

MICHAEL HAND

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DOWN

THE riddle of the Harrison Hall is deepening in the town of Roscommon . . . because nobody legally owns the massive building, an old British courthouse, which towers above the rest of the houses in The Square. Some people wanted to have the well-preserved Georgian hall taken over, renovated and used as a community centre.

They set up an investigation committee to probe the ownership snags — and discovered that the principal trustees, all dead, hadn't properly appointed successors.

A public meeting was called for the purpose of getting new trustees appointed and suggestions were made that £7,000 be spent on the building to make it a viable centre.

Some people there felt that the Harrison Hall should be torn down and a swimming pool built on the site.

The meeting broke up in disorder. Now Roscommon is back to square one.

I tried to unravel the mystery this week and spoke to a few people concerned in the investigation—and the parish

priest who, out of his own pocket, paid £200 in back rates to the county council. It seems that in the last century, the British authorities gave the building to the then parish priest for £20. Later, townspeople wanted to honour a local Dr. Harrison, who had given great service in the area. The priest gave

in the parish of Roscommon and Kiltewan are entitled to a say in the building.

A number of clubs use the hall as a social centre. No rent has been paid since 1966. Bazaars, drama, political party meetings and football committee meetings have been held there in the past four years.

Martin J. Neillan. Mr. Leyden told me: "I think it would be a shame if the building was demolished. There is a need for it in this town, but the only way to get proper control is through a plebiscite of the people. A voting system would be too costly. A public meeting is the best answer, and a

fiasco. I had suggested that the hall be used as a museum and library. The county council were very interested and then they came across the legal complications. The plan was scrapped.

"I have bought a site near the church on which a new community centre would be built. This would involve greater expense, of course, but at least we would know where the responsibility of ownership lay."

Canon Hanley pointed out that he had paid the last rate and electricity bills. "I cannot obviously continue doing this," he told me. "Rector Graham has told me that he would be willing to act as a trustee and would go with the idea of a community centre. It is up to all the people to agree. I don't know what happens next."

There will be another public meeting. I learned, to break the deadlock for good.

Meantime, an Army acrobatic and drill display will be held in the Memorial Hall for the International Festival next week.

The riddle of a memorial hall

the hall to the town. They named the building the Harrison Memorial Hall; three trustees—the Bishop, the P.P. and the Rector—were appointed and the hall became a clubrooms for various organisations. The position now is that with the original trustees gone, every man, woman and child

There is a current banking account for the hall, with a credit balance of £45-0-3. Nobody knows in whose name the account is.

Terry Leyden was secretary of the 15 strong investigation committee, which prepared a report on the memorial hall. It included a legal summary on the position from

decision taken once and for all."

Very Rev. Canon Thomas Hanley, P.P., V.F., said that he would be prepared to get the £7,000, if the legal position was sorted out and certain undertakings from clubs were given.

He added: "The meeting a couple of months back was a

CAMERA : BRIAN BARRON