

PAST TIMES
Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee Celebrations
Seaton Ross
22nd June 1897



The ageing Queen-Empress Victoria was the figurehead of the largest empire the world had ever known; one on which, quite literally, the sun never set. She was a powerful symbol of Britain's world domination – as had been graphically demonstrated in 1897, the 60th anniversary of her accession to the throne.

For this Diamond Jubilee, her tiny black-clad figure had been accompanied to St Paul's Cathedral by a spectacular parade of empire troops from Africa, Asia, Australia and North America. Crowned heads from across Europe, many of them descendants, flocked to pay homage to the "Grandmother of Europe". From Land Ends to John O'Groats, and throughout the United Kingdom, celebrations took place in villages, towns and cities with beacons lit across the whole country. Seaton Ross was no exception in celebrating, and the day's events were reported in the local newspaper. The following is the extract from The Howdenshire Chronicle and Pocklington Weekly News of Saturday 26th June 1897 reporting on the Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Seaton Ross: -

"The rejoicings in honour of Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee were carried out in loyal fashion at the above place on Jubilee day. The village presented an unusually animated appearance, flags, bunting, and other tokens of patriotism were displayed at all places of worship, the village school, and by many private householders.

The local committee formed for the purpose of carrying out the wishes of the parishioners succeeded by hard work and perseverance in raising upwards of £17, a sum which enabled them to give a free tea to all the inhabitants, and to provide prizes for an extensive programme of sports for all classes in the village, medals, nuts and sweets for the children & c. The committee were fortunate in securing the services of Mrs Thomas Ibbotson as caterer for the tea, who provided one of the richest and best teas that has been placed before the public at Seaton Ross. The tea was served in a spacious and profusely decorated marquee in Mr Ibbotson's field, generously lent for the occasion.

During the afternoon and evening, the various prizes offered by the sports committee were keenly contested, and added considerably to the enjoyment of all. At the conclusion of the sports, the prizes were kindly presented by Miss Middleton of Park Farm, to the successful competitors. Shortly before the appointed time, for the lighting of the Beacons and bonfire, the assembled company were addressed by the Rev. E. W. Atkinson, in appropriate terms of the 60 years glorious reign of our Gracious Sovereign. Ringing cheers were given for Her Majesty, followed by the hearty and fervent singing of the National Anthem. After viewing the lighted beacons, dancing and other amusements in the marquee were indulged in till 12 o'clock. An interesting picture in connection with the above celebration was the presence of Mr Richard Witty, an old resident, in the 95th year of his age, who is in the possession of all his faculties and who may frequently be seen on horseback. He is in the remarkable position of being able to remember three coronations and three jubilees".

It would appear that the Victorian Seatonians celebrated Her Majesty's Diamond Jubilee in style and with great dignity as part of "Empire" – past times on which the sun never set.

Malcolm Young