

Death of a King



Rosebery County Grammar School

In view of the great acclaim for the film "The King's Speech", I thought the following memory might be of interest.

Lunchtime, 6th February 1952 and I was in my second term at Rosebery County Grammar School. As we all went into the Dining Room we noted, with great surprise, the presence of our Headmistress, Miss Lack. She looked very solemn and then announced the news of the King's sudden death. Everyone was upset and many remembered the newspaper photograph a few days earlier of the King, looking tired and frail, saying goodbye to Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh at London Airport at the start of their East African tour.

Normally after lunch, we had dancing in the hall, but by common consent the gramophone was silent. Groups of girls talked quietly, some in tears, and then went outside to see the flag at half-mast. No one concentrated very much on lessons that afternoon as we thought about the news having to be broken to the young woman who was now our Queen.



A few days later the whole school gathered in the hall to listen to the King's funeral service on the wireless. In silence, with the rest of the country, we were united in sadness at the loss too soon of a good and courageous man.

Wendy White nee Wells. © 2011