

# Scruton News

## Queen Elizabeth II (1926 -2022)



### From the Parish Council

*By Cllr. Syd Nye (Chairman)*

The sad death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II seems to have dominated life for most of the month. I think Scruton did Her Majesty proud with all the flags in the village at half-mast, the Book of Condolence and the minute's silence on the village green in her memory.

We have received some requests and suggestions for a memorial in the village to our late Queen. Please forward your views on, if you want a memorial and if so, what type it should be. Perhaps something simple and with no ongoing maintenance would be appropriate. There is no rush to decide but if you do want a memorial, it has to be right.



### Telling the Bees

Royal beekeeper, John Chapple, informed the bees at Buckingham Palace and Clarence House of the Queen's death and draped their hives in black. 'Telling the bees' has been a tradition amongst beekeepers for centuries when keepers knock on each hive and deliver news of family births & deaths. Its precise origins are unknown, but the practise may date back to Celtic times.

When a queen bee dies, the hive must replace her within a few days, or the workers will become an angry swarm. Once chosen, the new queen shows herself around the brood cells, the workers get back to work and the hive continues its business.

We have undergone a similar ritual; the new monarch has been displayed busily around the realm to deter everyone from becoming an angry swarm and anarchy breaking out! Everyone will reaffirm their loyalty piously, until after the funeral, when the normal news feeds return, and we perhaps become an angry swarm once again!

For thousands of years it was assumed that the hive was run by a King Bee. The unbelievable truth was finally affirmed in a book by Charles Butler in 1609, shortly after the death of Elizabeth I - perhaps there's a link? In fact the workers are not ruled by either king or queen: they are, literally, an 'anarchy'.



### God Save the King

We have a new King - Charles III. At 73 he is the oldest monarch to take the British throne, he has waited six decades, no heir has ever waited so long to accede. But he inherits an amazing legacy of public service and public goodwill left to him by an amazing woman.

### Foiled plot in Scruton could have changed history!

*A true story that has remained secret for forty years, by Malcom Barker*

The recent funeral of Queen Elizabeth II reminded me of an incident which 'almost happened' in Scruton in the early 1980s. Back in those days it was usual for the royal train to be brought up the railway line from Northallerton and parked at Bedale Station overnight for either the Queen or Prince Charles to rest before they undertook royal duties elsewhere in the North. In those days we were living next to Scruton Station and Mrs Plews, who was the gatekeeper, used to tell us beforehand of the impending visit because she was responsible for opening and closing the crossing gates as the train passed. After the death of my father, she had taken to calling round for morning coffee with my mother which was greatly appreciated.

One day, when I went home for my dinner, Kathleen Plews came around, agitated, and told us that a man had been hanging around the railway all morning and that the Queen would be coming along in a couple of nights time. She had been watching him from behind her curtains and now he had walked towards the main road. This was at a time before the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland and the threat of terrorism was high. I told her that I would jump into my car and see where he was walking to, and subsequently I passed him walking towards Morton Bridge. On my return I rang Northallerton Police Station and explained about the royal train and the man walking towards Morton.

I heard a couple of days later that the police had picked up this man and that he had been Irish but that they had released him. Something however had changed with the security of the royal visit. No cars were allowed to pass either level crossing in the village and if people wanted to go to work in Northallerton then they had to go via Langton Bridge. It was pure chance that I was talking to one of the rail workers a couple of weeks later and he told me that a bomb had been found on the line before the royal train came and that it had been defused by the Bomb Disposal Unit. He hadn't been told how viable the bomb was. but that he was one of the team who found it. Bedale Station was never again used as a place to park the royal train.

As I watched the Queen's funeral and the thousands who attended it, I thought to myself that Mrs Plews' caution and my phone call to the police, only very small acts in themselves, may have given the Queen 40 more years on the throne! Scruton could have gone down in history for all the wrong reasons. Imagine how different society, this county and the world would have been if this assassination attempt had succeeded. Many years have now passed and it is strange to think that a possible cataclysmic change in world history was averted by the caution of an elderly gatekeeper and a twenty something year old farmer living so 'far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife'.

*Thank you Ma'am, for showing us what a Queen should be*