

EGREMONT CRAB FAIR

Established 1267

**Friday 20 and Saturday 21
September 2024**



Official programme of events
Timetable • History • Articles • Interviews

LIST OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Crab Fair would not be possible without the hard work of our committee of dedicated volunteers.

This year, these were:

Life member

Ken Watson

Life member

John Dixon

President

Steve Foster

Chairman

Callum Scott

Secretary

Ian Curwen

Treasurer

Steve Foster

Assistant treasurer

Dean Cruden

Field manager

Nick Jeffrey

Assistant field manager

Stewart Kenyon

Stall manager

Stacey Scott

Saturday night manager

Kevin Brown

Health and safety manager

Daniel Nixon

Communications

Ian Curwen

Rachael Grealish

Official photographer

Robert Haile

Dog show

Graham Hogg

Ferret show

Jane Butt

Committee members

N Armstrong

A Gribbin

E Gribbin

D Lewthwaite

C Reay

B Hudson

A Milling

R Naylor

GH Cordona

E Ralls

G Bell

K Blaney

M Coiles

S Whelan

S Morris

T Anderson

V Barnes

S Swan

L Coan

S Fleming

L Adams

Junior members

M Scott

M Scott

Crab Fair helpers

M White

A Tubman

T Harrington

H Hail

T Porter

L Scott

C Cockelty

M White

D Swinburn

B Shutt

T Norman

Sports committee

C Dunbar

D Campbell

M Campbell

C Scott

CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

Thank you for picking up this programme and taking an interest in this year's event. It was great to return last year after such a long gap, and I know that this year's event will be even better.

I truly believe that the Crab Fair is the highlight of the calendar each year - not just in Egremont but in the surrounding villages and communities too. Come rain or shine, people turn out to support our events and make the Fair the very best it can be.

If you've seen our fundraising page on social media, you'll know that in these challenging economic times, we have to work really hard for every pound of funding. So if you have given any money to help fund the fair, or have attended any of our fundraising events, then thank you. These really do mean we can put on a better event. If you haven't yet, there is still time. Take a look at our Facebook page. Even sharing our content helps us reach a wider audience.

We were delighted with how last year went. As our first year, with a lot of new committee members, it was a busy and sometimes chaotic Fair to organise. But we managed it. This year, we've been able to look at what went well and what could have been better and have made changes.

One of the most notable is that we've added a lot more attractions to the Crab Fair field, to make it bigger and better. This includes working with Bee Unique to bring their inflatable fun to the field. We hope you enjoy it.

As always, there are lots of sporting and other events taking place in the run up to the Fair weekend. The details can be found later in this programme. The Fair proper takes place on the weekend of Friday 20 September and Saturday 21 September 2024.

It starts with Dancing in the Street on Friday evening and ends with the World Gurning Championships and Crab Fest events. Needless to say, there's plenty in between to please everyone.

This year, we've said goodbye to a key member of our committee for a number of years, John Dixon. We'd like to wish John all the very best and thank him for everything he's done for the Fair over the years.

All that's left to say is I hope you enjoy this year's event and that the weather plays its part.

Thanks

Callum Scott
Chairman

HISTORY OF THE FAIR

Egremont Crab Fair was first held in 1267. It is believed that the fair was founded when the Lord of Egremont started a tradition of giving away crab apples. This tradition remains a central part of the modern-day fair, with the Parade of the Apple Cart, where apples are thrown to the crowds who line the Main Street hoping to catch an apple.

In 1267 King Henry III granted a Royal Charter to Thomas de Multon (1247-1294), Lord of the Barony of Egremont, for a weekly market on Wednesdays and an annual fair to be held on the 7th, 8th and 9th of September.



Little is known about the events of the Crab Fair until the nineteenth century. Cock fighting and bull baiting, nasty but popular lakeland sports, were popular attractions at the local fairs, especially in mediaeval times.

A typical Crab Fair in the nineteenth century would begin at dawn with the erection of the greasy pole "at the fish stone by the Market Cross". The pole was thirty foot tall and greased with lard. The objective was to climb to the top and retrieve the prize. Originally the prize was a hat, probably a top hat. Over time, the prize changed to a leg of mutton. While the prize has changed, the tradition continues to this day.

In the nineteenth century, events included street racing, Cumberland wrestling, quoiting and snap pitching, horse racing, bicycle racing, hound dog trials, pipe smoking, eating biskeys and treacle, dialect singing, and gurning. We're proud that many of these events remain to this day.

The origin of gurning remains a mystery, but it is believed to have originated from the mockery of a village idiot. We're not sure if that's true, but we're happy to continue the tradition.

Over time gurning has become a much bigger part of the fair, and for many the World Gurning Championships are the Crab Fair. Multi-time champions, like Tommy Mattinson and Claire Lister, would doubtless agree.



EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE FAIR

There are lots of events taking place in the run up to the Fair. These include the disco to crown the Crab Fair Queen, and lots of our sporting events.

Friday 13 September 2024
Crab Fair Queen Disco, under 16s
7pm to 9pm, La'al Club, Egremont

Saturday 14 September 2024
Horse and Pony Leaping
10am, Lane Head, Sandwith

Sunday 15 September 2024
Clay Pigeon Shooting
Details to be confirmed.
Please check our Facebook page
for final details.

Tuesday 17 September 2024
Multi Terrain Race
Entries from 5:30pm.
Race starts 6:30pm,
Egremont War Memorial

Wednesday 18 September 2024
Fairground opens
5pm, Chapel Street Car Park,
Egremont

Duck Race
6pm, meet at Egremont skate park.
Entries on the night.



DANCING IN THE STREET

Dancing in the Street was first introduced to the Crab Fair in the days following the Foot and Mouth outbreak.

This year, we've got a new look and feel for the event, which will be hosted by the one and only, Stella the Fella.

We spoke to Stella's alter-ego, Stuart Fleming, to find out what's in store.

"I think Friday night at the Crab Fair is a great event, and over the years, we've seen some amazing acts. I used to be involved in the Fair, but dropped out a few years ago. I am delighted to be back involved and am looking forward to a brilliant Friday evening.

"Callum asked me to get involved, and told me they could use some of Stella's creative flair to bring some magic to Friday night - well how could she resist!

"When I spoke to people about Friday night, it was clear that what they wanted was a party, and that's what Sam Davidson and I will be bringing. We've got some brilliant local acts who are guaranteed to get people up and moving.

"They range from the Ultimate Shania Experience - which will be a fantastic follow up to the OG Shania's appearance at Glastonbury this year, to the amazing Committed to Rock Choir - and I've got no idea how we'll squeeze them all on to the stage.

"We've also got Sneaky Finch, Boomin and loads more. Sam and Stella will both be doing a turn too, so it's going to be a great night.

"Stella doesn't do as many gigs as she used to, so it's well worth coming out to see and cheer her on. And as well as all of the above, we've also got new food stalls, street entertainers, face painters, the wheelbarrow race, pipe smoking competition and more."

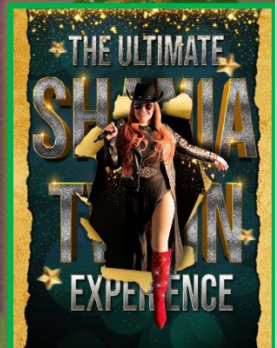
As Stuart, says, it's going to be a great night. This year's Friday night didn't look certain, but the generous donations of the community and the three Egremont pubs - the Kings Arms, Wheatsheaf and the Blue Bell have really helped. Thanks to you all.



EGREMONT CRAB FAIR

PROUDLY PRESENTS

DANCING IN THE STREET



FRIDAY 20TH
SEPTEMBER
EGREMONT MAIN STREET
FROM 5PM



PERFORMANCES BY AND HOSTED BY SAM DAVIDSON & STELLA THE FELLA

FEATURING

**BOOMIN - JENNY BALL - THE ULTIMATE SHANIA EXPERIENCE
SNEAKY FINCH - COMMITTED 2 ROCK CHOIR**

FAIR RIDES - FOOD STALLS - CAKE STALL - FACE PAINTING - STREET ENTERTAINERS - STALLS
WHEELBARROW RACE - PIPE SMOKING CONTEST
& MUCH MORE!

SATURDAY MORNING EVENTS

On Crab Fair Saturday, you'll find lots taking place on Egremont Main Street and at the Crab Fair sports field.

On Egremont Main Street, there is lots to keep you entertained, including events and the street market. Don't forget that your favourite shops and pubs will be open as normal and are a big part of the Crab Fair experience.

9am to 10am	Street racing starting at Dent View. Sponsored by GoLocal stores, Orgill
9:30am	Blessing the fair
9am to 2pm	Street market
9am to 10pm	Fairground
9:30am to 2pm	Vintage bikes and cars
10:30am	Greasy pole
11:30am	Riding the boundary
12:30pm	The parade of the apple cart
9am to 1pm	Main Street stage entertainment to include local dancing groups and music

Please note that all horses taking part in any events must be supervised and ridden at all times. Any unruly horses will be removed from the Fair and will be asked to return to the start point immediately. This is to ensure everyone's safety.



SATURDAY AT THE SPORTS FIELD

Following the Parade of the Apple Cart, the focus of the fair moves to the Crab Fair sports field, where events have been taking place throughout the morning.

In the field you'll be able to find an array of sports, entertainments, food and craft, crafts and horticulture tents, street entertainers and much more.

It really is the place to be.

9am **Horse events start**



11am **Horticulture tent judging**

Look out for all the details of the categories you can enter on our Facebook page. Whether you've got a giant onion or can bake a mean cake, we want your entries. There are categories for adults and children alike.



10am **Dog Show events**
Hosted by Graham Hogg



Fairground

12:30pm **Sports events start**

The main field is the place to be for an array of sporting events including running, cycling and much more. Competitors come from far and wide to try and lift the trophy for their event.



12:30pm **Bee Unique arena opens**
New this year!

We're working with the fantastic charity Bee Unique, who support autistic children and their families. They're bringing their inflatable slides and toys to the field, to offer our younger guests an amazing time.

2:30pm **Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling**

One of the most traditional elements of the fair is this local form of wrestling. It's always a great spectacle.



1pm **Ferret Show events start**

Hosted by Jane Butt

3pm **Wheelbarrow race**

3:20pm **Egg throwing**

A surprisingly competitive event. How far can you and your partner throw an egg without cracking it?



3:45pm **Children's pets**

Plenty of prizes on offer for our children's best friends.

4pm **Novelty dog show**

An amusing end to events on the sports field.



All day **Walking with alpacas**

Children's activities

Walkabout street entertainers

Fair rides

Market stalls

Food



EGREMONT CRAB FAIR

PROUDLY PRESENTS

CRAB FEST **24**

SATURDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER

CRAB FAIR FIELD FROM 1_{PM}



ONLY ALCOHOL
PURCHASED ON
THE FIELD WILL BE
ALLOWED



ACCESS ALL
AREAS

ADULTS: £7

SENIOR CITIZENS: £4

5-16: £3

UNDER 5'S FREE!

FEATURING

ALMOST PINK

DJ RATMAN - MISFITZ - JAMESON COVERS BAND

COLLISION - DANNY DUNNERY BAND

THE ANTICS - THE MUSTANGZ

BEER TENT - LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
FOOD STALLS - CRAFT TENT
SPORTING ACTIVITIES - DOG SHOW
FERRET SHOW
CHILDRENS ENTERTAINMENT
FAIR RIDES - ALPACCAS
AND MUCH MORE
ALSO JOINING US ON THE FIELD THIS YEAR:
BEE UNIQUE

SCAN THE QR
CODE TO GET
YOUR
TICKETS NOW



OR VISIT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE
FOR DETAILS

THE WORLD GURNING CHAMPIONSHIPS

To gurn means to 'snarl like a dog, look savage, distort the countenance'. This competition is extremely popular and is the highlight of the whole Crab Fair for most people. Contestants have to pull a grotesque face through a horse collar, known as a braffin.

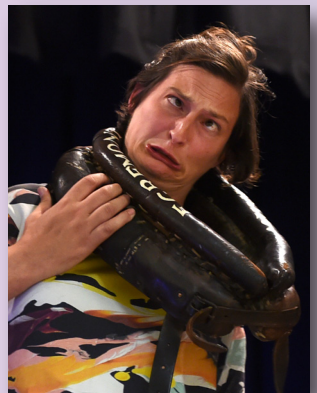
Through the centuries the event has been reported by newspapers under various titles. In 1852 it was described as Grinn for tobacco, in 1884 it was more colloquially known as Grinning for 'bacca. In the twentieth century it became Gurning through a braffin and is now known as the World Gurning Competition.

The origin of gurning is obscure. It is reported to have originated from the mockery of the village idiot - the townsfolk would throw a horse's collar over him and make him pull funny faces in exchange for a few pints of ale. How much truth lies in this story is questionable.

Other stories include when a drunken farmer arrived home to find a most discontented wife, he shouted "stop gurning, woman!" and thrust a horse collar over her head. At this her facial expressions, to say nothing of the language, became even worse.

The use of tobacco became common in the 17th century, and was either chewed or powdered and inhaled as snuff. It is probable that Grinning for 'bacca originated from these times - certainly it was described as an ancient tradition by the Cumberland Paquet in 1852.

The evening amusements, along with much singing and dancing until the small hours of the morning, brought the Crab Fair to an end for another year.



THE WORLD GURNING CHAMPIONSHIPS



In the Crab Fair programme of 1884 it was stated the fair was recognised as a charitable institution. Tea, bread, etc. were distributed amongst the poor and the war widows of the town. In these times it was common for donations of hats, ties, toys, etc. to be given by local tradesmen to be used as prizes for the various events.

In recent years people have travelled from all over the UK and the world to attend the championship, either to take part or just soak up the evening.

Modern World Gurning

There has only been two periods of time the Gurning has not taken place - during World War 2 and a recent four-year hiatus due to COVID and the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Tommy Mattinson has won the most titles as World Gurning Champion - taking his 18th win in 2023 - a win that was marked with recognition and awards from Guinness World Records.

About his win, Tommy said: "It feels bloody amazing to have been given the Guinness World Record, to have it updated in the book, what a night, just what a night."



Not only did Tommy walk away with the win and the world record, but he was awarded with the Gordon Blacklock memorial trophy. The longtime gurner passed away in 2020, but had competed alongside Tommy for decades in the competition.

Tommy gave an emotional speech talking about his work and friendship with Gordon and said: "Gordon was a great gurner, a great friend, we toured and gurned together - it was amazing. I really miss him this year, I always turn around and Gordon's always there at the back so it's been surreal to not have him there."



TREASURE HUNT

Think you know the Crab Fair? Well our Treasure Hunt will help reveal whether you're a super-fan.

The clues below will lead you to well known Crab Fair locations. When you visit these locations, you find part of a code. When you get all of the answers, the code should become clear.

Then bring this page to a member of the Crab Fair committee in the Field on Saturday and they'll swap it for a special Crab Fair prize.

Field clues

1. Where furry friends show their skills
2. Here you'll see our runners and riders
3. Could this location Bee any more fun?
4. Where handmade treasures come to be judged

Main Street clues

5. Where talents perform for your entertainment
6. The building where faces twist and grimace for gold
7. Follow the car where the fruit flies through the sky

Answers:

Your name:

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CRAB FAIR

The Crab Fair wouldn't happen without the support of so many people - from the committee members who plan and run the event, to the businesses and individuals who put their hand in their pockets to support what we're trying to do, to those who take part in the sporting, horticultural and craft events and not forgetting those who get up and stage and sing, dance or even pull their ugliest face.

Here are just a few ways you can help us:

- **Turn up** - the most important thing you can do is come along to the Fair. The more who attend, the better the event. This also means taking part in things like the Greasy Pole, our competitions and events.
- **Donate a few quid** - you can do this in one of our many donation buckets or by supporting our fundraising events or page. Search our Facebook page for more details on these.
- **Get involved** - we always need more people to help make the Fair happen. This could range from being a volunteer on the weekend, offering specialist skills, or even joining the committee and helping things run smoothly.
- **Like and share** - the more people who know about what we're doing, the better. So tell your friends, show them this programme or comment on or share our content on Facebook.



Thanks to Mike McKenzie for the professional photos in this programme.

BEAT THE CRAB FAIR

We know people love the Crab Fair, but we want to find the most dedicated of fans - the cream of the crop - those people who soak up the event from start to finish and who want to be involved in everything.

If you complete all six events listed below, and get a stamp, you'll be awarded a special Crab Fair prize. These are limited in number and only available to the first few who achieve greatness.

Complete any six of the events listed below and then bring your completed form to a member of the committee on Saturday evening at the Gurning and you'll get your special prize.

Stamps are available from the registration point for the event. If you catch an apple, bring this to Emma Ralls Wealth Management to collect your stamp.

Eligible events:

- Catch an apple from the apple cart • Compete in the wheelbarrow race
- Compete in a foot or cycling race • Compete in the horn blowing
- Compete in the World Gurning Championships
- Attempt to climb the Greasy Pole • Try Cumberland Wrestling
- Compete in the hunting songs event at the World Gurning Championships

Event 1	Event 2
Event 3	Event 4
Event 5	Event 6

Your name: