

SUMMER FETE

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It was Friday 26 June 2009. The morning began with doubtful weather. However, it had cleared up for the summer fete which began at the primary school at 2.35.

The fete was to begin with the County Dancing team which is the only reason why I went. The sun was now giving warmth over the huge bouncy castle on the field and on the stalls on the playground. The usual stalls, cuddly toys, second hand videos and books, plants, tombola, the ice cream van and cakes and drinks in the hall. Nothing exciting but, at least there was no entrance fee.

Years ago, this school summer fete would have different acts every half hour such as a brass band and Irish dancers but, like everything else, there were cutbacks. As a result, this fete did not make much money and was probably a waste of time, effort and resources.

Just after the scheduled time for starting, all the classes in the school came out down the few steps to the playground, class by class, some children in twos holding hands. They all sat down in a square ring to accommodate the dancers who were to perform in the centre. This procedure seemed to take a long time.

The children sat on the ground, knees apart and ankles crossed. Their ages ranged from five years old to about eleven years of age. Several adults were present taking photographs of the children sitting on the Tarmac and, later, of the dancers. The boys were in dark gray short trousers and a white shirt some with a navy blue jumper. The girls wore either a blue and white small squared gingham dress or a white top perhaps, with a navy blue cardigan, and some wore a gray skirt.

Having four sides to this square ring, boys and girls were sitting opposite each other. Some boys were laughing at pointing discreetly at the girls and whispering in a companion's ear. Some girls sitting in this position were showing their knickers. Some of the girls were very pretty and in years to come would break boys' hearts as they do.

I was concerned that adults were taking pictures of the group sitting and wondered whether photo processing laboratories would print pictures when some of the girls had their legs open. But today people have digital cameras. It is strange that even parents cannot take photographs of their children acting in a school play but can take photographs in an outside event, such as this one, when such outdoor pictures are more likely to encourage paedophilia. I would not want to take any photographs of these sitting children because it would be a permanent record of indiscreet pictures.

There was one woman with a camera with a zoom lens. She was moving about using her zoom to photograph the seated children. She was waiting to photograph a pretty blonde girl in a gray skirt and the woman was becoming agitated. Then the girl moved showing red knickers and the camera clicked. The woman turned away immediately as if guilty.

I thought of the woman on Sandown Esplanade with her binoculars trained on the naked child.

The photographer moved to another side of the square concentrating her view on two girls sitting next to each other. They were probably about nine years of age. One wore a gingham dress and had black knee length socks. The other was in a gray skirt. The camera was ready. The woman was acting furtively and had a strip of sweat on her cheek.

The girl in the gingham dress moved showing her thin white knickers with a hint of pink. The camera clicked. Again the woman then turned away suspiciously. She looked back and raised her camera. The girl in the gray skirt was showing her brilliant whites. The camera clicked. The woman moved away quickly.

The dancers appeared in their white tops and long blue skirts with two horizontal strips of white along the bottom. One blond girl fell on her bottom in the first dance. The camera clicked. Another dancing girl had her dress slip right down showing all her underwear. She pulled it up as if she had no care in the world and carried on. The camera clicked.

After the dancing, I met up with this lady and asked her if she had any children or grandchildren at this school. She answered no and said that she had no children neither had any brother, sister or had children. She seemed very nervous and I was left wondering why she had taken these photographs. I asked if she were a journalist or a photographer for any newspaper or magazine. She said no very angrily and walked away and then began to run out of the school grounds.

What should be the regulations about taking photographs of children?

Was the photographer doing wrong and, if so, what is her wrong and what action should be taken against her? Bear in mind that some trashy newspapers take photographs of female celebrities struggling to get out of cars in miniskirts and these photographs appear in newspapers.

If a mother or father was aware of what this photographer was doing and doing to their own child what rights do they have?

The behaviour of the photographer and her eventual running away indicates her guilt, doesn't it?

Is her behaviour therefore that of a pervert and, if so, does this not contradict the claim that only men are sexual perverts?.

If you compare her with the woman with the binoculars at Sandown Bay what judgments do you make?

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