



Hungerford Farmers Club

On Wednesday afternoon last the tenth anniversary of this club was held at the Bear Hotel, Hungerford. The club has been established since the year 1857. From the time of its formation it has gradually and surely kept pace with the times, and throughout former years to the present time the papers that have emanated from the various members have doubtless been beneficial both to the compiler of them personally and also to the community they were designed to serve. It is a signal and patent fact also that this association has commanded thoroughly practical men for its officers, and to this one point much of the good results which the club can at present boast of, both intellectually and in respect to its exchequer, are attributable. During the past year its energetic secretary, Mr. William Chandler, of Aldbourne, has done his best-and most satisfactorily- towards maintaining the efficiency of the club.

Similar praise must be given to the treasurer and the general committee. These last named gentlemen and the previously named officials met for the annual transaction of business previous to the dinner. Mr. Hissey, the treasurer, and the secretary, were re-elected, and in room of Messrs. Cundell and Stagg, who retire by rotation from the committee, Mr. Henry Trumper and Mr. Woodman were elected. Mr. T. Frankland was also chosen to act on the committee in place of Mr. Potter, who had resigned. Mr. Hewitt will be chairman for the ensuing year, and Mr. Williams, of Bayden, will act as vice chairman.

The treasurer's account was most satisfactory, leaving after all the liabilities of the club being defrayed, a balance of nearly £20 in hand. Although this is not an enormous surplus it is under the circumstances a very satisfactory one, and shows that the Association is somewhat appreciated by the class whose duty it is to support it. It was stated that the number of members at present on the list is a hundred and four. The annual dinner took place in the large room of the before named hotel, and was admirably served up by Mr. Welch. There was a tolerably good attendance, both of members of the club and farmers generally. Several members of the Newbury Farmers' Club personally attended, and also a few of the tradesmen. The company included Messrs. C. P. Darke, A. Bland, G. Harding, F. E. Ryott, Mr. Goodwin (chairman), Mr. Hewitt, (vice chairman), Messrs. Hissey, Williams, F. Chandler, Walker, Frankland, Atherton,

Waldron, Pinniger, Beard, King, Allerd, Holman, J. Hellard, Bethell, C. Keable, Mackrell, Freeguard, Woodman, Gould, J. Platt, Jnr., Booth, Kearsy, Barnes, Low, H. Trumper, W. Chandler, Hodsord, Astley, Woodridge, Canning, &c.

On the removal of the cloth, the Chairman gave the usual loyal toasts in succession, which were most enthusiastically drunk.

In giving the Army, Navy, and Volunteers, the Chairman said that the whole of these services had shown themselves most efficient and worthy of the thanks which they could give them, and he was still certain that whenever they were called upon for duty they would be as efficient as in the past (hear, hear).

Adjutant King of the Berks Yeomanry, responded on behalf of the Army, he thanked them very much for the honour they had done the army of the country, and hoped and trusted that they would always evince the same confidence in the British soldiers. It seemed impossible for him to enumerate the good they had effected for the country in the past days, and he was sure they all knew it much better than he could tell them. He was quite satisfied that if the time should arise, and whenever they might be called upon for service the British soldier would always prove equal to the occasion (cheers).

Mr. Richard Cumming also a member of the Berks Yeomanry responded.

Mr. Wooldridge briefly responded for the Navy and subsequently sung the "Death of Nelson."

Mr. Williams then said he was about to propose a toast which he knew they would all readily drink. He hoped they would fill in drinking the health of their Chairman (cheers). Associations could never go on in prosperity without a good chairman. There's had been most able and willing, and was always at his post during the year, and had fulfilled his duties to the very best of his abilities (hear, hear). He was certain that they would appreciate him as a good farmer, a good friend, and a jolly companion, and like-wise in all the acts he did (hear, hear). He could look with pride upon the association of Hungerford, for they had now more than a hundred members belonging to it (cheers). If they are agriculturalists looked back they would find that their interest had been neglected in the proper place - the House of Commons - because they had never shown any union amongst themselves as they had done. They had now seemingly got over that difficulty, and were looking ahead. They had now the Chamber of Agriculture to look to. He hoped that some truly practical results would result from the many discussions in the different clubs, even more so than in the past; in concluding he begged them most heartily to drink the health of their worthy Chairman (hear, hear).

Mr. Godwin, in rising to return thanks, was very much obliged to them for pleasing compliment. He throughout his term of office had done his best to promote the interest of the club (hear, hear). He had been a member of it too from its foundation. Nothing was more pleasing to him, as a sign of its present vitality, than to see such a numerous and good assemblage at their annual dinner (hear, hear). What had fallen from his friend, Mr. Williams, was certainly undeserved (no, no), but he should always do his best to give all the assistance to the club possible, and he hoped in the future would be one of prosperity, and continue increasing in its numbers of members as it had done (hear, hear). For many years past every law that they had seen passed tended to depress that interest (hear, hear).

Mr. Hewitt then proposed the "Newbury Farmers' Club" which he affectionately termed their "Young Brother." He was glad to see it represented so ably that day, (hear, hear) and in responding he certainly did not expect that they would show a feeble front (hear, hear). The members of the Newbury Farmer's Club, to show at all events that they really meant making themselves of influence in the neighbourhood were taking very important subjects for their discussion (hear, hear). Although they could not be present at their meetings, they had the pleasure of reading the reports of the meetings. If they as farmers had rivalry amongst themselves it was satisfactory to know that it was of a perfectly friendly character, (hear, hear) and as clubs there was not the slightest chance of one being jealous of the other (hear, hear). He had very great pleasure in proposing the Newbury Farmer's Club, coupled with the name of Mr. Darke (cheers). That club had already entered, he might say, with a subject that may be very widely undertaken, "The Diseases of Sheep." Their secretary had received a promise from a member of the Newbury Farmer's Club to read a paper to them on that subject. He believed

that where it was brought forward there would be great difference of opinion on the matter, and as far as that went the discussion itself arising from such difference, he considered an advantage (hear, hear).

Mr. C. P. Darke (president of the Newbury Farmers' Club) responded. He was very much obliged to them for the kind manner in which they had received his name in connection with the club, and also for the right-hand of fellowship they had extended towards them. He was glad to see that state of things existed at that end of the county (hear, hear). On behalf of the Newbury Farmers' Club he could say that they thoroughly reciprocated that kindly feeling which had been shown to them (cheers). At various times the subjects they were upon to discuss were very important, and hitherto there was none more so than the "Enquiry into diseased sheep". A short time ago they had occasion to call upon Professor Gamgee to deliver a lecture before their club on that subject. He then told them that veterinary practitioners were entirely in the dark upon the subject, and that great good would result if they could in any way inaugurate any inquiry into it. Their club had considered the matter, and last week he had an interview with the Professor, and he entirely concurred in all their proposals, and stated that he was quite ready, when receiving instructions from the club, to come down into the county and institute the proposed inquiry. Of course the amount of time the Professor would be able to give would be in proportion to the amount of money they could raise, and he (Mr. Darke) hoped they would see the necessity of supporting the movement, and would see the necessity of supporting the movement, and would send in their names to Mr. Chandler, with the amount of the subscription. If all farmers who were prepared to support them would contribute £1 a year for three years, they would be able to form sufficient funds in order to have a thorough investigation into the matter. The Professor had promised to publish a work on the subject at the end of the inquiry, which would be a benefit to them all, and he, (Mr. Darke) had no doubt that the result of the inquiry would be to elucidate facts of importance which they were now in ignorance of (hear, hear). He would have a meeting next week to again consider matters, and the amount of subscriptions they had yet received, and as the lambing season was coming on it was a very appropriate time for the enquiry to commence. Another subject which they were called upon to consider from time to time was the Malt Tax, and he could not help thinking that the course which all governments had taken in the matter did not do them credit (hear, hear). Upon the principles of equality and justice he thought they should call upon them to exercise their authority in carrying out this measure of the abolition of the duty. It had been the custom hitherto to consider the Conservative government as friendly to agricultural interests, but he could not in his recollection - certainly they had not had much opportunity - remember any single measure of late years that they had advocated, which had been beneficial to agriculturists. He found now that the question of education was becoming of considerable importance, that the House was about to propose that they should have an education rate that should be levied upon the poor's rate. The result of that would be that the occupiers of land would pay a much larger proportion to that rate than any others in the country. He hoped they would all resist that measure to the utmost of their power (cheers). He looked upon the Farmers Clubs as having the power to assist in such resistance, and he trusted that they would not lose the opportunity that would be offered to them in due course. He again thanked them very much for their kindness to him and the Newbury Farmers Club.

Mr. Walker, of Hungerford sang a "Hunting song," which was followed by a long and impressive recitation, by Mr. Holman, entitled, "A voice from the trenches before Sebastopol," which was greatly applauded by the company.

Mr. Chandler then proposed the "Health of the Vice Chairman." He looked forward with pleasure to his services during the coming year, having seen so much of his previous zeal in connection with the club (hear, hear). He had always been attentive to his duties in his humbler position, and he had confidence that he would do justice to his promotion. Certain he was, that in their discussions he would give every one a fair hearing, and he thought, too, he would make those who now very often talked to themselves, address the chairman, so that the whole of the members might have the benefit of their opinions, (hear, hear.)

Mr. Hewitt, (president elect for the ensuing year), was sorry he was called upon to occupy his prospective position, as he knew many others were a great deal more capable of doing so. If anything was to him a source of gratification it was the proposing of his health by his friend, Mr. Chandler, for he was certainly looked upon him, if not as a father of the club, as its captain (cheers). He hoped that at the expiration of his term of office the club would be in as great

prosperity as at present. As to the business, it was his wish that everything should be carried out in a respectable and straightforward way. He would be pleased to see persons join the club who were not farmers. Another thing he congratulated himself upon very much, was that they were blessed with a good secretary, (cheers), and he was more than ever convinced that they had the right man in the right place. If it was in order he would ask them to drink the health of Mr. Chandler, Jnr. (cheers).

Mr. Holman here favoured the company with "Nil Desperandum."

The Secretary was extremely obliged to them for the very high compliments they had paid him, and he could assure them that the duties of his office were not heavy as he at first imagined they would be, because he had such efficient assistance in the committee and other officers. Just to show them that the remarks of their meeting were not without appreciation; in a letter he received from his brother at Ballarat, he stated that he had seen one of their meetings quoted in a paper of that town.

Other toasts followed, and the company did not adjourn until a late hour.

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