

Carols on the Green and Christmas Lights

On 19th December 1967, the first Carols on the Green event was organised by the former Hadlow Green WI. The Hadlow Green WI minutes on 5th July 1967 record that "Mr Williams [Hadlow Green WI choir master] had asked Mrs Neal [President] if the Choir could give a recital and also if some of the husbands could attend. It was decided to ask Mr Williams in December and offer him approximately half an hour." A personal diary records about the event: 'It was a fine winter's evening & the suggestion to gather outside Willaston Memorial Hall [where Hadlow Green WI met on the 1st Tuesday of every month] to sing Christmas Carols was much enjoyed by all.'

In 1968, it was reported that about 300 people had attended in not very good weather. (Hadlow Green WI minutes).

For several years, the 1st Willaston Girl Guides set a nativity scene for Carols on the Green. The press cutting below shows Sally Legg dressed as Mary on the donkey, which was led by Ruth Macdonald. Their arrival was met by all the children singing 'Away in a Manger'.



Eileen Macdonald remembers: 'One year when we had a donkey in the nativity, he got a bit restless and was kicking the stage, not in a nasty way – he had just had enough!'

This tradition has continued ever since.

The lights on the tree on the Green were initiated by Hadlow Green WI to illuminate the Carols on the Green and give the village a festive feel in December. It is not clear exactly when the lights on the tree were first installed but Hadlow Green WI minutes record on 15th November 1963 that:

‘There will be a Council Meeting re the coloured lights on the Green Nov 25th. Mrs Leck is dealing with this.’

The source of power for the lights was from the top of the street lamp on Hadlow Road, until a specific power supply was installed at the base of the tree (date unknown). For the streetlight to work for the rest of the year, the lights had to be removed each year. There was no light on the corner of the Green outside the Memorial Hall so the coloured lights on the tree illuminated the whole area.

Mrs Eileen Macdonald (Member of Hadlow Green WI and WR&CS committee) would phone Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council to arrange for the lights to be put onto the tree in November and switched on in advance of Carols on the Green. (Source: Eileen Macdonald personal memories)

Ruth Hampshire remembers: *‘I recall getting wrapped up with hats, scarves and wellies and tramping along to the Village Green in the snow. There were refreshments of soup, hot dogs and jacket potatoes and the carol singing was led by the ‘Hadlow Green WI Choir’.*