

Recollections of Queen Elizabeth II from current and ex-local residents



By Mike Riley Local Journalism Initiative Reporter With the sad passing of Queen Elizabeth II on Sept. 8 at the age of 96 years, there are many people from all around the world who have recollections of a monarch who sat on the British throne for 70 years, including many here in Bancroft and the surrounding areas. Bancroft This Week asked residents of Bancroft and surrounding areas if they had any memories of the Queen and if they could share them. Several people did, and here are their remembrances.

Nancy Baker lives in Cardiff and reveals that her uncle Richard Cole was a photographer with the Toronto Telegram and was commissioned by the Queen to take photos of the Royal family at their home in England.

“My uncle said it was a great experience. Prince Philip was very helpful. The pictures and story were published in the Star Weekly, a weekend paper,” she says.

Originally from Apsley, David Wease now lives in Burleigh, Queensland, Australia, and recalls he saw the Queen in Port Hope in 1959.

“She was standing on the steps of the Anglican Church and waving at the crowd. Took my mother-in-law as she was brought to Canada as a Barnardo child [one of over 100,000 children, some orphans, some poor and many from families that had no other option, that were sent to Canada from Britain between 1869 and the late 1930s for hopefully a better life by Dr. Barnardo’s, a philanthropic organization],” he says.

Jackie McCormack recalls the time that her cousin Mike Burke was one of three Belleville railroaders to work the Queen’s train when she visited in 1984. Burke spoke with Sean Kelly several years ago for a radio show called Weekend Magazine on CJBQ, where he talked about his experience working on the Royal train, one of three train crewmembers, back on Sept. 27, 1984. He said a lot of local people were involved with it, and that he and the other two crewmembers even got brand new uniforms for the occasion.

“It was a lot of protocol and there was a lot of security. We had to have our security clearances ourselves for the train crew. But we

also had the OPP and they had a team of dogs, the RCMP, the Internal Royal Security Forces, the CNR, the Ontario Ministry of Government Services, Bell Canada, as they had to get the radio bands for us. So, there was a lot of protocol. And we started in Spadina Yards, marshalled the train, we took the train from Union Station in Toronto to Cornwall and we reversed the train in Cornwall and then prepared it the next day for her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip,? he says.

Burke met Vivian Bloom about three years ago, and she recalls what a fantastic man he was and said that his family were from this area but lived in Belleville. Bloom says that Burke came up to visit an older relative on her advice, as she was quite elderly and had lived with his family to find work during the war times.

?She is 95 and was so enthralled as I was with his stories. He told us of the Queen's travels across the country and that he had talked with her on the train and how amazing it was,? she says.

Pauline Windsor Ferguson lives in Peterborough and says she wrote to a 19-year-old Queen (then Princess) Elizabeth II to ask if she knew anything about her family name; Windsor.

?I saw her more than once, but I wrote to her about my name when I was 10 years old and got a reply back from her lady-in-waiting Mary Morrison. She directed me to the genealogy society in London, where I got a lot of information,? she says.

Karen Bucholtz lives in Kelowna, British Columbia, but she and her parents lived on Paudash Lake where they owned the Ohio Lodge (now the Somerset Inn) on Hwy 28 from 1964 to 1976. After that, she says her folks built a log house across the highway on the other part of their property and lived there for many more years. She recalls that she saw the Queen in Kitchener back in July, 1959.

?I was just shy of my fifth birthday and was placed on my 6'3" dad's shoulders so I could see as she passed by in her motorcade down the main business street. I have never forgotten the excitement of seeing her,? she says.

Betty Lou Armstrong lives in Ottawa, and is now retired, but was raised in Bancroft on Flint Street, next to the Anglican Church. She says she saw the Queen for the first time when she visited Ottawa in 1957, and several large black cars slowly passed the Chateau Laurier where Armstrong was standing.

?She was waving. I was stunned because she looked exactly like the photos I had seen! She had a beautiful complexion and appeared to be very tiny. I had no idea that she would be seen in downtown Ottawa. A total surprise and something I could tell my mom when I got home to Bancroft,? she says.

From 1964 to 1994, Armstrong probably saw the Queen eight more times, largely due to the fact that her office overlooked Elgin Street near the War Memorial, where she spent all her working years working as an employee of the British government at their High Commission in the nation's capital.

?It was a three-minute walk to Parliament Hill! It was a great location to get to any happenings at the Chateau Laurier, National Arts Centre, Parliament Buildings and view motorcades headed to and from the airport.?