

Our Founding Fathers

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Summary

This article explores the history of Richard Ansdell's great painting 'The Meeting of The Royal Agricultural Society, Bristol 1842' which hangs in the Society's Council Chamber in the Arthur Rank Centre at Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire and provides an insight into the background of a number of the individuals portrayed within it.



The painting depicts the **1842 Meeting of the Royal Agricultural Society** (or The Royal Show as it is known today) staged at Bristol, probably being on Clifton Downs to the North-West of the City.

It is not known whether or not the picture was commissioned by or (more likely) purchased by Thomas Agnew the elder because it was donated, probably by his son Thomas the younger, to Salford Museum and Art Gallery in 1868. It measures 16ft. x 6ft. and is reputed to be one of the larger canvases that Ansdell painted. Set in a landscaped background, it represents one hundred and twenty seven of the more important members of the agricultural community who were reputed to have attended the event. It includes horses, dogs and seventeen implements and machines that would have been displayed on exhibitors' trade stands, the details of which can be found in the 1842 catalogue. An accompanying key-plate identifies those depicted. The painting was published as an engraving in 1845, of which the Society holds two copies.

It has not been possible to locate records of when Ansdell commenced the painting but he first produced sketches in oils of the individuals before including them in the final work; at least two of the sitters, The Earl of Leicester (Coke of Norfolk) and Lord Western are known to have died before the picture was completed. The Society has in its possession 45 of these original paintings and a further five engravings. The whereabouts of the remainder are not recorded but they do appear on the market from time to time. The Society's *Record of Disposals* (1956) lists a number of individual portraits that were 'consigned to salvage' due to their poor condition and they may include some of those that are missing.

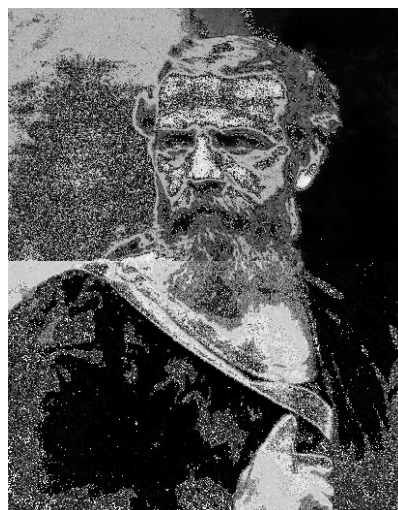
One can only speculate as to whether or not The Rt. Hon. The Earl of Hardwicke, the Society's President at the time, was consulted over its composition but the placing of individuals within the painting poses an interesting conundrum for social history enthusiasts!

¹ Phillip Sheppy comes from a farming background and spent much of his working life as an agricultural educationalist and administrator. Appointed MBE in 1985, he is a fellow of Royal Agricultural Societies and an Honorary Member of City and Guilds of London Institute. Upon his retirement in 1994 he was appointed Honorary Librarian to the Society. He retired in 2007.

Soon after its completion, it was seen by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert when it was exhibited in Maddox Street, Regent Street, London and later it was on show at the Society's meeting held at Derby in 1843.

In 1886 it was reported to have been destroyed, its whereabouts apparently being unknown and it was by way of a speculative letter in 1956 that the Society learnt that the painting was in Salford, rolled up having apparently been in store for a number of years. Upon request it was loaned permanently to and restored by the Society the same year. It was hung in the Council Chamber of the Society's London Office in Belgrave Square and when the lease on the property was relinquished in the early 1990s, it was re-hung in the Council Chamber in the Arthur Rank Centre at Stoneleigh Park where the sketches and engravings are also displayed within the Society's Archive. It is identified by art experts on the period as one of the artist's more important works.

Richard Ansdell Esq., (1815-1885) was born at Liverpool in 1815, the son of a block maker. On leaving school at the age of thirteen, he is said to have been apprenticed to W.C. Smith, a profile and portrait painter. He first became established in Lancashire having become known for his ability to combine portraits of people and their animals into a landscaped background and received commissions from influential patrons including 3rd Earl Spencer, the Society's President (1838 and 1843). He was a prolific artist who was exhibiting at the Royal Academy by 1840 and his total contribution to the RA between 1840 and 1885 is reputed to have numbered 150 but he had to wait until 1861 to be elected an Associate Member of The Royal Academy (ARA) and a full academician (RA) in 1870. He always retained his love for Lancashire but moved to Kensington, London in 1847 and had homes at both St. Albans and Moy in Scotland. He travelled extensively in both Scotland and Spain. He was recognised as one of the leading artists of the day and was often compared with Edwin Landseer. His pictures are said to have sold well, averaging some £750 during the latter part of his lifetime (£20,000 at current values) and many were engraved; he was a wealthy man at the time of his death at Farnborough Hampshire in 1885. His eldest son, Thomas married Constance the grand-daughter of Thomas Agnew the elder.



*Richard Ansdell by David Wilkie
National Portrait Gallery*



*Bust by M. Noble, 1853
Agnews*

Thomas Agnew Esq., (1794-1871) the elder was born in Liverpool where he studied drawing and modelling. He moved to Manchester and in 1810 was apprenticed to an Italian print-seller Vittore Zanetti who also dealt in clocks and optical instruments and with whom he entered into a partnership in 1817. Following the latter's retirement in 1828 he became the sole proprietor of the firm in 1835 when under his direction, the business specialised in dealing in works of art, print publishing and with carving and gilding picture frames. His gallery was originally in Manchester with a second opening in London as well in 1860. Thomas Agnew and Richard Ansdell were believed to have been very close and Agnews handled many of Ansdell's paintings. They became deeply involved in the highly profitable business of publishing engravings and published one of this picture by S.W. Reynolds the younger and a number of the original artist's sketches. He was Mayor of Salford.

Agnew's commitment to the production and sale of prints is exemplified in the following extract from an advertisement that appeared in *The Art Union*, June 1845 drawing readers' attention to:

**AGNEW'S GALLERY OF
PORTRAITS OF EMINENT ENGLISH AGRICULTURISTS.**

This is the first attempt to form, in a style worthy of the subject, an Engraved Gallery of Portraits of the Leading Agriculturists of Great Britain; and perhaps at no previous period was such an attempt so appropriate as at the present time, when science has elevated, and is still extending, the power of the cultivators of the soil. The Portraits are all whole length, uniform in size, and beautifully engraved by Mr. REYNOLDS, from the original Portraits painted from life by Mr. ANSELL.

Autographs Proofs	£1 1 0
Lettered Proofs	0 10 6
Prints	0 7 6

Size of the Engravings, 17 inches by 11 inches.

The following are now ready:—

<p>His Grace the DUKE of RICHMOND. His Grace the DUKE of SUTHERLAND. His Grace the DUKE of NORTHUMBERLAND. The Right Honourable the late EARL of LEICESTER. The Right Honourable EARL TALBOT. The Right Honourable the late LORD WESTERN.</p>	<p>The Right Honourable LORD WORSLEY. HENRY HANDLEY, Esq. J. A. RANSOME, Esq. GEORGE WILBRAHAM, Esq. GEORGE TOLLET, Esq.</p>
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The Portraits of the late Earl of Leicester and the late Lord Western were painted a few months prior to their decease.
Each Portrait may be had separately.

Sold by Messrs. FORES and CO., Piccadilly, and Messrs. ACKERMANN and CO., Strand, London; and THOMAS AGNEW, Printseller and Publisher to the Queen, Prince Albert, and the Duke of Cambridge, Repository of Arts, Manchester.

Private collection

The one hundred and twenty seven individuals portrayed in the painting included not only many of the early 'improvers' who were associated with the Society's work, but also leading agricultural scientists and inventors of their day. It is worthy of note that among them is HRH Adolphus Frederick, 1st Duke of Cambridge (1774-1850), the 7th son of King George III and a brother to King George IV and King William IV. Such was their stature that it has been difficult to select from the fifty images in the Society's possession those worthy of further consideration. However, 34 have been chosen and their images are included in the following pages. Short biographical notes researched and mostly written by Mrs. Rosemary Eady, (Hon. Vice President and former Council member representing Northamptonshire) are added to highlight the work for which they were renowned.



John Charles, 3rd Earl Spencer, (1782-1845).

Whig Politician and prominent agriculturalist and one of a small group of landowners, agricultural writers and farming enthusiasts who attached at least as much importance to the scientific development of agriculture as they did to legislative means for the achievement of rural prosperity. He who proposed the formation of **a national agricultural institution** at the Smithfield Club Dinner in December 1837. Elected as the first President of the Society in 1838 (then The English Agricultural Society) and again in 1843 he worked untiringly on its behalf in the formative years. He is reputed to have been the most influential member of the Whig governments of 1830 to 1834 serving both as Leader of the House of Commons and Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is widely acknowledged as one of the more important links between the early improvers such as Coke of Norfolk and the Duke of Bedford and the agencies such as our Society and The Great Yorkshire Agricultural Society of which he was also a founder member. He was highly respected amongst the farming community. His wife, Esther Acklom of Wiseton, Nottinghamshire, died in childbirth at the age of 29 in 1818 and although his estate was at Althorp in Northamptonshire, he spent much of his later life at Wiseton and developed one of the leading Shorthorn herds of the time.

**Thomas William Coke, Earl of Leicester, KG. (1755-1842)
(Coke of Norfolk).**

Coke inherited the Holkham Estate in Norfolk in 1776 at the age of 21 and by his own admission knowing little about farming invited his neighbours to teach him. These annual gatherings soon became known as the Holkham Sheepshearings and were held continuously from 1777 until 1821. He was immensely innovative, installing drainage to his estate and applying lime, marl and the 'new' bone manures to his light flinty land. Experimenting with different breeds of livestock, he is reputed to have trebled their numbers, used the recently developed seed drill and within a decade had increased soil fertility to a point where it was possible to grow wheat as opposed to rye. He was a firm believer in long term tenancies and did much to encourage his tenants to take up developing technology. He is reputed to have refused a peerage on a number of occasions because the offer had been made by a government of whom he did not approve! He was eventually ennobled in 1837 by

Queen Victoria in the first year of her reign as the first Earl of Leicester (second creation) and Viscount Coke. Truly one of the great early improvers, his reputation as an innovator, communicator and disseminator of knowledge remains unblemished.



This group of four agriculturalists are related by Achievement, Estate and by personal Association and exemplifies the quality of the Council of the Society in 1842 which took as its original epigram **Practice with Science**. They are, left to right:

John Chalmers Morton Esq., (1821-1888). (*The first initial T on the frame is incorrect.*)

After he attended lectures by David Low at Edinburgh he assisted his father John Morton, the agent to Lord Ducie at the Whitfield Example Farm in Gloucestershire. At the age of 18 in 1839, he was possibly the youngest Governor of the Society. Founding editor of the *Agricultural Gazette* and a prolific writer on agriculture, he also had articles published in the Society's Journal

Dr. Lyon Playfair, (1818-1898).

Scientist, Courtier and Politician, born in Chunar, Bengal. After an education in St. Andrews, Scotland and medical studies in Edinburgh, he studied with Liebig in Germany. He was an Honorary Member of the Society and Consulting Chemist from 1842-7. He investigated the potato blight in Ireland. After advising the Prince Consort on his new invention **of filtering royal sewerage to fertilize the Osborne estate**, he became a special commissioner assisting with the 1851 Exhibition which is enduringly remembered through its Royal Charter 'To increase the means of industrial Education and to extend the influence of science and art upon productive industry'. He was created 1st Baron Playfair in 1892.

Dr. Justus von Liebig, (1803-1873).

An Honorary Member from 1842, he was born in Darmstadt, Germany where he studied at the Universities of Bonn and Erlangen. He became a professor at Giessen in 1824. He was famed for his systematization of organic chemistry, production of industrial dyes and his pioneering of the production and use of artificial fertilizers. In 1842 Lawes appointed Gilbert, a pupil of Liebig, to be director of research at Rothamsted. By 1840 Liebig had developed concentrated beef extract, a bouillon to nourish the impoverished. With George Giebert in 1865 he founded the Liebig Extract of Meat Company to manufacture the flesh of livestock in Uruguay, previously only used for hides, and made a product which eventually became the Oxo cube. In 1873, the year of his death, the company, renamed Fray Bentos, started producing corned beef. In May 1874 the Council of the RASE recorded their sense of loss *which not only the Society, but the whole world of science, suffers by the death of Baron Liebig whose chemical discoveries, especially in relation to the production and utilization of food, have been of the utmost importance to agriculture.*

Henry George Francis Moreton, (1802-1853). The Rt. Hon. 2nd Earl of Ducie.

The Rt. Hon. 2nd Earl of Ducie. A Whig MP for Gloucestershire before he succeeded to the title in 1840. As an early correspondent to the journal he wrote about the growing of carrots. A noted breeder of Shorthorns, also on his estate at Tortworth in Gloucestershire was the Whitfield Example Farm. His stance as a repealer of the Corn Laws seems not to have affected his position within the Society for he became President for 1851-2. In the 1842 painting he, and his associated group, are placed in front of the Ducie Cultivator, marked D, and made by his Utley Machinery Company. The Society holds an undated press-cutting relating to the sale of his herd of Shorthorns in 1853 that refers to some of the cattle being purchased by Mr. J. Thorne and exported to the USA (*ref: Society's Register of Artefacts No: E1.5*).



The Rev. Professor John Stevens Henslow (1796-1861).

An ordained minister and extraordinarily gifted scientist who held successively chairs of mineralogy and botany at Cambridge. A Fellow of the Linnean Society at the age of 22 he was a founder of the Cambridge Philosophical Society in 1821. A tutor of Darwin, it was he who recommended Darwin for the Beagle expedition and received the specimens which were sent back to Cambridge. He was responsible for remodelling the Botanical Garden at Cambridge for educational purposes. The Society made him an Honorary Member in 1842. After he resigned his professorship for a Rectory at Hitcham in Suffolk he became involved in improving the education of the labouring classes when he established schools, allotments and other benefits for his parishioners. His fame as an educationalist spread to the Royal Family and he was invited to give some lessons in botany to the Royal Children.

Charles Shaw-Lefevre Esq., MP. (1794 –1888).

An MP from 1830 and Speaker of the House of Commons 1839-1857 after which time he was created the 1st Viscount Eversley of Heckfield. With his mother, a Lefevre, came his Huguenot ancestry. He married the younger daughter of Samuel Whitbread 2nd. In 1835 he was chairman of a committee on agricultural distress. At various times he was a church estates commissioner and an ecclesiastical commissioner. Involved totally with the new Society, he was on the committee of management; one of the original seven members of the journal committee to which he was a fruitful correspondent. He became President in 1863 and this painting of him was presented to the Society by Sir Walter Gilbey Bt. in 1896. In 1893 he published an authoritative work on Agrarian Tenures. He was a Governor of the Society.





Jonas Webb Esq., (1796-1862).

Although he was born at Great Thurlow in Suffolk, he is known as Jonas Webb of Babraham, Cambridge, to where he moved in 1822 becoming the leading breeder and improver of Southdown sheep after the death of John Ellman of Glynde. The breed, thus improved, was sometimes called the Cambridge Down. His sheep were exported to Europe, Australia and America. He started winning prizes when showing at the first Cambridge Show (1841) and continued his success at Bristol. He also exhibited at the 1855 Paris Universal Exhibition where he was awarded a first class gold medal. Subsequently in 1862, he sold his flocks and continued with his Shorthorn herd which he commenced in 1838 and won a gold medal for a bull calf as the best male animal in the Shorthorn class. A statute inscribed 'Jonas Webb of Babraham, Born Nov 10 1796, Died Nov 10 1862. By Farmers and Friends in many lands' was put up in the Corn Exchange in

Cambridge. It is currently placed opposite Church Farmhouse, Babraham High Street, Cambridge. It was listed in 1985. The Society has in its possession a plaster model of A *Southdown Ewe* that he exported to America to Samuel Thorne, Duchess County, New York in 1853. The model was presented to him by Jonathan Thorne 'as a perfect specimen of the breed'. A manuscript note recording many of Webb's transactions from 1844 to 1859 is also in the Society's possession (ref: Society's Register of Artefacts No: E1.5.).

Samuel Jonas Esq., (c1802-1872).

He farmed at Chrishall Grange, Essex. In the inquiry, conducted by the Society, on the extreme vagaries of weather in 1868, The Society's Journal for 1869, an account is given of his farming and his pertinent views on politicians. A substantial farmer whose offspring continued to farm in Cambridgeshire and Essex, and were Land Agents and Solicitors in London. A Member of the Society, he published articles in the Society's Journal on *Farming in Cambridgeshire* and *Suffolk Drainage*.



John Hudson Esq., (1795-1869).

From 1822 Hudson was a prized tenant on the Holkham Estate Norfolk where he farmed a holding of 997 acres at Lodge Farm, Castle Acre. In 1850 he was a prize winning essayist of the RASE and contributor to the journal competition on 'the construction of farm buildings'. He was among those instrumental in establishing the Farmers' Club and was its first chairman, serving 1842-3. On the Monument to the 1st Earl of Leicester in the Park at Holkham is a bas-relief depicting the granting of a new lease and shows Hudson and his son. An extensive account of Hudson's farming practices at Castle Acre is given in the Society's Journal for 1869. Written by H.M. Jenkins, it became Hudson's obituary, He was a founder member of the Society.

Sir William Miles Esq., (1797-1878).

He farmed at Leigh Court, Somerset. Created a Baronet in 1859, and was successively MP for Chippenham, New Romney and 1834-1865 in East Somerset, He was chairman of the local committee who 'contributed to the excellence of the arrangements' for the Bristol Country Meeting. He took a practical interest in experiments on his farm. A keen sportsman and host for the Society, he served as Steward of Implements, Vice-President and was President in 1854-5 when he headed a Society deputation to the Universal Exhibition in Paris. The extended obituary for him written in the Society's Journal for 1879 by John Dent Dent and Sir Brandreth Gibbs portrayed the affection and esteem with which he was held. He was a member of the Society's Management Committee.



James Hudson Esq., (1804-1859).

Appointed Assistant Secretary and Librarian of The Royal Society in 1826 where he assisted Sir Humphrey Davy (President) and Michael Faraday with scientific experiments. He resigned due to ill health in 1835. Appointed the first full time Secretary to, and Editor of The Journal of The Royal Agricultural Society of England in 1839, a post he held for some twenty years until 1859 when he left the Society's employ in somewhat dubious circumstances. He died later the same year. In 2006/7, a number of his descendants have researched his life, providing a substantial amount of information about his background.

Edward William Wynne Pendarves Esq., MP, FRS. (1775-1853).

MP for Cornwall West, he lived at Pendarves House, Truro, Cornwall and was a founder Governor of the Society.



Sir Charles Lemon, 2nd Baronet, (1784 –1868).

A Scientist and MP for West Cornwall until 1857. Fellow of the Royal Society and President of the Royal Statistical Society 1836-1838. In 1838 he was President of the Royal Institution of Cornwall and set up the funding for what became the Camborne School of Mines. A regular contributor to the Society's Journal and a patron of plant hunters in the new world. He was a founder Governor of the Society and lived at Carclew, Penryn, Cornwall. He was a member of the Society's Management Committee.



Sir Charles Morgan, formerly Gould, 2nd Baronet, (1760-1846). He was active in advancing agriculture in Brecknockshire and Monmouth, his father having been a member of the 'old' Board of Agriculture from 1793 to his death. As an ensign in the 2nd Foot Guards in 1777 he served in America and was taken prisoner at York Town. He was MP from 1787-1831, successively for Brecon Borough and Monmouthshire. He was a founder Vice President and Governor of the Society and lived at Tredegar, Newport, Monmouthshire.

Edward Berkeley, Baron Portman, (1799-1888).

Raised to 1st Viscount Portman of Bryanston in 1873, in his early life he was a Liberal MP for Dorset and then for Marylebone, Middlesex. From 1839-64 he was Lord Lieutenant of Somerset. In the Society's Journal for 1843 he gives an account of bringing land newly into cultivation at Durweston Common in Dorset and the fifteen years it took! Paying his first subscription in 1838, he was a noted breeder of Devon and Alderney cattle. At the time of his death he was the *Father of the Society* serving as President in 1846, 1856 and 1862.



Philip Pusey, Esq., MP. (1799-1855).

His father, born Philip Bouverie, succeeded to the estates of his Pusey aunts and to inherit he had to change the family name from Bouverie to Pusey. After Eton and some time at Christ Church, Oxford, Philip Pusey together with his friend Henry Herbert, who was to eventually become his brother-in-law and the 3rd Earl of Caernarvon, instead of the traditional classic tour had an extended 'gap' year travelling in Catalonia where they fell into the hands of guerillas! On returning home, Pusey married and with his wife settled in Rome until the death of his father in 1828 when he came into the family estates. After a somewhat shaky start as an MP (he gained a seat and then lost it on two occasions) in 1835 he became MP for Berkshire and served until 1852. He was a keen advocate for 'tenant right' on the value of unexhausted improvements; ahead of his time it remained for others to pursue it to a valuable conclusion. From 1839 Pusey became part of the governance of the new Society, The Royal Agricultural Society of England. It was through the example of his editorial control of the Society's Journal that this has remained a fundamental tool in the dissemination of education and science for the Society. In 1851 Pusey was chairman of the agricultural implement department of the Great Exhibition. A Royal Commissioner, he wrote the *Report to H.R.H., (Prince Albert), the President of the Commission for the Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations*. This report was reproduced by the Society in the Journal for 1851. It contains a multitude of illustrations of the implements, and makes favourable comment about the work of the Society; *The yearly shows and trials of the RASE have certainly done more in England for agricultural mechanics within the last ten years than had been attempted anywhere in all former time*. He was President of the Society in 1840 and again in 1853. Of his 5,000 acre estate, he managed the 300-400 acres of the home farm himself. In the late 1840's he laid out water meadows on his farm. An excellent landlord, with concern for the welfare of his workers for whom he provided allotments. Elected a Fellow of the Royal Society in 1830 he was also an ardent hymnologist transcribing the 17th German *Christe du Beistand* of M. von Lowenstern into the hymn, *Lord of our life and God of our salvation* which was published in the Salisbury Hymnal of 1840. He was one of the more influential men of his time and his contribution to the work of the Society merits this lengthy inclusion.

John Price, Esq., (1776-1845).

The eldest son of a tenant farmer on The Earl of Coventry's Croome Estate in Worcestershire, he had but a rudimentary education; not that this impeded his ability to grasp the concepts of productive agriculture and became established as a notable authority and breeder of Hereford cattle. He was considered a 'favourite' of Lord Coventry and his relatively humble station in life did not preclude his mixing with the wealthy aristocracy. He relinquished his tenancy in 1811 and purchased the small estate at Ryall near Upton-on-Severn. An unfortunate venture into agricultural real estate caused him financial difficulties and he moved to Poole House, Upton on Severn, Worcestershire in 1816 when the 116 cattle sold at his sale averaged £58 – a considerable sum of money in those days. He was a winner of prizes for Hereford cattle at Bristol in 1842. An obituary (including a portrait) appeared in *The Farmers' Magazine* in October 1845 and his career is well documented in Macdonald and Sinclair's *History of Hereford Cattle*.



James Smith, Esq., (of Deanston)(1789-1850).

Born to a merchant of the City of Glasgow he was an agricultural engineer and inventor. He made one of the first mechanical reapers in 1811. Later, he won a gold medal for another model at the Imperial Agricultural Society of St. Petersburg. In agricultural husbandry he was known for his demonstrations of modern cultivating methods using the swing plough and the subsoil plough in tandem which together with experimental work on the draining of soils helped to raise the profile of good drainage in husbandry and the need for financial support legislated for through government. Large areas of land in Scotland had been improved by Deanstonization (as it was referred to). For sportsmen, he would be remembered for his invention of the salmon ladder which enabled the fish to climb to the higher water up weirs. From 1842 he was a commissioner inquiring into the health and sanitary conditions of

townships which was critical for the welfare of the populace. At the time of his early death he was investigating the use of a new sheep dip instead of 'tarring'. A worthy protagonist of the Society's *Practice with Science*.

William Youatt Esq., (1776-1847).

The son of a Devon surgeon, he was destined to become a nonconformist minister but his zeal for the 'cure of souls' turned to the welfare of animals and he joined a veterinary infirmary in London. For ten years the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge engaged him in producing books on domestic livestock, the welfare of which was only now gaining credence; formerly the horse had been the prime concern. He produced the 6th edition of *The Lincolnshire Grazier*, previously published by Horne, under the title *The Complete Grazier*. It must have been his growing stature and popularity that as a governor of the Society from 1839 he was immediately invited to be a member of the Committee of Management where he sought to improve the liaison between the Society and the world of college veterinarians. He was a lecturer at University College, London and veterinary surgeon to the Zoological Society. He continued his veterinary work without formal qualifications which were only awarded within three years of his death when the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons was given a Royal Charter. In the Society's Journal for the year 1893, John Thornton writes in depth of his professional life. A great compliment to Youatt was that one of his students, James Beart Simonds, was the first Inspector and then Consulting Veterinary Surgeon to the Society!





George Granville Leveson-Gower, (1786-1861).

He succeeded his father as 2nd Duke of Sutherland in 1833 and his mother as 20th Earl of Sutherland in 1839. As a small child he was with his parents in Paris where his father was a diplomat when, on their travels out of France, they were held briefly by the Revolutionary Council. The family invested in the new railways and canals and the 2nd Duke inherited estates in Scotland, Shropshire and Staffordshire. The Staffordshire estates eventually being sold to the Anson family but the 'improvements' he made to his estates in Scotland through the 'Highland Clearances' when the inland holdings were accumulated into vast tracts of commercial sheep-farming, displaced many farm tenants to the coastal areas. Although the overall effect was to the greater benefit of profitable farming, and therefore improved rents, the migration to Canada of many of the displaced tenants occurred as a result. He was successively MP for

Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire.

Henry Handley, Esq., MP. (1797-1846).

It was Handley, who in January 1838, wrote to Spencer on the idea of 'an Institute to promote practical agriculture on scientific principles'. He grieved the loss of the old Board of Agriculture which had finished some twenty years earlier. This letter was eventually published, in pamphlet form, as an advertising aide to reach like minded agriculturists. He was a member of the Journal Committee and the winner of the essay prize in 1839 on the subject of Wheel and Swing Ploughs. In 1841 he attended, for the Society, a meeting near Mecklenburg of the newly formed Society of German Landowners and Foresters where papers were read and debated for eight days. *Daily, at two o'clock the members met at a spacious table d'hote at which the Grand-Duke and his family dined, and to which ladies were admitted, forming a company of nearly 700 persons. There were no toasts or speeches, the whole party being apparently intent on the one object of satisfying hunger, an operation similarly repeated at night!* But serious exhibits were shown – one where he marvelled at the finest of the Austrian fleeces of which twelve hairs of the Austrian equalled in thickness to one Leicester! In his native Sleaford he was involved in the River Slea Navigation and there is a memorial to him in the style of the Eleanor Crosses. He was MP for South Lincolnshire for nine years until 1841 and President of the Society in 1841-42 and was a contributor to the Society's Journal. The engraving of Handley was a gift to the Society in 1929 of Miss Emma Handley.



William Shaw, Esq., (1797-1853).

In 1832 he helped to found a new agricultural newspaper, *The Mark Lane Express* which under his editorship gave comprehensive coverage to agricultural matters and he was also associated with the monthly *Farmers' Magazine*. From the early 1830s he advocated the establishment of a *national, non-political agricultural society for England* and he, amongst others, persuaded the 3rd Earl Spencer to propose its formation at the annual dinner of The Smithfield Club. He founded the Farmers' Club in 1843. He became involved with the burgeoning insurance industry and fell into financial difficulties, emigrating to Australia in 1852, where he died in penury. He never received the recognition to which he was due for his contribution to the agricultural industry. He was appointed Secretary of *The English Agricultural Society* (which became *The Royal Agricultural Society of England* in 1840) upon its formation in 1838 so in effect was the Society's first Secretary and a member of the Management Committee.

Rev. William Lewis Rham, MA. (1778-1843).

Born at Utrecht in the Netherlands, he studied medicine at Edinburgh before he took a degree in divinity at Trinity College, Dublin. In 1808 he was presented to the living at Winkfield, Berkshire where, within his own parish, his strong belief in the necessity for agricultural schools led him to form a *school of industry* to provide an education and training for those who took up employment in agriculture. In many ways he anticipated the theories which were to be incorporated into similar establishments elsewhere in the country. He maintained his connection with the continent and his knowledge of foreign languages enabled him to participate in discussions with colleagues in Europe. He contributed articles to the Society's Journal on *The Comparative Values of Fodder* and won a prize for his essay on *The Analysing of Soils*.



Professor Charles Daubeny, M.D. (1795-1867).

Professor of Chemistry at Oxford in 1822 and Sibthorpeian Chair of Rural Economy in 1840. An honorary member of the Society and a pioneer of scientific education in agriculture; much of his advice was accepted in the foundation of The Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester in 1845. He was one of a small number of pioneers of agricultural science who conducted primary research independently of the leading agricultural societies and institutions, possibly the most learned of all *The Founding Fathers*.

Charles Gordon-Lennox, 5th Duke of Richmond, (1791-1860).

In 1838 the Duke was one of the first of the number of distinguished noblemen who stood beside Earl Spencer and the cause for an English Agricultural Society. The Duke having been involved with the Smithfield Club resolved that what was now required was a different kind of society; one that had a broader base of enquiry and experiment and addressed a scientific and even intellectual need. On 26th March 1840 Queen Victoria granted The Royal Charter and*We further will and declare it our pleasure that the said Charles Duke of Richmond shall be the first President of the said Royal Agricultural Society.....*In national Politics, Richmond had his own battles to deal with, and in retrospect it is amazing that the Society ever came into being with Richmond and Spencer being on opposing sides of the debate on protection. Spencer had been a 'closet' repealer of the corn laws and Richmond was President of the National Society for the Protection of Agriculture. It is possible that the foregoing was remembered when establishing the structure of the new society for it was Richmond's avowed intent that the society should always be of political neutrality. The lower case 'p' and not the capital 'P' has remained at the heart of the society's deliberations and Council has often had to be reminded of this. From 1843 the Duke was winning prizes for his improved Southdown sheep. He was President of the Society in 1839, 1845 and 1851. He developed the horse racing at Goodwood and was a steward of the Jockey Club.





Sir Charles (Merrik) Burrell, Bart. MP. (1774-1862).

MP for New Shoreham 1806-1862. It was he who built the castellated gothic mansion of Knepp Castle in West Sussex in the early years of the 19th Century to a design by John Nash. He wrote articles for the Society's Journal *On some varieties of Wheat and White Carrots*. It is perhaps his descendants, the 7th Baronet, Sir Merrik Raymond Burrell, who was President of the Society in 1936 and the 8th Baronet, Lt. Col. Sir Walter Burrell, CBE, TD, DL, President in 1964, a much loved Chief Cattle Steward for many years, who are better known for their association with the Society.

Charles Callis Western, (1767-1844). Created 1st Baron Western of Rivenhall, Essex in 1833.

He was MP for Maldon 1790-1806 and 1807-1812 and then for his county of Essex until 1832. His championing the cause of agriculture sometimes seems perverse with the fact that at times he was promoting the 1815 Corn Bill whilst remaining an advocate of protection. Indeed it was he who got parliament to debate the distressed state of agriculture which pertained in 1816. A prominent member of the Merino Society having been a recipient of a Merino from King George III, he also figures on the 1804 oil painting by Garrard of the Woburn Sheep-Shearing. His keenness as a breeder is shown in the works which are today part of the Rothamsted Collection; an engraving of the Landseer painting, 1814, of Southdown rams; and an engraving of a British Boar, 1818 also painted by Landseer.



James Marmont, Esq., (c1759-c1873).

A Land Agent and Surveyor. He was Secretary to The Bristol Agricultural Society in 1842 which was the Local Committee for the Bristol Meeting and would have been a man of considerable influence in the organisation of the meeting and he was one of the 'Stewards of the Yard'. In earlier days, a Local Committee was involved to assist with 'on the ground' organisational matters and offered prizes to the members of their own society who exhibited in the *Local Classes*.

Charles Chetwynd Talbot, 2nd Earl Talbot of Hensol, (1777-1849) of Ingestre.

Lord Lieutenant of Ireland 1817-1821. At the time of the Bristol Country Show he was Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, 1812-1849. His exhibits of Hereford cattle, a cart horse and Leicester rams won premiums in 1841. Although a supporter of Peel and the repeal of the Corn Laws, he nevertheless sought the general promotion of agriculture in England and to improve his own estates.



Cuthbert William Johnson Esq., (1799-1878).

Barrister-at-Law of Lincoln's Inn, writer and an authority on agricultural matters. Together with William Shaw he was a founder of the Mark Lane Express and Agricultural Journal. In 1841 he was awarded the Society's Prize Essay for work *On the Improvement of Peat Soils* to a question posed by the Society. In the year of the painting he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society and published his best work, *The Farmers' Encyclopædia and Dictionary of Rural Affairs*, which was also edited for an American edition. An early speaker to the Farmers' Club in 1846 on *The economy of manures* for manures or fertilizers were the subjects which occupied his sphere of influence and thinking; his experience of law would be of use as a commissioner of metropolitan sewers when he pursued the legislation which brought the Public Health Acts into being. He also prosecuted water rights and river pollution for the local Croydon Board of Health.



William Goodenough Hayter, Esq., MP. (1792-1878).

MP for Wells, Somerset for some 27 years. A successful and practical farmer, at Linslade, Buckinghamshire, his farm was renowned for economy and practical management. A repealer of the Corn Laws with an interest in the management of woods and forests. Created a baronet in 1858, he was a founder member of the Society, a member of the Management Committee and he wrote *An account of improvements of Linslade Farm in Buckinghamshire* in the Society's Journal.

Samuel Druce Esq., (c1788 -1860).

Of Eynsham, Oxfordshire, he was a founder member of the Society and was a considerable farmer, land agent and valuer. At the Society's first Show at Oxford in 1839 he won ten pounds in the extra stock class for a Hereford Ox bred by another breeder. In the Society's Journal for 1853 he was writing to Philip Pusey, '*On comparative profit realized with different breeds of sheep*'. He was an innovative sheep breeder and by then his crossings of the Southdown and, to a lesser extent 'Hampshires', with Cotswold sheep for the past 20 years were showing considerable improvement and he, together with John Hitchman were probably the most influential breeders of the 'Oxford' during its formative stages, his flock holding the main blood lines from which the breed developed. In 1857 the name 'Oxfordshire Down' was formally accepted by breeders and in many respects he may be acknowledged as one of the fathers of the breed.



The Society will be pleased to learn of the whereabouts of any other sketches in oils that may be related to this picture. The statements made within the article are believed to be as correct as the extensive research has allowed; the Society will be pleased to hear of any inaccuracies that may appear in the text.

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