

Transcribed from an unknown Bridgwater newspaper, late June 1927

THE LAST PERFORMANCE
GREAT PROCESSION THROUGH THE TOWN.
PAGEANT ENDS IN A DOWNPOUR.

Remarkable scenes of enthusiasm marked the closing stage of the greatest week in Bridgwater's history, when, on Saturday night, the Pageant came to an end. With that thought for the sick and suffering which is so characteristic of the Mayor, his worship arranged for the procession to take place through the streets of the town, so that those who through any circumstances were unable to visit the Pageant, and especially the patients in the Bridgwater Hospital, might have all opportunity of seeing at least some of the great army of performers in their gorgeous and many-coloured costumes. A notice in the "Mercury" office window that the procession would be held brought into the streets thousands of onlookers, the scene being reminiscent of Carnival night in Bridgwater.

Forming up in the Cattle Market, the procession was arranged in sections according to the chronological order of the episodes. At the head were the B.A. Christy's Band, and walking behind were the Mayor, Major Cely Trevilian (the Pageant Master), and "The Spirit of the Bridge," who had frequently to acknowledge the salutations of the crowd in acknowledgment of the great work they had accomplished. Then came the performers, many of whom were on foot, whilst others rode in cars, and a horse-brake (provided gratis by Mr. H. Head, of the Railway hotel), provided accommodation for a number of the children. Especially imposing were the mounted and foot soldiers of the Sedgemoor episode.

The procession was of great length, and proceeded through High-street to the Cornhill, Fore-street, and the Bridge, where it turned into Salmon Parade and then came back again into Eastover, so that the Hospital patients and staff had an opportunity of seeing the spectacle pass the institution twice. From Eastover the procession moved on into Monmouth-street and Bath-road, and so to the Pageant grounds. Everywhere the streets were crowded, and if an advertisement was needed for the Pageant nothing could have been a better one, but, of course, by then the splendour of the production had become a household word in the town.

THE FINAL PERFORMANCE.

Huge as had been the attendances throughout the week, they were easily eclipsed on Saturday night, when the final performance was given. The grandstand was packed with sightseers, and the remaining accommodation was taxed to its utmost capacity; in fact, many who followed the procession to Sydenham, despairing of getting a view, did not attempt to enter the grounds. Owing to the procession, the start of the Pageant was a little late, but once it begun, it went through splendidly, and aroused great enthusiasm. Although the weather was very cold — a biting wind being more like April than Midsummer—and rain threatened, it was not until almost the end that for the first time during the six performances the rain fell. During the Hustings scene there was a sharp shower and although it momentarily ceased a downpour set in, and drove many of the spectators who were not under cover from the ground before the performance ended. The great majority of the spectators, however, remained until the end and were deeply impressed by the beauty of the Epilogue. In the growing darkness the great company of performers slowly

marched off singing the hymn, "O God, our help in ages past," with the electric cross shining out in the gloom. It was a thrilling scene, and many of the audience were moved to tears. After the spectators had dispersed the performers assembled in the grandstand, where a series of presentations took place

ENTHUSIASM OF THE PAGEANT MASTER

"We have come to the end of a very extraordinary and happy week", said the Mayor, addressing the company, and he wished to express grateful thanks to all who had worked so hard in connection with the pageant, he was grateful to everybody for the enthusiasm and wonderful spirit of cooperation shown throughout the whole of the Pageant, and for the wonderful help they had given. Every man, woman, and child taking part in the Pageant were the better for doing so, and the whole tone of the Pageant had been uplifting in the highest sense of the word. (Cheers.) The performers, added the Mayor, wanted to express their appreciation to one or two who had been so absolutely wonderful in their co-operation and help. (Cheers.) The first they would like to thank was their Pageant Master. (Loud and prolonged cheering and the singing of "For he's a jolly good fellow.". The performers thought they would like to present Major Trevilian with a record of themselves, and they wanted him to accept an enlarged photograph of the whole of the Pageant performers, with the coat of arms inserted in silver, a specially prepared copy of the Pageant handbook, embossed in leather, with the coat of arms of Bridgwater, and a Jacobean oak-cased Westminster chime clock, with the insertion in the oak of a reproduction of the borough arms in gold. (Cheers.) They hoped the chimes would always peal forth to Major Trevilian a message of love and goodwill from the Pageant people of Bridgwater (loud cheers.)

The Mayor went on to make reference to "The Spirit of the Bridge" (cheers) — and said her efforts had been appreciated not only by the performers, but by the audiences, and they were exceedingly grateful to her, for her very valuable contribution. (Cheers.) The performers wished her to accept a gold and turquoise necklace. (cheers.) Another to whom their special thanks were due was Mr. Morgan, the hon. business manager, for the enormous amount of work he had put into the Pageant. (Cheers.) They wished to present him with a silver cigarette case, engraved with his initials, and to him and Miss Soole, also a copy of the handbook similar to that to be presented to Major Trevilaian. (Cheers.) The gifts, added the Mayor, would be handed to the recipients by the oldest performer (Mr. Francis Parr) and the youngest performer (Master Michael Milton). The clock was supplied by Mr. Huggins, St. Mary Street.

Major Trevilian, who was greeted with great enthusiasm, first made acknowledgment, and said the week had been a most wonderful one and he hoped they had all enjoyed it as much as he had. He thanked them from the bottom of his heart for the gifts, but he wanted them to realise that he was absolutely nothing except a link which joined them all together. Work had been done by literally hundreds of people, and he would specially mention Mr. Page and Mr. Dilks —(cheers) —for the material they had dug out for historical episodes.

Then there were the performers, added Major Trevilian, who had stuck it out under tremendously difficult circumstances very often, and then there was the Mayor—(cheers)— who was the inspiration of the Pageant; (loud cheers.) His had been the spirit that had inspired everybody, but beyond all there had been the performers themselves. The spirit they had put into their work was most extraordinary. He would now make a confession to them. When he first came on the scene,

he thought they were the sickest lot he had ever seen - (loud laughter and a voice, "But we have stuck it")—but they changed all that, and had pulled the thing through because they had had the right spirit and the spirit of getting together,

There was one great lesson which had been underlying the Pageant, said Major Trevilian, and that was a love for England. If there was one thing greater than any thing in this world it was England – (cheers) – and if they had struck some blow for England against wrong and for right, then they ought to be thankful for the privilege given to them. (Cheers.)

"God bless you all," said Major Trevilian in conclusion, "and I hope we shall all be friends as long as our lives last. (Loud cheers)

"ENJOYED EVERY MOMENT."

Miss Nora Soole, "The Spirit of the Bridge", was loudly cheered when she proceeded to acknowledge the gifts, and to express her heartfelt thanks for them. All she could say was that it had been a pleasure to her to come there, and that she much appreciated the honour of being invited to take part in that Pageant, and to represent the town of Bridgwater. (Cheers.) She thanked everybody for their great kindness to her, with the result that she had enjoyed every single moment of the Pageant. (Cheers.)

Rousing cheers were given for the Mayor and Mayoress, and there were calls for Mr. Sturdy, the Mayor remarking that they were grateful to Mr. Sturdy for his kindness.

Mr. Sturdy made a few remarks, and said he liked Bridgwater, and the old house in which he had come to live. He had grown to love the place, and he had always wanted to see people of the past in the grounds. The performers had shown them to him, and he was deeply grateful. (Cheers.)

AN IMPRESSIVE ENDING.

The Mayor recalled the Pageant service on the previous Sunday, and the wonderful atmosphere it had created throughout Pageant week, and in order that they might end the week on the same note with which they started it he asked the Vicar to pronounce the Benediction as a fitting conclusion to the Pageant proceedings

Amid silence, and in the darkness, the Vicar of Bridgwater (Rev. Seymour Berry) impressively pronounced the Benediction, the performers standing with bowed and uncovered heads. They afterwards noiselessly took their departure from the grounds.

SOME OF THE HELPERS.

The scenery, stands, and arena were designed by Mr. Francis Parr, the costumes were designed by Mrs. Millican. Mrs. Wallis, Mrs. Guppy, Miss Ethel Harris, and the Art and Technical School, and were made by the Ladies' Dress Committee and other helpers, the principals' costumes and wigs were by Messrs. Clarkson (London), the electric cross was by Mr. F. A. Pine, the grandstand and other structures were by Messrs. Bryer and Co., Ltd., and the scene structure and many of the stage properties were by Messrs. H. F. Tottle and Son. The car parking arrangements were under the care of the borough engineer (Mr. H. P. Bishop), assisted by the patrols of the R.A.C. The latter, together with the county and borough police, also controlled the

enormous traffic in the Bath-road, and although there were hundreds of cars going to and from the Pageant ground, so excellently were the arrangements carried out that there was not a single accident. Everything working most smoothly. The National [Omnibus Co][**EditorialNote**:The rest of this line is cropped in the original cutting] Co and Messrs J. Fursland and Co, Bristol Road ran motor buses from Cornhill to the grounds and back each evening, and these were crowded with performers and the public. Great crowds each night and on Thursday afternoon watched the wonderful stream of traffic through the town. It is also pleasing to record that the Pageant performances passed off without any untoward incident, and beyond one of the riders in the Sedgemoor episode having a nasty fall from his horse after galloping from the arena, there was no accident. The Bridgwater motor ambulance was in attendance throughout the Pageant, together with a number of members of the brigade and nurses, but, happily, their services were not required. Every one was struck with the absolutely smooth working of the performance, and each episode was carried through practically on the minute of the scheduled time. Large marquees, were, erected as dressing-rooms, and the catering of refreshments was carried out in tents by Mrs. A. M. Wilce, of Eastover.

THE FLAGS FROM OVERSEAS

Owing to the rain, it was decided to dispense with the ceremony, which was to have taken place on Saturday evening of presenting the flags from two Bridgwaters overseas, but they have since been handed over by the Pageant Committee to the Mayor, and received by him on behalf of the town to be deposited in the Charter Hall