

DO YOU REMEMBER The Silver Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, 1977

Next year, when we celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee it will be 35 years since the Silver Jubilee Day on 7th June 1977; a memorable day in Garway

Plans started earlier in the year with a committee being formed to plan the day and raise funds. On 7th April the children of Garway planted a tree on the Common and a plaque was made to commemorate this event.

This plaque was unveiled on Jubilee Day by Miss Emily Lawrence who had been postmistress of Garway Post Office for over 50 years. Miss Lawrence gave a short speech, pulled the Union Jack off the plaque and was presented with a bouquet of flowers.



The Queen began the official celebrations when on Monday 6th June she lit a beacon at Windsor Castle, starting a chain of beacons which spread right across the country. Preparations had been made on Garway Hill for an enormous bonfire and local farmers had been hauling material up to the top of the hill for some time. As darkness fell on Monday evening a huge crowd congregated on the hill and the fire was lit. A vast quantity of hot-dogs was cooked on camping stoves in the brick building on the summit of Garway Hill filling the air with the smell of sausages and fried onions and a great party atmosphere.

The village was in the mood to celebrate and was decked out with flags and bunting as we all gathered at Garway common on the afternoon of 7th June. In 1977 the area opposite the Garway Moon was cut occasionally when necessary but the ground was very rough and uneven with bracken constantly trying to grow through. The edges of the common by the field were still wild and overgrown.



The main event of the afternoon was a fancy-dress cricket match. As the ground was much too bumpy for a wicket to be mown someone borrowed a long green practice mat from a local secondary school. All the cricketers were dressed in silly costumes and included a baby in a nappy complete with a dummy and a large burly local lad in a hula hula skirt. John Tapper was the umpire dressed as Father Christmas.



Suddenly, circling overhead and very high up could be heard the noise of a helicopter and as the crowd gazed up two black dots jumped out. Down came the parachutists heading towards the Common. There was quite a stiff breeze blowing and one of them was blown wide, landing in the field. He soon joined his companion on the common and all the children were delighted to find that it was

Major Michael Rose SAS, (now retired General Sir Michael Rose) who lived in the village. He had brought the Jubilee coins that were given to all the children in the country and presented one to each of the Garway children. Then, to the great delight of all, the helicopter landed.

After all this excitement it was time to wander down to the village hall for tea. And what a tea – the ladies of Garway had pulled out all the stops! The hall was crammed and the tables groaned with all the food for a sit-down tea. Ham, tongue, pies, salads trifle, jelly, cakes and gallons of tea. But the day was not over yet!

After a rest at home the hall filled again in the evening for a dance and social with a bar. A truly memorable day!

There was, however a lasting benefit. The committee who organised the event met again to decide what to do with the surplus funds that had been raised. It was decided that it would be a good idea to use this money to improve the playing field. The village was consulted, agreed to the scheme and a Sports Committee was formed. During the winter of 1977 the local farmers ploughed the field, levelled and landscaped it and put in field drains.



In the spring of 1978 there were tractors with harrows driving up and down to break up the soil. It was then left for several weeks so that all the stones could be picked off. On most summer evenings you would find a group of villagers plodding up and down with a bucket picking up stones and putting them in a trailer.

We filled several trailers! In the autumn special sports grass seed was sown and by 1979 it was ready to be used. This area has given much pleasure over the last 35 years. Any plans for the Diamond Jubilee?