

Beryl's Investiture at Windsor Castle

After our recent visit to Buckingham Palace we were very pleased that Windsor Castle was to be the venue for my investiture and thrilled that the Queen would bestow the honours. The letter commanding my presence at the investiture also included invitations for my husband and daughters.

Red Carpet Treatment

On arrival at the Castle we were directed to the red-carpeted Grand Staircase. At the top of the stairs I was led into the semi-state apartments and then to the Queen's Drawing Room; Brian, Karen and Joanne proceeded through the Grand Vestibule to the Waterloo Chamber and were escorted to their seats. In the Queen's Drawing Room the other recipients and I were briefed on protocol and procedure; members of the Household also tried to calm our nerves.

The ceremony took place in the Waterloo Chamber, which is a magnificent panelled room, dominated by a portrait of the 1st Duke of Wellington commissioned by George IV to commemorate the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. On the dais stood a detachment of the Queen's Bodyguard of the Yeomen of the Guard, created in 1485 by King Henry VII after his victory at the Battle of Bosworth Field.

The Queen entered the Waterloo Chamber attended by two Ghurkha Officers - a tradition begun in 1876 by Queen Victoria. Following the National



Anthem, the Lord Chamberlain announced each name and the reason for the honour. I was announced as "*Beryl, Mrs Brown - for services to Wychwood Library in Oxfordshire*". I curtsied and walked forward to the dais. The Queen pinned the MBE insignia on my lapel and asked "*How were you involved with the Library?*" I explained "*When the Library was under threat of closure*

the community came together to save it and now it is a thriving community centre." The Queen then offered her hand and said "*Very well done.*" I shook her hand, stepped back and curtsied, before leaving the Chamber.

Most Excellent Order of the British Empire is a British Order of Chivalry and was established on 4th June 1917 by King George V. The medal is a cross on a pink ribbon, depicting the Royal and Imperial Cipher (*GRI - Georgius Rex Imperator*) of George V and portraits of King George V and Queen Mary.

The ceremony was warm and friendly and went like clockwork; there were ushers and officials of the household to ensure that everyone was guided to the correct place. In the background the Orchestra of the Irish Guards played. The whole day was a wonderful experience for my family and me, including our five grandchildren. I would like to thank the Wychwood Community for their continued interest and support over the last 30 years.

Beryl Brown MBE