

then suddenly open them and take us all in. On one occasion a young curate was sitting near him leaning back in his chair. The poor young man looked very uncomfortable however when quite suddenly a stern voice rapped out "Shall I fetch you a cushion, Kelto?" The curate's name was Harold Kelto[?], his mother and sister lived and worked in the parish for some years.

In 1898 and 1901 these were Fetes in what is now the 'People's Park' but then a field and grounds adjoining Neithrop House. These were in aid of St Mary's Church and were great events in the town and lasted from Monday to Saturday. Each day the opening ceremony was performed by notable people. On the first day the opener was the Duchess of Marlborough accompanied by the Duke. She was very tall and elegant, the former American heiress, Consuella Vanderbilt. Lady Gordon Lennox, the sister of the Countess of Warwick and then living at Broughton Castle, opened the Fete on one day of the 1898 date, looking very fair and beautiful. She was unable to come to the second Fete but sent her little daughter, the Hon. Ivy, to take her place – a very [f.6] pretty, daintily dressed, golden haired little girl of ten years old who won all hearts by the charm with which she performed the ceremony.

The chief event at each Fete was the performance by the Oxford University Dramatic Society and Mrs B. Irving of the Pastoral Plays "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night". These were acted in the part of the Grounds where a stream, now filled in, and the surrounding trees made a delightful setting. They were beautifully performed. The chief actors with Mrs Irving were Frank Lascelles and Gwen Lally[?], later of Pageant-producing fame. Frank Lascelles or Stevens lived at Sibford and used to drive into Banbury with a tandem or horses. Gwen Lally, or Speets, was the elder daughter of the Vicar of Wroxton and curate at St Mary's when I was born. Lyall Swete[?] was an unforgettable Malvolio. The jester in "As You Like It" was a Mr Loveday, probably the father of the present Bishop of Dorchester.

Mrs John Cheney, a very musical lady, trained a troupe of children as Gypsies and Piccaninnies to sing songs accompanied by several older people, all living in a camp. A dummy house was erected filled with sticks and inflammable material. On a platform at the top were some children or firemen and others lighted by lime light and intended to be rescued by firemen before light being set to the house. By some mistake the fire was started before the children were all down causing some tense moments to the parents and the people watching, but they descended just