

VILLAGE ECHOES

The Ox Rib of Goudhurst

In the midst of all the articles surrounding the Coronation there was a report in The Times about the sad state of the Roast Oxen business. It begins 'For centuries, grand royal occasions have been accompanied by the mouth-watering aroma of roast beef.'



They are known to have been popular from the Middle Ages, especially in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This was certainly a long-held tradition and Goudhurst was no exception. In March 1863 there was one consumed in 'Commemoration of the Prince of Wales Wedding.' The ox weighed 85 stone and was spit roasted on The Plain by the local blacksmith. It was reported that 400 people were fed and the left overs made into soup in the following days. Some quick minded resident purloined a rib, which was eventually donated to the History Society. It has been inscribed with the date and occasion, more of which can be read about on our website.



As might be expected some oxen were cooked for the late Queen's coronation in 1953. This proved controversial because following the war, food rationing was still in place to a certain degree. The then Ministry of Food decided to only allow one to be roasted in places where

they had been cooked at the previous coronation for King George IV. One hundred and fifty-four applications were received of which thirty-three were refused, forty withdrew and eighty-one were approved.

The recent Times article went on to say that the owner of one company in Bruton, Somerset reported that he had provided one for 1,500 people for last year's Platinum Jubilee but had no orders this time. Another company in Leicestershire had the same experience although he diversifies with barons of beef for 200. They both put the reason down to the current financial situation together with celebration fatigue. They explained that the cost of a whole animal started at £5,000.



Nowadays hog roasts are the most popular barbeque option, as witnessed on Coronation Saturday on the Glebe field in Goudhurst.

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