

Wedding-works

LONDON (AP) 1981 In his last official act as a bachelor, Prince Charles lit the first in a nationwide chain of wedding beacons Tuesday night, and London's sky blazed with a spectacular fireworks display.

More than 900 people were reported injured in the crush of spectators.

Half a million people swarmed into 138-hectare Hyde Park and cheered wildly as Charles — using an Olympic torch handed him by a disabled youth in a wheelchair — lit the first of 101 beacons symbolically carrying the news of his marriage to the farthest reaches of the British Isles.

Buckingham Palace said the event drew one of the largest gatherings of royalty and heads of states in modern times, with 150 members of royalty and foreign government leaders joining the 32-year-old prince of Wales in the royal box for the occasion.

The bride-to-be, Lady Diana Spencer, did not attend the spectacle, spending her wedding eve in traditional seclusion at Clarence House, the residence of 80-year-old Queen Mother Elizabeth.

THRILLED BY SIGHT

Aerial panoramas of silver serpents, golden wheat-sheaves, feather plumes and bursts of purple, sapphire, ruby, diamond and turquoise drew oohs and aahs from the crowd. Silver star shells, golden rockets and octopus bombs with fiery tentacles flashed across the night.

The \$121,000 fireworks show recreated a display in nearby Green Park in 1749. It celebrated the signing of the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle with France, ending the Austrian War of Succession.