When we went down Hopping, Hopping down in Kent - 2016

Even more memories of Hopping down in Kent by residents and staff of Tower Hamlets Community Housing produced to celebrate the 2016 THCH Hop Festival in Cable Street, Shadwell

Sponsored by westpac
Foreword

I am delighted to write a few words for this year’s booklet. All being well, I will be attending the Hop Festival again this year. If previous occasions are anything to go by, I will enjoy another lovely event in the company of local people and the ever-helpful and cheerful staff of Tower Hamlets Community Housing.

This year’s Festival is particularly poignant, being Mike Tyrrell’s last one as Chief Executive of THCH. As I said in a recent letter to him regarding his departure, it has been an enormous privilege to know Mike and to work with him over so many years. As much as it is difficult to imagine THCH without Mike at the helm, he certainly deserves some relaxation: working in the housing sector in Tower Hamlets is a considerable challenge to even the most good-natured and hardworking of individuals!

I have seen photos of Mike with family and friends in Kent, during the hopping period, and photos even further back, showing relatives of his from earlier years, on the farm, or in the tin huts. Some depict the work, whilst others show them relaxing at dinner time. People really squeezed everything out of the experience – bearing in mind the fact that hard work was involved in this break from their everyday hard work back in London.

Mike’s face in those photos says it all. He is ‘of’ this community. The Hop Festival is his festival as much as everyone else’s. As I said in my recent letter to him, ‘good luck, Mike, and thank you – for your heart-and-soul commitment to the people of East London. No-one cares or has cared more than you.

Jim Fitzpatrick
MP for Poplar & Limehouse

Photos from the 2015 THCH Hop Festival
Introduction

Today is our tenth Annual Hop Festival.

Up till about 50 years ago, early September in the East End of London meant it was time to go hop picking for a working holiday. It is thought that as many as 200,000 people – mostly women and children – made the journey down to Kent to help with the hop harvest. Many of them would return to the same farms, year after year and generation after generation. By the 1960s, however, the exodus had begun to decline, due in part to mechanisation and the increasing job opportunities for women in London.

THCH has been celebrating the annual hop picking journeys with its residents for some years now, and this Hop Festival has become the biggest community event in Shadwell, involving residents from around the wider THCH area, together with specially invited guests.

THCH CEO, Mike Tyrrell, has written about "hopping" and what it meant to East End families in the booklet for an earlier festival, and if you would like a copy of that booklet just contact the THCH Community Development team.

Mike is leaving THCH on Friday 9 September, and so today is an opportunity for guests to say their goodbyes and thankyous to a man who has symbolised all that THCH has stood for since 2000.

At each of our festivals we have had an exhibition of old hopping photos. In the week commencing 21st September 2016, the exhibition will be on show at our offices at 285 Commercial Road, Stepney, London E1 2PS. We are always looking for more photos to add to the exhibition. If you have any you can add to our collection of hop picking photographs, please contact the Community Development Team on 020 7780 3076, and they can make an appointment for you to come in so that she can copy the photographs will you wait.

Finally I would like to thank Westpac an Australian Bank who are sponsoring this year’s event.

Photos from the 2015 THCH Hop Festival
I hope that you enjoy yourselves and that this souvenir booklet helps to remind you not only of the 2016 Hop Festival but also of many years of hard work and good times in the Kentish countryside.

Nick Abbey  
Chair, Tower Hamlets Community Housing  
7th September 2016

Photos from the 2015 THCH Hop Festival

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Photos from the 2015 THCH Hop Festival
Nick Abbey the Chair of THCH with Commander John Ludgate and Mike Tyrrell at the 2015 Hop Festival

Alfie Raines (1920-1996) and Harry Cushway (1900-1967) outside the huts at Tompsett’s Farm, Fowl Hall, Kent in c1948
Please note that in all the following photographs all the women are referred to in their single name where known, as is common practice in the East End.

The Annual Apple Scramble at Harts Heath Farm, Staplehurst, Kent

John James, Rose Tuck, Brian Taylor, Danny Tuck, Jean Tuck & Pat Durrell in the hop gardens at Stilstead Farm, East Peckham, Kent
Rose Pegram & Ron Callow at Harts Heath Farm, Staplehurst, Kent
Iris Galley aged 2 and a half at Thompson’s Farm, Yalding, Kent
Monica Christmas and her daughter Clare Day at Hermitage Farm, Wateringbury, Kent in 1964
Stan Harrop and his Daughter Jackie in the hop gardens at Whitbread's Farm, Beltring
The Harwood Family, Harts Heath Farm, Staplehurst, Kent
Terry Tuck, Sheila Tuck, Veronica Herring and Josie Herring in the hop gardens at Stilstead Farm, East Peckham, Kent c1960
Albert Galley at Harts Farm, Headcorn, Kent
Katie Brown nee Elsey who was once voted Hop Queen, Emily Saint nee Charlton, Lily Carter nee Hime and Rose (Poppy) Day outside the huts at Morry Lane Farm, East Sutton, Kent
The Harrop family at Whitbread’s Farm, Beltring, Kent
Rose Crosner, Sheila Tuck, Terry Tuck and Rose Tuck outside the Man of Kent in Golden Green, Kent
A gathering of old hoppers inside one of the brick huts at Morry Lane Farm, East Sutton, Kent
Anne Lowden nee Elsey, Sasha Tinnerman, James Owen, David Thornton, Rene Warner nee Scott, Sheila Warner nee Charlton, Robert Thornton, Dorothy Gilbert nee Charlton, Joan Cheyne nee Charlton, Lily Scott nee Bird & Victor Scott
A beano from the Royal Duchess Pub in Commercial Road, Stepney ending up on the common of Jack Tompsett’s Farm, Fowle Hall, Kent in the 1960s.
The Collins and Audley Families at Harts Heath Farm, Staplehurst, Kent
Alfie Raines (1920-1996) from Limehouse in the Hop Gardens at Jack Tompsett’s Farm, Fowle Hall, Kent in c1975.
Coreen Galley, Nell Galley and Nell Higgs in 1957
Outside the huts Jack Tompsett’s Farm, Fowle Hall, Kent in c1967.
Chloe Shea, Kirsty Brown and Jodie Brown in double beds welded together to create double bunk beds to save space in the huts at Morry Lane Farm, East Sutton, Kent
Pat Tuck, Brian Taylor, Jim Tuck, Rose Crosher, Sheila Tuck, Jean Tuck and Patty McFarlane in the hop gardens at Stillstead Farm, East Peckham, Kent
On the common at Jack Tompsett’s Farm, Fowle Hall, Kent in c1975
The Harrop family taking a well earned break in the Hop Gardens at Whitbread’s Farm, Beltring, Kent
The London Hop Exchange is a Grade II listed building at No. 24 Southwark Street, London, in the Bankside area of the London Borough of Southwark. Opened in 1867 and designed by R.H. Moore it served as the centre for hop trading for the brewing industry. Hops, introduced to England from the Netherlands, are still used in the brewing industry. They are harvested from farms (known as "hop gardens") in Kent, and in the 19th century they were brought by railway to London Bridge Station, or by boat up the River Thames. They were then stored in the many warehouses in the Borough area. The purpose of the Hop Exchange was to provide a single market centre for dealers in hops. A glass roof allowed business on the trading floor of the Great Hall to be conducted under natural light. A fire in 1920 led to the top two storeys being removed, and the Hop Exchange was then converted into offices.
Having a rest outside the huts at Morry Lane Farm, East Sutton, Kent after fixing the roofs with James Owen, Diane Brown nee Haney, & Garry Brown and laying down are Sam Farrugia and Donna Burwood nee Brown.
With the hops in full bloom in the background, outside the huts at Morry Lane Farm, East Sutton, Kent are Nicola and Kerry Letchford in the back row and Jodie Brown, Chloe Shea and Kirsty Brown in the front row.
The Ripman & Thompson Families at Harts Heath Farm, Staplehurst, Kent
Peter Cheyne holding Freddie Burwood, Diane Brown nee Haney holding Kirsty Brown, Ann Lowden nee Elsey, Jean Morton nee Holderman waiting to go home outside the huts at Morry Lane Farm, East Sutton, Kent
Pop Harrop, Maggie Day, Joan Day (1929-1990) & George Rogers (1925-2012) in the hop gardens at Whitbread’s Farm, Beltring, Kent
By the barn at Harts Heath Farm, Staplehurst, Kent
Mrs Galley on a day trip to Whitbread’s Farm, Beltring, Kent in 1989
Dickie Gilbert from Millwall driving the tractor and Peter Cheyne from the Shetlands but he lived in Cubitt Town following the trailer at Morry Lane Farm, East Sutton, Kent
Vera Galley, Nell Galley and Nell Higgis in 1957
Richard Thornton, Sheila Warner nee Thornton, Annie Lowden nee Elsey, James Owen, Katie Brown nee Elsey, Emily Saint nee Charlton packing up outside the huts at Morry Lane Farm, East Sutton, Kent.
The huts with their new roof at Morry Lane Farm, East Sutton, Kent
Lena, Ern Pegram, Dick Callow, Mary Goodwin, Sally & Lou Pegram at Harts Heath Farm, Staplehurst, Kent