

EAST FARNDON FETE AND FLOWER FESTIVAL MINUTES 1975-2017.

The village fete in East Farndon has been celebrated for many decades, perhaps even centuries. It used to be known as 'Farndon Feast' and the local paper records the event as far back as Victorian times. In more recent times it has always been referred to as the Fete and normally takes place on a Saturday, within a few days of 24th June, St. John the Baptist's day, the church being dedicated to St John.

The minutes (which start in 1975, but with a gap during 1977) show that numerous people gave immense amounts of time and effort to plan and set up a successful event. Possible bad weather had to be anticipated, with stalls moving under cover, perhaps into the church. Marquees needed to be borrowed or bought, volunteers rounded up to man the stalls and games and possible extra attractions, such as a visiting band or a dog show, had to be booked and organised.

As you read through these minutes, you will notice how often the same names crop up, often year after year. As the years moved on and the stalwarts got older, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, they felt they could no longer devote the same energy as in previous years and the Fete became a shorter event, centred round a barbecue and a small number of stalls. At that time, there were no new and younger villagers who had offered to take over. However there was a renewed drive to re-establish the Fete in its full form when, to the relief of the 'old brigade', younger organisers emerged to take over in the years following the period covered by these minutes. Even this renaissance was short-lived, however, because of the Covid pandemic, which caused the event to be suspended in 2020 and 2021. The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 saw a much larger-scale event staged over several days. What the future may be is not clear at present (late 2022).

The Flower Festival was staged in alternate years through the second half of the 1970s to the 1990s, with the last one being staged in 2000, to mark the new millennium. It was held in September as a rule, with flower arrangements in the church illustrating a particular theme. The event was held over a weekend, usually with a concert as part of the festival, as well as a special service. The Flower Festival is not part of the earliest sets of minutes, which only deal with the Fete.

Below are some photographs to illustrate some of the events mentioned in the minutes.



A general view of the 2002 Fete



The Fete raised funds for the church and the raffle was an important way of raising money. Here in 2016, Cameron Fraser announces that Liz Thake has come forward with the winning ticket.



In 1985 the weather forced the plant stall down to Farrar Farm. Liz Frisby and her daughter (left) and Sonya Fraser (right).



At the shortened version of the Fete in 2015 (30 years after the previous picture) Sonya Fraser is still running the plant stall. Here she is talking to Bob Boucher.



The Bric-a-brac stall in 2013. Julie Booker is selling and Adrian Hill may or may not be buying.



The bottle stall in 2015 was manned by Mark Biggin. David and Pat Evans are hoping to buy a lucky ticket.



The Corby Silver Band were frequently part of the celebrations. This was in 2002.



2013 was one of the years when a dog show was among the attractions.



Cathy Williams ready to serve tea in 2006



A barbecue was part of the shortened Fete in 2015. Liz Thake and Ollie Boucher prepare to serve the salad.



The Joanne Woodcock School of Dance put on a performance in 1984.



There were always plenty of games to test your skills, such as Skittles, here in 2006 with Jim Grant in charge.



Here in 2013 Guy Knox-Holmes tries to avoid touching the the wire, watched by his father Brent.



The 'Aunt Sally' needed a brave volunteer to be the victim. This action shot is from 2006.

Below is the programme of the Flower Festival of 1993, with its theme of the four seasons.

CHURCH OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST EAST FARNDON

FLOWER FESTIVAL 1993

'The Four Seasons'

Friday 10th to Sunday 12th of September



Welcome to Saint John the Baptist Church

Arrangements

1. An introduction to Spring.	Sheila Buttress and Diane Peacock
2. Mothering Sunday.	Diane Peacock
3a. Palm Sunday.	Sheila Buttress
3b. Good Friday.	Judy Weeks
4. Easter Day.	Judy Weeks
5. and 6. A late Spring Evening.	Liz Gowling
7. May Day.	Sheila Buttress, Judy Weeks and Diane Peacock
8. Ascension Day.	Mary West
9. and 10. The Cross of all Seasons.	Marjory Houlston
11. Saint Swithin.	Joan Pratt
12. The Sabbath Day.	Aileen Clifford and Mary West
13. Nearer to God's Heart.	Aileen Clifford
14. and 15. Saint John the Baptist.	Ollie Boucher
16. and 17. Summer Holidays.	Ollie Boucher
18. Village Cricket.	Ollie Boucher
19. Back to School.	Sheila Fox
20. Summers Bounty.	Sheila Fox
21. Natures Store Cupboard.	Pam Donoghue
22. Mist and Mellow Fruitfulness.	Pam Donoghue
23. Autumn Glory.	Pam Donoghue
24. Thanks Giving.	Margaret Gadd
25. Harvest Festival.	Margaret Gadd
26. Bonfire Night.	Gretta Grove
27. Remembrance.	Joy Hirst
28. Christmas Cheer.	Jane Sadler
29. Epiphany.	Gretta Grove
30. Winterland.	Gretta Grove
31. Evergreen.	Gretta Grove
32. Promise of Spring.	Gretta Grove

**PROGRAMME OF CHURCH SERVICES
AND OTHER EVENTS**

FRIDAY 10th SEPTEMBER

The Festival opens at 7.30 pm with a concert of 'WORDS and MUSIC by JO and DAVID' Admission by ticket or at the door Adults £2.00 Children £1.00 to include coffee and biscuits.

SATURDAY 11th SEPTEMBER

The Church is open from 10.00 am to 6.30 pm. Refreshment tent opens for coffee at 11.00 am. Teas and stalls from 2.30 pm to 5.30 pm. Braybrook Morris Dancers will perform during the afternoon.

SUNDAY 12th SEPTEMBER

The day opens with a FAMILY SERVICE at 11.00 am., everyone is welcome to join us. During the afternoon there will be teas and stalls from 2.30 pm to 5.00 pm. The Festival closes with SONGS of PRAISE at 6.30 pm., once again visitors are most welcome.

All proceeds are in aid of the Church Funds.

The following photographs show some of the beautiful arrangements from various years.





Alan Langley
July 2023