

Remember, Remember...

Remember, remember the fifth of November, gunpowder treason and plot. How could we forget? We all knew about Guy Fawkes, taught to us at Dinton school. We could still remember last year efforts and we were now certainly looking forward to the coming November and as October approached the excitement grew and there was a lot of work to be done. The material for the bonfire had to be collected. No one person really organised it. It just sort of happened. Everyone who was interested in the event, children and adults, got together and collected any burnable rubbish etc. from anywhere within the village. We would even collect some old dead tree branches from the local woods. All this was then taken down to the Green and the bonfire began to grow. Most people had something to get rid of and over the next 2 or 3 weeks the bonfire steadily grew in the middle of the Green.

Some of the older children would make a 'guy' with the help from adults which would be put into its final position on the fire usually in the afternoon of the fifth. Darkness comes fairly early in November and the fire was lit around 6-30 to 7 o'clock and by that time there were very many villagers on the Green, young and old, to watch and enjoy the evening event. The fire soon took hold and from a separate area away from the bonfire the fireworks were lit. The display would continue for an hour or so until all the fireworks had been let off. Not all families could afford to buy them but one or two of those who were better off ensured a good show supplemented by the occasional 'banger' let off by us youths. We would spend some of our pocket money on fireworks and many of the smaller children were given 'sparklers'.

With the fire now burning brightly and giving off a good deal of warmth on the cold November evening we would place potatoes into the fire embers on the edge of the fire to cook slowly and these would be eaten for our supper! The cooked potatoes were somewhat blackened but always tasted good! Soon all the fireworks had been let off and enjoyed by all, many stayed on the Green being kept warm by the now dying fire and probably by 9 o'clock all was ended again for another year. Well not quite as the Green had to be tidied and cleaned up which we did as best we could over the next few days. What a mess though, from a lovely tidy Green to one with a large blackened area. The spent empty firework containers were collected up and disposed of. Soon the rain would wash away the ashes left by the fire and as the spring arrived the following year the new green grass would grow again and all trace of last year's fire would be gone. So also gone were the Rockets, the Roman Candles, the Catherine wheels and Bangers to await the coming of next November, the event which would be repeated with the same enthusiasm.

Although the Green is surrounded by many thatched cottages I cannot recall any problems from the bonfire but thinking back to those days it must have been a little worrying for the occupants of those cottages. I also cannot recall any person getting hurt in any way from the bonfire or fireworks. This annual event was a village affair with adults and children all helping to make it a success. A great deal of effort had been put into these few hours of celebration but it certainly had been worth it and we had enjoyed every minute of it.

Gordon.S.Weedon.