

Transcribed from the *Bridgwater Mercury*, late June 1927

THE ATTENDANCES SOME DISTINGUISHED VISITORS.

The audiences at each of the five public performances were very large, and for once in a way Bridgwater was attended with good luck in the matter of weather, although on most of the evenings the wind was very cold, necessitating the use of overcoats and rugs by the onlookers.

Wednesday evening's performance drew a large attendance, practically every seat in the grandstand being filled, while hundreds found accommodation in the cheaper seats running across the end of the, "stage." The visitors from other towns were very numerous, and the whole audience expressed delight at the performance.

Before the Pageant began a pleasing ceremony took place in the centre of the arena, a civic welcome being accorded by the Mayor (Alderman W. Deacon), who was accompanied by the Deputy-Mayor (Alderman H. M. B. Ker) and the mace-bearers, to the Mayor of Taunton (Councillor Howard Westlake), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor J. S. Scudamore), the Mayor of Glastonbury (Councillor C. V. Heaphy) and the Deputy-Mayor (Councillor R. C. Clarke) The Mayors and Deputy-Mayors wore their robes. The Mayoress of Taunton (Mrs. Howard Westlake) and the ex-Mayoress (Mrs. Scudamore) were also present.

Other visitors were the Bishop of Taunton and Mr. J. C. Cooke-Hurle (ex-chairman of the Somerset County Council).

The attendance at the afternoon performance on Thursday was huge. The grandstand was crowded, and other parts from which to view the scenes were packed. Again visitors came from all parts of the county and from places beyond. Bristol University sent its representatives, including the Vice-Chancellor, and another distinguished visitor was the Dean of Wells (Dr. Armitage Robinson). Asked by a *Mercury* representative his opinion of the performance, the Dean, who is a great scholar and historian, said, "It has been, beautifully conceived and beautifully done." Among other prominent people in the county who were present during the week were Mrs. Wynne Willson (wife of the Bishop of Bath and Wells), Mr. F. H. Berryman (chairman of the Somerset County Council), Mr. H. H. Shepherd (chairman of the County Education Committee), the Recorder of Bridgwater (Mr. Wyndham N. Slade), Colonel M. L. Blake (a collateral descendant of the great Admiral), and Mr. I. Crompton Wood, M.P. for the Bridgwater Division. Large parties of scholars attended from schools in the county, including Taunton School, Huish School, Bishop Fox's School, Weirfield School, and St. Katherine's, Taunton Westcliff School, Weston-super-Mare, Weston-super-Mare Secondary School and St. Dunstan's College, Street.

An aged descendant of Admiral Blake, accompanied by his wife, was present on Tuesday night, and was deeply moved at the presentation of the life of his illustrious ancestor. With tears in his eyes he shook hands with Mr. Cuzner, whose impersonation of Bridgwater's greatest townsman had evidently much impressed him.

There was a pleasing incident after the I performance on Thursday, when those taking I part in the Riots and King John episodes, the libretto in each instance being written by Mr. T. Bruce Dilks, assembled in the garden of St. John's Vicarage, formed into procession and, led by the marshal (Mr. E Welland, the King's Jester), marched away and took up position in front of Mr. Dilks' house in Eastover. At the call of the Jester, three cheers were given for Mr. Dilks. The members of this episode then moved on and those of the other took their place, and, led by Mr. D. Fackrell, heartily cheered Mr. Dilks. The event was witnessed by a huge crowd. Before, the matinee the horsemen in the Pageant paraded the town and made an imposing spectacle. **[Editorial Note** T. Bruce Dilks was agoraphobic, and rarely left his house. The majority of the Pageant council meetings were held there.]

On Friday night there was again an enormous crowd present, for in addition to the whole of the stand being occupied, the ends of the arena were packed with spectators. This performance was, perhaps, one of the best of the series, everything going through without the slightest hitch.