

## WHAT THE PAPERS SAID

*This first item is one account amongst many recorded in the papers of the day describing the jollifications which marked the coronation of Queen Victoria on 28<sup>th</sup> June 1838. The report for Cley is longer than most and the details provided enable the reader to form a good mental picture of the day's events, which began in at the Salt Pans by the Mill and finished in a barn at the Old Hall. Will three quarters of the village population ever again assemble for such an entertainment?*

*Norwich Mercury*      7<sup>th</sup> July 1838

The coronation of her Most Gracious Majesty was celebrated in this town in a most spirited manner, nearly 600 persons (being three-fourths of the entire parish) sat down to an excellent dinner of plum pudding and roast beef. From the very short time allowed to provide for so large a party it is almost surprising how the arrangements were so well completed; suffice it to say, from the commencement the committee devoted all their energies in endeavouring to promote the happiness of their poorer townsmen, all minor differences ceased, and loyalty reigned in every breast. The day commenced under the most favourable auspices, and by twelve o'clock every arrangement was complete. At half-past two o'clock the presidents and vice-presidents each wearing a blue sash, attended by a band of music, proceeded to the "Salt Pan", a piece of grass land admirably adapted for the occasion, where nine long tables covered with white cloths were judiciously set out. The entrance to the ground was a triumphal arch; at the opposite end was a booth decorated with evergreens, flowers, garlands, &c, extending the extreme length was "Victoria our Queen, long may she reign," in the centre, an arch, "peace and plenty", the whole surmounted with a superb crown. Flags waved in different parts of the ground, the whole forming a most pleasing spectacle. To the ladies of Clay great praise is due not only for their indefatigable exertions in furnishing the decorations, but for the excellent manner in which the dinner was cooked, and the regularity with which it was conveyed to the tables. Not the slightest accident or confusion occurred. By four o'clock every person was comfortable seated, and in about five minutes every dish was on the tables. Mr. John Ebbets was appointed general chairman, and Mr. W. T. Smith his vice. At about a quarter past four the welcome gun gave the signal, at which the assembled multitude stood silent and uncovered, during which the Rev. Mr. Norgate invoked a blessing on the dinner.

The important work immediately commenced, the carvers and assistants sufficed to keep every plate well filled till every appetite was absolutely exhausted. The committee furnished everything in the greatest abundance, and it is pleasing to remark that from every table respectable fragments, both of meat and pudding were removed, and which were distributed to the poor the following morning. About five o'clock dinner was concluded, and everything having been removed, another gun was fired, and grace again said by the Rev. Mr. Norgate.

The mugs were now again filled, and soon the chairman gave the Queen, and nine times nine - a gun followed the announcement of this toast, which was heard far and near, and the cheers of the people were most enthusiastic. Other loyal and appropriate toasts followed in quick succession. Then came enjoyment of both old and young in smoking and dancing, and many a one who have seen three score years joined the lads and lasses in the merry dance - joy seemed depicted in every countenance, various amusements continued until late in the evening, when

the rain became too heavy for out-door sports, but the worthy chairman with his accustomed hospitality, immediately had his large barn prepared, and thither all bent their course, where quadrille and country dance were kept up till about eleven o'clock, all classes joining in the latter. The greatest good humour prevailed throughout the day, and it is but justice to remark the people generally conducted themselves in the most orderly manner, and proved by their peaceable behaviour, their good sense and gratitude. They dispersed in as good order as they assembled, and it is worthy of notice, not a single brawl or accident occurred to mar the pleasures of the happiest day known for many years in Clay.

*The only connection between the previous event and the next is that both took place during the year of the coronation! A shoat, by the way, is a piglet recently weaned, and a brawn is a boar.*

**Norfolk Chronicle and Norfolk Gazette 11<sup>th</sup> August 1838**

On Thursday, the 11<sup>th</sup> ult. A fat bullock, supposed to be over-driven, fell down in the parish of Rougham, near this town, on its way to Smithfield Market. Butchers were immediately sent for, who obtained leave of Mr. T. Everett to slaughter the animal on his premises. The shocking condition of the beast may be easily conceived by the fact that three sows, two large shoats, and a fine brawn, the property of Mr. Everett, of the value of 20l [ie £20], to whom the offal was given, died almost immediately. A sow belonging to Mr. Loffs, of the Cricketers, in this town, died from eating some of the entrails, and several cats also from partaking of the lights. The mouth of one of the butchers, from placing the knife there, was completely ulcerated, and the arm of another swollen and inflamed to the shoulder. The carcass of the beast, weighing about 70 stone, was however, in this state, perhaps of putrefaction, forwarded to the London market for sale.

*Surely, you must be thinking, this couldn't really happen in the fine county of Norfolk, even in 1838? Well, actually it didn't, for the grisly event took place not at the Rougham near Fakenham but the one near Bury St Edmunds – the item was quoted from the Bury Post.*

*With the 'millennium' in mind, the last item is a reminder that common time keeping across the country is a relatively recent practice, established initially for the convenience of the railway companies. Until then, what time did the Glaven villages keep? Was an accurate time ever needed ashore?*

**Norwich Mercury 14<sup>th</sup> March 1868**

[NORWICH]            ALTERATION IN TIME            To promote as far as possible in the city the uniformity of time, from the first of this month the regulator in Mr. Dixon's window, London Street, will indicate Greenwich mean-time, instead of the actual local time; the latter, however, may always be immediately inferred from the former by adding to it 5.2 minutes for the difference in longitude between Greenwich and Norwich. It may be well to remind persons travelling by rail, that all trains are dispatched by Greenwich, or as it is popularly called, railway time.