

Memories of the Queens Coronation Celebrations. 1953.

I was a young fourteen year old in the top class at Bugbrooke School, under the guidance of the Headmaster Mr Lantsbury in the year of the Coronation.

After the Death of King George the 6<sup>th</sup> who passed away on the 6 of February 1952, and all the ceremonies of his funeral were over plans were being made for the Coronation of our new Queen Elizabeth the Second.

Mr Lantsbury asked everyone in the top class, to help design the garden in front of the school in readiness for the Queens Coronation.

The final design for the garden was to have the two large beds either side of the lawn planted out with Salvias Alyssum and Lobelia to make two large Union Jack flags, and the centre bed was to be made into a Crown, with the use of French Marigolds and Cineraria.

It was to be one of the first times that I enjoyed doing Mathematics at school in helping measure up the sizes of the beds, and to how many plants would be required to complete the task in hand.

I was to spend many hours working alongside Jennifer Gardener, and Margaret Smith, helping to get all the plants ready under the watchful eye of Mr Steve Billingham.

As all the plants that were required to complete the job in hand were grown in his large greenhouses.

These were at the rear of the Co-op Shop, it took a great deal of time to transfer all the very small seedlings into larger trays ready for growing on, until they would be large enough to be planted out into the flower beds.

While others were given the task to clear and get the beds ready for planting, and to do all the marking out for the designs for the Crown and Flags.

Everyone from the top class was involved in this big task ahead.

At first when all the plants were in place in the beds they did not look much to start with, but as soon as they started to flower, the fruits of everyone's labour came to be.

As it looked so wonderful and rewarding when in full flower or bloom.

There were many photos taken of the garden at the time when in full bloom, as we were told it was a wonderful achievement, it made one feel really proud to have had the privilege of helping with such a project under the guidance of the Headmaster Mr Lantsbury, and Mr Steve Billingham Manager of the Co-op Shop.

As the day for the Queens Coronation came near, we were all given a Cup saucer and plate with the Queens Head on it, and date of the Coronation along with a book to commemorate this occasion.

Plans for other celebrations had also taken part in organising a sports day in the Park, and a very large Marquee to have a meal and drinks in.

On the day there were competitions, Tug of War, and races to suit all ages, I was to come second in the Half Mile 880 yards race, to Graham Marshall who came first in our age group.

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I well remember the very heavy showers of rain, at one point it nearly pulled down one side of the Marquee, this was due to water getting trapped on the topsides of it. But between the showers everything went to plan.

At the end of the day, a very large fire was lit on the top of Bugbrooke Downs, followed with a firework display, also the Men had two barrels of beer taken up for drinking and celebrating with on this occasion.

The very next morning, some of us young lads went up to the top of the Downs to see the remains of the fire, and to see who and what was about.

There were a few folk who had stayed out all night up there, as they had plenty of shelter from the very large Elms, and the warmth from the remains of the fire.

Also the beer barrels were not completely dry?

I still have today one of the taps from these barrels that I took as a souvenir.

The atmosphere was very much like it was just after the second world had war ended, with many folk being merry and singing.

It was a wonderful occasion to experience along with seeing all the flags and bunting decorating the streets and houses in the village.

Stanley Joseph Clark.