

INCORPORATION OF BEXHILL.

GRAND RECEPTION OF THE CHARTER
MEMORABLE SCENES.

FOUR SUSSEX MAYORS PRESENT,
BANQUETS, SPEECHES, SPORTS, AND FIREWORKS.

PROCLAMATION & PROCESSION

SUCCESSFUL PARK FETE.

Hardly recovered from the fever heat of excitement and jubilation caused by the motor races on Whit-Monday, Bexhill celebrated the attainment of the grand and happy climacteric of its civic life on Wednesday, when it received with much ceremony and festivity, and placed in the local archives, the Charter of its Incorporation as a Municipal borough. The inhabitants, their bosoms swelling with pride at the Municipal honours which are to be showered upon them, hung their shutters and deserted their homes to hail with fluttering flags and resounding cheers the arrival of a simple yet momentous document, which marks an epoch and the commencement of a new and important era in local history.

Of the best augury for the prosperity and progress of the new borough was the fine weather which prevailed, and considering the storms of wind and rain which were experienced for weeks right up till the eve of Charter Day, and which returned again on Thursday, it would seem that the hard-working and popular Hon. Secretary, Councillor Vale, had added to his many and varied accomplishments in the organisation of the process of the remarkable feat, in some mysterious manner, squaring the Clerk of the Weather. At all events, Bexhill was singularly fortunate on Wednesday in the fine, clear, and sunny conditions, and taking advantage thereof, the whole town, from the noble Provisional Mayor down to the humblest burgess, united in the achievement of a notable success, which will always be a pleasant recollection to the many thousands who participated in the spectacles and functions. A town, whose rise and progress in local government has been so phenomenal, dating from a Local Board of Health in 1884 to an Urban District Council in 1894, and a Municipal Corporation in 1902—a record unsurpassed in Municipal history—was naturally expected to excel itself on its natal day as a borough, and unquestionably Bexhill on Wednesday lived up to its reputation for the first time, and in the short space of eight hours an imposing proclamation ceremony, a long and interesting procession, old English sports for children and adults, a couple of concerts, and an illuminated fête and display of fireworks. Thanks to the admirable organisation of Mr. Vale and his co-workers of the Incorporation Committee, the whole programme was carried out without the slightest hitch, and in a complete and perfect manner, which entitles the officials and populace alike to the heartiest congratulations.

The morning was ushered in with delightful prospects of a favourable equilibrium in the meteorological elements. Bright warm sunshine, which chased the clouds from the fair face of heaven, greeted Bexhillians as they began the preparations for the day's festivities. While the inhabitants were engaged in decorating their houses, and displaying inspiring messages, and Lord De La Warr and Mr. Vale were flying in all directions putting the finishing touches to the arrangements, the appointed deputations were journeying to London to fetch the Charter. The gentleman entrusted with this historical mission were Mr. R. H. Gaby, the gentleman who has done the legal engineering of the scheme so well, Councillor John Groves, who achieved the distinction of moving the first resolution in favour of Incorporation some three or four years ago, Mr. J. D. Atchison, and Mr. Sydney Cohen. On arrival at London Bridge the ambassadors of Bexhill drove to Mr. Gaby's agent's offices in Gray's Inn, where they received into their safe keeping the precious Charter. There was no time to lose if the machinery for the fête was not to be entirely dislocated, and the party drove off to Victoria Station, where, having been joined by the Deputy Provisional Mayor (Mr. Daniel Barrett, J.P.), they entrained at noon for Bexhill. Alderman John Bray formed one of the unofficial members of the party on its return journey.

At ten minutes past two o'clock Earl De La Warr alighted from a motor car amid a great crowd at the Town Hall, and walked into the Municipal building with the Charter in his hand. There while thousands of eyes were being strained, and six terrific reports in the air notified to the outside world that Bexhill had got its Charter, the Provisional Mayor mounted the

stand, rapidly followed by a number of Sussex Mayors, Deputy Mayors, Town Clerks, and other distinguished guests as could squeeze themselves into the rostrum, and the Acting Town Clerk immediately proceeded to the reading of the Charter. This interesting formality did not take more than ten minutes, long enough, however, for scores of cameras to render the picturesque scene, rendered picturesque by the handsome robes of their visiting Worthships, and brightened up in every part of the crowd by the smart uniforms of the Volunteers, the glittering helmets of the firemen, and the waving flags and bunting. Everybody who heard it felt a glow of satisfaction at the King's greeting to the inhabitants of Bexhill, and when the reading was over "God Save the King" came heartily from a thousand throats. Then came some speech-making from the visiting Mayors, felicitating Bexhill on its latest and greatest honour, and expressing cordial wishes for its future prosperity. Intersected with the congratulations were a few sensible words of advice and warning, which the baby borough of Sussex, as one of the speakers termed it, could profit. A graceful acknowledgment from the Charter Mayor, and a happy and hearty welcome to the visiting Worthships, who thoughtfully recalled the memories of the departed, and the ceremony closed.

With the exactitude of clockwork, the procession, of half a mile in length, was immediately got into order under the skilled marshaling of Mr. C. S. James, who bears the motto "The King's Man," a skilled equestrian, and the tour of the town was commenced. Several private motors added to the interest of the scene. In nearly every case there were hundreds of spectators, the route being lined in most places on either side. The Mayors and other guests were taken by Egerton Park, where they were met by the band of the latest acquisition and improvement. The journey, which covered practically all parts of the town, was over about four o'clock, when the Down, filled with the children of the town, was reached. Here Mr. Lawrence and his assistants were working assiduously for the entertainment of the youngsters, who found themselves engaged in the popular programme of sports, Punch and Judy, roundabouts, swings, and other recreations dear to the juvenile heart. Long before the races and fags of war were over, the Mayor and his assistants commenced at the Kursaal and Devonshire Hotel, the Provisional Mayor entertaining a large and distinguished party in his beautiful building, while the tradesmen and friends did honour to the occasion at Mrs. Sewell's hostelry. At eight o'clock came the grand finale to the day's proceedings, in the shape of a very delightful illuminated fête in the Egerton Park, most charmingly lit up with fairy lights and lanterns, the whole culminating in a grand firework display by Brock, an immense fire of the Charter Mayor being hugely delighting the crowd of over 3,000 persons. A number of enthusiastic souls kept up the festivities until midnight with a concert at the Devonshire Hotel, and Bexhill was bed thoroughly tired, but fully satisfied that it had done itself credit, and rendered all due honour to the King's Coronation Charter.

THE DECORATION OF THE TOWN.

The decoration of the town was very creditable, especially in Devonshire-road, where the display of flags and bunting was particularly effective. The following are some details:—

DEVONSHIRE ROAD.

The Devonshire Hotel was conspicuous for a fine display of flags from the upper windows, which greeted the eye on emerging from the railway station. Some score of Union Jacks, Red Ensigns, and other patriotic standards floated from the side of the hotel facing Station-square. The Red Ensign, the St. George's Cross, and other flags adorned the entrance at the corner. Over the porch in Devonshire-road was a large and handsome Union Jack, and about a dozen flags waved from the front of the house. Small flags and streamers decorated the adjoining premises of Mr. T. Davies. The Union Jack with streamers and flags, adorned at the corner of the London and County Bank of the adjacent premises of Councillor J. B. Wall, Messrs. Lyne and Co., the London and Provincial Bank, and Mr. Wright, and Union Jacks at Mr. H. Carter's and Messrs. Hall and Co.'s shops. The white form of the decoration at the Bexhill Estate Agency, where the Union Jack and Royal Standard waved in company with art coloured streamers. Red, white, and blue bunting adorned the front of Messrs. Wagon's Royal Cafe Restaurant, where a large Union Jack and other patriotic colours fluttered side by side with a reminder of the glories of the War, in the shape of the C.V. flag. The Red Ensign, a Blue Ensign, and strings of flags

made a brave display at Mr. Parker's confectionery shop next door Mr. W. J. Crick displayed red bunting, with the word "Welcome" in white letters on a red ground, and a shield with a trophy of flags, the whole being set off with gay streamers. At Councillor Vale's the decoration was among the most ambitious in the road. The upper windows were draped in red, white, and green (the town colours). Across the large bay window were the words, "Hail to the Bexhill Charter," in pale green, with red capitals, on a white ground, edged with red. Streamers depended from the windows, and the decorations were illuminated with Japanese lanterns. The shop front was decorated in red, white, and green, and displayed four shields bearing the Royal Arms. In the centre appeared the Arms of Bexhill, edged with red and green, and surmounted by the town colours. A bright display of flags, including several Royal Standards, was seen at Mr. F. S. Wood's, and Mr. Lane displayed bunting of the town colours. From the premises of Lewis, Hyland, and Co. waved some dozen Union Jacks. The Cuba Cigar Store and Messrs. Cunningham and Co.'s displayed bunting. Much care had been taken in the adornment of the "Bexhill Observer" Office, across the front ran the words, "Prosperity to the new Borough of Bexhill," in red letters on a white ground, edged with delicate pale green and red in narrow stripes. Above appeared the motto "Hanc Urbem Formosam Deus Fortinet." The upper part of the front was gaily decorated with numerous flags, a shield with a trophy of flags forming the centre of the decoration, and above this a large Union Jack and the "Red, White and Blue." The premises of the London Drapery Company displayed bunting and flags, and a red ensign, flanked with the town colours in bunting, was conspicuous at Mr. F. R. Aldridge's. Flags and bunting appeared at Messrs. Hull and Dixie's, W. H. Croucher and Co., the Bexhill School of Music, and other adjacent places of business. Across the road Mr. F. N. Collier had a brilliant display of bunting and flags, the Bexhill colours predominating. The word "Welcome," tastefully worked in red letters on a white ground, was seen here

tower of the Sackville Hotel. The front of the Hotel was crossed and re-crossed with strings of coloured streamers. The Union Jack flew over the Kursaal, and the flag-staff at the Coastguard Battery was dressed with flags, the Marine Club being similarly decorated. Farther to the west several houses, including Fotheringhay and Rangemore, displayed streamers and bunting. The Y.W.C.A. showed the texts, "God is Love" and "The Lord Reigneth."

OTHER ROADS.

In Sackville-road several houses and shops flew flags, and a row of streamers crossed the road in front of Messrs. Shorter and Son's premises. In Cornwall-road, Wilton-road, and Western-road there were individual contributions to the decorations in the shape of flags. In Buckhurst-place the "Bexhill Chronicle" Office displayed the words, "Welcome to Bexhill Borough," in green, with red capitals, on a white ground. The Castle Hotel had "Success to Bexhill" in white on red. In front of the Bexhill Pantechnicon appeared the words, "Let Bexhill flourish in prosperity to the new Borough." Several of the shops at the corner of Station-road were decked with bunting, and Messrs. Jones and Edwards displayed the words, "Success to Bexhill Town. Long life to Earl De La Warr and to the town rulers." In Station-road Mr. Sydney Smith's house was decorated with flags and Japanese lanterns. Mr. D. Page displayed flags, bunting, and fairy lamps. Mr. W. Sharp had "Welcome" at Ivy House, and a framed portrait of Earl De La Warr entwined with bunting, a Royal Standard, and rows of streamers. At St. John's Villa, St. James' Villa, Stoneleigh, Fern Green, Lindal Lodge, and other houses, there were flags and streamers, and similar emblems of rejoicing appeared at the Red Cross Pharmacy, the establishments of Messrs. W. Parks, F. W. Christian, E. G. Hunter, W. Noakes, etc., Union Jacks adjoining the balcony of the York Hotel. In various private roads there were flags, Sawston House, Eversley-road, being conspicuous in respect, and displaying the words, "Welcome to the Charter."

appointed for the function. The buildings facing the open spaces were a festive appearance with numerous flags, and such motes as "Success to Bexhill" (on the Castle Hotel), "Welcome to the Charter" and "Success to the Borough" (on the Town Hall), and "Welcome to Bexhill Borough." The ornamental garden, in full bloom, afforded a natural touch of brightness and sweetness, and the Volunteers appeared in their scarlet uniforms, and the firemen in their brass helmets, and the Coastguards in their national blue, the scene was interspersed with picturesque. Visiting guests were brought to the Council Chamber to refresh themselves before starting on a long programme of events. Here also the Councillors and Incorporation Committee men assembled, and bedecked their coats with rosettes. Mr. Keefe was seen on his native heath once again, looking well and very enthusiastic about Bexhill and its Charter. Councillor Goodwin came over from Worthing. The crowd outside gradually grew in numbers, until, at two o'clock, the roadways were full, the converging point being in front of the platform in the Town Hall enclosure, this erection being covered with red cloth. The Artillery Band were located on the left, while the King's Band was stationed in the garden by the Colonel Lane Memorial. On the right of the platform seats had been placed for ladies, who attended in force. The weather, so fine and promising all the morning, now became dull and a little threatening, but hardly noticed, perhaps, in the excitement of the hour. The train carrying down the Charter, in the custody of the Deputy-Provisional Mayor, was a little late, but at ten minutes past two a couple of mounted policemen, followed by a dozen carriages, and the motor car containing Lord De La Warr and Mr. Daniel Mayer, came at a good pace down the road from the Station, with another great crowd of people, and within half a minute the Charter Mayor was seen ascending the steps of the Town Hall with the Charter in his hand. At this moment the whole town resounded with the explosions of six powerful maroons. Bent on losing no time, his Lordship immediately returned and mounted the rostrum, followed by the Mayors of



Photo by F. J. Parsons, Ltd. Reading the Charter at the Town Hall. DECORATORS BY CURRINGHAM, BARRETT, AND CO.

Messrs. Barker, Cunningham and Co., and others had bunting, Messrs. Wickens and Son displaying the Royal Standard, and the town colours of the Royal Japanese lanterns and streamers made a warmth of colour at Mr. Henry J. Rieder's, and the front of Messrs. Barclay and Co.'s Bank had two large Union Jacks, several other houses and shops displayed flags.

ST. LEONARDS ROAD.

In St. Leonard's-road one's attention was naturally attracted by the pretty floral adornment of Messrs. Giggins and Co. shop. Roses, tulips, carnations, lily, narcissi, marguerites, and geraniums were lavishly employed in beautifying the balcony and the front of the shop. Ivy festooned the children, and palms set off the brighter hues of the blossoms. Hanging baskets of flowers were suspended at intervals, producing a most tasteful effect. The appearance of the whole won much admiration. At Messrs. Cunningham, Barlett, and Co.'s there were large Union Jacks and other flags and streamers, and a row of streamers crossed the road in front of Messrs. J. L. French and Co. showed large Royal Standards and the White Ensign. At J. W. Colbran's was a flag with the Prince of Wales' feathers.

SEA ROAD.

The Royal Standard flew in front of the De La Warr Estate Office, and several houses displayed the Union Jack.

THE FRONT.

In front of the Kursaal and at the gates were rows of streamers, which added greatly to the festive appearance of the locality. Japanese lanterns and bunting decked Glynne Hall and Ripley House, and at Windsor House and Normanhurst these ornaments were supplemented by flags on the front railings. Normanhurst had also portraits of the King and Queen on bunting. The Cockburns' house was with its coloured streamers, while Mount Lehman and Hurst Dene had streamers and bunting. The Union Jack flew from the

THE TOWN HALL.

looked very imposing with a broad strip of crimson cloth, edged with gold across the front. Above the ground floor windows were the words, "Welcome to the Charter," in the town colours, and "Success to our Borough." The Union Jack and two Red Ensigns flew from the eaves of the building, and there were also flags and shields. The decoration of the Municipal building had been ably done by Messrs. Cunningham, Barlett, and Co. The London and County Bank adjacent to the Town Hall had rows of streamers. In the Old Town, Belle-hill, and other localities there were also flags.

THE PRIZES.

The Hon. Secretary of the Incorporation Committee (Mr. Vale) has received the following letter:—

Devonshire-road, May 21st, 1902.

Dear Sir,—Mrs. Wall and my sister, Mrs. John Smith, who were deputed by your committee to adjudge and award the prizes for the best decorated houses, are pleased to be able to report, as a result of their inspection, that the decorations to several premises were of great merit, and they would specially mention the premises of Mrs. Giggins, St. Leonard's-road; Mr. Reider's, Devonshire-road; the "Observer" Office, Devonshire-road; Mrs. Sewell's, Devonshire Hotel; and your own premises, Devonshire-road.

They further consider that Mrs. Giggins should receive the first prize, and that Mr. Reider should receive the second prize.

Yours very truly, J. B. WALL.

The first prize is £2 2s. and the second £1s., the latter given by Mr. Daniel Mayer.

RECEPTION AND PROCLAMATION OF THE CHARTER.

SPEECHES BY SUSSEX MAYORS AT THE TOWN HALL.

People began to assemble in the vicinity of the Town Hall an hour before the time

Hastings, Eastbourne, and Lewes, preceded by their picturesque Mace-Bearers, and accompanied by their Town Clerks. Their Worthships were, of course, in their robes, which lent a special and appropriate interest to the scene in view of the time so near at hand, when the Mayor of Bexhill will appear at functions similarly attired. The Ex-Mayor of Eastbourne and the Deputy Mayor of Hastings were also present, in their gowns. As many as possible crowded on to the platform, the observed of all observers, and the prey to scores of cameras, which were soon busily at work.

The ceremony opened with the reading of the Charter by the Acting Town Clerk (Mr. E. Sholto Douglas), whose voice was heard a considerable distance. The quaint wording of the document, commencing with a greeting from His Majesty to the people of Bexhill, evidently interested the people, who listened very attentively during the ten minutes which the reading occupied. Three hearty cheers were given at the close, and the immense crowd in the square, who listened very attentively during the ten minutes which the reading occupied. Three hearty cheers were given at the close, and the immense crowd in the square, who listened very attentively during the ten minutes which the reading occupied. Three hearty cheers were given at the close, and the immense crowd in the square, who listened very attentively during the ten minutes which the reading occupied.

CONGRATULATIONS FROM HASTINGS.

The Mayor of Hastings (Alderman F. A. Langham) said it was happy to be here today on this auspicious occasion, both on personal and official grounds. Personally, as many of you know, I have had a great deal to do with the life of Bexhill from the time the Local Board was originated, and for 15 years I held an official position in this town, and therefore I am very pleased to think that I have this day the opportunity of congratulating the town of Bexhill on their acquisition of a Charter of Incorporation. I am quite sure that it will be beneficial for the town and for the country, and that it is a better government, but a more important government, probably—a government which, at all events, will take a higher place in the annals of the country than it has hitherto. I can go back to the time when Bexhill was a very small village, but when I first commenced my official connection with the place in 1884 you had a

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