

ROUND AND ABOUT IN THE PARISH.....

Two years ago was given information by Robert Fry about his friend Scan Tester. Sadly Robert died soon after. Scan was born in 1887 at Chelwood Common and was christened Lewis. In 1891 the family settled at Horsted Keynes where Scan's father took the Green Man Public House-he is named as the licensee, but probably Scan's mother had more of a hand in running it. Scan's father had several interests, such as breeding ponies in the garden and running brickfields. He was also a fishmonger. The fish came by train from Brighton and Scan's father sold the fish around the district.



At about the age of five Scan acquired the nickname 'Scantelope' which became shorted to Scan. Robert Fry said that in the early days he was always known to him as Mr Tester, only later as he grew older did he use Scan's first name.

Aged 22 Scan married Fanny Turner, whose sister Amy was his brother's wife. Scan's mother-in-law, Granny Turner, was a baker with a general grocery shop at Chelwood Common and Scan did a variety of jobs for her before he married, including re-lining the bread oven with bricks, delivering bread and picking up lodgers from Forest Row with a pony and trap.

Granny Turner (Fanny) and her husband Frank bought their house which became known as Turners Bakery in 1896. However Frank died intestate in November 1901 so the house and bakery was inherited by their son Alfred, who was 16 years old at the time. Granny Turner carried on the bakery and in November 1909 Alfred, rather generously bequeathed the property to his mother. She carried on the bakery with her daughter, also called Fanny. At some point Scan came on the scene and eventually married young Fanny. Granny Turner continued the bakery until she sold it in 1939 to Percy Smith. This photo, courtesy of Catherine and John Older, is of Granny Turner at her bakery and general store Is the younger lady Fanny later to become Scan's wife?

Whilst still a boy, Scan's first experience of entertaining was at The Green Man, he also played at the Stone Quarry at Chelwood Gate, as well as at the Nutley Arms and the Foresters's at Fairwarp.

Scan's brothers Will and Trayton both played concertinas, whilst his other brother Bert, was a singer.



At Christmas time they would all go out and busk together with his lifetime friend 'Rabbity' Baxter from Chelwood Gate. Photo of Trayton and Scan Tester.

Scan married in 1910 and in 1911 had a daughter, called Daisy, who in later years played the piano.

Scan continued to play almost up to his death. His last public outing was to the Coppersongs Folk Club at Peacehaven, just three weeks before his death. He was taken there by his neighbour and friend Robert Fry. Here he was joined by many of his friends and played throughout the evening. Scan died in 1972 at the age of 85, having achieved many things in his life.

My thanks to the late Robert Fry and his widow, Christine, to Catherine and John Older and to the late Peter Kirby for use of his photos.

Jill Rolfe 740446

Editor's Note

Scan Tester was a very accomplished musician playing Anglo concertina, bandoneon, melodeon and fiddle. He was born in Chelwood Gate, and began his entertainment career aged eight in his father's pub, the Green Man, Horsted Keynes. Later he became well-known and appreciated throughout the region. He made an album (called 'I Never Played to Many Posh Dances') and also gave a concert in the Royal Festival Hall. Between the wars he ran a dance band, which was known as a jazz band because there was a drummer (his wife). For more details see Wikipedia or, for all the detail see the website: <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/tester.htm> . To hear him playing search Scan Tester on YouTube or follow this link if reading on the church website:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KD4ReCiENhE&list=OLAK5uy_mK9H-WYNMKMbNGWHXpmOgFyf8ZNBzyZxA&index=7

