

Hopping in Penshurst



Warren Farm and Elliott's Hop Garden

Mrs E.M.E. Rose remembers... "A few years ago (c.1950s), I went to a Home Farm for a day at Penshurst where the locals were picking at a shilling (5p) a bushel. One could earn in a day what our whole family used to earn during the season (£11 for 2-3 weeks hopping). I wonder though, does it buy as much?" From: *Old Days in the Kent Hop Gardens*. The West Kent W.I. News, 1962.



Lady seated on the hop bin with baby kept safe in a tea chest serving as a playpen, Warren Farm, Penshurst, c.1900. Image: P2003.797



Young ladies hop-picking whilst perched on the hop bin at Elliott's Hop Garden, Penshurst, c.1910. Image: P2002.498



Women and children picking into a drift of hop bins at Warren Farm, Penshurst, c.1910. Image: P2003.798

Note the pole across the top of the bin. Prior to the use of stringing, hops were grown up poles. These were 'pulled' and brought to the pickers at the end of the alley where they were rested across the top of the bin. This method is not seen on later photographs.



Dick Goodwin unloading pokes at the oast at Elliott's Farm, Penshurst, c.1920.

Image: P2002.503

Poke or Pocket

Pokes are coarse sacks into which hops are measured from the bins. A poke traditionally held 10 bushels and were very light and the old horse-drawn wagons could take an enormous load. Empty pokes might be used for a variety of purposes. They were ideal for sitting on during the midday meal break or for covering a picker's head when it rained.

Pockets are the long sacks into which the dried hops are pressed in the oast, ready for marketing.



Filling pokes at Elliott's Farm, Penshurst. The lady on the left of the bin, Doris Goodwin, is recording the measure, Ivy Warren is holding the poke, c.1943.

Image: P2002.502