

LORD MAYOR'S DAY - Keble's Gazette - 15th November 1884

A few years ago, a party of youths - calling themselves "The Bonfire Boys" - wishing for an early repetition of the Guy Fawkes Carnival, had a second procession on the 9th November, when they caricatured the Lord Mayor's Show. This has been kept up ever since and has developed into quite a pageant, so that large numbers of persons are attracted to witness it.

Anyone walking in the neighbourhood of the Railway Station on Monday evening at about 7.30, would have noticed that something more than usual was expected on account of the crowd of passengers which alighted. There was a procession headed by a mounted policeman in mimic costume and he was immediately followed by several "Military-looking" personages on horseback. A van well filled with fantastic passengers came next, bearing a large banner, "The Lord Mayor's Show, our best thanks to all Subscribers". A carriage and pair driven by a coachman in livery followed. This contained the "retiring Mayor" and the "Mayor elect", well got up. Many pedestrians with torches walked by the side of the vehicles and threw quite a brilliant light on the procession.

Other horsemen followed the Lord Mayor's chariot, and then came a conveyance which seemed to combine business with pleasure, for its occupants were hard at work at a forge, trying with sledge and hammer to bring sparks from a piece of iron, which they were constantly bringing up to white heat. A large banner explained the pantomime, "Randy Churchill and Salisbury Tinkers, M.P.'s for Birchington".

On came more pedestrians bearing torches, and there was a dog in a cart with two gentlemen riding in front and footman with folded arms at the back of them. This conveyance, too, carried a banner - "Success to Dr. Wood" was the wish of all. More "interesting" ladies and gentlemen on foot followed on and then closing up the procession, but rather far in the rear, came what was certainly very amusing. Several youths attired as clowns had charge of a small donkey - which didn't seem to appreciate so much attention, nor to see the necessity of keeping up with the procession. The clowns pretended to be anxious to ride, but in their attempts to mount, either fell on the other side or soon fell off again. When one succeeded in seating himself, he was held on by his comrades, notwithstanding his cries "Take me down or I shall fall off!"

The procession started from "The Bungalows", proceeded over the Railway Bridge and on to the Square and then to East End [Epple Road area]. Returning again to the Square, a halt was made, the Mayor's carriage being brought up in front of the Institute. The retiring Mayor made a speech, introducing his successor, who suitably replied. While this was going on there was a great deal of horse-play, but it was all taken in good part.

The next start was made through Parish Lane in the direction of the National Schools and then back again to the Square and down Station Road. A short halt was made in front of the residence of Mr H. Tapsell, confectioner and soon after, the procession broke up. A large quantity of fireworks were let off, much to the merriment of the children.