

A Summer's Day to Remember!

In last year's *Emsworth's Echo* I wrote about those fortunate agricultural workers who benefited from financial awards offered by the South East Hants Association in the nineteenth century.

The story continues. Charles Osborn, founder and secretary to the Association, farmed on Hayling Island and Fareham and was a regular visitor to the Chichester cattle market. It was there that he announced that he proposed giving premiums to three of the most worthy labourers in the locality and he duly did this in 1835 at the dinner which followed the Christmas Fat Stock Show. This was chaired by the Duke of Richmond who enthusiastically supported Osborn's idea of a society which rewarded labourers of outstanding character and husbandry skills at an annual meeting at which livestock were not to be judged.

The West Sussex Agricultural Association was formed and held its first annual meeting in September 1836. Osborn, a committee member from Hampshire, saw the opportunity to benefit his labourers and those who worked for his neighbours. He argued that potential candidates, who met the society's criteria of regular church attendance, of being self-sufficient as far as their circumstances allowed and who stayed away from the beerhouses, should be drawn from within a 20 mile radius of Chichester. This area included the parishes of Warblington and North and South Hayling.

Awards to labourers of Warblington tended to be given to those "whose cottages and gardens, consisting of not more than half an acre, shall be kept and cultivated in the neatest manner and the general appearance of whose crops shall be most satisfactory to the judges".

George Bolton, John Durrall or Durrell, William Eames, Thomas Garnett, Thomas Tickner and John Westbrook, were awarded prizes of 10s. to £1. 5s. Od. between the years 1839 to 1843.

Winners of other classes were:-

Maria Harden, awarded the only prize of £3 in 1859 for "the female agricultural servant who had been in service the longest period and had voluntarily afforded most material support to her relatives".

William Redman, 2nd prize of £3 in 1859 for "married labourer or widower who had been in employment for the longest period and who either voluntarily supported their parents or made provision for old age".

G. Sparkes, employer not named, 1st prize of £5 for "labourers who have supported the largest family with the smallest amount of parish relief since 1826" in 1837.

Thomas Tee, took the first prize of £3 in 1837 and 2nd prize of £2 in the sheep shearing competition in 1839.

William Tickner, aged 59, employer not named, in 1838 1st prize of £5 for "the labourer who previous to his marriage had made best provision for his future life. He had saved £45 of which £35 was in a savings bank and £10 in his master's hands, had worked on the same farm for 23 years and was 29 when he married". In 1840 he won 15s. in the cottage and garden competition.

Thomas Tipper, in 1847 — 1st prize of £3 for "the labourer over 40 and under 55 years who had brought up their family respectably and had retained their services for the longest time and had the best character".

William Tipper, in 1847, 2nd prize of £3 for "labourer 55 years and upwards who had brought up their family respectably and had retained their services for the longest time and had the best character"

Mary Welch, 2nd prize of £2 in 1859 for "female agricultural servant who had been in service for the longest period and had made provision for sickness or old age".

It is regrettable that the secretary of the West Sussex Society failed to provide, for posterity, the newspaper with personal details which justified the awards, unlike his Hampshire counterpart Charles Osborn. These prizes were given out to the men at the annual award ceremony which was held in early summer, after the hay harvest. As was the custom women, unless they were the wives of the president or members of his committee, were excluded from these annual celebrations but were given 2s. 6d. (25p) in lieu.

The Hampshire Telegraph & Sussex Chronicle sometimes provided descriptions of the day at Goodwood Park. From the outset, both the duke of Richmond and Osborn were determined that proper respect should be shown to the labourers by sitting with them in the same room for a really good meal. Other societies had merely invited winners into the dining room, given them the award and dismissed them without any food or drink. The duke, his guests, farmers and clergy sat at one long table and the labourers, with a local farmer, at the other. The lunch was a jolly occasion when men from Warblington could meet kinsmen or friends from surrounding parishes and exchange gossip.

An address was made to the men by the president and then cash prizes were given out, accompanied by a certificate. Following the prize giving the winners left and, it is assumed, went home along the winding, dusty country lanes in transport provided by their employers. It really would have been a summer's day to remember!

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