Fairs, Fetes and Carnivals

*Picture 1 the tombola stall under the canopy*

*Picture 2 carefully looking after the stall to raise money for the tower restoration*

*Picture 3 the plant stall with the skittle competition in the background*

Saturday 13th July was the Community\Church village fete held in Wychbold. It was a lovely sunny day, but not too warm and the event was very well attended with both local and foreign visitors. There were a number of different stalls and we had a dog show with competitions for the dog with the wiggliest tail, the best behaved, the dog who most looked like their owner and the dog with the nicest eyes.

It would not be a fete without food and there was a cake stall, a barbeque and tea and cake available all through the event.

The Stoke Prior Tower Project had a stall to raise money for me and inform people of my need for restoration.

The history of fairs, fetes and carnivals is very interesting.

Did you know that the village or church fete only really dates back to the 1920’s or 1930’s?

The origins of the fete seem to be a way of raising money for charities or local causes. However the origins of the fair go back much further to Roman times. In medieval times the fare would have been an important economic event with merchants coming from all over the country and Europe to trade their goods. Churches would have sponsored fairs to coincide with religious holidays as a way of raising funds for the church. Fairs were also granted protection by Royal Charter and most of the fairs that still take place today can trace their roots back to a medieval charter.

Some of our agricultural shows can trace their origins back to the medieval fair.

Have you ever heard of a “mop faire”? There were common in the agricultural areas of the Midlands and were originally a place to hire agricultural labours for one year. In 1563 the Statue of Artificers was a piece of legislation passed due a labour shortage caused partly by the Black Death. It said that on a given day the high constables of the shires would proclaim the rates of pay and employment conditions for the coming year. Mop fairs were held near Stoke Prior in Alcester, Evesham, Stratford upon Avon and Tewkesbury.

So that leaves Carnival, you may be surprised to hear this is a part of the religious calendar and is associated with the time just before lent. The carnival in Rio de Janeiro is probably the most famous and is in the Guinness book of records for the largest carnival in the world. It takes place around Mardi Gras (literal translation Fat Tuesday) or Shrove Tuesday as we know it in the UK.

I hope you enjoy this blog and you can read earlier blogs by going clicking on “Older Blogs” towards the bottom of the page. We are still raising money for the restoration of the tower so if you can help it would be appreciated.