

# THE MEDIEVAL FAIRS: 1



In the December 1978 edition of SAL, the Village Hall Committee put forward the idea for a Mediaeval Michaelmas Fair to recapture something of what Steeple Aston might have been like in 1479. The aim of the Fair, apart from giving everyone a good time, was to raise funds for the improvement and repair of the village hall. A supplement entitled 'Steppulastone - 1479' was included in the magazine describing life as it was imagined 500 years before.

A meeting was held to test village opinion, after which a plan of events was produced, sketches and paper patterns of C15th costumes were produced to encourage people to make their own, and dancing lessons arranged.

The first Fair was held on Sunday 30th September 1979 at Church Corner and Cow Lane. This was planned to start with an afternoon church service and blessing by the Rector as would have happened in mediaeval times, followed by stalls, sports and mediaeval pastimes.

There were facilities to barbecue your own food with a meat stall run by John Walton and a bread and salad stall run by the W.I. A bar was open all afternoon. Craft stalls included a silversmith, pottery and a blacksmith. Entertainment included the Adderbury Morris Men, The Players performing, school children demonstrating country dancing, and may-pole dancing. There were mediaeval-style musicians and sideshows.

The second Fair, a much larger event, was held on Sunday 28th September 1980, following the same format as the first. Again it began with a church service but as well as Church Corner, Robinson's Close was also used to hold a more varied programme of events. These were planned to include competitive sports, a larger number of stalls and a variety of amusements. To involve villagers, a costume parade around the village was held a fortnight beforehand and a feast was arranged in the village hall on the previous Friday evening.

The Committee was: Michael Hayter - Chairman; Mary Furness - Secretary; Simon Harrison; Ron Gardner; Paul O'Sullivan; Roderick Nicholson; Roy Kinch; Richard Hutchings.

