

Village Echoes

JUBILEES

This month we are celebrating our Queen's Platinum Jubilee of 75 years on the throne. Of course there have been many Jubilee celebrations for previous British monarchs but none for as long as this one. Queen Elizabeth II has already celebrated her Diamond in 2012, Golden in 2002 and Silver in 1977.

British monarchs began to mark Jubilees in a significant way with George III who celebrated his Golden Jubilee in 1809 curiously marking his 49th year on the throne in anticipation of his 50th the following year! It was also known as the Grand National Jubilee. Next was Queen Victoria who celebrated her Golden in 1887 and Diamond in 1897. She was followed by George V who celebrated his Silver Jubilee in 1935.

Goudhurst has joined in these celebrations over the years with great enthusiasm, when parades featured predominantly. On May 6th 1935 on the 25th anniversary of George V's accession to the throne the day started at 7am with Church Bells followed by a Church Parade and service at 10am. There was a dinner for the 'Old Folks', tea for the children and sports for everyone. At 6 'clock the Carnival Parade assembled at the Plain for judging before touring the Village. This was followed by the Torchlight Parade after which the Beacon was lit and Fireworks let off, prompted by a signal from the King at 10pm.



The decorated High Street, Goudhurst 1935

Although a much smaller affair, Kilndown had its own programme for the day, held in fine weather. The format was very much like Goudhurst although the Church bells were at 9.30am. There was also the addition of a parade by the British Legion and a dance in the parish room. It was interesting to note how many people were members of the organising Committees. In Kilndown alone there were fifteen members of the main Committee and thirteen on the Sub-Committee. Remember there was no TV.

Many people will still remember the present Queen's Silver Jubilee of 1977 offering a joyful relief from a period of turmoil in the 1970s. Despite a dreary day weather wise, our Parish launched into preparations with enthusiasm.

It took eighty pages of the Goudhurst & Kilndown Millennium Book to describe details of the day. Suffice it to say that the seventeen members of the Committee covered all aspects of village life in history on decorated floats each presented by a village organisation. Apparently French Television filmed the preparations on the morning and Southern Television filmed the actual pageant in the evening. This was the highlight of the day beginning with a giant replica of the Sovereign's crown and finishing with Goudhurst in the future imagined by the local Young Farmers Club.



Although on a smaller scale Kilndown had a procession led by Betty Batchelor as Louisa, Viscountess of Beresford, whose family largely created the village.





All three villages had fancy dress competitions; this is the one from Curtisden Green.

Subsequent Jubilees were celebrated in much the same way, all well prepared and attended by residents for their pleasure and the thousands of visitors who knew about our reputation for elaborate events.



And finally who can forget the Houses of Parliament on the Pond in 2012

Goudhurst & Kildown Local History Society would be very glad to receive photos of this month's celebrations.

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