



NAYLAND COMMUNITY TIMES

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Not so



Black Tuesday ?



This village newspaper would be failing in its duty if it went to press without making a major reference to the filming of "Black Tuesday" in the village during a week in the middle of June. It must be sometime, if at all in living memory, that the centre of the village has been so taken over, and so many villagers actively involved in a "happening" in the village. One worthy actually wrote to the Essex County Standard commenting at the unusually large number of people to be seen walking the streets of the village! There was a huge response from people wanting to participate as "extras" and many were signed up. A tented village was set up on the Fennage for make-up and afterwards part of the fun was trying to recognise individuals decked out in their wartime outfits and hair-dos as they subsequently walked about or lined the streets. Indeed some were almost unrecognisable - one husband was reputed not to have recognised his wife! - and many were not sure they wanted to be seen anyway!

The transformation of the village centre, too, was a source of wonderment and surprise, with sticky tape over windows, sandbags, "bomb-damaged" buildings propped up, vintage cars dotted about including a police car straight out of "The Blue Lagoon", old style milk bottles, posters reminding us the "walls have ears" etc. The Mill Stores was turned into the Roxy Cinema, the Health Shop into "Betty's Fashions" and Mrs McClennon's house into the Police Station. The traffic road signs were taken down, yellow lines painted out and Union Jacks, Stars and Stripes and bunting hung from many windows and across the road.

Despite the interminable "hanging around" the whole episode seemed to go off in very good spirits and everyone seemed to be enjoying themselves. The crew from the film company established a very good rapport with the extras they had recruited and with the watching crowd, many of whom were wielding their own cameras and recorders. Tensions heightened as the time came round for the much heralded arrival of the column of troops and vehicles from Stoke.

At last they arrived !!! - and weren't they real big! There was much cheering and flag waving - some leg showing and mutual winking and great fun was had by all! Of course the scene had to be shot several times and it will be interesting to see how much of Nayland and its cast of extras appears in the final film - or did we all end up on the cutting room floor?

No doubt many residents and recruited extras had interesting, harassing, or funny experiences during the process and your Editor would be pleased to print any reminiscences you would care to pass on. In that respect I am pleased to include an article by Iris Sebba - which describes her experiences and comments! - see over.

BLACK TUESDAY - PART TWO

- Iris Sebba -

For those of the village not able to attend the second part of the filming I offer you this epilogue.

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The film company obviously knew you had to be mad to work for them and arranged for the two day dance sequences to be filmed in a redundant mental hospital in Friern Barnet! Chambers Coaches added to the fun of the first morning 5.15am call with an early morning mystery tour of all the hospitals in the Barnet area! At 7.40am we at last arrived at the disused gormenghast of a place to the enviable choice of a three course breakfast under canvas or endless queues to be reunited with one's wig and 1940s costume. Gone was my District Nurse's uniform to be replaced by a little cream number and the claim to being last on the set at 11.30am as they tried to make my straight, fine hair curly. As you may imagined I had missed no filming!

Familiar faces on the set consisted of the stars plus the core of black actors. Benny, Simon and Kate were still there waving their arms about in reassuring disorganisation and they had been joined by the diminutive Hobbit, the most demonstrative of them all, whose crowning glory was a head of peroxide tufts described by assembled Naylandites as a cross between a toilet brush and hedgehog! The other extras consisted of two white Americans from Mildenhall who played the MPs, a variety of young black Londoners and two dance clubs from Biggin Hill and Walthamstow. Nayland folk had been given one training session in the Village Hall on the basic waltz and fox trot, but as it turned out if you wanted to dance it was rather a rugby scrum as there were too many women extras. I don't think any locals volunteered for the jitterbug!

The action took place in a small hall in the grounds of the hospital, which they regularly filled with smoke from a machine. The scenario was black GIs arrive at village dance, black boy meets white girl, they dance, they talk, the black GIs leave. This equaled two days of filming. It was noticeable that one month on from Nayland the production team's tempers were a little frayed, one needed a raffle ticket to get lunch and the teatime cakes were cut in half on the second day.

The choice of "Action" for the extras was to boil being moving wallpaper in the hall or idle away time in the sunshine outside on the grass. Nick Moriarty was given a script to read as he had a walk on part as a naval first lieutenant and so he became our guru as to how far the action had got. Personally I had a great time meeting and talking to a variety of people, having a little twirl on the dance floor with Keevan, an unemployed carpenter from Croydon and being selected as one of three couples to be moving wallpaper in a close up scene of the stars. I mean, my nose or red, red lips are bound to be on camera, in the can and hopefully not on the cutting room floor now!

The filming was due to finish on Sunday and various of the young attractive members of our group came away clutching not only there £95.40, but invitations to the end of filming party in the Kings Road. I hope they have a ball.

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An interesting fact I found out was that the title Black Tuesday originated from the only day the black GIs were allowed out to socialise as they were segregated from the white US soldiers.