

## DANEHILL PARISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Model Village which Mr C Joyce Created in Fletching.

Jill Rolfe

For over 25 years Mr Joyce, a Verger at the Parish Church, made model houses in cement. Some took only three or four months to make, whilst others took as long as twelve months. In the late 1940's/early 50's Mr Joyce arranged them in his beautifully laid out rockery garden for visitors to enjoy. He put up a wooden 'thermometer' indicating the target and on the first day raised 28/- (£1.40, a significant sum).

All the models were made in his workshop, including 200 miniature trees to surround the village. Mr Joyce spent many hours cutting out roof tiles of local stone and tiny glass panes for the windows to create an authentic look. So that the display changed constantly, each year he made additional models. There were typical Sussex cottages, copies of French homes and even a hunt waiting outside a model inn.

Surmounting it all was a huge castle on a hill, a model of Dover Castle, which took Mr Joyce 5 months to make. There was of course a model of Fletching Parish Church and the nearby Rose and Crown Inn. To extend interest there was an Elizabethan manor and a model of Shakespeare's birthplace and keen interest was taken by visitors to stones inscribed with verses. Amateur photographers found the model village an excellent subject.

Money donated by visitors to the model village at Mr Joyce's home, Vearth, totaled £177 in 1955 and the previous year he raised £140. All of the money Mr Joyce raised over the years was sent to the Sunshine Home for Blind Babies.

A sign "The village in a village" was the only advertisement to this attraction and thousands of visitors a day in the summer admired the Model village; sometimes there were even six motor coaches a day unloading their holidaymakers to see this attractive feature.

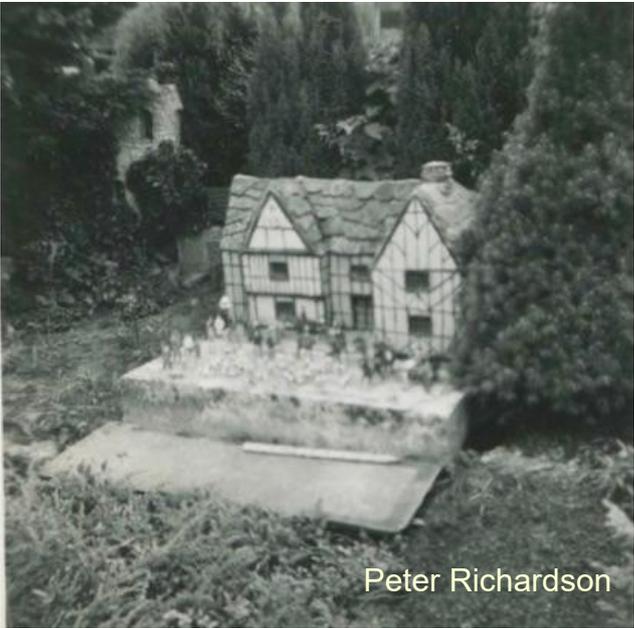
In the corner of a field opposite Mr Joyce's house is where the village scout hut used to stand and more about the scout hut next month.



My thanks to Mr Geoff Isted who very kindly provided me with all this information.

New photos of the village have just been found discovered by Jill. See next page.

Thank you to Peter Richardson for the photos on this page.



Peter Richardson



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