

ard Spring and the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society

ard Spring joined the RCPS shortly after he moved to Falmouth in 1939. During the war, the Society continued to put on events, but faced difficulties including the threat of requisition of premises (in 1939 a detachment of Royal Engineers made use of the Society's Hall for about 8 weeks; potential use by both the British and American Navy was reported in 1943 and 1944). By 1944 the Annual Report noted that "little use was being made of the Society's members... the Society was not serving the useful purpose it should in the life of the community, the membership was falling off and... the Society was not attracting younger members" (Annual Report 1944). After the War, the Society faced the challenge of restoring and using a deteriorating building.



The extensive refurbishment of the building was undertaken over the next few years. The building had previously served as a cinema and then a dance hall. When the dance hall premises closed in 1949, the Society decided to refurbish the hall as a venue "suitable for concerts, plays, exhibitions and assemblies of all kinds". It was only after the family moved to Falmouth in 1947 that Howard Spring had become an active member of the Society. The work done by the Society as reflected in the Annual Reports of the 1940's was Cornwall wide, not only lectures, visits, an essay competition, weather reporting, a library and museum. This was described by his wife's description "The hall of this Society ... is used as a centre for the arts and sciences: concerts, picture exhibitions, plays, ballet" and Howard Spring must have been a significant influence in its post war development.

The Annual Report for 1949 included his essay "The Functions of a Polytechnic Society" in which he stated that "technic" needed to embrace arts as well as sciences. In 1953, Howard Spring was elected President of the Society and in 1954 the Polytechnic Arts Committee was established as a sub-committee of the Executive Committee. This Committee brought into the Society the "Falmouth Arts Committee" of Falmouth, previously a separate organisation, which was supported by the Society.