



Ansty's New Maypole

Tallest in England Claim

Villagers' Busy Bank Holiday

With the break of dawn on Whit Monday Ansty became a hive of industry. The men, wearing working clothes, could be seen hurrying towards the centre of the village, where, for over a century, a Maypole has towered in the middle of the road. The villagers are proud of their Maypole, which, they claim, is the tallest in the country, and jealous of their rights in connection with it. That day they were to erect a new Maypole, the fourth which has stood at that spot, and young and old were eager to give all the help that lay in their power.

The new Maypole had been fashioned from one of the most magnificent larch trees on Lord Arundell's estate, and was 84ft in height. On the top was placed a weather vane, and a 1937 two-shilling piece was hammered into the wood. Earlier in the week the villagers had sawn down the major portion of the old structure, leaving a stump to be removed so that one maypole should succeed the other within 24 hours. The tree was brought from the estate on a huge timber waggon, the biggest in the district. The first Maypole had to be hauled from Wardour woods by man power alone. Always the work in connection with the Maypole and Maypole festivities has been carried out voluntarily and the people of Ansty boast that no one has ever received any payment. The four trees have all been given by the Lords of the Manor.

Villagers Make Merry

The tackle by means of which the Maypole was raised was lent by Mr. J. G. Morrison, M.F.H., and was in charge of Mr. W. Burt. As soon as the Maypole was in a vertical position, and had been secured, for the meantime, by huge wire ropes, a tremendous cheer went up, and Mrs. J. Power, the wife of the village licensee, smashed a bottle of beer upon the massive base of the timber. Flags were then run up by pulleys and the men proceeded to complete the work of filling in the eight feet deep hole with concrete.

Once the work of the day had been concluded the villagers, and friends from the surrounding district, made merry. Drinks were supplied to all, there was Maypole dancing to music by Ansty Band, which has also existed for over 100 years, and general festivities in which everyone joined.

The arrangements were made by Mr. E. S. Brain who thanks all helpers.

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