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On the evening of the fifth the fire was lit, but "the rabble" which had assembled in unusually large numbers, was dissatisfied and bent on mischief. They dragged the reserved supply of firewood to the Cross, where they made a new fire, adding whatever fuel they could collect.

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riot followed, and reached such a height, that the constables were obliged to retire, leaving the mob masters of the town.

About 11 o'clock that night the rioters obtained a tar barrel,

which was lit and sent down the High Street. When the barrel fell to pieces they scattered the burning brands. Then the mob went to the High Constable's house where they broke windows and did other damage. It was nearly three o'clock next morning before the riot ended and the town was left quiet.

PELTED WITH TRIPE

Another memorable sight seen at the Cross was that of a man in the pillory. His name was Benjamin Evans, of Box, a soothsayer who professed to "rule the planets." He had been found guilty at Gloucester Assizes in 1814 of obtaining money under false pretences, and was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, but once every quarter he was to be exposed for an hour in the pillory at Stroud on a market day. The pillory, a large heavy timber framework, was brought especially from Gloucester. The first time he was pilloried he was pelted with refuse from a tripe shop, but this was soon stopped by the sheriff's officer. However, this did not stop Evans being assailed with wordy wit and coarse jests.

Near the Cross there were, over a century ago, the stocks where drunken men were "laid by the heels," to sober up, and be a warning to others.

THE FIRST HOUSES

Stroud probably began as cluster houses at the junctions of the chief roads in the area. Probably the first cluster of houses formed what is now the top end of the High Street, and the open space called The Cross.

As Stroud gradually grew the open space at the Cross remained in the centre of the old town. From the earliest times the Cross has been used for public meetings and festivals. Here Maypoles have been set up, adorned with ribbons and flowers, and men and women have danced round them. Here sheep and oxen have been roasted and eaten, and barrels of beer broached and drunk. Here crowds have shouted for victories won and peace restored.

About 1786 a bull was baited in the open space of the Cross. The animal was fastened by a rope to an iron ring embedded in the ground, and then fierce dogs were set on the bull, while a large crowd gathered to see the "sport." Fortunately the space was hardly large enough, and it was probably the only exhibition of this kind in Stroud.

Stroud was originally a hamlet in the Parish of Bisley, and Stroud is not mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1087 as it was then part of the manor of Bisley. In 1360 Stroud became a separate parish, but the division between the two parishes was so ill-defined, that in title deeds of 1773, some property is described as "situated in Stroud or Bisley, or both of them."

The name Stroud probably comes from the Saxon word "Strogd," meaning scattered, presumably the first houses were scattered about. From the original "Strogd" the name changed to Strode, Strod, Stowed, and finally Stroud.

(To be continued)

"STROUD NEWS"
Beginning this week we present the
first of a series of articles telling the
fascinating story of **29.3.57.**

STROUD

- ★ The November 5th Riots
- ★ Bull Baiting at "The Cross"

FLAMING barrels of tar used to be rolled down Stroud High Street on November 5, to the "great annoyance and terror of the inhabitants."

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holding celebrations in the town.

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