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**West Sussex County Times 16 July 1881 Fete Ancient Order of Foresters**

12 July 1881 FORESTERS' GRAND FETE

The annual gala of "Court Holmbush" of the Ancient Order of Foresters was held at Horsham on Tuesday, when, favoured with charming weather, the affair was an immense success. The day's proceedings commenced by meeting at the Crown Inn, where a procession in which a number of brothers from neighbouring courts joined, was formed, and, preceded by the Horsham Town Band and the Rifle piccolo band, and with flags and banners flying, they marched through the principal streets of the town and then proceeded to Springfield Meadow kindly lent by Mr A Agate. Here several shows, knock-'em-downs, merry-go-rounds, shooting galleries etc. were erected, and those present were not long before they found something to amuse them.

At two o'clock dinner was served in a spacious marquee by Bro Young of the Crown Inn, at which about 320 sat down.

Sir Henry Fletcher Bart MP presided and was received with loud cheers on entering the tent. He was supported by Lieut. Bostock, Messrs W Lintott, Lintott Jun, J Moon, D Mitchell, W L Thomas, J H Ashburner, R Stotesbury, We Weller, Nelson, H Carter, J Grinstead, C Rowland, etc. The dinner gave every satisfaction. Sir Henry toasted the Queen, The Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Army, Navy and Reserves at great length.

The rest of the day was spent in the open where every arrangement had been made for the amusement of all. Towards the evening crowds flocked to the scene, which presented a very lively appearance. The efforts of the Town Band (under Mr Garman) and which played for dancing being much appreciated, and large numbers indulged in this pleasing, though rather warm exercise in this tropical weather.

*The Ancient Order of Foresters began in 1834, but its origins lie in a much older society called the Royal Foresters formed in the 18th century. Meeting in Leeds, this seems at first to have been a purely sociable society until the members decided that they had a duty to assist their fellow men who fell into need "as they walked through the forests of life". This 'need' arose principally when a breadwinner fell ill, could not work and, therefore, received no wages. Illness and death left families financially distressed and often destitute. Relief of this need has been the main purpose of the Foresters throughout their long history. It was achieved by members paying, initially, a few pence a week into a common fund from which sick pay and funeral grants could be drawn*

*By the end of the 19th century, competition from other societies had grown. In particular, societies established by employers made membership of their scheme a condition of employment. This had consequences for numerical membership, as had the Depression years between the World Wars. The formation of the Welfare State in 1948 had a similar effect, but the Foresters kept going, eventually producing a range of financial products designed to meet changing needs in the changing world of the late 20th century.*