

Round And About In The Parish

The Danehill and Chelwood Gate branch of the British Legion, whilst having a strong connection to what is now The Club@Danehill, used to be closely associated with the Coach and Horses. To raise funds for the local British Legion, an annual fête was held in the field behind the pub.

Celebrities would be asked to open the fete and on one occasion Ronald Shiner, who owned his own pub, The Blackboys Inn, came to perform the opening ceremony and sign autographs. This photo is of him at the fete.



The fêtes were very well attended and at the same time they had a vegetable and fruit show, together with other events to suit everyone.

There were many games for the children, and one was very specific to Danehill. This involved children going to the top of Coach Hill and rolling coconuts down, and the child who got the furthest was declared the winner. For adults there was the normal coconut shy. There was also a children's Fancy Dress Competition.

Craft classes were held and one was for a home-made clay pot. Ray Smith went out into his garden where there was clay, puddled it in water, and formed a round pot. Then, when his mother was out, he baked it in her domestic oven to harden up the pot. When completed Ray filled the round pot with flowers, for which he won first prize.

Jakes Baker (who lived at Danehill) is pictured at the back of the Coach and Horses. He is wearing a tall top hat and there was a competition to knock the hat off his head by throwing soft things at him. I'm not quite sure what exactly was thrown but he was the willing stooge. [



Classes for domestic produce also featured. The competition for the best tasting jam was always hotly contested. Strawberry jam, whilst being one of the most popular, is notoriously difficult to set, its setting time is sporadic to say the least, and the end result is nearly always runny and drips off a spoon at an alarmingly fast rate. Lilac Fruit Farm was a prolific grower of strawberries and this fête occurred in the height of the fruit picking time. Pete Baker was one of the fruit pickers so when she entered the competition she was short of time and used Certo, photo next page, [nothing in the rules to say you can't do this] - the result was the judge said it was the best and she won first prize.

At this time Pete was the Legion's Treasurer and she contacted a local flour mill, The Pride of Sussex Flour Mill, at Robertsbridge and arranged for them to fund the prize money for the Victoria sponge competition . A condition of being eligible for a prize was to place an empty packet of Pride of Sussex Flour under the plate. Whilst now flour is pre-sifted, it was then necessary to sift the flour as it was quite dense. The Mill seems to have closed but it is advertised widely on the side of trains .

Anyone who had a decent sized plot of land grew the variety of gooseberry known as The Leveller. Newick also had their own version of The Leveller



and there was intense rivalry between the two villages. The Leveller is a desert gooseberry which grows to a surprisingly large size and is sweet. Many growers had their own secret recipe to try and ensure their berries were the largest. Gooseberry growing was a major trade in and around Chelwood Gate and Danehill. This photo is from Lilac Fruit Farm. At the show there was a class for the best plate of six gooseberries.



Men were not excluded from the fun activities and there were events for men to race around the field several times [about a mile] and Mo Baker, who lived in the house at the bottom of Coach Hill and ran for the Horsham Blue Star Harriers, started the field off and he then stayed at the back to make sure all was ok.



Just beside the pub is a very large tree and this is where Col. G. Fox [who lived at Infield) presented the prizes. Col. Fox at one time had been Treasurer to the British Legion and took his duties very seriously and this is probably why he was responsible for distributing the prize money.

As might be expected if a fête is held at a pub, someone might get drunk, and this was no exception. It fell to our local policeman, Mr Patten, to deal with this and as there were no police cars in those days, he borrowed a trolley from Bun Baker at Lilac Fruit Farm, put the drunk in it, and somehow got him up to the Beaconsfield Road out of harm's way.

My thanks to Pete Baker,, the late Mary Benson, Peter Richardson, Ray Smith, and Jean Wood.

Jill Rolfe