

Easter Dole, 1912



The annual distribution of bread, cheese and later tea, attracted large crowds at the beginning of the 20th century. Originally given at the church door on Easter Sunday, the event caused so much disturbance that the Dole was moved to Easter Monday and subsequently, and to this day, to the old workhouse. It was always a popular occasion and attracted visitors from afar. In 1869, 537 loaves and 460lbs of cheese were given, and 140 families were also given financial relief. In recent years about 60 people receive the gift annually.

Len Smith, Baker, Easter Dole, 1950



Len Smith, village baker, prepares loaves for the Easter Dole in 1950

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Bell Ringers



The church tower holds eight bells, one has the date 1599, but has been recast since that time, others are dated 1712 or later. There has been a team of bell ringers, calling themselves the Biddenden Youth, for many years. This is the team in 1954 and includes the ring master Bert Deacon, Ray Watts, Harry Baker, Bert Payne, Frank Goodearl, Geoff Walters and Cyril Deacon.

Ladies' Hockey Club, c.1912



A ladies' hockey team was formed in about 1912. They played in a field below the church, coached by Mr Raven, the curate, who was also referee at matches. After WWI a new team was formed and played on a field near Dashmonden. In one year, the team played 16 matches, winning 14 and drawing two. A mixed team was formed later; it won silver medals in 1938, but was disbanded during WWII.