life of the village. The proposed building is to contain a hall 40ft x 20ft, with kitchen, lavatories etc; its programme will include entries for chess and whist leagues, billiards, socials, dances, etc: doubtless the educational side will not be neglected, and courses of lectures may be looked for. The five trustees and the committee are all elected by the members, and the club will be open to all over 16 years of age.

© Quorn Village On-line Museum, www.quornmuseum.com. Information for personal/community group use only. Copyright forbids further publishing, distributing, copying or transmitting. See copyright info on www.quornmuseum.com.

Melton Mowbray Times and Vale of Belvoir Gazette - Friday 18th June 1926

QUORN. MEN'S INSTITUTE.

At a general meeting held on Friday night, the chairman, Mr. Frank Bunney, presided over a small attendance. Although there are 50 members on the books, only 12 were present. The secretary reported that the sum of £6O was urgently needed by August next, the balance due to the builders. It was decided to ask each member to advance the sum of 5s, towards this as a loan free of interest, the money to be repaid as occasion arose. Several members present promised to take shares and it is hoped that in this way the money will soon be raised.

Leicester Evening Mail - Friday 2nd July 1926

FUNERAL OF MR. F. J. KENT, QUORN.

The funeral of Mr. F. J. Kent. of Quorn, who fell and broke his neck at the Mountsorrel Granite Works on Saturday, took place yesterday [Thursday 1st July 1926] at the Parish Church. Among the wreaths were three from the Works Hospital Mountsorrel, fellow members of Quorn Men's Institute, and "Fellow Workmates". A collection for the widow is being raised amongst friends in the village.

Leicester Evening Mail - Tuesday 5th October 1926

QUORN NEWS.

The recent fruit and flower sale held at the King William IV., in aid of Loughborough Hospital. realised the sum of £8. 2s 6d. Guessing competitions. etc., were won by Messrs. T. Gartshore, D. Starling, J. Chamberlain and E. Taylor.

Last night [Monday 4th October] the first dance of the season was held at the Men's Institute, the new floor being much appreciated. Messrs. G. Pick and G. Joiner were M.C.'s. and music was supplied by the Bachelors Band.

Leicester Chronicle Saturday 17th September 1927

NEW QUORN TEAM

The newly-formed Quorn Men's Institute FC team, who in their first game beat Loughborough Clarence 3 – 1.



The newly-formed Quorn Men's Institute F.C. team, who in their first game beat Loughborough Clarence 8—1.

© Quorn Village On-line Museum, www.quornmuseum.com. Information for personal/community group use only. Copyright forbids further publishing, distributing, copying or transmitting. See copyright info on www.quornmuseum.com.

Coalville Times - Friday 27th January 1928

THRINGSTONE ATHLETIC v. QUORN MEN'S INSTITUTE

This Loughborough and District game was played at Thringstone, on Saturday, before a good crowd. The ground was wet and treacherous. Both teams maintained a fast pace, with Thringstone holding a slight balance of play. Chapman saved grandly from Smith and Underwood, but was beaten by Twigger after 10 minutes, Smith adding a second two minutes later. Birkin profited by an error by the home defence, to open the score for Quorn. The Athletic quite outplayed their opponents after this, and further goals were added by Smith (2), Wardle and Whyman (1 each), leading by six goals to one at the interval. Within ten minutes, Whyman had brought his bag to 3, with two good goals. Quorn played up pluckily after, and had quite as much of the play as the Athletic, Horsey netting, the same player scoring again after Neal had saved his first attempt. Chapman saved his side in the last ten minutes, when he kept out shots from Twigger, Smith and Hoult. Quorn were awarded a penalty, which Jackson failed to convert, but later made amends when he scored the visitors' fourth. Result: Thringstone Athletic 8 goals; Quorn Men's Institute 4.

WW2

During the war, Allen House (as we now know it) was used as a café for the many service people in the village.

21st February 1947 – From the Allen House deeds

On this date the trustees were updated. Frederick Draper was the only active trustee remaining, the having either died or retired. William Shirley Northcote Toller of Quorn Court joined Frederick Draper as a trustee.

1950s and 1960s

Children from St Bartholomew's Primary School on School Lane, would be walked across the village to Allen House to eat their school dinners.

1956 and 1959 – From the Allen House deeds

Frederick Draper died on 2nd July 1956 and William Shirley Northcote Toller resigned as a trustee in October 1959 when he moved out of the village.

Late 1950s

The building was rented by Quorn Scouts for their meetings.

1961

Quorn Men's Institute trustees wanted to sell the building as the group had disbanded, but the scouts couldn't afford to purchase it.

Leicester Chronicle – 15th September 1961

QUORN NEWS

Scouts at Quorn are to organise a petition against the sale of the village's Men's Institute. which they want as their headquarters. The petition will ask the Institute's three trustees to reconsider their proposal to sell the hall because it is no longer used for its original purposes.

© Quorn Village On-line Museum, www.quornmuseum.com. Information for personal/community group use only. Copyright forbids further publishing, distributing, copying or transmitting. See copyright info on www.quornmuseum.com.

Leicester Evening Mail – Wednesday 27th September 1961

BIDS NOT HIGH ENOUGH FOR MEN'S INSTITUTE
'MORAL VICTORY' FOR QUORN PEOPLE

Quorn Men's Institute -75 per cent of the villagers have signed a petition saying they want to keep it as a Scouts' headquarters —came under the auctioneer's hammer last night. But nobody bought it.

The 60 villagers who crowded into the green and cream painted hall, which was built 36 years ago, regarded the "no-sale" decision as moral victory. Afterwards one commented "Quite a few people were interested in buying the place but they were too afraid what Quorn would think of them."

Bidding stopped

Auctioneer Mr T. Wragg was met with silence when he started asking for bids.

After five minutes he had still only received one offer of £50 but then as the silent villagers sat watching the bidding for the institute – "a sound, solid building, ideal for conversion into a bungalow and worth £2½ thousand of anybody's money" crept up to £1075.

There it stopped, well short of the reserve price fixed by the trustees.

"This is a surprise but we are very pleased." said Mr. A. Devereux chairman of Quorn Scout Committee, and leader of the "Save the Institute" movement.

'No comment'

"But", he added, "we only hope that now the trustees will meet us so that we can reach an agreement. It's rather difficult though because they have forbidden us to approach them."

And trustee Mr. Don Stirling - one of the men responsible for Quorn's Indignation - refused to comment.

"I am not saying anything" he said. "I have said that I will make a statement when the institute is sold. And that is what I am going to do."

Last week Mr Stirling was reported as saying "When the villagers learn how we plan to use the proceeds they will agree we acted in their best interests."

19th March 1962 – From the Allen House deeds

The Charity Commissioners authorised the sale of the hut for not less than £1,750.

Leicester Evening Mail - Saturday 26th May 1962

£l,000 GIFT TO QUORN SCOUTS

Quorn Scouts and Guides will, after all, be able to buy Quorn Men's Institute for use as their headquarters thanks to a gift of £l.000.

It was revealed this week that the gift was from 80-year-old widower, Mr. Chalinder Allen, who recently moved to a Devon nursing home from his home in Buddon Lane, Quorn.

A Scout himself 60 years ago, before spending 42 years in America, Mr. Allen -who returned to Quorn in 1954 - had wanted to make sure that Scouts and Guides continued in the village.

Who was Chalinder Allen?

George Edward Chalinder Allen was born in Ipswich, Suffolk in 1882 to George Brighten Allen (a Master Mariner) and Elizabeth Allen. He qualified as a solicitor in the early 1900s, although over the years his profession was stated as an auditor, accountant, economist and corporation president in the real estate sector. He moved to America around 1912/1913, but can be found returning to England on the Olympic (sister ship to the Titanic) in March 1914, immediately prior to marrying Edith Annie Warden from Leicester. The couple lived in America

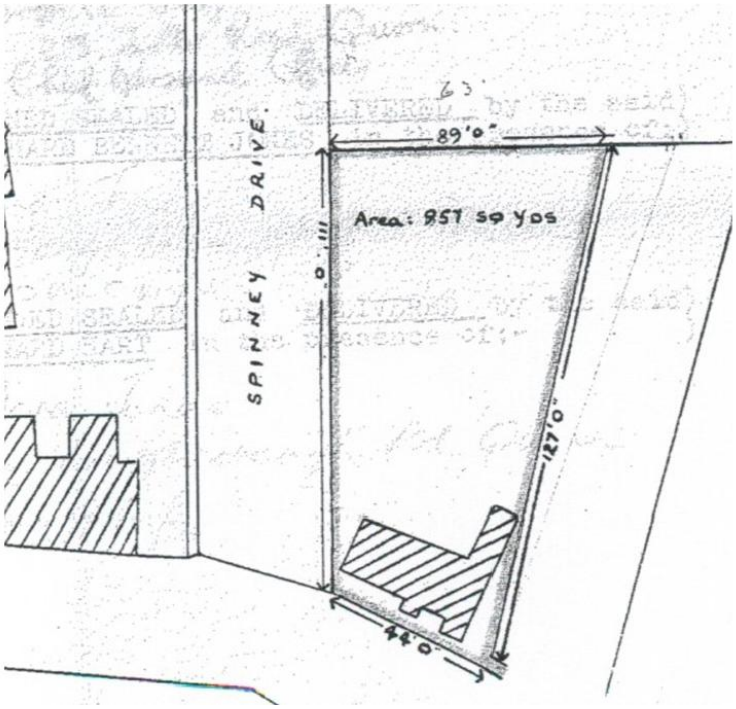
© Quorn Village On-line Museum, www.quornmuseum.com. Information for personal/community group use only. Copyright forbids further publishing, distributing, copying or transmitting. See copyright info on www.quornmuseum.com.

initially, in Larchmont, New York, and later a short distance away in Greenwich, Connecticut. They came back occasionally for visits when they gave their England address as c/o 48 Chaveney (now no 114). This was the home of their niece, Joyce Edith Olga Staples, through Edith's sister Ada Markham. Joyce lived there with her husband Ralph William Staples.

In 1954 the couple returned to England to live, with their new address recorded as 24 Tempest Road, Birstall. After this they lived at 18 Buddon Lane in Quorn. Edith died on 15th August 1961. Shortly after Edith's death, Chalinder moved into a nursing home in Salcombe, Devon and it was from here in May 1962, that he made the donation that changed the future for Quorn Scouts and Guides. Less than five months later he died on 2nd October 1962.

12th July 1962 – From the Allen House deeds, the sale goes through

The deeds to Allen House tell us that the sale went through on 12th July 1962.
The trustees of the charity known as The Quorn Men's Institute were Frank Bunney (Retired Painter and Decorator), William Swinfield (Retired Foreman Weaver) and Donald Stirling (Retired Insurance Agent) all of Quorn.
The trustees who signed for new Scout and Guide hut were Marius Wright (Textile Manufacturer), Gwendolen Mildred Wilmer Wright (the wife of Marius Wright), Arthur Devereux (Incorporated Secretary), Richard Bennett Jones (University Lecturer) and Edward Hart (Company Secretary) all of Quorn.



Leicester Daily Mercury – Saturday 6th October 1962

MAN WHO GAVE SCOUTS £1 000 FOR HALL DIES
The man who gave Quorn Scouts and Guides £1,000 and made it possible for them to buy a home of their own, Mr Chalinder Allen, has died in a nursing home at Salcome.
Mr Allen who was 80, moved from his home in Buddon Lane, Quorn, to the nursing home earlier this year.
He was a scout himself 60 years ago. He gave the Scouts the money to help them buy the Village Institute.
The Scouts had been renting the building for some years but then it was decided to put it up for sale and the Scouts had little hope of buying it until Mr Allen's gift this year.
Mr Allen spent 42 years in America, returning to Quorn in 1954. His wife died last year.

© Quorn Village On-line Museum, www.quornmuseum.com. Information for personal/community group use only. Copyright forbids further publishing, distributing, copying or transmitting. See copyright info on www.quornmuseum.com.