

SAMPFORD PEVERELL SOCIETY OPEN DAY : 9 JULY 2005.

As part of the Sampford Peverell Heritage Project, the Society organised an Open Day to celebrate the work done so far. We wanted to involve as many of the community as possible, including former residents and others who were interested in our local history. In particular, we were keen to involve the children from our local Primary School and so some events were arranged specifically with them in mind. About 600 invitations were sent out before the day, including one to each household in the Parish. These invitations included details of the programme for the day, which enabled people to pick and choose which events to participate in.

We had so much that we wanted to show people that we decided on having two buildings where items would be on display: the Village Hall and the Primary School. This proved to be a good decision for a number of reasons: it meant that neither place was too crowded; it provided a greater involvement for the teachers and children of the Primary School than might otherwise have been possible; and it helped to get people circulating around the village, participating in the various walks and quizzes on offer on the way.

In these two locations we housed all the static displays:

- archaeological display showing finds we have made (e.g. flints)
- information about our historical buildings
- a description of the local geology, together with sample stones
- a collection postcards of village scenes, together with comparative, current, photos
- school record books (log-books, admission registers, punishment books etc.)
- the original village stocks (on loan to the Society)
- display of old school photos
- display of old photos of local people, with names where known
- display of the Society's Heritage Project work
- display of old maps, including the facility to overlay one edition on another
- display of documents
- display of natural history photos
- display by Tiverton Museum of documents etc relating to Sampford Peverell
- display by The Grand Western Canal Rangers relating to Sampford Peverell
- display by a local group of spinners (relating to the local wool industry)

In addition to the static displays, we arranged the following:

- Costumed historical characters from Sampford Peverell's past.
- A fancy dress competition for children on a historical theme
- Guided walks which described the village heritage
- Guided nature walk
- Treasure hunt using a metal detector in a sand pit – for children!
- Numbers quiz (which involved finding and solving numeric clues to be found around the village in order to derive a final number)
- I-Spy nature quiz for children
- Quiz for children, the answers for which were obtained by talking to the historical characters
- On-the-spot interviews by camcorder
- Copying photos and documents brought in by visitors

- Changing displays, using data projectors, of recorded interviews, the database, our web-site and natural history photos.

The Open Day was officially opened by the Parish's oldest male resident, who had long taken an interest in our local history. Although exact numbers of visitors were difficult to determine owing to the use of more than one 'centre', we think that there were over 200, excluding the volunteers themselves. We were extremely fortunate in having so many volunteers willing to help on the day, whether manning a display, leading a walk, taking the part of a historical character, helping with refreshments etc. Overall, there were 60 such volunteers without whom the event would not have been possible. It was a somewhat smaller team who were responsible for designing and creating all the displays and exhibits before the Open Day and enormous credit must go to all of them.

Judging from all the favourable comments we have received, the day was a great success. We were delighted to welcome so many current and former residents, some of whom contributed to our Project by letting us copy old photos or by identifying people in the photos on display. We also have a list of more residents who are prepared to be interviewed in order to record their reminiscences.