

EMPIRE DAY - 24 May

Empire Day began in Canada, becoming a national event in schools from 1898.

In 1903 the Empire Day Movement was formed in Britain

From 1904 Queen Victoria's birthday, 24 May, was adopted as Empire Day in some schools.

From 1907 many more schools joined in.

Empire Day became more significant in the First World War.

Over 70,000 schools & institutions saluted the flag and sang the national anthem.

24 May 1916 the first national observance took place.

In 1958 Empire Day became Commonwealth Day.

Since 1973 Commonwealth Day has been held on the 2nd Monday in March.



EMPIRE DAY IN CROCKENHILL, EYNSFORD AND FARNINGHAM

Empire Day was celebrated in all the schools, with an added significance in the First World War when support of troops from the Empire was much appreciated.

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School closed in the afternoon because of Empire Day.
A collection was made for the soldiers at the front in connection with the Overseas Club.

Crockenhill Church School Log Book, 24 May 1916 – The first national Empire Day

The national anthem in place of usual morning hymn.

Schools closed for the afternoon.

Pupils collected items such as tobacco and 'comforts' to be sent to the troops.

Collections were organised by the Overseas Club, which gave certificates to the children.

EMPIRE DAY IN CROCKENHILL



Crockenhill Church School children in Edwardian times thought to be wearing flower for Empire day. Head, Henry H. Harnett, back row, his wife, Harriet Harnett, seated centre, pre-1911

EMPIRE DAY CERTIFICATE



1916 Certificate to Crockenhill Church School pupil, Maud Bower(s), from the Overseas Club to thank her for sending 'some comfort to the brave Sailors and Soldiers of the British Empire who are fighting to uphold Honour, Freedom and Justice.' Other children received similar certificates

CELEBRATING EMPIRE DAY AT FARNINGHAM HILL, 1911



These photographs are mounted on card and headed as above. Two schoolmasters are named under two photographs – Mr R.L. Edmonds, a back view not included here, and Mr Stone, head of Farningham Council School during the War. It appears that flags were raised before a large gathering of adults and children.

CELEBRATING EMPIRE DAY AT FARNINGHAM HILL, 1911



These photographs show younger girls watching and older boys on parade. Mr Stone, the headmaster of Farningham Council School is inspecting the line.

