

RIDING TO A BYGONE ERA

A family with a passion for restoration
have created a touring funfair filled
with colour and nostalgia

THE FAINT STRAINS of a pipe organ waft across the park as families make their way towards an area corralled by vintage trucks decked out in maroon. Inside the fairground, the senses are bombarded by a nostalgic mix of rock 'n' roll, clanging bells, excitable shrieks and candyfloss.

Riders on traditional Gallopers rise and fall sedately as they go round on horses with names such as Teddy, Eve, Frank and Amber. Children's legs hang kicking out of the seats as a Chair-o-Plane ride gathers momentum, and white-knuckled hands grip the rail as the Dive Bomber somersaults over at speed.

This is Carters Steam Fair, an unashamedly old-fashioned funfair, which tours the south of England from Easter to Bonfire Night. All the rides and sideshows are restored originals dating from the 1870s to the 1960s. The same applies to the gleaming showmen's wagons, and even the lorries that tow them from site to site. A large sign entreats visitors to "try something old today".

Early days

The fair was started by John and Anna Carter in the late 1970s, a result of their obsession with all things mechanical and old. Neither came from a show family, but they did own a test-of-strength machine, the Mighty Striker, and one ride, the Steam Yachts. >



Anna Carter and her late husband John resting on a Galloper called Joby, named after their son.

