

Claydon with Clattercote Newsletter

Village History Supplement

January 2012

THE CLAYDON FAIR

Continuing the recollections of long standing villagers on life in the village in the recent past.

The annual visit to Banbury Michaelmas Fair was a highlight of the year for many villagers, but a small travelling fair also visited the village during the summer months when the weather was much more favourable.

The Fair was founded by Albert Watkins who was later joined by his two sons. The firm operated for 65 years and was eventually sold in 1953.



Albert Watkins in 1940

Albert started the business by making his own equipment. He built a small Merry-Go-Round which was operated by a man pushing the ride around and this was accompanied by Albert's daughter Sylvia, known as 'Sylv' playing an accordion.



Sylvia Watkins with her accordion

Albert also bought second hand rides via Exchange and Mart. It was based in Sulgrave, but during the summer months it would tour the villages in the area.

The fair was normally set up on village greens, but in Claydon it was sited on the field opposite Lambert's farm buildings in Crossing Lane.

Later the firm acquired a large Carousel which was extremely popular. It was equipped with a barrel organ and it was remembered for playing only one tune entitled "Connie in the Cornfield". After a time this repetition proved to be a source of irritation for one occupant of the cottages which were situated at the entrance to Crossing Lane. Other attractions included Swing Boats, a Coconut Shy, a Rifle Range, Roll-a-Penny and Pony Rides.



The Carousel



Swing Boats in 1948

This field was used rather than the village green as the site needed to accommodate not only the attractions but also the lorries to carry them around and the living quarters for the operators.



A caravan from 1925



One of the lorries in 1950

It is reported that visits to Claydon ceased after one of the lorries broke down and could not be repaired.

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