High teas to Hippos in the SWI?

I remember when my Mum went to “The Rural” as it was called when I was a child. I watched her getting her competition entry ready each month. Sometimes this took a few tries until she was happy. I watched her getting her good skirt on and her badge; I was so jealous. I desperately wanted to go too.

When I turned 14, I was allowed! The wee back room at the village hall was the sacred place, chairs set in rows and at the end, a table all set beautifully with a tablecloth, cups and saucers. This was for the demonstrators, the president and on occasion another committee member. They were served sandwiches and fancy cakes, meanwhile, we, the ones in the rows, got a cup of tea and a biscuit from the box (these were normally a wee bit soft.)

I remember the preparations for the float that entered the parade at our local gala, “Guid Nychburris”. It was weeks of creating costumes and toilet paper flowers. Mum was “on the float” several times. One of the most memorable was when she was a purple hippopotamus, a character from a popular cereal box of the time. The things that can be done with a sheet of foam and ping pong balls!

I was on the float one year, dressed as the long yellow toffee from Quality Street. This consisted of a very thick wool blanket tied at the neck and the ankles, then covered with cellophane.

A bee decided that the yellow was obviously some sort of delicacy, flew in, and got trapped. This resulted in me squealing and several ladies holding me down until the bee had been liberated and allowed to fly off in search of a pollen-filled flower!