

# Hopping at Somerden Farm, Chiddingstone



Poppy Jenner and Mrs Borer hop-picking at Somerden Farm, c.1930.  
Image: P2002.421



Mabel Seal hop-picking with Tiny the dog. Sister Olive far right and mother Clara between them. Probably at Hale's hop garden, Chiddingstone, c.1919.  
Image: P2019.3634



Loading hop pockets from Somerden Farm at Penshurst Station, c.1920. In the picture: Henry Withers on left, Bert Seal on right, and the Station Master. Image: P2002.422

## Queen of the Hops

Celebrations took place at the end of the picking. The 'Queen of Hops' was 'crowned' and everyone 'treated' the pole puller, and wore flowers in their hats. There was a picnic laid out with special treats along with soft drinks and beer for the adults. Everyone joined in with singing and dancing. There were many songs which varied from place to place, such as the traditional 'The Jovial Man of Kent'; to those that were favourites where Londoners picked, such as 'Roll out the Barrel'.



Queen of the Hops Party at Somerden Farm, late 1940s. In the picture are Mrs Inkpen, Lou Jeffery and David Hale.  
Image: P2002.452



Cart loaded with hop pockets from Somerden at Penshurst Station, c.1940. The carter on the right is Will Withers. Image: P2002.417

Pauline Broussard remembers...

*"... the cold bright mornings when we set off for Somerden Farm. When we arrived, we found our bin, one of two together, which was made of sacking and folded like a camp bed. We sat or stood at the side of the bin and a man came along with a long pole with a hook on the end and pulled down the hops. You had to mind that you did not get embedded in them! My grandmother and my mother picked hard all day long. Oh! The smell! Strong and bitter, like the beer for which it was an essential ingredient. And their hands! Oh, so black!" 1957*



The Crouch family at Somerden Farm, 1957. Photographer: Pauline Broussard. Image: P2018.3616