

HARVEST

Harvest was one of the most important, if not the most important celebration in the life of rural, agricultural communities. It demarcated the end of one year with hopefully a successful harvest, and the start of the next.

As with any important celebration in the past, a Village Church Service was held to give thanks for the harvest, the Church decorated with flowers and harvest offerings which would have been distributed to the poor and needy... a tradition we still continue in Carbrooke.

Village revelry later, would include a harvest supper and dancing.

Our Harvest Festival will be held on Sunday 30th at 10.30am.

**‘Bring and Share’ Harvest Supper Saturday 29th at 6.30pm
Village Hall**

All donated food offerings will be donated to **‘Watton Food Bank’**, a local organisation which collects and distributes food to our local poor and needy.

HIRING FAIR

Hiring Fairs have been held in Britain for hundreds of years. The Hiring Fair provided an opportunity for a day out, the labourers had an opportunity for a break from work and a 'knees up', eating, drinking and side stalls. However, as the agricultural year ended it also meant that many of the labourers and domestic servants ended their year-long term of contract to their employer, and needed to find a new position. This was before the days of Job Centres and unemployment benefit.

And so, at the annual Harvest Fair, a Hustings would be erected where unskilled labourers and domestic servants would gather, the local employers would then arrive to hire their staff for the following year. This arrangement formed a binding contract, between employer and employee, it was vital for those searching for work to find a position (the majority would have been extremely poor, unskilled and living in overcrowded conditions). The alternative would have been asking for assistance from the Parish, and failing that being sent to the workhouse.

Depending on the job, the employee may have been provided with accommodation and food (perhaps living with the animals in the case of the livestock labourers), it was unlikely that they would have received their uniform if they required one. The hours long, the work hard and the pay low, but at least they had a position.