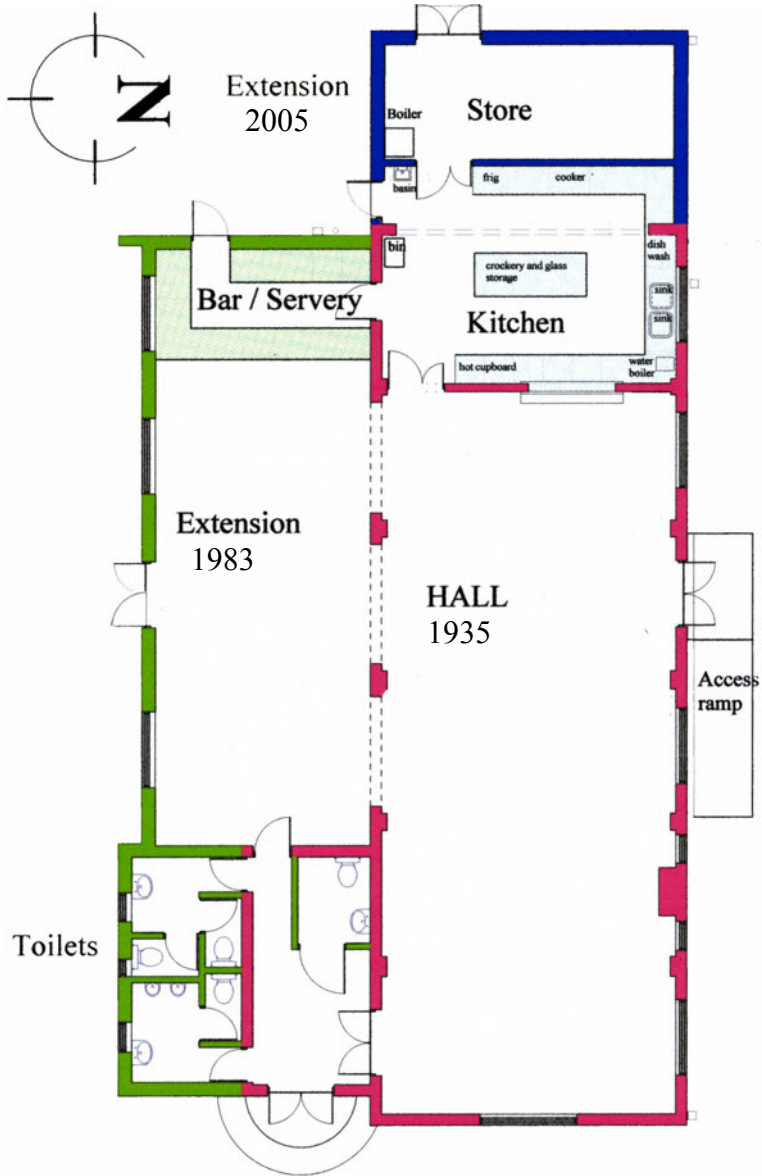


Stock and Bradley Village Hall

1935 - 2010





Stock and Bradley Village Hall

John Whybrow 1924 - 2001

Updated and edited by David Waring

July 2010

Today Stock & Bradley is justly proud of its village hall. The hall, fronting east onto Church Road, Bradley Green, is situated in its own plot, bordered by hedges and ditches. The 60ft x 35ft hall, originally fifteen feet narrower, is built of brick with a plaster finish and roofed with tiles. It is centrally heated, well lit and maintained to a high standard. The floor is polished maple. Stacking chairs and folding tables are sufficient for 120 people. The kitchen is well equipped for catering with a cooker, refrigerator, dish washer, hot cupboards and water boiler. Toilet and access facilities are provided for the disabled. There is ample car parking for most events, including private functions.

The hall is in regular use for - Keep Fit - Art Class - Village Hall Committee - Breakaway - Gardening Club - Parish Council - Scottish Dancing - Drop In.
 Annual bookings include: Art Class Exhibition, Breakaway AGM, 100 Club Draw, Parish Meeting and Parish Council AGM, PCC Harvest Supper, Skittles Match (Bradley Green v Stock Green), Village Hall AGM, Gardening Club Plant Sale and Walking Club AGM.
 In addition the hall is used for family events, business meetings and social evenings by the various organisations.

Stock & Bradley Village Hall is a registered charity and is governed by its constitution. The management committee for 2010 and the organisations represented are:

Life-President	Reginald Cocks	
Chairman	Linda Smith	Parish Meeting
Vice-chairman & Minutes Sec	Jessica Albutt	Cool Kids Club
Secretary	Gloria Forgaard	Parish Council & Breakaway
Treasurer	Stella Wallis	Walking Club.
Members	Clifford Metcalfe	Parish Church
	Thelma James	Art Class
	(unrepresented)	Scottish Dancing
	(unrepresented)	Baptist Chapel
	Mel Bates	Gardening Club
	Pauline Warren	Stock Green Residents
	Karen Teasdale	Cool Kids Club
	Wendy Ralphs	M AD Group
Caretaker	Mrs Wendy Elvins	

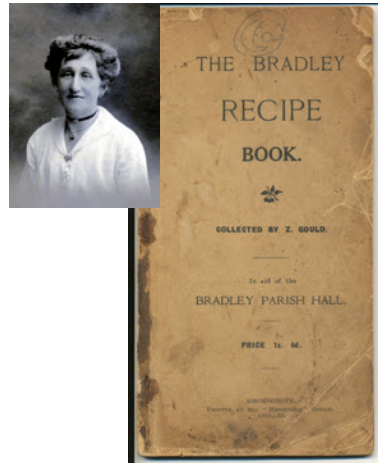




Early days The village hall was completed just in time for its official opening on 26th January 1935. However it was planned well before that. The Great War of 1914-18 was a watershed in the life of the nation. Every town and village had its war memorial.

In 1921 Stock & Bradley, by public subscription, had installed a memorial rose window in the parish church. Following on from this and as a continuation of the community spirit, there was by 1923 the intent to have a village hall, possibly initiated by the rector, Rev J T Conan-Davies who was also chairman of the parish meeting. He was supported by Mr John Newton-Jones, his vice-chairman, by Mr Norman W Gould who was to become the treasurer, and by Councillor Reuben Inett, Stock & Bradley's representative on Droitwich Rural District Council. This seems an all-male cast. However, generally speaking, women are more sociable than men and it is probable that

the wives of these notables, together with other ladies of the parish were equally strong an influence in the founding of the village hall. In particular would have been the enthusiasm of Mrs Zaida Gould, president of the Womens' Institute. Zaida produced a recipe book which sold for 1s.6p. in aid of the hall and included recipes for Coconut Pie, Cheap Summer Pudding and Make-Me-Quickly-Cake among many others.



Mrs V Janet P Cresswell, after inquiring in 1986 from friends in the parish, recorded in the parish magazine, the *Chronicle*, the money-raising whist drives of those early days:

Whist drives would often be held in the Rectory, now the *Old Rectory* and today's home of the McKechnie family. Quite often as many as 30 tables would be in play. Imagine! - 120 people, in a private house, filling the rooms to capacity, even the bedrooms, hell-bent on winning and at the same time raising funds for the building of the parish hall. The ladies would arrive in their twenties-style dresses with their hat-pinned hats (which were never removed during the evening's play) and would sit very straight-backed and efficiently playing their hands. Can you see the chaos? It was so crowded that there was not room to change tables every hand. Only the kitchen would be free from card playing enthusiasts, but it would be well occupied by busy hands preparing refreshments. Two ham sandwiches each, a cake and a cup of tea - all for 1/6d. This 1/6d covered the entrance fee as well and a good time was had by all. Of course, there was no mains water supply in those days and if too much water was used for washing up after a whist drive, then the rector's family had to wait ages for a bath - perhaps until it rained.



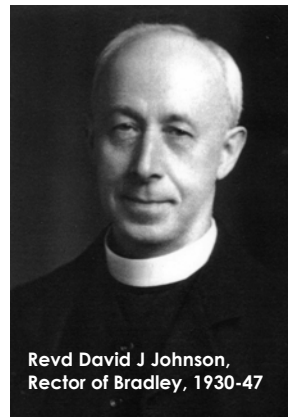
Opening ceremony of fete at the Rectory c1933, to raise funds for forthcoming village hall. From left: District Councillor Reuben Inett, Mr Norman W Gould (treasurer), Mrs D J Johnson (rector's wife), Mrs E J Thompson (principal guest, wife of Bank's Brewery chairman), Rev D J Johnson (rector), Mrs Molesworth. (Remainder unknown.)

The account book survives and shows that between 1923 and 1934 subscriptions, fetes and whist drives had raised over £600 towards the hall.

The Hall Building and Furnishing Account shows a total expenditure of £841.7s.3d. This included payments to the builder, G. Harrison & Son, £611.16s.8d., the architect Maurice W. Jones, £43.6s.7d and solicitor, J. Gabb £17.17s

Unfortunately further details are sparse, the village hall minute book covering the period having been lost.

In 1930 the new rector, the Revd D J Johnson, took over the reigns. By 1932, when plans were nearing completion, the present site for the hall was bought for £35. The field on the Tithe Award map of 1841 was described as a charity field belonging to Stock & Bradley Church. According to an undated pencil note in the back of the account book the deeds of the village hall were sent for safe keeping to the *National Council of Social Service*. The trustees were 'Rev. David John Johnson, Clerk in Holy Orders, Norman Webb Gould, School Attendance Officer, Sidney Frank Johnson, Battery Erector, and George Bertram Cocks, Farmer'. In October 1934 and whilst the hall was under construction by George Harrison & Son of Droitwich, the trustees applied for the *Bradley Parish Charity* to be approved by the Charity Commission. This was granted on 18th January 1935 under the title of *Stock & Bradley Village Hall*. The charity states that the purpose of the hall 'shall be for the purposes of physical and mental recreation and social moral and intellectual development, through the medium of reading and recreation rooms, library, lectures, classes, recreations and entertainments or otherwise as may be found expedient, for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Stock & Bradley and its immediate vicinity, without distinction of sex or of political or other opinions.'



Revd David J Johnson,
Rector of Bradley, 1930-47

A week later, on Saturday January 26th, the village hall was officially opened by the Rt Hon Sir Bolton Eyres-Monsell, M.P. , an important personage, for in addition to being Worcestershire's M.P. he was also the First Lord of the Admiralty. But Mrs Sylvia Glover, then the teenage daughter of Rector Johnson, has given (2000) this irreverent, behind-the-scenes account of the event:

I vaguely remember the opening day of the village hall - a bitter, dull day with a strong east wind blowing. Mum, Dad (the rector) and I went to the hall in the morning to help put out the chairs. My father was always affected by an east wind and was niggly. Every chair Mum and I put out - he altered the position slightly, until I flaunted off into the kitchen, angrily saying to mother, 'Oh! for goodness sake let him do it himself'. All I can recall of the actual opening by Sir Bolton E-M was being introduced to him and his saying, 'What cold hands you've got, my dear! Never mind, that means a warm heart.' I remember thinking, 'Big creep!' - or whatever the equivalent slang was in those days.



Coronation celebrations 1937

Once the hall was opened there were regular whist drives and dances - sometimes on the same day. Initially, dancing was to a quartet, Mr & Mrs George B Cocks playing respectively the violin and piano, with another violinist and a drum player completing the ensemble - so recalls Mr Reginald T Cocks who as a schoolboy had watched the hall being built. As regards social activities, there were the usual breaks in the summer and at harvest times. This pattern continued until the war came when whist drives fell off. Between 1940 and 1942, when the Britain had its back to the wall, there were fewer activities. The hall was let out from time to time to the Women's Institute and for Air Raid Precautions meetings. However, by 1943, when the tide of war was about to turn, the dances increased gradually to almost weekly events. Some sponsored the Red Cross, St Dunstons, Redditch Hospital, the Worcester Royal Infirmary and similar good causes.

After the war From 1948 onwards we have the minute books of the village hall committee which greatly help in the continuation of the story. Below is the 1948 committee, mostly involved with farming. The addresses are given for this history because it shows that whilst people come and go, houses last longer and have an association with the village hall. This realisation may help incomers in building a sense of belonging and continuity.

Chairman:	Albert E Farley (Bradley Park, Bradley Green)
Vice chairman:	Ernest Inett (Cider Mill, Cider Mill Lane, Bradley)
Secretary:	Sidney F Johnson (Elm Tree Farm, Berrow Hill)
Assistant secretary:	George Kettle (Yew Tree Farm, Bradley Green)
Treasurer:	Norman W Gould (The Villa, Bradley Green)
Members:	Denzil Barratt (Corner Cottage -now Haverhill- Stock Green)
	Mrs H L Clevely (Silver Leigh, Bradley Green)
	Cyril D Cooper (Old Smithy, Middle Road, Stock Green)
	Harry Dyson (Horns Farm, Bradley Green)
	Mrs A E Farley (Bradley Park, Bradley Green)
	Mrs N W Gould (The Villa, Bradley Green)
	Miss Pat Hamer (now Wysche, Stock Green)
	G Homes (now Old Rectory Farm, Bradley Green)
	Mrs G Homes (now Old Rectory Farm, Bradley Green)
	Mrs G Kettle (Yew Tree Farm, Bradley Green)
	Raymond Richardson (Pool House, Stock Green)
	Lawrence Summers (Stone House Farm, Stock Green)
	Mrs L Summers (Stone House Farm, Stock Green)
	Harry Taylor (Rose Cottage, Bradley Green)
	Reginald T Cocks (Tibbatts Farm, Bradley Green), aged 16, joined the committee in August.



Reginald T Cocks ,
aged 16.

Twenty members is a lot for a committee; but there was a lot of work to be done. It was reported that during 1947 there had been twenty-six dances and five whist drives and that the committee had met twelve times. Bands needed to be organised for the dances and whist drives, which were to grow in number, required prizes. There were problems too. Some visitors, from outside the parish, came to the dances late and perhaps in too jolly a mood. The committee resolved that certain persons from Astwood bank and

Feckenham should be named and not permitted to the village hall premises. This would have required a watchful eye being kept on the door and Mr C D Cooper (who became chairman in 1949) is remembered as being vigilantly on duty. In the winter the village hall would have been a blaze of light -paraffin lamps, of course- and a welcoming sight.

In 1948 a second-hand piano was bought for £45. It was sold two years later for £20.



Christmas cake decoration demonstration

The 1950's Then, as now, although many enjoyed the facilities of the hall, few members of the public attended the business meetings. For three consecutive years from 1950, apart from the committee, it was plaintively recorded that there was 'a total absence of parishioners' at the AGMs. In the meantime the committee tackled the inevitable problems of heating the premises, maintaining the structure and repairing damaged chairs and tables. In 1952 preparations were made for the installation of electricity and water, including running water for the toilets. There was talk of the land at the rear being made into a bowling green or tennis court. Whilst this showed commendable forward thinking there was at the same time concern that young people were not supporting the dances and that some were even leaving the village.

Mr Reg Cocks, in 1953, was promoted to vice-chairman, 'a young man and very helpful member', read the minutes. The Women's Institute presented a memorable series of plays and sketches.

In 1954 a youth club was started, on a month's trial. Members had to belong to the Sunday School and were required 'to wear pumps or house slippers' so as not to damaged the floor. As it happened the regular dances, which had been such a feature before, during and after the war years, ended during the spring of 1954. Their demise coincided with the advent of television.

Village hall play by members of the W.I., c1950.

From left: Mrs Bourne, Mrs Sarah Barley, Mrs Edna Clevely, Mrs Farmer, Mrs Wise (seated), Mrs Beryl Richardson



The whist drives continued to flourish and such were their popularity that tables were restricted to thirty, that is 120 participants. The Christmas 'Poultry Drive', with tickets at 3/- each, had prizes of a goose, cockerels, boiling fowls, pheasants and bottles of sherry, with consolation prizes of nuts and fruits. Raffle prizes included a chicken dinner, an iced cake and a box of toffees. Plays and concerts were particularly successful. Finances were sound with investments in Defence Bonds amounting to £750. Caretakers came and went with gaps in-between. There was the odd complaint about noise after 'closing time' and of youths using the grounds at night as a playground, but by and large the village hall was well-loved and carefully-used.



W.I., c1950.

The 1960's The committee, which ten years previously had numbered twenty, was by now reduced to twelve. By the end of the decade it would be down to single figures. The hall was used regularly for whist drives, by the Women's Institute, the Parochial Church Council and for private functions. From 1964 onwards the newly formed and successful children's Play Group used the hall regularly. In that same year Mr Norman W Gould retired from the committee. He had been treasurer since 1935; and thereafter for practically thirty years his neat and accurate hand graced the account book. The new treasurer was Mrs Edna Poultney (the daughter of Mr Albert E Farley, the 1948 chairman) who, after her first year, was congratulated for 'the efficient way she had carried out her duties'. To the committee's ceaseless job of maintaining the interior and exterior of the hall was added the higher standards of safety now required. Extra fire doors which opened outwards had to be installed and bold exit notices displayed. The hall was still heated by two coal fires and these were the cause of much work and not much heat.



One of the two original fires heating system



Village hall play by
 Don Kent
 Janet Cresswell
 Eve Millardship
 Margaret Griffin
 Lila Kent
 Kath Bather

The 1970's The first few years of the new decade began gently enough but in 1973 came the death of Mr Cyril D Cooper who since 1949 had been the chairman of the village hall as well as being rural district councillor. The same year, 1973, also saw the formation of Stock & Bradley's own parish council. Change was in the parish air and with it a new release of energy.

At the village hall's AGM in March 1974 there was an attendance of about thirty, higher than for many years. It was resolved that a plaque in honour of Mr D C Cooper be hung in the hall 'for all time'. The new chairman was Mr Reginald T Cox (Tibbatts Farm) with Mr Michael Richardson (Bradley Farm) as vice-chairman and his wife Mrs Kathleen Richardson as secretary. Mrs Edna Poultney (The Elms) continued as treasurer. Supporting the officers was a team of activists: Mrs Kath Roberts-Hindle, Mrs Janet Cresswell, Mrs M Harding, Miss E Bather, Mr Peter Gould (son of the former treasurer, Mr N W Gould), Mr Thomas Bather, Mr R Cooper, Mr Walter A Hill, Mr Albert Clarke and Mr Brian Summers. No sooner had the AGM finished than on the same evening the new committee held its first meeting, determined to strike whilst the iron was hot. A new caretaker was appointed; a new constitution and rules were to be formulated; the whist drives, recently suspended, were to start the next month with all committee members donating a prize; a music, singing and dancing licence would be applied for; dances and other fund-raising events would be introduced and a youth club was planned for the autumn. Within a few months the hall floor was repaired. An horticultural society was proposed from which grew the Stock & Bradley Gardening Club.

By 1976 the committee were confident enough to have a central heating system installed at a cost of £982. In this they were helped by £430 raised from a sponsored walk and a donation of £200 from the parish council. In 1978 the '100 Club' was formed. Shortly afterwards the car park was leveled and resurfaced for £795, and the hall roof insulated.



In July, 1976 a 20 miles Sponsored Walk raised money for the original boiler .

The 1970's ended with the start of the 'Tote', which, run by a handful of committee members and parishioners, was to raise thousands of pounds.

The 1980's There was a good attendance at the decade's first AGM. There was even competition to serve on the management committee, nineteen standing for eleven vacancies. Traveling suppers were started as were country and western evenings. The hall was too small to accommodate the 100 Club dance and so the larger Cookhill village hall was hired instead. Such was the committee's confidence that it was decided to enlarge our village hall. Mr David Waring (Staddle Stones, Stock Green) freely offered his professional services, he estimated the extension costs would be about £25,000. The committee asked him to go ahead and prepare drawings. Meanwhile the ladies social club, Breakaway, was flourishing and using the hall regularly as well as the gardening club and the parish council. The Tote profits had risen to £2000 and was to top £7000. This was regarded as a building fund. New curtains were fitted and the building re-wired and re-decorated. The 1981 AGM was proud to elect 'the best ever committee'. Mrs Kath Hill (Forest View) was appointed caretaker in 1982 a position she held until her untimely death in 2000. Her husband Mr Wally Hill has carried out repairs over many years. A 'Week for the Disabled' raised £1000. Planning permission was granted for the extension. In 1983 the county council gave a £10,000 grant towards the extension and the parish council allowed an interest-free loan of £500. The hall's chairman was now Mr John K Sidaway (Tinkers Halt, Bradley Green) and he with Mr David Waring shouldered the responsibility of the 1983 new extension which included a bar. In 1984 all debts were discharged and the hall was in use on average five nights a week.

Bradley Parish Hall
management
committee

Standing :
John Sidaway,
Peter Gould,
Jill Hicken,
Janet Cresswell,
Kathleen Richardson,
Reg Cocks
and Walter Hill.
Seated:
Roger Baggot (secretary),
Michael Richardson
(chairman),
Edna Poultney
(treasurer).

Photo: Conrad Rowberry.

BERROW'S WORCESTER JOURNAL, NOVEMBER 27, 1980



Now, as has happened more than once, there was a slight dip in the hall's fortunes. By 1985 progress seemed to have peaked. In 1986 bookings dropped. The play school, the dancing class and the keep fit class had ceased. Support declined for social functions, including the New Year's Eve dance. The grind of repairs and renewals were continuous. Drainage and sewage were troublesome and the ditches had to be cleared out. The hall floor was re-sanded with a kind gift from the Scottish Dancing Club. New members on the committee were surprised at the never-ending round of maintenance which appeared on the agendas but were assured, if not comforted, that this was quite normal.

As an inducement for greater support for the 1987 AGM, free cheese and wine were advertised in the Chronicle, the parish magazine. This brought in a near record of thirty-five villagers. Some controversy was enjoyed when, from the floor, Mr John Whybrow (Welwood, Stock Green) proposed that the name of the village hall be changed to *parish hall* on the grounds that *parish* encompassed Stock Green whereas *village* implied only Bradley Green. The proposal was defeated, amid cheerful confusion, by one vote.

This AGM was the last for Mrs Edna Poultney as treasurer, a post she had so faithfully carried out since 1964. The new treasurer was Mr Roger Baggott (Bradley Park, Bradley Green). Mrs Gloria A Forgaard (The Rookery, Bradley Green) became the new secretary. The indefatigable Mr Reginald Cocks continued as chairman. The committee, which had consisted of volunteers, was now composed of representatives nominated by the various parish organisations, as the constitution required. This obviated the dreadful silence which had sometimes followed the request for volunteers at previous AGMs.

In 1985 there was a joint celebration for the 50th anniversary of the Village Hall and the 10th Open Show which included a tombola run by Keith and Sue Hill, cake stall by Jenny Cox., Guides support for Srilanka by Alison Waring and a display of quilting by the sewing group.



In 1987 Mr James A Hackett (Horns Farm, Bradley Green) arranged several successful junior disco parties. There were some complaints about late night noise. The outcome was the introduction of secondary double glazing. The following year the floor of the hall was completely replaced at a cost of £4000 and a dehumidifier installed for £700. Once again these major improvements were financed almost entirely by the Tote.



1988 old floor removed

The 1990's At the 1990 AGM it was reported that the Tote's turnover during its first ten years had reached £57,000, over half of which had rightly been paid out as prize money and agents' fees, leaving £17,000 for the benefit of the village hall. This was a remarkable achievement. Those who had served on the Tote committee included Mr Reginald Cocks (treasurer), Mrs & Mrs Michael Cresswell, Mr & Mrs George Hickin, Mr & Mrs Michael Ralphs, and Mr & Mrs Michael Richardson. They met weekly on Thursday evenings at the Bird-in-Hand to the organise the proceedings.



1988 new maple floor

At the 1991 AGM Mrs Janet Cresswell suggested that, due to the lack of social events, a new social committee be formed and that a team of eleven stalwarts were ready to serve. The results were immediate - a disco, a barbecue, a skittles evening and a New Year's Dance. In addition the Scottish Dancing Club, through Mr O Davidson of Inkberrow, put on a splendid Burns Night. In all over £1330 were raised by these events. In 1992 another suggestion to raise funds came from Mr John Whybrow, that of 'Flying the Flag' on birthdays and other anniversaries at £5 a time. Mrs Kathleen M Richardson took bookings and saw to it that the flag was flown outside the village hall as required.



Flying the Flag

The committee continued to upgrade the hall by redecorating, providing new curtains, resurfacing the car park, re-flooring the hall and installing a new suspended ceiling. In this they were aided by a grant of £5,500 from Wychavon District Council which the committee had to match.

At the 1993 AGM the future use of the land at the back of the hall was discussed and a bowling green proposed. The Bowling Club undertook to prepare and seed the ground, which they did. Sadly the plan lapsed due to a disagreement with the village hall committee.

In 1995 the Tote finished after sixteen years. More bookings were needed to maintain the hall and in 1997 a promotional leaflet was prepared and distributed to every resident in the parish and a supply placed in local libraries. There was no immediate effect although private bookings for weddings and family celebrations continued and all who used the hall were generous in their praise.



By 1996 the social committee, which had raised almost £5000, took a breather and thereafter social activities dwindled, being confined to the regular 100 Club Draw in May, organised by Mr Tony Warren and an occasional skittles match between Bradley Green and Stock Green.

1997 The Hall got a new sign

In 1999 Mr Reginald T Cocks was appointed Life President in recognition of his 57 years of service on the village hall committee - a remarkable record of service to his community.



Regular Users



ART CLASS - Founders group



DROP IN



CIRCUIT TRAINING



GARDENING CLUB - Plant Sale

The Millennium. At the start of the 21st century social events, once again, are increasing. The New Year's Eve Millennium Party, under Mr Rodney H J Purbrick (Orchard Cottage), chairman of the Millennium Committee, has confirmed the village hall to be Stock & Bradley's most used community asset.

BREAKAWAY - 2000 group

The 2000's At the Millenium the chairman was Tony Warren in May he was succeeded by Rod Purbrick, followed by Clifford Metcalfe in 2003, Mel Bates in 2006 and the current chairman Linda Smith in 2008.

As the new chairman in 2000 Rod Purbrick became Father Christmas making a sleigh ride through the village with the his helper Geoff Briscoe collecting for the children's ward at the AlexandraHospital



Inevitably with a building of this age, the minutes of the management committee meetings tend to read like a building maintenance report.

At the AGM in 2001 the then chairman Mr Rodney H J Purbrick expressed his concern that so much needed doing urgently to the hall including sewerage system, drainage ditches, kitchen , heating, windows furniture external decoration and roof repairs. During the following years most of these have been achieved. In 2002 the Parish Council funded the Millennium window and the provision of a secondary treatment tank to improve the sewerage system. By the AGM of 2004 the heating had been improved with the installation of a new boiler and radiators. 2005 saw the completion of a new extended kitchen and store and by the AGM in April 2006 the original steel windows had ben replaced with double glazed PVC windows.



Before extension

In 2007 damp at the edge of the hall floor caused concern and is currently being resolved.

Fund raising as always has been a priority and in addition to the hall bookings the committee run a Quiz night started, very successfully in 2000 by Andrew Worthington and currently chaired by Alan Smith.



Extension in progress

The 100+ Club, started in 1978, continues to raise funds for the hall and currently has 180 members.

Flying the Flag, started by Kath Richardson in 1992 continued by John Whybrow then Frank Moyes and from 2003 by Peter Collins, charges £5 to fly one of several flags to celebrate special occasions



Extension complete

A skittles match, Stock Green versus Bradley Green, is held annually more for fun than funds; the current holder of the trophy being Bradley Green.



New Kitchen

Events in the hall



'Farewell to the Forest' - 2004



Golden Jubilee - 2002



ART CLASS - Exhibition



BREAKAWAY - Skittles



GARDENING CLUB - Bulb Show



COOL KIDS CLUB give a tea party for retired residents of the Village 4 07