

CELEBRATIONS

Memoirs of Pageants and celebrations for Coronations and Jubilees

Tape 1 -

1953 Elizabeth II coronation – tea party in barn behind Ewelme Farm [Church Farm?] (Mrs Clive's house).

1977 - Silver Jubilee – tea in Fords Farm Barn.

Tape 2 -

1937 George VI coronation – procession through the village – played in brass band. There was a maypole and tea.

Tape 3 -

1937 – George VI coronation – remembers street parties and sports.

Tape 6 -

George V Jubilee [1935]– her father supplied the barrels of beer to the party held in Fords Farm barns.

Tape 8 -

1997 - The Silver Jubilee - was a chapter of accidents from beginning to end. Held on the Common in dreadful weather, not enough mugs for the children. The ox roast. Everything that could go wrong went wrong with the ox falling off the spit and burning in the fire. Organisers went to Dewhursts the butchers and raided them of every tin of corned beef in the place. Rev Williams kept announcing things that never happened. Local women baked buns to be eaten with the beef – someone taught the local women how to bake them.

Tape 9 -

Pageant at the Manor – 1951 Reverend Jenkins and Nora Harwood were the Duke and Duchess of Suffolk, Kath Baker was the Princess Elizabeth, Fred Greenway was Henry 8th.

Tape 13 -

1977 – Silver Jubilee – ox roast a disaster. The farm gave a whole beast for the roast. The RAF offered to cook it. But they cooked it with it's skin on and didn't get the fire hot enough so when we came to eat it the whole thing had gone rotten. Everyone had to dig food out of their 'fridges to eat. The RAF billed the village £150 for cooking the ox! The villagers were not amused.

Tape 14 -

1977 – Silver Jubilee ox roast – Bill Edwards gave an oxen but the roasters didn't roast it correctly and it was an absolute disaster.

Tape 15 -

1977 – Silver Jubilee. Disaster of the ox roast.

1995 – VE Day street party.

Tape 17 -

1977 - Silver Jubilee Celebrations - The whole village took part. People dressed up. There were carts with all the different organisations. We had Races on the Common, country dancing. Mr Collier the coalman had purchased a pony and trap did it up. Floats came down the village. I played some of the Coronation ceremony on tape and spoke to them about it. I had been in London on the day. I was in the Mall all night.

Tape 19 -

Edward's barn always used for special days. Particularly VE days and celebrations.

Tape 20 -

1995 - VE Day – did teas out of her front door.

Tape 23 -

Village pageant in 1951 - took part in it in about 3 scenes. It was held in the Manor Gardens. It covered 2 days Friday and Saturday in July 1951. The then Rector organised it.

Tape 24 -

1937 Coronation of George VI - had foot racing to commemorate the coronation. Can remember his mother shouting to him to run and not to turn round. The children were given commemorative cups - some of which are still in the village. Sir Donald Somervell planted 37 oak trees at the top of the Common (on Common land), but its ownership seems to be in dispute today.

Pageant of 1951 – Mick was away in the army. Brothers took part. Ron was a page to Mr Orpwood who was dressed as a knight in shining armour. Aubrey was a pikeman.

1977 - Silver Jubilee - as a family the Gilbeys made a float - they dressed as Hawaiians in grass skirts out of binder twine. They had a very colourful and decorative float but didn't win the barrel of beer as they were told they should not have tossed drink cans into people's gardens etc. Has many photos of his mate Reg. Carter.

Tape 28 -

School 550th Anniversary - Girls remember the re-enactment of the 550th anniversary celebration of the school over a period of two days in July 1987. Wore medieval clothing, cooked medieval food in scorching heat. Fred Harwood taught thatching, Marie Darkin potter, and someone did stonemasonry carving gargoyles out of a breeze block. The girls have memories of heat and sunburn and sackcloth and Maypole dancing.

The Jubilee 1977 - was memorable. Parade and party on the Common. Mungo Jerry played because the group's drummer lived next to the current Post Office. Colin Collier had a trap full of kids. Honey Factory did something. So did cricket and football clubs. Everyone involved and it lasted a day. Those were in the days when we knew everyone and everyone knew us.

Compared to VE Day where it was felt many turned out but only a few were really involved.

Tape 29 -

Silver Jubilee - 1977 - Big party on common - procession - lot of hype. Weeks of preparation. Floats - dressed up as a Knight. All children got involved. Ox Roast which went wrong. RAF Benson brought in corned beef tins. Ox roasting for ages - condemned by environmental people. Mungo Jerry pop band played - drummer of band lived in house next to post office. (Thatched). Everyone in village turned out for it. Unifying.

Tape -

Flower Show - Biggest event was annual Flower Show which was always held in one or other of the big gardens or sometimes in Elliott's Field (the piece of ground opposite the school) or on the cricket field above the church. Good event, marvellous flowers and vegetables - can remember the smell of these in the marquee which was hired and the big red and blue award cards. Sometimes in association with the Flower Show was a sports day - egg and spoon and sack races - and bowling for the pig for the grownups.

In 1935 the Silver Jubilee of King George V and Queen Mary and there was a big celebration carnival parade through the village (has photographs). Races organised again and bowling for a pig.

At some time they found the old village maypole in one of the barns - it was painted up and they got hold of a book to find out how it was done and Miss Walker taught the children - remembers a dance called Spiders Web. (Has a photograph). A piano was carted out for the occasion.

Coronation 1937 - Years later at the coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth the village excelled itself and had a carnival with the crowning of the Queen of the May. They had a child each dressed to

represent the 4 countries of the UK and one of the young ladies was Britannia which was Joyce Winfield dressed in a white gown with a big golden helmet on her head. He cannot remember if it was based upon, or was actually one of the firemen's helmets in Tom Orpwood's barns where there was the old village fire engine. It was a huge and interesting engine. There was a rack with the old firemen's helmets on it. He, and Fane and Brian Orpwood used to shove the vehicle and run it down the slope - a wonder they didn't kill themselves! Wonders what happened to those wonderful helmets and pumps - all brass.

School used occasionally for dances. RQ was in Ewelme for **VE Day 1945** and the village dance was in the downstairs room for that occasion. Not used frequently. But there was the little Village Institute where the Reading Room is (a thatched building) and there were sometimes small events in there and in the Rifle Range and in the area next door was a snooker room - they had events in there.

In the War there was an evenings entertainment in the Rifle Range a sort of review - and the commander of RAF Benson a Wing Commander Hussey played the banjo and sang, I think it was the Donkey Laugh - that was fun.

Tape 32

VE Day June 1945 there were parties, dance in the school. I remember seeing a number of people there. I was at Henley school at the time and the headmaster organised a Treasure Hunt to occupy the whole afternoon and a big tea party.

VJ Day - Church services and bells ringing. On VJ Day I wasn't in Ewelme, but I remember being woken up at 5.30 am by some chaps on the railway line detonating fog detonators by shunting an engine up and down to wake the town. Bonfires and dancing. I was just 17 when it ended.

Tape 41 -

Silver Jubilee George V - I remember it was a lovely day but a thunderstorm at night that put the mockers on it. May 6 1935.

Interview 50 -

EWELME PARADE (2nd Edition) with the dates 9th - 11th March. Unfortunately not the year; 1942 or 43 ? Total Proceeds for the Merchant Navy Comforts Service - in the A.R.P. Rooms. Everyone in the village, apart from the Vicar and Mrs Jenkins and Mr and Mrs Quixley and my mother must have taken part. I think Mrs Quixley may well have been in charge of the costumes. She was lovely and business-like, the kind of woman who was in charge of things. The finale was *The Trial of the Knave of Hearts* from *Alice in Wonderland*. Although I was the Knave of Hearts, I seem to remember I only had one line.

This show brought a third injection of music into my young life. I must have been six or seven or so at the time. Item 5 was 'Sea Shanties' by THE ROVERS. Eight or ten young lads of the village piped out such ditties as, "What Shall We Do with the Drunken Sailor ?" and "Shenendoah." I have a vague idea that I overheard someone saying I was there to make up the numbers but I couldn't sing. I suppose I made up the numbers in the church choir as well. There was more music in the show. AMY STREVVENS AND THE GLAMOUR GIRLS sang "This is the Army" to open the first half and "Silver Wings in the Moonlight" to open the second. There was even an item, "Fairy Songs" by REAL FAIRIES.

I recall an episode at the final rehearsal. There was the usual show business chaos everywhere on the stage and in the auditorium. The splendid Mr Fred Greenway, the owner of GREENWAYS FOOD STORE in the village, was the producer of the whole show. He also wrote and starred in "Corpses don't need Brandy." Scenery and props were being sorted on the stage, village ladies were putting final touches to costumes in the auditorium. No doubt the young Pirates were getting under everyone's feet and being a damn nuisance. There were two dressing rooms backstage, one male, one female. We were rounded up and sent off out of the way. When we opened the door to our dressing room the Pirates were amazed. Pinned all round the walls were a dozen or so large colour photographs of girls - beautiful sunlit girls, all of them completely nude. I doubt whether any of us had seen a sight like this before. These lovely creatures were posing and smiling at us, proudly.

Concert in the Tithe Barn at Fords Farm - My fourth Ewelme music was quite an event in the village. On the other side of the road from the school, there is a substantial house at the end of a long garden. Who it belonged to I have no idea. It may have been the home of a well-to-do farmer because at the side of it, running along Days Lane, stands a large barn. In here, one warm evening at the end of a beautiful summer's day I sat in the front row at a concert. I imagine I was sitting between Mrs Quixley and my mother. This must have been the first live orchestra I had ever seen. I think it was an RAF band, the kind that every so often transforms itself into a symphony orchestra. I wish I still had the programme because I would love to know all the things they played. I only remember their final piece and that is because I can still 'see' the scene, not because I can hear the music.

File 53 -

I remember someone was going to stage a production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in the grounds of a big house – opposite the King's Pool, behind high walls. A lot of us little children were to take part as fairies but I remember being very disappointed with my costume, a skimpy green tunic and not the frilly concoction with wings that was hoping for.

File 56 -

The village had a fete I think once a year, I remember Sabrina coming one year to open it, she was probably the most famous person I remember coming to the village.

File 72 -

Village fetes were always popular; I remember a big one that was held in the garden of Lady Hambleton's house. Fred Greenaway was involved with the setting up of it and he recruited us kids to help him. He rewarded us with pop and crisps at the Greyhound Inn.