

SITE HISTORY – THE CO-OP HALL (1939-2008)

Nuneaton's consciousness of a bygone age.



For three generations of Nuneatonians the Co-op Ballroom holds special memories. A place where people met their loved ones, dated and danced to their favourite bands and pop groups. It was filled with nostalgic thoughts of happy times mixed with joy and heartbreak.

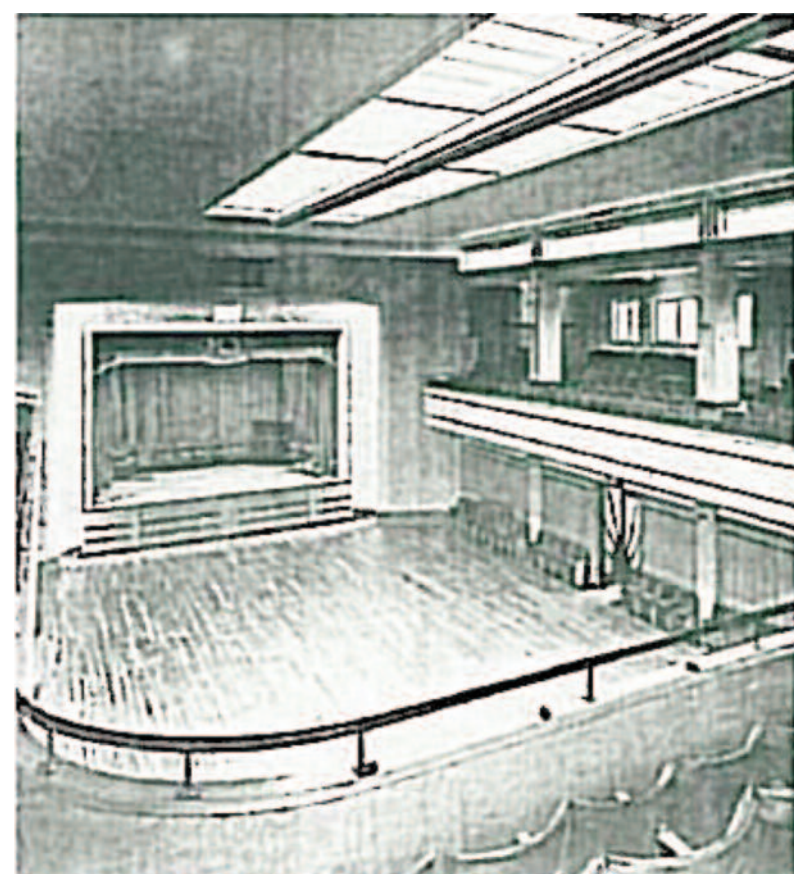
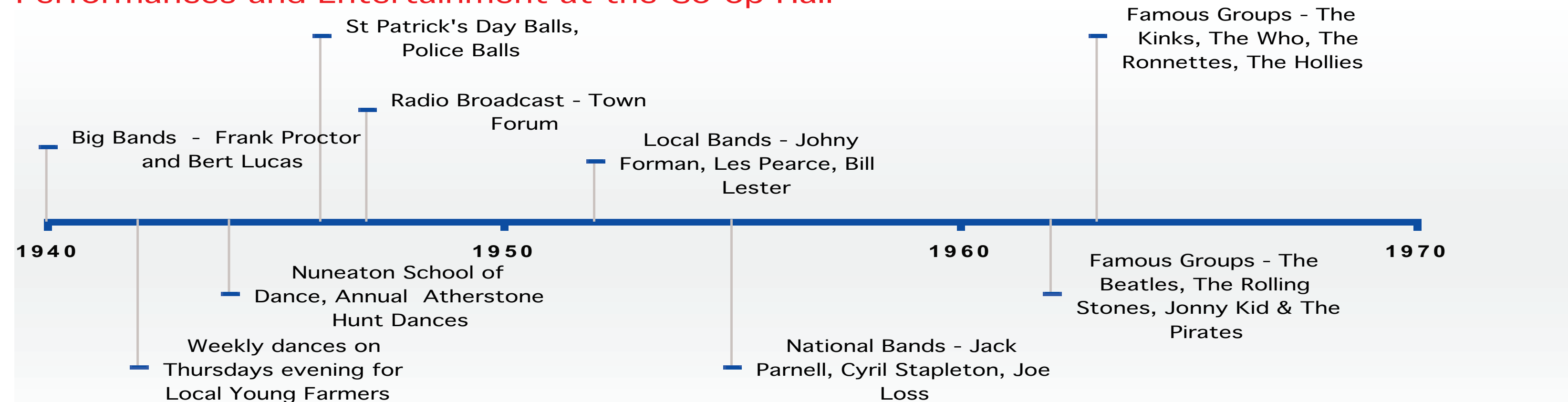
THE BUILDING FACTS

- ▶ Constructed in 1938 by the **Nuneaton Co-operative Society**, which at the time was a very successful local enterprise with 19,421 members.
- ▶ An Art Deco building designed by **Mr.H.N.Jepson A.R.I.B.A** of Nuneaton. The ballroom had a beautiful sprung dance floor in polished oak measuring 60 ft x 25 ft, a bar and dining room. The ground floor was occupied by a grocery store, butchers and gentlemen's' outfitters.
- ▶ C.W.S. Building Dept. Manchester constructed the hall over 12 months, costing **£30,000** to build.
- ▶ It was built using mostly local materials by workmen from the Nuneaton area.

BALLROOM ENTERTAINMENT

The Hall opened on 4th September 1939 during the period of the Big Band Era, many talented musicians performed here over the next 30 years.

Performances and Entertainment at the Co-op Hall



NEW YEARS EVE TRAGEDY MARKS THE END OF AN ERA

On 31st December 1965 a terrible incident occurred when the crowd began to rush down the only one set of stairs in a bid to see the star band appearing at midnight. Unfortunately people slipped down the stairs and the sheer weight of the crowd caused the death of four young people. Those who died:

**Pauline Swingler, aged 16, David Greenway, aged 19
Joseph Brian Peare, aged 22, Keith Harding, aged 15**

The Co-op Hall closed for a while to carry out repairs and install a second staircase, however it was never quite the same after the tragic incident.

FINAL CHAPTER OF THE CO-OP HALL

The Co-op Hall was later used as a Bingo Hall, which was a successful re-use of the building. Following this the supermarket chain Kwik Save occupied the ground floor shops.

The Kwik Save chain went into administration in 2007, with the Nuneaton store closing in 2008.

The Co-op Hall then was demolished in November 2008.



NEW BEGINNINGS

The site along with the former Nags Head Pub was purchased by Lidl Foodstores. Planning permission was granted in October 2009 to develop the foodstore, which stands before you today.

*In Memory of Pauline Swingler, Joseph Pearce, Keith Harding and David Greenway.
Information provided by Peter Lee of the Nuneaton Society*