

## Chapter 18 Langcliffe Village Institute

Hector Christie, Mill Owner of Langcliffe Place and Jervaulx Abbey had the Institute built in 1899, according to the Title Deed

*'for the benefit of the inhabitants of Langcliffe, Stainforth and the Locks and to be known as Langcliffe Institute (it was affectionately known by many older villagers as 'the stute.'). To the intent that it be used as an Institute for men and youths resident in the Parish of Langcliffe for reading, writing and recreation, in accordance with such rules and regulations that the Committee of Management of the Institute shall, from time to time prescribe.'*

In 1900 the committee of the 'New Institute', as it was described in a copy of the Craven Herald, dated 2nd March, held a concert to raise funds to establish a Library for the use of members. The report stated that the Institute was full, although the night was stormy, and various local artists took part, including a young village soprano, Miss Ethel Hunt, whose family has lived in the village most of this century (her sister, Sarah, used to live in the Chapel Cottage.) An arrangement was made with Mr. George Horner for a continuous supply of fresh books to be changed at frequent intervals and chosen by the Library Committee. The Library consisted of about 400 books and membership was 1/- and non-members 2/- per annum. Books were loaned at 1d for 14 days. The last entry in the Library Record Book was for Brenda McClelland in 1949.

The main hall, measuring 55 ft x 21 ft was divided by a folding screen, making a room for the Billiard Table and a separate room for other functions.

In 1907, the annual membership was 5/-, payable in advance - with the option of paying 1/- monthly, beginning the first Monday in October, until fully paid.

The rules permitted members to make use of the papers in the library on application to the caretaker, at a charge of 1d per day or 6d per week. The Institute was open on Sundays for reading only between 2.00 p.m. and 5.00 p.m. and 8.00 - 9.30 p.m.

As well as the Billiard Table, numerous other games were provided, also a good supply of papers and periodicals.

In 1923 it was decided there was a demand for a large assembly hall in the village and a need for an extension to the building. If the Institute was needed for a large function the Billiard Room had to be brought into use with the result that "billiard enthusiasts were debarred from their pastime on these occasions ". The committee felt that by adding another room to accommodate the billiard table the difficulty could be met. To raise funds for this extension a 2-day bazaar was held on Friday and Saturday. Mr. W.L. Christie, son of Hector Christie, who died on 25th April, 1915, presided. He said he was pleased to be back in Langcliffe and had hoped to renew many of his old acquaintances, but the only one present was Mr. Brayshaw. Colonel Birkbeck of Anley Hall opened the bazaar. It is recorded that the proceeds from this event amounted to £191. The Secretary at this time was Mr. H. Bannister and Mr. Marsden was the Treasurer.

The agreement between the Institute Committee and Builders, Brassington and Sons of Settle, to build this new extension was signed in June 1931 by Mr. H. Bannister

and Mr. H. James for the Institute and Mr. Brassington for the Builders. The new Billiard Room, Kitchen and W.C. were added and remained unchanged until the 1990s.

In 1937 a group of villagers organised a committee calling themselves 'The Old Folks Treat Committee', providing a tea and entertainment in early January, each year. This was held in the school until 1949 when "due to the fact that considerable nursery furniture was now in the school it was resolved to ask for the use of the Institute":

At this time an application to the Food Office had to be made for a permit due to food rationing. In 1951, 80 invitations were issued and 7 widows invitations (Mrs. Harris, French, Green, Craven, Ovington, Higginson, Spence). Each person received a handkerchief. The tea was served at 4.30 p.m. and the entertainment consisted of a film show, given by Mr. Eddie Percy of Giggleswick who also provided the music for dancing, by radiogram. The dance was held after the concert and admission was adults 1/- and children 9d. The Institute made no charge for the use of the premises.

In 1955 the committee consisted of Mr. G. Newhouse (Chair), Mr. S. Potts, Mr. E. Mercer, Mrs. Mercer, Mrs. Hurst, Mrs. Jackman, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Hoggarth and Miss Bradley (Secretary). To raise funds dances were occasionally organised, together with basket whist drives (admission in 1954 being 2/-), and bring and buy sales (admission 6d including tea and a bun). The balance of the fund in 1957 was £12.13.6d which was invested in the Co-op. In 1953 it was proposed that the caretaker be paid 2/6d an hour for cleaning the Institute after the party and dance. The format of the party remained much the same until 1987, when the golden anniversary was celebrated. At that time the committee consisted of Mr. R. Allen (Chair) Mrs. O. Monk (Secretary), Mrs. R. Walker and Mrs. M. Lodge. Due to lack of support it was decided to discontinue this event and the remaining bank balance was given to the Age Concern Thursday Club.

In a copy of the Craven Herald of 1945 it was recorded that an old-time dance, arranged by the Langcliffe Section of the Settle Constabulary was held in the Institute and was largely attended by people in the district. Special Constable Clark carried out duties of M.C. with music provided by the Ribble Dance Band. The stewards were P.C. Carman (village bobby), Section Leader Johnson and S.C. Soames and Sparling. The money raised was to be given to the Holmfirth Flood Disaster Fund.

In the early 1980s the old coke boiler, which supplied the central heating for many years was replaced by a new, more efficient gas boiler. Mr. Derek Soames remembers helping his father, who was then the caretaker, to shovel the coke into the boiler house.

In 1981 the Billiard Table needed recovering and as funds were very low a Sponsored 3 Peaks Walk was organised with many villagers and young people taking part, many of them managing to walk all three peaks, a long and arduous walk. The event raised over £400.

In 1990 the Institute, whose committee had been reduced to two - Jeff Lodge and John Clark - who between them had managed the running of the premises since the early 1980s, was handed over to the village.

In order to conform to the wishes of the Chief Custodian of Charities (who could not accept the original Title Deed), new Trustees had to be appointed - J. Lodge, J. Clark, C. Ellis and R. Bell were duly appointed as trustees and they, in turn, handed the premises to the village and a new Trust Deed was made in 1990.

In the 1990s with a new Village Hall Committee in place, plans were made to build a new extension to house a new kitchen and toilets. In order to obtain grants from various bodies, most of which needed the committee to fund a proportion of the cost themselves, many years of hard work, fund raising, was required. Teas were served in the Institute each Sunday during the summer and bank holidays to raise these funds together with many other fund raising events. Finally, in time to celebrate the centenary of the Institute, the refurbishment was completed.

The centenary was celebrated with an exhibition in the Institute and a party and concert, given by villagers, which made a very enjoyable and memorable evening for everyone.

*Margaret Lodge*

NB. The Institute is used for whist drives, dog training, lectures, demonstrations, workshops, Parish Council meetings, archery, muscle toning classes, country dancing, music rehearsals, concerts, celebrations, Thursday Club, bowls, private functions and teas on Summer Sunday afternoons.