



**Abinger Common**  
**13<sup>th</sup> June 2026**  
**2-5pm**

[abingerfair.com](http://abingerfair.com)  
[facebook/abingerfair](https://www.facebook.com/abingerfair) #abingerfair

**Entrance & Programme Free**  
**All profits go to local charities & amenities**

## Welcome!

It is my privilege to welcome you as the Chair of the Organising Committee of the Abinger Medieval Fair in this special 70th anniversary year. I am just one of a long line of villagers who have held this role since the Fair was revived in 1956. Everyone who has been in the role has witnessed the extraordinary way in which the village pulls together to make this ambitious event happen on a small village green between the church and the pub. Almost every household in the village will have helped in some way or another and there are a group of incredible individuals who have put in more than 50 years of service to the Fair. Things don't always run smoothly but somehow we manage to put together a charming fun day and it is so satisfying to see everyone enjoying the afternoon in so many ways and particularly gratifying to then be able to allocate funds to many local charities and amenities later in the year.

For the 70th anniversary, this programme is a special extended edition which includes a summary of the history of the Fair, more of which can be found on the website. We very much look forward to the displays of medieval combat by Invicta Men at Arms.

On behalf of all the villagers of Abinger, thank you for coming and enjoy your afternoon.

Joanna Durham

## Proceeds from 2025 were donated to charities and local amenities

Abinger Common Nursery	Holmbury Cricket Club
Abinger Hammer Village Hall	Holmbury Village Hall
Abinger Parish Council for the Playground	Holmbury Toddlers
Abinger Sports Club	Mole Valley Citizen Advice Bureau
Brigitte Trust	Momentum Children's Charity
Dorking Foodbank (Churches Together)	Stella Hancock Driving Group
Evelyn Hall	RDA Carriage Riding for the Disabled
Friends of Dorking Hospital	St. James' Church
F@SH - Friends at Surrey Hills School	Surrey Young Farmers
Holmbury Church	The Fountain Centre

For further information about the results of the fair and the plans for next year, visit us at [www.abingerfair.com](http://www.abingerfair.com)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT



# THE ABINGER HATCH

Welcoming interior with  
two log burning fires,  
extensive garden with  
patio seating area &  
heated tipi with bench  
seating

Abinger Lane, Abinger  
Common, RH5 6HZ



## WEDDING & EVENTS

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country pub venue

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# Find your favourites



# Attractions

## **PUNCH & JUDY:**

Shows at 3.00pm and 4.30pm, on the green in front of the Church.

## **BALLOON MODELLING:**

Show at 2.00pm, on the green in front of the Church.

## **SIDESHOWS:**

Test your skills: Tossing the Sheaf: The record is over 9m.

Or try the Medieval Stocks, Splat The Rat and the Coconut Shy.

## **FOR THE CHILDREN:**

Go to the children's corner for Face Painting & Childrens Crafts.

Visit Pilgrims Pottage for costumes and Fathers' Day gifts, or try the children's Tombola.

## **FOOD:**

Cake & Savouries; Cream Teas in Evelyn Hall next to the pub; Ice Creams; Preserves with jams, pickles & chutneys; Lamb from the Spit and the Sweet Stall.

## **DRINKS:**

The Bar: beers, cider, soft drinks, water & medieval mead; Ye Olde Pimms stall, bottled water at the Sweets stall or get Teas & Coffees in the Evelyn Hall.

## **STALLS:**

Plenty of stalls to browse or try your luck: Books with Puzzles, DVDs and CDs; Pilgrims Pottage has medieval souvenirs & local crafts; The Plant stall with flowers, shrubs etc & garden related items; Rag, Tag & Bobtail for jewellery, bags & more: The White Elephant stall to grab a bargain and try your luck at the Bottle Tombola & the Raffle.

## **MUSIC in ST. JAMES' CHURCH:**

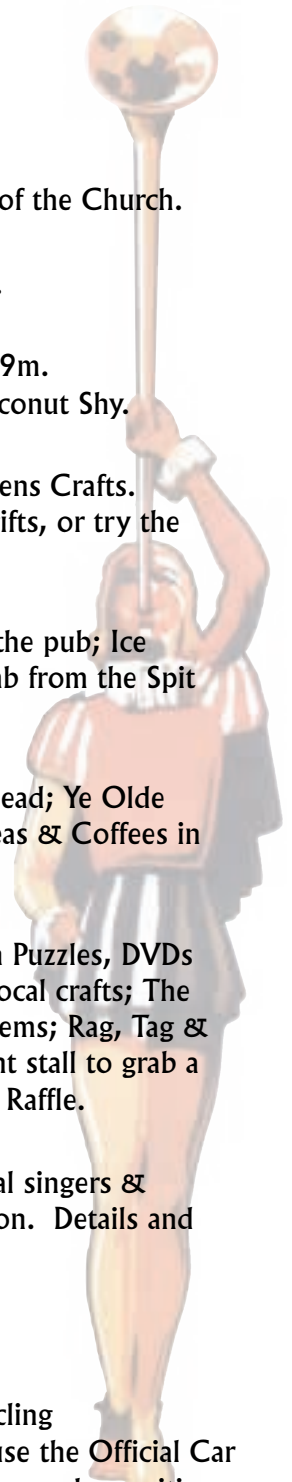
Take a pew in the church to relax and listen to the local singers & musicians who are performing throughout the afternoon. Details and times are listed in the centre page.

## **FIRST AID TENT:**

By the children's playground next to Sutton Lane.

Please take your rubbish home for recycling

Entrance to the fair and Programmes are free. Please use the Official Car Parks, just £5.00 and all proceeds go to local charities and amenities.





# **Kinghams Midweek Treat**

**3 Courses £49.00**

**4 Courses £59.00**



**Tuesday - Friday Lunch**

**Tuesday - Thursday**

**Dinner**



**Call 01483 202168 to  
Book**



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# The Pro

## Events: Music in the Church

2.30 - 3.10pm TIMELINE CHOIR

3.20 - 3.50pm MEADVALE SINGERS

4.00 - 4.15pm THE HAYMAKERS

Singing: The Haymakers, It's a rosebud in June,  
I courted a sailor, the Haymakers will sing by the  
church porch if the weather is dry.

4.20pm

MARIIA RAIEVSKA plays the Domra

Enjoy the rare and beautiful sound of the domra,  
a traditional Ukrainian string instrument.

Take a short walk into St James' church and enjoy a change in pace  
as you listen to the singers and musicians who will be performing a  
wonderful range of music during the afternoon.

The Abinger Fair Committee, its servants and agents accept no responsibility for (i) loss or damage to any vehicle, its contents and accessories, or to any other property whatever, and/or (ii) any injury to persons or animals at this event, however such loss, damage or injury may be caused, including by negligence.

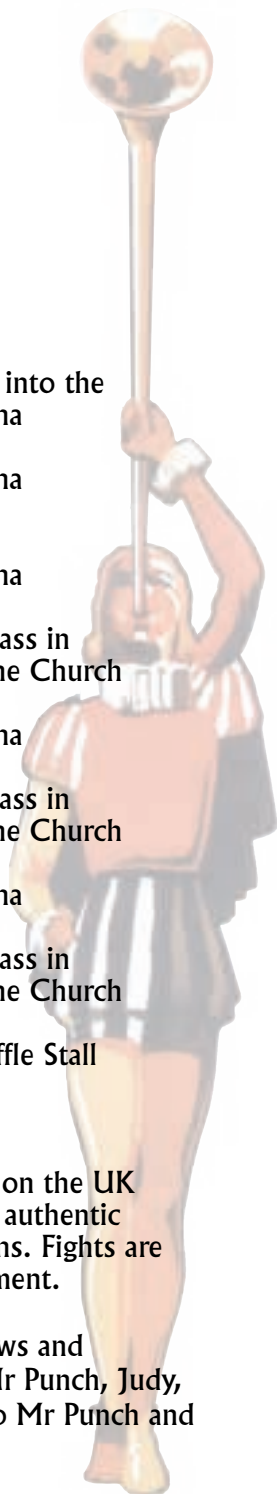
# gramme

## Events:

Time	Event	Where
2.00pm	Procession	Processes into the Main Arena
2.05pm	Crowning of the May Queen and Maypole Dancing	Main Arena
2.30pm	Invicta Medieval Combat*	Main Arena
3.00pm	Punch & Judy*	On the grass in front of the Church
3.30pm	Children's Races	Main Arena
4.00pm	Children's Balloon Modelling	On the grass in front of the Church
4.00pm	Invicta Medieval Combat*	Main Arena
4.30pm	Punch & Judy*	On the grass in front of the Church
4.45pm	Grand Raffle Prize Draw	At the Raffle Stall
5.00pm	CLOSE	

\*Invicta Medieval Combat is one of the leading teams on the UK Buhurt scene. Buhurt is a sport. The competitors wear authentic replica mediaeval armour and use blunted steel weapons. Fights are between teams and are refereed, this is not a re-enactment.

\*Jonathan Cann returns to give 2 Punch and Judy shows and to make balloon models during the afternoon. Meet Mr Punch, Judy, the policeman and the sausages, you can even speak to Mr Punch and become a part of this wonderful show.



We are pleased to be supporting the  
**Abinger Common  
Medieval Fair**

**01306 577 960 • [abingeroffice@merrywood.org.uk](mailto:abingeroffice@merrywood.org.uk)**

**Abinger Lane, Abinger Common RH5 6HZ**



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# History of the Old Fair of Abinger

## Churchyard Fairs – a very old English village tradition

Churchyard Fairs gave local people the opportunity to bring their cattle to trade and to make merry throughout the Middle Ages. There is little doubt that Churchyard Fairs were held in Abinger for hundreds of years. While the importance of cattle trading at the Fair had all but died out by the end of the 19th Century the annual merry-making continued until the early part of the 20th Century.

## 1944 The quiet village of Abinger was brutally brought in to World War II

On 3rd August 1944 a flying bomb landed on St James's Church causing considerable damage, and its costly restoration was completed in 1951.

As Church finances were depleted by the restoration The Rector of St. James', Dr Clifford Chapman decided to revive the tradition of the Churchyard Fair in 1956, as a fundraiser for the Church. Dr Chapman and his team organised activities consistent with the medieval theme – darts, skittles and casting the stone as well as less recognisable events such as cambuc, a medieval cross between hockey and golf, and hen-baiting, although the programme indicates that this activity was modified according to RSPCA requirements.

The Court of the Pie Powder was another revival from the Churchyard Fairs. Trade and other local disputes were tried by the court and those on the losing side would end up in the village stocks.



The first  
revival in  
1956

To match the authentic range of medieval activities, villagers were asked to dress as authentically medieval as possible. Designs were initially simple. Men would wear a length of sackcloth cut at the fold to allow the head to go through and then sewn at the sides with a gap for armholes and gathered in by rope. Women were similarly attired but to the ankle and a blouse could be worn underneath adding some femininity.

Gradually the village adopted the look of medieval gentlefolk rather than the simple peasants who would have lived in Abinger in the Middle Ages.

### A dramatic turn of events in 1964

During the evening of Friday 12th June 1964, a violent storm hit the



Fire following a lightning strike on the eve of the Fair 1964

village with thunder, forked lightning and torrential rain.

Just after midnight, lightning had struck the lower part of the spire of St. James' and very quickly the wooden spire was engulfed in flames. Many villagers rushed to save whatever they could from the blazing Church including a number of heavy wooden pews that were dragged out in the rain. It was 4.00 am before the fire was under control and the villagers retired to the Abinger Hatch for well-deserved brandies. Just a few hours later dawn revealed extensive damage to the roof and the spire. In a sad twist, the 300-year-old bells that had managed to survive the bombing almost exactly 20 years earlier melted in the intense heat. Despite their fatigue, having spent half the night trying desperately to save the Church, the villagers were out the next morning to prepare for the Fair.

This dramatic incident came to the attention of the National Press and a

well-known photographer, Richard Swayne of The Tatler was sent to take photographs.

At Abinger Manor he came across the young fiancée of Robert Clarke, Cherry, who embraced the traditions of the village she was about to move to was dressed for the Fair very elegantly. Cherry Clarke went on to be Chair of the Fair Committee and still lives in the village today.

### A ghostly appearance

In the 1960s John du Bois who lived in the middle of the village dressed for the Fair in a full suit of armour. He enjoyed the mead at the Fair so much that by 6pm he lay down for a rest on one of the graves in front of the church opposite the pub.

He only woke at closing time when the rowdy drinkers leaving the Abinger Hatch came face to face with a knight in full armour rising from one of the graves and began to wonder just how much they had drunk themselves that evening.

### The Fair achieves worldwide fame

Although no one was quite sure how or why, in 1988 the increased publicity brought The Old Fair of Abinger to the attention of the Japan Airlines in-flight magazine and much to the surprise of the car park attendant that year, a coach load of Japanese tourists turned up and space was eventually found for the coach in the driveway of Abinger Manor. Apparently, the Japanese particularly appreciated English scones and left happy.



Cherry Clarke makes the cover of Tatler in her Abinger Fair costume 1964



### Shenanigans before the days of Health & Safety

One year the Wandsworth Police Dog Handling team staged the pursuit of an armed criminal in the Arena. During the demonstration the criminal turned and fired his gun. Of course, the gun only fired blank pellets but nevertheless a woman in the audience was “shot” and left with a nasty bruise on her upper arm and everyone was very relieved that the blank had not hit one of the many children sitting around the edge of the arena. Tossing the sheaf over a bar is always popular and becomes extremely competitive. In 2023, the sheaf was thrown with such vigour that it landed on the telephone pole adjacent to the Green and could not be dislodged. A fire engine was called and remained to the delight of the children, while the firemen tried unsuccessfully to beat the locals at tossing the sheaf.

### The Old Fair of Abinger unifies our village

The Fair is an amateur but ambitious affair which depends entirely on the goodwill of the whole village and as such it brings us all together once a year. While we have had many wonderful Arena displays, much more memorable have been the birds of prey who have flown off, the horses who have refused to follow orders and pigs and terriers who have gone in the wrong direction.

The Fair has been running for 70 years since its revival and has raised a great deal of money for many local causes. It has been an Abinger tradition for many, many years – long may it continue.



Duck herding 2025

**We welcome children  
from  
2-5 years old  
Monday to Friday  
sessions.**

We also have breakfast and  
afterschool clubs available.

For more information or to  
arrange a visit please  
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**ABINGER COMMON  
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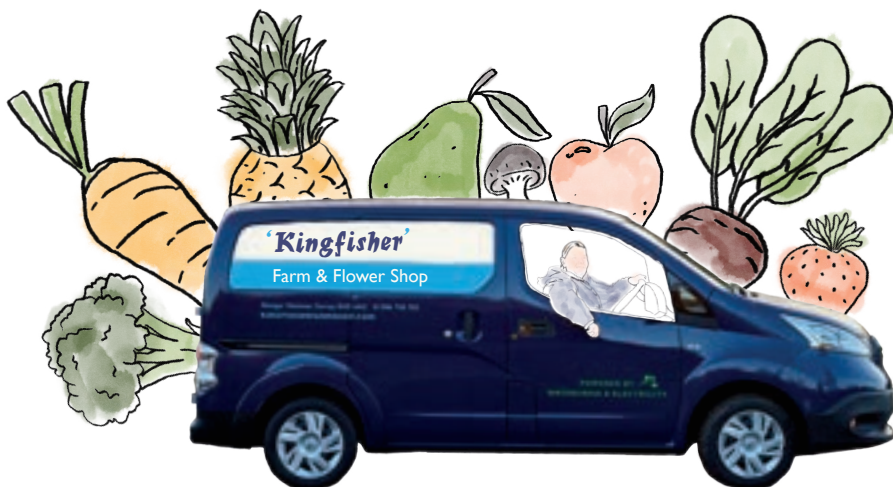
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# We hope you have **FUN** at **THE FAIR!**

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