

Special Things

On the top shelf of a glass fronted cupboard there are 2 cocktail glasses. They are perilously tall and shaped like the bell of a trumpet, as if to herald an evening of fun and sophistication. They are decorated with a curving line, highlighted by three diamante points that catch the light.

Just below them sits a large heavily moulded blue glass bowl. This was a wedding present to my parents and it featured on each of my childhood birthdays when it was filled with trifle, the centre piece of the birthday tea for my friends and I.

Apart from his role as the blacksmith, my Great Grandfather also ran the 14th century Anchor Inn. I now have several glasses that were used there. Two of them are goblet shaped and much heavier than modern glasses, probably to give them a longer life in a busy pub.

On the same shelf are 2 simple cylindrical glasses with the words "Plymouth Gin 1793" engraved on them. These were bought some years ago, at the end of a tour of the Plymouth Gin distillery, still housed in its original quayside building. Just a stone's throw away are the steps down to the water, from which the Pilgrim Fathers set off in 1620.

In the centre of the middle shelf sits my beautiful cream jug. It was made in London in 1805 by silversmiths and brothers, William and Peter Bateman. They came from a family of silversmiths headed by father John, also a goldsmith, and mother Hannah, herself a silversmith. The monogram on the front of the jug is an indication that it was a commission but I have been unable to discover who had it made.

When my sister and I cleared our late father's house we agreed to share a very old tea service, which had been given to our grandmother on her retirement from the unpaid post of Secretary to the local Nursing Association. This was long before the establishment of the NHS and the local lady of the manor, Lady Stucley, headed this organisation to provide some home nursing care and midwifery services for local people in their small North Devon town. Gran took the bookings for a nurse/midwife when a baby was due. She often had some "interesting" news long before the baby's arrival was imminent.

On the bottom shelf is an interesting piece of royal memorabilia. It is a dish with an image of King Edward VIII in the centre and the date of his

forthcoming coronation on May 12th, 1937, which didn't take place. King Edward abdicated in favour of his brother George, before it could happen. The dish had originally belonged to my grandparents.

On another shelf sits a coronation mug, which was presented to me, as a small child by the Mayor of the little Cornish harbour town where I grew up, just after our late Queen's coronation in 1953. I and all my friends, had just enjoyed a tea which was laid on for local children.

All these things are special to me because they hold such precious memories and associations.

Jan Rees March 2024