

## Anecdotes of an Akeley boyhood - Fred Rush

Fred Rush, born in 1923, the middle one of a family of 11 children, lived his early life in a thatched cottage on Main Street sited behind the rear of the garden of the Bull & Butcher public house. The cottage had previously been the village Post Office & Store and is featured on a popular postcard of the Walford & Sons Village Series taken c1900.

He has a photo taken outside the cottage c1930 showing himself with younger brothers Stan and Tom and older sister Marjorie. As Fred says "Children would be born with only about twelve months between them in those days".

"My father, George, originally from Silverstone, worked for Captain Price at Akeley Wood house and farm ..... grandfather on my mothers side was an Akeley man called Tom Knibbs, roadsweeper, verge cutter and ditch clearer. He would work the Leckhampstead road which was gated ..... about three sets of gates at that time".

"My earliest memory was seeing a circus passing along Akeley High Street, going towards Northampton ..... we were in bed and dad called upstairs for us to look out of the bedroom window, the elephants were just outside and they could have reached the window with their trunks".

"In the winter we had a great big iron pot which stood on the kitchen range in which we made stew, topped up now and then with fresh bones which would be chucked in from time to time and it would be there all winter ..... I wonder what the kids would think of that now, even I look back and wonder did it really happen! ..... the same range was used to heat bricks with which the bedroom was warmed".

"I went to school in the Square at what is now The Old School House .... there were two classrooms, one for the youngest and one for older children ....teacher, she was a Miss Neale, came from Hanslope in a little old car .....she was stricter than any man ..... one day, as she was about to cane me, I pulled my hand away and she hit her leg ..... she then held my hand and gave me a real belting".

"During school holidays we used to play fox and hound, going through Foxcote Wood, along by the brook, through Stocking Wood, past the reservoir over to Akeley Wood and back across the fields to the village to where the Post Office used to be ..... if we wanted to swim we went down Duck End past Dunkleys farm and the Brickyard to the brook where we would dam it to form a pool ..... it wasn't all play though because one of the jobs in the holiday was to weed the allotment ..... and it had to be done properly, no skimping".

Fred attended the methodist chapel for Sunday School but on going to the C of E school was more or less obliged to attend the Church.

Eddie Holyoake played the church organ and Fred often pumped this for him.

"At Christmas we went carol singing around the village, with an harmonium on a trolley played by Mrs Land ..... finishing at Captain Bathurst's place in the Leckhampstead Road where we were given a cup of cocoa and a mince pie".

"Just inside the school field was a pond and two great oak trees. When they did the new school they must have filled the pond in ..... the pond had been used by cattle and never ran dry because of the springs in the village ..... you can count six springs in a line that ran into wells with a pump in the Square where folks used to go and get their water.....there is a well still there down Duck End, halfway down the hill is a hole in the wall with a little lift-over and a tap in there .... there's a tremendous lot of water in this village ..... there was a big long pond on the side of the Leckhampstead Road where the row of new private houses now stand and I daresay it had been used by cattle in the past".

"The old cottages were made of wattle and daub .....because you see there was a lot of running sand in the village, all down the main road, moist sand with a certain amount of clay in it which was used for the daub ..... my dad told us that when the electricity came and they dug up the main road to put cables in they had to put a raft across the road because of the running sand and water ..... he also told me that the cottages on Daisy Bank were built with Akeley bricks made at Bobby Watts brickyard on the Lillingstone Lovell road ..... quarry tiles were also made there and I had one with the name Akeley on it but let it go".

"On Main Street was a butchers shop with slaughterhouse next door owned by Jack, Ellis and Burleigh Clarke ..... when I was about ten or eleven I used to go and help them on Saturdays, make the sausages, soak the bread and scrape the pigs ..... they had big lead trays in which they would salt the pork ..... old Burleigh was a little bit wonky, he would collect fallen apples, get an old churn fill it with water and put the apples in to make cider .....his older brothers would often find him drunk from it!".

"Charlie Cox, he used to go round on a Friday in a pony and trap to take the meat to Akeley, Lillingstone Dayrell, Lillingstone Lovell then he would go across to Leckhampstead and back to Akeley..... I would go round with him sometimes, especially in the school holidays."

"My dad used to keep two pigs, one to sell and one to keep which when ready he would take down to the butchers to be slaughtered and cut up ready for salting".

"Winterburn had a pony and trap, lived in the big house behind the church and did a bit of carrying .....talking of which, there used to be an old boy, a chimney sweep from Chackmore who had a pony and trap ..... after he had swept the chimneys he would go in the pub .....when he'd had enough he would be put into the trap and the pony took him home!"

"Dommo Whitehead, a shoe repairer had a place down Duck End .....you daren't talk to him when he had a mouth full of nails in case he swallowed 'em! .....his body was all doubled up and they had to break his back when he died".

"There was an old gal we used to call Long Esther, I've never seen a woman so tall in all my life ..... to us kids she looked enormous ..... she and Tommy Cook lived in a cottage down Duck End where the old barracks used to be".

"There were two coal merchants, one on the main road and Dunkleys who also sold logs and firewood ..... local delivery was by wheelbarrow".

"Tibbetts who owned the thatched cottage in the Square had a business at the rear making carpentry items including windows and coffins ..... one son was a carpenter and another a painter and an adopted child worked as odd-job man".

"Lewis Tibbett had a lock-up at the top of the hill from which he ran an old charabanc between Akeley and Buckingham".

"Jas Hawkins ran the Bull & Butcher pub with a general grocery shop attached, his son-in-law brought the bread from the bakehouse at Maids Moreton..... Johnny Miller was the landlord of the Greyhound public house which was open at that time.....my parents told of the time when it was a bakery as well as a pub and Sunday dinners could be taken there to be cooked.....my grandad Tom would work his way down to the Greyhound by mid-day and told of an old saying used by Johnny Miller on Mondays "come in for some soap suds and jaw pie" referring to it being wash day and no doubt some scolding from his wife!".

"Jimmy Cox and Jack Clarke used to go to the pub and have a pint pot between them, one would have a drink, put the pot down and then the other would take a drink out of it, and so on.....".

"At that time both pubs sold beers brewed by Hopcraft & Norris of Brackley and a pint of best ale cost about 4d ..... in the winter it was common practice to take a hot poker from the fire and dip it into the beer to heat it!".

"There was also deliveries of beer and lemonade by Kings of Syresham".

"Farms included Manor Farm owned by Dunkleys, Willow (now Fox's Dairy) used to be farmed by Bill Bennett as a dairy and Ted Panters smallholding down the Leckhampstead Road .....Jimmy Cox farmed up by the church, he delivered milk using a yoke with a big can of milk either side, he would ladle out the milk into your jug with half pint or one pint measure .....they also used to make butter there".

Fred's parents were committee members of the then thriving "Akeley & District Horticultural Society" (Akeley, Lillingstone Dayrell, Lillingstone Lovell, Leckhampstead and Chackmore). An original schedule from the 20th Annual Flower Show held on Saturday, August 19th, 1939 in his possession indicates the interest in the event.....72 classes of entry with 216 cash prizes totalling 480 shillings (£24), this from an 3d entry fee means that 1920 entries were needed to cover the value of the prizes !.

He has a photo taken at the 1935 Flower Show held in the field at side of the Village Hall. Bert Holmes is in the photograph and also Rowland Nichols whose old dad gave the land on which the Hall stands.

A fancy dress parade was a regular feature and Fred remembers his Mum, Dad and some of the children going as "Mr & Mrs Dam and the Dam family!".

Many thanks to Linda Burgess (nee Rush), Akeley born herself, who suggested that I meet with her dad and to Fred himself for providing this fascinating glimpse into pre-1940 Akeley.

Geoff Spink  
February 1999

## REGULATIONS.

1. Entries to be made 5 days before the Show to the Secretary.
2. All members will be allowed to exhibit.
3. No Competitor to take more than one prize in each class.
4. Exhibitors to have their produce staged before 12 noon.
5. No two members from one house can enter in the same class.
6. The decision of the Judges shall be final.
7. All vegetables to shown in a clean condition.
8. No exhibits to be removed before 7 p.m.
9. All exhibits not cleared by 7.30 p.m. will be sold unless the Secretary is notified otherwise.
10. The Committee will not be responsible for any loss or damage to any exhibit, the same being at the sole risk of the exhibitor, but all ordinary care will be taken.
11. All exhibits must be grown by the exhibitors.
12. All exhibits will be inspected by the Committee either before or after the Show.
13. Any member breaking the Rules will forfeit all prize money won.
14. Any member making a complaint must deposit 2/6 to the Secretary by 6.30 p.m., which may be forfeited if the complaint be frivolous.
15. That each entry fee to be 3d. If only 3 entries, 2 prizes given. If only 2 entries, one prize given.
16. Prize Money (Open Classes) to be paid same day as Show, at 6 p.m.
17. Members' Subscriptions must be paid on or before May 31st each year.
18. Plates will be provided for vegetables.
19. CUP COMPETITION.—Points will be as follows:—1st prize, 3 points; 2nd prize, 2 points; 3rd prize, 1 point.
20. The Cup cannot be won by a competitor living in the Society's area.

*Ans. S. Rush.*

# AKELEY & DISTRICT HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Akeley, Lillingstone Dayrell, Lillingstone Lovell,  
Leckhampstead and Chackmore.

## SCHEDULE

OF THE

# 20th ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW

TO BE HELD AT

~~AKELEY~~

ON

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19th, 1939,

at 2 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. J. E. CLARKE.

Committee:

Messrs. Herbert Knibbs, H. Cox, G. Jones, W. Tibbetts, C. Jones, G. King, A. Holmes, A. Mumford, G. Ridgway, W. Jeffery, G. Judd, J. Rush, F. Jones, F. Staley, F. Judd, G. Rush, R. Nichols, A. Tibbetts, R. Jones, A. Cress and G. C. King.

Ladies' Committee:

Mesdames A. Holmes, E. Panter, F. Ridgway, H. Dunkley, G. Ridgway, E. Dunkley, N. Bates, G. King, G. Rush, P. Carter, H. Knibbs, W. Jeffery and A. Cress; Misses N. Tibbetts and M. Cox.

Hon. Treasurers:

P. CARTER & H. DUNKLEY.

Hon. Secretary:

F. RIDGWAY.

## SCHEDULE OF PRIZES.

Class		1st	2nd	3rd
1	Eight White Kidney Potatoes ... ..	4/-	2/6	1/-
2	Eight Coloured Kidney Potatoes ..	4/-	2/6	1/-
3	Eight Coloured Round Potatoes ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
4	Eight White Round Potatoes ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
5	Collection of Potatoes, 6 varieties, 4 of each	4/-	3/-	2/-
6	Fifteen pods of Runner Beans ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
7	Twenty pods of Peas ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
X 8	Twelve Long Pods ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
9	Twelve Broad Beans ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
10	Six Shorthorn Carrots ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
11	Six Long Carrots ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
12	Six White Turnips ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
13	Four Parsnips ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
14	Six Winter Onions (Rocca Type) ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
15	Six Spring Onions (Bed Sown) ... ..	4/-	2/6	1/-
16	Six Spring Onions (Transplanted)... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
X 17	Twenty Shallots ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
X 18	Pair Vegetable Marrows ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
X 19	Three Round Beet ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
20	Three Long Beet ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
21	Three Cabbage ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
22	Best Pickling Cabbage ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
23	Three Lettuce ... ..	4/-	2/6	1/-
24	Best Six Cooking Apples ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
25	Best Dozen Plums ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
26	One vase Gladioli, 4 spikes, 4 distinct colours	3/-	2/-	1/-
27	Four bunches of Sweet Peas, 6 stems, 4 distinct colours ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
28	Three Antirrhinums not less than 3 distinct colours (shown as grown) ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
29	Three Stocks, not less than 3 distinct colours (shown as grown) ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
30	Six Asters, not less than 3 distinct colours	3/-	2/-	1/-
31	Six best Dahlias, not less than 4 colours ...	3/-	2/-	1/-
32	Six best different varieties of Annuals ...	3/-	2/-	1/-
33	Best bunch of Flowers ... ..	4/-	2/6	1/-
34	Best Flowering Window Plant ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
35	Best Foliage Plant ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
36	Best Collection of Wild Flowers (Members' Children only). Entrance Free ...	3/-	2/-	1/-
37	Best dozen Hens' Eggs, White ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
38	Best dozen Hens' Eggs, Tinted ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-

Class	LADIES' SECTION.	1st	2nd	3rd
39	Best dish of Eight Cooked Potatoes ...	3/-	2/-	1/-
40	Best Fruit Cake, not under 2lbs. weight ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
41	Best Fowl, plucked and trussed ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
42	1lb. glass pot Home-made Jam ... ..	4/-	2/6	1/-
43	Bottle Home-made Root Wine, not less than 1 pint (named) ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
44	Bottle Home-made Wine, other than root, not less than 1 pint (named) ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-
45	Best Plain Cake, not under 1½lbs. weight	3/-	2/-	1/-
46	1lb. glass pot of Marmalade ... ..	3/-	2/-	1/-

Exhibits in Classes 1, 2, 15, 23, 33 and 42 to be sold towards Society's Funds.  
Exhibits in Classes 1, 2 and 42 can be retained on payment of 1/- to Sec.

### OPEN CLASSES (Nurserymen Excepted).

A SILVER CUP valued 12 guineas will be presented to the Exhibitor winning the greatest number of points in Open Classes.

The Cup to be returned on 31st July each year to the Society in good condition, when the sum of £1 1s. 0d. will be given to the holder.

47	Eight Coloured Kidney Potatoes ... ..	5/-	2/6	1/6
48	Eight Coloured Round Potatoes ... ..	5/-	2/6	1/6
49	Eight White Kidney Potatoes ... ..	5/-	2/6	1/6
50	Eight White Round Potatoes ... ..	5/-	2/6	1/6
51	Eight Heaviest Potatoes (one variety) ...	4/-	2/-	1/-
52	Fifteen pods of Runner Beans ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
53	Fifteen pods of French Beans ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
54	Six Long Carrots ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
55	Six Shorthorn Carrots ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
56	Six Winter Onions (Rocca Type) ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
57	Six Spring Onions (Transplanted)... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
58	Six Spring Onions (Bed Sown) ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
59	Three Cauliflowers ... ..	5/-	2/6	1/6
60	Twenty Shallots ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
61	Twenty pods of Peas ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
62	Three Round Beet ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
63	Three Long Beet ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
64	Three Lettuce ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
65	Six best Tomatoes ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
66	Best Pickling Cabbage ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
67	Heaviest Marrow ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
68	Three best sticks of Celery ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
69	Best Six Cooking Apples ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
70	Four bunches of Sweet Peas, 6 stems, 4 distinct colours ... ..	4/-	2/-	1/-
71	One vase Gladioli, 4 spikes, 4 distinct colours	4/-	2/-	1/-
72	Six Zinnias, not less than 3 distinct colours	4/-	2/-	1/-

Exhibits in Class 59 to be sold towards Society's Funds.



AKELEY VILLAGE, NEAR BUCKINGHAM.

The Village Post Office, Akeley c1900.



Fred Rush with younger brothers Stan, Tom and older sister Marjorie outside the cottage c1930