

THE LAST 'KING' OF PILTON

The first Pilton Festival was a two month series of events in June and July of 1982, and as part of the festivities a 'King' was proclaimed on the day of the Medieval Market and Historical Pageant on Saturday the 24th July. The 'King' was to be the youngest male from Pilton Parish born prior to that day. Timmy and Jill Buckler, then from Bradiford, claimed

that title for their son Luke who was born only nine days prior. An extract from the North Devon Journal of the time describes the day.

PILTON'S FEAST OF MERRIMENT

HISTORY came alive in Pilton at the weekend when visitors were counted in thousands, costumes in hundreds and the motorcar was effectively shut out.

The ancient burgh's medieval market and pageant left police staggered by the sheer magnitude of the operation. Those prepared for a modest church bazaar were staggered.

But no-one is happier than the vicar, the Rev. Anthony Geering, who devised the idea of celebrating 1,100 years of recorded history in Barnstaple's very own village.

"A raving success, with tremendous good humour and free entertainment for all the visitors," was his summing-up of Saturday's feast of medieval merriment.

It was not the intention to seal off Pilton Street. In the end, with thousands of onlookers pouring through, the street closed itself. The "bazaar" had turned into a major North Devon event.

There were never less than 2,000 people milling the streets during the six-hour period of the pageant and fair. Cars simply didn't stand a chance.

The pageant depicted people and events throughout Pilton's history—which was why a medieval, Elizabethan and Victorian atmosphere intermingled happily.

Constant music

The Puritans hissed and booed the Cavaliers, with the vicar caught up in the middle; the lepers paraded to the old hospital and presented candles; there were mummers, morris dancers, a mock mayor making and almost constant music.

Fresh trout, home made lemonade, Athelstan griddle cakes, herbs and diverse remedies typified the offerings at the medieval market, where the accent was on value for

money.

A family of Londoners expressed amazement that they could buy cups of tea for 10p each!

Pilton's newest baby—a symbol of hope for the future—turned out to be nine-day-old Luke Buckler.

He earned three cheers from the crowds that packed Pilton House where the pageant ended.

On Sunday Pilton's former vicar, the Rev. James West, who left a year ago for retirement in Cornwall, returned to preach at a thanksgiving service.

There was much to be thankful for—not least the fine weather that ensured such a massive turn-out the previous day.

This week a meeting is being held to decide what limited celebration can be staged every year, for no-one can bear the thought of having to wait another 100 years to paint the town red again.

The flags, the banners, the historical charm have now gone as Pilton returns from Yesterday to Today.

It had never known a day quite like it...

Also included here are photographs from the day. Below (left) is Timmy Buckler with his son Luke being announced to a crowd in front of Pilton House pavilion by Rev. Anthony Geering. Below (right) are Timmy, Luke and Godparents John Mock and Dave Baglow.



The following year the Buckler family emigrated to Australia and they have lived there since. Luke's sister Penny followed and is now back in Barnstaple. Our Monarch now lives and works in Sydney where the third photograph (left) with Godfather John Mock was taken in 2015.

John Mock