

FILED

18th April, 1953.

April 22, 1953.

The Paganhill Maypole and Village Fair

It is very difficult to give any definite information abt the Paganhill Village Fair as no records have been kept. We do know however there has been a Maypole on the Village Green for abt 200 years except for a very short period when after an accident when erecting ~~the~~ one of the poles the then Squire of the Manor would not allow a new pole to be erected.

The villagers however were not going to be without their Maypole for long and took the matter into their own hands. One night they stole a tree from Pen Woods and erected the pole on the Green - an act for which they suffered imprisonment. But there has been a pole ever since.

Fisher in his recollections of Stroud mentions this and tells how the villagers elected a Mayor each year, and how he was taken to the village pond in a chair where he douched everyone near him with water.

This happened on each Whit-Monday and there was general merry-making. ~~but there~~ Every house was thrown open to visitors and much cider was consumed. But there does ~~it~~ not appear to have been any organised arrangements and there is no record when the last Fair of this description was held.

Paganhill people are very proud of their Maypole and when it has been taken down for painting or to be replaced it has been the custom to have a collection to raise the money needed, as the work is all done voluntary and much of the material used is gifts. It meant that there was usually a good balance over which provided teas or some other form of entertainment for the old people of the village.

Maypole 2.

It was the second World War which brought about the revival of The Mayors Show and Village Fair, a committee was set up to raise money for the Welcome Home Fund. It was through this Committee that the idea of holding an election for a Mayor came about and this was the means of raising over £1,000 for the Forces Fund.

It was never intended to make this an annual event, but as they were so popular and brought people from all over Glo'shire, The

Maypole Village Hall Committee have held two such fairs since the war to raise funds for a new village hall and it is possible that one will be held next year (1954)

There can be no comparison between old time events and those of present times. Stalls are erected in the village street, there is a carnival with the Mayor, Mayoress, Aldermen, Town Crier etc heading the carnival procession, open-air dancing, skittles and refreshments such as hot dogs and baked potatoes. The Mayor at the last fair in 1950 was put on trial to prove that he was worthy to hold Office before he was again inaugurated. This was done with much ceremony and toasting.

The present pole which was first erected in 1928 was brought down on Sat. April 18th 1953 to be repainted for the Coronation, but unfortunately will not be put up again as there are several decayed patches in it. A new pole will be obtained for the Coronation when there will again be dancing community singing and stalls erected around the pole.

The present pole is 91 feet long and we hope to purchase one at least the same length. It is reputed to be one of the longest in the country without any supports and there is little doubt that while Paganhill has its Maypole there will always be that community spirit which exists between the people which exists in more remote villages, even though Paganhill is now surrounded by Council estates and will be even more so in the near future.