

**Monday 20 June 1887 – Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee is celebrated in Sawbridgeworth and High Wych**



The above picture has possibly been seen by some of you before. It is thought to be one of the earliest photographs of Sawbridgeworth and supposedly dates from 1887. It shows the intersection of London Road and 'Cock Street' (now called Bell Street). Having recently seen the above better quality rendering of it I started noticing some of the details, bunting above the road and the fact that several of the girls in the picture wear relatively fancy clothes. They are in their Sunday best! Some sort of festivity seems to be going on. What could this be I wondered and then it dawned on me: Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebration which took place on Monday 20 June of that year.

That jubilee was of course a big deal for the United Kingdom at that time. Preparations were started quite a while before the day. In Sawbridgeworth, which included High Wych at that time, a committee was formed for the purpose under the stewardship of the Reverend H.A.Lipscomb, vicar of Great St. Mary's. Other members were Mr.Burton, Mr. Prout, and Mr. Truswell. At a meeting reported on by the Hertford Mercury a Mr. Newman proposed a 'general feed for every man, woman and child in the parish'. Mr. Poole thereupon estimated the population of Sawbridgeworth and High Wych put together at 3000. 'From that a figure of 5-600 might be deducted as not being eligible for the dinner. Costs were estimated at £120. Mr. Poole then proposed and Mr. Truswell seconded 'that the men and lads over 14 would be provided with a meat dinner and the women and children under 14 with a tea.'



**JUBILEE FESTIVITIES.**  
A LARGE STOCK OF  
**FLAGS, BANNERS,**  
Etc.  
GRAND  
**DISPLAY of FLAGS**  
**FOR SALE**  
On **MONDAY, 13th JUNE,** and  
Following Days.  
**S NEALE & SONS,**  
**HERTFORD.**



**Left to right, the Victoria Golden Jubilee Sovereign, an advert for bunting from the Herts Mercury and the celebrations at Hoddesden.**

On 25 June the same Hertford Mercury reported a celebration on a field at Walnut Tree Farm. 'A substantial tea was given to 1500 women and children and a 'meat repast to 700 adults. A long programme of sports was carried out.' The organising committee had collected contributions towards the cost of £150 to which another £50 was added from Mr. Bowlby of Gilston Park, the Lord of the Manor at the time.

Strangely, although the aforementioned Mr. Truswell was a local Herts and Essex Observer correspondent at the time no mention was made of the Sawbridgeworth celebrations in their edition of 25 June. There was however quite a lot about Bishop's Stortford and Harlow. Only on 5<sup>th</sup> July is there mention of a jubilee concert on 23<sup>rd</sup> June. The Herts Mercury had by that time already reported in more detail on the same event. Performers mentioned were Mr. Brickwell, Mr. Havelock, Miss Fulcher and Miss Navine whilst there is also mention of a Mr. Swift who provided the comic element which was loudly applauded. Amongst the audience was Prince Francis of Teck.



### **Jubilee Street Parade in Hertford - Prince Francis of Teck.**

Now Prince Francis of Teck was the brother of the later Queen Mary, wife of King George V. According to Wikipedia Francis was a bit of a naughty boy. He was chucked out of Wellington College for throwing his housemaster over a hedge to win a bet. He then went to Cheltenham where he got into more trouble. Francis never married. He was an inveterate gambler whose debts led to him being sent to India to pursue a military career. His affairs were stuff of legend. The actress Sarah Miles has claimed to be the great-granddaughter of Prince Francis, through her grandfather, allegedly an illegitimate son of the prince called Francis Remnant, born at Richmond, Surrey, in 1894. What brought this interesting person to East Herts and whether he enjoyed himself there I have not been able to find out.

Sources for this article were the Hertford Mercury, the Herts and Essex Oserver and Wikipedia.