

## Knole Farmers' Club & South Wilts Chamber of Agriculture 1872



A general meeting of this association was held at the Seymour Arms, East Knole, on Thursday last. As some of our readers will probably remember, the Farmers' Club resolved last summer to extend its field of operations, and there being a prospect of much success attending the step, this meeting was called to make arrangements for the holding of other meetings for the discussion of subjects in which the members are interested, and to consider the propriety of taking other steps which may tend to bring about the great end in view, namely, the promotion of the interests of agriculture.

Mr G Troyte-Bullock, vice-president, occupied the chair and the following other members were present: Mr Vere Fane Benett-Stanford, the Rev R N Milford, Mr Stratton, Mr J Allen, Mr R C R Godwin, Mr S Jefferys, Mr W Pike, Mr S Bracher, Mr J Corbin, Mr B Thorpe, Mr J C Perry, Mr W Gray, Mr J N Down, Mr P Genge, Mr T Stacey (hon treasurer), Mr H Ball, Mr C T Russell, Mr J B Gray (hon secretary), Mr G Bristol, Mr F Rawlings, &c.

Mr Benett-Stanford stated that he had been requested by Lord Henry Thynne MP to inform the meeting that he should have been present had he not been called upon to give evidence that day in an important law suit in the Court of Common Pleas.

Mr Gray (hon sec) stated that Mr T F Grove MP had asked him to say that he was also unable to be present, owing to his having an engagement at Dorchester.

The Chairman said he came to the meeting more as a listener than anything else. Unfortunately he had been unable to attend previous meetings, but he was delighted when he heard that it had been determined to form a chamber of agriculture for South Wilts and he thought it was greatly to the credit of the East Knole Farmers' Club that they had established such a society.

He hoped the chamber might go on and prosper, for there were undoubtedly many questions affecting agriculture which it could aid in settling. The first question which the meeting was called to consider was – is it necessary to draw up special rules for the use of the chamber? He thought there could not be much doubt about that; they must have a code of rules for their guidance.

Some conversation having taken place on the question, it was resolved on the motion of the Chairman, seconded by Mr Benett-Stanford, that it was necessary to draw up special rules for the use of the chamber, and that the working committee should prepare them and submit them for approval at the next meeting.

The Chairman said the next question was - should there be monthly meetings and a paper read at each by a member, to be followed by a discussion.

Mr Stratton moved that it was not necessary to have any fixed periods for meetings, but that it should be left to the discretion of the committee and secretary to call a meeting at such time and place as might seem to them best. In his opinion they ought to visit the large towns of the county in rotation in order to make the society what they designated it, namely, a South Wilts Chamber of Agriculture. Instead of it consisting of about 80 members, it ought to, and no doubt ultimately would number 300 or 400, and the way to obtain that large accession of strength was to show the farmers and the people of the county generally that the Chamber did not confine itself to the promotion of the interests of any particular district. He also thought that they ought to have different chairmen of different politics, and be careful that they did not take any particular side in political affairs.

Their aim should be the attainment of the great object which they had in view, namely the promotion of the interests of agriculture - interests which hitherto had been much neglected. The legislation proposed for their benefit had been framed in obvious ignorance of their wants and they would have been almost as well without it. He would instance the legislation have reference to the cattle trade, which had allowed great losses to be inflicted on breeders and owners of stock. By forming a strong society however, by bringing their opinions to bear on the leading men in the county, and by informing them of the needs of the case, they would, no doubt, be able to bring pressure to bear on the Government, and obtain a redress of their grievances.

At present the executive officers who were entrusted under the Privy Council to take steps to prevent the spread of the cattle disease were utterly ignorant of the way to grapple with it. They also knew that representatives in parliament did not understand properly the questions which affected agriculturists, and had not given them that consideration which the required; but by means of the Chamber they would be able to instruct them and show them the necessity of attending to the interests of their agricultural constituents.

The meetings which he suggested should be held in the large towns in the county must not be got up carelessly, but so far as possible, success must be ensured for them. If they were not successful they would injure the Chamber. Mr S Jefferys seconded the motion and it was adopted unanimously.

Mr Benett-Stanford remarked that as they had become the South Wilts Chamber of Agriculture and extended their borders, he thought it would be also advisable to take a wider field for the holding of their annual meetings. As long as they did not get too far from their secretary and committee, it would have a wholesome effect their leaving Knole.

He did not mean to say that they had not had good meetings at Knole, and Mr Ball had not given them excellent dinners, but by having their annual meeting at Tisbury one year, Hindon the following year, Mere the next, and then coming back to Knole, he thought they would thereby secure as members a large number of agriculturists who would never, in all probability, join the Chamber if they adhered strictly to Knole.

They might, if it was though advisable, have their next annual dinner at Tisbury where there was a fine large room, and come back to Knoyle in the following year. In succeeding years they could visit some other places.

He should not propose however that they should go to Salisbury until the strength of the Chamber had been considerably augmented. If they went to Tisbury, they would no doubt get Mr Morrison and Lord Arundel to attend and have other fresh blood from other parts of the county. He thought with Mr Stratton, that it was very desirable that they should keep more closely to subjects affecting agricultural than political ones at their annual dinner. The motion he would submit to the meeting upon the question was, that their annual ploughing matches and dinners should not always be held at Knoyle, or any particular place, but that it should be left to the working committee and secretary to arrange each year where they should be held.

Mr Bracher proposed an amendment to the effect that, for the present, the Knoyle Farmers' Club should continue to hold its annual ploughing matches and dinners at Knoyle. He agreed with Mr Stratton however that meetings should be held in different parts of the county for the discussion of questions affecting agriculturists.



Mr Godwin expressed a similar opinion. As soon as they were strong enough to be warranted in moving from place to place then he should have no objection to their doing so. At present, however, the thought the carrying out of the rules of the club at any other place than Knoyle would be attended with considerable difficulty.

The club was purely a local affair, and he did not think it was the intention of its members that the awarding of prizes to the agricultural labourers should be interfered with, or that its annual meetings should be held in different places. He would therefore second the amendment.

The Chairman also thought that there would be difficulties in the way of the Farmers' Club moving about.

Mr Allen considered that it might be inconvenient to hold their annual meetings at different places, but not to the extent some appeared to fear. Tisbury seemed to him a very suitable place for such a purpose, having good railway accommodation, an excellent room, and land might be obtained at a comparatively short distance off for the ploughing competition. He did not advocate Tisbury more than any of the other places suggested, but he thought they might change their place of meeting this year with advantage, and if they thought proper, come back to Knoyle next year.

He also thought that it would be beneficial to the Chamber if other gentlemen than Mr Seymour took the chair at their annual meetings occasionally; and he wished Mr Seymour had been present to hear the remark, and his assurance that it was not made out of any disrespect to him. On the contrary, he said that whilst entertaining the greatest respect for him, and with the feeling that he had frequently listened with advantage to what he had said whilst occupying the chair at annual meetings. His (the speaker's) object in suggesting that other gentlemen than Mr Seymour should take the chair was to promote the interests of the Chamber.

Mr Benett-Stanford: I see you are two clubs. I thought you were amalgamated into one large society.

The Rev R N Milford thought it was quite clear that the rules it was proposed to draw up must name the parishes to which the operations of the Farmers' Club should be confined, and whether there was any difference between the Club and the Chamber of Agriculture. If there was not a difference between them, so far as he could see the 80 members had a perfect right to all the benefits of the association. He thought that if they had enlarged their borders, they must extend the advantages accordingly.

Mr Benett-Stanford: The county association would not be led by the nose by the Knoyle Farmers' Club.

Mr Stratton thought the members of the Chamber living away from Knoyle would not feel so much interest in what took place in the local club as in the questions affecting agriculture which were brought before the Chamber for discussion.

The Chairman expressed his thorough concurrence with the motion of Mr Stratton that had been adopted, and read what Mr W B Beach, MP, stated at the meeting of the Hampshire Chamber of Agriculture, held in Winchester a fortnight ago, relative to the advisability of chambers holding their meetings in different places.

Mr Benett-Stanford asked if it was always necessary to have the ploughing match and dinner of the club on the same day. He did not think it was necessary.

Mr Godwin: When we have got enough members we could hold our annual dinner in some other place than Knoyle, and call it the dinner of the South Wilts Chamber of Agriculture.

The Secretary: We have always held the annual meeting and ploughing competitions here because it is the most central place.

Mr Allen seconded the motion of Mr Benett-Stanford.

The Rev R N Milford further remarked that he had no desire to drive the club away from Knoyle, but he would have them remember that they had enlarged their borders and wanted to get more members, and he did not think they would, to any great extent, unless they moved to other parts. He came to the annual dinner at East Knoyle every year, and owing to the smallness of the room he was nearly stifled during the four or five hours the meeting lasted.

The Secretary said they were not anxious to enlarge their Farmers' Club.

Mr Benett-Stanford: Half your members come from my part of the county.

The Secretary replied that he was aware of that, but he nevertheless thought it would be inconvenient to hold their annual meetings away from Knoyle, more especially on account of the ploughing matches.

The amendment and motion were then put to the vote, and the former was carried by a large majority.

Mr Stratton was afterwards elected, on the motion of Mr Benett-Stanford, seconded by the Rev R N Milford, to represent the Chamber at the meetings of the Central Chamber in London. It was considered advisable to refer certain minor questions which had been suggested by the committee for consideration to that body or to a future meeting of the Chamber.

Thanks was accorded to the Chairman and the meeting broke up.

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