

Reeve Talks Bungay

There is no doubt that one of the highlights of 2016, when we look back, will be the celebrations of the 90th birthday of Queen Elizabeth II, and we are certainly planning to mark it in Bungay in traditional style.

Last month I spoke about the plans we have for an event on the Queen's official birthday, June 10th – a celebration with something for all the family, and finishing with the lighting of the Town Beacon and a fireworks display.

Now we are adding another event to mark the Queen's actual birthday, April 21st, a Thursday. I have been contacted by Bruno Peek, the official national organiser of such events, who is keen that as many communities as possible light beacons that evening so there is a chain from one end of these islands to the other. There will be around 850 places, large and small, taking part and Bungay will do its bit, lighting the beacon at the castle at around 9pm. It will be a brief event, including a proclamation, to salute a remarkable monarch and all she has done for the country over the past 64 years.

The day before that, there is a coffee morning at the home of Roger and Sue Allen at 33a, Earsham Street, to raise funds for All Hallows Hospital at Ditchingham – something I want to support with my fundraising this year. The other is the Bungay Sea Scouts, which has done such wonderful work for young people over the years, and which is now taking female as well as male scouts. In fact I am keen to support young people in general, and I thoroughly enjoyed a visit to the Fisher Youth Theatre Group and their impressive production of *The Musicians* recently. There is tremendous talent among its many enthusiastic members.

Along with the Mayor, Olly Barnes, I represented Bungay recently at the Suffolk Courts of Justice service at St Edmundsbury Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds, hosted by the High Sheriff of Suffolk, Judith Shallow – a colourful and most enjoyable event and another opportunity to meet civic leaders from other towns around the county. That is an important part of the role of Town Reeve – sharing experiences and promoting the town of Bungay in the process.

Earlier in 2016 I attended the ceremony to unveil a plaque on the Bridge Street home of author Elizabeth Jane Howard, noting that she lived there. The project was put together by the Bungay Community Library Trustees (the author was a patron of the library) and the Bungay Society, and it is fitting that her life's work should be noted in Bungay in that way.

Plans for the festival in the summer are progressing, and the exciting project to develop the King's Head Hotel is also on the move, though at a very preliminary stage. And I'm pleased to say that it seems that the Bungay in Bloom group has recruited new members and will be in action again to keep the town looking attractive and colourful over the summer and autumn period, so that visitors will remember Bungay and want to come back on a return visit. The group has the support of the Town Trust, and we have offered to plant and erect the hanging baskets on the Butter Cross in the Market Place, and keep them watered, as our contribution.

Eamon Gaffney

Town Reeve of Bungay