

DITTISHAM DIAMOND JUBILEE FESTIVITIES June 2,3 4

As the Chairman of the Jubilee Committee said in reply to the message of thanks she received 'this small village can really put on a show, there is just so much talent and energy around'. There will be no thank yous in this article as it is doubtful if there is a person in the village who did not in some way contribute to the festivities which everyone will remember for the rest of their lives.

Fascinating archives and brilliant floral arrangements depicting the colours in the flags of Commonwealth countries were on display in the church. A peal of bells rang out at noon to start off the weekend as runners whizzed by in the mini marathon. Saturday morning was grey but remained dry for the Dog Show which had about 50 entries. It is such a spectator event whether you are a dog lover or not. One of the judges when asked about criteria replied 'I give the prize to the most aggressive- looking owner.' Perhaps the funniest moment was when a youngish entry in the obedience class did not lie down so the owner lay down instead and in the obstacle course to bend in and out of cones one dog peed on a cone then all that followed had to stop and have a sniff. The traditional children's three legged, wheelbarrow and sack races were hugely popular as was the Punch and Judy Show and 'bash the rat' stand. Many people had dressed in red, white and blue which made the Ham wonderfully colourful. Villagers had been asked to create something with 60 objects and this although small was a very special exhibition. Leo Stevens had made a crown of sweets and the note below said 'This is my gift to the Queen, I hope she likes liquorice all sorts'. A gorgeous cushion had a note saying that it made for Her Majesty to rest her weary head or feet. The Marquee was huge and it needed to be as after WI cream teas with music from the Torbay Brass Band, the much awaited Fashion Show started to a packed house. Gathering authentic clothing from the 6 decades, rehearsals of the 29 cameo scenes on the catwalk had been going on for weeks, actually months, and the atmosphere in the changing area was pretty lively. Changes of dress had to very fast and the pace of the show really made it quite special. Huge cheers for the kids as spice girls, rockers, Abba, and for the grown ups who did not mind making fools of themselves dressed up as Elton John, David Bowie, John Travolta but there were poignant moments, too. Princess Diana accepting a bouquet from a young child to the strains of *Candle in the Wind*, and a beautiful woman in a black dress and diamonds glided down the catwalk as Holly Golightly. Whilst all this was going on the hardy sailing folk were out in brisk winds to compete in the 60 Guineas Diamond Jubilee Regatta Race. There was quite a tussle between the yawls, a boom was broken, someone capsized but it was all great fun. The evening bash was noisy with lots of dancing. Condolences to Ray Benson of the Ferry Boat, who has ruptured his Achilles tendon but got up on stage and sang on regardless. On Sunday morning St George's was very well attended. The Parish Council chairman read out a letter from the Palace and the sermon by Ron Travers reminded us that during her 60 years reign the Queen has nurtured a respect and encouragement of all faiths in our country. The tables in the Marquee were groaning with food and it was a hugely jolly atmosphere with music from Martin Holland. Freya Thom and Leo Stevens read out a specially composed poem about the Queen's Secret visit to Dittisham by Brian Patten. The presentation of the Queen's 60 year reign written by

Ron Travers, read by Peter Ford, interspersed with hit tunes of the day sung by a community choir, accompanied by Jonathan Watts had a terrific reception. There was lots of flag waving and audience participation for the finale of Rule Britannia with the large form of Tony Bryant, base, draped in a Union Jack. The raffle was fixed. That is all one can say. One couple were hugely embarrassed by winning 4 prizes, one man drew a ticket belonging to his wife and another man

drew a ticket for himself. Every child in the village received a Commemorative Mug and then it was really time to go home and rest up. On Monday the marquee was transformed again into a market place. A little earlier than scheduled the flotilla from Dartmouth came up and turned at the end of the pier. A wonderful sight of many vessels dressed overall and a wonderful sound of hooters and horns paying respect yet again to our beloved Queen. In the evening at 10.15 a good crowd gathered for the lighting of the beacon up at Bozomzeal. However, despite the laying of many faggots the contraption to light them failed so that a chap had to climb up the ladder to try and ignite the beacon but sadly it only flickered before dying out again. No one was downhearted for it had been a very very special Diamond Jubilee. God Bless the Queen.