

# Tenterden Royal Visits and Other Events

## Death of Queen Victoria

Queen Victoria, whose reign had dominated much of the last century passed away on Monday 22 January 1901 and the following Sunday all places of worship in the town special reference was made of her late majesty and the Dead March (a funeral march) was played at each service. The funeral of the Queen took place on Saturday 3 February 2001 and the day was observed with every sign of mourning in the Borough, business being suspended for the day. A memorial service, which was attended by the Mayor and members of the Corporation in state, was held in the parish church at two o'clock. In a crowded church, the vicar (Rev S C Lepard) and his son (Rev A G G Lepard) carried out a most impressive service. The organist (Mr A H Smith) played the "Dead March" at the commencement of the service. At three o'clock a service, conducted by Mr R Weeks, was held in the Town Hall, which was filled to overflowing.

## Proclamation of King Edward VII (Kentish Express, February 2, 1901)

At Tenterden the ceremony was carried out according to ancient custom on Monday. At noon the Mayor (Ald Hardcastle) in his robes and chain of office, attended by his Sergeants at Mace in their quaint dress, and accompanied by the Aldermen and members of the Council, the Town Clerk and Clerk of the Peace, assembled in front of the Town Hall, and, at the command of the Mayor the proclamation was read by the Town Clerk (Mr J Munn Mace), at the conclusion of which the band of the G Company, 2nd Volunteer Battalion, East Kent Regiment played "God Save the King". Cheers were heartily given for King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. The local Company of Volunteers was present, under the command of Lieutenant Body, and there were a large number of burgesses present.

## Coronation of Edward VII in 1902

His coronation, fixed for Wednesday 26 June 1902, was postponed at short notice by an operation for appendicitis, his second serious illness, though he recovered in time to go through a shortened ceremony on Friday 9 August 1902. The Committee running the celebrations at Tenterden was composed of the Town Council, with a few co-opted members, the Town Clerk, Mr J Munn Mace, and Mr H B Mace, deputy Town Clerk, being joint honorary secretaries. It met on the Wednesday morning, on hearing of the King's illness, and postponed all events for Thursday, with the exception of the tea to the children, provision for which had already been made. The town had already been well decorated and preparations made for effective illuminations, but the whole lot were taken down before Thursday. At four o'clock, around 600 children assembled in the Corporation Field at East Cross and, after the National Anthem was sung, marched in procession, headed by the band of the 2nd VB East Kent Regiment under Bandmaster Batt, to the centre of the town, where they were provided with a tea. After tea they adjourned to the Recreation Field, where they spent an enjoyable time.

The Coronation festivities finally took place on Saturday 10 August. The townspeople responded magnificently to the request of the Committee. The inhabitants of the town illuminated their business house and private residences and merry peals of the bells were rung from the belfry of the parish church. A good congregation attended a Coronation Service that was held in St Mildred's Church in the morning. The members of the G Company 2nd VB East Kent Regiment, under Captain J Munn Mace (Town Clerk), assembled at West Cross and with their band marched to the church. At two o'clock nearly all the adults and children of the town assembled in the Corporation Field (Recreation Ground), and being placed in various groups the National Anthem was played by the band, and the chorus joined in by the assembly. A large procession was then formed and, at the discharge of a maroon, proceeded from the Corporation Field, via Golden Square, Beacon Oak, Jubilee Oak, Ashford Road and through the High Street to West Cross, returning to the field, where all the children of the town were entertained to tea by the Mayor (Cr J R Diggle MA) and each was presented with a mug, which was embellished with a portrait of the King and Queen and a suitable inscription, as a memento of the occasion. The procession

was headed by a cart, which had been tastefully decorated by the workmen of the Corporation and was under the charge of Mr T Sims. On this vehicle were seated in improvised seats the sixteen young ladies who were to take part in the maypole dance. They wore white dresses, with red, white and blue sashes. This was followed by a section of the Fire Brigade with the manual engine, the next being the floral car of the Gardeners' Society, which was a work of art, being composed of light grass and flowers. Inside were four young ladies dressed to represent the various colonies. The Friendly Societies came next, among those represented being the New Year's Club and the Foresters, with Robin Hood mounted on a grey horse in a very realistic costume, and their banner and standard bearers. The Hearts of Oak Society made a good show with their two cars, the first representing a wreck on the Goodwin Sands, and the second an up-to-date lifeboat, which was manned by very "able seamen." Then came all the schoolgirls of the town, followed by the band the G Company 2nd VB East Kent Regiment, all the schoolboys, members of the Volunteer Company and several veteran members of the army. The members of the Town Council then came in three carriages and the Fire Brigade brought up the rear. There were many spectators and after the children had been supplied with a good tea each one had a dip in the bran pie and was the recipient of a present. A programme of sports for the youngsters was then carried out. The maypole dancers and the drills by the Volunteers attracted the attention of the elderly. A reception was held in the Town hall from seven to nine by the Mayoress (Mrs Diggle), accompanied by the Mayor, who wore his robes as a Baron of the Cinque Ports, in which capacity he had attended the Coronation Service in Westminster Abbey. The town was brilliantly lit by Chinese lanterns and with its fine avenue of trees for decoration, the High Street was seen to perfection. At nine o'clock, Mr G R Hook lit a monster bonfire in the Corporation Field and there was a wonderful display of fireworks. A string band and the band of the 2nd Volunteer Battalion East Kent Regiment also played during the evening and the spacious dance ring was largely patronized. Free swings and other amusements were provided for the younger folks. The public buildings and a few other edifices were decorated with patriotic devices designed by Mr W T Bark, the Manager of the Gas Company, and were admired by the crowds. A large number of people visited the town during the day and evening and events were brought to a close at midnight.

Edward's short reign gave the name "Edwardian" to a recognizable period, suggesting in retrospect the final golden effulgence of 19th century prosperity, comfort, and security, projected into the first decade of the 20th century, and marked in social life as in the arts by a prodigality of display and decoration amounting at times to ornateness when judged by later standards: a period when the austerities of Victorian days were relaxed and grim problems of later years had scarcely appeared above the horizon.

#### Coronation of King George V in 1911

Blessed with blazing sunshine and a cool breeze, Coronation Day on 22 June 1911 was a very big day in Tenterden. A section of the railings of the recreation ground in Oaks Road was taken out and replaced with an archway of very tall poles, decorated with flowers and flags and fairy lights to be lit at night. In the recreation ground a stand was erected for speechmaking and for the band to play on. Further away was a large tent for teas. The Town Crier played his part splendidly from the Town Hall balcony and the bells of St Mildreds and St Michaels and All angels rang merrily. The afternoon procession marched down the High Street to the recreation ground, led by the band and local dignitaries, followed by Boy Scouts, Territorials, Fire Brigade, schoolboys, Freemasons, schoolgirls, slate football, cricket, cycling and goal running clubs, most with banners and flags. All schoolchildren were presented with a Coronation Mug by the Mayoress, Mrs Boorman, and in the evening there was dancing in the Town Hall, singing in the inns and a magnificent display of lights, as people carried brightly lit Chinese lanterns in patterns around the recreation ground. The band brought the day's proceedings to an end with the National Anthem.

#### Silver Jubilee of King George V

As with the rest of the country, the Jubilee was celebrated on 6 May 1935. The Mayor, Councillor S Wilson, had the honour of receiving from his Majesty a King's Jubilee Medal. In July, Tenterden

celebrated the Jubilee of King George V with a pageant depicting its past history. Edith Craig, daughter of Dame Ellen Terry, was the producer and 359 performers (more than 1 in 10 of the population of the town) portrayed the 500 characters. The pageant was devised by Edith Craig and Edward Percy, the non-de-plume for E Percy Smith, the author, who lived at Stone-in-Oxney and was later MP for Ashford from 1943-1950. Edward Percy also wrote the pageant with Franklin Lushington of Pigeon Hoo, Tenterden, providing historical introductions.

The pageant was performed in the gardens of Hales Place, the home of Major J S Robson. Itself one of the most historic houses in Tenterden, Hales Place was formerly the home of the famous Kent family of Hales, who settled there during the reign of Edward III, and in 1600 provided the town with its first Mayor. The great square lawn, fringed on each side with trees, formed the auditorium, and faced onto a wide raised walk, backed by a rose-mantled wall. In the centre, steps, shaded by a spreading tree, led down from the terrace to the velvet green turf, whilst at each corner stood, sentinel like, two 16th century octagonal towers. Performances took place on Wednesday 3 July (afternoon and evening), Thursday 4 July (evening) and, owing to its enormous success, again on Friday 5 July (evening). Admission was 1/- (one shilling).

In times past, many famous people came to Tenterden and it was their visits that were made to serve as the more important episodes of the story, outline details of which are given below.

<u>Prologue</u>		The Seneschal of the Cinque Ports enters in his robes
Episode 1	Circa 1150	The Abbot of Battle Abbey assesses the only dwelling house at Tenterden to be taxed at the rate of one mark (13s 4d or 66.5 p)
Episode II	Circa 1169	Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, passes through Tenterden on his way home from France
Episode III	1333	The coming of the Flemish Weavers
Episode IV	1461	The building of the Church Tower
Episode V	1525	Freebooters from the Isle of Oxney attack and rob a boat-load of sailors from Tenterden
Episode VI	1534	Visit of Henry VIII to Tenterden
Episode VII	1600	The Borough of Tenterden. The appointment of the Mayor and Jurats
Episode VIII	1655	The people of Tenterden
Episode IX	1656	Eleven men taken by the press gang for service with the Commonwealth navy escape from Rye and are hidden by the burghers of Tenterden
Episode X	1688	James II makes his first attempt to flee the country after the revolution
Episode XI	1754	Riots in England due to famine prices of corn. Oliver Goldsmith visits Tenterden with a troupe of strolling players
Episode XII	1804	Emigrants for America leave Tenterden taking with them Caxton the Printer's Book
Finale	1928	Caxton's Book is presented to the Mayor and Corporation by Mr Robert Penrose, an American citizen

John Drinkwater, the poet, Shakespearian actor and dramatist played the part of Seneschal of the Cinque Ports. The Kentish Express gave the event good coverage and both this paper and the pageant brochure give the names of all those who took part.

#### Visit of Duchess of York to the Grange 1935

On 11 December 1935, the Duchess of York opened the Service Training Centre at St Michaels Grange. The Duchess arrived at St Michaels, about 1.30 p.m., and lunched privately with Mrs S Wintour (founder of the Centre), the Rev Maxwell Bury of Loose (late Chairman), Capt C G Larking of Maidstone (Treasurer) and Miss Mercer. The lunch was cooked and served by trainees and later the Duchess was welcomed by the Marquis Camden, Admiral of the Fleet Sir Reginald Tyrwhitt and Lady Tyrwhitt, the Mayor of Tenterden (Mr S Wilson), the Mayor of Tunbridge Wells (Mr Weeks), Miss Tyrwhitt (Divisional Commissioner for Girl Guides) and Miss Tennant. After the luncheon, the Marquis of Camden, Lord

Lieutenant of Kent and President of the Centre, extended a welcome to Her Royal Highness. He explained that the object of the Service Training Centre was to train men – from the distressed areas in the North – in cooking, housework and as handymen, and he paid tribute to Mrs Wintour, who formulated the scheme.

Her Royal Highness, a petite figure, impressed the large company by her charming smile, which seemed to convey a personal greeting to each. As mourning for Princess Victoria, the Duchess wore black. The Duchess said at the opening that she believed the future of the country, and of the Empire, was in the hands of the young generation, and she was pleased to see and to assist efforts to help them. What appealed to her most was that a county like Kent, which was not over prosperous, was holding out the hand of fellowship to the less fortunate counties and it showed a worthy spirit. The Duchess also commented on the fact that trainees would be taught housework and that she wished the venture every success. With a smile, she added that she already had first-hand acquaintance with the cooking.

Later the Duchess was cheered by the crowd of spectators at the Town Hall when she appeared on balcony to receive an address of welcome by the Recorder of Tenterden, Mr J F Eastwood.

#### Coronation of King George V1 and Queen Elizabeth on Wednesday 12 May 1937

For the first time the traditional ceremony in Westminster Abbey was heard by countless millions all over the world – thanks to the invention of wireless. Rain marred the celebrations in many parts of the country. The Kentish Express reported that school children made such an onslaught on the food at teatime that more had to be hurriedly fetched from the Town Hall where the old folk were being entertained. Though the rain prevented sports being held, the children had attended the Embassy Cinema and before tea had received beakers from the Mayoress (Mrs Diggle). Many residents attended the cinema performances and after the first show the Mayor (Alderman J M Diggle), having returned from the Coronation ceremony in London, described his experience.

#### 500th Anniversary of Borough in 1949

August Bank Holiday 1949 had an added significance for the people of Tenterden, falling as it did on 1 August. On that date 500 years ago by the Royal Decree of Henry V1 the town was elevated from a humble position in the ranks of similar Weald communities and annexed to Rye and added to the Cinque Ports as a corporate body. The Borough Council justly proud of their long tradition arranged eleven days of pageant and celebration from 27 July to 4 August.

The festivities were introduced by an open-air pageant on the first three days (27, 28 and 29 July), in which the 390 pupils of the new Homewood County Secondary School acted the history of the town from the twelfth century to the riots and emigrations of the 1820s. It was no light matter for a school – less than a year old – to launch a full-scale pageant of more than 700 years of local history. However, the school had as its home a square and friendly eighteenth-century brick house, with vegetable and flower gardens, wood and meadows in the grounds. It had in Mr Leslie H Warren, a headmaster who wrote – in dialogue and blank-verse – the script of the pageant; Mr Alan Holden, the school's history master, who added a historical commentary with a catalogue of contemporary events to match each episode of the pageant, which made the pageant programme a topical history book. The Mayor (Cr S J Day), whose appearance attended by robed Councillors, the Town Clerk and Sergeants at Mace were heralded with a fanfare of trumpets, pronounced the invocation and called for Father Time played by Mr C J Edwards, one of the masters and the only adult in the cast, who emerged from a background of whirling mists. He then explained the reason for the celebrations.

This year is one of special joy and pride  
To those who love this fair and pleasant town;  
Five hundred years ago in Henry's reign,

The gentle Henry, Sixth of that fair name,

She won her right to freedom and esteem

A Body Corporate by a royal decree...

No sooner had he finished than a boy and girl (James Tilley and Annette Wilcocks) in school uniform came out of the auditorium and asked him to take them with him "along the Road of Time." Father Time, without so much a wave of his scythe, he spirited audience and players alike 800 years into the past. With a graceful model of the parish church of St Mildred in the background, and the perpendicular tower of the real parish church a few field away on the hilltop, the pageant began.

*Eight hundred years ago Tenterden Tentwardenne as it was then called - was a small but busy village. Assisted by a goat and a pony, the inhabitants were seen ploughing and scything, carding wool, drawing water from the well, and – most important – refusing to pay their taxes to the monks from Battle Abbey. By 1255, Tentwardenne had grown. The inhabitants still have plenty of fighting spirit, and we see them dragging to the pillory a baker who had sold bread that was poor in quality and under weight. The fourteenth century brought Flemish weavers to Tenterden. With their cloth, their looms and their spinning wheels – and also strange imports in the shape of hops and cherries – they received a somewhat ungrateful welcome. In 1449 came the Royal Charter. At this point the décor achieved a tour de force. The old Norman tower of the church was slightly decapitated and there swung into place – every window, pinnacle and pennant comparable with the tower across the fields – a living model of the new perpendicular tower. The pageant showed the seventeenth century as the age of press-gangs and represented the 1800s by the visit of Oliver Goldsmith and his band of strolling players. The riots and disturbances of the 1820s led to emigration of desperate families to America.*

As a grand finale all the characters, in a motley of gay dresses from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries, were re-called by the boy and girl to assemble before the audience as Father Time prepared to disappear once more into the eternal mists to forever guard the fortune of the sons of Tenterden."

People were very impressed by the pageant and an enthusiastic reception was given to the announcement by the Mayor at the special quincentenary council meeting that he wished to be placed on record the Council's grateful thanks and appreciation to the headmaster, the staff and pupils of Homewood School for the unqualified success of their pageant.

A souvenir brochure was produced bearing in colour the arms of the Borough. The brochure was prefaced by the following messages.

*On the occasion of the Quincentenary of the Borough the following message was sent to His Majesty the King by the Mayor: -*

May it Please Your Majesty

On this the occasion of the Five Hundredth Anniversary of our Charter, the Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of the Ancient Borough of Tenterden in the County of Kent, a Member of the Confederation of the Cinque Ports, desire to tender to your Majesty our Loyal Greetings.

We pray that Your Majesty, being restored once again in health, may together with Her Majesty the Queen long be preserved to reign over your loyal and dutiful subjects.

*The following reply has been received to this message: -*

I am commanded to send you, Mr Mayor, and to the Aldermen and Burgesses of Tenterden, the sincere thanks of the King for the kind message of loyal greetings and good wishes which you have sent on the occasion of the Quincentenary of your Charter of Incorporation.

His Majesty congratulates your Borough on the completion on August 1st of five hundred years unbroken existence as a municipality and on the preservation of your ancient rights and privileges.

The King sends to you, Mr Mayor, on this notable occasion his best wishes for the health and prosperity of the inhabitants of Tenterden

*Private Secretary*

On 12 August 1949 the Kent & Sussex Courier produced a souvenir supplement given free to Tenterden readers. The supplement printed messages from the Mayor of Tenterden, Cllr Stanley J Day who at 38 years of age is one of the youngest men to hold the office, and Mr E P Smith the Ashford MP.

*From the Mayor, Councillor Stanley Day*

On this, the occasion of the Quincentenary Celebrations of the ancient Borough of Tenterden, I accept gladly the opportunity, made possible by the courtesy of the Editor of the "Kent and Sussex Courier", to extend the warmest welcome to all our visitors.

During the 500 years of our incorporation as a municipality, it has oft-times been difficult in the extreme to preserve intact those rights and privileges granted and confirmed by Royal Charter. Today we are threatened with the loss of our Courts of Quarter Session, the services of our Recorder, and many of our powers of local government. We intend to resist such attempts to deprive us of our age-old rights by all legal and constitutional means.

In conclusion, I feel assured that those of you who are able to come and join with us in our days of rejoicing will agree that, in the Borough of Tenterden, we have a heritage far beyond price, and one for which we must be prepared to fight to the end.

*Mayor's Parlour  
Town Hall  
Tenterden*

*From Mr E P Smith, MP for Ashford Division*

My most affectionate congratulations to my home Borough of Tenterden on the 500th Anniversary of the grant of its first Charter of Incorporation! However much Time speeds, may Tenterden stay!

*House of Commons*

Copies of the Charters of Incorporation granted in 1449 by King Henry VI, and by Queen Elizabeth in 1600 were produced at a special meeting of Tenterden Borough Council, called by the Mayor on 1 August, exactly 500 years to the day after the town had received its first Royal favour. The meeting attended by many members of the public was broadcast into the be-flagged street outside the Town Hall. The Mayor in scarlet robes and gold chain of office moved resolutions to the effect that:

The council should place on record the attainment on that 1st day of August 1949 of five hundred years of uninterrupted existence as a municipality; that it was mindful of some 248 Mayors and Bailiffs who had over that period discharged their duties of office with diligence, impartiality and sincerity; also of those elected members who had in the past rendered memorable and valuable service as aldermen and councillors.

That the council was aware of the danger which confronted its continued existence as a Borough by reason of impending legislation – for example, the Justice of the Peace Bill, which purposes to dispense with all separate Commissions of the Peace except in the case of counties and county boroughs. Whilst the activities of the Boundary Commission had been terminated, the council was fully alive to the trend of modern legislation, which was in favour of placing responsible local government in the hands of larger authorities, and pledged itself to use all possible measures to maintain the continued existence of the Borough, with all adequate local government powers and services as may be possible, for the betterment and enjoyment of the inhabitants.

That the council should place on record its appreciation of the faithful service rendered by the past and present permanent officials of the Borough.

Wondering what it was like in Tenterden that day in August 500 years ago before, the Mayor spoke of the tremendous debt the present inhabitants owed to their predecessors, whose efforts had made the borough what it was today. They had a good heritage and would do well to maintain it. Amid applause, the Mayor declared “We shall fight tooth and nail to maintain those rights and privileges granted to us in the past”. Seconding the resolutions, the senior alderman, Ald J M Diggle referred to the 248 Mayors and Bailiffs who had held office during the past 500 years. He had known 25 of them, which number might be considered a fair sample, and everyone had a main characteristic – that of doing his level best in the situation in which they found himself. Of the present council, he said “We are the corporation for the time being, but we die, and the corporation does not. However, they could be sure their forebears had their difficulties, and if they had not had them the municipality of Tenterden would not be in existence today. The Deputy Mayor, Cr F G Bourne, paid tribute to the present mayor and said he was proud at this important period they had one of the youngest mayors for many years. The time had come for Youth to take its fair share in the government of the borough. The senior councillor, Cr A J Wright, as the chairman dealing with the new boundary proposals, had something to say about the recent threat to the borough’s independence. They had arrived at what might be called the interregnum or, perhaps, an armistice, for there were still those who did not believe in anything small, or that anything small could be efficient. As Chairman of the Publicity Committee for the celebrations, Mr W E Judge handed to the Mayor copies of the souvenir brochure and then members of the council were called upon to receive a signed copy from the Mayor. Everyone was asked to stand when the letter from the King’s Private Secretary was read. The Town Clerk, Mr Ivo T Emberson, read extracts, couched in involved legal phraseology, from the exemplification of the 1600 charter granted by William III. The Mayor voiced his appreciation of Mr Emberson’s valuable help to himself and every mayor during the 25 years he had been Town Clerk. He had received his instruction from members of the Munn-Mace family, who had held the office for 100 years. It was pointed out that Mr Emberson had never been off for a single day’s illness in the whole of his 37 years with the council. The Mayor also paid tribute to the excellent service of Mr Gilbert Turner (surveyor and sanitary inspector since 1936,

and before that, sanitary inspector from 1914, whose father had been surveyor to the council before him) and Mr Harold Millen (the Town Clerk's assistant) who had been with the council before and since the last war. After the meeting, the Mayor and Mayoress informally received members of the council and friends in the Mayor's Parlour.

Mayors from the Cinque Ports and many other distinguished personalities, including the Lord Lieutenant of Kent, Lord Cornwallis, were guests of the Mayor and Corporation at a Civic Luncheon on the Thursday (4 August). The long tables set up in a marquee on the recreation ground were brightly decorated with flowers arranged by members of the horticultural society. In a humorous speech LT-General Sir Henry Pownall, KCB KBE CB DSO MC now retired, and living at Wittersham, proposed the toast to the Mayor and Corporation. As a soldier he had been interested in the military history of Kent and he traced events from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the threat of invasion in the late war. Coming to the subject of his toast, he told how he had seen, since leaving the army, something of the spirit of voluntary service endemic in the people of this country. "There is no more important and active form of voluntary service than that of the local administration", he said, and later amid applause "That spirit of service is exemplified by your Mayor and Borough Council". The gratitude of all the citizens should be extended to them for their unpaid work. They were subject to criticism and did not often get thanks. Before replying, the Mayor (Cr S J Day) read a telegram from the High Sheriff of Kent, which said "Kent very proud of Tenterden and its grand score of 500. May your team ever flourish!"

The Mayor said that he could imagine there were many who would have liked his opportunity of replying to the toast, but he could think of no one more proud to do so. Of all the guests there he especially wished to thank Lord and Lady Cornwallis who had both arrived back from Canada in late July, and, asked at the last moment, had been determined to attend despite missing Ladies' Day at Canterbury Cricket Week. He went on: "Today in Tenterden we are very proud of our town, and of the fact that we are no longer a child. We have since Monday, arrived at the age when at least we can be looked upon as a youth compared with the other boroughs."

After speaking of the achievement of its people through the years, the Mayor continued: "Tenterden has moved on through the ages and has gone on from success to success." As a farmer himself (Pickhill Farm, Smallhythe Road), he spoke of Tenterden's chief industry, saying: "As long as agriculture flourishes, trade will flourish along side it." The Recorder of Tenterden (Mr Geoffrey Lawrence), who referred humorously of his imminent danger of being abolished as recorder, proposed "The Confederation of the Cinque Ports." He said the confederation did not consist of five ports, but many more, and some towns not ports at all. It was in fact a confederacy of all of the most important towns in the South Eastern area. They were honouring not an active confederation, but a great tradition, and a valuable one today, when anything old was liable to extinction. Mayor of the premier Cinque Port, Hastings, Cr J D Cooper, said his town was proud to be associated with Tenterden, which he described as a typical English country town. A welcome to the guests was voiced by Ald J Macrae Diggle, who was, he said, like most of the entire population in Tenterden, bursting with pride on the occasion. In reply, Lord Cornwallis recalled that the first speech he ever made in Tenterden was under the chairmanship of Ald Diggle. In addition he and his wife had very personal reasons for wishing to be present. "Stanley Day happens to be a member of another family, which used to be known as the Linton Estate. I hope you are as grateful as I am proud that the Linton Estate has sent you your Mayor for the 500th anniversary." Lord Cornwallis recalled a visit he made to Tenterden during the threat of invasion in the late world war, and revealed that one Sunday morning he came with the question: "Can you flood Romney Marsh in 24 hours?" He never heard anyone complain, or say it was impossible, and he had realized then that true men were still bred in and about Tenterden. Referring to the town, Lord Cornwallis ended: "I hope it will not be spoilt, and that it will be just the same 500 years from now." Also replying to the guests, Mr E P Smith, MP for the Ashford Division, remarked that it struck him as a little odd that he should be considered a visitor, when he had always regarded himself as a citizen. His mind went back to the days of 1935 when he had produced a pageant in the borough to honour the Silver Jubilee of King George V.

Remembering how he had written the incidents of the past, he could see how intimately English history was bound up with the town of Tenterden. But "Old things should not be valued simply because they are old: but because of what they enshrine. Here in your lovely town you have a veritable crystallization of English history, of which we are proud, and which we hope we shall always be able to be proud." Among the guests were Sir Harold and Lady Campbell, Major C E Pym (Chairman of the Kent County Council), Major J F Ferguson (Chief Constable of Kent) and Mrs Ferguson, and His Honour Judge A F Clements.

During the week there were dances in new and old styles, cricket matches, grass-track racing, a fancy-dress parade, an entertainment for old people, pony show, a goal-running competition, a bonfire and firework display.

#### Visit of Queen Elizabeth on Thursday 29 June 1950

After visiting Cranbrook, Benenden School, Benenden village and Benenden Sanatorium the Queen visited Tenterden on her way back to London. On her way the unusual sign at Castleton's Oak, which shows a man sitting on his coffin, amused the Queen. Soon the impressive tower of Tenterden Church stood out on the skyline as she passed down Goods Hill. Before the Queen reached the town she went to Strood House, the Rolvenden home of Sir Harold Campbell, Equerry to the King since 1937, for a brief rest. Later, as she drove up Tenterden's broad, tree shaded High Street, with its spacious grass verges; the Queen was able to admire the quiet dignity of the old Wealden market town. Her car stopped at the 18th-century Town Hall. The Mayor, Alderman Stanley J Day and the Mayoress, Mrs Day, were presented to the Queen. Then the Mayor's 10 years old daughter, Dawn day, presented to Her Majesty, a large basket of Kent cherries, which had been gathered that morning. After she had accepted the cherries, the Mayor presented members of the Corporation, who were in their robes, to Her Majesty. Her Majesty admired the fine old Town Hall, which was beautifully garlanded with roses. Leaving Tenterden with its cheering crowds the Queen passed through St Michaels and Biddenden. When the Queen had gone Lord and Lady Cornwallis joined the reception in the Town Hall, when, the Mayor, in a brief speech, proposed the Queen's health and said it had been a great day in the history of Tenterden.

#### Festival of Britain 1951

This was a celebration held in the United Kingdom of the centenary of the Great Exhibition of 1851. Many cities and towns took part in the Festival. Celebrations were held in Tenterden between Sunday 2 July and Saturday 4 August. Shopkeepers and residents made the town really attractive with special window displays and window boxes full of flowers. Beautiful grounds and gardens open to the public include those of Hales Place (Major J S Robson) and Plummer House (Mrs T H E Taylor Jones). After dark, the floodlighting of the Parish Church, St Michaels Church and East Cross Gardens made a fine spectacle.

Alan Delgado (14 Bryanston Street, Portman Square, London W1) of literary fame was appointed organiser with a committee headed by Stanley J Day and consisting of Nigel Balchin, C Bourne, Richard Church, John Gielgud, Col B L Hooper, F C Hooper, Mrs F C Hooper, W S Hudson, Dr R E McLaren, Sir Francis Meynell, The Hon Harold Nicolson, J Rex Pearson, Major J S Robson, Miss V Sackville West, Mrs F L Winsler, Ivo T Emberson (Hon Secretary) and R H Pepler (Hon Treasurer).

A united service at St Mildreds Parish Church on the Sunday (22 July) preceded the opening by the celebrated actress Dame Edith Evans. The service was conducted by the vicar, the Rev C S W Marcon, assisted by the Rev E C Griffith (Baptist Minister) and the Rev C O Hunswick (Methodist Minister), and attended by the Mayor (Cllr A J Wright) who was joined by the Mayor of Rye (Cllr R A Prebble), the Cinque port of which Tenterden is a limb, members of the Town Council, and Mr W F Deedes, M P for Ashford, and Mrs Deedes. A heavy storm with thunder and lightning reached its height as the service was in progress and heavy rain fell as the Mayoral procession walked from the church to the Town Hall.

Here the Mayor introduced Dame Edith Evans and welcomed the Mayor of Rye and the many visitors. Throughout the country, he said, the theme of the Festival of Britain was development. Tenterden had something unique through its relation to the earliest printing trade in England founded by the renowned William Caxton. Dame Edith, wearing the scarlet robes of an Honorary Doctor of Literature of Cambridge University, greeted the "Lovely County of Kent and rising from it her stalwart sons". She said that she was born in Westminster where Caxton once worked and described the Festival and its accompanying book exhibition (in the Town Hall) as an example of the fruit of Caxton's work. Caxton was born in the Weald and no one seemed to argue when Tenterden was claimed as his birthplace. Proposing a vote of thanks to Dame Edith, Cllr Stanley Day spoke of all she had done for literature and the stage and claimed that Tenterden would continue to claim William Caxton until others could prove otherwise. The large numbers of guests were afterwards entertained to tea in a marquee on the recreation ground.

The book exhibition included a series of exhibits of the Caxton Deeds, lent by Viscount Kemsley, which cover the period 1420-1467. Books printed by Caxton on show included "The Canterbury Tales" and there were other books from famous presses throughout the ages together with displays of bookbinding, repairs of vellum manuscripts and the process of binding. As a background to this exhibition there was a display of printing and typography showing material used for the reproduction of illustrations by letterpress, lithography and photogravure together with presses and machines from the 15th to the 20th century. In conjunction with this exhibition, which was associated with the National Book League, prominent authors gave talks. These included Victoria Sackville West ("Gardening in England"), Sir Francis Meynell ("How to look at a Book"), Harold Nicolson ("Old and New Diplomacy"), Richard Church and Compton Mackenzie.

On Monday (23 July) the Mayor opened an exhibition of craftsmanship organised by Tenterden Trades Council in the Drill Hall (now St Mildreds Hall). More than 300 entries were received from children and the woodwork, metal work and needlework exhibits were judged to be of a high quality. Monday also saw the lighter side of the festival when a comic cricket match between Smallhythe Ladies' Cricket Club and the "Those were the Days" Old-Time Dancing Club. The Mayor bowled the first ball. The ladies wore oddly assorted men's garments and their male opponents were in ladies' evening dress. One member, M Burbridge, displayed great sacrifice by shaving off his moustache in order to look the part. With the Mayor was Mrs S Day, president of the Smallhythe Ladies' Cricket Club and who is acting as mayoress during the Festival. The large crowd who watched the game contributed £4 towards the comforts of patients in West View Hospital. Afterwards both teams paraded through the town. The Ladies, who made 62 triumphed over their rivals who replied with 43.

The first serious sporting event of the Festival occurred on Wednesday (25 July) when Tenterden Cricket Club entertained Nigel Balchin's X1 of authors and publishers at Morghew Park. Tenterden batted first and declared on 165-8 (K Goodall 76, W A R Collins 6-74) and then dismissed the Balchin's X1 (W A R Collins 72 not out, D W J Packham 3-18) for 122 to win by 35 runs. The Tenterden team was K Goodall, G Bassett-Smith, S Head, A D Field, Rev C S W Marcon, E List, W Holdstock, T Jenner, V Packham, A Jenner and D W J Packham. At Homewood County Secondary School on Wednesday local schools combined in choral singing, plays, physical training and dancing. On Saturday, Tenterden Football Club organised an athletics meeting in the Recreation Ground. Two of the outstanding achievements were the high jump of Ken Martin of 5ft 2ins and the long jump by Douglas Goldsmith of 19ft 3ins. J Hutchins' win in the mile race was also notable. The prizes were presented by Mrs Stanley Day and the Mayor expressed the appreciation of the borough to the Football Club in making the event such a success. There was also a large one-day camp organised by Scouts and Guides, concluding with a campfire sing song.

On the second Monday of the festival the Trades Council sponsored an exhibition of craftsmanship at the Drill Hall and this continued throughout the week. Then on the Wednesday a four day agricultural, horticultural and produce show was staged in a huge marquee in the Recreation Ground. The show displayed a comprehensive picture of the products for which the area is noted. There were exhibits, amongst others, by the National Farmers Union, Tenterden Young Farmer's Club, Tenterden Horticultural Society and the Tenterden and Smallhythe Women's Institutes. During the afternoon many children enjoyed an open sports meeting in the Recreation Ground with prizes being given to winners and losers alike. Also the Caxton Tableau – Tenterden's entry in the Canterbury procession the next day (2 August) – toured the town. The arrival of the tableau at the Recreation Ground caused a temporary halt to the sports as the lorry on which it was staged came slowly through the entrance gates and halted before a small dais where the Mayor was waiting to receive it. Welcoming the tableau, Cllr Wright expressed the thanks that were due to those taking part for a wonderful effort. The tableau was, he said Tenterden's contribution to the Canterbury procession entitled the 'Life and History of the East Kent Towns'. He particularly thanked Miss Maud Gibson, who had devised and organised the tableau. Proposing thanks to the Mayor, Mr Robert Coombs presented him with a parchment scroll record and memento of the occasion. The tableau represented Caxton sitting at his press with his assistants, the scene being completed by the King and Queen with Knights, ladies and other figures of the period. Particularly appropriate, perhaps, was the fact that the part of the 'Father of Printing' was taken by a well-known local printer, Mr Walter Thomson. Others taking part in the tableau were Gilbert Turner (Borough Surveyor), as the printer's assistant, and Robert Orpin and Peter Ralph as "printer's devils". Hugh Willsher took the role of Edward 1V with Judy Taylor as his Queen, while Nicholas Day and Roger Lambkin appeared as Prince Edward and prince Richard, the Princes in the Tower. Elizabeth Ann Coombs played Princess Elizabeth with Duncan Courtenay and Mona Warwick a gentleman and lady-in-waiting. The Rev C S W Marcon (Vicar of Tenterden) portrayed a monk, while Rollo Burtenshaw, Don Fuggle and David Stanger completed the tableau as soldiers in armour.

The end of the second week saw a horse show and gymkhana at Hales Place on the Thursday followed by a motorcycle and gymnastic display on the Saturday. Saturday evening saw the closure of the fortnight with a grand fireworks display in the Recreation Ground.

During the celebrations the Mayor, Cllr A J Wright, unveiled a new inn sign at the south end of the High Street where the inn known for generations as the Black Horse now becomes the William Caxton. The new sign was later featured by Messrs Whitbread in their series of inn signs was designed by Violet Rutter. It was based on a woodcut of King Canute learning chess from "The Philosopher" in "The Game and Plays of the Chesse" printed in 1474 which is perhaps Caxton's most famous production. Before unveiling the sign, the Mayor said the town had been taken to task for claiming that it was the birthplace of Caxton. Actually, it had never done so; it had only claimed that Tenterden had been closely associated with Caxton. Mr J Marchant, Managing Director of Frederick Leney & Sons Ltd, owners of the inn, said that they were glad to continue a tradition of honouring names of famous men by making them the subject of their inn signs. At an informal luncheon, Mr W F Deedes MP, congratulated the brewers on improving the appearance of the High Street which was of interest of many outside Kent. Those present included Richard Church, the author, and Mr Alan Delgado, who is organizing the Tenterden Festival.

#### Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on Tuesday 2 June 1953

Robert Coombs headed a coronation Committee, which devised an interesting programme. Many of the town buildings and houses were decorated. On the morning of Coronation Day the sound broadcast of the Coronation Service in the Abbey was heard at St Mildreds, whilst some people were able to watch on black and white television sets that were just starting to be seen in homes. In southeast England, Coronation Day was cold and wet. Slight modifications had to be made to the programme. The local Motor Cycle Club did manage to hold a gymkhana as arranged. There were over 100 entries for the

children's fancy dress parade, which was switched to the Town Hall. The judges were Mrs Stanley Day and Mr and Mrs J M Stowting. Miss A Singleton (Headmistress of Penderel School) and Miss E H Judge (Headmistress of the British School) arranged the display. A display of progressional dancing, arranged by Mr and Mrs G Freeland, also went on and music during the evening was provided by 305 Squadron (Ashford, Kent) ATC Band. Dressed in his robes of a Baron of the Cinque Ports, the Mayor (Cllr Stanley J Day) spoke to the crowd in the recreation ground about the coronation ceremony. At about 10 p.m., the day ended with fireworks and a huge bonfire in the recreation ground.

The gymkhana and children's sports that were to have been held on Wednesday afternoon were postponed. The children's tea was held in the Town Hall and Woolpack Garage and about 600 children, including many from Smallhythe and St Michaels attended. The tea – for which 2000 cakes were given – was arranged by Mrs F N Pass, Tenterden Centre organiser of the WVS, helped by Mrs N Goldsmith and about 60 others. On Tuesday and Wednesday at the C of E School, there was a display of paintings, essays and poems that were the best efforts in a children's competition. The Mayor presented the prizes at the children's tea.

The Mayor wrote the following in Tenterden Church Magazine.

“On Tuesday 2 June 1953, Queen Elizabeth II was crowned, or perhaps it would be better to say. HALLOWED in the sight of GOD and her peoples. You sent me, as a Baron of the Cinque Ports, to represent Tenterden at this Coronation Ceremony at which I took a very small part, but nevertheless a very honoured and privileged one, of accepting the Standard of Ceylon, as the Queen's Procession moved up the Nave into the actual Coronation Theatre. To write about the whole ceremony would take up far too much space here and therefore I will confine my few remarks to the part that the Barons of the Cinque Ports played.

Firstly then, after we had been informed of the part we were going to take, we were summoned to a rehearsal in the Abbey and after being welcomed by the Earl Marshal we were placed under the care of Sir George Bellow (Garter Principle King of Arms) who instructed us on receiving the Banners from the twelve Standard Bearers. My particular job was to stand in the Nave – on the left hand side looking up – and when the Queen's Procession came up the Nave, I looked out for the High Commissioner for Ceylon and when he approached me I took a place forward, bowed, and received the Standard which I was responsible for during the whole of the Ceremony in the Abbey. When the Service was over the Barons took up their position in the Nave, on the opposite side to that on which we had been when the Procession went in, and as the Queen's Procession came down the Nave and when the Commissioner for Ceylon was almost opposite me I took a place forward, bowed, and returned the Standard. For this little Ceremony we had three rehearsals, including the Dress Rehearsal on 29 May.

On 2 June we got up at 5 a.m. had breakfast and got into our six 'Daimler Hire Cars' at 6.30 a.m., at 7 a.m. we took up our position in the Nave which was next and either side of the Screen. From then on it was just a wonderful sight and we saw Peers, Peeresses, High Ranking Officers and many others, just coming into the Abbey in their twos and threes, some very much aware of their position, some serious, some smiling, some walking very slowly and with great dignity, some hurrying as if they did not wish to be seen, all this went on until 8.30 a.m. At 8.50 a.m. we had the magnificent sight of six Processions moving past us at intervals, after that the Nave was brushed and cleaned by a squadron of cleaners, and then a great silence, followed by a fan-fare of trumpets, and the Queen's Procession had commenced its progress from the Annex, up the Nave, and into the Coronation Theatre. After that the Service, which we could not see but which we heard and were able to take part in, and then again all the Processions coming out and past us down the Nave. A truly wonderful sight that cannot be described but you will appreciate when you see the splendid colour on the film. Quite apart from the lovely Service, the beautiful singing, the breath-taking spectacle of a lovely and regal Queen, and the colour, the thing that

so much impressed me was the wonderful organization! – everything was coordinated into a perfect piece of timing, even down to the cleaners, nothing was hurried and everyone knew where they should be and what they had to do. The manner in which we were got from the Abbey, refreshed, cars found for us, and taken back to our hotel without any fuss or bother, all reflects the highest possible credit on the Earl marshal, and I feel perfectly certain that the highest possible congratulations are due to the Gold Stick Officers, for the manner in which they did their job.

When we got back to our Hotel at 4 p.m. I met an American Lady and gentleman who had just come from their seats in Whitehall, very tired and wet through. They told me that they had only arrived in this country on 1 June and were due to stay four weeks in England, but the Coronation had impressed them so much that they wished all their heart that they could return to the USA ‘straightaway’ as the whole thing had been so wonderful, so tremendous, so impressive that they could not wait to tell their friends all about it. Personally I felt the same and I wanted to leave the Hotel ‘straight away’ because I wanted to tell my friends in Tenterden what a wonderful sight I had been privileged to witness. I was proud and glad that I had been able to witness one of the traditions of England which makes us the envy of the World.”

In the same edition of the Tenterden Church Magazine, Mrs Higginbotham of Ratsbury, Smallhythe Road, wrote of her experiences ‘from the pavement’ in London.

She writes: “The huddled thousands on the footpaths of the Mall did not lack entertainment. ‘Tomorrow’s Piper’ was on sale before midnight. At about 1 a.m. came a newsboy calling ‘Everest conquered’. The disconsolate seller of morning papers returned crying sardonically ‘Churchill swims the Channel – but I don’t suppose anyone minds’. He got his laugh and Hilary a hearty cheer. The new Elizabethan era had begun.

At 3 a.m. we stood to enable other thousand to join us, and hours later the BBC loudspeakers awoke to tell us how we had slept. From then on we hardly had a dull moment. Grey toppers and picture hats, mackintoshes and fur coats, on their way to expensive seats intermingled with such sights as a small cockney buffoon in a pantomime admiral’s uniform until the arrival of Police and Guards to line the route. Then followed the separate processions of Abbey guests, each more spectacular than the last, culminating in that incredible, uplifting moment when the Queen herself – supremely lovely in her fairy tale coach – passed slowly by, creating an effect on all who saw her quite impossible to describe in words.

Weariness and discomfort forgotten, we listened in reverent stillness to the Abbey service. Some sang parts from the full score; practically all had or shared a printed form of service, and in our thousands we joined in the hymns and prayers, and stood for the crowning. The return procession took an hour to pass, and as the golden coach again approached with our crowned Queen – and the Duke of Edinburgh quiet but pleased and proud at her side – the crowded pavements took up a rhythmic chant which drowned the marching bands and must surely have echoed even in Tenterden – ‘God ... Save ... the Queen! God ... Save ... the Queen!’”

### Silver Jubilee 1977

Tenterden celebrated the Jubilee with a Celebration Week from 4 June to 11 June. Thousands lined the length of Tenterden High Street on Tuesday to see the Jubilee Procession and hear the loyal address by town mayor Cr Hugh Roberts. The procession, with decorated floats led by the Crawley Youth Band and Majorettes, was the climax to the town’s weeklong jubilee celebrations, which began on Saturday (4 June) with a flower festival, bell ringing and Morris Dancing. On Sunday, the Vicar of Tenterden, the Rev Ewart Roberts, conducted an open air civic service on the Recreation Ground where on Monday there were sports and a disco followed by the lighting of the town’s beacon. An Elizabethan Fair on the

Greens began Tuesday' celebrations, with representatives of local organizations, dressed in period costume, manning the stalls. The crowds then gathered along the High Street and outside the Town Hall where the mayor and councillors assembled on the balcony to hear the loyal address sent by the town to Buckingham Palace. Mr Roberts read "May it please your loyal Majesty, we the Town Mayor and councillors of the town and Hundred of Tenterden, a member of the confederation of Cinque Ports, do humbly desire on behalf of the people of the town and hundred to tender your Majesty our most sincere and heartfelt congratulations on this, the year of her silver jubilee." The address was followed by the procession, considerably hampered by traffic on the A28 through the town, which had not been closed for the event. Prize for the overall winner went to St Michaels' School Association float – St Michaels' Silver Stories – depicting scenes from fairy tales. On Wednesday and Thursday, the Tenterden Operatic and Dramatic Society and the Choral Society staged a jubilee event in the Town Hall with excerpts from Merrie England. On Thursday the 2nd Battalion the Queen's Regiment Band performed on the recreation Ground, followed by Beating the Retreat in the High Street. The week ended with a special exhibition – "Hands across the Rother" – at the Museum, an exhibition by Ashford Adult Education Centre in the Town Hall and a Mayor's Celebration Ball at Homewood School on the Friday evening.

### Tenterden Museum 1977

The Tenterden Museum was opened on Saturday 9 April 1977, 49 years after the idea was first mooted. The key was ceremoniously turned in the door of the traditional Kent weatherboard building in Station Road by TV personality Donald Dougal, of Scene South-East, who described the museum as "most apt for the jubilee year." He was watched by a large crowd, including local MP Mr Keith Speed and his wife, the Mayor and Mayoress of Ashford, Cr and Mrs Harry Watts, the Mayor and Mayoress of Winchelsea, Mr and Mrs Donovan Cole, as well as the Town Mayor of Tenterden, Cr Hugh Roberts, who is also chairman of the Museum Association. Mr Roberts described the occasion as a great day for Tenterden – and for him personally, as the history of Tenterden is one of his great interests. Mr Roberts said the museum building was leased from Ashford Borough Council at a peppercorn rent, but money was needed to maintain it. The Tenterden Trust, the Tenterden and District Local History Society and the Tenterden Railway Company, with the blessing of the Town Council, had got together to form the museum association, which was responsible for running it.

### Tenterden Parish Church Octocentenary in 1980

In 1980 the Parish Church of St Mildred celebrated 800 years of existence. The present church was dedicated to St Mildred in 1180, but there has been a church on the same site from before 850 AD. In June 1978 the 800 was formed to prepare for a year of celebration. The idea was that Church and Town should come together in a joint celebration and raise urgently needed money for restoration of the church. During 1979 the Church was engaged in a considerable scheme of restoration that included weather vanes, the clock, the south roof of the nave, a new vestry in the tower space, new furniture and the decoration of the interior. All this cost upwards of £22,000. The many events that took place included the 800 exhibition in the church organised by Tenterden Museum in association with St Mildreds Church, the Mayor of Tenterden's 800 Charity Ball at Homewood School, performances of Robert Bolt's "A Man For All Seasons" in the Church by Tenterden Operatic and Dramatic Society, a visit by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Rt Rev Robert Runcie), Tenterden Carnival, a Flower Festival in the Church organised by Mrs Sarah Fletcher and visited by over 5,000 people, Rotary 800 Gala Day on August Bank Holiday Monday and 'The Tell Tenterden Campaign' in October.

The Carnival, which took place on Saturday 19 July, was organised by the Chamber of Trade with the help of other organizations and surprised everyone with its size and splendour. Many people lined the route as about thirty floats left the Recreation Ground in the late afternoon and took a route along Oaks Road, Beacon Oak Road, Ashford Road and the High Street to West Cross. One appropriate effort was by the Tenterden Wives, Mother's Union and Youth Groups showing the activities of St Mildreds with

solicitor Mr Roger Champion changing his role to clergyman. The Tenterden High Steppers and Cranbrook Majorettes with their band were in the procession as was Tenterden Carnival Queen Miss Cathy Murdoch together with her attendants and Miss Cranbrook, Sarah Sienesi. Earlier, actress Joanna Lumley (star of the Television Series, the New Avengers) with the Mayor and Mayoress, Councillors Frank Abbot and Sylvia Jeffery, and Dr T H E Taylor Jones had worked hard to pick out the winning floats in which schools and organizations predominated. A disco, barbecue and fireworks display at Eastwell Farm, later on in the evening attracted a large number of people. Later Mrs Pam Mitchell, the Carnival Publicity Officer presented a cheque for £307 to the Rev Ewart Roberts, the Vicar of Tenterden, followed two days after by Mr Maurice Clarke, Treasurer of Tenterden Operatic and Dramatic Society, who handed over £405, the profit from A Man for all Seasons.

The last event of the year was an Auction in Highbury Hall, organised by local auctioneer Mrs Pauline Chalk. Nearly 350 lots, all donated by local residents and businesses, raised nearly £3000 for the fund. This brought the total fund to over £10,000 and meant the Church had realized its target for restoration work carried out to mark the octocentenary, and could pay back all the money denoted by generous parishioners.

#### Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Oak, March 1980

Kentish Express

Tree surgeons failed to save Tenterden's Jubilee Oak, a victim of earlier road improvements, and it was felled. The tree given to the town by Mrs Gordon of Ingleden in 1898 will live on in name. The Mayor, Cr Robert Cruttenden, planted a replacement close to the original site at the junction of Ashford and Beacon Oak Roads. He said "I hope it will always be known as the Jubilee Oak." His late father was among those who saw the original tree planted. At the planting, Cr Cruttenden expressed his thanks to the County Estates Department for providing the tree and for the care and attention they gave for the trees in the town. Those present at the ceremony included the Mayoress, Mrs Eileen Cruttenden, Town Councillors Hugh Roberts and John Bates, and John Willis from County Estates.

#### Visit of Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, to Tenterden 1982

On Friday 14 June 1982, the 81 year-old Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother was on the second day of visiting the county in her official capacity as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and Tenterden welcomed her in the afternoon. This was her third visit to the town and her main function was to unveil a commemorative plaque at the voluntary restored Kent and East Sussex Railway to mark the inauguration of a railway carriage specially designed for the disabled. The Queen Mother arrived in Tenterden by car having travelled on a circuitous route from Dover Castle during the morning. Mr Stuart Brown, the town mayor, welcomed the royal party, which included Lord and Lady Astor, at Tenterden Railway Station. The station, which was beautifully decorated with flowers, then witnessed five-year old Jennifer Sanderson, whose father is a town councillor, presented the Queen Mother with a bouquet of flowers. The Queen Mother then met local dignitaries, including Members of the Town Council. She sat in the shade of a marquee as Mr Brown read the loyal Address. He then gave her the hand written scroll on which the address was inscribed. As she unveiled the plaque on the corner of the station building, the Queen Mother said: "It gives me great pleasure to unveil the plaque to mark the inauguration of a special coach designed to accommodate the disabled." Mr Mark Yonge, the Chairmen of the Kent and East Sussex Railway then escorted Queen Mother through the station-booking hall whilst presenting her to several members of the railway. Mr Mark Toynbee, the Station Master, offered her a free pass to travel on the line when she reached the platform. The Queen Mother had a few words with engine driver, Mr Jack Hoad, his fireman, Mr Jack Davey, and the locomotive inspector, Mr Fred French, who were in the cab of the engine Northiam that had been fitted with a Lord Warden headboard. She then watched an impressive demonstration by 13 year-old Peter Sinclair, who is

confined to a wheel chair by muscular dystrophy, as he steered himself up a loading ramp into the special carriage. The Queen Mother carried out an inspection of the coach and met several of the disabled who were inside. For the first royal trip on the railway to Rolvenden Station she travelled in the Pullman car, Diana, and signed its visitors' book. At Rolvenden her departure by car back to Tenterden recreation ground was heralded by several noisy salutes from the train whistle. At the recreation ground she received a rousing reception from hundreds of schoolchildren.

#### Leisure Centre - Visit of Princess of Wales in 1990

Generally regarded by most townsfolk to be the biggest happening in Tenterden since the opening of its light railway in 1900, the £3.7m Leisure Centre opened in a blaze of publicity on Saturday 31 March 1990 when over that weekend nearly 7000 curious visitors inspected the splendid facilities. Attendances were maintained during the summer months when it was announced the centre averaged 12,000 visitors every week. As well as a swimming pool it offered a health suite (Jacuzzi, sauna, steam room), a conditioning suite, squash courts and a main hall where most sports could be played and entertainments staged.

The centre received its final seal of approval when HRH Princess Diana, Princess of Wales officially opened it on Wednesday 17 October 1990. Crowds turned out to see her arrive by helicopter at the town football field next to the centre and she was cheered by a flag-waving contingent of schoolchildren from Tenterden Infants' and Junior Schools. The Princess, escorted by Deputy Lieutenant of Kent Brigadier Maurice Atherton, wore a suit in red and black tartan with a long-line jacket and knee-length skirt. As she arrived and later on her way back to the Westland Sea King helicopter she walked round to talk to people and her arms were filled with flowers given to her. Following the presentations to Tenterden's Mayor Cr Henry Edwards and others in the official party, she toured the centre. Guided round the centre by manager Matthew Roberts, the Princess saw the In-Shape fitness studio the main hall were short mat bowls Eastern martial arts were being demonstrated, a trampoline display by a team from Homewood School, a squash game and the centre's ante-natal class. After seeing the bridge club playing bridge on the balcony, the Princess came to the poolside to see the mother and baby swimming class in the training pool and aqua-aerobics. There was also a swimming display by Tenterden Junior School pupils in the main pool and a succession of children sliding down the water flame. In the Rainbow Room, the Princess unveiled a commemorative plaque opening the centre and was welcomed by Ashford Mayor Cr Bernard Moorman, who said "This Centre was built by Ashford Council on land made available by Tenterden Town Council, for the people and children of the Borough." The Princess was presented with a Royal Doulton crystal bowl. She received a presentation from the Ashford Borough Council in the form of a dapple-grey rocking horse made by Stevenson Brothers of Bethersden. This she presented to nine-year old Robin Mills, of Folkestone, a leukaemia patient who had been treated at the William Harvey Hospital and to Sister Brenda Allen of Padua Ward at the hospital. The rocking horse went to Padua Ward for young patients to enjoy.

#### Death of Princess of Wales (1961-1997)

The Country was stunned by the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, in a car crash in Paris on Sunday morning 31 August 1997. Meetings and sports events were cancelled or silence was observed whilst a book of condolences was opened at the Town Hall. A Remembrance Service, organised by Canon David Trustram in St Mildreds Church, on Friday 5 September 1997 was packed. At this service, the Mayor of Tenterden, Cr Scilla Aitchison, paid tribute to the Princess and described a "series of snapshots" of her memories of the Princess's visit to Tenterden to open the Leisure Centre in 1990. She spoke without notes and said it was the "saddest and hardest" thing she would have to do as Mayor of the town. She recalled that no pomposity was permitted, the Town Council was requested not to wear chains or robes and the Princess had been given a rocking horse. She said that Diana had "sprinted away" from the official party, to talk to the crowds at the centre. When she left by helicopter, she waved until she was out of sight. The service included a reflection on the life of the Princess by the Rev Margaret Roylance

and a solo from Fauret's Requiem by Sandra Relf. The hymns chosen for the funeral next day were sung and many people lit candles and left flowers and cards at the altar. At the postponed Town Council meeting, the Town Clerk, Christine O'Neill, recorded the council's "sincere regret at the untimely death of Diana, Princess of Wales" and the message was sent to the Queen.

#### 550th Anniversary of the Borough 1999

The organising archives committee estimated that at least 500 people attended a three-day exhibition commemorating the 550th anniversary of the granting of the Royal Charter to Tenterden. Eleven mayors from the Cinque Ports and Ashford were at the opening of the exhibition at the Town Hall. Hugh Roberts, Robert Cruttenden and Frank Abbott, the three Freemen of Tenterden, also attended. Kevin Linzey, who set it up with councillors Margaret Knight, Michael Pearson and John Link said there was only one complaint that it was not open for longer. The exhibits included a display of billhooks by Fred Hams, who collects old agricultural tools. Commemorative ceramic tankards were sold at the Tenterden Gala Day on the Saturday and a replica commemorative ceramic plate that had been made for the Queen Mother was on show. The Mayor of Tenterden, Cllr Jill Kirk, headed the Gala Day procession dressed as Queen Elizabeth I. Her escort, her husband John Kirk, was in medieval costume. Traffic warden Harry Hickmott was town crier for the day. The Day Centre young disabled took part in the parade with members of Tenterden Residents' Association, the Hospice Committee and Tenterden Fire Brigade. Many groups took part and raised money for their own funds.

#### Millennium Celebrations 2000

Lights blazes out in the darkness at midnight on New Year's Eve, 31 December 1999, across the district as fresh hope for the future united mankind. Beacons, lanterns and fireworks shone forth, kindling optimism, spirit and resolve as the new Millennium dawned. Communities heartily sang *Auld Lang Syne*, linked arms, embraced and welcomed the next thousand years. Pealing bells and clinking glasses hailed the celebrations for the biggest global party ever. Buried Millennium time capsules and new sapling trees will be features enduring beyond the flames to be reminders of promises and resolutions as we world moved into 2000. Computer systems continued to run without hitches with the feared Millennium Bug not occurring.

The pews in the 12th Century Parish Church were pushed back for the biggest party in its history on New Year's Eve. Three hundred people toasted the new Millennium with champagne when the bells rang at midnight. The Mayor of Tenterden, Cr Jill Kirk, was also on the Town Hall balcony with councillors to welcome in the year 2000 and invited everyone to link arms for a community *Auld Lang Syne*. The party organised by Graham Maple, Anne Marie Trustram, Elaine Pryor and Tony Allen at the Church was a sell out. It included computer games for youngsters and disco dancing. Jane Trustram, Anna and Helen Weaver, Alice and Ellen Vink, the St Mildreds Angels entertained. The Church bought a television licence for just one night, so that the Dome address by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Rt Rev George Carey, could be projected on a big screen. Canon David Trustram held a short service and Kate Slatter lit a Candle of Peace.

The press reported that the public houses in the town did very little business and had closed by midnight. In fact Magnums wine bar was closed and the Woolpack Hotel was closed to all but pre-booked restaurant customers. The William Caxton and the White Lion had private parties whilst the Tenterden Club's bars were open to members only.

A New Year's Day peal of church bells coincided with the opening of the Tenterden Millennium Garden on neglected land at the rear of the Pebbles. By chance town councillor Henry Edwards, Millennium Group chairman, shouted the opening speech whilst the bell ringers led by his son, Richard Edwards, were at work in the belfry. The Mayors of Ashford and Tenterden attended and saw the newly-planted Millennium oak which was donated by Phillip Skelborn, property manager of Lionheart Inns, owners of

the neighbouring White Lion. Cr Jill Kirk announced that a plaque would be placed at the foot of the tree carrying the names of the town's youngest and oldest residents. These would be 108-year-old Arthur Whitlock from St Michaels and Britain's oldest man together with the most recent arrival, Edward Jones of Appledore Road, who was born one month early on 30 December. The garden has a rose arbour and wooden 2000 seats selected by Cr Margaret Knight. One is a memorial to the life of town solicitor Richard Pengelly. Cr Kirk thanked the chairman, the Ashford Borough Council and the Rural Development Commission for donating £1000 each, and landscape contractors Merriments.

The jubilant whistling of two locomotives headed the new Millennium on the Kent and East Sussex steam railway. Two historic engines were at the head of the line's Wealden Belle, which left Tenterden at 7.30 p.m. on New Year's Eve and returned in the early hours of 1 January 2000. The 37 diners on board the luxury Pullman cars celebrated midnight at Northiam station and were looked after by the train's 20 mainly volunteer staff. In all 1,3000 passengers took part in celebrations over the New Year holiday, when a train of Victorian carriages ran daily.

#### Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II 2002

Good weather and an upsurge of community spirit helped make the jubilee celebrations a great success as Tenterden celebrated with a huge selection of events running over four days (Saturday 1- Tuesday 4 June). Deputy Mayor, Cr Barry Wright, chaired the town's jubilee committee. About 50 shops, cafes and restaurants transformed their windows into a splash of colour to mark the Queen's 50 years on the throne with the best display being won by Porters. Pupils from Homewood School staged a concert in the Town Hall and public houses across the town hosted bands. The Weald of Kent Art Group, which has about 120 members, celebrated their 40th birthday with a party for old and new members and also had an exhibition of their paintings in the Recreation Ground. Saturday saw a concert by the Tenterden Singers at St Mildreds, a Jubilee Ball at the London Beach Hotel and a gourmet dinner on the Kent and East Sussex Railway. A packed civic service was held at St Mildred's on Sunday followed by a quarter peal of bells. During the celebrations there were many activities in the Recreation Ground, including a fair, circus workshop, fencing display, bouncy castle, market stalls and a fancy dress teddy bears picnic.

Dr Jack Gillett