

The Bury and Norwich Post, And Suffolk Herald.

Wednesday October 26 1853.

'A Pugilistic Contest between Nat Langham and Sayers came off at Lakenheath on Tuesday last. The former (now a publican at Cambridge) was declared the victor at the end of the sixtieth round. The disgraceful exhibition continued for two hours and six minutes.'

The prize for the fight was 200 sovereigns between two middle weight fighters.

Spectators came from far and wide with Brandon and Mildenhall well represented.

THE MORNING ADVERTISER,

Wednesday October 19 1853

'NATANIEL LANGHAM AND THOMAS SAYERS, FOR 200 Sovs.

'.....Yesterday being the day appointed for the tourney, and a special train being engaged, at half-past eight a full freight was whirled away in a train of no mean longitude from the Eastern Counties station. The weather was splendid, and after a merry whirl, with a couple of stoppages to slake the moisture lost by the steam steeds perspiration, Lakenheath, in Suffolk, was reached, distant from the metropolis about eighty miles.....'

'.....By a quarter-past one o'clock all things were in complete readiness and the men were conducted to the scratch, and were left to begin hostilities. The attitude of both men was in all respects most artistic.....It was apparent that Langham was the more accomplished boxer. After the first twenty rounds Langham, who at the commencement had taken the lead, fell off, to all appearances weak; indeed, his deliveries seemed to want force. Sayers, at this juncture, was urged strongly by his friends, and he resolutely answered their call to "go in". So busy was he that, at one time, his chance of winning looked particularly promising. Langham, however, with consummate generalship, husbanded his strength. The result was that the courageous, strong and youthful Tom Sayers was compelled to cry "hold. enough;" being at the end of the sixtieth round utterly incapable of prolonging the contest.' The loser, as well as the winner, were highly applauded for their bravery, and the seconds of Langham and the loser collected £30, as a *solatium* for the loser collected on the spot for the sores of Sayers.'

Post script.

THE CLARE JOURNAL. MONDAY NOVEMBER 20 1865

'The body of the renowned Tom Sayers was interred last week in Highgate Cemetery, in the presence of many hundreds of persons, the large majority of whom were of that class whose knowledge of Tom's 'brilliant career' had evidently prompted their presence as a last tribute of respect to his bravery..... '

Later in his life:

'Unable to fall back upon those pleasures of a cultivated mind from his want of education he became the idol of his followers; he cast off all those restraints which had secured for him health and victory, and plunged into excesses of living-late hours and dissipation'.

He died, aged 39, of diseases of the lungs together with diabetes after many bare-knuckle fights.

Newspaper research by Michael Tuffs.