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## *“Empire Day” 24<sup>th</sup> May*

Empire Day was the 24<sup>th</sup> May also Queen Victoria's Birthday.

Empire Day was a big celebration, a half day holiday from school (which seemed more fun than a full day somehow) and fireworks at night. My memories would be from the years 1954-57 and take in Glenbrook School's Celebrations rather than those of my own school – Manly West. We were always in Glenbrook in May.

Glenbrook School always had an Empire Day sports carnival which was held in the Park. I was allowed to join in, as I had made friends with some of the students. There were all the usual races – age race; sack race; three legged; wheelbarrow and egg and spoon but best of all was the small white paper bagful of lollies we were given before we went home.

Mrs. Murphy the Headmaster's wife, also made two beautifully iced fruit cakes, one iced blue and the other gold for the two school houses, Parkes and Barton. Everyone received a slice at the end of the Carnival.

Then it was off home to count our firecrackers. We usually kept them in a shoebox and had been collecting them for weeks. We always had a good sized bonfire and what with sparks from the bonfires around town and the occasional stray skyrocket the fire brigade was kept fairly busy.

There was usually a fireworks display organized for the park and one fateful year, Noel Berry had his RAAF truck full of fireworks when somehow a skyrocket went the wrong way and landed in the truck of fireworks causing the whole lot to go off at once!