



# FROME CARNIVAL

The year; **1927**. The place: **Butler & Tanner factory** in Frome. The scene: **2.30am** - in the staff room of the Night shift having a 30-minute break.

3 workers who had the previous Saturday seen Bristol Rag Parade, telling their colleagues of a fantastic show.

The conversation finished with 'Why can't we have one in Frome. And in the September, Frome had its first Rag Parade. A profit of £50 was divided equally between the Victoria Hospital and the Queens Nurses.

A second one was held the following year with a dance held in the nearly new Memorial Hall. Profit £60, divided as in the previous year.

It was then decided that an annual event should be held called 'CARNIVAL', enlisting the support of local organisations and leading citizens of the town.

The minutes show that the first committee meeting was held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1929 held in the Victoria Hospital and included members from Frome Rotary, Friendly Society, Girl Guides, Town Band and the Rag Committee which was chaired by Mr Hargreaves-Beare, a Frome Rotarian.

More representatives came forward and sub-committees formed including 'Ground & Route committee', 'Programmes', 'Advertising & Publicity', 'Competition & Sideshows' and 'Decorations'. Within 3 weeks, on July 19<sup>th</sup>, Mr Horsfield, a local garage proprietor in Cork St said he would produce a new Austin car (cost £140) to raffle - £25 donated by the Austin Motor Co, £75 from an anonymous donor, £15 from local subscribers leaving £25 to be found by the committee.

Extracts from the next committee meeting: 'Timber required to throw a temporary wooden bridge over the river in order to use an adjacent field to the Market Yard'; (A retired army Engineering Colonel was willing to supervise the construction). Mr Daniel to be approached regarding use of the Yard and the field.

Prizes to be in vouchers which could be exchanged in local shops. More offers came in; a boxing tournament; Ladies football match; Putting competition; Sunday concert; Baby show and Ankle competition and a Tennis tournament. Carnival pencils purchased to be put on sale. The Roundabout Fair proprietor be approached and offered a profit sharing contract, 6/8 in the pound of the profits for the Carnival Committee.

Mr Panniccia had offered 10 shillings to be allowed to sell ice-creams in the field. (A subsequent minute showed Mr Panniccia had sent a cheque for one guinea). Frome United Brewery be approached to use one of their lorries to transport the King & Queen.

By August 16<sup>th</sup> the committee had grown to 44 members.

Carnival held on September 28<sup>th</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> meeting June 28<sup>th</sup>. **3 months to organise a Carnival.**

Subsequent meeting on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1929. **Treasurer reported a profit of £935-8-11.**

Carnivals continued annually until 1939. It was cancelled in September 1939 due to the war and the committee lost a large amount of money that year.

In 1945, Carnival started again with the same enthusiastic group, always their first priority was a donation to the Victoria Hospital and the Queens Nurses.



In 1948 when the government nationalised the health service including the hospitals it was decided to set up a charity and on September 27<sup>th</sup> 1948 a Trust Deed was drawn up and called 'Frome Carnival Charities Association'. This called for five trustees, the founding trustees being were: Arthur Cornish, who had been secretary since 1933 and who was the driving force after the war, Bert Scott, a garage proprietor and chairman of Frome Urban Council, Clifford Spittal, boss of 'Singers', Nelson Read, boss of Wallbridge Cloth factory and George Creswick, Solicitor at Faulkners in Bath Street who drew up the Deed.

Extracts from the Deed included:

Bursaries available for:

- Charitable purposes for Inhabitants of Frome Urban and Frome Rural Districts councils
- Covering assistance for education of a person
- Convalescent or other medical reasons.
- Homes for the elderly or disabled
- Assisting the poor of the area etc.

In 1974, the reorganisation of local government, the deed was amended to read 'the said former Frome Urban & Rural districts and the parishes of Chapmanslade & Corsley.

In 2006 the small number on the Carnival committee work 9 months to put the event on in September and Frome Rotary continue to assist with the collection on the day. The expenditure each year continues to increase, covering such items as the Queen's floats, dresses, prizes for competitors and the queens, to insurance at around £1300 and numerous other small needs. Additionally, collectors have dropped in number by a half over the last five years.

Will it continue?

The answer lies with you, the people of Frome.

Author Ken Miller.  
Frome Rotary Club and Former Chairman of the  
Frome Carnival Charities Committee