The Black

Pear Bulletin

*The Newsletter of the Battle of Worcester Society*

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**26 - Oak Apple Day Special Edition 2020**

**OUR CHAIRMAN WRITES**

Oak Apple Day (or Royal Oak Day; Restoration Day) 29th May

King Charles II returned to England on 29th May 1660, (his 30th birthday) after nine years in exile following his catastrophic defeat at the Battle of Worcester on 3rd September 1651. His coronation was on 23rd April 1661 when Parliament voted to commemorate the restoration by declaring 29th May as ‘Oak Apple Day’.

This name was chosen in recognition of Charles hiding in an oak tree at Boscobel House, Shropshire on 6th September 1651 during his escape from Worcester. An oak apple is a gall or the larvae formed when a wasp lays its eggs on an oak leaf which grows into a golf ball sized shape.

A close up of a plant

Description automatically generated

King Charles was accompanied in the tree by Colonel William Carlis/Careless/Carlos, a fellow escapee from Worcester, who came to live at Hallow, Worcester when Charles returned (as described in the book *‘Nine Witnesses for the Colonel’* by Elaine Joyce who gave a talk at The Commandery last year.)

A group of people in a garden

Description automatically generated

Oak Apple Day was a Bank Holiday until it was discontinued

in 1859, but it is still recognised at The Commandery

(apart from pandemic restrictions).

A group of people walking in front of a building

Description automatically generated

Worcester Guildhall decorated for Oak Apple Day (2008)



However, it is in London that Oak Apple Day is still going strongest, albeit under a different name. The 29th May is Founder's Day at the Royal Chelsea Hospital, an institution which Charles II established in 1682. Confusingly, Founder's Day isn't always celebrated on 29th May and because of the Covid-19 situation it has been cancelled this year. The Founder’s Day event is a private ceremony when the Chelsea Pensioners dress up in all their finery, plus a sprig of oak leaves, and honour Charles’ statue in the hospital grounds with boughs of oak.

All images can be found on Google

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