

Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations - June 3rd 2012

What we all hoped for and expected in Brompton Regis to mark Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee on Sunday 3rd June was sun, warmth and a light breeze. What transpired was entirely different with wind, persistent drizzle and heavier down pours bombarding us throughout the day. However, the wet weather did not dampen our enthusiasm for a right royal celebration.

The hall looked stunning, decorated with special table cloths, red, white and blue wall streamers and flowers, and festooned with Union Jack flags. People waiting for lunch could browse the display of Coronation and royal memorabilia displayed by Mary Stacey in the Dennis Boundy room, where all the entries for the handmade crown competition were also on show. Prizes for the games and crowns were donated by the Gymkhana committee, with Mr Stewart-Smith donating the Royal Mint Jubilee Crown for the children's treasure hunt and Pete Stringer giving the plate for the best scarecrow.

With hindsight, we could have organised a river pageant of our own, as there was certainly enough water about. Instead, the Parish Council and Luncheon Club pushed the boat out with a 'Big Lunch' for 153 parishioners and friends of the community. On the Sunday lunch menu was a full roast with pork, beef and all the trimmings, a selection of home-made desserts and a sparkling toast for Her Majesty's sixty years on the throne.

The Lunch Club's usual team, assisted by Sylvia Luxton, Kevin and Lynn Steer, Joan Hutchings, Louise Knight and my friend Kathy, all worked like kitchen devils to cook and serve the two sittings, washing up and re-laying in between. The lunch made good use of the new kitchen facilities in the village hall, and we were all very pleased with the results. Such a mammoth undertaking would have been inconceivable before the improvements project.

On the Millennium Green, our special occasion started well as we managed to erect the tent, layout the games track and festoon the Village Green with bunting in relatively benign conditions before starting the celebrations with a church service of thanksgiving. All looked promising at this stage, before gusts of wind and rain demolished the tent on the Green together with most of the bunting.

Whilst the majority of the Village enjoyed their 'Big Lunch', a small band of people worked hurriedly to retrieve what we could of the tent and the bunting and re-erect them. There is no doubt that the British are at their best when the chips are down and the odds against. We were all determined to enjoy ourselves and so we did.

After the first sitting of the Big Lunch, a small posse of excited children were briefed on the treasure hunt, which was laid out in the centre of the Village. They had 8 clues to solve, which we expected them to complete in about 30 minutes. To our astonishment the first pair back, who received a £5 Jubilee coin for their success, completed the course in just 7 minutes! This all goes to show that the brightest children hail from West Somerset!!!

The children's games then commenced at 2.15pm with 7 races each for the 4 to 8 year olds and 9 to 13 years. Despite the very damp conditions the running, hopping, 3 legged, spoon and potato, wheelbarrow, sack and dressing up races were all eagerly contested with huge enthusiasm by the children. The clothes for the dressing up race were so damp that they looked as though they had just come out of the washing machine and were therefore difficult to get on but even this did not deter our competitors.

The adult games then followed on with teams of ladies and gents endeavouring to move two planks that they were standing on in a coordinated manner about 40 metres along the race track. There were slips and spills along the way and a clear inability of some contestants to know their left foot from their right, but clearly the laughter and enthusiasm suggested that everyone was enjoying themselves.

Regrettably due to the weather, we had to abandon the tug of war for fear of injuring someone. In its place we substituted sack, wheelbarrow and dressing up races. These were all contested with riotous enthusiasm and much laughter by all concerned.

During the races, a small selection of sideshows had been set up in what was left of the tent. These were visited and enjoyed by those who wished to escape the rain. At 4pm, those villagers who had not been washed away gathered for the planting of a commemorative oak tree, donated by Octavian and Annabel Hofmannsthal, on the Green followed by a Village photograph and then the announcement of the prize winners in the raffle, scarecrow and handmade crown competitions. The enjoyable afternoon was rounded off with delicious cream teas supplied by the PCC and Brompton Regis Women's Institute, and everyone went away with a rekindled awareness of community and how good it is to get together!

Our very special thanks to all those many people involved both in preparing and serving a fantastic lunch and to those who helped lay out and dismantle the Green, organised the the sideshows, masterminded the treasure hunt, games and crown competitions and ensured most competitors went away with a prize. Our very grateful thanks to you all, I hope you have now dried out!

The Parish Council had set a budget of £500 for the lunch, and although slightly overspent, the shortfall was covered by the sale of the extra lunches and the raffle that Betty Miller ran on the day. At the final reckoning-up meeting a week later, the Chairman of the parish council complimented everyone involved, stating that such events were essential in a rural parish of isolated hamlets and farmsteads: the money could not have been better spent!

David Hannah and Jenny Stringer

MENU for the BIG LUNCH

- Main Course: Roast beef & pork, horseradish & apple sauce, yorkshire puddings, roast & new potatoes, carrots, peas & gravy.
- Dessert: Fruit pavlova, blackforrest gateaux, trifle & chocolate profiteroles.



BROMPTON Regis villagers marked the diamond jubilee in "truly British" style - in the rain.

But the weather failed to dampen anyone's spirits as 160 people sat down to a celebratory lunch in the village hall and afterwards enjoyed slightly soggy games and a cream tea on the Millennium Green.

A children's treasure hunt and a crown competition also went ahead, with only the men's tug of war event falling victim to the weather.

A commemorative oak tree was planted on the Millennium Green, and for those seeking shelter there was an exhibition of photographs and memorabilia in the village hall.

"It was a wonderful day and there were smiles on people's faces all the time, despite the rain," said villager Gill Smith, who sent us some photos of the event.

"We celebrated in a truly British way."

● Pictured above at the exhibition, holding a photograph of themselves taken at a Kings Brompton Young Farmers event on the day King George VI died, are, from the left, Margaret Buckingham, Mary Stacey, Percy Buckingham and Vi Boundy.

Left, parishioner Octavian Hofmannsthal is pictured planting the commemorative oak tree he donated to mark the diamond jubilee, helped by one of the winners of the crown competition.

And below, villagers enjoy the celebratory lunch in the village hall.

