

Extracts from 19th century newspapers relating to salmon feasts and kettles

TWEEDMOUTH FEAST - The annual festival of our neighbours in Tweedmouth took place on Monday, and was the occasion of the usual amusements and festivities. Although the fishing season on the Tweed has not hitherto been remarkably successful, still there was no lack on Monday either of grilse or salmon for the table. In the course of the evening there were racing contests on land and on water, attempts at climbing a greased pole and sack races, all of which afforded amusement to a large company of spectators, who continued to throng the streets until a late hour in the evening. Those who prolonged the amusements to midnight had their usual gratification in witnessing or assisting in the election of "the mayor". The honour was, as is generally the case, conferred upon a stranger, an itinerant dealer in toys. The treatment he received from his constituents was more lenient than some of his predecessors in the office have occasionally been subjected to, but it was enough, we dare say to operate against his coveting a re-election.

Berwick Advertiser
25th July 1846

TWEEDMOUTH FEAST AND ITS SPORTS – The annual occurrence of the Tweedmouth feast was observed on Monday with the usual festivity and merrymaking, and seemed to lack none of its accustomed hilarity and enthusiasm. The generous Tweed had yielded one of its best supplies on the preceding week, thus furnishing the principal ingredient of the feast; nature favoured the occasion with good weather and liberal arrangements were made for the conveyance of strangers to the scene both by sea and land. All these favourable circumstances were duly taken advantage of. On Sunday two steam-boats arrived from the Tyne, well laden with passengers. They are reported to have brought hither 300 of the denizens of the banks of the Tyne and Wear. Next morning a special train of thirty carriages containing about 700 passengers arrived from the same place; and another train of twenty carriages containing about 600 passengers arrived from Kelso and the west. These additions to our usual population made a visible impression on our streets, which were during the day promenaded by varied groups of well-dressed and respectable looking persons of both sexes.

The Athletic Games included Foot Races of 150 and 300 yards, Putting the Ball of 16 lbs and 24 lbs, Running High Leap over a Bar, Standing High Leap, High Pole Leap, Sack races, and Climbing a Greasy Pole for a leg of mutton.

BOAT RACES - At six o'clock the public were again congregated by the announcement of the boat races. The tide was full and for a time the water was placid. The bridge, the shore, the ramparts and every available space of ground within sight was occupied by an excited throng.

SHIP BOATS, four rowers and a steersman in each – four boats started. The boat of the Thames clipper gained the first prize (£1 10s), the Juno the second, the Friends' Adventure and Helen, third and fourth.

PILOT BOATS, four rowing and a steersman in each – four boats started. This was a capital match, a contest between Spittal and the Greenses. For a long time all kept well up. On the return two of them shot ahead of the others, and between these some fouling took place which for a time marred the general effect. The Flower of Spittal was first, the Bunch of Roses, Greenses, second.

SALMON COBLES, five competitors, three rowers in each. The first prize (£1 0s) was awarded to the boat rowed by Alex Hood, Henry Shaw and John Tait.

Berwick Advertiser
30th July 1853

TREAT AT SPITTAL FEAST - On Monday night Mr. John Cowe, with his usual well-known liberality to his work people, took advantage of the return of another anniversary of the festive occasion to give them and their friends one of the old fashioned kirns, once so common in all fishing places. Although the surroundings of the places in which these are held are rough indeed - a curing shed being cleaned up by willing hands for the occasion and herring barrels, planks and kits doing service for tables and chairs yet it does an onlooker good to see what amount of happiness and good friendship is displayed by old and young. A good substantial supper was done ample justice to by the large number assembled.... Before breaking up the company gave three hearty cheers for their kind host and hostess.

Berwick Advertiser
9th September 1887

TRADESMEN'S KETTLE - The gathering which is normally held on some convenient spot on the banks of the Tweed by the party of tradesmen from this town associated together for the purpose, took place on Tuesday on Yarrow Haugh. Salmon, the staple of the feast, were abundant, and were cooked to perfection. Other viands were provided, while the liquors were both plentiful and of excellent quality. The weather was fine and clear and being favoured with the cool air from the stream the party were enabled to enjoy a variety of athletic exercises.

Berwick Advertiser
13th August 1853

TRADESMEN'S KETTLE - One of those social entertainments peculiar to this locality came off on Tuesday last, being, we believe, the first on an extensive scale during the present season. The party consisted of the master-tradesmen of Tweedmouth and when we mention the number present were upwards of forty we shall convey the fact that the invitations had been generally accepted by the class of persons whose name gave title to the occasion. The site selected for the entertainment was Yarrow Haugh. The take of fish was abundant and some of the Tweed's richest salmon were subjected to the fishermen's most approved method of dressing and cooking, the art of which is never seen to perfection but on an occasion of this kind. The fish was accompanied by a liberal, but at the same time temperate and wise enjoyment of mountain dew, the whole feast being more remarkable for its excellence in quality than variety in kinds.

Berwick Advertiser
23rd July 1853

CONSTABLES "KETTLE" - On Tuesday one of those much enjoyed treats, usually called a "kettle", took place in Gainslaw garden, on the banks of the Tweed, under the auspices of the constables of the borough, who, having a large surplus of funds on hand this year, kindly invited a number of their friends of both sexes to enjoy the treat along with them. The day was all that could be desired. The company assembled by early noon and continued to enjoy themselves in high glee until darkness threw her mantle o'er the scene. The good things of this life were served out in rich profusion - there was enough and to spare: indeed the fragments filled several baskets. Salmon, as a matter of course, was the chief dish. After a plentiful supply of strawberries, a contra dance and a final bumper, the company betook themselves to their several conveyances, and reached home about eleven pm, no accident having occurred to mar the harmony of the proceedings.

Berwick Journal
16th July 1859

KETTLE AT GOSWICK - On Tuesday, Robert Crossman Esq. entertained a party of gentlemen to a kettle on the sands at Goswick. The weather was highly favourable. There was an abundant supply of salmon as well as other fare usual on such occasions. The usual games were engaged in with spirit, and the party broke up at nightfall. Mr. Purves provided the kettle.

Berwick Advertiser
3rd September 1864

SALMON SUPPER - On Saturday the employees in the locomotive department of the North Eastern Railway at Tweedmouth, held their annual supper in the Bell Inn, Spittal. The chair and vice-chair were occupied by Mr. John Wilson and Mr. J. Smeaton. The company, numbering about 20, sat down to an excellent repast, the chief item being "salmon", provided by Miss Smith in her best style.

Berwick Journal
30th August 1888

TWEEDSIDE KETTLE - The last of these festive meetings for this season took place at Heugh Shield on Wednesday, when a party of twenty four gentlemen belonging to the town assembled and enjoyed a sumptuous spread of Tweed salmon, beef, and other edibles, together with a large supply of drinks. Alderman Ruddock presided, and Councillor Thomas Darling occupied the vice-chair. The weather being highly favourable the party engaged in quoiting and other amusements; several excellent songs were given by the company, and after spending a very convivial afternoon the party separated at nightfall.

Berwick Advertiser
15th September, 1865

END OF SALMON FISHING - As usual a number of Salmon Suppers were held in Spittal on Thursday of last week, denoting the close of the season 1887. Conspicuous was one held at the Albion House by Mr. Wm. Swinney and crew of the Sandstell fishing. The supper was provided by Mrs. Weightman's best style, and was fully appreciated by all present. After the tables were cleared a very enjoyable evening was spent with songs and recitations. Dancing was engaged in with great zest to music supplied with a violin. Punctually at 11 o'clock the company broke up with the greatest decorum.

Berwick Advertiser
23rd September 1887