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# Pageant of Sport

ABINGER COMMON, SURREY



SATURDAY, JUNE 7th, 1952

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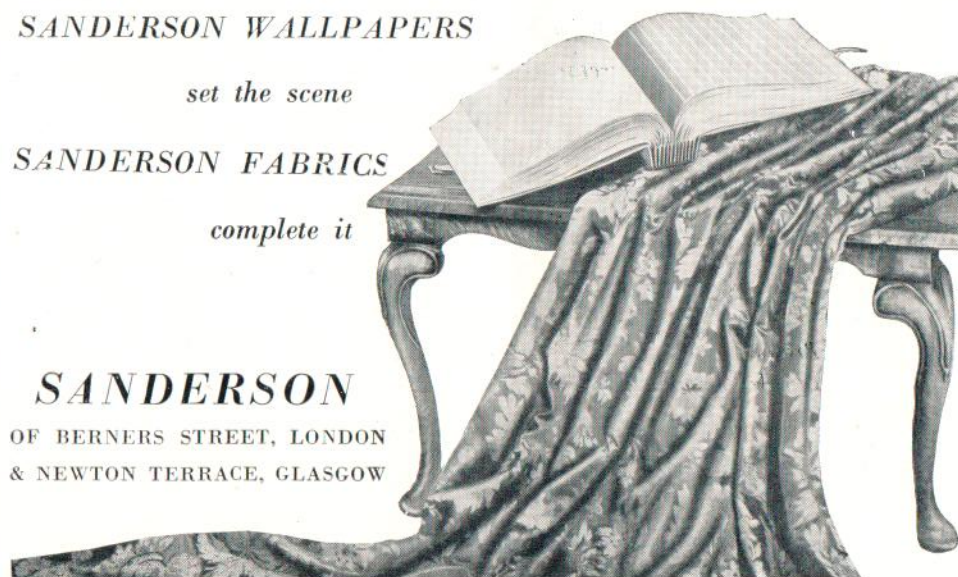
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## Pageant of Sport

*(In aid of the rebuilding of Abinger Church  
after destruction by enemy action)*

SATURDAY, JUNE 7th, 1952

Written and devised by.....Charlton Abbott

Production by.....Nance Chapman and Charlton Abbott

Dances .....Nance Chapman

Music.....David Holmes

Mistress of the Robes .....Mrs. N. Hamilton

### COMMITTEE

*Chairman:* THE REVD. CLIFFORD CHAPMAN, Ph.D.

*Hon. Secretary:* MRS. ALAN C. ABBOTT

*Pageant.* Mrs. Chapman, Miss A. King, Mr. A. C. Abbott.

*Refreshments.* Mrs. Archer.

*Side Shows.* Mr. and Mrs. O'Donaghue, Mr. Witcher.

*Publicity.* Mr. N. Hamilton.

*Seat Reservations.* Mr. F. Roberts.

*Produce Stalls.* Mrs. Pratt-Barlow, Mrs. R. McInnes,  
Mrs. McLelland.

*Cake Stall.* Mrs. A. Carr, Mrs. R. Seal, Mrs. I. Borman.

*Carnival Stall.* Lady Stewart, Mrs. Nicholson, Mrs.  
Witcher.

*Ground Committee.* Mr. R. Woods, Mr. A. Randall.

## AROUND THE VILLAGE GREEN

You may wonder why a little village like Abinger should put on a "Pageant of Sport." So far as we know, Abinger has produced none of the great names which resound in the annals of sport. No young Dr. Grace has smashed our windows with massive leg drives from the village cricket pitch; we have raised no Joe Becketts to battle their way to fame in the boxing arenas of the world. We are just an ordinary village, meeting round its village green. We do feel, however, that it is just the ordinary English villages which have, on their village green, given the world the many sports and games which it enjoys to-day.

The village green has always been the focal point for sport, as indeed it is for village life in general. It was here that our great national games of Cricket and Football were born and were developed. It was the place where all could play from childhood until the onward creeping years and the rheumatics made the role of a spectator more pleasant. Under its trees and outside its inn the old men could sit and tell each other how much better the game was played in their day.

To-day the great towns are slowly swallowing up our countryside, and our villages, if they can manage it, prefer to call themselves towns and behave as such. The town despises the village green, and the majority of town-dwellers never have the chance, or perhaps the desire, to play games. We are fast becoming a nation of games watchers rather than games players.

Now, Abinger lies in the centre of the greatest and, we claim, the most lovely and freely accessible district near London. Through its woods and along its roads and paths, stream, every week-end, a vast host of hikers, bicyclists, scouts and lovers of the open air. All around us are villages, each boasting its cricket and its football club, meeting each week-end to do battle with some rival. There is hunting and beagling; there is shooting and fishing. Even the rarer pastimes of archery and stool ball flourish amongst us.

So we feel we are a centre for those that want to play themselves and not merely to watch others playing, and this is our apology for putting on a "Pageant of Sport." In it we shall try to show, in their historical settings, many of our famous sports and pastimes.

All our players are amateurs who have given their time to make what we venture to hope may be a pleasant and amusing afternoon for you. To them and for their enthusiasm we tender our sincerest thanks.



# THE PROGRAMME

## PROLOGUE by David Holmes

### SCENE I: MEDIEVAL

- (a) *Falconry*.....*Members of the Abinger Pony Club*  
(b) *The Sports of Archery, Wrestling, Single Stick*.....*Guildford Youth Club*

This scene opens with a party of Norman nobles HAWKING in one of the many great forests that covered England. Hawking was a sport entirely reserved to the nobility and was largely practised by ladies. The Hawk was carefully trained to fly at Game, and was carried on a gloved fist.

Archery, which forms the second part of this scene, found one of its most romantic exponents in Robin Hood. The strict game laws which the Norman overlords enforced to protect the game in their forests were undoubtedly bitterly resented by the Saxon peasant. Whilst the Norman Lord pursued the game on horseback and killed with his spear, the Saxon peasant filled his larder with the silent and swifter arrow. The bow, and particularly the Longbow, to which the English were greatly attached, proved its value as a weapon of war at such notable battles as Crecy and Agincourt, and it became compulsory for all Englishmen who were fit and healthy to have a bow in their possession and available for use in his sovereign's behalf, should need arise.

WRESTLING and SINGLE STICK are very old sports amongst Englishmen.



### SCENE II: ELIZABETHAN

- (a) *Bowls and Skittles*.....*Members of the Abinger Bowls Club*  
(b) *Chess*.....*Ladies and Gentlemen of Abinger and Children of Abinger Hammer School*  
(c) *Country Dancing*.....*Ladies and Gentlemen of Abinger and Children of Abinger Common School (Trained by Miss Gore)*

The earliest mention of BOWLS occurs in the thirteenth century. Only two bowls were used, small triangular markers being bowled at from each end in turn. It was not until the fourteenth century that the "jack," or object ball appears.

The game of SKITTLES is closely allied with nine-pins. Its ancient name was Kayle Pins, derived from the French word "quills." Some of the earlier forms of skittle pins were sheep's bones. Both Bowls and Skittles were, in the Middle Ages, played by women.

The country dances, of which one of the most important was the *Maypole*, have long been a feature of English life. The May Day celebrations are of Pagan origin.

The origins of CHESS are lost in obscurity. It is known to have been played by King Canute and William of Normandy. The chessboard appears to have been the same as to-day.



### SCENE III: SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

- (a) *Stool Ball*.....*Miss Brooker & Friends*  
(b) *Minuet*.....*Shirley Munro*  
(c) *The Duel*.....*Members of the Guildford Fencing Club*

The scene opens with the ancient game of STOOL BALL, a game still carried on in this county. The original form of this game appears to have been played by women, as a kind of French cricket, with a milk stool as wicket.

The duel shown is Sword and Dagger.



### SCENE IV: EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

- Boxing*.....*Members of the Surrey Constabulary, Ladies and Gentlemen of Westcott*

Britain is the home of boxing and it is one of our oldest sports. The rules as we understand them were introduced about 1740 and early fights were with bare fists.



### SCENE V: EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

- Children at Play* ..... *Patricia Faure (Singer),  
Veronica and Heather Harrison,  
Children of Abinger*

Some of the earliest children's rhymes date back to 1728, when an unidentified author wrote the "Nurses' Song," regretting some characteristics of young children.

A little later such nursery rhymes as "Boys and Girls come out to play," "Jacky Horner" and "This Pig went to Market" came into being.



## SCENE VI: VICTORIAN

- (a) *The Seaside*.....*Ladies and Gentlemen of Abinger,  
Children of Abinger Common School*
- (b) *Tennis and Croquet*.....*Lady Touche & Friends  
1st Holmbury St. Mary Guide Company*
- (c) *Cricket*.....*Gentlemen of Abinger*
- (d) *Football*.....*Holmbury St. Mary Football Club*

*Nineteenth Century.* We now pass on to what was perhaps the heyday of British sport. Swimming has always been a sport pre-eminent amongst us, and is mentioned by as early a writer as Piers Plowman. Tennis, as we understand it to-day, is generally supposed to have originated from the indoor or real tennis. Cricket originated from club-ball, and MSS. of the fourteenth century shows a man with a bat being bowled at and surrounded by figures (once again of both sexes) who are obviously fielders. Wickets were not used until the early eighteenth century.

Football was very popular in the fourteenth century, and an edict of Edward III prohibited it as impeding Archery, then considered the most vital exercise. Shrove Tuesday has been, and still is, the day when massed football was played in a number of towns and villages throughout the land.

Croquet is the direct descendant of the old game of Pall Mall, from which comes the name of the London Street. Pall Mall came from France in the early seventeenth century, being played with mallets and balls on a similar principle to croquet.



## EPILOGUE: FOLLOWED BY—

- (1) *Modern Stoolball — Coldharbour Stoolball Team.*
- (2) *Modern Fencing — Miss Gibson's School of  
Fencing, Godalming.*
- (3) *International Folk Dancing by Members of the  
Society for International Folk Dancing.*

The dances planned are the WEGGIS (Switzerland), NEOPOLITAN TARANTELLA (Italy), WINDMILL (Germany), SCHOTTISCHE (Sweden), KARAPYET (Russia).

- (4) *Square Dancing — by Guildford Youth Clubs, led  
by Mr. T. O. Pope.*

Spectators are invited to take part on payment of One Shilling.



# THE ABINGER STORY

The oldest residence in Abinger dates back to about 8000 B.C. It is a Stone Age pit dwelling, discovered a few hundred yards west of the Church in 1950. A hundred yards or so from the Church is a mound and a moat, which was an early Norman fort. On the top of the mound there was a stockade. Next to this "strong point" there was, no doubt, the first manor house. The Manor is still there.

The Church may have been originally built, probably of wood, in Saxon times. It is mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and the nave was certainly early Norman. The list of Rectors dates from 1286 when, on 28th April, Richard Fulvenne, son of Reginald, was instituted. There is a farm on the Sutton-Abinger road named Fulven's.

The earliest entry in the old Church registers is of a baptism: "Lawrence Dayre, son of Matthew Dayre, was baptized the xxiii day of Aprill, 1559." There are many interesting records, such as that of the burial of "John Marsh, a noted travelling hog-ringer," on 12th July, 1730, and that of the baptism on 29th April, 1758, of "Samuel, base born son of Jane, the wife of Robert Lane who was transported 3 or 4 years ago."

At one time the Tillingbourne Valley was an industrial area. The Hammer ponds were used in the iron industry, hence the name Abinger Hammer. The record of the burial on 4th December, 1600, of "William, a Stranger, which did worke att the Hamer Mill," shows that the stream was used for power. There are still one or two mills along the valley.

On 3rd August, 1944, at 8 a.m., a flying bomb exploded near the Church. The blast brought down the belfry, the roof of the nave, and parts of the walls. The organ and almost all the furnishings were destroyed. Only the thirteenth-century chapel remained more or less intact. The restoration of the Church was entrusted to F. Etchells, Esq., F.R.I.B.A., who, from old etchings and photographs, etc., was able to reconstruct it as it was before the bomb damage occurred. The builders were Messrs. Trollope and Colls.

The restored Church was consecrated by the Lord Bishop of Guildford on Whit Sunday, 1951. When the interior is completed the Church will be worthy of its purpose and the natural beauty of its surroundings, 551 feet above sea level on the slopes of the highest hill in Surrey.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The organisers of the Pageant wish to express their gratitude to the many people in Abinger and elsewhere who have helped with the making of costumes and equipment, and by gifts of goods and money. In particular, it is desired to mention G. Comper & Sons, of Shere, for the loan of the public address equipment; Mr. E. D. G. Matthews, of Manor Farm, for the loan of a horse and bathing machine; Messrs. W. & G. King, for the provision of the stage; Messrs. Slazenger's Ltd., for an autographed cricket bat; and Captain Horton, Bailiffs' Keep, for assistance with art work.



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*A quiverful — the Victorian family in the Abinger pageant.  
[T. A. Wilkie.  
Photo]*

THE ambitious Pageant of Sport staged at Abinger Common on Saturday cost less than £100 to produce. Four months ago the idea had not even been put on paper.

The pageant was a great success, and with a fete and competitions, helped the fund for rebuilding and refurbishing the parish church, which was severely damaged by a flying bomb in 1944. Gross takings were nearly £500.

Man behind the pageant was Mr. followed into the arena a cleverly constructed shoe-house, drawn by a cart-horse. "The Old Woman who Lived in a Shoe" and other nursery rhymes were sung by Patricia Faure, accompanied by Veronica and Heather Harrison, and mimed by the children.

#### "HEYDAY OF SPORT"

Lastly came the Victorian age, which the programme described as perhaps the heyday of British sport, and also with its tradition, dignity, class distinctions, and decorum. There were plenty of laughs at the gentle fun poked at our grandfathers and grandmothers. This scene was presented by men and women of Abinger and children of Abinger Common School. Then dignified tennis (Lady Touche and friends) and croquet (1st Holmbury St. Mary Girl Guides) were followed by a "slow motion" and comical football match by Holmbury St. Mary F.C. The Victorian scene closed with the greatest of all English games—"that manly sport"—cricket, played by "whiskered" men of Abinger.

#### APPRECIATION

After the epilogue the whole company paraded and received well-deserved appreciation from the audience.

The pageant was arranged by a committee under the chairmanship of the Rector (the Rev. Clifford Chapman), with Mrs. Alan C. Abbott as secretary. Production was by Nance Chapman and Mr. Abbott, dances by Nance Chapman, music by David Holmes and mistress of the robes, Mrs. N. Hamilton. Many of the costumes were designed by Mrs. Abbott, and Miss A King was also one of the principal pageant helpers. There were, of course, many others who contributed towards the success of the afternoon. During the evening there were displays by Coldharbour stoolball team Miss Gibson's School of Fencing (Godalming), and members of the Society for International Folk Dancing. Square dancing, in which any one was invited to take part, was led by Guildford Youth Club, with Mr. T. O. Pope as caller.

#### ON VILLAGE GREEN

The scene was the Village Green—the scene of village sport—in the natural beauty of this unspoilt corner of the Surrey countryside. Nearby is the old Parish Church on the slopes of the highest hill in Surrey, and now showing no sign of its war-time damage.

For 90 minutes between two and three thousand people watched a picture of colour and movement on the village Green as Elizabethans, Georgians, and Victorians strode the turf.

They had done years before. The organisers took great pains to make a whole picture as authentic as possible, and it was this eye for detail that contributed a great deal to the pageant's undoubted success.

Two heralds in white, with gleaming surcoats, preceded on to a central stage the Spirit of Sport (David Holmes), who delivered the prologue, and throughout the pageant he spoke the dramatic narrative from "behind the scenes."

#### BIN HOOD AND HIS MERRY MEN

First came the medieval scene with a ancient sport, of falconry, presented by members of Abinger Pony Club, followed by the romantic heroes of Sherwood Forest. The appearance of Robin Hood, who sent an arrow straight into space over the trees, was the signal for a rollicking entry of the Merry Men in Lincoln Green.

This was Stoughton Youth Club's contribution, and they demonstrated sports of archery (there were three "bulls" from 30 paces), wrestling, and single-stick. During a wrestling match Lee Sewell broke his collarbone, and Jack Page sprained a wrist.



*A quaintful — the Victorian family in the Abinger pageant.  
[T. A. Witte.]*



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Man behind the pageant was Mr. followed into the arena a cleverly constructed shoe-house, drawn by a cart-tural merchant in London, who has horse. "The Old Woman who Lived in made his home in Abinger for 16 years, a Shoe" and other nursery rhymes Mr. Abbott, who had seen only two pageants in his life, began to devise and write the pageant in February, and this was his first attempt of its kind.

Men and women of Abinger and organisations from the district—a cast of nearly 200—took part. Some of the costumes had to be hired, but most of them were home-made and beautifully done.

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#### BOWLS, SKITTLES, CHESS

On to the Elizabethan era and the more serene bows and skittles, country dancing, and chess. The last-mentioned was outstanding in presentation. A chequered cloth was spread on the ground, and children of Abinger Hammer School, dressed to represent chess pieces, acted a game between Good Queen Bess and a nobleman. Others in the Elizabethan scene included members of Abinger Bowling Club and children of Abinger Common School (trained by Miss Gore).

Stool ball, displayed by Miss Brooker and friends, a delicate minuet by Shirley Munro, and a realistic-looking sword and dagger duel by members of Guildford Fencing Club were chosen as popular sports and pastimes of the 17th century.

Two men of Surrey Constabulary gave a bout of bare-knuckle boxing, and men and women of Westcott were supporters and onlookers in this 18th-century episode.

The early 19th century was represented by a charming group of children at play. Children of Abinger

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# VILLAGE TO STAGE 'HUMAN CHESS'

THE STAR—PAGE 3

"Star" Reporter

## A BINGER COMMON,

a straggling Surrey village near Dorking, is

preparing to transform its village green for one day into a sports arena.

Nearly everyone in the village, which stands on the side of Leith Hill, a beauty spot, is helping to

prepare costumes and scenery for the villagers' Parade of Sport.

With it they hope to attract 5,000 visitors on June 7 to raise money for the restoration of the lovely Norman village church.

There will be a human chess match with villagers in costume acting as chess pieces on a huge chess board painted on the ground, a cricket match of 1850

and a Victorian bathing belle in a bathing machine.

The bathing belle is to be one of the village girls who has kept a secret.

Two police boxers from Leatherhead will give a display of bare-knuckle fighting.

There will be displays of football, wrestling and "stool-ball," the ancient village game which preceded cricket.

The displays will be of every sport popular throughout the ages since medieval days. A

Chelsea pensioner is cycling from London on a penny-farthing to the show.



SMART SET. — Dressed for tennis in the height of late Victorian fashion these partners were at Abinger Common, Surrey, where they took part in a "Pageant of English Sports through the Ages."