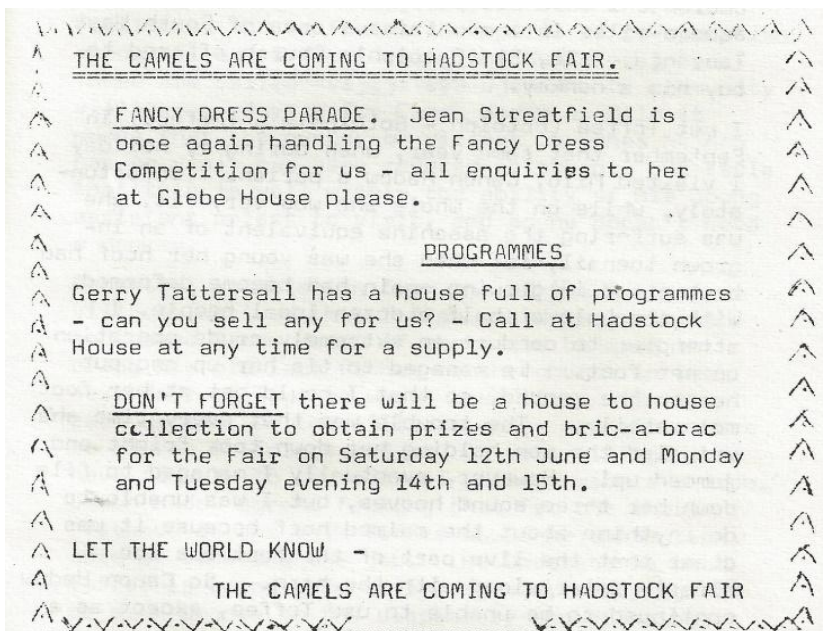


Hadstock Fair June 1976.

The Day of the Camels

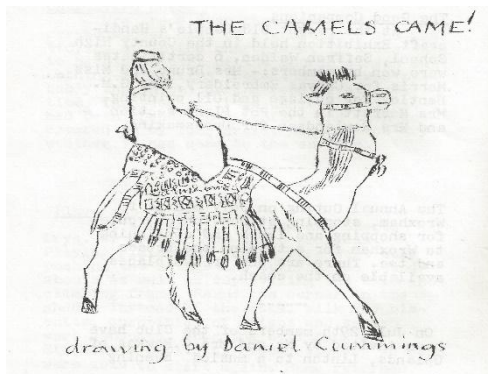
Hadstock had been granted the right to hold a fair way back before the Norman Conquest. In the 1950's a few small fetes were held in the Rectory garden (now Hadstock House) and in 1965 the Fete became a regular event held on the Saturday nearest St Botolph's Day. In 1976 the church needed major and costly repairs, at least £50,000, and it was decided the fete would be rebranded Hadstock Fair with an ambitious programme of attractions on the Recreation Ground.

Headlining was the Camel Racing. The camels were hired from Chipperfields and ridden by local teams. As well as various sideshows there were some inter-village competitions – Tug-o-War, Pram Racing and Tossing the Sheaf. There was a combined Little Walden and Hadstock team.



from Hadstock Magazine June 1976

1976 had been exceptionally dry until that is the 19th June, the day of the Fair, when it rained all day. The Rector, Michael Yorke, in his letter in the Magazine the following month noted that 'the beer tent was crowded', not surprising. The camels were at first a bit lethargic but eventually got going by race 4



from Hadstock Magazine July 1976

When the Camels came - Anne Streatfield

It was a wet, dull day when the camels came. In the morning everybody was busy getting their own sidestalls ready. Daddy was selling raffle tickets. I looked all over the field but I could not see any camels then in one corner above all the people I saw a lump of hair, so I rushed over to the lump and there on the ground lay three damp camels. I felt a bit sorry for them, after all they probably were not used to this climate.

After lunch I went with Mummy to help with the Fancy Dress. There were lots of very good costumes. By now it was starting to rain a bit more. The next event was: the first camel race. As it was the main attraction, practically everyone was there. The camels did not go very fast, one in particular, so a man hit it on the backside with a stick, (poor thing) and off it went.

Later on there was a tug-o-war it was rather amusing watching the people slipping on the soggy ground. In between times I had a go on the sideshows, they were very good. Some while after that, there was Tossing the Sheaf, I thought the people must be very strong to lift the sack of corn, I knew I could not, let alone with a pitch fork. During the afternoon, there was several camel races, eventually won by U.T.P. By then it was raining quite hard so people were starting to go home. I stayed on a bit, so I went down to see the camels and I was allowed to lead one into its feeding place. That evening my parents want to a dance, they said 'it was very good.

I thought the day had been well worth it even though it had rained.

from Hadstock Magazine July 1976

The net profit from the Fair was £1594.05. Hiring the camels cost £350, entry fees for the races raised £150 and camel rides £12.13.

There was a lovely letter from Anne Streatfield published in the July 1976 Hadstock Magazine which sums up the day and a drawing of a racing camel by Daniel Cummings— despite the rain a great time was had by all.

Some other contributions from the children:

Rebecca Neale:- “It was fun but the camels were messy – and were smelly”.

Sally:- “It was nice – shame it rained.”

Tina:- “Ever so good – the camels made it nice because it was unusual.”

Paul:- “It was funny because the camels can go so funny.”

Mark Donaldson:- “I had 21 goes on the crockery – it was fun to break it. I liked the way the camels sat with their double jointed legs.”

To the commentator:- “ ‘Ere mate, you from the B.B.C.?”