

STATHAM FESTIVAL.

All Records Broken By The Tenth Celebration.

THE CHARACTERS.

The sudden spell of hot, sunny weather during Whitsuntide resulted on Monday in an unprecedented success for the tenth annual Statham Festival. The festival was started by Councillor Frederick Lockyer, of the Star Hotel, Statham, a lover of children, and enjoyed the unique distinction of being successfully continued throughout the war. The respected Councillor passed away last year after a long illness, but it has now been continued by his widow, Mrs. S. A. Lockyer, with the valuable assistance of their son, Mr. William Lockyer.

Last year's was particularly successful from the financial viewpoint, a credit balance of £11 7s. 3½d. being increased to £22 8s., despite the fact that the expenditure amounted to £16 9s. 5½d. At the same time no attempt is made to secure a profit, and the promoters would be quite content if the revenue merely met expenses.

The festival commenced, as festivals will, with a fancy-costume and floral procession, plentifully besprinkled with decorated luries drawn by horses kindly lent by the Lymn Urban District Council. The leading character was Miss Fowler, who always takes part in the festival. Last year she appeared as Mrs. Caudle; this year she wore a patchwork gown and large floral hat. There were three tableaux. In the foremost the Queen of the Fairies was seen surrounded by her court, who, arrayed in silver-decked white, with gauzy wings, reposed beneath a canopy of laburnum blossoms and foliage. A group, emblematic of the Allied nations, whose banners were freely displayed, was followed by a detachment of older children, who appeared to depict the same idea. The procession left Cross-brow, Statham, at half-past one, and progressed along Booth's-hill and down Eagle-brow to Lymn Cross. There, the crowd was found to be greater than ever before in the history of the festival, even approaching the dimensions of last year's Lymn Festival itself.

Councillor H. Appleton, one of Statham's representatives on the local governing body and who throughout the day proved an indefatigable master of the ceremonies, delivered a brief address. He said that he was pleased to be able to be in his native ward that day as its representative. All owed a great debt to the late Councillor Lockyer's widow and family, who had been practically responsible for that day's festival, it having been their wish and desire that it should be continued in remembrance of Councillor Lockyer, who had been a man held in high esteem in their little ward. He voiced the hope that all would do their best in the future to assist the widow and family in carrying that wish into execution, and concluded by thanking all who had in any way—whether by subscriptions or otherwise—assisted in promoting the success of the function.

Mr. William Gregson, of 1, Oldfield-road, one of Statham's respected old inhabitants, also thanked one and all who had assisted in making the festival a success, and referred feelingly to the loss they had sustained in the death of Councillor Lockyer, who had always taken such a great interest in the festival.

The Morris dancers, in their gay-coloured ribbons and bells, gave a short performance. They included Mr. Edward Rowles, excellently disguised as "the old lady," and acquitted themselves with great success. The Warrington Borough Band, conducted by Mr. Thomas Griffin, then played "the National Anthem," and the procession moved on. At Cross-brow, Statham, the Morris dancing was repeated.

AT THE FIELD.

Having passed through the bedagged village and arrived at the large field adjoining Statham Crossings, the procession broke up, and a very gay spectacle the crowd presented, sprinkled with the Welsh, Scotch, Garland and Morris dancers, Lymn footballers, fairies and other characters. Misses Annie and Ethel Dalton acted as judges of the costumes, and the special prizes for the best were awarded as follows: 1st, Elsie Cook (Butterfly); 2nd, Harold Clarke (Cap and Bells); 3rd, Vera Cooke (Little Boy Blue). Every child in Statham, of course, received a prize—chiefly toys—and an orange, and a substantial tea in the Statham Schools. The old folk were also entertained to tea, the men receiving a gift of tobacco and each of the ladies a ticket for groceries.

Both in the afternoon and in the evening, the costumed children entered the oval enclosure and went through a series of pretty dances, which they performed with perfect ease and grace. The Maypole was plaited amid applause, and both national and folk dances were exhibited. For a second year, the children had been trained by Misses Edith Wibberley and Elsie Clarke. Last year these ladies each received an umbrella as a memento of their services; this year the gifts were neat wristlet watches.

After these merrymakings, the band played until dusk for public dancing, which was joined in by a large concourse. Practically everybody stayed until towards ten, and as a result the later trains in the Warrington and Manchester directions were crowded to their utmost capacity—in fact, so great was the congestion, it was scarcely possible to breathe in them.

THE CHARACTERS.

The following were the characters:—

Maypole Dancers.—D. Burrows, S. Atherton, M. Field, D. Field, E. Hinton, L. Hill, E. Gilberts, A. Rushforth, O. Clare, M. Riley, E. Atherton, M. Stirton, M. Hartley, M. Hinton, I. Smith, M. Finney, M. Griffiths and E. Owen.

Scotch Dancers.—D. Clark, M. Bell, M. Lanning, N. Rushforth, A. Struthers and D. Hewitt.

Welsh Dancers.—A. Atherton, M. Bell, A. Field and C. Riley.

Handkerchief Dancers.—D. Clark, M. Bell, D. Hewitt, E. Sharples, A. Struthers, A. Bate, N. Rushforth and M. Lanning.

Garland Dancers.—C. Riley, A. Atherton, A. Field, A. Bate, E. Struthers, B. Burrows, E. Atherton, L. Bell, M. Bell, E. Gilberts, E. Sharples and L. Hill.

Fairies.—W. Moss, D. Struthers, D. Watts, G. Drinkwater, L. Wibberley, E. Thomason, A. Hartley and E. Clare.

Morris Dancers.—M. E. Rowles (old dame), E. Clare (accompanist), R. Clark, A. Riley, R. Hartley, F. Stirton, K. Lockyer, E. Wibberley, H. Struthers, W. Watts, A. Struthers, B. Appleton, A. Massey, H. Taylor, G. Finney and R. Leigh.

Others.—Miss Fowler (patchwork), E. Cooke (butterfly), V. Cooke (little boy blue), H. Clarke (cap and bells), and E. Leather and A. Atherton (teddy bears).

THE COMMITTEE.

The Committee for the Festival has been as follows:—Chairman, Mr. Wm. Lockyer; joint-secretaries, Mrs. S. A. Lockyer and Mr. W. Lockyer; trainers, Mr. Edward Rowles, Misses Edith Wibberley and Elsie Clarke; other members, Mrs. T. Appleton, Messrs. Bert Burrows, B. Drinkwater, J. Finney, A. Massey, Edward Rushforth and Sam Wibberley.