

CLARION CALLING: A SHORT HISTORY OF THE WAVENEY CLARION 1973-1984 ed. John Ellerby and Don Mathew, Waveney Clarion Supporters Group, UK, 2025, large format paperback. 117 pages

*International Times* - London's principal 'underground' broadsheet from the later 1960s into the next decade - inspired provincial 'answers', usually wanting in terms of constructive journalism and artwork, and enduring until staff tired of messing about with stencils, ink cartridges, carbons, the close smell of correcting fluid and the clanking of a duplicator.

The *Waveney Clarion*, nevertheless, was advantaged by access to a relatively sophisticated printing press, and, with circulation sprawled across East Anglia, formerly one of Anglo-Saxon England's most powerful kingdoms, 'enjoyed a loyal readership and a greatly longer life than most of its kind'. Thus proclaims founding editor Sandra Bell near the start of a soothing retrospective related via mainly light-hearted commentary by the *dramatis personae*, buoyed by reproductions of significant articles, photographs, cartoons, columns, advertisements and front covers, that should hold protracted attention for even those not around a post-Woodstock scene that, writes Jill Smith, a foremost correspondent, 'was only just emerging from being a backwater with small farms ploughed by horses'.

The monthly's chronological trajectory aligned with that of the first Barsham Fair, among recurring low-budget happenings that had less to do with maypole dancing and coconut shies than the myriad minor festivals that signposted the present-day vastnesses of Glastonbury and Cropredy. Over the next eleven years, the *Clarion* embraced 'issues and ideas that were then regarded as "fringe"', Sandra explains, 'such as growing your own food or discussing environmental politics' - along with concerns like cruise missiles, cycle paths and the arts, a diversity reflected too in features based on interviews with such as regional agriculturalists, Greenpeace campaigners - and those who were as much stars parochially as any Top Forty entrant. Among the most renowned were The Global Village Trucking Company (perceived by fans as a sort of UK Grateful Dead), Steve Ashley - a respected name within British folk-rock circles - and jokey country-and-western exponent Hank Wangford, surnamed after a Suffolk village. Yet what of, say, The Ivory Brothers, Reg Rabbit, The Half Dead Live Band and Ronnie and his Roofers - who meant little elsewhere, but surfaced as regularly as rocks in the stream in the gazette's coverage of venues and entertainers? 'There was so much going on', gasped Jill Smith, 'musicians, poets and performers everywhere; endless music events and ceilidhs in village halls - and the *Clarion* - a paper like no other, with all the information about these people and events that you could ever need'.

*Alan Clayson*

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