

THE FAME OF THE FAYRE

Due to the Coronavirus crisis the Denham Village Fayre has had to be cancelled this year.

Here is a shortened reprint of an article that was published in July 1970 (fifty years ago) in the first issue of the then newly launched "Denham St Mary's Parish News" - a monthly eight-page newspaper in tabloid format.

It was the Beetle that started it — a beetle that was born in the oak timbers of the Church roof and over the years played havoc with the beams and other woodwork. The Church Council was hard-pressed to meet what was obviously going to be an expensive item.

But undaunted and led by faith, various money-raising ideas were formulated, one of which was a suggestion that a Whitsun Bazaar might be held — but a bazaar with a difference — the stalls being held in the Village street. This made a delightful setting for such an event. So the Beetle Fayre was born and when the financial objective was achieved — as achieved it was — no one thought of dropping the event which has now become a traditional part of the life of the Village. Although it takes a similar pattern year after year no one ever tires of it — in fact every year it seems to attract more and more people. One family who had motored from the North told our representative: "We have never seen anything like this anywhere else."

THE MESSAGE OF THE BELLS

Not a word is spoken when the festivities open — yet the opening ceremony is heard over a far wider area than any loud-speaker system could penetrate. It is "spoken" by the bells of St. Mary's, the parish Church, which ring out to declare that once again the Fayre has started. This year ringers came from all over the country. Not only was their message heard over a wide area but the ringing attracted a number of sightseers. During the afternoon there was a further demonstration of ringing — this time with hand-bells. It is pleasing to note that both kinds of ringing have some quite youthful adherents.

The Church itself was the focal point for a number of activities. During the afternoon Mr. Derek Houghton, the Church organist, gave a recital, thrilling music-lovers with nine selections well chosen for contrast and interest.

The Church was also used to stage exhibitions concerning the Church Army, the Church Missionary Society, the Church of England's Children's Society and one of particular interest showing the work of Sheila and Niall Watson in Kenya. These two Missionaries are agriculturalists who are supported by the Church. Another display which attracted much attention was presented by the Art and Needlework Guild.

A new feature this year was an art show. This was staged in the churchyard and the 150 or so works on view covered

the widest possible variety of subjects. Young artists were able to show their talent in a children's competition which resulted in a separate show containing 120 pictures.

BONNY BABIES

Dr Elmes and Sister P. Kearney of Hillingdon were hard pressed to determine the ultimate winner in a baby competition which attracted 45 entries. Mrs. A. Wilson found the judging of the dog show even more of a problem — the event attracted thirty entries.

Music was provided by the West Wycombe Band and other attractions included model train and donkey rides, pet's corner, and a balloon race. This event is always popular and there was an almost continuous stream of gaily coloured balloons floating "up, up and away" from the stall on the corner of the Village Green. As we go to press over sixty cards have been returned to Mr. Stewart, nearly half of them

from the Continent. The furthest went over 500 miles — well south of Lyons; another in the same general direction went to a village in Switzerland; a third landed in Schleswig Holstein in the extreme north of Germany.

As usual the mile of pennies seemed to have a magnetic fascination and gradually the line grew all along by the wall of Denham Place. Some motorists seemed to think that their contributions constituted a car parking fee!

It was obviously a day which had provided a great deal of enjoyment for some thousands of people, but the sun has to set on even the happiest of days and when at last dusk began to fall the army of cheerful volunteers whose day had begun well before 7.00 a.m., completed their work by cleaning up and restoring the Village street to normality. Mrs. M. Seymour, Chairman of the Organising Committee expressed the views of all her colleagues by saying: "I am most grateful to all for all their hard work both on and before the day."



Photo: R. UDELL