

# CELEBRATIONS



## Queens Jubilee 2012

Next year sees Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee and plans for Bicester's celebrations are well underway. A variety of events will mark the 4-day weekend that starts on 2 June.

A Jubilee Steering Group has been formed to ensure that Bicester makes the most of the historic occasion of Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee in the best and most appropriate manner and includes the maximum number of Bicester residents.

The Group's chairman Jason Slaymaker said "We want to encourage, support and promote as many events and celebration opportunities as possible and aim to facilitate this through the Bicester Jubilee website. We would also like to encourage anyone living in Bicester to add their own ideas and comments as well as details of events that they are planning".

A special website has been created to provide a platform to promote and develop all the events taking place in and around Bicester with a forum for discussion as well as a calendar section to record what is happening in each area. Anyone with suggestions or events to promote should visit [www.bicesterjubilee.co.uk](http://www.bicesterjubilee.co.uk) to record their thoughts or share their events.

So far, plans for the weekend include the Jubilee Carnival, Civic Service, The Big Lunch, Jubilee Tree Planting, a special Concert, the Jubilee History Walk, Fun-Fair and a Fireworks Display.

Bicester businesses and individuals are joining a growing list of Corporate Partners who wish to support the event. So far these include Bicester Village, Bicester Round Table, Littlebury Hotel, TMIT World and Bicester Town Council. Bicester schools will also be invited to take part in the many celebrations.

For more information please visit the website: [www.BicesterJubilee.co.uk](http://www.BicesterJubilee.co.uk) or by email: [info@bicesterjubilee.co.uk](mailto:info@bicesterjubilee.co.uk) Find more on Facebook: "Bicester Jubilee" or follow on Twitter: @Bicesterjubilee.

## Jubilee Celebrations Went Off With A BANG

As plans for the Jubilee Celebrations get under way, Peter Chivers looks back to the time of the last Diamond Jubilee and finds it was noisy.

If there is one thing we as a nation are still fairly good at, it is combining tradition and celebration to mark important occasions.

With 2012 fast approaching, the Olympic Games and Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee will provide an opportunity for the country to let down its hair and, for a brief time, forget some of the more negative happenings we have experienced recently.

The quiet, country town of Bicester and the surrounding area was not slow to embrace the Diamond Jubilee celebrations organised for a previous monarch, Queen Victoria. Events certainly started with a bang! The

Bicester Herald newspaper dated 25th June, reported events to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee. The Market Square became the focal point for the festivities. Reports indicate that 'as soon as the hour of midnight passed a volley from Mr George Sirett's anvils (a local blacksmith) proclaimed the opening of the great day. Several anvils charged with gunpowder were fired repeatedly during the day and until early next morning. The reports (sound) could be heard all over the town.' Union flags decorated the town and were hung from local shops and public houses. Church services and civic events marked the occasion. Jubilee celebrations have already marked important milestones in the reign of our present Queen. Echoes of the past were revived when anvils were fired once again in the Market Square during celebrations for Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee in 1977. The honour of firing the anvils using thunder flashes was undertaken not by town blacksmiths but by members of the local clergy, namely, Rev. Michael Scott-Joyner, Rev. Jonathan Meyrick and the Rev. John Blyth. The firing on this occasion provided the signal to start a Carnival procession through the town. Some forty floats took part in what was rated at the time as one of the best processions the town had ever seen. Winners of the best decorated float were judged to be the Bicester Choral and Operatic Society with a silver and white float depicting Queen Elizabeth I. Many shops made a special effort to dress their windows to celebrate the occasion. Street parties, fancy dress and entertainments were held in the town.

So what of the celebrations for the Diamond Jubilee of 2012? Would it be appropriate to revive the anvil firing tradition to provide a form of continuity with past Jubilee celebrations or will 'health and safety' considerations possibly intervene? We shall have to wait and see!

