

THE DAY THE QUEEN CAME TO CALL
 Part Two of our Silver Jubilee Year souvenir series by JOAN REEDER
South Wales GWENT

When she arrived, the strain of the marathon Jubilee tour along the highways and byways of Britain was showing. But that afternoon the posies, glad songs and bells—and the love on the faces of those 900 pupils and their teachers—took away her tiredness



THE CHILDREN WHO FOUND

Once upon a time (last June, in fact) there were 900 cheeky, snub-nosed, tall, small, noisy, giggling and excited children who were going to have the Queen to tea—at their school.

"Will she wear a crown, Miss?" clamoured the youngest. "It's all just like a fairy-tale, isn't it?"

Now it so happened that that day, Friday June 24, the Queen, who had been on a lot of long journeys, was looking very tired when she arrived to see them.

She hadn't brought her crown with her, she was in ordinary, everyday clothes, except that hers were made of apple green silk. She even seemed to have lost her smile.

But it *was* like a fairy-tale, because those 900 schoolchildren found that smile—and gave it back to her.

Their teachers knew, of course, that that third week in June had been a long and hard one for the royal couple. Monday and Tuesday had been spent in Lancashire, Greater Manchester and Merseyside; Wednesday, Thursday and Friday covering the length, and much of the breadth of Wales.

The Friday's 13 hours of engagements had begun at 10.05 a.m. in Cardiff.

By 4.30 p.m., as they reached the little town



Teacher Anne Hewkins and husband Russ

of Risca, in Gwent, they were only half way through that day and, in the new Comprehensive School, there was yet another dais to sit on, another plaque to unveil, concert to hear . . . all before they could have a cup of tea.

But that new school, on a hill above a Welsh mining valley, did something for the Queen that was so special that it felt like watching a fairy-tale coming true.

In 75 minutes it not only welcomed her but understood her tiredness, took care of her, and cheered her on her way, rested, her smile renewed, and with her husband, Prince Philip, looking pleased and delighted.

And it was all done by 900 children aged between 11 and 16, and their teachers.

Teachers like the deputy Head, Mrs. Winifred Goulding, who'd worked in Risca school since the 1930s, when it was housed in a dark old building in the town's one long, narrow street. Now, 42 years and five generations of children later, she was still with it, up in the bright new buildings overlooking the Bristol Channel.

Widowed, and with no children of her own, she had given a lifetime of instinctive love and understanding to the children of other people.

And those 42 years of her devotion were all there for the Queen—in the children.

"I'd invited the children to send me letters telling me their thoughts and feelings about their royal day.

Those of PAUL HERRERA, 13, were typical. "I was very excited, but when the Queen finally arrived I was surprised to see how small she was. I thought she was very pretty, but she looked tired, as if all the travelling on Jubilee visits were taking their toll. I felt so lucky to receive the honour of being an usher for her."

Though children write such things they rarely say them. But that Friday their sympathy and pride seemed to reach out to the small, tired woman in the green coat and hat as she walked through the long school corridors. All the double doors ahead of her flew apart, proudly opened by curtsying girls whose hearts were set on becoming nurses, air hostesses and kennel

maids, and by bowing boys determined to be sailors, long-distance lorry drivers and policemen.

By the time she reached the school theatre, her strained face was noticeably more relaxed.

Behind the scenes the children waited nervously and excitedly to give their concert. Yet, once again, when they saw her, it was of her they thought, rather than of themselves.

PAUL CROOK, 13, wrote: "I was on pins, like a bag of beans . . . and then we were all ready to go out and do our best to please the Queen, as she did look pale and tired."

CATHY PAYNE, 13, wrote: "When the music started for us to go on, my heart stopped . . . but when I reached my place and I looked at the Queen I felt very sorry for her, and the Duke

For their letters about the Queen's visit to their school, WOMAN awarded Risca pupils £50 in prize money. Here are the two first-prize winners

STEPHEN REES, 13: *I do wish I was the Duke because I would be very famous and I could have almost everything I pleased with all the money—an electric guitar, a Steinway grand piano, a full-size electric train set, Set 10 Meccano.*

In another way I would not like to be the Duke because even if I had all those things I wouldn't have time to use them because of all the work and travelling . . . launching ships, signing papers, giving statements to reporters about different events.

I will never forget having to perform in front of the Queen and her applauding for me. Also afterwards, I sat in the seat which she had sat in Herself.

Then best of all, I will never forget the Duke winking at me and smiling. For me, Friday, June 24, was the greatest day of my life.



Right: Ringing out a welcome, Sheila Parry (second from the right) with her Grosmont Hand-bell Ringers. Below left: "Noble Lady, fair and kind . . ." they sang when they laid their posies at her feet



John Dixon



THE QUEEN'S LOST SMILE

looked tired too, and I felt sorry for him—I felt like that as I sang."

You could hear, see, feel the sympathy and understanding going out as 15 girls sang:

*"Simple flowers are all we bring you,
 Simple songs are all we sing you,
 Of devotion, love and duty,
 To our lady, fair and kind."*

They laid their posies at her feet.

The choice of the song, the patient training of the sweet young voices so that every word of its gentle message reached the Queen, were the work of teacher Anne Hewkins who'd played a toy piano so well, that her father decided she must have a proper one.

So he'd mortgaged himself to the tune of £40,

who each win £10. Extracts from the letters of the six runners-up appear in our story. Each of these entrants receives a £5 prize.

DEBORAH WORGAN, 15: *I was most privileged in that I was chosen to serve the Queen and her guests with eight girls of my age . . . Who is this woman, I thought, who can raise the emotions of so many people, she's not a pop star or a football hero, but someone very special and different. When she entered the room . . . she smiled and my first impression was: Goodness! She's a real person, a very drawn, tired looking lady who is desperate for a cup of tea and a sit down.*

I watched her eating, it seemed strange that she liked salmon sandwiches like us, and drank tea.

My mother wanted to know every detail . . . how many times she looked in my direction, in which hand she held her cup and if her small finger stuck out.



a fortune for a foundry-worker during the Depression, and bought one.

He made it possible for Anne to win a grant to Cardiff University to become a Bachelor of Music at the age of 21, determined to teach and share her own musical chances with children.

Nothing has ever stopped her doing that.

She did it through loneliness, sadness, and little money when her first marriage broke up. She had to take her small daughter, Abigail, with her over the mountains, down in the valleys, everywhere she went, to teach.

She did it with a kind of feminine courage that took her out to buy a loaf one Saturday morning, and come home with a £1,300 second-hand grand piano instead, which meant more years of sacrifice in order to teach music.

And she's still doing it, through the happiness which has come since she and fellow teacher, Russ Hewkins, married two years ago.

And all that experience and understanding was there too, for the Queen—in the children.

By the time they burst into their swinging, exuberant finale, *When the Saints Go Marching In*, they had brought the animation back to her face as she turned, delightedly, to the Duke.

The children noticed that, knew, in their own way, what they'd succeeded in doing:

DEBRA FARLEY, 14, wrote: "I'll always remember I sang for the Queen that day, and I could tell she enjoyed it because she began tapping her feet, and she started off the clapping."

JOANNE WEBSTER, 13, wrote: "When I went home I told my Mum and Dad how ill the kind Queen had looked, but I thought they'd both enjoyed the concert we'd put on for them."

DIANE PAGE, 12, wrote: "As I went to sleep I was wondering what it would be like to be the Queen, and all the responsibilities you would have to take to represent your country, and you might never get any praise. But I'll always remember how beautiful she looked, and the way that she smiled."

Headmaster Derek McKie put it another way, and very simply: "For all of us," he said, "staff and children, it was a day of real sharing."

How Sheila nearly missed her once-in-a-lifetime chance

Welsh farmer's wife Mrs. Sheila Parry is 39 and has a Jubilee message for every child: "If you hang on to a childhood dream for 31 years, you can make it come true." She did.

This year, to the open-mouthed amazement of her 10 young bell ringers and her best friend, farmer's wife Marje Havard, she picked up her skirts, tore after the Queen, stopped her, and talked to her. And that's what she'd longed to do all her life.

Sheila was eight when she got her first school-girl crush on the then 20-year-old Princess Elizabeth. From then on the walls of her bedroom in her parents' farm were smothered with pin-ups of the Princess . . . Duchess of Edinburgh . . . Her Majesty.

Naturally musical, the first tune young Sheila taught herself to play on the piano was the

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Jones-the-Music auditions the Grosmont Hand-bell Ringers in Marje's farmyard