

# ROBERT BAKEWELL

*Pioneer Livestock Breeder*

by

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A portrait of Robert Bakewell which belongs to the Royal Agricultural Society of England. Another (similar except for small details) hangs at Dishley Grange, but it is not known who painted either picture.

## FOREWORD

by SIR JAMES A. SCOTT WATSON,

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**I**T IS noteworthy that, over a large part of the world—and especially in the New Countries—the business of producing beef, mutton and lamb is based largely, if not quite exclusively, on breeds of cattle and sheep that were created in Britain. Thus New Zealand lamb is mostly the product of a Romney ewe, originating in Kent, by a Southdown ram native to the adjoining county; again, most of the vast amount of beef that is consumed in North America, and nearly all that is exported from South America, derives from breeds that were created in Hereford, North-Eastern Scotland, Teesdale and Devon.

Two reasons account for the pre-eminence of Britain in the rôle of creating our modern meat-producing breeds. The one is that, two centuries ago, Britain was the only country where any large body of consumers could afford to indulge their taste for meat of high quality, and were no longer content to eat a product from an old cow, an ox that had spent years in the plough team or a sheep that had borne three or four fleeces.

The second reason is that Robert Bakewell, of Dishley in Leicestershire, envisaged new types of animals to meet the new demand and, after years of study and experiment, succeeded in creating tolerably true-breeding strains that would yield, at an early age, carcasses of tender meat, as fat as consumers might desire.

It is true that, today, Bakewell's Longhorn breed of cattle is no more than a museum piece, and that his Leicester sheep and its

derivatives are no more than some of the many breeds that combine efficient meat production with useful weight and quality of fleece. But the others were created by the methods that Bakewell was the first to employ; moreover, as Professor Cooper points out in the chapter that he contributes to this volume, Bakewell's pupils might have done better if they had more faithfully followed the master.

Again, Bakewell recognised that the kind of animal that he wanted must require abundant and nutritious food, and hence he devoted much care to his pastures, and was one of the early practitioners of grassland irrigation.

Professor Pawson examines the unfavourable views that have been current with respect to Bakewell's personal qualities. It has been said that he was over-intent on personal profit; and indeed he set high prices on the cattle that he sold, and high fees for the use of his rams. On the other hand, he kept open house to his many visitors and entertained them royally—perhaps to the extent that, at one time, he became financially embarrassed. Another charge is that he was secretive about the methods which he used. Here, his reluctance may be explained by the prevailing view that the mating of closely-related animals—to which indeed he freely resorted in "fixing" the qualities that he valued—was a reprehensible practice.

There is so much of legend in connexion with Bakewell that it is well that he should have this belated opportunity to speak for himself, as he does in the letters which constitute a large part of this book.

Much painstaking research has gone to the production of this book, and the historian of farming will be duly grateful to its author. Moreover, there is much in it that the practical stockbreeder will do well to read and ponder.

*Jas A. S. Watson*

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Mr. George H. Green of the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Nottingham, has given most generous help in verifying and collecting information, especially valuable because of his local knowledge and residence for many years near Dishley; for this unfailing service, I record my warm gratitude.

My thanks are also due to Mr. and Mrs. Porter of Dishley for their courtesy and kindness during my visits to the farm; to Mrs. D. A. Wright, Ellesmere P.O. Highland, near Grahamstown, South Africa, a descendant of Bakewell, for permission to copy the Bakewell coat of arms in her possession, which copy, used in this book, was executed by Mr. Peter Hoal, an art student of Rhodes University; to the Editors of *The Times*, the *Agricultural History Review*, and the *R.A.S.E. Quarterly Review*, for publicity which brought me useful contacts; to the Trustees of the British Museum for permission

to publish the Bakewell correspondence preserved in the Department of Manuscripts, also to Field Marshal Sir Gerald Templer for the loan of a diary written by an ancestor who was a contemporary and relation of Bakewell: and finally to the Royal Agricultural Society of England and its Secretary Mr. Alec Hobson, O.B.E., for permission to use photographs and other assistance.

I am also very grateful to Mr. John W. Wilson, Crosby Lockwood & Son, for his keen interest in the MS. and most helpful criticisms.

The authorities consulted are, I believe, all acknowledged by their inclusion in the Bibliography; particular mention should, however, be made of some notes of an unpublished memoir by the late Mr. Herbert W. Cook, Loughborough. These notes were passed on to me by my life-long friend, Emeritus Professor H. G. Robinson, C.B.E., M.Sc., himself an ardent admirer of Bakewell, who, when Principal of the Midland Agricultural College, did much to seek to revive interest in Bakewell and to restore his burial-place, and who has encouraged me to write this account.

My thanks are also tendered to my faithful secretary, Miss Julia Burkett, who has borne the main brunt of the labour involved in transcribing much difficult documentary and other writing (my own degenerate handwriting included) into typescript.

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To  
MRS. LEATHER-CULLEY, O.B.E.  
whose gift of  
THE BAKEWELL LETTERS  
discovered amongst correspondence left  
by the last of the Culleys of Fowberry,  
Northumberland, transformed a long-  
cherished desire into firm decision to  
write this book.



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Frontispiece. Colour photograph by *Farmers Weekly*

Plate 2. Copyright Hulton Press Ltd.

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## PREFACE

**R**OBERT BAKEWELL may be regarded as a man whose work assumed an importance which has not been exceeded by any agriculturist before or since his time, and it is curious to consider why, if this statement is not an exaggeration, there is no biography of him.

The reason is probably twofold. In the first place, no written account by himself of his work and the events of his life is available, such as we possess for example in the case of Jethro Tull's *Horse Hoeing Husbandry*; and secondly, the great importance of his work was not fully realised until many years after his death, though some of his contemporaries, like Arthur Young, the first Secretary to the Board of Agriculture formed in 1793, appreciated his outstanding contribution to livestock improvement.

Today his genius in this realm of agricultural progress can be better realised, especially since the principles laid down by Mendel were published in 1865 and the subsequent developments in this century of genetical science. Dr. John Hammond, a leading authority in animal-breeding research of our time, has confirmed the soundness of much of what Bakewell achieved by his thinking and stock sense. In the meantime, breeds based on Bakewell's work were built up and shipped all over the world, and Great Britain attained the proud position of the premier stockbreeding country.

Several essays and papers about Bakewell have been written by contemporaries and others since, but I have discovered nothing on record of his early life and development of his thought which led to his later success. Something perhaps may be deduced from the following quotation taken from the "General View of the Agriculture

of the County of Leicester” by William Pitt, Wolverhampton, 1813; “The late Robert Bakewell was bred to his father’s business and his early genius for selecting and improving stock was encouraged by his father beyond all parallel and without limitation . . .” It is also probable that he received his earlier education at Kibworth Academy under Philip Doddridge, but this cannot be authenticated. In the absence of this earlier knowledge, it is therefore impossible to construct a detailed biography.

I counted myself very fortunate, however, when, quite fortuitously, I came into possession of a collection of lengthy letters written by Bakewell to his one-time pupil, George Culley of Northumberland. Through the kindness of my friend, the late Major J. G. G. Rea, I was informed that Mrs. Leather-Culley, then Commandant of the Red Cross Hospital at Callaly Castle, Alnwick, Northumberland, had a large number of old papers, most of which would have to be destroyed; but that she thought some of these documents might be of agricultural interest. Accordingly I spent several hours sifting through masses of papers, and ultimately isolated the exciting collection of thirty-two foolscap written in Bakewell’s own hand, together with a copy of his financial appeal, containing a list of several subscribers and other documents of the same period.

These letters, which I have described as “The Culley Collection”, and which are now in the possession of King’s College, Newcastle upon Tyne, throw much light on Bakewell’s character and the working of his mind in his later years when his theories were proved and his practice established.

The only other surviving Bakewell documents, as far as I have been able to ascertain, are six shorter letters—quarto size—in the care of the British Museum and printed in the Appendix; also a copy of the financial appeal referred to above, which is in the Rothamsted Library.

For very many years I have been keenly interested in the subject of this book, and my school education at Bakewell, Derbyshire, was one of several links with the man whose family name was derived from this well-known market town and centre of a famous annual agricultural show. I have, therefore, been eager at all times to read everything I could find about him. In so far, however, as this account falls short of what may be expected of a biography, it is to be regretted. Everything relevant from the observations of his contemporaries plus his own letters, has been used to build up this account of the man and his work, and the hope is expressed that it may lead to a fuller appreciation of the character and work of a great man, to whom his country owes so much, and who is regarded as a legendary ancestor by livestock breeders throughout the world.

# PART I

## CHAPTER ONE

### *Historical Background*

**R**OBERT BAKEWELL, son of Robert and Rebecca Bakewell, was born on May 23, 1725, in the farm-house of Dishley Grange, situated a little less than two miles north of Loughborough, Leicestershire, on the main road to Derby. He spent his whole life on this farm, and, as his gravestone records, "Departed this life Oct. 1, 1795, Aged 70 years".

The century into which he was born was remarkable for the revolutionary changes which took place in the economic and industrial life of England. The normal use of the word "revolution" implies a single event in history, but it has come to be applied to a process. The Industrial Revolution was evident in Bakewell's early days, but was greatly accelerated in the second half of the century in which he lived. In 1735 Darby's use of pit-coal in place of charcoal for the smelting of iron has been described as the greatest innovation of the century. The inventions of Arkwright and Hargreaves in textile machinery led to the vast development of the Lancashire cotton trade, so that from 1780 Manchester trade was a factor in world commerce. In 1750 Watt effected improvements to the steam engine, which made it a means of creating and distributing power in manufacturing industry.

The previous century had been one of civil war and of general unsettlement and unrest, but in the comparative calm of the eighteenth century the transition from mediævalism to the industrial state as we know it today made rapid progress. From being a land

of hamlets and villages, more and more labour came to be concentrated in the centres of expanding industry, and the population figures reflect this great development. At the time of the Norman Conquest the population, it is judged, was about 2 million, and it had grown to 5 million by 1600 and to  $6\frac{1}{2}$  millions by 1750. In the next hundred years it had increased to 27,513,551 (1851 Census figures). The slow increase of previous centuries was largely on account of a very high death rate associated with a low standard of living in the labouring classes. Technical development in mining, engineering, and in the cotton and woollen industries changed the long-established ways of life and thought so as to fully justify the term "Industrial Revolution". One major result was that whereas the producers of bread and meat formerly outnumbered the buyers, the position was now quickly reversed. The demand for a higher standard of living naturally concerned itself chiefly with the need for more food.

It is abundantly evident that Bakewell lived in a period not only of industrial but also agricultural revolution. To the latter his work was probably the most outstanding contribution. Agriculture had made but little progress in increased production for many centuries. It is recorded that in the seventeenth century one half of the country was covered by forest, moorland, and bog. The methods of farming reflected the influence of Roman occupation and, indeed, in many respects were not unlike those described by Virgil 1,700 years earlier. Little progress could be expected under the Manorial system, with its military-cum-agriculture organised settlements, where a man had to be more or less the Jack-of-all-trades and had no individual direct control over the land he cultivated. At the end of the fifteenth century Ernle records that a farm "had acquired its modern sense of an indefinite area occupied by one tenant at one rent". When, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, the change to our present pattern had been initiated, i.e. from strips of land cultivated in com-



mon in the open-field system to fenced fields and compact farms, each under the control of an individual (tenant or occupier owner), the conditions and incentive for greater improvement were provided. More land began to be enclosed for cultivation, often by landowners who had become enriched by wealth gained from exports of woollen goods, and new capital was also available from coal and other forms of commerce. This mutual benefit was to promote the progress of both industry and agriculture. As Trevelyan puts it: "Each helped the other. They may indeed be regarded as a single effort by which society was so reconstructed as to be able to feed and employ a population that was rising in numbers with unexampled rapidity, owing to improved medical conditions." The progress of the enclosure movement, with the subsequent development of "commercial" farming, had been very slow. Between 1455 and 1607 the area of land enclosed amounted to only 516,673 acres. In Bakewell's century, however, during the reign of George III, 3,500 Acts of Parliament—each enclosure had to be confirmed in this manner—were passed to enable enclosure of 5–6 million acres.

The time was ripe, therefore, for new and better methods to deal with this expansion and to increase production of crop and stock from both new and old farming land. Happily agriculture did not lack men of the pioneering spirit who could match the need.

Four names merit special mention in this brief *résumé* of the agricultural revolution. They are Jethro Tull (1674–1741), Charles Townshend (1674–1738), Robert Bakewell (1725–1795), and Coke of Norfolk (1754–1842). Although not unmindful, for example, of the reclamation drainage work in which the Earls of Bedford played a leading part from 1630 onwards and the value of Woburn sheep-shearings of the Dukes of Bedford at a later date, the work of the four men above-mentioned was mainly responsible for the improvement of basic methods over a period of about 100 years.

Tull, who farmed in Berkshire, advanced his proposals for sowing

by mechanical drill and horse-hoeing between the rows of growing plants, based on his own practice, by various publications, and published his first book in 1731. As revealing the strong conservative instinct that obtained and the general resistance to change, an edition published in 1822 with preface by William Cobbett indicates that these methods were still a matter of controversy and had to be defended. Nevertheless agricultural education of a contagious nature resulted in the spread of this epoch-making change in cultural methods. Originally part of the opposition to Tull's ideas was due to his prejudice against the use of dung and his insistence that adequate mechanical cultivation could dispense with manure.

Charles, Viscount Townshend, though largely occupied with politics, probably did greater good for his country when he devoted much of his energy to the improvement of his Norfolk estates. He adopted Tull's practice of drilling and hoeing, but is most famed for his incorporation of the turnip crop in a four-course rotation which has passed into history as the "Norfolk Four Course". This rotation of roots, barley, clover, and wheat, replacing the almost unvarying sequence of two corn crops followed by fallow under the previous system, had an immense influence on arable husbandry, making possible greater crop production, with consequent increased food supplies for livestock, especially for winter feed, whilst reducing to a minimum the area reserved for fallow. His advocacy of the cultivation of roots, of which the turnip crop was the pivot of his rotation, earned for him the title, to be held in honour, of "Turnip Townshend".\*

The third member of this band of innovators was the subject of this book, Robert Bakewell. In 1760, at the age of 35, he took over the full responsibility for the tenancy and management of the family farm, though from about 1755 he had been given an increasing

\* Townshend did not introduce the turnip as a field crop but popularised its use by his rotation.

share of that responsibility through the advancing age and infirmity of his father. An account of his work follows, but the reflection may be interposed here that, of the four great agriculturalists of his period, he was destined, despite opposition, to see more widespread results from his endeavours during his lifetime than those of his fellow reformers. By the end of his life he had seen his creations in new or improved breeds of sheep and other livestock appreciated not only by the farmers of his own country, but also by visitors from all over the world. Moreover, the outstanding nature of his work was its scientific soundness, confirmed by research done after 150 years.

The fourth of these pioneers of agricultural progress was Coke of Holkham. He has been called the pioneer of high farming, and may be described as the father of Agricultural Discussion Meetings. He was heir to the work of Tull, Townshend, and Bakewell, and applied their methods and other ideas on his 50,000-acre Norfolk estate. By his improvements his annual rent-roll rose from £2,200 to £20,000.

It was in the setting, therefore, of a revolutionary period, when the surge of inventions and the resulting industry caused the flow of increasing populations into industrial centres, together with resulting prosperity accompanied by vast social changes, that Bakewell made his all-important contribution. An agriculture barely supporting  $6\frac{1}{2}$  millions in 1750 was feeding a quadrupled population 100 years later. It cannot be gainsaid that the improvement in livestock breeding, so largely the outcome of Bakewell's labours, was one of the most significant factors.

Invention was in the air, so to speak, and Bakewell was indeed described as an inventor when the Duchess of Exeter asked another Robert Bakewell (probably the celebrated geologist of that time) if he were related to "the Mr. Bakewell who invented sheep". With more enclosure and more direct control on the part of the occupier of the farm, whether landlord (e.g. Coke) or tenant (e.g. Bakewell), encouragement was thus afforded to improve the land, hence more

attention to such matters as draining and liming. Coke was one of the first to use bone manure and to realise the advantages of folding stock for the benefit of their manure, and, especially with sheep, for their treading effect on light land.

These new methods were not received with universal enthusiasm, for, as in the case of Tull, so Bakewell had his critics and opposition to counter. The spirit of "What was good enough for my grandfather is good enough for me" dies hard, and even today not all remember that tradition, whilst a good servant can be a bad master. Large tracts of waste land remained, and common land, as today, constituted a problem of improvement. Still there was no stopping, but only a delaying of the onward march in both agriculture and industry, which has led to the structure of the world in which we find ourselves today.

One other essential was needed to complete the system of farming which was to win the admiration of so many for our English husbandry—that was the breeding of more and better livestock. The ascending spiral was "more crop, more stock, more stock, more manure, more manure, more crop". To which must be added as the way to greater efficiency the need for earlier maturing, better types of stock, with emphasis on meat-producing properties. This need was met by this remarkable farmer, Robert Bakewell, whose painstaking life's work, if it did not lead on to fortune (in a financial sense), as Shakespeare describes the tide in the affairs of men, certainly led to fame. Combined with the other developments described, it made possible, amongst other things, a year-round supply of fresh meat and the replacement of the salted meat hitherto reserved for the winter, produced from the slaughter in autumn of grass-fed animals.

Bakewell, as will be observed later, was keenly interested in the land-improvement side of farming, but the achievement which gave him enduring fame concerned the breeding and feeding of livestock. His greatest success was with sheep, and it is not correct, as some-

times stated, that he was equally successful with cattle. His influence on the adoption of better methods in the breeding of both classes of livestock was profound.

It cannot be claimed that he was the first \* breeder to endeavour to bring about any measure of this much-needed improvement, but that he was the man who first realised the importance of sound commercial stock of the type which would produce good meat at low cost. For this purpose he ultimately produced animals of finer bone, thicker fleshed on the more valuable parts and "barrel" shaped in contrast to the lanky, coarse boned inferior sorts common in his day.

Marshall in *The Rural Economy of the Midland Counties*, 1790, makes Bakewell's pre-eminence clear in the following words:—

"It must not, however, be understood, by those who are not locally acquainted with this district, that MR. BAKEWELL, though he has been long, and most deservedly, considered as the principal promoter of the ART OF BREEDING, and has for some length of time taken the lead, is the only man of distinguished merit in this department of rural affairs, in the district under survey. It abounds, and has, for many years, abounded with intelligent and spirited breeders. I could mention some fifteen or twenty men of repute, and most of them men of considerable property, who are in the same department, and several of them eminent for their breeds of stock.

\* It is said that Hugo Meynell, the first Master of the Quorn Hunt, was breeding foxhounds in the 1760s on the same principles as Bakewell. Quorn Hall is only a few miles from Dishley Grange. Meynell may have learnt from Bakewell. Marshall affirmed that the origin of the "New Leicestershire" Breed of Sheep was due to Joseph Allom of Clifton, "who has raised himself by dint of industry from a ploughboy" and "distinguished himself in the Midland District for a superior breed of sheep". The exact origin of the improved flock of Allom's, as in the case of Bakewell, was apparently obscure, though it is said he obtained his ewes chiefly from the Melton quarter of the county. He sold his ram lambs from two to three guineas apiece to "superior farmers" who went to Clifton in the summer season to purchase them. From this, Marshall says, "it may be reasonably supposed, the breed through the means of Allom's flock had passed the first stage of improvement before Bakewell's day". Even so, Marshall seems quite clear in according to Bakewell the premier place in the subsequent development of this breed of sheep.

“Nevertheless, it must be and is acknowledged, that Mr. Bakewell is at the head of the department;—and, whenever he may drop, it is much to be feared, and highly probable, that another leader, of equal spirit, and equal abilities, will not be found to succeed him.”

This continuous progressive movement in livestock improvement undoubtedly stemmed from the eighteenth century and was the result, as in our own time, of the sustained efforts of many farmers, landowners, cattle-men, and shepherds. Initiative, however, is always more limited; and although, before Bakewell's time, others had been seeking ways of improving the all-too-common mongrel and ill-assorted types of livestock, it is generally agreed that the man who merits the title of *the* pioneer of pedigree livestock breeding was Bakewell.

There were other circumstances, in addition to the increasing need for food, and especially for meat, which favoured the spread and influence of Bakewell's methods during his own lifetime. For example, he pursued his research—for the term indeed truly describes his work—at a time when agricultural improvements were attracting increasing attention and the support of several members of the ruling classes. The Duke of Bedford at Woburn and other landowners entered with zest into this progressive movement, carrying out experiments and making known their results, whilst many other types of people were eager to promote what was regarded as a fashionable cause. Royalty gave its active patronage to such an extent that George III became known as “Farmer George”. Through his study of agricultural writings, his Windsor farm, his flock of Merino sheep maintained at Kew, and his experiments in stock-breeding, he gave evidence of a lively interest in farming matters. So enthusiastic was His Majesty in his agricultural studies that he wrote occasional articles for Arthur Young's monthly *Annals of Agriculture*, under the name of his shepherd at Windsor, “Ralph Robinson”. Bakewell evidently came in for a measure of

the King's favour, and no doubt his recommendation. "I left Dishley about a fortnight past," he writes to Young in a letter (p. 172) dated March 10th, '88, "have brought a Black Stallion to London which has been seen by the King, Prince of Wales and many other personages to whom he gives more general satisfaction than others I have yet shown." The horse was paraded \* before Royalty in the courtyard of St. James's Palace. It is said that the King was more interested in Bakewell than in his horse. Bakewell no doubt made many influential contacts through the King's interest.

Another and more important circumstance was that Bakewell was a practical farmer. Then, as since, the advice of gentlemen or "arm-chair" farmers was, if not despised, seldom listened to with that measure of respect afforded to men who depended for their living upon their own efforts as farmers. Ernle quotes Dr. Edwards as stating (in 1783): "Gentlemen have no right to be farmers; and their entering upon agriculture to follow it as a business is perhaps a breach of their moral duty." Bakewell's example and precepts were more readily accepted because he was not only one with, but one of the rank and file of the farming community. To belong, or only to be with, still makes a difference in rural matters. In sharp contrast to the interest, admiration, and emulation which Bakewell's work evoked in many was the opposition, sometimes spiteful, which he encountered from particular individuals within the farming community, especially with respect to some of his later enterprises—for instance, the formation of the Dishley Society. Considering, however, the almost total lack of what are nowadays the principal means of propaganda (though some few newspapers did exist), the knowledge of Bakewell's work spread at a rate which was little short of amazing. Yet even in these days of radio, T.V., and all manner of publications, the most effective way of selling and popularising ideas is personal recommendation by word of mouth. But Bakewell's

\* See letter (p. 172) written by Bakewell to Arthur Young, March 10, '88.

goods were their own advertisement. His Dishley or New Leicestershire breed of sheep ultimately carried his fame as far as New Zealand, Australia, and other parts of what is now the Commonwealth, as well as to Europe and America. His trade mark was surely the Dishley type, which the males that he bred stamped on their offspring in the many herds and flocks where they found homes—sometimes in environments widely different from that of Dishley. He used to say, “If they will not speak for themselves, nothing that can be said for them will do it.” That they did speak in this way is certain for the man who as described by Allan Fraser became the “Cromwell of English sheep breeding”.

The improvement brought about by the use of his sires stimulated curiosity in the man and his methods, which, through a happy marriage of art and science, gave Bakewell his unique place among the world’s stock-breeders. His lasting fame is confirmed in the following observation by James A. S. Watson quoted from the *Agricultural Review*, May, 1956. “The science of genetics has made great strides since Mendel, yet our most successful breeders still apply—with only minor refinements—the methods that were used by Bakewell.”



## CHAPTER TWO

### *Forebears and Farm*

**T**HREE THINGS, it has been said, make a man; heredity, temperament, and environment. There are other formative influences, including one supremely important, yet no student of life would deny the importance of each of these three factors. Bakewell would have agreed that the first and last deserve special mention, for he not only closely studied the effects of these on animals, but he himself provided an example of their potency.

His father and grandfather before him were tenants of Dishley farm, and records of his lineage go back nineteen generations. His earliest known ancestor was King's Chancellor in the reign of Henry II, and was presented to the Rectory of Bakewell, in the county of Derby, in 1158. Three of his descendants were consecutive rectors of Bakewell; the last, on his ejection during the reign of King John, retained the territorial name, and thus became the founder of the Bakewell family. In the thirteenth century the Bakewells moved to London, where some members of the family rose to high office in State and civil affairs. A grandson of Thomas de Bakewell, named John de Bakewell, was an alderman of the City of London, and was later knighted. He died by being crushed in a crowd, at the coronation of Edward III, in 1308.

The second son of Sir Thomas, a lineal ancestor of Robert Bakewell, and also called Sir John, became Baron of the Exchequer and Seneschal of Poitiers, the King's province in France, in 1322-23. He had two brothers in Parliament: Sir Thomas, who represented

the county of Kent in 1321, and Roger de Bakewell, member for Derby.

Subsequent descendants became successively owners of the family manor of Bakewell Hall, in Basinghall Street, near Guildhall, London, until it was sold in 1390. Bakewell Hall was formerly Basing Hall, and was granted by the City of London to Alderman Bakewell in 1293, and remained the family mansion until sold by Robert Bakewell, rector of All Hallows Church in Broad Street, to the Mercers Company. It was finally demolished in 1820 to make way for the Bankruptcy Court premises.

Four generations down the line, a grandson of Sir Thomas (the member of Parliament for Kent), Henry Bakewell, was appointed ambassador in 1415 to the Knights of Rhode Island. His granddaughter was the grandmother of the celebrated Countess of Shrewsbury, best known as "Bess of Hardwick". Hardwick Hall remains as a permanent memorial to her fame as the head of the female side of the family of Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire. Three generations later occurs another ambassador, Thomas de Bakewell, who possessed the degree of LL.D. and was appointed to Brittany.

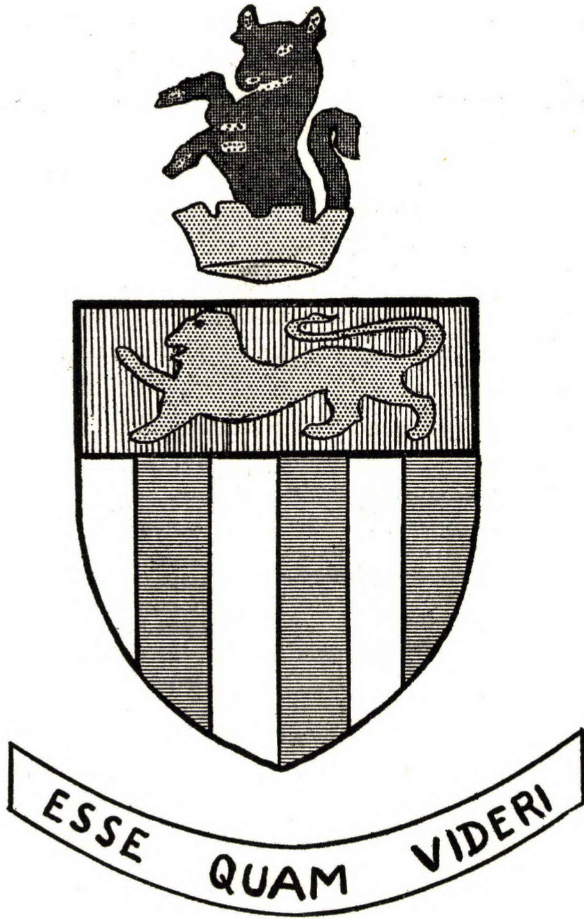
It was from one of Henry Bakewell's (ambassador to Rhodes) two sons, who settled at Normanton-le-Heath, in Leicestershire, that the branch of the family known as the Dishley Bakewells derived. Various church livings were held by members of the family, and the last of these, Robert, was rector of Hartlebury in Worcestershire. He was the first of five consecutive descendants bearing the same baptismal name, the last of whom was the famous livestock breeder. Robert, one of the sons of the rector of Hartlebury (or Hartleby), succeeded to the estate at Normanton. He had four sons. One of these sons, the youngest, became the first of the three Robert Bakewells of Dishley, and grandfather of the subject of this book. When he came to Dishley is not precisely known, but as he was born in 1643 and died in 1716, it was probably towards the end of the

seventeenth or even the beginning of the eighteenth century. From his will we learn that 66 per cent of his personal estate was composed of cattle, horses, sheep and pigs. A further 11 per cent was made up of wool and cheese in store, making a total of £602 10s. out of his estate of £793 10s. His son Robert, born in 1685, succeeded to the farm and died in 1773, aged 88 years. Thus we arrive at his famous grandson, who was born in 1725 and died in 1795.

From the time, therefore, of Thomas, who, deprived of his title and in reduced circumstances, removed to London and became known as Thomas of Bakewell, the social position of the family seems to have improved. In Church, State, and civic government Bakewell's ancestry appeared to have made a useful contribution, and this family history would indicate the inheritance of mental capacity and moral virtue which played its part in the fashioning of their character.

It is from about the middle of the fifteenth century, when this branch of the family settled in Leicestershire, that most of the descendants appear to have belonged to that class of country gentlemen, or yeomen, some of whom farmed their own land. Today, known descendants of the Dishley Bakewells are found in Great Britain, America, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and other parts of the world.

Influenced without doubt by this line of ancestry, the training Robert received from his father would do much to shape his outlook and affect his development. Both in practical farming and in seeking for further knowledge, it would seem that the son was encouraged by his father—how else could he have been allowed, when comparatively young, to leave the farm and make those journeys of exploration of farming methods and observation in livestock in the West Country, later to be supplemented by visits to Norfolk, Ireland, Holland, and elsewhere? One wonders how much of the famous Robert's ideas were stimulated, if not derived, from his father's long



Sable  
(black)



Or  
(gold)



Azure  
(Dark blue)



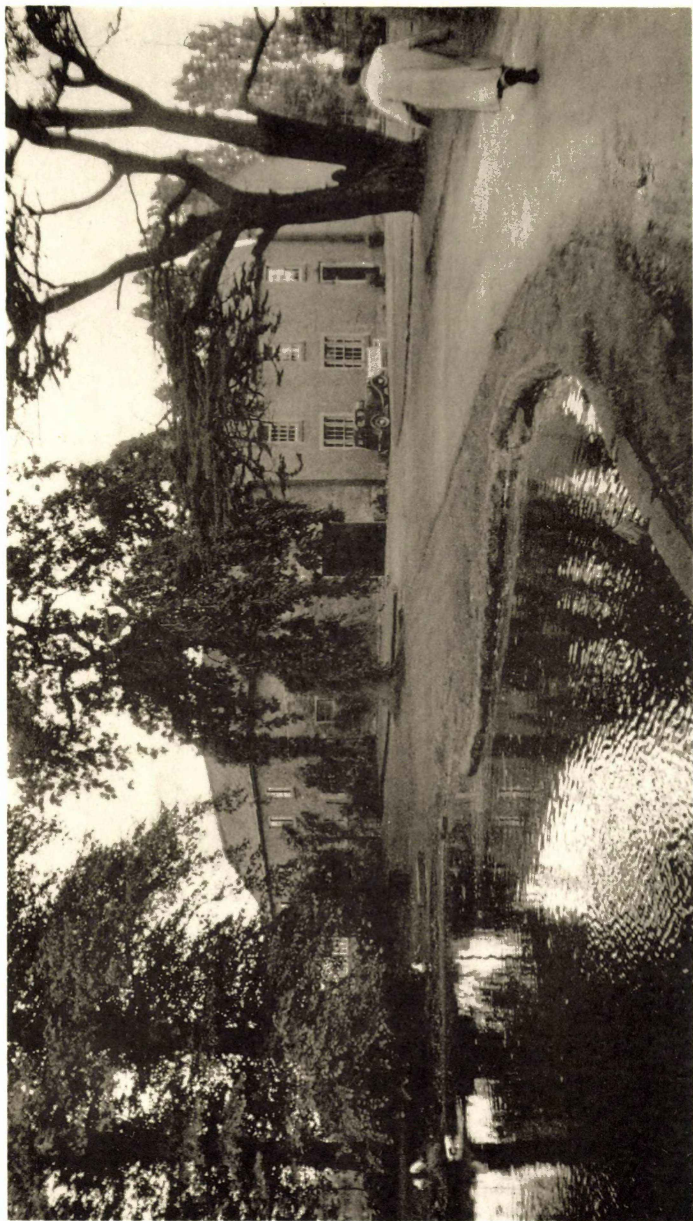
Argent  
(silver)



Gules  
(red)

KEY TO HERALDIC COLOURS

The late Dr. Robert Hall Bakewell, Auckland, New Zealand, who died in 1908—and whose son, living in Auckland, born in 1879, is the



*Plate 1.* Dishley Grange, near Loughborough. This picture shows the author making one of his visits.



*Plate 2.* Bakewell's fireside chair, now in the possession of the Royal Agricultural Society of England. On the back is an inscription which reads: "This chair was made under the direction of the celebrated Robert Bakewell of Dishley, out of a willow tree that grew on his farm. It was his favourite seat and the back which thus records his memory served as a screen when seated by his fireside calculating on the profits, or devising some improvements on his farm. Thousands of pounds have been known to exchange hands in the same."

experience and the expert training which he gave to his son. Arthur Young makes clear that the irrigation methods employed at Dishley, which the son developed and exploited in various ways—and upon which subject he advised others—were first begun by the father. This development would originally be suggested by the fact that much of the land of Dishley lies in the flood-line of the River Soar,

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only surviving member of that generation and bears the name William Levenet Chadwick Bakewell—was responsible for the research which resulted in the following information concerning the Bakewell Coat of Arms which has been borne by the family since the beginning of the reign of Edward II.

Although the family had its origin in Derbyshire it was registered in ancient rolls at the College of Arms in London as “Bakewell of Middlesex”, on account of residence in the city of London during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

“The coat of arms is blazoned, Arms-Paly of six, argent and azure, on a chef gules, a lion passant or. Crest— Out of a mural crown proper, a demi-bull sable, armed and unguled or.”

The earliest record of this coat of arms is that of “Sir Johan de Bakewelle” on a roll of arms dated about 1308, now preserved in the Cottonian Library, British Museum.

As to the origin of the crest: the “Black Bull” was the ancient family badge of Gilbert de Clare (called “The Red”), Earl of Gloucester and Hereford (*b.* 1243, *d.* 1295), the most powerful English noble of his day. It is probable that Sir John Bakewell belonged to the adherents of the Earl of Gloucester, who, when Sir John was knighted in 1293 granted to him the “demi-bull sable” (or black bull) for his crest, with the mural crown appropriate to Sir John’s position as a principal guardian of the Cripplegate, a postern gate in the city walls.

John Stow, in his “Survey of London”, (1598) cites a writ of Edward I, addressed to Sir Ralph Sandwich, Warden of the City of London and to Sir John Bakewell as custodians of the Cripplegate; Sir John died in 1308. The family motto is “Esse quam videri”—“To be rather than to seem.”

and would benefit from occasional natural flooding which Bakewell's father would exploit by controlling the distribution of the water. Bakewell himself made his distinctive contribution to the scheme for Dishley by utilising a brook (as will be described later) for irrigating high land far removed from the flood-line. The father was certainly in advance of the practices of his contemporaries and—according to a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*—“had always the reputation of being one of the most ingenious and able farmers of his neighbourhood”. It would seem a reasonable deduction, in view of the fact that Robert did not take on the full responsibility of the farm until he was about 35 \* years of age, that he owed not a little to his father for his enterprise and desire to experiment. Apparently the latter, when about 75 years old, handed over the entire control to his son, and from then the son came into increasing prominence as an experimental agriculturist and a breeder of improved livestock in his own right.

We turn next to a consideration of the farm and environment of Dishley, † for whilst Robert Bakewell was a man of the times and a traveller, his more immediate sphere of operations was the farm of which he was the tenant, consisting of under 500 acres, and described as being held on lease by his father “at an easy rent”. The land is mainly low-lying, and a large proportion would doubtless be in grass, the topography lending itself as suggested, to the improvement brought about by the method of irrigation. This grassland was a dominant feature of both the county and the farm. It is significant that Bakewell's occupation is still described in the *Dictionary of National Biography* by the word “grazier”. Again it was natural that, by reason of its situation in a county famed for centuries

\* Garrad, writing in 1800, says that when “about twenty-two years of age he began to pay particular attention to the improvement of different kinds of livestock”.

† Dishley = Dic-Leah, “Clearing By or Near a Dyke.” *Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological Society*, Vol. 18, 1934-35, p. 140.



for its fattening pastures, his farming improvements on the stock side should be mainly concerned with the production of meat; and also that, in the first instance, he should desire both good stock and good land, and not the one without the other. Although grazing and hay would be the major productions of Dishley in Bakewell's time, it is clear that he grew corn and roots for the winter feeding of his stock, as well as vetches, carrots for his horses, broccoli and coleseed. It will be noted also in his correspondence with Culley that he refers to his crop of peas. Further, he was evidently a keen cabbage-grower for seed as well as for a food crop and—as showing that his interests were not entirely concerned with the improvement of livestock—the following quotation from Marshall is of interest: “There is in this county a valuable sort—a large green cabbage—propagated, if not raised, by Mr. Bakewell, who is not more celebrated for his breed of rams, than for his *breed* of cabbages.” Mr. Paget of Ibstock is described as the greatest cabbage grower observed by Marshall, growing 10–14 acres a year, “excepting perhaps Mr. Bakewell of Dishley”.

Arthur Young, when he visited Dishley for ten days in his tour of the East of England in 1771, recorded that the farm comprised 440 acres, with 110 acres of this area under the plough; and “on this he kept sixty horses, four hundred large sheep and one hundred and fifty beasts of all sorts”. About 30 acres were under roots (mainly turnips, but including cabbage), 15 acres of autumn-sown wheat, and 25 acres of spring sown corn each year, including some peas. “Mr. Bakewell has generally a small field of potatoes which he plants after the plough, and keeps perfectly clear of weeds; he finds them to answer greatly.” The remainder of the farm (about 330 acres, less area under buildings, water-courses, etc.) was under grass, of which the water-meadows covered from 60 to 80 acres. Later Bakewell adopted alternate husbandry on a larger area of the farm. The soil Young described as “a mellow rich friable sandy loam which runs

naturally to white clover and other valuable plants", though inherently the land "is no better than his neighbour's". He noted his method of planting his quicks for fences, but critically observed that even at Dishley, as in other parts of the county, there was considerable waste of land in making new fences—mainly by reason of the double post-and-rail fencing, i.e. on each side of the planted hedge. He was most impressed by (but critical of) the division and sub-division of the pastures and meadows at Dishley. He admitted the convenience of this division when applied to fields near the steading, but said frankly that he could not understand its application to the fields beyond. Bakewell's reply is of great interest as showing knowledge in advance of his time in the management of grassland, and also in witness of his observation and deductions from travels through the country. Taking the last-mentioned point first, here is a note initialled by Bakewell which Young quotes in his account:—

"From what part of the kingdom comes oxen more completely fattened than from the county of Devon? and there they wish to have the pastures two or three acres, not exceeding four: three of which are grazed, the fourth at rest. This practice is well known in the dairying countries to produce most milk, and by a parity of reason, why not more flesh? If it be objected, that by this method, there is a waste of land, it is answered, that when the price of coals exceed sixpence a hundred, the hedges make as much for fuel as the land is worth for any other purpose.

R.B."

Young had also cited, not as objections but as points to be considered in taking up this idea of small fields or paddocks, which he granted after listening to Bakewell, "Admit of much to be said for it", the following:—

"1. The expense of sub-division. 2. That of Water. 3. The convenience of stock. 4. The superiority of the instinct of an animal in feeding himself, to the reason of a man, when applied to that purpose. 5. The trampling that happens on small fields, merely to get out of them. 6. The

shelter which long grass affords in a scorching summer. 7. The value it is of in winter.”

In support of the method Young summarises Bakewell’s reasons in the following words:—

“He contends that all grass should be eaten off the ground by August to make way for the fresh growth that comes afterwards. If this is not effected a loss must be incurred. Such as is not fed, should be mown. If the fields are large, this cannot be done. The beasts will eat the sweetest grass, and leave great quantities, which will grow sour and afterwards be refused even by the lean beasts, which are brought on in succession, as they will eat the young sweet growth, and leave so much, that a portion of the field had it been divided, might have been grown for hay. In a large space of ground also, they trample and spoil much more in beating about for the sweet spots, than they could do when a field is given in divisions by degrees.”

How interesting all this sounds in the light of our emphasis, nowadays, on rotational grazing, close even grazing, rest periods, strip grazing, and the like.

This question of grassland management has been treated at some length here because it explains to some extent why visitors in Bakewell’s time were impressed by the appearance of the farm and by the contrast between it and the surrounding countryside. The greenness of the fields—especially where irrigated and in the dry periods of the year—the multiplicity of divisions giving it almost the appearance of a modern experimental farm, and the superior quality of well-kept stock, combined to give Dishley, in a county with a certain repute for grassland and livestock, a pre-eminent position.

The grassland would not all be of a permanent character, for apparently Bakewell, as his stock increased in number, laid down much of his arable to temporary grass. Young reports that Bakewell tried experiments on laying arable to grass, repeating them for several years and from “the mass of his experience has drawn decided conclusions”—the adjective “decided” is significant, for it is characteristic of the firm judgment and self-reliance of Bakewell.

One of his fields which Young describes was in the following divisions: one laid with rye-grass (spelt "ray-grass") alone, another red clover alone, a third with white clover alone, a fourth white clover mixed with red, a fifth red clover and rye-grass: "and in feeding the field with various sorts of cattle and sheep, as well as in mowing for hay, he finds the last the best". Hence his general conclusion for laying down is given as "10 lb. an acre of common red clover and 2 pecks of good clean ray-grass". In a note by Bakewell which Young prints is the request for more experiments on this question of suitable seed mixtures for new grass. His method of establishing new grass, Young says, was not common. He took two crops of roots for the purpose of getting the land well cleaned, then used barley as a nurse crop.

"The first year he has a very fine crop of clover in the common manner; the spring following he manures it richly with very rotten dung and always finds that half the broad clover disappears that year; the third year it is quite gone; and the pasture ever after is not to be known from the best common meadows; the herbage consisting of good grasses and a thick covering of wild white clover."

Around the farmstead were his roads, which, constructed after his own plan, were kept tidy. Young says: "There is one use to which Mr. Bakewell applies water, in which he is perfectly original; it is that of making roads. He lets it into a short one that leads down to his house, and by washing, cleans and improves it."

On this first visit in 1771, Young reports that Bakewell, having observed many inconveniences to attend unfenced ponds—e.g. which cattle in hot weather make muddy—had constructed troughs which allowed for just sufficient water as was needed at any one time for an animal drinking, and with a paved approach, the pond being fenced off from the stock. His fields were thus adequately supplied with drinking-water. At the farmstead he had water in cisterns, and Young says all his cattle were let loose once a day to drink, "except

those on turnips which do not want it", which latter remark suggests a very liberal allowance of turnips per day. His cattle in winter were all tied, in open or other sheds, from November until the end of March. It is clear that at his own expense he constructed stalls and new sheds and converted old barns into the accommodation required for his increasing herd. Young reported that he had wintering accommodation for upwards of 170 cattle; also that, as he did not buy straw or hay, "it must at once appear that he keeps a larger stock on a given number of acres than most men in England".

All such additional equipment of land and buildings, and perhaps more especially that of the irrigation system, implies that Bakewell must have had a good landlord and a sense of security of tenure, doubtless arising in part out of the long-continued tenancy of Dishley by the Bakewells. Thus Young concludes the report of his first visit as follows:—

"No where have I seen works, that do their author greater honour; they are not the effect of a rich landlord's determining to be a good farmer on his own land, but the honest and truly meritorious endeavours of a tenant performing great and expensive works on the property of another. It is true, he is fortunate in a generous and considerate landlord; and much do I wish that such excellent farmers may always meet with the same encouragement. A truly good farmer cannot be too much favoured, a bad one cannot have his rent raised too high. Let me exhort the farmers of this kingdom in general to take Mr. Bakewell as a pattern in many points of great importance; they will find their account in it, and the kingdom in general be benefited not a little."

This tribute, it should be noted, was made when Bakewell would be in his forties.

Of major interest in considering the situation and layout of the farm is its adjacency to Black Brook.\* This is a stream which rises in the uplands of Charnwood Forest south-south-west of Dishley, and follows a circuitous course of about 10 miles in journeying to

\* See letter (p. 175) from Bakewell to Arthur Young dated Aug. 1789.

join the River Soar, near Dishley. It is a most important brook, as within 3 miles of its source it is dammed to form a mile-long reservoir of great depth, which supplies Loughborough and adjacent villages with water. The brook then continues from the reservoir overflow and, taking in tributary streams, descends from the uplands with a volume strong enough in former days to provide water for the mill at Dishley and with an adequate supply for irrigation not only of the fields adjoining it, but over much of the farm to the west. For this extensive water-way system Bakewell constructed a canal said to be over a mile in length, from which water would be distributed through smaller channels. The Black Brook finally reaches the River Soar to the north of Dishley. The main road, it would seem, follows the line of the old turnpike road, as suggested by culverts found under the present road four years ago. This road divides the farm, most of the fields lying to the north of it being flat, whilst those to the south of the road are more undulating. Judging from present-day observation it would seem that the farm was well laid out with reasonably sized fields. Bakewell had a personal liking for small enclosures, claiming that five 10-acre fields provided as much grazing as one large 60-acre field. As a tenant farmer he was not entirely his own master in this respect, and some of the Dishley fields exceeded his ideal. The buildings are fairly extensive, and though alterations and additions have been made over the years, parts of the original house and steading can be traced.

The famous barn, in which Bakewell showed off his sheep and in which many agreements would be transacted is, alas! no more, though the writer suggests that irregularities in the area immediately north of the present steading may conceal remains of its foundations. White says that an ancient barn, 50 yards long by 15 yards broad, was pulled down in 1856. This would be the original Abbey Grange, said to be one of the finest barns in England.

Dishley as an agricultural parish has a very long and interesting

history, and is now in the borough of Loughborough, with vast housing estates adjacent. The Dishley parish never went through the process of Parliamentary Enclosure, though its neighbouring chapelry (Thorpe Acre) did have an Enclosure Act in 1779. It is somewhat curious that Bakewell, unlike so many of his Midland friends, never seems to have served as an Enclosure Commissioner, especially as in his day there was still much open-field land in his locality. During his life the road by the Grange was turnpiked, which would aid travellers coming from all parts to reach him. The toll-gate was situated just beyond the Grange going northwards, and the small toll-gate house was pulled down as recently as 1954, leaving just the small garden. The corn-mill by the stream was closed and its mill-pool reclaimed for agricultural purposes at the end of the same year. Two new farm cottages have been built during the twentieth century on the farm, but one ancient cottage with low thatched roof remains which was re-thatched this year.

The main road today carries very heavy traffic, and schemes for by-pass roads may cut through the Dishley farm and fields so familiar to Bakewell. Adjoining is the stretch of land forming an aerodrome into which industry is seeking to establish itself. The canalised Soar flanks one side of the Dishley Grange and the smoke-trails of two railways lie to the east, yet the Dishley farmstead and fields have survived so far (1957).

More recently the farm area has been increased, some extra acreage being taken, for example, in 1941. Today the Grange is therefore larger than in Bakewell's tenancy and consists of 590 acres with an addition, known as "The Mill", of 56 acres. The fields are chiefly watered by the stream, and no seasonal shortage is experienced. In the 1940's a well was still serving the farm water-supply requirements. Mr. J. H. Porter, the present tenant, has farmed Dishley for upwards of forty years, and his father farmed it before him—thus following the Bakewell family tradition.

## CHAPTER THREE

### *The Man and his Contemporaries*

**I**N APPEARANCE Bakewell has been described as tall, broad-shouldered, and in later years inclined—as is not uncommon—to stoutness. His portliness is confirmed by the print (reproduced at page 104) of a half-length portrait which has hung in the writer's private room at College for many years. This would appear to be a copy of the original engraving, the work of F. Englehart, published by Joseph Rogerson of Norfolk Street, Strand, London, in 1842. It shows a clean-shaven face, rather prominent nose, firm mouth, and double chin. The features suggest keen intelligence, alertness, and sagacity, but a glance at this picture makes one always aware of the most striking feature, namely the eyes. These seem to indicate, by their piercing, intent quality, those powers of observation which played so important a part in the success of his work. It is difficult to conceive that much of importance in connection with live-stock or farming would escape detection by those eyes. He is wearing, as will be seen, a low-crowned hat, a short, dark wig, a single-breasted coat with many buttons, and a white cravat.

At Dishley Grange, Mrs. Porter, wife of the present tenant, must have shown many visitors the equestrian portrait now hung over the fireplace in one of the front rooms. In this picture (Frontispiece) he is depicted riding a horse which looks like a good Cleveland Bay (a breed belonging to a district in which Bakewell's famous breed of sheep are maintained today), though he is said to have favoured a



strong, black cob. In the background are trees and a wide expanse of greensward with three Longhorn cattle, to whose improvement Bakewell devoted so much attention. The hat, the periwig, and the coat with a few buttons unfastened to reveal the cravat, are as described earlier, suggesting that the engraving was copied from this painting. The loose buff coat (described by one writer as his drab Quaker-cut coat), the scarlet waistcoat, leather breeches, and top boots, would no doubt be an attire often adopted by Bakewell, especially on his tours and on days when he showed his many visitors round his farm and stock.

This painting in oils by an unknown artist (30 inches by 41 inches) was exhibited at Leicester in 1927 and at Amsterdam in 1929. It was formerly in the possession of a member of the Bakewell family, John Styles Bakewell, Esq., of Crom Hall, Gloucester, who presented it to Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Porter in 1930 in appreciation of their work in connection with the discovery and renovation of the Bakewells' burial-ground. Mr. John Styles Bakewell had previously purchased the picture from the Rev. Smithers, rector of Hathern, a village situated 1 mile from Dishley.

The Royal Agricultural Society possesses, however, what is apparently a copy, in oils, of this picture; which is hung in its offices in London. The Society also houses an interesting relic of Bakewell in the form of a stoutly-made wooden chair, which was presented by one of its Leicestershire members, the late Henry C. Woodcock, on the occasion of the Royal Show at Leicester in 1896. On its high back, with a movable rest for the head, are inscribed the words:—

“This Chair was made under the direction of the celebrated Robert Bakewell of Dishley out of a Willow Tree that grew on his Farm—It was his favourite seat, and the Back, which thus records his Memory, served as a screen when seated by his Fireside calculating on the profits, or devising some Improvement on his Farm—Thousands of pounds have been known to exchange Hands in the same.”

Having sat in the chair, one can testify to the generous proportions, which confirm the description of Bakewell's stature. It is not difficult to imagine him sitting in his chair reflecting on his work, for the purpose, as Virgil once described it, "that so practice and pondering might slowly forge out many an art".

Bakewell has been charged with several faults of character, such as secretiveness, selfishness, jealousy, and an occasional proneness to self-advertisement. He had his critics (some of whom later became his converts) who were at times extremely hostile, and was "ridiculed and opposed, most of all by those who lived in his immediate neighbourhood"; but what great man has not at times experienced similar opposition? Undoubtedly his success accounted for much of the disparagement he suffered. There was also the degree of cunning (in these days more politely described as shrewdness) which he is said to have exercised by a writer of his own time, and which was called "the vice of his profession". That he might at times have been more conciliatory and perhaps more understanding, one does not question: but his integrity and honesty of purpose are beyond doubt, and his manners were described as having "rustic, yet polite and pleasing frankness which rendered him acceptable to all ranks". In confirmation of this opinion we may quote the tribute of Sir Richard Phillips, who seems to have known Bakewell well. Phillips, makes an interesting comparison between Bakewell and Cobbett, the famous writer-politician. He writes of Bakewell:—

"In person, in originality and in self-thinking on every subject I have never met with any approximating to him except in William Cobbett. They are in many characteristics kindred men. Bakewell was not a writer, but in his opinions he was as bold and original as Cobbett. The vulgar farmers hated him, just as the small thinkers hate Cobbett. If the two men had been weighed in the balance, they would each have weighed 16 stone; if measured in height each would have been 5 ft. 10 in.: if a painter had mixed colours to paint their complexion, the same dark tints would have done for both; if a tailor had made their clothes, the patterns and colours,

brown and scarlet, might have been interchanged, and if a blind man had heard them talk, the same style of reasoning would have deceived him as to their identity. Bakewell's visage was longer than Cobbett's; but there was the same playfulness of manner, the same contempt of vulgar opinions and of authority in thinking, and the same deviation from common tracks both in conclusions and in practice. I have seen Bakewell on his farm and I have seen Cobbett on his farm, and except in the different species of their enthusiasm, of one as a breeder, and of the other as a writer for the press, no two men could be more enthusiastic and no two men more like each other."

On the question of his secretiveness it would seem that the charge has certainly been exaggerated, and may indeed have little foundation. It is probable, as suggested earlier, that the criticism has simply been repeated by successive writers without study of the evidence.

In the *Complete Grazier* (sixth edition, 1833) it is stated that

"With regard to the 'mysterious manner' in which Mr. Bakewell has been too generally accused of having conducted his business it is a charge so vague and undefined, as hardly to merit remark; yet, as it conveys somewhat of reflection upon his character, it may be due to his memory to enquire upon what foundation it rests and if examined closely it will resolve itself into this:—that he was gifted with more than common acuteness of observation, judgement and perseverance; which combined with the experience he had acquired under his father, (who was also a distinguished breeder in his time) he unremittingly applied to the improvement of cattle. Such qualities directed to any one object, could not fail of success; and such it may fairly be presumed was the only mysteries he employed."

It is only right, however, that an opposite view should be quoted and William Pitt writes in 1813 "No man perhaps ever made more comparisons between the different breeds of cattle than Mr. Bakewell and no one able to tell us so much has ever told us so little about them." A fair deduction, it would seem, is that in a period of keen rivalry amongst eminent breeders of livestock Bakewell's practice was not open to the inspection of everyone, though he was willing

to help many genuine inquirers. That he did not publish or leave behind him a written record of all his methods is hardly a justifiable basis for the charge of secrecy.\* It is difficult, for instance, to reconcile the charge with the following quotations from one of his letters to Culley, dated February 8, 1787:—

“A few days ago I was honoured by a letter from Count de Bruhl, Envoy Extra-Ordinary to the Court of Great Britain, requesting to know the best method of Breeding, Rearing and Feeding the best kind of stock and what I would expect for such communication, to which I returned for answer that I had not any knowledge I should not with great readiness communicate and accordingly gave him the best Account in my Power.”

Possibly his use of in-breeding as an aid to fixing type—and none applied it so intensively as he did—may have accounted in part for a certain reticence. There is some indirect confirmation for this suggestion in George Culley's *Observations on Live Stock*, 1786. Culley writes, “The great obstacle to the improvement of domestic animals seems to have arisen from a common and prevailing idea amongst breeders that no bulls should be used in the same stock more than three years, and no tup more than two. Otherwise the breed will be too near akin.” Culley adds a significant observation, “Some have imbibed the prejudice so far as to think it irreligious.” Religion and respectability were close associates in those days, and Bakewell, who so completely ignored the prejudice against mating close relations, may have been less than frank in conversation about this matter. Bakewell, following in his parent's footsteps, was a loyal supporter, and chief mainstay financially, of the Unitarian Chapel in Warners Lane, Loughborough. This chapel was built in 1743, and Bakewell's father was one of the first two trustees of the

\* Of John Ellman (1753–1798) of Glynde, Sussex, who did for the Shortwools what Bakewell did for the Longwools and so making possible the Southdown, though his work was about twenty years later than Bakewell's. Fraser writes: “There is perhaps less known of Ellman's methods than of Bakewell's”, ref. 34, Bibliography p. 97.

property and at one time its treasurer. Robert, the son, was appointed a trustee in 1774, and in 1761 was also a trustee for the Mountsorrel Chapel, and even in the days of his financial difficulty maintained his subscriptions to the church. That his religious convictions were of importance is borne out in other ways; for example, he would never show stock on a Sunday, even to his most exalted visitors. It may thus be that this was another factor accounting for his reserve on such questions as his method of in-breeding. He certainly had a horror of "city farmers", as he described the journalists who came to see him to obtain "copy" about his agricultural methods, and this no doubt gave force to the criticism. It is clear, however, that he genuinely desired to encourage others to engage in the work of livestock improvement. Hence he writes to Culley (p. 102): "This matter I think of great importance to determine and much wants investigation which I hope you will attend to also request your friends to make the same experiments"—and again, writing about Culley's book on livestock, he observes (p. 102):—

"I congratulate you on the success you had in your Publication and doubt not but you must and will have the Thanks of the sensible part of Mankind and what the others say or think is of little consequence. I hope you will soon be ready for a Second Edition."

It would thus seem, then, that the criticism of Bakewell's secretiveness about his methods has been rather too severe. On the sources of his original foundation stock it is granted that he was uncommunicative, and in his matings it is said his only confidant was his shepherd. What, of course, Bakewell could not communicate to anyone else was his own skill and judgment in the selection and mating of his stock and his combination, so entirely personal, of powers of observation, intuition, and memory which, even in these days of readily accessible pedigree records, herd books, and the like, is still indispensable to the establishment and maintenance of a successful stud, herd, or flock. Bakewell's success was largely due to

his great capacity as a judge of stock; something more than proficiency in the use of a score card is necessary in a judge of stock. As Low puts it, "He perfectly understood the relation which exists between the external form of an animal and its aptitude to become fat in a short time." There is art as well as science in stock-breeding and feeding; and milk or other records are of value only if the data thus made available are rightly interpreted and efficiently applied. It is not uncommon in these days to find successful stock-breeders who have difficulty in explaining their methods in words.

About Bakewell's philosophy of life we can glean a little knowledge from the Culley collection of letters. Here is a selection.

"We are best of all led to Men's Principles by what they do" (p. 104), and again, writing in April, 1787 (p. 109), when he would be only 61 years of age, he says:—

"And as in the way of Nature my continuance cannot be long I like Earl Douglas, who when dying said:—

'Fight on my merry men all,  
For why my life is at an end  
Earl Percy sees me fall'.

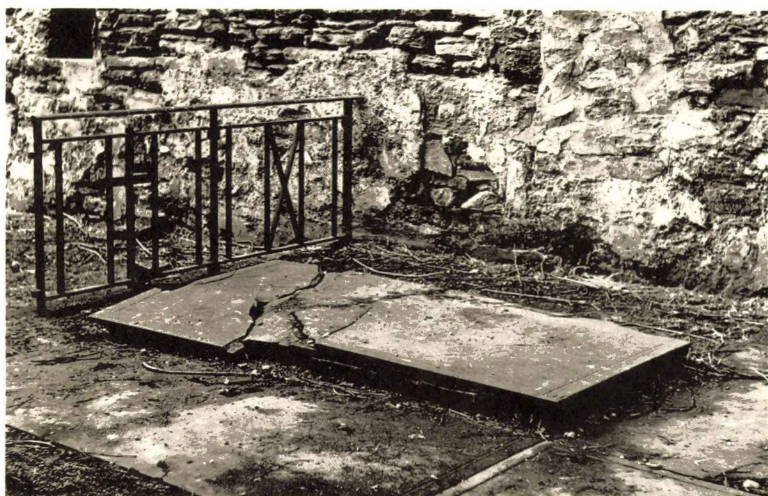
so I would recommend to you and others who have done me the Credit of adopting my Opinions to pursue it with unremitting Zeal as far as shall be consistent with prudence and common sense, always open to conviction when anything better is advanced."

In June, 1787 (p. 112), he opens his letter thus:—

"Your kind Favor of the 19th Ult. came in due course and I have the pleasure to inform you that I am now much better than I have been for some Months past, but feel myself not so active or able to bear so much Exercise as in the earlier part of Life but this is nothing more than is reasonable to expect Pope says

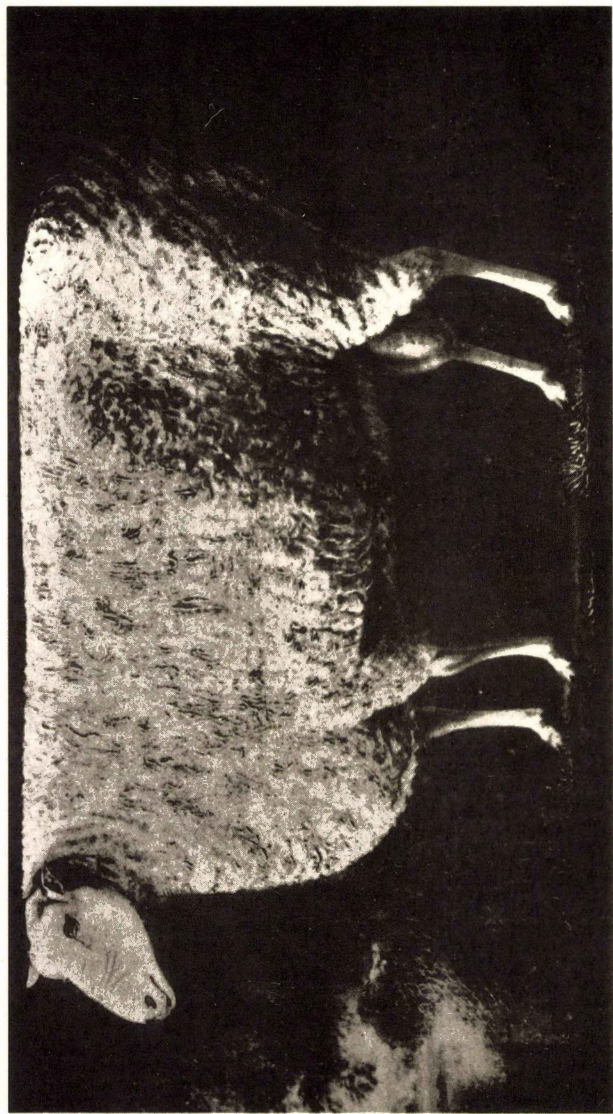
'Nor from the Dregs of Life hope to receive  
What the first sprightly runnings hence could give.'

I wish to do all in my power to serve the cause in which I have engaged and hope they will accept the Will for the Deed."



*Plate 3a.* Recent restoration work at Dishley Church. Originally the church, dedicated to All Saints, consisted of a nave, chancel, north porch and a low, embattled tower with one bell.

*Plate 3b.* Bakewell's tombstone.



*Plate 4.* Bakewell's improved Leicester Ram *Twopounder*. Bakewell's own description of the type of sheep he aimed to breed, it is recorded, was that the 'collar' of a ram should be thick and bowed like a swan so that the drops from his nose may fall on his breast; that he should have an eye like a hawk and a heel like a lark. The head long and thin between the eyes, but ewe headed rams he could not tolerate. According to his creed "Nothing but first rate loins, thighs and scrags can support in and in breeding." Apparently he never wearied of citing the maxim of an old farmer who went to see a brindled cow and, placing his hand on the loin, said, "Strong loin, strong constitution."



On Mrs. Culley's passing, Bakewell writes (p. 126) to his friend; "I most sincerely sympathise with you on the loss of Mrs. Culley, but these trials we must submit to the great Arbiter of all events."

This is from a letter written in February, 1790 (p. 151), "Pray how have you been this fine winter, have you had the greatest of all blessings, Health of Body and Peace of Mind? For when these are wanting all other Enjoyments avail but little."

His comments on Arthur Young, the best-known agricultural writer of his time, and later first Secretary of the Board of Agriculture, are revealing of both characters:—

"I have not yet wrote to Mr. Young for which I think myself much to blame but I cannot say I wish to be taken notice of in the manner he does it which I think has made many Enemies and rather hurt the cause he means to serve notwithstanding this I have a very high opinion of his Abilities and of his Desire to throw all the light he can on this Subject." (p. 102).

In another letter (p. 107) to Culley, Arthur Young again comes under his judgment:—

"Perhaps he thinks every Person who writes has as much time on his hands as he has which I believe with men of much business is seldom the case. I have just heard his Account of your publication and Account he gives of his Journey to this place and on the whole considering what hands we have been in I think we have escaped pretty well I think he has great merit as an Author but if he was less severe and sarcastical in his expressions he would not disgust so many of his Readers and his very useful Performance would still do greater good."

Bakewell was clearly appreciative of good landowners, as the two following extracts show:—

"Monday following I spent the Day with the Duke of Grafton and a young Esq. at Wakefield Lodge in Northamptonshire. We had a ride over some of His Grace's Estates and saw many of his Tenants who are not affrighted at his Approach but pleased with his Good Humour and Familiarity; he sometimes goes into a Town and visits every House beginning at one End and going to the other asking many Questions as to their Health

D

and what is wanting to make them happy; how much it is to be wished more of the Nobility and Gentry would imitate this Noble Example of Humility and Condescension; it would afford them more real pleasure than can arise from The Advantage gained by distressing their Tenants and making them unhappy consequently in a grand measure prevent the Improvements which with Pleasure would be made were proper Encouragement given." (p. 156.)

Of Coke of Holkham, afterwards Earl of Leicester, he writes (p. 129) after visiting Norfolk:—

"Mr. Coke has been making large purchases has near 50,000 Acres in that County, he receives his own Rents and himself hears the Complaints of all his Tenants, in short, he is like a Prince of the best kind amongst them being loved by many and feared by few. I wish more Gentlemen of Fortune would follow his most laudable Example—hear more with their own Ears and less with those of Servants and their Dependents."

In the same letter he records a visit to Horncastle, where he met Mr. Charles Chaplin, another livestock breeder and apparently a rival of Bakewell, with whom he was often in dispute. On this occasion he writes:—

"Where I saw Mr. Chaplin who was civil. In the afternoon Mr. Charles, his eldest son and myself had a pretty warm dispute; he acknowledged giving their Sheep Corn in Winter and told Mr. Wright and I that he would not believe any Person that said he did not. I said when a Person would not believe another I always supposed he told Fibs himself upon which he said I gave him the Lie and if I was a Young Man he would knock me down. I replied I laughed at him. After this talking on high prices of Leicestershire Rams he said he did not like high Prices: I said when the Fox could not reach the Grapes he said they were sour, etc. etc. not worth repetition. But you will see by the London Papers that he has made me a Person of more Consequences than the world supposed I was."

He pays tribute to Joseph Elkington, the pioneer in land drainage, whose work received State recognition in the eighteenth century, as he writes (p. 157):—"Saw great Improvements by draining a Bog done by a Mr. Elkington near Coventry, a self taught Philosopher

who without doubt has given many proofs of his being first in that line of business."

That he was an interesting conversationalist and possessed of a sense of humour, or at least of dry wit, is evidenced by the following quotations, chiefly from the Culley correspondence. A few years after his death it was written of him that "he spoke neatly in a few words always to the purpose and had a store of anecdotes and stories". To Culley he writes (p. 157):—

"I had the honour to dine at His Grace's Table with his Duchess and family, most of them, like His Grace, very thin. He said, 'Bakewell, you would not like to have your stock like my sons.' I replied I had frequently said I had rather keep a Fat man for one shilling a day than a lean one for eighteen pence—a long laugh you may suppose."

Dealing with the value of change of seed corn he writes (p. 142):

"I will not dispute with you as to the propriety of changing seed neither do I profess myself to have had much Experience in that Business, but I have been told a Person sold his Barley to a merchant about 20 miles from the Place where it grew and made a practice for many years of having a small quantity from the said merchant by way of change the Farmer attended the putting up of his own Barley and lost his sleeve Button, in sowing what he had from the Merchant the Button was found—Excellent change."

Bakewell underlined the last two words. One feels that he would have enjoyed the school-girl's howler:—

"In the reign of George III people were beginning to think more about farming. A plain farmer named Bakewell taught the people how to improve the breeds of sheep by which a great many more legs of mutton might come off one sheep than had been before and as there was more meat there were more people to eat it and the population became a great deal larger."

His friendship with George Culley was clearly of the kind that could stand plain speaking, as an example of which the following remarks to his friend (p. 160) may be cited:—

“I have observed what you say about the Success of the Rams you have had from Dishley, and taking them in the aggregate I don't see much cause for Complaint as there are very few of my Customers who have paid so little money in so long a term of Years or with more Advantage to themselves.”

And in the same letter:—

“I have not any objection to your acting as a Commissioner or engaging on any difficult undertaking to serve your Country or Friends in that which *another* cannot do, but however honorable the office of High Constable in which you have been engaged may be to another I think to you it is too great a Condescension, and that your Superior Abilities may be employed to much more important purposes.”

In a later letter (p. 163) he says:—

“I shall be glad of remittance as soon as convenient after this comes to hand, and shall be very happy to wait on you or any of your Friends at Dishley, but have little Expectation of you as a Customer as I find there are so many Others that are willing to give more Money without thinking they are over charged.”

This last quotation, in which Bakewell asks for remittance, is a reminder that at one period he found himself in a parlous financial state. Since Bakewell was a shrewd man of business and had established a definite lead in stock-breeding, it seems difficult to understand the reason for this setback in his fortunes, especially as there is evidence that some near relations were affluent at the time in question. At one period, to judge from an extract discovered in a diary kept by another Robert Bakewell, who was born in 1775, he was reasonably prosperous:—

“A namesake of mine, A Mr. Robert Bakewell, who lived at Dishley, two miles West of Loughbro' and who at the latter part of the eighteenth Century appeared to have arrived at the pinnacle of his glory, stood acknowledged by all his Competitors, on that high aspiring point, as the first Breeder of any Age or Country, his Rams he used to let out for the

Season at most enormous prices, for a few months only, was used one of his best, for which he received one Thousand Guineas, a Second for eight Hundred, a third for Seven and a fourth for six hundred guineas, making a total for the use of four Rams for one Season the sum of three Thousand, One Hundred guineas. Cross Breeding he used to encourage when judiciously Chosen. His Cows and Horses was much noticed and was considered far superior to any of his neighbours, and he was a most successful Candidate and obtained the greatest reputation for that degree of fame in his Day. The Farm he occupied was from 5 to 6 Hundred Acres of valuable Land, the Property of Thomas March Phillips, Esq., of Garendon (principally grazing) and the Stock upon the Farm was said to be of a greater Stirling value, than the possession itself, provided that they had both been brought to the Hammer. *The Landlord gave notice to his Tenant of raising his rents 400£, per annum, the latter replied that it was only taking half another sheep from him.* \*

That Bakewell became bankrupt has been doubted but, though difficult to understand, it appears certain to the writer. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for November, 1776, there is an entry among the list of bankrupts—"R. Bakewell, Dishley, Leicestershire, Dealer". True, it has been argued that this may refer to another Bakewell—there were several living in the same district at that time—who happened to be receiving "Dishley hospitality" or may even have been given a cottage on the farm. The date 1776 raises another problem, if indeed the entry quoted refers to the subject of this book, for part of the evidence to be cited is based on Bakewell's own statement, dated 1789; and twelve years seems too long a gap. It is certain that Bakewell prospered again after his financial setback. When he died, his herd and flock were passed on intact to his nephew, Mr. Robert Honeyborn, son of Bakewell's sister Rebecca. The herd included the cow Comely, purchased from Mr. Webster as a heifer for his work on improving the Longhorn breed.

The answer to any who are sceptical about Bakewell's temporary

\* The italics are mine.

financial difficulties is provided by the following three documents,\* though these do not give clear reasons for his change of fortune.

The first is the copy of the appeal which was discovered with the Culley letters. As compared with the Rothamsted Library copy it has a fuller, albeit incomplete, list of the more prominent subscribers. (Appendix I, p. 181.)

The second is a paragraph from a letter written by Robert Bakewell himself to Arthur Young, dated Aug. 1789 (p. 175), which is in the British Museum collection. It reads:—

“Your favour of the 18th instant I read but of late have been so much engaged on the Ram business and other matters relating to my Bankruptcy what I hope will soon be settled that I have not had time to attend to anything else, and on account of my affairs have lately been in I should think any opinion as coming from me will rather injure than benefit any publication, and probably may have a tendency to make the whole disregarded, as most people think well or ill of any scheme by the success with which it is attended but this I leave to you.”

Bakewell would be 64 years of age when he wrote this letter, and it speaks much for his courage and enterprise and sense of discernment that he should express himself in this way. He would seem to be on the way to recovery, however, for later that year he wrote to Culley, November, 1789 (p. 146):—

“I never made near as much as this season or with so little trouble. I have not fixed a price on anything for more than twelve months past and am fully persuaded it is the best and most expeditious mode of doing Business for both Parties both at Home and at Market. On the 13th a Servant of mine took an old lame Horse to Loughborough Fair and did not set price; some swore, others laughed and went away; others finding him positive bid money, some from three to three and a half which was the most till the last Bidder who gave a Guinea more. Are not many Estates much Timber, the large Sales of Goods at the India House and many other Places disposed on in this way, and who can assign any reason why it should not become

\* See also G. Culley's mention of bankruptcy in statement p. 195.

general, only it is *not custom*, surely her shackles have been worn long enough and tis high time more of them were shaken off."

The third instance of documentary evidence is from a foreign visitor, François Armand Frédéric Rochefoucauld (1765-1848), who was a friend of Arthur Young and was deeply interested in agriculture. He made a visit to England and to Dishley, as is confirmed by Bakewell to Arthur Young in a letter dated 26 Feb. 1783 (p. 171).

EXTRACT FROM *A FRENCHMAN IN ENGLAND 1784*

Being the *Melanges sur Angleterre* of François de la Rochefoucauld

"Having spoken of Mr. Bakewell as an example of the trouble which the farmers take to get instruction, I want to say a little more about him, as he is one of the most remarkable men to meet in the whole country. As a farmer he is quite well off; his father bequeathed his farm to him at an early age and he has maintained it ever since; from his early days he set out to perfect every kind of beast that could be useful to him, and he has attained to the greatest possible measure of perfection. He began by buying every kind of animal, the best specimens he could find, and by crossing them he has achieved a breed which preserves all the good qualities and excellences of the progenitors without any of their defects. I cannot quite understand it myself. Presumably he bought the finest cow and the finest bull he could find, and so contrived it that if the bull was of tall build, was strong and had fine legs, the cow had a fine head, a well-made back and so on. . . . It is fairly well known what parts of the body the offspring will inherit from father or mother—arrangements are made accordingly. After many and many attempts, perseverance triumphs, and everyone who knows anything of the matter admits that Mr. Bakewell has achieved the finest breed of cart-horses, of cows, of sheep, of pigs and so on. His oxen have the faculty of growing fat in a shorter time than those of other farmers because the cows who produced them were fattened at the time they calved, and perhaps the bulls were in the same condition. Mr. Bakewell has made a lot of bets on all this kind of thing and has always won. His sheep have the finest wool combined with such a carcase as those which produce fine wool seldom have when destined for the butcher. They have also the advantage of fattening more quickly. Lastly his pigs are large, with big bellies and very short legs; they fatten very well on potatoes, which other pigs do not. They also get fat in a short time. It

is the same with all his breeds. His is now so sure of himself that he will make an offer to anyone to produce an ox for him that will put on fat on the head or the back or even in such parts of the chest or stomach as do not usually grow fat. He even offered to make us a bet that would have some beasts that put on fat in the tail. All this is astonishing. I do not properly understand it, but I believe it as I believe in my religion—because I have been told what I ought to believe and because everyone believes in it. It often happens that a man who excels in some particular field is highly esteemed by a certain number of people and that others do not regard him in the same light. This is not the case with Mr. Bakewell: he is esteemed by the whole of England and his breeds are famous and eagerly hired.

“I say ‘eagerly hired’ because he never sells any of the finest specimens of his breeds, but lets out a horse, a bull, a ram, a hog and so on for a summer, with a view to establishing the breed in the hirer’s farm. The charge for hiring these animals is excessive, the usual charge for a ram of the finest breed being eighty or ninety guineas for the summer. One ram can serve as many as a hundred and forty ewes. The charge for the other breeds is in proportion. That which I have quoted is only for the very highest breed. The others which do not attain this supreme quality are sold, but even these are immensely superior to any others in England. All this will seem quite astonishing and will not be believed, but it is gospel truth.

“Some time ago the clients who had hired animals of the breeds perfected by Mr. Bakewell failed to pay properly; none of the Scotsmen whom he had supplied had paid him and so forth. The result was that the continual and heavy expense which he necessarily incurred reduced him to a condition of bankruptcy, although he was not in the least to blame himself. In such cases the English are admirable—their charity is prompt and expansive. Mr. Bakewell’s friends opened an subscription list for voluntary contributions on his behalf and he received without delay a thousand pounds sterling, which enabled him to renew his experiments. The Duke of Richmond gave five hundred guineas himself. It is in this way that, without any government interference, the generosity and enthusiasm of individual people come to the rescue of the industrious who suffer misfortune through no fault of their own. Moreover, at the present time Mr. Bakewell is much better off than he was, as he has now been paid the money that was previously owed to him and forced him to go bankrupt.”

There would seem to be a certain measure of exaggeration, if not serious inaccuracy, in this author’s account—due perhaps to his en-



thusiasm for his subject; but the whole statement serves to show how great was the impression made by Bakewell on his visitors. The final paragraph adds to the oft-quoted explanation of Bakewell's financial difficulties, namely his lavish hospitality, and another possible cause, bad debts. In fairness to Scotland, it should be added that Bakewell himself is said to have attributed his failure to the default of an Irish lessee of his rams. We should not rule out the cost of his various experiments as a possible contributory factor.

Practically all references, however, to Bakewell's habits lay stress on his very generous hospitality and mention the large numbers of visitors who made their way from all parts to Dishley Grange. An American \* appreciator of Bakewell has said: "The Dishley Estate was more than a farm. It rapidly became an institution of higher learning. Many earnest young men were attracted to Bakewell and came to stay and work with him solely for the experience to be gained." Housman says, "His lavish hospitality, however, was enough to account for some measure of pecuniary trouble." "Men of every kind were found at that too hospitable board," writes Dixon. It was indeed the Mecca of those interested in livestock improvement, for to their host good cattle and sheep provided a theme which never grew stale. In the farm-house kitchen—which then, as often now, was the living-room—he would receive the so-called high and low. Friends and strangers alike could count on his warm welcome. He kept open house at the Grange and, since there was no inn convenient to the farm, we may be sure the privilege was much used, and perhaps often abused. Mr. Coke said, "Dishley is the best inn on the road." It was reported that "in his kitchen he entertained Russian Princes, French and German Royal Dukes, British Peers and sightseers of every degree", but that, dine with him who might,

\* "The Master of Dishley", Lawrence K. Foley, Concord, N.H., *Jersey Bulletin of Indianapolis*. Vol. 71, 1952.

"he dined by himself at a small round table in a corner near the window".

He would show, in his hall, the preserved joints in brine and the skeleton structures from which he studied the effects of heredity with due regard to such other factors of environment and nutrition. This agricultural "museum" must have been a somewhat frightening spectacle to some visitors, but it was from these specimens, as Housman reports, that Bakewell gathered information on "the degree of fineness of bone, the size and shape of frames, the thickness of the layers of muscle and the depth of outside fat and quantity of inside fat", all of which served as a guide to his analyses of breeding results. Seated in his own chair, he would discuss with his visitors of high or lowly estate the records in his books, which, alas, must have been destroyed. But whoever the guest might be, Bakewell's methodical habits were maintained as follows: "Breakfast at 8, dinner at 1, supper at 9, bed at 11 o'clock; at half past 10, let who would be there, he knocked out his last pipe."

A farm is much more of a community than any urban industrial enterprise, and a great deal can be deduced about the farmer from the attitude of his farm workers. The happiest relations were evident at Dishley; it was said that Bakewell "so much disliked losing sight of a familiar face that he would not engage a farm man for a shorter term of service than four years". The strong proof of the attachment to Bakewell and Dishley is the length of service of his staff, e.g. William Arnold, junior herdsman was with him twenty years; John Breedon, senior herdsman, thirty-two years, and William Peet, superintendent of the horses, for nearly forty years. He doubtless expected a high standard of service, but he did well by his staff. Hence it was neatly said that "his general treatment of livestock, and management of servants, all constituted parts of that system which did honour to his head and heart".

His kindness was manifest in the handling and treatment of his

stock, which in consequence were markedly quiet to handle.\* Nothing angered him more than rough or cruel treatment of animals. It is not surprising that there are many reports of the docility of the stock on Dishley. Housman remarks:—

“On this subject Mr. Bakewell was far in advance of his day for his generous anger was kindled instantly by the sight or report of cruelties so often practised in the times when the sufferings of the inferior animals, however discreditable and degrading to men who inflicted them, were thought beneath the notice of the law.”

Bakewell appears to have taken no part in politics, or even to have let it be known which political party he supported. He was ever a fighter for liberty of thought and action, and no doubt his vote would be influenced by this and other principles based on his religious convictions.

He was never married and, as H. G. Robinson aptly puts it, resembled other farmer bachelor stock-breeders, who seemed to “succeed better in the sphere of breeding by being wedded to their stock”. The home at Dishley was in the care of his sister Hannah, described as bustling and of early-rising habits, who apparently had some share in the farm affairs. As illustrating one aspect of the times in which they lived, it is said that she was concerned in the conviction of a sheep-stealer and witnessed his execution by hanging at Ashby-de-la-Zouch—the last occasion in England (so it is reported) on which the extreme penalty was exacted for this offence.

Hannah died two years before her brother, i.e. in 1793. In the earliest account of her illustrious brother, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* almost immediately after his decease, it is written that Bakewell died “after a tedious illness, which he bore with the

\* From Young's *Tour of Eastern England*, “Another particularity is the amazing gentleness in which he brings up these animals; all the bulls stand still in the field to be examined.”

philosophical fortitude that ever distinguished his character". The date was October 1, 1795, and we may judge that the fortitude was one of the fruits of a life-long faith in the integrity of Him whom he once described to his friend Culley as "the great Arbiter of all events".

Pioneers seldom receive the just reward for their services and more often during their lives are subjected to malicious back-biting than rewarded with praise. Bakewell's system of breeding, however, continued to make progress through his pupils and disciples, such as George Culley, Charles Colling, and the many others who benefited from his example and counsel. He was also Coke's mentor in stock-judging. Stirling in *Coke and His Friends*, writes:—

"At Dishley, as has been already mentioned, there lived a well-known breeder named Robert Bakewell, of whom it was wittily remarked that 'his animals were too dear for any one to buy and too fat for any one to eat!' Almost immediately upon coming into his estate, Coke had asked this man to come and spend a week at Holkham. Bakewell did so, and Coke was very struck by his remark that the Norfolk sheep were the worst in the whole of Great Britain. He questioned Bakewell about the cattle and the answer was: 'Mr. Coke, give me your hand, and I will guide it!' Bakewell thereupon took Coke's hand in his own, and passing it over the cattle, taught him how to judge the formation of a beast's flesh, its inclination in feeding, and whether it possessed the proper qualities for fattening."

There is evidence, too, that Bakewell encouraged his nephew, Mr. Honeyborn, to follow his methods and to travel the country with a view to picking up ideas as well as to select breeding-stock. To him he bequeathed his herd and flock. Yet how soon memory and gratitude may fade. Men are apt to take for granted a heritage that has been built up by much labour and expenditure of thought. So it happened with Bakewell; "Respect will long be paid to the memory of Mr. Bakewell," wrote Garrad in 1800. Yet, writing last century,

Arthur Young remarked: "Years after Bakewell's death his system was established with such completeness that men forgot not only the existence of any different conditions, but even the very name of the most active pioneer of the change."

Ernle in his classic agricultural history writes: "There is some foundation for the statement that many monuments have been reared in Westminster Abbey to the memory of men who less deserved honour than Robert Bakewell." The world then, as now, had a strange sense of values. Many monuments commemorate military and political achievements, but, so far as the writer is aware, the statue in Cambridge to Jonas Webb of Southdown fame, "From Farmers and Friends in many lands", and that to Coke in Holkham Park, erected by his tenants and admirers, are the only such reminders of men of agricultural fame.

So far from there being any monument to his honour, even his burial-place remained unknown for a very long period. It was in the year 1919 that some German prisoners of war employed at Dishley were one day given the job of clearing a jungle of weed and rubbish centred in and around the ruins of a little church adjoining the farm buildings. Only portions of the east, north, and south walls were standing, and these covered with ivy, were crumbling away, and the floor was covered with fallen masonry and rubbish. As the result of the clearance, Mrs. Porter made the discovery in the chancel floor of flat slate gravestones, and thus of Bakewell's last resting-place.

On a badly cracked stone the inscription was easily read:—

Sacred to the  
memory of  
Robert Bakewell,  
who departed this  
life Oct. 1, 1795  
aged 70 years

Beside the grave lay those of his parents and grandfather:—

In  
Memory of  
Robert Bakewell  
who departed this life  
the 23 of May, 1773  
Aged 88 years.

And of  
Rebecca his Wife,  
who departed this life  
the 7 Feby. 1769

Here lyeth Inter-  
red the body of Robert  
Bakewell who changed  
this life for a better the 6th  
day of July 1716. In the  
74th year of his age.

Also buried in the chancel is Bakewell's sister Hannah, who died in 1793, aged 60, and Robert Honeyborn, Bakewell's nephew, who succeeded to the farm on his uncle's death and died in 1816 aged 54. The graveyard was in use until the nineteenth century.

Some years after the discovery Professor James Scott Watson, then Sibthorpe Professor of Rural Economy at the University of Oxford, visited the Grange and became interested in Mrs. Porter's desire to effect at least a partial restoration. Mainly through his initiative and with the assistance of Dr. Milburn (Principal of the nearby Midland Agricultural and Dairy College) and others, a sum was raised for the purpose. A faculty was obtained from the Chancellor of the Diocese to authorise the work, Mr. William Keag of Leicester acted as honorary architect, and the improvements were carried out by a Loughborough firm.

A railing was put across the chancel and its floor concreted. The tombstones were re-lettered and, after the ivy had been cleared from the three remaining walls, these were pointed and buttressed. The whole of the brick floor was re-laid and the tombstone of the last Robert Bakewell was raised above the rest.

On July 18, 1929, at an impressive ceremony attended by a number of well-known agriculturalists, this memorial to Bakewell,

“pioneer of English stock-breeders”, was unveiled by Sir Thomas Middleton, K.C.I.E., K.B.E., C.B. (Chairman of the Development Commission), who placed a wreath on the grave and gave an address. The late Mr. Thomas Hacking, M.Sc.—one-time Agricultural Organiser for Leicestershire—gave a short description of the restoration work and also issued a small printed pamphlet giving some of the main facts of Bakewell’s life. The procession from the Grange to the grave was headed by the Archdeacon of Loughborough and the Rev. F. Tolhurst (vicar of Thorpe Acre and Dishley), who offered dedicatory prayers.

The years passed, and the church, with no roof or other adequate protection from the elements, deteriorated considerably, as may be judged from the illustrations in this book. In 1954, through the representations of Professor H. G. Robinson, then Principal of the Midland Agricultural College, the Royal Agricultural Society appointed a Special Committee to consider a plan for erecting a more permanent memorial, which, after several meetings, reluctantly decided that nothing could be done (1955).

Not even a street in Loughborough has been named after Bakewell, though it is understood that a desire to do so has been expressed by some of its citizens. So far as the writer is concerned, he would like to see an equestrian statue—not unlike in size to that of Bakewell’s famous contemporary, John Wesley, which is to be found just off the busy street adjoining the New Room, Bristol. It might depict Bakewell setting off on one of those rewarding journeys that he often made—riding, as he is reported to have done, without whip or spur and with a loose rein. This should be placed at the entrance to the farm, and thus be clearly visible to passers-by on the main road. Even though, as seems not altogether unlikely, building extensions from Loughborough may gradually reduce or ultimately eliminate the farm, a statue of Bakewell would be a not inappropriate reminder to urban and town-dwellers. In the absence of such

an enduring memorial to this great man, one can only suggest that if, when we visit the sales of sires—e.g. bulls at Perth and Aberdeen—where five-figure prices are now realised, and those of rams at Kelso and at other centres, or look round the livestock at the Royal and Highland Shows and the finished products at Smithfield Show, we should do well to apply to Bakewell the words used of Sir Christopher Wren, architect of St. Paul's Cathedral: "If you seek his monument, look around you."

NOTE.—It is a pleasure to add that during the last two seasons members of the Vaughan Archeological and Historical Society, Leicester, have been doing a certain amount of work at Dishley in tidying up the ruins of the church, keeping the area free of weeds and, in the autumn of 1955, carrying out some restoration work on the stones of Bakewell's grave. All this does not, however, absolve agriculturists from their duty of doing something more tangible to preserve Bakewell's memory, for at present (1957) this building being roofless, the inscriptions tend to become covered with deposits, and Bakewell's grave is still in need of much more complete restoration.

H.C.P.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### *Steps to Fame*

**T**WO WHAT extent Bakewell anticipated the greatly increased demand for food, or especially of meat, that was to follow the rapid industrialisation of the country, it is impossible to say. What is abundantly clear is his belief that the meat-producing properties of both cattle and sheep could be greatly improved.

It is apparent that Bakewell had as his objective the improvement of every class of livestock on his farm—horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs. Nor did he overlook the need to improve the land in order that it might maintain the improved stock. Although his greatest success was with sheep, his cattle herd was also greatly improved, to such a degree that his stock became generally known as the “Improved Longhorn Cattle or New Leicester” and the “Dishley or New Leicestershire breed of sheep”. Like other farming developments, this advance was not achieved overnight; it was the fruit of years of observation, patient endeavour, numerous experiments, and systematic planning. How did Bakewell set to work not only to establish better breeding animals on Dishley, but, what was more important, how did he come to inspire by his example widespread efforts by others to the same end.

In February, 1956, at a conference of the British Cattle-breeders' Club held in Harrogate, Mr. John E. Moffit, one of the most successful of present-day breeders of cattle in Great Britain, is reported as having said, “I would like to impress on the young breeder that, when you start breeding cattle, the most important thing is to make

up your mind where you want to get to; fix in the back of your mind a clear picture of the type of animal you want, based on utility points." That is almost precisely how Bakewell began and how, indeed, he described his beginning 200 years ago.

Bakewell, as has been pointed out, was not the first to adopt selective breeding and close in-breeding. Others before him and in his own time had similar ideas. Such progressive breeders were few in number and were somewhat spasmodic in their efforts. In general, stock-breeding then was a haphazard affair; it has been described as "the union of nobody's son with anybody's daughter". Bakewell was the first to apply successfully precise methods aimed at producing early maturing meat-producing animals, which would leave more profit by reason of the more rapid turnover, and would moreover prove more efficient feeders, and also transmit these qualities with increased certainty. He was concerned with both the feeding and carcase qualities of his animals. One of his sayings was: "All is useless that is not beef", and another: "You can get beasts to weigh where you want them to weigh, i.e. in roasting places and not boiling places." He had the same general objectives in respect of his sheep-flock. Thus first in his mind he transformed the slow-maturing, almost ugly-looking animals in conformation to types which would possess fine bone, less waste and offal, and well furnished with flesh on those parts which to this day are the most desired by the butchers. An illustration of one of his sheep portrays his desirable type of an animal with a small head, fine bone, short leg, well-sprung ribs, and with a well-developed, rounded body. "You can't eat bone," he used to say, "therefore, give the public something to eat." In concentrating on meat he was criticised for neglecting the quantity and quality of wool produced, to which he would retort, "My people want fat mutton and I give it to them." By "My people" \*

\* "Sheep for the keelmen, pitmen and all such hardworking people are never too fat for people of these descriptions," is the statement of a writer of this period.

we may assume the "working classes" as they used to be described, for there were criticisms of his sheep having "too much fat for a gentleman's taste". Nowadays most consumers demand lean meat and not too much bone. Marshall reported that Bakewell's sheep were not really greatly deficient in wool, though Bakewell obviously gave more thought to the mutton propensities. It must not be supposed, however, that he lacked interest in wool because of his emphasis on the mutton properties of his sheep. His observations led him to observe, we are told, that the fineness of wool probably depended on the difference of soil. He had noticed a remarkable difference in the softness of wool, equally fine, but which was produced in different districts. From this he was led to believe "that the herbage of each district derived from the differences of soil some peculiar properties which gave to it as the food of sheep the power of effecting that process of the animal economy by which wool is produced". These observations no doubt account for his strong advocacy of greasing the sheep to preserve the soft quality of wool and counteract effects of climate and soil where these are unfavourable to this quality.

The first step, then, was to conceive a picture of the kind of animals he desired, and to produce and fix that type: "One cannot go beyond the fact that Bakewell excelled as a judge of desirable types." This faculty, partly inherited, must have been exercised for some years before Bakewell began to be recognised as a stockman whose methods of breeding were so strikingly successful. An interesting aspect of his method of judging was the emphasis he placed on handling or feeling the stock under examination, rather than relying, as was common, solely on the eye. Bakewell and Culley agreed that if they must choose between the eye in the light or the hand in the dark, they would not hesitate a moment in preferring the latter.

The next step in working out his plans was the selection of the raw material with which to experiment. Selection of suitable parent

stock was the first essential, and in this Bakewell's intuition and skilled judgment doubtless played a very important part; indeed, it is clear from his letters that he possessed not only the capacity for arriving at sound reasons, but also the ability to apply his ideas. The selection of suitable foundation stock involved long and arduous journeys. Travelling in those days was usually laborious. It is difficult for us, in these days of aeroplanes, trains, and motor-cars, to appreciate what it meant to be delayed when stage-coaches were held up for days through floods or other happenings. No doubt Bakewell made many of his journeys, as did his famous contemporary John Wesley, on horseback. It is not difficult, when looking at the frontispiece, to imagine him travelling at a pace, and seated at such an elevation, as facilitated observation of the fields and farms and livestock as he passed. He appears to have made many travels—especially into the northern and south-western districts—and always with a view to comparing the types of stock found in different districts and making his selection and purchases.

In Bakewell's time cattle were commonly used as draught animals and their value for producing meat for human food was secondary. They were long in the leg, narrow-bodied, big-boned and coarse, designed rather for draught than for beef or milk. The requirements for draught purposes were, of course, size \* and strength, especially the former, though they were commonly equated. As late as 1786 George Culley wrote: "Nothing would please but Elephants and Giants." Bakewell set himself to breed a type of cattle more suitable for meat than for draught, and it was natural, because the Longhorned cattle were at that time regarded as the most valuable, that he should have begun with foundation animals of this type. Attempts had already been made to improve the Longhorn stock of the Midlands by introducing cattle from Cumberland and Westmorland,

\* Bakewell even with horses did not consider mere size as an indication of efficiency—see letter (p. 173) to Arthur Young, Nov. 20, 1788.

where the best type was thought to exist, though the county of Lancaster was regarded as the original nursery of the breed.

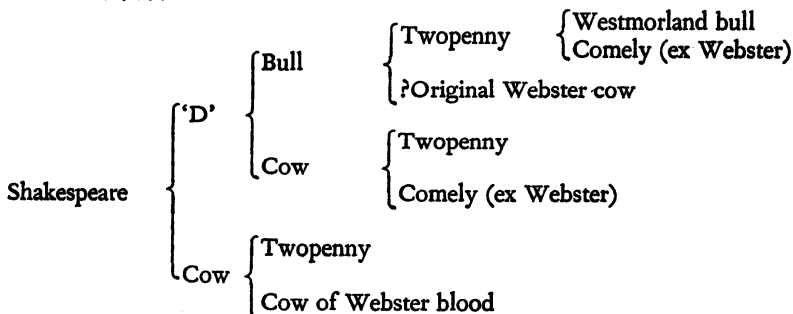
A Mr. Webster of Canley, near Coventry, was one of the most distinguished of the early breeders of Longhorns, using a strain which he had originally obtained from a fine herd at Drakelow House, a seat of Sir Thomas Gresley, near Burton-on-Trent. Webster also brought bulls from Lancashire and Westmorland, his work served to fix the Drakelow type, and he was reputed to possess "the best". It was from Webster that Bakewell purchased two heifers, and it was from Westmorland that he brought a promising Longhorn bull. He then began to in-breed with a view to fixing the qualities he deemed to be desirable for beef production. He was probably well aware of the risks attached to such a policy but, partly by culling and partly by interposing matings of only moderately close relatives, he was able to conserve at least some of the qualities desired and to avoid any seriously deleterious effects. He thus pursued his objective and, as Low has recorded, "amid many disappointments, he never despaired of his ultimate purpose, but bore up against ridicule, neglect and predictions of failure, till the end". The cattle he thus bred were commonly described as remarkable for their fineness of bone, good fleshing properties, with a rich, mellow touch when lean, and firm when fat. The fullest description is by John Lawrence, who wrote describing them as having,

"Sound, tight cylindrical carcase; wide in the hips, but very little prominence in the huckle bones; straight back, well filled behind shoulders; neck long and fine without any superfluous skin or dewlap, horns long, taper downwards, and of a deep yellowish colour; head fine and smooth. The barrel form, gradually tapering towards the ends, was the model, as in sheep."

One of Bakewell's heifers, originating from Webster's Canley herd, became well known as "Old Comely". Calved in 1765, she was the dam of the famous bull "Twopenny", so named, it is said,

because someone remarked that he was not worth twopence. He became, however, the most famous of Bakewell's cattle, and his name occurs repeatedly in the pedigrees of improved Longhorns. Presumably Bakewell was responsible for the choice of name and, if so, it reveals both humour and judgment in reaction to disparaging comments.

The bull "Shakespeare", said by Marshall to be "the best stock-getter the Midland district ever knew", may be mentioned as the first example of the influence of Twopenny. This is seen in the following breeding record used by Cooper in his book *Beef Production* (1953).



The writer possesses an original copy of the catalogue of the sale of stock belonging to W. Thomas Paget, Esq., November 14, 15 and 16, 1793, in which a bull Shakespeare (bred by Mr. Fowler and probably a son of the famous Shakespeare, Lot 34) was offered for sale. An inked note indicates that he sold for 400 guineas to "Greasley, Worstershire". An interesting condition of sale was attached to this bull: "Whoever buys this lot, the Seller makes it a Condition that he shall have the Privilege of having Two Cows bulled by him yearly".

Comely lived to a ripe old age, and her lineal descendants were still at Dishley when Bakewell died in 1795. Throsby, visiting Dishley in 1790, describes her as standing

“like a venerable ruin on props of magnificent architecture, bulging fine limbs, enfeebled with old age. I will not attempt to describe what she has been, only in general terms observe that she is now 25 years old, and has been esteemed by judges one of the finest animals of that species ever bred. She now lives in an asylum, a meadow full of keep, set apart to soothe her passage to the earth, for in the slaughterhouse she is not to make her exit. She eats but little and yet retains upon her back, which is now a yard over, broad cushions of fat. She seldom moves; she stood like a statue while I went round her, upon her legs bowed at the joint like those of a decrepit old man in the last stage of his existence.”

Actually she died at the age of 26 years, and some parts of her were preserved at Dishley in Bakewell's remarkable museum. It is recorded that “her sirloin fat was then four inches thick”.

Young reports that Twopenny was a very big bull, “most truly made on the barrel principle, circular, but broad across the back”. Bakewell refused 200 guineas for him—a large sum in those days—and the fee for his service at home was 5 guineas. His sons were hired out for the season for fees varying from 5 to 30 guineas. A grandson of Twopenny, named ‘D’ \* (see pedigree p. 54), was considered even more remarkable and was retained by Bakewell for his own use. The quality of the herd is described by Marshall as follows:—

“MR. BAKEWELL is in possession of many valuable individuals, males and females. His bull D. generally known by the name of the ‘mad bull’, is a fine animal; and is a striking proof of the vulgar error, that breeding in-and-in, *weakens* the breed. He was got by a son of Twopenny, out of a daughter and sister of the same celebrated bull; she being the produce of his own dam. Nevertheless, D. is the sire of Shakespeare, by another daughter of the same bull, and is probably the most *robust* individual of the longhorned breed; while D. himself, at the age of twelve or thirteen years, is more active, and higher mettled, than bulls in general are at three or four years old.

\* “Mr. Bakewell has adopted the simple plan of distinguishing not his horses only but his bulls and rams by letters, instead of less elegant names.” Marshall.

"This has long been esteemed Mr. Bakewell's best bull; and has been kept, principally, for his own use. He has never let, except part of a season to Mr. Fowley; but has had individual cows brought to him, at five guineas a cow.

"Mr. Bakewell's cows are of the finest mould, and the highest quality: and his HEIFERS beautiful as taste could well conceive them: clean and active as does. Mr. B.'s exhibition of cattle would gratify the most indifferent spectator, and could not fail of being highly satisfactory to every lover of the rural science."

Thus by selection, inbreeding, judicious crossing, and culling, Bakewell succeeded in breeding stock which, according to Youatt, were

"unrivalled for the soundness of its form, the smallness of the bone and its aptitude to acquire external fat; while they were small consumers of food in proportion to their size; but at the same time their qualities as milkers were very considerably lessened. The grazier could not too highly value the Dishley, or New Leicester Longhorn, but the dairyman and the little farmers clung to the old breed as most useful for their purpose."

The success of Bakewell's work with the Longhorn inspired others. Nevertheless the new breed was destined, not many years after the death of Bakewell, to be outclassed. This was mainly the result of two causes: (*a*) the change in the character of the breed, which, according to Youatt, resulted in "a delicacy of constitution inconsistent with common management and keep"—a refinement which would certainly not have been approved by Bakewell—and (*b*) the appearance of a formidable rival in the shape of the Short-horn, which combined better milking and better fattening propensities without the undesirably long horns. As Ernle puts it: "As milkers the New Longhorns were deteriorated by their increased propensity to fatness. In a county like Leicestershire; which depended not only on feeding stock but on dairy produce, this poverty of milking quality was a fatal objection. . . . The breed was beaten by one which possessed superior natural qualities." De-



spite this limited success of Bakewell with his Longhorn, and its subsequent replacement by other breeds, his work was of inestimable value in stimulating the adoption of improved methods of breeding. The system he devised and used in the improvement of the Longhorn was followed in creating the modern Shorthorn, which latter was to become so widely and deservedly popular both in Britain and overseas. It is fascinating to a lover of history to trace the links in the chain of progress. In the eclipse of the Longhorn by the Shorthorn we have an example of how failure can contribute to success. In "Notes on Shorthorn History" contributed to the Royal Lancashire Agricultural Society's Annual Journal in 1925, John Whittaker writes:—

"George Culley, born 1730, author of 'Observations on Live Stock', (1785) and a breeder of Shorthorns, was a great admirer of Bakewell, and paid several visits to Dishley. He was also a friend of Charles Colling, of Ketton, and Robert Colling, of Barnton. At the instigation of Culley, Charles Colling made a prolonged visit to Dishley in 1783. His example was followed by Robert Colling, and the two brothers closely studied the system of breeding carried out by Bakewell. From these visits they returned with the determination to do for the Shorthorns what they conceived Bakewell had done for the Longhorns. The Collings did not possess a sufficient supply of the necessary materials, so they pursued a course similar to that which had been carried out by Bakewell, selecting the best specimens of the Shorthorn race they could procure from others, and having thus obtained the requisite foundation stock, proceeding to apply the system of in-and-in breeding. This system they probably carried even further than Bakewell himself had done. The results were marvellous, and the area of the breed spread rapidly. Wherever they went the stock of the Collings brought in their train quick improvement in the essentials of meat and milk."

The Longhorn Breed still exists, and in at least one herd is still bred for beef production; but its decline after Bakewell's time was so rapid that Youatt, writing in 1833, remarked "at the present moment there is not a single improved Leicester on the Dishley

farm. . . . There are not a dozen pure Leicesters within a circuit of a dozen miles of Dishley. It would seem as if some strange convulsion of nature, or some murderous pestilence, had suddenly swept away the whole of this valuable breed." He is here referring, of course, to Bakewell's Longhorn cattle, which in his day was very widely distributed.

If Bakewell's success in establishing the breed of improved Longhorn cattle was somewhat ephemeral, the case with regard to his sheep, which became known as the Dishley or New Leicestershire breed, was very different; with his flock he achieved abiding fame. It is no exaggeration to say that Bakewell laid the foundation for our modern sheep-breeding systems.

"The production of the New Leicesters, writes Low "can be said to form an era in the economical history of the domestic animals and may well confer distinction on the individual who had the talent to conceive and fortitude to perfect the design. The result was not only the creation of a breed by art, but the establishment of principles which are of universal application in the production of animals for human food."

Youatt describes the old Leicester sheep as large, heavy, coarse-wooled animals, long and flat-sided, with large bones. The pelt and offal were thick and coarse, the animals were slow feeders and the flesh was coarse grained and with little flavour.

Bakewell *had in mind* a type of sheep which, whilst helping to fertilise the land and also producing wool, would make a major contribution to the food of the nation and to the prosperity of the farmer's potential as a producer of meat. The following quotations from Professor R. G. White succinctly define Bakewell's aim "to produce a sheep which would give the greatest weight of mutton for the least expenditure of food, in the least possible time"; and "though in the process he reduced the size of the sheep and reduced the weight of fleece, he undoubtedly achieved his purpose".

Again the first step towards the realisation of his ambition was

the careful selection of the foundation stock. For this purpose, as with cattle, he made many visits to various parts of the country.

The particular breed or types of Long-wool sheep from which Bakewell was subsequently to produce his world-famed Dishley breed is a matter of controversy and admits of differing views. The Long-wool type came originally from the Continent of Europe, and was characterised by a large, ill-formed body and long legs. Its chief value was its fleece. As found mainly in the Midlands and Lincolnshire, it was a coarse type, slow in growth and tending to fatten only at an advanced age. It had been bred for size and weight of useful long and strong wool. There was indeed an old Leicestershire breed, but, as Scott Watson points out, it is by no means certain that Bakewell obtained all, or even the greater part of his foundation stock from local flocks. No one—not even among his close friends and pupils—seems to have had information on this historically interesting matter. Young and Culley state that the foundation animals were old Lincolns; and, in any case, the Long-wool type of sheep was so widely distributed that there would have been plenty of choice. Low, however, refers to a statement by Bakewell that “at one time he had used Old Lincolnshire rams, but had not done so for many years” and, further, that he expressed the utmost dislike for the breed as being “coarse and unthrifty”. So the authorities differ—some suggesting the use of Ryeland, Teeswater, Warwickshire, or Charnwood Forest blood; others the Southdown or some other of the Shortwool breeds. A most suggestive story, quoted by Scott Watson, is that of the Rev. Robert Ferryman as related by William Pitt in his *General View of the Agriculture of the County of Leicester* (1809). Mr. Ferryman says:—

“About the year 1747 there were a succession of wet seasons, which occasioned a great rot in the deep rich clays and in a short space swept away whole flocks. Some of the small and indigent farmers were ruined; but the more opulent and enterprising resorted to the high grounds near Friday-

thorpe, in Yorkshire, where they purchased some neat small sheep which, crossed with the few that remained in their own fields, produced some very useful animals. As the numbers bred for a long time afterwards were not equal to the demand, they sent year after year to the same market. Jobbers were established who employed themselves in purchasing sheep on the Yorkshire Wolds for the use of the Leicestershire farmers and graziers. Mr. Bakewell engaged these jobbers not to offer their sheep for sale till he had seen them, and had taken out such as he thought would best serve his purpose. From these droves, or from the flocks so bred in his neighbourhood, and probably from a distant cross with the large broad-wooled Lincolnshire, he bred his first short-legged square-framed sheep, which for a time were well received by the public."

In the light of this story, if valid, it is interesting to note, as Scott Watson reminds us, that the East Riding of Yorkshire is the only district where the Leicester long maintained its place as the predominant commercial breed. It would thus seem that we must presume that the foundation stock were probably Longwooled sheep of the Midland counties. But the selection, whatever it was, reflected the genius of a man whose shrewd instinct and skilled judgment were unsurpassed among the breeders of his day.

Bakewell then proceeded to apply his system of in-breeding, continuous selection, rigorous culling, with carefully applied tests of food consumption, rate of feeding, and carcase properties. All these were designed to create and fix the type \* that he had in mind. Nature's price for the change for a time was probably less prolificacy,

\* As an example Young records the following measurements:—

"I have this day measured Mr. Bakewell's three years old ram, and find him as follows:—

	Feet	inches.
His girth	5	10
His height	2	5
His collar broad at ear tips	1	4
Broad over his shoulders	1	11½
Ditto over his ribs	1	10½
„ over his hips	1	9½

Dishley, 17th March 1770. H. Sandford.

some deficiency in fleece, and milk secretion in the ewe not so abundant, and perhaps an increase in weakly lambs. But these were all gradually improved under his skilful management. The latter observation is confirmed by Culley, who, writing in 1786, says:—

“Mr. Bakewell has not had a cross (from any breed than his own) for upwards of 20 years; his best flock has been bred by the nearest affinities yet they have not decreased in size, neither are they less hardy or more liable to disorders, but on the contrary have kept in a progressive state of improvement.”

At first the breed was known as the Dishley, and later, as it became more widely known, as the New Leicester. But in a printed inventory in the writer's possession, of a proposed stocking for a suggested experimental farm in the County of Northumberland, dated 1797, the list of sheep includes, along with Cheviot, Heath and other ewes, item “10 Dishley ewes £5 each”.

“The first and perhaps the most important of Bakewell's services was that he conceived an entirely new type of animal,” writes Scott Watson. The methods he adopted to that end are summed up by Housman as follows:—

“The correlation of form and certain propensities was one discovery upon which he is known to have acted; the fact that under some conditions consanguineous breeding might be practised with most advantageous results was another. Upon these two principal rules all the other parts of his system appear to hang.”

Before Bakewell's time oxen had been bred for draught purposes and cows for milk as a secondary objective; and sheep had been bred mainly for their wool.\* Bakewell aimed at meat production and, in the case of sheep, sought to create a new type, quicker-feeding, smaller-headed, blocky or cylindrical in shape, shorter of leg, finer in bone, and broader-backed. The common type of those days was

\* The Lord Chancellor's seat on the Woolsack is to this day a reminder of the importance of wool and the woollen industry in the economy of the country in earlier times.

large, lean, long-limbed, slowly maturing, flat-ribbed, and heavy-boned. Further he was always of a very economical turn of mind, and therefore a parallel aim was to develop quickly-maturing animals which would make the maximum use of their food, and thus enable increased output per acre of land with greater profit. Culley reports that the wethers of the improved Leicester breed were ready for the butcher at 2 years of age, whereas the usual period allowed to bring wethers to maturity had been 4 years. Wethers of the new breed, if kept longer than 2 years, became too fat. In keeping with these objectives was that of a carcass yielding a maximum amount of edible meat and a minimum amount of waste or fat. In short, Bakewell had the same aim as the breeders of today—an abundance of flesh on the right parts of an animal.

Bakewell undoubtedly improved the Longhorn as a meat producer, though not in its milking qualities; he also gave it greater uniformity as a breed. The need for the dairy and dual-purpose types in the end was met by the Shorthorn breeders who nevertheless owed much to Bakewell's example. "It was his material, not his principle that failed" in the case of the Longhorn. With his sheep, however, he achieved outstanding success and lasting fame. Many of our present-day breeds owe much to Dishley blood; it had a marked influence on other Longwool breeds and some of the Shortwools also. Dishley Leicesters were exported in large numbers to France (where they retained the Dishley name), and to other parts of the Continent. Following the establishment of the Merino in Australia for wool, they were imported for the establishment of herds for meat and at the time when Youatt wrote his book on Sheep (1837) they were the most important breed in the United States.

Bakewell's achievements in livestock improvement extended to horses and pigs. As oxen began to be replaced by horses there was increasing demand for improved types, whether for the farm, the town or the army. Up till Bakewell's time the horse-breeder had

been mainly concerned with types suitable for hunting, racing, coaching, and the army. Culley records how Bakewell was impressed by some Dutch black coach stallions which had been brought to Leicestershire from Holland by one of the Earls of Huntingdon, for use by his tenants. These had sired horses of a very good type and Bakewell, having seen them, characteristically went off to Holland and bought several mares of the same breed. These he used, by crossing, to improve the black heavy horses native to his own county. Once again, by continued selection and careful breeding, he evolved a distinctive type of draught horse which met a demand from the army as well as for the farm. He got rid of much of length and looseness of form, and also long, thick, hairy legs, ultimately breeding a more compact, shorter-limbed and more active animal and for which he claimed better constitution. He was criticised by those who equated bulk or weight with strength. Marshall \* has left on record his appreciation in the following statement:—

“The handsomest horse I have seen of this breed (the Leicestershire black cart-horse) and perhaps the most picturable horse of this kind bred in this island, was a stallion of Mr. Bakewell named K. He was in reality, the fancied War horse of the German painters; who in the luxuriance of imagination, never perhaps excelled the natural grandeur of this horse. A man of moderate size seemed to shrink behind his fore end, which rose so perfectly upright that his ears stood (as Mr. Bakewell says every horse’s ought to stand) perpendicularly over his fore feet. It may be said, with little latitude, that in grandeur and symmetry of form, viewed as a picturable object he exceeded as far as the horse which this superior breeder had the honour of showing to his Majesty and which was afterwards shown publicly, some months ago in London, as that horse does the meanest of the breed. Nor was his form deficient in utility. He died, I think, in 1785, at the age of nineteen years.”

\* This writer states: “But the most useful horse I have seen of this breed is a much younger horse of Mr. B. whose letter I do not recollect. His carcase thick, his back short and straight and his legs short and clean; as strong as an ox; yet active as a pony.”

In his letter to Culley, (p. 105) dated 8th December, 1786, Bakewell offers to hire one of his horses

“If you think you and your friends would like to have him on the same terms as last year (viz.) Eighty Guineas, you bearing all expenses except me paying the Man’s Wages.”

On 13th April, 1792, he writes (p. 166):—

“I have the Pleasure to inform you the Horse and Bull Trade have been very good this Season. Last year, I had a Horse in South Wales hired by a Gentleman for the use of his Tenants, and this Season I have one in North Wales to which they have entered into a Subscription for a Hundred mares at 2 Gs. and Half a Crown each Mare.”

Bakewell’s horses became highly valued and provided, as Low points out, progenitors of the Dray horses in London, “and his example benefited, for Leicestershire and adjoining counties became distinguished for the breeding of this class of horses”. This is further confirmation of Bakewell’s ever-widening influence.

It is evident in his letter to Culley on 8th May, 1789 (p. 139), that the Suffolk was a strong rival of the improved Leicester horse. “On Monday last I was at Ipswich Fair where was a large Show of Stallions, many of them of the true Suffolk kind which the Bigotry and Prejudice of the Farmers in that County lead them to believe and roundly to assert are *the best in the World*.” He refers to removing those “Objections that are all to frequently made to all Black Horses and that a useful Farmers Horse may be under a Black Skin”. The most interesting part, however, of this letter is where he gives his idea of the best conformation of a horse:—

“From hearing what they said at Ipswich I proposed a mode of Examining their Stallions venturing to give it as my Opinion, that a Horse either for figure or use, particularly the former, should have his fore end so formed that his Ears when he is shown to advantage be as nearly as may be over his forefeet, that measuring a horse from the fore part of his shoulder points to a little below the Tail and divide that Measure into three parts that from the Shoulder to the Hip should not be the longest and when a Horse is Shown as Stallions commonly are, he should be wider over the ribs than from Shoulder to





*Plate 5.* One of the sluice gates in Bakewell's irrigation channels photographed with Mr. Geo. H. Green.

“The importance of watering is no where seen to more advantage, than on Mr. Bakewell's farm; 80 acres he improved in this manner long ago, and he has lately hired a watermill, which giving him a command of the river so much higher has enabled him to plan out an irrigation of 40 acres more, by cutting a large carrier trench near a mile long as high up the slope of his fields as the levels will admit.”—*Annals of Agriculture*, Vol. 6. A. Young's account of visit to Dishley in 1785.



*Plates 6a, 6b.* Examples of Bakewell's irrigation channels.

*Hip.* This Doctrine was new to them, but I rather think will have some effect. . . . I have let a Horse which came up Yesterday to stand at Mile End and about a mile from White Chappel Church which I flatter myself will bear examining as above." \*

Pigs were bred and fed in considerable numbers in Leicestershire and were in good demand for London and in markets that supply stores for ships. Bakewell, in accord with his ambition to improve all classes of stock on Dishley, experimented with pigs described as Berkshires, and others described as a "mixed breed sort". No records are available of the results he obtained and, whilst he and his friends claimed that improvement was secured, other less favourable views were expressed, for example that they were "All rickety" or "all fools". That he carried out trials on the pattern of his sheep-feeding investigations is evidenced by a reference in one of his letters (p. 118) to W. Culley—31 August, 1787—to a trial with "tied up sheep" on different quantities of food in which he wrote: "I am making experiments of this nature in the Pig way which I shall also communicate and I think it will throw much light on this important subject." According to Marshall he had "a want of success at the outset of improvement", but "he persevered", and this writer sums up his efforts in the following interesting comments:—

"Of swine, as of every other species of stock, Mr. BAKEWELL possesses a superior breed; a mixbreed sort; which I mention the rather, as

\* According to Thomas Dykes in his article on "Clydesdale Memories" (*Trans. of Highland Agric. soc.*, 1907) horses bred by Bakewell made their contribution to the development of the heavier type of Clydesdale farm horse. Bakewell, not content with selling stallions into Scotland to the Duke of Buccleuch and other breeders, sent north two Black horses of his own breeding which were stationed alternately, three days a week at the Crown Hotel, Linlithgow, and at quarters in the Edinburgh Grass Market. These horses were made much use of and Black Horse blood as distinct from old type Clydesdale came into general demand.

One of Bakewell's stallions known as Young Sampson, a four-year-old, is described in the *Edinburgh Advertiser* of May, 1774, "and is allowed to be the best black horse ever shown in Scotland".

it furnishes the only instance, I have met with, of this species of stock being improved by *breeding inandin*; a practice which, though it is admitted as applicable to the three superior species of livestock, is considered by intelligent men, even of this district, as inimical to the species under notice.

“He continued to send his sows, year after year, to the same celebrated boar (belonging to a gentleman in his neighbourhood) which boar is the father of the entire family: his daughters, and his daughter’s daughter, having been regularly sent to him! The consequence is, the breed, so far from being worn out or weakened, has been highly improved, by this incestuous intercourse.”

The truth about his progress with this class of livestock probably lies somewhere between the favourable comments of his friends and the adverse criticism of his unfriendly critics. It would seem that Bakewell made less progress with pigs than with other types of livestock. In his correspondence stallion horses, bulls, and rams appear to predominate over all other interests.

As Ernle says, Bakewell’s success, together with the increasing demand for butcher’s meat, led a host of farmers to follow his example. There was a striking improvement in the average weights of cattle and sheep. Ernle, quoting from Sir John Sinclair, gives the following average figures for sheep and cattle sold at Smithfield Market in 1710 and 1795. In 1710 the average weight for beeves was 370 lb., for calves 50 lb., for sheep 28 lb., for lambs 18 lb. In 1795 (the year of Bakewell’s decease) the average had risen for beeves to 800 lb., calves to 148 lb., sheep to 80 lb., and lambs to 50 lb. The “Smithfield Club Christmas Cattle Show”, as it was originally called, founded in 1798, did much to further the improvement of meat-producing animals and to this day its annual show, held in December, is the outstandingly popular event for farmers and others interested in meat production.

One of the best examples of the widespread influence of Bakewell’s New Leicesters is afforded by the development of what we

now know as the Border Leicester. From the time when Culley introduced Dishley sheep into Northumberland in 1767 the number of breeders on both sides of the Border who adopted Leicesters increased steadily—so much so that by the earlier part of the nineteenth century the breed was predominant at the sales of draft ewes and ram-breeding flocks were numerous. Up till 1830 the owners of these northern flocks went south for their rams, but thereafter a new type of Leicester, which in time became quite distinct, began to be developed. In 1868 it was necessary for judging to recognise two classes "Border Leicester" and "Leicestershire". The story does not end there: indeed it is but the beginning of a still greater development. The Border Leicester began to be used for crossing with the mountain breeds, first to produce sheep for fattening with the early maturing and meat-producing properties which had already been imparted to many lowland breeds. It was not long, however, before the female offspring of the first cross between the Border Leicester and either the Cheviot, or the Black-faced Mountain, was being used for breeding purposes. Such was the origin of the popular Half-bred ewe, and, for certain conditions, the more favoured Grey-faced or "Mule". What these developments have meant to the sheep-breeders and feeders of the North, and indeed to the whole country, would be hard to calculate. The Lincoln, Wensleydale, Cotswold, Devon, Longwool, Dartmoor, and Exmoor breeds were among other breeds to be improved by the use of Dishley blood, while retaining or recovering their own essential desirable qualities, e.g. as Scott Watson cites, the Lincoln, Romney, and Wensleydale were improved in early maturing and carcase qualities by the infusion of New Leicester blood. Bakewell's Leicester sheep it was recorded "had no rival from the Shetland Isles to Penzance".

Thus north and south, east and west, his sheep secured a dominating position and the man whose skill, perseverance, and concentration had made this possible stepped into well-deserved fame.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### *The Scientific Agriculturist*

**O**NE DIFFICULTY which besets the geneticist in investigating breeding questions with farm livestock arises from the numbers of animals required to obtain reliable results. Bakewell was well aware of the variation in results obtained from individual sires, all of which might be considered well bred, and also of the time required to assess the capacity of each sire to stamp its merits on its offspring. The land at Dishley, and therefore the stock numbers he could maintain, were limited; hence his adoption, on an extensive scale, of the system of letting out his sires for the season to other farmers. He was thus enabled to study their respective performances in other herds and flocks, and under different environmental conditions. Most important of all, it enabled him to increase the range for selection of sires for his own use. He was, indeed, not the only breeder to adopt this system; but he made far more use of it than any of his contemporaries. Thus he tackled the problem mentioned and developed the system of progeny testing, on which so much stress is laid today.\* Nor did he fail to give adequate attention to the factors of environment and nutrition which may mask, temporarily at least, genetic differences. He insisted that the feeding must be natural and not "forcing" in character, though he did not

\* For example the concluding sentence of an article in the *Agricultural Review* December, 1956, written by Prof. E. J. Roberts and G. Ll. Williams, on "The Improvement of Hill Sheep in Britain", reads "If breeding is to be made less of a gamble the sires used should be the result of mating proven rams to ewes of sound breeding."

forget that conformation is influenced by feeding as well as by breeding.

Thus by selecting and retaining the best for his own use and by inbreeding, he was able to attain a high standard of uniformity—good animals capable of passing on their desirable qualities. Selective in-breeding has been a dominating principle in livestock improvements from Bakewell's time until now.

His system of letting out his sires was at first ridiculed, and Bakewell experienced difficulty in persuading farmers to adopt it. With sheep, the first ram he let for a season in the year 1760 for 16s., and he drove it himself to Leicester Fair. In that year he let two others, obtaining for each 17s. 6d. Twenty years' struggle against ignorance and prejudice finally brought its reward, not only through the retention of the best sires for the building up of the Dishley flock, but also through the income received from his annual lettings. By 1780 ten guineas was commonly obtained, and by 1784 he was letting rams for 100 guineas. In 1786 Marshall reports he made "by letting twenty rams only, more than a thousand pounds". His famous and favourite "Two Pounder" (so called because in shape he was like the barrel of the two-pound cannon) was let for one-third of the season for 400 guineas, another third for the same amount, and Bakewell had its use for the remaining third. According to the *Leicester Journal* the fees for one particular ram amounted to 1,200 guineas, "a fact almost incredible". Perhaps this may be an exaggeration of "Two Pounder's" value, but it is indicative of the value placed on Bakewell's stock and of the consequent keen demand for the Dishley blood. To such rams as he kept at Dishley he took in farmers' ewes at charges of 10 to 60 guineas per score. He employed—and Fraser suggests may have invented—the use of teasers, "aproned rams of small value which running with the flock detected the ewes that were in heat". His selected rams were kept in small enclosures, the ewes being brought to the ram singly by which means 100 or

more might be served by one ram. George Culley records: "In the Spring of 1792 Mr. Bakewell let a bull for 152 Guineas to be used only four months, viz, to go the first of May and return home again on the first of September; probably the highest price that was ever given for the hire of a bull to be used so short a time and at so late a season." Of interest, too, in this connection is the report by Monk that Mr. Bakewell had let out a bull for 50 guineas for the season; and that it occasioned the following curious case for the lawyers. The gentleman who hired the bull died before the expiration of the agreement, and his executors, ignorant of the agreement, sold the animal, with other stock, at a public auction. The bull was bought by a butcher for about £8, and killed soon afterwards. Mr. Bakewell, not knowing of the transaction, sent for it, when he was first informed of the circumstance, and as the executors refused either to pay the stipulated sum or the value of the beast, the owner was necessitated to seek restitution in a suit at law. His demand was for 200 guineas for the bull, and 50 more for the season. The executors, refusing the demand, were grounded on the publicity of the sale, and the small sum that was then obtained although "there were many farmers present and some of those thought to be men of judgment". On the trial, however, many witnesses gave their opinion, on oath, that Mr. Bakewell had not over-valued his property, and after a full examination of the case, a verdict was given in favour of the plaintiff "to the full amount, with costs of sit".

Bakewell did not originate \* the idea of letting sires, but he undoubtedly popularised the practice. Low has recorded that

"the animals were exhibited at Dishley at a stated time, in the latter end of July or beginning of August, and the hirers put their own valuation on the rams they selected and the offers were accepted, or refused, without any auction. No legal agreement was made, everything being trusted to the

\* Evidence available to the writer shows that rams were hired in the Romney Marsh in 1706.



honour of the parties. About the middle of September the animals were sent to their destination in carriages, hung on springs, and about the beginning of December the hirer was expected to return them in safety; but if a ram died from any cause while in the hands of the hirer, the loss fell upon the owner. The whole system manifested a wonderful degree of confidence and mutual good faith and contributed in an essential degree to the diffusion of the new breed."

No doubt there would be many first refusals of offers, for Bakewell had his own ideas about prices—as witness his reply to a question on service fees in general for livestock, viz.

"the only way to improve the breed is to keep up the price; for if the price is low, people send any kind of cows, and if the produce fails, the bull is blamed; but if the price is high they are particular, send none but the very best which is the only method to improve the breed".

It is not difficult to imagine the scene when Bakewell's rams were displayed, either for individual visitors or for inspection, by a larger company, for the purpose of the annual letting. Monk describes it thus:

"Everything at Dishley is conducted with the greatest order and regularity, and I may add, with every politeness and attention a stranger can wish for. The sheep are shewn one by one in a place built for the purpose. They are brought in at one door, and, after you have satisfied your curiosity, they are returned by another door, and then another is brought in and soon, I observed, they brought them regularly better and better, so that the best came last. On my asking the reason for this, I was informed, if they had brought the best first, the great superiority would have made the others much worse than they really were, which would be a great injury to them. This, too, I found was the reason they never shew their rams after they are engaged, it being natural to human nature to covet that which it cannot possess."

Bakewell was evidently a student, not only of nature, but of human nature also, and was a practical psychologist, though he would not have understood this description. There is further evidence of this conclusion in the next paragraph.

According to a Memoir of the famous stock-breeder, Mr. Ellman published in Baxter's Library of Agricultural and Horticultural Knowledge, 1837, it would seem that Bakewell did exercise some measure of discrimination in the inspection he allowed of some of his sheep, and especially of his rams. He apparently observed strictly a rule of the Dishley Society that his rams would be shown only from June 8 to July 8, and from September 8 to the end of the season. This made him open to criticism when breeders desired to see all his sheep on any occasion, and gave rise to the statement that Bakewell hid his rams in outhouses and corners. He was also criticised for buying often at a high price single sheep from flocks in different counties to provide "a considerable foil to Mr. Bakewell's own breed in shape, weight and condition". He gathered around him a regular menagerie of animals thus acquired and then, pointing them out, would say "after all my pains and expense see a specimen of that miserable breed". It is only fair, however, to consider another possible reason for his "menagerie", as indicated by the following two extracts, the first from a letter (p. 106) to Culley:—

"I am making experiments of many kinds of Sheep which are now tied up weighed and their food weighed to them but as it is not finished I must omit giving you an account of them until my next for you see according, to Mr. A. Y., nothing is to come before the Public but experiments." "Mr. A. Y." must refer to Arthur Young, to whom Bakewell once wrote (p. 114): "I have had an Agent from the King of Denmark. This agent was a native of Iceland and was much pleased at seeing his own Country sheep at this Place. These different sorts grazed together have a better effect in encouraging the Gentlemen than any scheme I have yet practised."

Another development originating with Bakewell which undoubtedly increased both his fame as a breeder and his income, was the establishment of the Dishley Society. His nephew, Mr. Honeyborn, who succeeded him at Dishley, was appointed Secretary and

Treasurer. From this Society, which he established in 1783, Bakewell was paid 3,000 guineas for the use of some of his rams in 1789. The object of the Society was the preservation of purity of breed, but no doubt increased profit from the sale of stock was also in the minds of certain breeders, and this would justify the criticism that the prices of pedigree stock were thus placed beyond the reach of many farmers.

The principal rules of the Dishley Society, as given by Youatt, were:—

- 1st. No member shall hire or use a ram not belonging either to Mr. Bakewell or to one of the members of the Society.
- 2nd. No member shall give his rams, at any season of the year, any other food than green vegetables, hay and straw.
- 3rd. No member shall let more than thirty rams in any one season.
- 4th. No member shall let a ram for less than ten guineas to any person nor for less than forty guineas to any person who lets rams.
- 5th. No one ram shall be let to serve the flocks of more than two persons.
- 6th. No member shall let a ram to any one who lets or sells his rams at fairs or markets.
- 7th. No member shall take in ewes to be served by more than one ram, at his own residence, in any one season, unless they belong to members of the Society, nor to be served by any ram he uses for his own flock, with the same exception.
- 8th. Mr. Bakewell engages not to let any ram for less than fifty guineas to any person residing within one hundred miles from Dishley.
- 9th. No member shall let a ram to any person residing within thirty miles from Leicester, and not being a member of the Society, who shall have hired a ram of Mr. Bakewell during the preceding season.
- 10th. No member shall sell any ewes or rams of his own breed, to breed from, unless he sells his whole flock of sheep, except to members of the Society.
- 11th. From the 1st to the 8th of June the members shall not show their rams, except to one another. They shall begin their general show on the 8th of June, and continue to show their rams till the 8th of July: from that day until the 8th of September they shall not show them to anyone, but shall open their show again, and continue it until the end of the season.

- 12th. On the 8th and 9th of June, although the rams may be shown, no ram shall be let or engaged to be let, nor shall the price which will be required for him be mentioned by any one.
- 13th. Every member, refusing or neglecting to abide by the rules of the Society, or withdrawing himself from it, shall no longer be considered a member. From what time he shall not be permitted to hire any ram or share of a ram from any of its members, until readmitted into the Society at a general meeting.

There were, no doubt, several other rules which were adopted as the need arose, but as H. G. Robinson has suggested to the writer, Youatt's list is probably that which was finally determined.

Portions of the Minutes of the Dishley Society, which were presented to the University of Nottingham by Miss Sanday of Nottingham, reveal some interesting facts about the Society's activities. Ten guineas was the membership subscription, and this was forfeited, as was membership, if a member refused or neglected to abide by the rules and orders of the Society. The amounts mentioned as penalties for infringement of the rules were large, as much as 200 guineas being recorded. A few members are mentioned as having broken the rules, and one, Mr. Astley of Osbaston, was evidently in trouble from the beginning and was cut off from supplies of sires. Readmittance to membership was at the consent of a general meeting. Meetings were held in the George Inn, the Lion & Lamb, Bull's Head, and Three Crowns, all inns at Leicester, and the Bull's Head and the Anchor, both at Loughborough. A meeting was held on June 4, 1794, at Dishley, which may have been called there because of Bakewell's failing health. These minutes show that, though Bakewell was made President, he was later succeeded by Thomas Paget (a well known breeder and intimate friend of Bakewell).

One of the minutes—for 1796—is interesting as showing the widespread distribution of the farmers with whom the Society was concerned, and it includes the name of Culley. It is set out as follows:—

“That not less than one hundred guineas be taken from any of the persons whose names are hereafter written for their first contract for one Ram, or if two people join not less than two hundred Guineas. After which the price to be thirty gs. for wether getters. And if any of the said people refuse to inform a member of the society that enquires what business he has done and with whom, he shall not be dealt with at less than one hundred Guineas, viz:

Messrs. Goss, Harrold Park  
Maxey, Knotting  
The Duke of Bedford

} Bedfordshire.

Creswell, Raunstone.  
Radford, Little Eaton.

} Derbyshire.

Dr. Hall,  
King, Dean Prior.

} Devon

The Marquiss of Buckingham, Stowe,      Bucks.

Freeman, Hitcott  
Harris, Brewin

} Gloucestershire.

Alesbrooke or  
Osibrooke, Broughton  
Bish, Horblen,  
Boulton, Broughton.  
Codd, Benjn, Glentworth  
Codd, Jno, Ranby  
Cooke, Burton, nr. Lincoln  
Horner, Broughton.  
Marflett, Somerton Castle.  
Rogerson, nr. Horncastle.  
Skipworth, Aylesby.  
Slater, North Carlton.  
Thorp, Owersby.  
Wright, Spilsby.  
Dalby, Marston.

} Lincolnshire.

Mann, Straglethorpe.	}	Nottinghamshire.
Martin, Clifton.		
Sandey, Holme.		
Wilson, Flanbro'		
Coke, Holkham.	}	Norfolk.
Thistleton, Walpole.		
Hickman, Nuneham.	}	Northamptonshire.
Roper, Parry.		
Weston, Brackley.		
Creek, Rousham.	}	Oxfordshire.
The Duke of Marlbro'		
Wingfield, Tickencote.		Rutland.
Princep, Croxhall.		Staffordshire.
Ld. Egremont, Petworth.		Sussex.
Barnett, Asps.	}	Warwickshire.
Chandler, Saml, Kineton		
Greenhall, Milcott.		
Higgins, Stratford.		
Pratt, Junr.		
Russell, Cubbington.		
Brookes, Woolvey.		
More, Thorpe.		
Penrise, Salford.		Worcestershire.
Alder,		
Cleaver,		
Collins, nr. Darlington.		
Culley, East Field,		
Nesbit.		
Robertson,		
Thompson,		
Sale, Wentbridge.		
Fisher, Linley,		
Webber, Bathalton.		

Another minute re-affirms "that the Society of Breeders of the Dishley Breed is necessary for the improvement of the Breed and for the benefit of the public". The influence of Bakewell would seem to be behind Minute No. 22 "Resolved that no member shall let a Ram on Sundays". Talking out of Committee was evidently regarded as a serious offence—hence Minute 4: "That secrecy be kept by all members respecting the business of these meetings, except to the members absent, and that any member quitting the Society keep secret upon his honor the transactions before he left it". Minute 38 reads: "That Mr. Bakewell shall not let a Ram to any person within one hundred miles of Dishley for less than Fifty Guineas, and that beyond that distance prices and all other circumstances to be left to his own discretion". It is amusing to note the penalty imposed on any member withdrawing from a meeting without saying presumably "Please may I leave the room" for Minute No. 12 reads: "That at all future meetings, any member leaving the room without permission of the Society shall forfeit one shilling for every quarter of an hour he is absent".

Bakewell always said "the only way to have capital stock is to keep the price high". The Society encountered much opposition, just as when, in Northumberland, Culley (encouraged by Bakewell by his letter to him dated 6th June, 1791, p. 155) tried to emulate his great friend in this matter. No doubt there is truth in the comment of a writer of the period, who states that the Dishley Society was condemned "exactly in proportion to the rise in prices". Bakewell naturally was singled out for criticism, and scurrilous attacks were made on the practices of members of the Society. It is possible that some of the proceedings were open to criticism but, on the evidence available, it is impossible to form any well-founded adverse judgment. The idea savoured of a close monopoly, (Rules 5-13); yet had these pioneers not combined to protect themselves they might have failed to get a reasonable return for their outlay of

time, money and care in improving their flocks. In our own day seed-growers and others have adopted a not dissimilar policy. It would appear that some unworthy practices were adopted at auctions to ensure high prices and sham contracts, not by Bakewell, but under cover of a fraternity of improvers, and such would tend to be associated with Bakewell's lead in stock improvement.

It is worthy of note that, five years later, a Leicestershire Agricultural Society was formed, as described in the following extract from *History of Leicester*, James Thompson, 1879:—

“About this date (February, 1788) the formation of an Agricultural Society for the country, under the Presidency of Lord Rawdon was announced. Among the subscribers were Lords Huntingdon, Harborough, Winchelsea, Gainsborough and Rawdon, and Sir John Palmer, Colonel Hastings and Messrs. Abney, Bakewell, Buckley, Burgess, R. Carver, R. Cresswell, John Cave Brown, Joshua Grundy, T. Paget, W. Pochin, T. Pares, T. Pares, Junr., C. Winstanley, Dr. Kirkland, Rev. W. Gresley and others. The first meeting was held on April 2nd, on which occasions subscriptions were entered into of one guinea each, and Mr. Mansfield's bank was appointed to be the place for payment.”

It will be observed that Bakewell's name is in the list of subscribers. The Dishley Society was, therefore, a forerunner of the County Agricultural Society, although the former had more exclusive interests.

Rule 2 of the Dishley Society, which reads: “No member shall give his ram out any season of the year any other food than green vegetables, hay and straw”, is of particular interest so far as hill breeds of sheep are concerned. Many farmers today would approve of this emphasis on natural feeding of rams to be used for service. Alan Fraser has strongly criticised the feeding rams of hill breeds as though they were lowland sheep—answering his own question: “What is an over-fed ram?” by saying it is over-fed “when it is given feed of quality or quantity beyond that customary in the commercial handling of the breed to which it belongs”. In a more



recent article Captain I. Burnaby Coutts writing on the same subject, says: "The fact of the matter is that far too many people are fooled by condition . . . it is gratifying to know that ram lambs are now being preferred to shearlings, since they have not had time to be spoilt by feeding."

Bakewell, was, of course, concerned with lowland and not hill sheep, and he believed in adequate nutrition, especially from good grass; but he was opposed to anything which bordered on "forcing" or expensive extra feeding. It is reported that his stock always looked well and were fed exclusively on food grown on the farm. Indeed, it was his proud boast that his sheep had such meat-producing properties that they would do well even when the natural food available left much to be desired. On one occasion he turned a few of his Dishley ewes out into the highways at May Day, for a summer's range there without other food. Housman, who reports this trial, remarks that "the roads were narrow in those days and the hedge-sides were bare; but the ewes at the close of their time of probation were in excellent condition—being fat".

At Dishley, however, Bakewell constantly sought to produce both the quantity and the quality of food necessary for the high stocking that he invariably maintained. So far as grass was concerned—and on grass he largely relied—this was improved by ploughing and irrigation. Although irrigation had been begun by his father, the son was considered to have been the most successful, anywhere in the Kingdom, in developing this system. Young says after a visit to Dishley in 1785:—

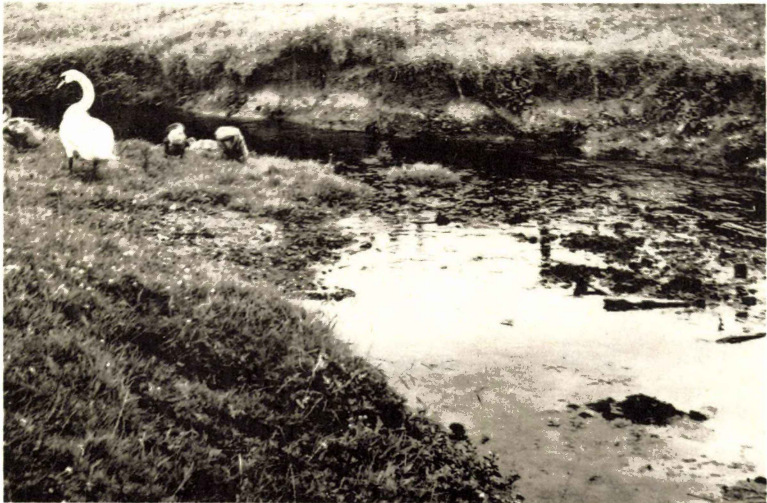
"The importance of watering is no where seen to more advantage than on Mr. Bakewell's farm; 80 acres he improved in this manner long ago, and he has lately hired a watermill, which giving him a command of the river so much higher has enabled him to plan out an irrigation of 40 acres more, by cutting a large carrier trench near a mile long as high up the slope of his fields as the levels will admit."

Monk states that, by means of irrigation, Bakewell was able to mow his grass four times in the year, using it as forage for cattle indoors in the winter and in the summer for feeding on unimproved land, which enabled the carrying of increased numbers of cattle, with consequent benefit from their droppings on such land. In this matter, as in many others, Bakewell was in advance \* of his time. We have for long associated irrigation with dry or at least semi-arid areas, and apart from water meadows it is only in recent years that attention has been directed to its value in this country for increasing crop production in districts of moderate or even high rainfall.

Young paid high compliments to Bakewell for the improvements brought about on his grassland through irrigation. He described the meadows as having been similar in the first instance to the rest of the country in ridge and furrow, with numerous ant-hills and marred by inequalities of surface. Bakewell had ploughed these fields and, after thorough cultivation (which, as in our own time levelled down the riggs), had then laid them away again to grass with an even surface. The so-called wise—those hidebound by tradition—were not slow to express views about this departure from custom, which they affirmed “was burying good land to bring up bad”. Indeed, they went further. Fearing lest the outflow from such irrigated fields would “poison” their neglected grass fields, they commenced legal proceedings to restrain him. Young’s justification of Bakewell’s innovation is worthy of note: “Our farmer has expended large sums in these uncommon undertakings: he richly merits the enjoyment of their profit.” Young saw less than half of the 200 acres of land which Bakewell ultimately irrigated.

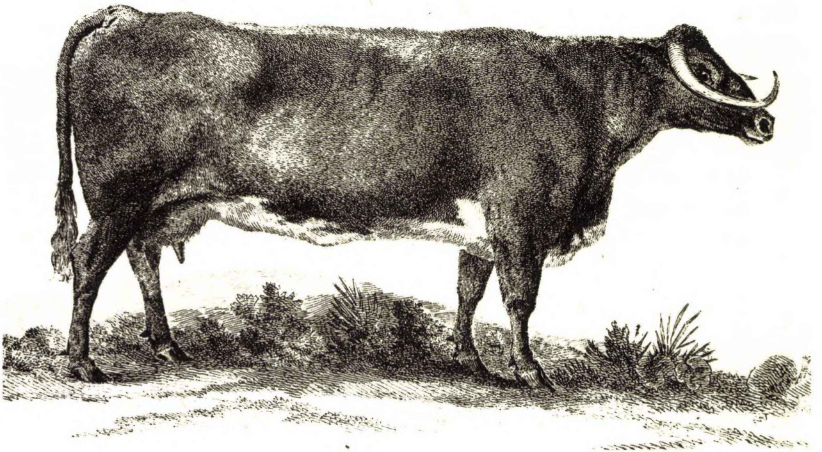
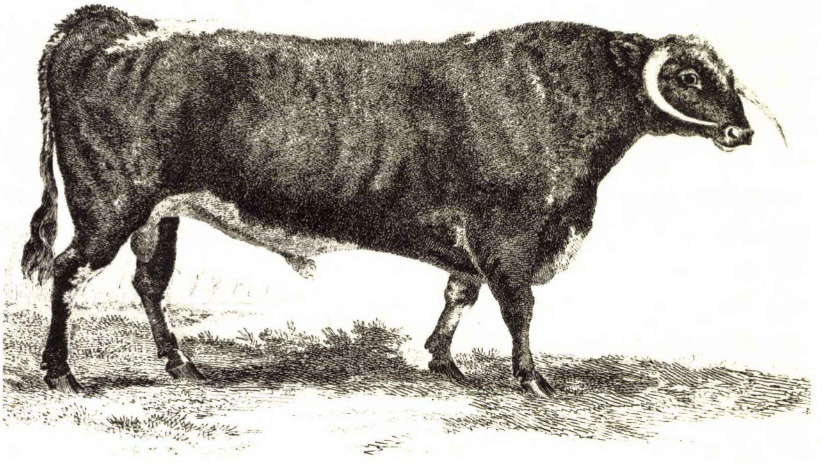
Bakewell took care to clear, to a uniform depth, the main stream

\* Irrigation of grassland is under scientific investigation at the present time (1957) at the Grassland Research Institute, Hurley, Berks.



*Plate 7a.* Another irrigation channel.

*Plate 7b.* Black Brook from which Bakewell drew off water for his irrigation schemes—also adjoining collecting area.



*Plate 8a.* The improved Long Horned or New Leicester bull.

*Plate 8b.* The improved Long Horned or New Leicester cow.

that supplied the water and, according to Housman, used the material excavated for filling in hollows in its course. This process was extended to the ditches by which the water was conveyed to distant fields, provision being made by water-channels to remove excess after-flooding. As in all his work, Bakewell proceeded cautiously, observing carefully the effects and studying the economics of the treatment. His marked-off plots compared irrigation with no irrigation, irrigation against manuring, spring water with stream water, and so forth, and the contrasts were stated to be spectacular. These "proof pieces", as he styled them, afforded striking contrasts.

An extract from a letter to Culley on 22nd November, 1788 (p. 133) reveals his enthusiasm for irrigation and also indicates a further use to which he put the main water channels:—

"What have you done in the Water Way? I have been doing much for two months past making Water bring Turnips close to that end of the Barn next Normanton and then to water the land adjoining which I intend to keep entirely for mowing from May to Michaelmas and giving to Horses and Horned Cattle as may be most convenient. This is a Hobby Horse of my own and I cannot say but at present I am very fond of it."

The stream- and water-courses were thus developed for transporting both crops and manure. It is probable that Bakewell first became interested in this system in 1786, for he writes to Culley, 8th December, 1786 (p. 106), "Much is doing here in the Water Way and the Cut is found useful in that the Turnips are flung in and swim down to the stack yard quite clean and fit for use." The turnips finally reached a kind of reservoir which Bakewell had constructed at the steading "from whence the water may be drawn at pleasure" and used at other times for sheep washing. A development of the idea is found in a letter to Culley on 13th February, 1790 (p. 151):—

"I become every day more fond of Water"—presumably meaning for irrigating his grassland—"The Cut for the conveyance of which will be found useful for other Purposes. It will bring Turnips home (near a mile) without more Trouble than putting them in, but the Tops, Cabbages, Carrots and some other things require ordinary Boating, on which account I have purchased Two Boats about 5 tons Burden, in which I propose bringing what may be wanting home and taking out the Dung in which I suppose (not having yet tried) there will be a considerable saving of Labour both of Men and Horses, also trampling the land. I wish this hint may be of use to any of my Friends."

In the *Annals of Agriculture* for 1790 this method is described under the title "Navigation for Turnips". By this means he secured the turnips "clean, washed and freight-free". "We throw them in and let them meet us at the barn end," said Bakewell. This last reference arises from the fact that, in the case of turnips, he found it cheaper to dispense with the boat, which required a man with a pole to keep it from slowing up. To this day ditches, near the steading and in certain fields at Dishley, confirm by their width the use which Bakewell made of them. It is significant that he conceived of this system as effecting a saving of labour, and it is worth noting that he wished his friends to benefit from his ideas.

With respect to the general management of his land and stock, Bakewell was fond of repeating that "Animal manure is the main source of husbandry". In earlier years he used to store the dung in a heap under conditions in which much of its manurial value would be drained away, but he changed his practice in this respect so as to make the best use of the solid and liquid excreta of his cattle, all of which were housed in the winter. He built up the minimum required length of standing of the stalls 6-8 inches higher to facilitate the collection and conservation of the droppings. He liked to convert as much straw as possible into dung by passing it through the animal rather than by using it as bedding, though later he modified his views in regard to using straw for litter to absorb urine. He held

so strong a belief in farmyard manure that when his accommodation was not filled to capacity with his own stock, he is reported to have taken in neighbours' cattle in exchange for the manure they produced.

Straw, meadow hay, and turnips were the principal foods available for winter rations, and in order to secure maximum consumption of straw he gave limited quantities at frequent feeds. His sheep were fed largely on meadow hay; and his nose-ringed pigs were allowed to range at will because he believed in their value in consuming material which otherwise would have been wasted.

It is evident that in Bakewell's time "the rot" (liver fluke—also called typhus fever) caused considerable trouble at Dishley as elsewhere, and was, in fact, the commonest and most costly of the sheep troubles at that time. Bakewell believed that the trouble was caused not by foul pastures, but by the flush of grass after a flood, especially on what he described as rich pastures. A Dr. Edward Harrison, who made an inquiry into land drainage in 1804, is reported as saying: "The late Mr. Bakewell was of the opinion that, after May Day, he could communicate the rot at pleasure by flooding." Housman and Caddy assume "the rot" to be foot rot,\* but Youatt in his book on Sheep of 1837, under his description of liver rot writes:—

"There is no loss of condition, but quite the contrary, for the sheep in the early stage of rot has a great propensity to fatten. Mr. Bakewell was aware of this, for he used to overflow certain of his pastures, and when the water was run off, turn those of his sheep upon them which he wanted to prepare for the market. They speedily became rotted, and in the early stage of the rot they accumulated flesh and fat with wonderful rapidity. By this manœuvre he used to gain five or six weeks on his neighbours."

\* For foot rot he had his own prescription as follows: "Reduce three ounces of verdigris, four ounces of alum, a similar quantity of white mercury and one ounce of white copperas, respectively with white powder, and gradually dissolve the whole into one quart of white-wine vinegar."

The following extract, from *Farmer's Tour in the East of England*, Vol. 1, by Arthur Young, confirms both reports:—

“Relative to the rot in sheep, Mr. Bakewell has attended to it more than most men in England. He is extremely clear, from long attention, that the disorder is owing solely to floods—never to land being wet only from rains which do not *flow*, nor from springs but in consequence of a flood, producing grass of so ‘flashy’ a nature that it occasions this common complaint. But, whether this idea is just or not, still he is clear in his facts that floods (in whatever manner they act) are the cause.

“Perhaps the most curious experiment ever made in the rot of sheep, is what he has frequently practised. When particular parcels of his best-bred sheep are past service, he fats them for the butcher; and, to be sure that they shall be killed, and not go into other hands, he rots them before he sells, which, from long experience, he can do at pleasure. It is only to flow a pasture or meadow in summer, and invariably it rots all the sheep that feed on it the following autumn. After the middle of May, water flowing over land is certain to cause rot, whatever be the soil.

“He has acted thus with several of his fields, which, without that management, would never affect a sheep in the least; the water may flow with impunity all winter, and even to the end of April, but after that the above effect is sure to take place. Springs, he asserts to be no cause of rotting, nor yet the grass which rises in consequence unless they *flow*. Nor is it ever owing to the ground being very wet from heavy rains, unless the water *flows*.”

This theory of the rot (adds Young) upon the whole appears satisfactory; “and that part of it which is the certain result of experience, cannot be doubted”.

These observations are suggestive of that shrewdness for which Bakewell was sometimes criticised, but also of his habit of mind in seeking to understand the why and the how of farming phenomena.

As already said, he was a strong believer in medium- to small-sized grazing fields and in rotating the grazing of the sheep. Although the average acreage of the fields on the “original” Dishley were nearly 20 acres and above usual size, this was probably due to



large enclosures made for sheep at an earlier period. It is possible that Bakewell's irrigation channels were used for the division of his grazings, especially in the case of hay aftermaths. A movable wooden bridge would have enabled the moving of stock. He did not adopt the practice of folding sheep, for he wrote to A. Young (August, 1789): "I cannot speak of folding sheep from my own experience, but will endeavour to get information from those who can, and let you know what they say of this kind of sheep." A sentence which is also revealing of his character.

He did not believe in grazing large numbers of sheep together, but in flocks of various sizes graded according to "kinds and strength", and not exceeding 100, so as to avoid excessive competition for the best food. How revealing too of his keen observation of stock is his remark: "For it is not preferable after the animal has filled its belly that it should lie down to sleep (and let it not be forgotten that repose contributes materially to promote fattening) than travel in order to create an appetite." He originally believed in washing his sheep in tubs "as immersion in river meant keeping them a long time and therefore endangering their health", but with the development of his artificial channel or canal of water he was able to construct the "reservoir" (see page 81) which apparently he boarded off and constructed with his characteristic thoroughness, and this he used for sheep-washing.

His farming policy was obviously dominated by his ambition to experiment, always with an eye to increased output and reduced expenditure on labour and other costs. He was constantly on the search for new ideas, and never lacked the courage to try them out. He is said to have been the first to plough with two horses abreast; however this may be, he certainly did not believe in the common custom of using teams of four or more horses with a boy in addition to the man required for the horse-plough. As was the common practice, he had earlier employed oxen for ploughing, but even then

he had his own ideas, believing it to be more economical to use 3-4-year-old heifers rather than steers, and he was so proud of these well-trained animals that he averred "he would not have taken 120 guineas for one of his teams of six".

Several references in early writings emphasise the tidiness and efficiency of the general equipment, including the fences. For these he planted three-year-old quicksets and gave them plenty of manure. Monk reports that "he has different small plantations of the Dutch willow in several parts of the estate, one of which he cuts down annually at seven years' growth; they run very long and some of them very large and are split and made use of for posts, gates, rails, etc., for which they are very excellent". His chair, it will be recalled, was made from willow, and willow wood was also used for the handles of his farm tools. A few old willow-trees, which possibly mark the line of one of Bakewell's original water-courses, remain at Dishley today and provide a reminder of Bakewell's use of this tree. Bakewell is said to have been one of the first to advocate concave road surfaces rather than the convex surface which was common in his times. He maintained that if people would only make their roads in that way, and attend to their repair, one shilling would go as far as five shillings the other way—another instance of his economical way of thinking. Monk approved his preference, saying that "the road by Dishley which was made on the concave principle is certainly much better than the roads about them".

Bakewell took great care of his implements, and selected them, especially the "Rotherham" ploughs, with care. For his waggons or drays, drawn by three horses, and carrying one ton, he advocated tyres 9 inches wide. Cooke's improved drill was used at Dishley, though it was certainly not in general use at that time.

His scientific approach, as well as his working philosophy, are revealed in a rather lengthy paragraph in one of his letters (p. 121), in which he expresses satisfaction at the keen interest shown by

some of the oldest graziers in his improved types of livestock. He writes, "For when the old Birds get into the trap the young ones will follow", and further:—

"when a Person advanced in Life gives up an old established Opinion there is the greatest reason to suppose it is the effect of full conviction therefore he will support his change of Sentiments by those Reasons that induced him to go out of that track which he had so long thought was right, and I believe it is frequently observed that those who are convicted later than others are not less zealous Supporters of their new Opinions than those who imbibed them in the more early part of Life, however that may be I take it for granted that it will be attended with this happy Effect that it will cause more People to think for themselves and not take things so much upon Trust as they have in times past, and I am persuaded most People will allow that free inquiry and proper Investigation will throw light on subjects that hitherto have not been so much attended to as their Importance seemed to point out and in which the Public in general are so materially concerned."

A lengthy sentence indeed, but revealing of how Bakewell's mind worked, and of his keen interest in agricultural investigations. Thus we find him writing in 1789 a letter to Culley (p. 141) which begins:—

"My stay in London was longer than I expected owing in some measure to a desire of having application made to some of the great Folks and by them to the King to have some of the Crown Lands which I understand in some parts of the Kingdom are like to be inclosed set apart as Experimental Farms for the purpose of trying from what sort of Beasts or Sheep most can be made of given Quantities of Land as nearly as may be of the same Quality be the same good or bad but I would have the Tryal made on different sorts of Lands from the very bad to the very good."

It is apparent from these quotations that Bakewell favoured State-aided agricultural research, and he must have been one of the first practical agriculturalists to advocate this assistance. In this, as in other matters, he was in advance of his time in the quest for knowledge on subjects which, as he thought, had received scant attention in view of their importance to "the Public in general". He thus

anticipated the time when scientific research in agriculture for the national benefit would receive considerable financial assistance from the State. In two of his letters to Young (Nos. 3 and 4), included in Pt II, pp. 173, 174, he advocates experimental work at "public expense", though he expresses little hope that such resources would be made available.

So on through the years he continued his search for more knowledge, always ready to change his views when convinced by trials of the need to do so, for, as Housman says, "He did not try to make facts square with his opinions but his opinions with facts." Arthur Young on the occasion of his second visit in 1785, when Bakewell would be 60 years old, records an experiment under the personal supervision of a young Russian, then living at Dishley, which included six rams of Durham, Wilts, Norfolk, Dishley, Charnwood Forest, and Herefordshire breeds. These were being fed in a sheep-house, the food being weighed and results recorded. These figures were usually chalked on a slate and subsequently transferred to Bakewell's carefully kept books. It is greatly to be regretted that these records and other writings have perished, but his influence has continued through the years in every branch of stock-breeding, to the benefit of producers and consumers of livestock products. It was in 1790, five years before his decease, that Marshall wrote of him, "The grand luminary of the art has passed the meridian, and though at present in full splendour, is verging towards the horizon."

## CHAPTER SIX

### *Present Day Evaluation*

By M. MCG. COOPER

B.AGR.SC.(N.Z.), B.LITT., DIP.RUR.ECON.(OXON.), F.R.S.E.

**B**AKEWELL'S CONTRIBUTION to knowledge was not as spectacular as the harnessing of steam or the splitting of the atom, for he worked in a field where there had been some progress over the centuries. Man from the earliest days of domestication of animals had been practising some form of selection and controlled mating to improve the economic qualities of his stock, and the animals that Bakewell knew as a young man were very different from their primitive ancestors. Nevertheless, by our present standards they were unimproved. There were no defined breeds, as we know them today, but local races which could be so described because they had some features in common due to ancestry or environment. One can picture a motley variety of animals such as those found now in the pastoral areas of tropical Africa, where the great leveller of a poor environment reduces all animals, good and bad alike genetically, to a measure of uniformity. In the East there was a proportion of polled cattle, because the Norsemen brought such stock with them, while in the Saxon South red was the predominant colour. In Wales and Ireland there were small black cattle of Celtic origin. Dutch cattle, with their broken colour and milking propensities, had made their appearance with the return of the exiled Royalists from the Low Countries, following the Restoration, to make their contribution to the melting-pot from which our

modern British breeds have been derived. From what one can gather of livestock, then, there were few grounds for thinking that within two centuries Britain would come to be regarded as the stud-stock farm of the world, and that the new countries, to be settled over this period, would be dominated by British breeds. There are in fact only two breeds today not of British origin, namely Friesian cattle and Merino sheep, which have a truly international status. There are, it is true, derivatives of the Merino, such as the Corriedale, which are numerically important, but these owe something to British breeds. The modern Merino, which dominates the sheep population of Australia, is vastly different from its progenitors, which mainly came to Kew from Spain as a present for Farmer George, and their evolution owes a great deal to the methods of Bakewell, which were applied by men like McArthur in the early days of sheep-breeding in Australia.

Bakewell's approach to his problem was a highly logical one by present-day standards, for he used concepts which were well over a century in advance of contemporary knowledge. In fact it is only with the recent development of the science of genetics that we have a proper understanding of his wisdom. We may say that he was completely empirical in his methods because he had no fundamental explanation of them, but this would be a denial of his qualities as a scientist—his capacity to observe and deduce from his observations.

In the first place, he assembled stock from many sources. This was a wise step, for in times when the movement of stock was limited, there was bound to be a measure of isolation, and under the pressure of selection, mainly natural, there would be a restriction of genetic material within any one isolate. If one were starting a breeding project today, with the intention of creating a nucleus of genetically superior animals, one would do precisely the same thing, namely, the collection of a wide variety of breeding material to ensure a range of genetic combinations to raise the ceiling of selection.

Secondly, he limited his objectives. His main concern was to improve carcase quality and rate of maturity, and in his sheep he tended to neglect the fleece. Fortunately he was not very concerned with breed points, for the labels of purity which were to receive so much attention later had not in his day achieved any particular significance. All this was very much to the good because he was able to measure progress to his desired ends. It is a lesson which could have been taken to heart by many who have followed, even up to the present day, for emphasis on colour, shape, or horns and other such meaningless traits has often retarded progress to more rewarding goals. In the Ayrshire breed we have had the absurd nonsense of the "yeld" school, while the Berkshire breed of pigs was once nearly ruined by an insistence on six white points. Even today very good Friesians have been discarded because of black at the hoof or a few black hairs in the switch.

Perhaps Bakewell's major contribution was his development of the progeny test as the basis of a selection programme. Quite early on he formed the Dishley Society, in which he enlisted the co-operation of neighbouring farmers. It is extremely difficult for any man working with a few score of animals to progeny-test effectively. When one is testing only a handful of sires, such are the chances against finding a really good one, that years may elapse before a worthwhile ram or bull is discovered. In this rare event there are generally insufficient mates in order to exploit him to the full. The essence of progress is a succession of such good sires, and a reasonable nucleus on which they can be used to maintain the momentum of improvement. Currently we see a realisation of this in the work of the Milk Marketing Board and in the development of pig-progeny testing stations, so that there are large numbers screened and a public recognition of the best breeding stock. Bakewell let out his rams to co-operating members, and he appraised their progeny, so that only the best were used on his nucleus flock. In his correspondence with

Searle and Culley regarding the unfortunate Mr. Rumps we have good evidence of Bakewell's trust in the progeny test.

One quite remarkable rule for the Dishley Society members, as Professor Pawson points out, was that supplementary feed should be limited to normal farm feeds. He realised very well that extravagant feeding on some farms, but not on others, would confuse the genetic picture. This is something modern breeders do not yet sufficiently realise. We have high prices being paid for the sons of quite average cows which have been forced to a level of production well above the average for their breed by elaborate cowmanship and lavish feeding. The Milk Marketing Board has had to devise a complicated equation to counter such variations in environment in order to assess the breeding performance of sires. Bakewell was wise enough to avoid the necessity of such a device, which in any case would have been beyond his ingenuity, by laying down very simply the plan of feeding. This cannot be regarded as a trifling precaution, but a commonsense step on the part of a far-seeing man.

Bakewell adopted inbreeding on a scale which is now only encountered in experimental breeding. In this respect he set the pattern which was to be followed by the master breeders who followed him—the Collings brothers, who developed the Shorthorn, Bates and the Booths working with the same breed, and Watson and McCombie, who laid the foundations of the Aberdeen-Angus. Inbreeding is a tool for increasing genetic purity and uniformity, but Bakewell was not to know this, and whether he adopted it purely by chance or through some inspired intuition we can only conjecture. It has been suggested that Bakewell mated relatives because he could not obtain unrelated sires of sufficient quality to use on his cows. Fortunately he was successful. If when he mated Comely to her son Twopenny he had bred a monstrosity, the subsequent paths of British livestock may have been very different.

It was said by contemporaries that Bakewell's ewes were poor



mothers and that the lambs were weak at birth. This sort of thing is a normal consequence of inbreeding. There is abundant evidence of loss of economic qualities where intense inbreeding is practised. Yet Bakewell's rams were used widely in Britain and contributed to the improvement of practically every long-wooled breed of sheep. One cannot help but wonder why it was that sheep which in themselves were suspect were used so successfully. Perhaps it was a manifestation of hybrid vigour. Today it is fashionable in America, and presumably profitable for all concerned, to develop in-bred lines for crossing. Probably Bakewell's sheep gave a measure of uniformity to their cross-bred get, more or less as a Down ram, today, will beget very similar lambs from ewes of varying types. Uniformity, provided it is at a reasonable level of merit, is, of course, a desirable attribute. Bakewell's sheep must have had a good breeding performance to have become so widely known and to have attained such a national prominence.

A consequence of isolation and improvement was the development of the pedigree concept, and the institution of herd and flock records which culminated in the publication by Coates of the first herd book for the Shorthorn breed in 1822, nearly thirty years after Bakewell's death. A part of the functions of the Dishley Society was the protection of purity through the keeping of pedigree records. It was not the fault of Bakewell that many years afterwards the value of pedigree was debased by a cult of ancestor-worship and an insistence on purity of descent, which possibly reached its climax in the Mills sale of the surviving Duchess Shorthorns, when thirteen head realised 51,680 guineas in 1873. Bakewell valued the individual not for its forebears but for its progeny and its close relatives, which is an example we are taking heed of again in the development of family selection and progeny testing.

It may seem odd, in these days of science, that progress should be no more than a turning back to the methods of someone who lived

in an unscientific age. That this should happen is but a testimony to the quality of this remarkable man. What an asset he would be, with his robust outspokenness and hard logic, on the councils of some of our modern breed societies, especially those that subscribe to the half-truth appraisal of animals. One has in mind registers of merit on which a sire may be placed regardless of the proportion of his offspring reaching a required standard, provided the minimum total number is achieved. A sire can only be judged fairly when all his offspring, and not just a selected sample—excepting of course those that have been the subject of accidents—are considered. This will be the procedure in the pig-testing stations which are now being set up, and it should be the policy of breed societies if they are to be more than keepers of breeding records and agents of breed propaganda. If the ghost of Bakewell could become vocal there would be some strong things said in the places where breeders meet and resolve their business.

The breeds that Bakewell worked with are no longer very important. The Shire is going the way of most working horse-flesh in a mechanical age. Longhorn cattle are curiosities because they did not, for obvious reasons, suit the bullock fold, and in this one feels that Bakewell let himself down in selecting cattle with such an unnecessary thing as a large spread of horns. Leicester sheep are only rarely encountered in Britain now, though they are represented, perhaps in not very large numbers, in several overseas countries. The Border Leicester, through Culley and his associates, is a derivative of the Dishley breed, and it is probably one of the most useful crossing breeds we have. Another, of lesser fame, is the Hexham or Blue-faced Leicester, which has outstanding crossing qualities on the Swaledale or Scotch Blackface. In itself, the Hexham Leicester is not a particularly good sheep, but possibly, in its cross-breeding performance as well as its own qualities, it is not unlike Bakewell's sheep.

Though the direct contribution of Bakewell is lessening, his mark remains, for his torch was taken up by many of the greater breeders that followed. Not only did he provide the methods and the example, but also the inspiration for men like the Collings. Britain became a stock-conscious country, and has remained so to this day. At times over the past century we have worshipped false gods, and there are still some images with clay feet which are brazenly exhibited at County Shows, but especially in the past decade there has been a turn to the realism and the methods of Bakewell. We will need more of this if posterity is to have all the milk, meat, and eggs it will require.

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PART II  
LETTERS

*The Bakewell Letters—Culley and  
British Museum Collections*

**T**HE LETTERS are mostly addressed to George Culley, Farmer, Northumberland, but include a few copies of letters sent as enclosures. George Culley, born 1735, author of *Observations on Live Stock*, 1786, who with his brother Matthew farmed extensively in Northumberland, was a favourite pupil of Bakewell's, and was described by Arthur Young as "a very considerable farmer, who has travelled over most of our English counties and been much in Scotland and Ireland, like his friend and fellow traveller the well known Mr. Bakewell".

*Note.*—The only difference made in the copying of the letters has been the substitution of 's' for the older use of 'f'. Neither punctuation nor spelling were Bakewell's strong points, and it would seem at times that his mind worked quicker than his pen could follow. Nothing has been edited or corrected and the letters have been exactly copied.

*1 [Urges need for investigations on the most desirable size and weight of beef cattle—His opinion of Arthur Young's character—Appreciation of Culley's book on Observations on Live Stock—Comments on season and effect on prices of stock—Invitation to Culley to visit Dishley.]*

DISHLEY,

11 April 1786.

Dear Sir,

Your favor of the 13th ult came in due course. Your account of the Weight of the Steers is surprizing to the People in this Country. Mr.

Poinup had a Cow killed a few Weeks past which he says he endeavoured to keep lean in order to have her hold the Bull but finding she would not he began to keep her well about Forty Weeks before she was killed. Then Two fore Quarters weighed forward of 18 Score each (360 lb.) the Hind Quarters more than Ten Pounds a Quarter each heavier than the Fore Ones Tallow about Ten Stone This is rather less than more but I can get you the particulars if you wish to have them.

Qy. Will not Two Steers as heavy as One of those you mention and two Cows the weight of Mr. P's. pay as much for what they eat and be every way as serviceable to the Community? This matter I think of great importance to determine and much wants investigation which I hope you will attend to also request your Friends to make the same experiments. I have not yet wrote to Mr. Young for which I think myself much to blame but I cannot say I wish to be taken notice of in the manner he does it which I think has made him many Enemies and rather hurt the Cause he means to serve, notwithstanding this I have a very high opinion of his Abilities and of his Desire to throw all the Light he can on this Subject.

I congratulate you on the success you had in your Publication and doubt not but you must and will have the Thanks of the sensible Part of Mankind and what the Others say or think is of little Consequence. I have not yet seen your performance but have heard it highly spoken of by all those who have; vast numbers would have been sold, Mr. Deveral got three and let Mr. Hall have one and Mr. Buckley another who has promised me the sight of his in a few days. I hope you will soon be ready for a second Edition but wish you to see the West Country and Sussex Oxen either in London or where they are bred; I last night looked into your Manuscript and there found some remarks I had made in favor of the Long Horned Beasts which I had never seen from the time they were wrote till then if after having seen what you say I perhaps may send them provided on a second look I think them worth notice.

The Horse was set forward about the time that was thought most proper with directions to call on Mr. Collings and I hope by this time is arrived safe and meets with the approbation of the majority of the Subscribers; all I do not expect he will please.

The Season here is very unfriendly to Vegetation Hay advancing and



grain lowering and Turnips almost gone yet the lean Cattle and Sheep are sold higher than would be expected which proves that the Stocks are small and I think will be excessive dear when Grass comes, what Grain will do I know not I have long thought as you do but have been so disappointed that I hardly dare give my Opinion. Mutton is 4/2 and not much sold and the Beef holds out far beyond my expectation, Winter Grazing cannot have been a good trade.

I expect being in London on a Navigation visit the latter end of this or beginning of next Month but that is uncertain Shall know more of it in few Days. Cannot you step into the Fly and favor us with your Company It will be the right Time for the West Country Beast tho rather too late for the large Ones.

Mr. Walton is gone into the service of Lord Lisbon in GloucesterShire. My Sister and those you know here join in most respectful Compts to you and yours

With

Dear Sir

Yours most obliged Humble Servt.

RT. BAKEWELL.

*Mr. Culley.*

P.S. The Bull Trade not so good as last year I have some useful Ones not yet disposed on and I am affraid not like to be, should any of your acquaintance let them know.

2 [*His commendation of Dishley breed of horses and favourable comparison with Suffolk breed—Offer of stallion for a season for use in Northumberland at eighty guineas—His modest appreciation of compliments paid by Culley to him in the latter's writings—Advice to Culley to keep to general principles rather than personal references—His desire to see Culley and presumably accompany him on a visit to the West or South to inspect cattle—Mention of use of the water-channels at Dishley for transport of turnips from field to stockyard.*]

## DISHLEY.

8 Decr. 1786

Dear Sir,

Your Favor of the 22 July came in due course.

I do not recollect that I have either wrote or rec'd any Letter from you since that time I am glad to hear that you had a pleasant Journey as far as Morpeth and that things were so favorable in your way Edward Porter and the Horse came home very well and I am pleased to hear they both gave satisfaction where they have been I have not any doubt but the Horse both from his Form and Family will please wherever he goes, what other kind of Horse either from Form or Action is likely to bear more Hardship of Labor Food or Climate? If you know tell me what and where they may be found, Mr. Young says in Suffolk but if Mr. Barton who at his coming to that large Farm near Nottingham brought with him a Set of those kind of Horses and yet notwithstanding his Knowledge of their Use and his general Acquaintance with that part of the Kingdom has not yet had a second Sett but has used the Black Horses, what must we conclude but that he thinks the latter most suitable for his Purpose

“We are best of all led to  
Men's Principles, by what they do”.

And a Gentleman near Norwich had two Teams for the Purposes of hard Labor, one out of Suffolk, the other out of Lincolnshire, a country where in your Opinion and Mine the Horses are not of the most useful Form, yet these were able to do much more at hard Labor than the former The Gentlemen's Name and Place I do not now recollect, but at any Time can



*Plate 9.* Robert Bakewell. From an engraving by F. Englehart, published London, 1842.

Dear Sir

Disbley 11 April 1786

Your Favor of the 13th Ult came in due  
time your Account of the weight of the Steers is  
surprising to the People in this Country, Mr Pin-  
cup had a Cow killed a few Weeks past which he  
says he endeavored to keep ~~at~~ lean in order to have  
her hold the But but finding she would not he be-  
gan to keep her well about Forty Weeks before she  
was killed the Two fore Quarters weigh'd upwards of  
18 Stone each (360 lb) the hind Quarters more than a  
Quarter each heavier than the fore ones Tallow about  
Ten Stone this is rather less than mine but I charge  
you the particulars if you wish to have them  
I<sup>d</sup> will not two Steers as heavy as One of those you  
mention and Two Cows the weight of M<sup>r</sup> P's pay as  
much for what they eat and be every way as serviceable  
to the Community. This matter I think of great <sup>three</sup> impor-  
tance and much wants investigation which  
I hope you will attend to also request your Friends  
to make the same experiments, I have not yet wrote  
to M<sup>r</sup> Young for a week I think my self must do them  
but I cannot say I wish to be taken notice of in  
the man nor he does it which I think had made  
him ending business and rather hurt the Cause he

Majority of the Labors as I do not expect  
with pleasure

The Season here is very unfriendly to Vegetation  
Hay advancing and grain bearing and Turneps  
almost gone yet the lean Cattle & Sheep are sold  
higher than would be expected which I prove that  
the Stocks are small and I think will be a fine  
year when Grass comes, what Grass will do I know  
I have long thought as you do but have been dis-  
appointed that I hardly dare give my Opinion that  
ton is 4<sup>th</sup> and not much sold and the Beef holds out  
for beyond my expectation, Winter Grazing cannot  
have been a good trade

I am being London on a Navigation  
script the latter end of this or beginning of next month  
but that is uncertain shall know more of it in few days  
cannot you step into the Fly and favor us with your  
Company it would be the right time for the West Country  
Break the rather too late for the large ones

M<sup>r</sup> Walton is gone into the Service of Lord Pembroke  
in Gloucestershire, My Sister and those you know  
here join in most respectful Compt<sup>s</sup> to you and yours  
with

Dear Sir

Your most obliged M<sup>o</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

W. W. W.

M<sup>r</sup> Cullen

Manuscript No. 1786

Mr. G. Pully  
London  
near St. Dunstons  
St. Dunstons

TO LOOK  
OROUGH

1786

P.S. the Ball trade not so good as last year  
I have some usefull ones not yet disposed on  
and I am afraid not like to be, should any of  
your acquaintance let them know

Plate 10b.

find it in my Tour into that Country; perhaps you may have heard the same—Great Numbers of foals have been sold this Season from 8 to 12 in the cutting way and Yearlings Colts and Fillies from 15 to 22; what more useful to pay rent with than this kind? I last night talked with Edward Porter on this Subject and he seemed to think you would cover your Colt next Season, and another or two of the same age he thought would also be covered and if so he thought it not very likely the Horse would have much Encouragement the next Season Please to give me your Sentiments freely on the Subject for far be it from me to send a Horse to injure you or your Friends If you think you and your Friends would like to have him on the same Terms as last Year (Viz.) Eighty Guineas, you bearing all Expences except me paying the Man's Wages, I will send him but not on any other Terms at present. I shall write to Mr. Thompson in a post or two and say nearly the same I have said to you & shall await your Answer. Pray how did the Ram Trade finish with you? I believe it never was so good in this Neighbourhood and in other Places where they had the same kind as last Season, some other Kinds I believe did not meet with the same Encouragement but a very few People now attempt to say much in favor of any other Your Pamphlet has made many Converts among the Sensible and Intelligent part of Mankind but some old Breeders in Lincolnshire Warwickshire and other Counties are much disgusted and I believe not more at you than me for the many Compliments you are pleased to pay a certain Person you allude to which they think is me leads them to think I was concerned and am sounding my own praises I am much obliged by the very kind manner in which you mention this Stock but should you publish another edition I wish you to say less and only mention general Principles When shall I have the pleasure of waiting on you in this part of the World? When will you go into the West or Sussex or see these Cattle in London? Mr. Deveral said you had requested him to order you a Cow from Mr. Gilsthorpe and asked my Opinion. I told him that I had answered the Purpose very well and that I did not know of any Improvement that would be made The prices of Grain the Newspapers will acquaint you and of Flesh those of your Correspondants Etc. that are more largely concerned in that way than I can give you better Information Turnips and Cabbage pretty good in this Neighbourhood more so than

in most other Places I have seen this Season and was in Holderness Lincolnshire Norfolk Essex and Middlesex in the Autumn Much is doing here in the Water way and the Cut is found useful in that the Turnips are flung in and swim down to the Stackyard quite clean and fit for use, we have put many in heaps.....the same as Potatoes and from what I see think it a good one.

Please not to take example by my apparent neglect of corresponding with you but from many Engagements want of Time and not of Inclination be assured it arises.

Please to make my proper Compliments to all when due and believe

Yrs

Most Sincerely

R.B.

*Mr. G. Culley.*

3 [*Experiments with feeding sheep—Critical appreciation of Arthur Young as a writer—Visit of Count de Bruhl for information about Bakewell's methods of stock management—Advice to Mr. Raike of Bath, who wrote on behalf of General Washington—Deprecates talking of high prices for rams as harmful to the cause—Observation on condition of turnips and prices for farm products.*]

DISHLEY

8th Feb 1787.

Dear Sir,

Your Favor of the 25th Decr. last came in due course, I hope you had a pleasant Journey into Scotland and found your Friend Dr. Anderson in good Health and Spirits. I wish to have some of the sort of Sheep he was so kind as to procure for me if they can be had if not to pay any expence on account of the loss he might sustain in his friendly attempt to serve me I am making experiments of many kinds of Sheep which are now tied up weighed and their food weighed to them, but as it is not finished I must omit giving you an Account of them till my next for you see according to Mr. A.Y. nothing is to come before the Public but experiments Perhaps



he thinks every Person who writes has as much time on his hands as he has which I believe with men of much business is seldom the case I have just read his Account of your Publication and the Account he gives of his Journey to this Place and on the whole considering what hands we have been in I think we have escaped pretty well I think he has great merit as an Author but if he was less severe and sarcastical in his expressions he would not disgust so many of his Readers and his very useful Performance would still do greater good. A few days past I was honored with a Letter from Count de Bruhl Envoy Extraordinary from the Elector of Saxony to the Court of Great Britain, requesting to know the best Methods of Breeding, Rearing and Feeding the best kind of Stock and what I would expect for such communication, to which I returned for Answer that I had not any Knowledge I should not with great readiness communicate and accordingly gave him the best Account in my Power, the amount of which was that the whole of the Art I was acquainted with was in chusing the best Males to the best Females and keeping them in a thriving state For further particulars recommended your book on that Subject with which he would be highly entertained and receive every information he would wish I have not yet re'd his Answer—I have an Order from that Great and Good Man General Washington for some implements of Husbandry which I shall send away next Week Saying I had the Order from him is too much—it came from Mr. Raike of Bath, but for his use, but I shall take the liberty of writing to the General and of recommending some other things than what he has ordered which I think like to answer his Purpose—As to a Waterman I should think it much the best to have a man not less than thirty or forty years old who has been brought up to the business to come and settle with you and make an Agreement for a term of 5 or 7 years as for such a one you will have full Employment with as many others as he can instruct, such may be had in Berkshire Somerset or Dorsetshire, but I should recommend the applying to Mr. Boswell by Letter directed to him at Peddletown near Dorchester or I will make any enquiry of this nature on which you think I can be of Service as I do not know of any Person in this Neighbourhood sufficiently qualified for such an Undertaking or for the Instruction of Others.

The Horse I intend sending down about the same Time as usual and will

run the hazard for the Season Should I change my mind will give you the earliest Information.

The Tup trade was very good and finished well the last Season and I hope is like to begin well for the next. I am at a loss to know who it was you allude to that said he was by when Mr. B. bid money for a Ram but more money has been bid for next than I have ever known in any former Season but I believe talking of great prices rather harms the cause for if some People can not have the Best they will not have another and if the price of those is more than they chuse to give they will not even look at the others, therefore I think the less said of it the better, this I said in a letter to A.Y. Esqre who has been kind enough to comply with my request, otherwise he had intended to have mentioned most of the high prices at which things had been disposed on for some time past.

The Turnips are not like to keep so well as I expected from the information I rec'd this day on opening the Pits, but I have not seen them, those in the field stand pretty well, all kinds of stock both fat and lean are very high and expected to be more so, the prices of Grain the Papers will inform you.

All join in Compliments and best Wishes to you and Yours with

Your obliged Hble. Svt,

R. BAKEWELL.

*Mr. G. Culley.*

4 [Refers to ill-health experienced in winter and of the passing of the years (he would be 62 years old at that date)—Encourages an open mind on possible improvements—Distinction being made between heavy and light boned animals—Mentions death of a Mr. Gilbert and sale of the livestock, quoting from sale particulars, viz “the sheep stock are perhaps the best that ever came under the Hammer”—Method adopted to prevent lambs being taken by the fox—queries the economy of feeding fewer cattle to great weight as compared with more to smaller weights.]

DISHLEY,

28th April 1787.

Dear Sir,

Your kind favour of the 13th Ult. came in due course. I know not what apology to make for not answering it sooner, but I have a kind of Stupor or, as old Cato said, “A heaviness that hangs about me, a Lethargy that creeps through all my Senses”, which at present I cannot well shake off, but hope time and exercise may remove it. I have been so much confined this Winter that from the latter end of November to the beginning of last Month I was only one Night from Dishley and that was at Ashby to consult Dr. Kirkland, to whom I lent your Book with which he is highly pleased. My confinement was owing to a slight Hurt on one of my Legs, which for want of care brought on an inflammation and it became a small sore this was so near well that I went out and again took cold which renewed the Complaint, this I did a second time, and it has been nearly well a third time and have begun to use exercise but must be cautious of taking too much, and as in the way of nature my continuance here cannot be long I like Earl Douglas who when dying said “Fight on my merry men all, for why my life is at an end Earl Percy sees me fall” so I would recommend to you and others who have done me the Credit of adopting my Opinions to pursue it with unremitting zeal as far as shall be consistent with prudence and common sense, always open to conviction when anything better is advanced, much is now said in favour of light bones in our News Papers on account of Sheep which have been killed in Leicester and Loughborough Markets, and they are now making a distinction between the great Sheep and those called little Ones, the former are called the true old Leicestershire breed consequently the others must be the new, this has

caused much conversation on the Subject and I think will throw considerable light upon it which cannot be too much investigated—at a Fair at Loughbro on the 25th Instant two Graziers differed in Opinion about two Cows, One said such a Cow, a heavy boned one, was better by a Pound than another, your acquaintance Mr. Buckley said the other was best upon which a small wager was layed and the two Cows are to be grazed in the same pasture they were Yesterday weighed and little difference in weight, about Eight Hundred each, price Seven Pounds, Fifteen Shillings, and the betts now go in favor of the light boned One, this will engage the attention of many both of the old and new Opinion.

As to the Horse I hope he will please that trade has been very good this Season, One of his Brothers had on Saturday the 14th Instant covered 38 Mares at 2 Gs and half a Crown each what he has done since I know not another was at Dishley at 2 Gs and like to [have] a good Season—Have you seen Dr. Anderson? Are we to have a second Edition? What is that worthy and ingenuous Man now doing? The account of the tyed up Sheep You shall certainly have as we now continue to weigh them every Week and shall do till they are killed, and then you shall have the particulars—Thus far was wrote on the 28th when Company coming in I was obliged to lay aside my Pen for that day,—Mr. Hall late of Coats, died in November last a Young Man of very respectable Character his Stock not yet sold. Mr. Gilbert of (so far on the 30th) of the same place who had frequently been a Customer to Mr. Chaplain in the Ram way, died a few days past, his Stock is to be sold on Monday the 7th of May; after giving an Acct. of the different sorts of Stock consisting of 123 Hogs or Tegs 85 Ewes and Lambs 20 Rams 12 Rams Hogs etc. etc. it is said “The Deceased as a professional Man was second to none and that the Sheep stock are perhaps the best that ever came under the Hammer” much more is said but this is all I have room for When shall we have the pleasure of seeing you in Leicestershire? The method used to prevent the Lambs being taken by the Fox is to hang Bells on the Ewes or any other Stock that is in the same pasture, this does in our small One, but perhaps may [not] in yours that are so much larger, there should be several Bells as some part of the Flock may be at rest while Lambs may be taken from the other. Have you sent for a Water Dr? our Meadows never appeared so

good as they now do considering the coldness of the weather we have much Stock upon them. I Yesterday dined with Mr. Jos. Thacker, who desired I would present his Compts. to you and Yours, this Family desire the same—Pray do not pay me with my own Coin but let me hear from you soon

Beef 4 Mutton  $4\frac{1}{2}$

I have seen the Acct. of the weight of the two Oxen. Query whether the same food would not have produced as much weight had it been given to 4 or perhaps to 8 or any number it would have supported.

I am Dear Sir

Yours most sincerely,  
R. BAKEWELL.

*Dishley,*  
*2 May 87*

*Mr. G. Culley*  
*Fenton,*  
*Wooller,*  
*North.*

5 [In better health and takes a less depressing view of his waning strength—Expects 60 guineas a score of ewes as fee for shearling ram, “Shoulders”—Price of fat stock—Refers to several visitors to Dishley—Their appreciation of value of irrigated plots of grass—Bakewell awarded Silver Medal and honorary membership of Agriculture Society at Salford—Demonstration of handling sheep and of valuable parts of same—Account of feeding sheep trial promised before Culley’s next edition to his book is published—Visit of agent of King of Denmark who was native of Iceland and saw Iceland sheep at Dishley—Encourages Culley to visit Leicestershire.]

P.S. please to acquaint  
E. Porter with the  
contents of this relating  
to the Horse

DISHLEY 30 June 1787

To name our averaging 36  
instead of 26.

Dear Sir,

Your kind favor of the 19th Ult came in due course and I have the pleasure to inform you I am now much better than I have been for some Months past but feell myself not so active or able to bear so much exercise as in the earlier part of life but this is nothing more than is reasonable to expect. Pope says

Nor from the Dregs of life hope to receive  
What the first sprightly runnings ne’er could give

I wish to do all in my power to serve the cause in which I have engaged and hope they will accept the Will for the Deed. Much is this Year done in the Sheep way more good Shearling Rams in this Neighbourhood than I have ever yet seen in it or any other and many of them let at very good prices and some of them for another Season and many of the best Customers yet unfitted tho they have offered very fair prices, but they are become exceeding nice in their taste and I think will not use what they do not like rather than give a price for what they do. Messrs. Breedon & Buckley have both fixed upon the same Sheep the latter used last Season (Viz) a three Shear Sheep use by Mr. Knowles of a Shearling Shoulders will be used at Dishley this Season and some Ewes taken into him I expect

at 60 Gs a Score I have refused 50 Gs a Score for Sixty, but whether I may have the same offer again is uncertain, this I would not have you say much of as I believe the report of high prices keeps some Customers away. I have also refused 40 Gs a Score for Sixty to another Sheep but I know not whether they will continue in the same mind However it is thought right to try to keep it up for if prices are lowered here it will affect all those that have bred from this Stock consequently they cannot themselves afford to give so much—*Shoulders* never made so good a figure or ever was so fat as this Season by desire of Mr. Wright who used him when here I hear he and others will be shewn at Lincoln on Thursday next with another Sheep Mr. I. Todd used two years since but no price is to be put on either of them on that day this was not agreed upon till Yesterday or I would have given you earlier notice—Fat stock has been sold high but is now falling. Beef and Mutton may be bought at 4d a Pound many good weather Shearlings have been killed some Lots more than 30 Pounds a quarter odd Ones as high as 36. One Person (Mr. Cresswell) had only 18 and sold them alltogether at Three Pounds each—I do not wonder at your being pleased with Mr. Boswell I should be glad to spend a few days with you in his Neighbourhood You would receive much information I much approve of your sending a Man and think it by far the best Method The Earl of Hopetoun and his Agent Mr. Steward breakfasted with me on Monday the 16th Instant at the same time I had Mr. and Mrs. Graham from near Aberdeen here they saw the improvements by Water and were much pleased four Yards square were watered from a Spring, which produced 25½ lb. of Hay the next piece of the same size 7½ lb. the proof Pieces gave them great satisfaction for which they paid me some Compliments and I have been presented with a Silver Medal from the agriculture Society at Salford and admitted an honorary member.

On Wednesday last the Marquiss of Graham was at Dishley from 11 to 5 oclock at the same time I had an Irish Gentleman largely concerned in the breeding way and many of the Breeders in this Neighbourhood, the two first mentioned were pleased to say it was to them a very high treat as they had never seen that Mode of handling Sheep and pointing out the valuable parts so fully explained before—by yesterdays post I had a Letter from Mr. Robt. Mitchelson of Colwell near Hexham desiring to

know the Price of the Horse E Porter lends (he supposed for you) I have heard but once from E. P. since he left home.

I have by this post returned for answer to Mr. Mitchelson that if he will pay you One Hundred Guineas free of any deduction he may have the Horse but not at any less price

The tied up Sheep you shall have an Account of before your next Edition comes out except it be published sooner than I expect, but had rather have the Sheep killed before you have the Acct. I have had an Agent from the King of Denmark this Agent was a Native of Iceland and was much pleased at seeing his own Country Sheep at this place, these different sorts grazed together have a better effect in convincing the Gentlemen than any Scheme I have yet practiced, when shall you Visit Leicestershire the thirst after knowledge in Sheep was never so great as at this day, do come and lent us your assistance—To your Friends I have to present the best Compt<sup>s</sup>: your most sincere Friend etc.

R.B.

*Mr. Culley*

*Mr. Geo Culley,*  
*Fenton,*  
*near Wooller*  
**NORTH**



6 [*Letter from B. Sayle to Bakewell concerning replacement of an unsatisfactory ram and leaving it to Bakewell to fix price and compensation.*]

*Went 28th Augst. 1787*

Sir

In consequence of the conversation you and I had at Lincoln and some consultation since with Messrs. Culleys who think themselves equally if not more injured by the same Sheep, I have taken the liberty to write to you upon the Subject requesting you to send such a Sheep as you can recommend to my house as soon as you conveniently can and Mr. Culley and self will manage all the rest and will leave everything to your own feelings respecting price over and above what amends may be thought adequate to our sufferings with proper respect to Mrs. Bakewell.

I am Yours &c.

B. SAYLE.

P.S. My being so much from home this Year makes it rather inconvenient to visit Leicestershire but hopes to do it perhaps with Mr Author . . . .

7 [*Reply from Bakewell to 6, asking Mr. Sayle to visit Dishley and to talk over the matter, with an assurance of his desire to come to a friendly agreement.*]

*DISHLEY,*

*31 Augst. 1787*

Dear Sir

Your Favor of the 28 came by yesterday's post, but I am quite at a loss to know how to act without a further explanation. I have not the least objection to make any allowance you think I ought in consideration of the Sheep not answering your expectation, you say send such a Sheep as you can recommend, what sheep is that? when Mr. Rumps so disappointed both you and Mr. Culley tho' he had done so much for those who had used him before, on Tuesday last I saw some very useful four shear Sheep in the hands of a Person who used him two seasons before he went North.

& what he did for Mr. Breedon who used him when a Shearling I believe you are no stranger to, I do not mention this as having any doubt of the justness of your complaint but only to point out the difficulty of recommending any Sheep for what Sheep at that day was in higher credit than Mr. R. as far as he had then been tried and an untried one can only have his form and blood by which *he* can be recommended, therefore in this case how must I act? I had much rather you would come and judge for yourself—you can put your foot in a diligence and soon be here, or say by Letter whether the Sheep I send is for you only or Messrs. Culley also, what number of Ewes you would put to him and what price you would like to give supposing this agreement had no connection with any former bargain, after which I am fully persuaded we shall not disagree about the abatement to be made on account of Mr. R. Do you know Mr. Collins near Darlington? I expect him every day from what he said to E. Porter on his return from the North. Have you seen the advertisement of Mr. Hall's Ewes to be sold on the 14th Septr. next? I shall wait your answer, and am

Sir

Your Obliged Hble Servant

R<sup>t</sup> BAKEWELL

8 [*Gratitude for Culley's appreciation of his work—Encloses correspondence with Sayle and invites Culley to come and see the sheep at Dishley—Conversion of many breeders to favouring Dishley sheep—Cautions Culley not to lower prices of his Northumberland bred Dishley Leicester shearlings—Cites example of smaller sized sheep making more economical use of food—Brief reference to pig experiments at Dishley—Enlightens Culley on situation of Salford in footnote.*]

DISHLEY,

31 Augst. 1787.

Dear Sir,

Your Favor of the 16th Ult. came in due course and is now before me, I am much obliged by the very civil things you say and the high opinion you are pleased to entertain of the pursuit I have been engaged in and the discoveries already made, also for the trouble you took about Mr. Mitchelson and E. Porter for which with other favors already confessed please to accept my gratefull acknowledgements I have not till since I sat down to write had any conversation with E.P, and the little I had was to know if I might expect to see any of my Northern Friends this way, he says he thinks Mr. Collins will be here soon but did not fix a time so that I expect him every day—I was at Horncastle Fair and returned last Night I had much conversation with the Lincolnshire Gentlemen about Wool Pelt etc. etc. I think they are coming over as some of the Leicestershire kind are now getting into the Graziers hands and I apprehend will soon make such a discover as they did not expect more Sheep are let from this Neighbourhood into that County than I have yet known and some engaged for another Season, many valuable Sheep yet undisposed off and many of the best Customers yet unfitted therefore how the Season will end is yet uncertain I yesterday rec'd a Letter from Mr. Sayle a Copy of which with my answer is on the other side as this is a matter of so much consequence cannot you take Coach come and see what we have? As most of the highest priced Sheep have been cheapest (tho Mr. R. proved so much otherwise) I think you should venture again and not stand still or go forward slowly while others are straining every Nerve and making their utmost Exertions in this line Mr. Breedon will have 20 Ewes more than the 40 before engaged price left to me and I believe Mr. Buckley will

have the same they have disposed of many sheep particularly Shearings for this Season to great advantage Mr. Stone and others have done the same, but I believe it has not been the case with anyone that is not now possessed of a particular kind which at this time is gaining credit every day as many of those who said most against this sort are now come over and by their actions convince the World their minds are changed I am glad to learn you have some good Shearlings I hope you will set a proper value on them and not lower the prices with you at a time they are advancing (I mean this kind) in all other places Northamptonshire I think very likely to come in and will be a fine Field for us as the Breeders there in common feed their own Sheep I have let a Shearling at 50 Gs into that County and others at good prices, the acct. of the tied up sheep you shall have with another Acct. of that nature from Mr. Mandy he tied up 6 Sheep the least eat  $10\frac{1}{2}$  lb. a day made 2-7-0 the largest eat 16 lb a day made 2-18-6 from which it plainly appears the least paid most for what it eat I am making experiments of this nature in the Pig way which I shall also communicate and I think it will throw much light on this important Subject—Crops of all sorts are good, the prices of Grain the papers will inform you. Wool worth about the same as with you much sold both in Lincolnshire and most other places where I have been with wishes to yourself and Friends

I am

Your much obliged etc. etc.

R. BAKEWELL

P.S. You ask where Salford is—a Hundred in Lancashire near Manchester.

9 [*From T. Wildbore on behalf of Bakewell to Culley informing him of forwarding of ram to Mr. Sayle—Report on satisfactory prices being realised for Dishley rams.*]

*DISHLEY*

*22nd Sept. '87.*

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 10th Inst, came in due course and Mr. Bakewell would have wrote himself but is much engaged and is going out, there was a Sheep sent forward to Mr. Sayle last Thursday morning with a Letter to Mr. S., a copy of which you have on the other side. I have the pleasure to inform you that Mr. B. has had a very good Season for his Rams so far, having never made so much money of the same number of Sheep, and prices at present do not seem to be falling. Mr. B. let a Shearling yesterday for 60 Gs. and took in 40 Ewes to Shoulders at 100 Gs.—on the 14th Inst. there was a Sale of 60 Ewes by auction at Coats in lots of 5 each being part of the Stock of the late Mr. Hall of that place, which was sold for 317½ Guineas I think a convincing proof of the high estimation this kind of Breed are held in, a Northamptonshire Gentle<sup>n</sup>. who purchased a part of them the same day hired two Shearhogs of Mr. B. one at 60 the other at 20 Gs. who I believe never gave above 10 Gs. for one before Mr. B. joins me in Comp<sup>ts</sup>. from, Dr. Sir,

You<sup>r</sup> most Hble. Serv<sup>t</sup>.

T. WILDBORE.

*I O [Letter from Bakewell to B. Sayle about the ram he has sent to him—Refers to use of a Teaser (meaning ram used to ascertain if ewe is in season and ready for serving)—Renewed invitation to visit Dishley.]*

DISHLEY,

20 Sept. '87.

Dr. Sir,

On Saturday last I rec'd a Letter from Mr. Culley dated the 10th with a Copy of yours dated the 14th Prev. in which he says I heartily join in his last Sentiments, a good one or none, accordingly I send by the Bearer a Sheep which I flatter myself will meet with your approbation, He was used by Mr. Stone when a Shearling and he has this Season let about Ten Shearlings by him for very good prices, to one he took in 40 Ewes at One Guinea each, and had let him for another season to Mr. I. Codd for what I do not know, but the sheep died on Saturday last Mr. I.C. has three Shearlings of Mr. S. this season and was to have had that which is dead and another for next season all sons of the Sheep which I sent last season he was used at Dishley by Mr. Buckley and Self. Mr. Culley mentions 40 Ewes for you and 40 for himself but if you use a Teaser (as I take it for granted you will) he will do 120 Ewes or more if you chuse as I am persuaded you will not think the price I shall charge a small one, I have some other very useful sheep if anything more is wanted and wish that you would come and judge for yourself with Comp<sup>ts</sup>. to Mrs. Sayle

&c. &c.

R.B.

1 1 [*Expresses confidence in the Dishley breed now being called the New Leicester—Expresses satisfaction that more of oldest graziers are now being converted to the superiority of his breed—His belief in free inquiry and proper investigation—Letter interrupted and resumed two days later—Prices for taking in ewes for service and for hired out rams—Mention of meeting of leading breeders to be held the first Wednesday in every month—Invitation to Culley to attend the January meeting.*]

DISHLEY 20 Nov. 1787.

Dear Sir

Your Favors of the 10th Sept<sup>r</sup>. and the 3rd Instant both came in due course and are now before me The former Mr. Wildbore acknowledged the receipt of and in your last you mention the receipt of his Letter

Now to Tups, I am very glad to learn the trade mends in your part of the Kingdom and I have not any doubt but it will continue to advance and perhaps as rapidly as it has done in this Neighbourhood I mean with those only who have what are now called the new Leicesters we are obliged for this Epithet to a Paragraph that appeared in the Papers mentioning the Weight of a Sheep &c after which it was said this Sheep is of the true old Leicestershire breed, but the truth of this is rather doubted but be that as it may the Breeder of that Sheep is become a convert to the other sort, on which account you may suppose he is pretty well both roasted and basted many others and some of our oldest Graziers are coming in and have given as high as 20 Gs each with no view of going more into the Ram way than saving 3 or 4 out of which they may use one themselves, this I consider as a great point gained for when the old Birds get into the Trap the young ones will follow, and further when a Person advanced in life gives up an old established Opinion there is the greatest reason to suppose it is the effect of full conviction, therefore he will support his change of Sentiments by those reasons that induced him to go out of that track which he had so long thought was right, and I believe it is frequently observed that those who are convicted later than others are not less zealous Supporters of their new Opinions than those who imbibed them in the more early part of life, however that may be I take it for granted that it will be attended with this happy effect that it will cause more People to think for themselves and not take things so much upon

trust as they have in times past, and I am persuaded most People will allow that free enquiry and proper investigation will throw light on subjects that hitherto have not been so much attended to as their importance seemed to point out and in which the Public in general are so materially concerned, but in this who has done so much as yourself or paid so much attention to the cause in which you have engaged and with such liberality and Candour made known the result of so large and long experience in those various branches of business which have been the objects of your Pursuit.

22 Nov<sup>r</sup>. I had wrote thus far on the 20th when I was called away—I have observed what you say with regard to Rumps but his Stock has been thought so favorably on in some other Places than in the North even this Season, but enough of that—The Sheep I sent is not without some Places I would wish better but know not how to alter them, on the whole I thought him most like to please of anything I then had disengaged, and Query if not of anything that was shown this Season, however that be, he would have made more than 300Gs. by taking in Ewes on the terms they were done at this Season, the latter end of which was much the best the day after Leicester Fair 11 Oct. I took 20 Ewes belonging to a Northamptonshire breeder at 80 Gs. and Mr. Stubbins that day bid the same price for 20 more which I refused at which I believe he was not a little disappointed, I had before taken two Scores at 60 Gs. each Score to the same Sheep and Mr. Stubbins at the time they were taken might have been on the same terms but thought the price too high at that time and would (have) been better pleased to come in at the latter than at the former price, tho' 20 more; this and some other advances that were made at the latter end of the Season I hope will be of service the beginning of next—Mr. Buckley asked 25 Gs. for part of a Sheep His Customer bid 20 some time after came again would have given 35 was asked 50 many more advanced and fewer lowered from their first price than ever I know in any former Season—I suppose some of your Correspondants have informed you that Messrs. Buckley and Walker have engaged a Ram for next Season at 400 Gs. and have since refused 100 for their bargain by that Person who gives 80 for the 20 Ewes Mr. Breedon has engaged another for himself only but not at so much money as the other, I am to have the first choice



for my own use B & W the second B the third choice to be made about the 10th of next June, much is now said about the Tup business and something is doing a Bett for a Rump & Dozen is made between Sir Peter Burrell (Landlord to Mr. Wright of Spelsby) and Mr. Chaplain he to shew 10 of his own 2 shear Rams in Sept. 10 Shearlings in Octr. against the same number of Mr. Wrights, should Mr. C. beat Mr. W. the honor will not be great the latter being so young a Breeder and the Judges Lincolnshire 6 chosen by each party Sir Jos. Banks Umpire—Your Company in this Country the sooner the better would give pleasure to your Friends, Your Advice and Assistance do service to your Country for at this time something like a new Code of Laws is forming amongst the Top men in this and some other Counties for which Purpose meetings are appointed to be held the first Wednesday in every Mth from this time till June for taking into consideration such methods as shall be thought most conducive to the Public good and may best promote the cause in which you together with many of your Friends are so deeply concerned, much Friendship and Unanimity prevailed amongst us last Season and I hope will not be less the ensuing, much you are sensible has been done and what may we not expect from more mature deliberations and the united efforts of those who shall attend such meetings and of others that may take this business into consideration and be kind enough to lend their Friendly assistance by making such proposals as to them may appear best calculated to promote the cause—Mr. Toosey and your Friends near Quebeck were well in Sept. last and desired their Compliments as doth this Family and be assured you have the best Wishes of

Yrs most sincerely

R.B.

*Mr. Geo. Culley,  
Fenton,  
Near Wooller. North.*

P.S. What are you doing in the Water way when did you hear from Mr. Boswell? When shall we see you? Do attend the January Meeting, Shoulders does little this Season I have taken in near 300 Ewes but suppose this practice will be abolished as it is much condemned allready.

*1 2 [Discusses price for substitute ram used by Sayle and Culley and what should be deducted for their disappointment—Expresses his confidence in this ram and progress in popularising his breed—Meetings for same purpose, and possible formation of an Agricultural Society in Leicestershire—Concern about frozen turnips.]*

DISHLEY,

16 Jan. 1788.

Dear Sir,

Your Favor of the 20th Ult. came here in due course, but I was then from home and since my return have been much engaged—I expected Mr. Sayle would have forwarded the Tup, but I have not heard anything from him therefore propose a Man should set forward tomorrow for the Sheep; The Sum I think as others were let and according to the Opinion of my Friends who I consulted on that Subject both before and since the Sheep were sent must be 300 Gs this Sum you and Mr. Sayle will settle in what proportion you please those to whom I mentioned this business know nothing of my Intentions of making you an allowance on account of the disappointment you and Mr. S. had from Mr. Rumps for which you have my consent to deduct Fifty or any Sum you chuse not exceeding One Hundred Guineas and I say more that if the Sheep does not answer your expectations you this time two years shall have a further return a Bill as soon as convenient at any date will be very acceptable this I intend mentioning to Mr. Sayle by letter when I send for the Sheep, as to saying more about him were it to do again I do not know that I would serve you better, and hope that the Pudding will prove well in the eating. J. Breedon has a good opinion of the Tup Lambs by him and should they prove otherwise than good Messrs. Breedon, Buckley and Self shall be much disappointed, but I will venture a pony that there will be a Score of his Sons let for more next season than the same number by any other Sheep of their age, he had a large rode last Season and at the time he was with you must be considerably reduced I wish you would come and judge for yourself. Messrs. Buckley and Walker I believe intended to have engaged the best Sheep after I had chose One for the year 89 but Mr. Breedon suspecting their design asked me price of the best (after my choice for myself) for the years 89, 90 and 91. I replied what would he

give; he said he would leave the price to me I might charge what I liked, each party were to be off in one Month on payment of a Bottle of Wine but as that time is expired and not any forfeiture made I suppose the contract will stand Mr. Breedon I believe has disposed of several Sheep for next Season this I think wears a very favorable appearance—I am much pleased with your Account of the wether killed at Alnwick but have seen nearly the same Account taken from some of the London Papers surely this must carry conviction whenever impartial Persons will think on the Subject—I had a letter a few days past from your acquaintance or Correspondant Mr. Hoyte with whom I have little acquaintance but from what I have heard him say and from his Letters I think him Sensible, Intelligent and open to conviction, he wants to have some meetings in the Neighbourhood of Falkingham and to have some of our sort of Sheep killed at that Place—I think such meetings are like to be of great use we had one at Milton last week and are to have another next Tuesday we had a very respectable Company many of the old Graziers did us. . . .

we had a Chairman who called to Order and not more than One to speak at once and he to on his Legs, it was proposed to have an Agriculture Society and Premiums given for any improvements that should be made but it was objected to as some of the B's were thought forwarder in the breeding line than some others upon which they (the B's) engaged not . . . for any premium given for any kind of live Stock I next day waited upon Lord Harborough and had a gracious reception it's proposed to extend to any Place within 30 Miles of Leicester but as yet not anything is determined—the Subscription begun I have not the least doubt but a business of this nature would meet with encouragement should any Person who had Leisure enough on his hands and ..... sufficient to qualify as a Secretary undertake the matter but I fear not anyone will be found that will lend that attention and take such an active part as the importance of the Subject will necessarily require, on which account I fear it will miscarry or do but little service, I wish you would come and lend your Assistance it is a common Cause and in which you are not a little interested as well as many other of your Friends

We have now a very severe frost which began on Monday the Turnips quite bare but dry when frose how they will be affected I cannot say

should they be hurt it will make a strange turn in the Flesh Markets which is at present very good, Mutton  $4\frac{1}{2}$  a Ram which had been out last Season was a fortnight past sold at that price. What are the Lincolnshires worth at this time? We have had plenty of Water and much done in that way how go you on? when does your next Edition come out? all here join in best Wishes and proper Compliments to you and yours with

Yours most Sincerely,

R. BAKEWELL

P.S. I hear Rump & dozen business is over. Mr. Chaplain could not get anyone to be a Judge for him

*Mr. G. Culley.*

*13 [Expresses sympathy on death of Mrs. Culley—Sends word to ease E. Porter's mind that he does not in the least blame him for an accident (probably to one of the stallions)—Mentions his two visits to London to influence "some of the landed interest" in Wool Bill—Invites Culley to come to Leicestershire and then go on a tour with him as he is now better able to stand travelling than when on his previous journey with him.]*

DISHLEY.

19 July 88.

Dear Sir,

Your Favor of the 5th Instant came in due course I most sincerely Sympathize with you on the loss of Mrs. Culley but these trials we must submit to the great Arbiter of all events—I cannot make any apology for not writing to you before for the last three Months only that when I wrote I intended a very particular account of what I had been doing and therefore postponed from one time till another etc. etc.

I am much obliged to you on E. Porter's Acct. and desire you will act as you think proper and inform him that I do not in the least blame him for the accident that has happened so that he may be perfectly easy on that account

Now Dear Sir I intended to have filled this Sheet but am requested to go

to Leicester this day on behalf of a worthy Friend who has been in confinement at that Place near Six Years, therefore all I can now say is that I have been twice in London this Spring the first time about a Month the latter two Months as an advocate for the Wool Bill which whether right or wrong I believe what I said had some influence with some of the landed interest, but more of this when we meet which I hope will be soon as for many reasons I think a Journey would be of great service to you and your advice and assistance is at this time much wanted in Leicestershire, and will accompany you to any part of the Kingdom you chuse to go as I have the pleasure to inform you I can now bear travelling much better than when I was the last Journey with you—I have a great deal to say about my London Journey about the Tup business in which I never knew so much and so well done so early in the Season as at present and many of the best Customers unfitted and some good Sheep yet undisposed of, many Shearlings let by Messrs. Breedon, Buckley and others of your acquaintance and myself at much higher prices than any of us has ever let before, please to favor me with a line and say if I may expect you and when at Dishley where to see you be assured you will give great pleasure to him who is with Compts. were due

Dear Sir,

Yrs most sincerely,

R.B.

*Mr. G. Culley*

*14 [Various visits made which included an encounter with Mr. Chaplin and his eldest son—with latter had a warm dispute over the feeding of corn to sheep in winter—Publicity which apparently Bakewell did not regret given to dispute by Chaplin in London press—Continued his travels into Lincolnshire and Norfolk—Fine tribute to Coke of Holkham—On return to Dishley replied in press to Chaplin's criticisms—Invitation to Culley to visit Dishley to choose a ram—Comments on state of crops seen in his travels—Confident he has taken the right steps in his action concerning the Wool Bill.]*

DISHLEY

13th Sept. '88.

Dear Sir,

Your Favor of the 27th Ult, came in due course, but on Saturday the 16th of that Month I set forward on my way to Horncastle went by Nottingham, Grantham and Sleaford, got to Horncastle on Tuesday, was there till Thursday, where I saw Mr. Chaplin who was civil in the afternoon Mr. Charles his eldest son and myself had a pretty warm dispute, he acknowledged giving their Sheep corn in Winter and told Mr. Wright and I that he would not believe any person that said he did not, I said when a Person would not believe another I always supposed he told Fibs himself, upon which he said I gave him the Lie and if I was a Young Man he would knock me down I replied I laughed at him, after this talking on high prices of Leicestershire Rams he said he did not like high Prices, I said when the Fox could not reach the Grapes he said they were sour &c. &c. not worth repetition But you will see by the London papers that he has made me a Person of more consequence than the World supposed I was, from Horncastle I went to the Marshes where I saw very great improvement by the Leicestershire Sheep, some bred by Mr. Watts Brother to Mr. Codd 2 Lincolnshire 6 Leicestershire shearlings and always been together from Lambs the former not so good meat by a halfpenny a Pound nor so heavy by eight pounds a Quarter. I believe I may say more than judge you of the difference in their value to the Butcher from there to Boston, Spalding, Wisbech and into Norfolk saw Mr. Sayles Farm

the upland in a bad State sheep not well shepherded, badly scabbed, but of this (entre nous) I wish he would be attentive as it will much hurt the Credit of this kind of Sheep as the Norfolk Farmers have got a notion off it and suppose they are never to be free of this complaint, they were in much better condition as to Flesh and the Lambs made a better appearance than I would have expected, and doubtless in time will make their way in opposition to that kind of Sheep so much admired in this part of the Kingdom, the Marshs on this Farm will become a very valuable acquisition and will enable them to finish their flock to great advantage, from thence to Mr. Cokes who has long horned Beasts from Mr. Fowler and Sheep from Mr. Paget which in time will do credit in each kind but at present his Bailiff Mr. Wright is much prejudiced in favor of the Norfolk kind he prides himself on shewing the best Lambs sold 140 at a Fair on the 4th for 16/6 each, Mr. Coke has been making large purchases has near 50,000 Acres in that County he receives his own rents and himself hears the complaint of all his Tenants in short he is like a Prince of the best kind amongst them being loved by many and feared by few I much wish more Gentlemen of fortune would follow this most laudable example hear more with their own Ears and less with those of Stewards and their dependants .....Mr. Barton at Rougham a Farm well managed but there is a greater degree of sameness in their mode of doing business than in any County I have been in and not admired by me so much as what I have seen in other places, but would be little less than "high treason" to give even a hint of this nature

I returned to this Place on Tuesday last and you will see that I have been a little engaged in making a reply to Mr. Chaplin which I suppose will be in the general evening Post and other Papers the beginning of next week. I propose being at Partney on Thursday where I expect to meet many Gentlemen and Breeders of Sheep and I think as the Bale is now kicked up it may be some time before the debate is ended and may have a tendency to throw much light on the Subject.

Should you not have a Ram this Season I wish you would come and chuse for yourself I have some yet undisposed on that I hope to let at good prices as many of the best Customers are still unfitted, do not let Mr Thompson get before you but keep up the prices and they must come

to, however you do I am determined on it even should some useful Sheep not be done, I have more on hand than have some of my Brother Breeders who have some of them near done and I expect it will be a rising market for those on hand, I am obliged to you for your information about Messrs. B & W but that matter has been settled some time—they have another Sheep at the same price—Crops of Turnips in Norfolk very good the Corn Crops there and in the Fens good also they have wanted rain for their pastures but they are now very good and it is expected the Store Stock will be sold very dear, my Opinion of the Wool Bill in my next but I am perfectly satisfied with the Steps I took and should do the same were it to do again. I wrote to Mr. Sayle by this day's post and hope he will meet me at Partney, when may I expect another Edition? How go you on the Water way? Please to make my best Compts. where due and be assured I am

Your much obliged Hble Svt.

R.B.

*Mr. Geo Culley*  
*Fenton, near Wooller, North.*



15 [Regarding further meetings of breeders—Rebukes Culley for adding “Leicestershire” to letters addressed to him “Why not London, Middlesex”? he asks—Mentions a letter he has sent to Leicester paper and London Evening Post on a Mr. C. (presumably Mr. Chaplin)—Controversy and a subscription of £1500 to support the Opposition to Bakewell’s views—Solicits subscription from Culley for his side of the case—Observations on state of turnips, cabbage and carrots—Mentions that he has sold 20 lb. of cabbage seed at 24s. a pound and given some to friends—Repeated enquiry concerning second edition of Culley’s book on Live Stock—Irrigation of grass which he intends to mow from May to Michaelmas for green fodder. Note of some subscribers to Bakewell’s Fund for continuing Mr. C’s controversy—Honeyborn (his nephew) was evidently made Treasurer.

DISHLEY,  
22nd Novr. 1788.

(Part of this letter torn off)

..... Your Favor to Mr. Baker came just in time enough to  
 ..... contents communicated to the Gentlemen who attend  
 ..... ting held by adjournment on the 13th at which as well  
 ..... on the 12th much indifference and want of attention  
 ..... the purpose of both meetings was to consider of  
 ..... answer to Mr. C’s Letter and each person had been  
 ..... requested to put his Sentiments on Paper without his  
 Name and have then read by an indifferent Person in the capacity of  
 Secretary without any mention being made who was the Author, we had  
 a meeting for the same purpose some weeks before when only Three  
 Persons besides Mr. Walker and myself attended and on that account the  
 meetings mentioned above were appointed the 13th being a Fair Day at  
 Loughborough (pray in your next address to me do not put such an  
 affront upon so venerable a Place as to add Leicestershire why not  
 London Middlesex) and as being the Fair there would be less apology for  
 none attendance when the Gentlemen were asked for what they had to  
 produce it appeared that not any one of them chose to produce anything  
 on the Subject, but wished to know what I intended to say to Mr. C  
 which I declined because if I must take the matter solely on myself I did

not think it proper to submit what I had to say to their censure or to receive any verbal instructions for should what I have said not meet with their approbation they might say it was acting in direct contradiction to their Opinion—I have therefore ventured to speak my own Sentiments without shewing my Letter to anyone out of this Family till it was sent to the printer it is in this days Leicester Paper and was by yesterdays Mail sent to the Editor of the London Evening Post but what reception it will meet with is uncertain You will there see my Apology for not writing sooner but whether it may appear sufficient I must leave others to determine, but I could not so well write sooner till I knew how far I should be supported in any proposal I made to Mr. C. could I have drawn up exactly such a Scheme as in every punctilio would have met with the approbation of all present I suppose the Subscription would have been entered into more freely, but one would not subscribe till he knew for what, so said another, another &c, now what Mode so proper as to have these things determined by a Majority when each Member has a Vow in the disposal of his own Money? How far we shall proceed will in a great measure depend on the reply Mr. C. or any other of his party makes to my Letter, I say his party because I believe Sir Jos. Banks, Sir Peter Burrell, and all the Opposers of the Wool Bill think themselves interested in this debate and will support Mr. C. by every means in their power for I saw at Spalding a Subscription amounting to more than 1,500£ to support the said Opposition and I do not reflect with greater pleasure on any exertions I ever made than in those of that said Bill wherein I can truly say I acted from the best principles the Interest of my Country, but pardon the digression—Now if these Gents will support Mr. C should not every one who has made use of that sort of Sheep which he so fully condemns unite in one body to support their Conduct and Opinion against all opposition and both use their Pens and lend their Purses on a Subject of such vast importance and in which the Community at large are so much interested? May we be honoured with your Name to our List of Subscribers, which would add great weight to the cause and would ensure us your assistance should our Subscription go on but I fear its doubtfull except more friends join us than at present I expect—so much for Mr. C. The Season continues very dry and at the latter end of November water

on some places much wanted—much complaint of the Turnips decaying in Norfolk, Herts and many other Counties, so that on the whole the Cabbage crop which wore so bad an Appearance in the Summer will in the end do most business. I have sold more than 20 lb. of Cabbage seed 24/ a Pound besides what I have given to my Friends, drilling Turnips I much approve, Carrotts are much the best Crop this Season beating any other I have seen. Mutton has till lately been sold at 4½ now 4d. Wheat rose 3/ a Quarter last week the prices the papers will inform you I saw Mr. Thacker last Week he desired me to present his Compts. and with his accept those of this Family. When must we expect a second Edition? When did you see Dr. Anderson? What has he been doing? What have you done in the Water way—I have been doing much for two Months past making the Water bring Turnips close to that end of the Barn next Normanton and then to Water the land adjoining which I intend to keep entirely for mowing from May to Michaelmas and giving to Horses or Horned Cattle as may be most convenient this is a Hobby Horse of my own and I cannot say but at present I am very fond of it—I am glad to hear the Tup trade was so good it never did so well here as this Season and some let well for next Season and good prices bid for others, I have not set price of any this Season nor do I intend to do it another I wish you to think well on this matter and let me have your Sentiments in a Letter very soon and what reception my Letters meet with

Yrs very sincerely

R.B.

*Copy of statement on above letter (also partly torn off)*

*Bullhead Inn, Loughborough,*

*12 Nov. 88.*

We whose Names are underwritten to agree to pay Rob<sup>t</sup>. Honeyborn Treasurer Ten Guineas each in such Sums at such Times and for such purposes as shall be hereafter agreed

.....a Majority of the Subscribers—Signed

.....wles, N. Buckley, Thos. Jones, T. Paget, J. Breedon.

.....ker, R. Bakewell, S. Deveral.

16 [Letter from R. Landaff (Bishop) asking for advice on irrigation and loan of a man from Dishley to instruct his staff on Bakewell's methods.]

COPY

Cambridge. Nov. 21 -88-

Sir,

I have lately purchased a considerable Estate called Callgarth near Ambleside in Westmorland. 100 or more Acres of this Estate admits of being watered with great facility, but there not being in that Country any Instance of watered Meadows, and understanding that you have in this as well as in many other parts of Husbandry succeeded beyond any other Person in the Kingdom, I make my application to you to lend me a Man for a week or ten days, who may instruct my People on the spot in the best Mode of accomplishing my Design. Mr. Benson, my Steward, is himself a very strong headed sensible Man, and he will in a very few days perfectly understand anything which may be told him by a Person who has a Practical Knowledge of the Subject. If you have such a Man belonging to you, and will be so obliging as to spare him, I will send you instructions how he may go down.

I am, Sir, &c.

R. LANDAFF

17 [*Reply to 16—Pays repeated tribute to knowledge he gained on the subject from Mr. Boswell of Piddleton, near Dorchester—would appear that Bakewell spent some days with Boswell, probably when, as seems evident, Bakewell's father sent him as a youth to study farming methods in the West Country—Recommends a Mr. Greensill of Cark in Staffordshire—Affirms the watering of land as the greatest of all improvements.*]

COPY

DISHLEY. 25 Novr. —88—

My Lord,

Your Favour of the 21st came to hand last night. I should have been very glad to have sent a Person to have done your Business in the Waterway had it been in my Power, but he who does mine was not acquainted with it before he came to me, and chiefly acts by my direction of what Knowledge I have acquired from the Observations I have made at different times. In passing through the West of this Island I spent some days with Mr. Boswell of Piddletons, near Dorchester, who has wrote a Pamphlet on this Subject which does him great Credit and which I should recommend to those who wish for Information in this way. Messrs. Cullys who pay more than £4000 a year for lands in Northd. sent a man from thence to Mr. Boswell for instruction. He was there some months and called on me on his return, but I being obliged to leave home the next day had not an opportunity of learning what proficiency he had made: as your L'ship has some land that may be done, my opinion is that it will be more to your advantage to employ a Mr. Greensill of Cark in Staffordshire who is himself of a . . . and is chiefly employed in undertakings of this sort. They take the levels, set out the work and have a number of men that execute the Business according to their directions, and I am told perform it in a very masterly way—if so . . . . . I have not yet seen but intend doing the first opportunity. I have no doubt they wd. be glad to be introduced into a Country where from the observations I have made so much land may be done and to so great advantage. I have long considered the watering of land as the greatest of all Improvements and the most neglected, and I think your L'ship will have great pleasure and much profit by introducing this practice on your own Estate as it may from your example teach others what may be done.

R.B.

18 [Concerning challenge to have comparison made between two rams of Mr. C's own breeding and two of Bakewell's rams to ascertain value of Old Lincoln and New Leicester—Apparently Bakewell had refused challenge for reasons given in letter—How controversy arose in first instance—His reluctance to bear the responsibility and cost continuing the controversy without the aid of other interested people—Appreciation of Boswell's industry in irrigation work—fear of frost damage to turnips in absence of covering of snow.]

DISHLEY, 29 Dec. 1788

Dear Sir

Your favor of the 15th Instant came in due course and is now before me at the contents of which I cannot say but I am a little surprised You say "Only many think and I do not deny but I incline to the same way of thinking Viz to have boldly and fairly accepted of the challenge" &c. &c. please to recollect what the challenge was, was it not to shew two Rams of Mr. Cs own breeding and then in his own possession against any two I had to have them weighed alive killed &c would this in any respect ascertain the value of the old Lincoln and new Leicester as it is well known Mr. C has had Rams from the Teeswater side from Warwickshire, Leicestershire and I believe other Counties, now as Mr C frequently keeps his Shearlings without doing any business the first year, had I accepted his challenge was he not at liberty to have laid by two of these of any kind he had let them be kept from business the second year have every indulgence of Corn Cakes &c. and then on the 5th July brought to Lincoln to be weighed Wool Fat and Carcase against the most compleat Sheep of the new Leicestershire that you or any other Person has yet produced, had his sheep with all the treatment above mentioned had more Wool, more fat and weighed any more in the Carcase and viewed by the Lincolnshire Breeders would they not have determined in his favor and consequently have published such determination to all the World?

You again say "We can have no conception of his excelling you in fat and form, if such thing was possible it is more than time we were all undeceived If you are really afraid that he Mr C has a chance to beat you in these essentials he must have stole them from your sort and in that case you have a right to object to any but the old Lincolnshire blood at any

rate and in every point of view it is my humble tho pointed opinion that you should have candidly accepted the Challenge under certain Stipulations"—Now my good Friend permit me to ask you when where and by whom should these Stipulations be made? as I mentioned in my last that Mr. C in my Opinion would be supported by his Friends was it not prudent in me to consult mine and know what support I had reason to expect? In another part you say "You best know how the matter first took place" I must say that had I your Sheep and matters gone so far I certainly would have tryed it out or never begun it, Your Sheep &c." Do not know how it began? was it not from my going into his pasture at Wrangle that occasioned the first Letter and Answer, and the Shew at Partney the second? You say again "Your Sheep needed nor do I trust do need Newspaper Cavils to set of their Merit, possibly the other may or at least once did" &c. &c. My Sheep I flatter myself never were so high in the Opinion of the best Breeders as at this time then why should I fight a Shadow or play a Game when I have a chance to lose but none to win? Is not Mr. Culley and his Northern Friends more interested in this debate than any other Persons? are not the Numbers bred greater with you than in most parts of the Kingdom therefore of more consequence to those that are in possession of and wish to extend this kind of Sheep here their Credit is so well established that anything which can be said against them will have little effect therefore I consider myself not so much interested in this debate as some People may imagine, the expence of Letters already exceeds Five Pounds and should the Controversy go on as I suppose it will do the Case will cost us much more. Should there be Exhibitions of Sheep at different times in different parts of the Kingdom and should there be proposals made that the quantity of food consumed by each sort should be ascertained by whom are these expences with others such as conveyance attendance &c be defrayed? by whom are proposals to be made and if some Company is not formed and Subscriptions made can it be supposed any one Person will take the whole upon himself and singly stand the Butt of a whole Kingdom I candidly own it is more than I think incumbent on me at my time of life, yet I shall be glad to serve a cause I have so much at heart by taking any part I ought to do in conjunction with such others as any regular formed Committee shall appoint but I

almost say not otherwise this you will please to consider and act as is most agreeable to your own suggestions on this Subject

I do not wonder at your not having received an answer from Mr. Boswell as he has done the same by me he has many engagements on hand should advise you to write again as his correspondence is worth cultivating, my Letter and answer to the Bp of Landaff I send you on the other side and hope you will acquit me of what you lay to my charge the frost severe and not any snow to cover the Turnips I fear they will be much hurt.

Yrs most sincerely,  
R.B.

*Mr. G. Culley.*

*19 [Bakewell's description of the kind of horse he favours and answer to critics of his Black horses—Further comparison with Suffolk breed—His practice of not fixing any price for rams but asking customers to bid—Observations on market trends and effect of shortage of hay—Intends visiting House of Commons and then into Hampshire to see Horned Sheep—Mentions a scheme for sheep testing Experimental Farm in that county.]*

SWAN INN,  
Lad Lane, LONDON.  
8 May 1789.

Dear Sir

Your Favor of the 29th Ult. came here by Yesterday's Post another some time past I rec'd the receipt of which I am ashamed to say I have not acknowledged and hope you will pardon for be assured you cannot be more desirous of continuing the Correspondence between us than I am tho appearances I must confess are against me and which (as you have done before) I flatter myself you will overlook. I am obliged to you for the favorable account of Ed. Porter and his Horse which think will in time remove those objections that are too frequently made to all black Horses and that a usefull Farmers Horse may be under a black Skin—on Monday last I was at Ipswich Fair where was a large Shew of Stallions,



many of them of the true Suffolk kind which the Bigotry and Prejudice of the Farmers in that Country lead them to believe and roundly to assert are the best in the World, and a few days past I saw one advertisement in a Welch Paper offering a Premium of 20 Gs. for He that should shew the best Stallion the preference would be given to a Suffolk Punch but a Certificate must be produced that he was of that kind, this advertisement surely was drawn up on the other side of the Water or why prefer Blood to form or action? from hearing what they said at Ipswich I proposed a Mode of examining their Stallions venturing to give it as my Opinion that a Horse either for figure or use, particularly the former, should have his fore end so formed that his Ears when he is shewn to advantage be as nearly as may be over his fore feet, that measuring a Horse from the fore part of his shoulder points to a little below the Tail and divide that measure in to three parts that from the Shoulders to the Hip should not be the longest and when a Horse is shewn as Stallions commonly are he should be wider over the ribs than from Shoulder to Hip, this Doctrine was new to them but I rather think will have some effect I forgot your description of a Horse or probably might have availed myself of it. I have let a Horse which came up Yesterday to stand at Mile end about a Mile from White Chappel Church which I flatter myself will bear examining as above.

As to the Sheep I do not recollect any more about them than what you mention of Mr. Gibsons Comission and how it was executed I have not any knowledge of Mr. Donkin or any Person for him ever having any Sheep from Dishley.

The Tup trade wears a very favorable appearance at present and there is the greatest probability of the best being done very well Messrs. Breedon and Buckley & Self have each of us done some for next Season, Mr. Breedon has engaged with me for three Seasons to come, pray come and see what is doing and lend us your assistance as much yet wants to be done, last Season I did not fix the price of anything but let my Customers bid what they liked, this I think by far the most eligible Mode and I much wish it to be practiced by all those that have any concern with the Dishley breed—the Horse and Bull trade not so much advanced as the Tup trade yet on the whole not much reason to complain—The Flesh Marketts

here are full and not sold so high as was expected some time past and whether as Fish and Gardeners ware will be coming in there will be any advance is uncertain tho the Grass Beasts must be very backward, great quantities of Pork from many quarters consequently badly sold this has had great effect on Beef & Mutton Butchers have gained much both by Beef and Mutton particularly by the latter Lean Stock has been sold lower than last year but it is expected will advance as few People would buy for want of Hay the Drovers on Epping Forest have had a bad trade and bought their Hay at upwards of four Pounds a Load here some has been sold at 5 Gs. and Straw at upwards of 4£ a Tonn

13 May, 89.

I left your Letter this morning with my Nephew therefore will say more in my next. I am going to the House of Commons this afternoon suppose I shall be back at Dishley in about a Week but what road I shall go is uncertain I thought thro' Hampshire amongst the Horned Sheep a Scheme is in contemplation to have an experimental Farm for trying the merits of each Kind of Sheep &c. give me your thoughts on this Subject.

Yrs. R.B.

*Mr. G. Culley.*

20 [("Mr. C") Charles Chaplin's notice of exhibition of his sheep at Horncastle Fair and challenge to any breeder to compete with him.]

RAMS

Many unwarrantable things having been said of my Stock and the management of it, I hereby give notice that I shall produce at Horncastle Fair the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June next, Twenty One Rams, one third of which will be old Sheep. One third Shearlings, and one third Hogs; that shall have been washed precisely ten days before, to be there clipped and to be subject to any experiment that may be made upon the fleeces and carcases, against any breeder that may be inclined to enter into competition with them and produce the like number, to be subject to the same experiments, and that the same Sheep shall be shewn again at the next Michaelmas Ram Shew— at Lincoln against any that may be produced in competition with them at Horncastle.

CHARLES CHAPLIN.

21 [*Account of visit to London to interview influential persons to urge that certain Crown Lands be set aside for Experimental Farms with special reference to livestock experiments—Asks Culley to take the lead in this cause, as Bakewell feels he is too old to accept major responsibility—Influence of a clergyman farming in Suffolk on the neighbouring farmers, especially regarding drilling v. broadcast sowing—Purchase of a particular drill for himself and recommends Culley to do the same—Amusing incident connected with change of seed—Generous tribute to Mr. C. for his latest address to Public—Contacts with peers interested in farming.*]

Dishley 30 May 89.

Dear Sir

My stay in London was longer than I expected owing in some measure to a desire of having application made to some of the great Folks and by them to the King to have some of the Crown Lands (which I understand in some parts of the Kingdom are like to be inclosed) set apart as experimental Farms for the purpose of trying from what sort of Beasts or Sheep most can be made of giving quantities of land as nearly as may be of the same quality be the same good or bad but I would have the tryal made on

different sorts of Lands from very bad to very good the proposal seems to meet with general approbation and if some Young active Persons will undertake to form a Plan and attend the execution much good may result therefrom but I fear that it is too much to expect unless a Mr. Culley will stand forward and take upon him and some of his Friends this important business to which I shall be happy to lend all the assistance in my power but at my time of life cannot act as a Principal however well I may wish to the cause I was as I informed you in my last in Suffolk after that in Surry & Sussex in the former County on a Farm of 700 Acres lately purchased by a Clergyman who occupies a Farm of 300 Acres of light Land in Suffolk on which he practiced the Husbandry of that Country with the addition of Mr. Cooks Drill Machine on his entering upon his new purchase about three years past the whole whereof or as much so as on any farm I have yet seen is a very strong cold Clay which he was determined should be treated in the Suffolk way for which purpose he had both Men and Horses from thence also implements of Husbandry with which he has done wonders indeed in the Drill way particularly, by which he has converted many of his Neighbours who like Farmers in the other Counties are too tenacious of their old Opinions, on every Field he sows a small quantity of land broadcast and One of his Neighbours who suspected he was too partial to the Drill said if he would permit him to find and prepare his own seed and give him leave to sow it himself he would beat the Drill and would do it for any Sum accordingly a bett of 6 Dozen of wine was laid his Neighbour chose an Acre in the middle of the field and treated it in his own way the other was drilled and it did at the time I saw it appear much in favor of the latter the price of Machine 12-12-0 to be had of the Revd. Mr. Cook No 9 White Lion Yard Oxford Street London which I strongly recommend you to make a trial of as being fully persuaded great will be the advantage a Neighbour of mine bought one your Friend Mr. Walker another and I a third with which I intend.....

.....  
 You cannot well entertain a high Opinion of Mr. Boswell than I do I will not dispute with you as to the propriety of changing seed neither do I profess myself to have had much experience in that business but I have been told a Person sold his Barley to a Merchant about 20 Miles from the

place where it grew and made a practice for many Years of having a small quantity from the said Merchant by way of change the Farmer attended the putting up of his own Barley and lost his Sleeve Button in sowing that he had from the Merchant the Button was found excellent change but you know there are more Gotham men(?) live in the County of Nottingham—But what do you say of the Spirited and very liberal manner in which Mr. C. has addressed the Public tho on former occasions I have not admired his manner of writing yet I think this will do him great Cred with every Person of Candour and Ingenuity a Meeting is intended to be held at Lough on Thursday next to consider of the propriety of sending some Two or three year old Wethers to be shewn in their Wool shorn and then killed I think you should attend also Mr. Collins and some other of your Friends also with Sheep if you are prepared for it, as to taking Rams not any Breeder in this Neighbourhood will think of it but if they take Wethers it will draw a vast Number of People from different and distant parts of the Country.

About 12 Miles from London on the Epsom Road lives Mr. Logan whom I suppose you know also his Brothers he proposes meeting them here to look at the Rams as he thinks this kind may be introduced into Surry He says his Brothers made a great mistake in leaving the Sheep they bid money for some Years ago, when shall we see you in Leicestershire? come and lend your assistance much remains to be done Markets for Flesh in London were very dull till Monday the 15th which was a very good One that I saw and Friday following I was told still better I came by the Earl of Essex, Lord Clarendons a great Pig breeder and Grazier of these feeds 120 or more every year, then to the Marquess of Buckingham whose Steward was a Customer last Season, called at the Duke of Graftons whose Steward is also coming over in favor of this kind of Sheep. I came here on Monday last and find our meat Markets are better than they have been a prospect of great Crops both of Grass and Grain except wheat which in some is very thin, do not be too severe on Messrs Mickles if they were not the Inventors have they made improvements? Ive not yet seen M<sup>r</sup> Youngs account but will look for it.

Best Compts where due,

R.B.

22 [*Willingness to oblige Culley's friends with information—example of his prudence in advice to them regarding seeking knowledge from Mr. Chaplin—Plan for a company to be formed to hire his Dishley rams—Asks for Culley's opinion of plan—Details experiences of selling cattle on bidding method—Commends his methods in Tup Trade but tells Culley to adopt whatever method he feels is likely to be best for his area.*]

SPILSBY,

23 June 1789.

Dear Sir,

Mr. Sayles favor of the 6th Instant I send by Mr. Potts in company with Mr. Robson at Horncastle on Sunday last they came to Nottingham and there were informed Mr. Stubbings and Self were gone to that place (Horncastle), give my leave to apprise you I shall do everything in my power to oblige Mr. Culleys Friends, but have had very little conversation with them as it was thought most prudent for them not to appear as my acquaintance as that would deprive them of gaining that information which otherwise they might obtain from the Lincolnshire Breeders for this purpose they were instructed to interrogate Messrs. Chaplains who yesterday shewed 7 Hogs 11 Shearlings and 9 aged Sheep but did not chuse to have them shorn at Horncastle I did not handle any of them or speak to Messrs. C.C. Messrs. Stubbings and Stone requested to know where they would be shorn and might be seen Mr. C replied he did not chuse to have then seen soon after shearing Mr Potts appeared in character of one who wished to be a Customer the Plan succeeded and he and Mr. Robson went home with Mr. C.C. Jun<sup>r</sup>. last night and when they had seen and heard all they would are to come to Louth where I am to meet them tonight if they are there, if not to wait for them and see the Market tomorrow where we shall go from thence is at present uncertain I had the pleasure to learn by them that the Indisposition mentioned in Mr. Sayles Letter is removed and that you was able to attend the markt at Morpeth I believe I need not tell you I wish your health may be long established for the benefit of your own Family as well as that of the Public at large.

Last week more was done in the Tup way and at higher prices by my

Friends and myself than I have yet known so early in the Season Mr. Breedon for this Season joins Messrs. Bettison and Buckley and some other Partners they have liberty to take in to those two sheer Rams they have fixed upon and an aged Ram is reserved for the present in case of loss of any of the others this agreement removes some little disputes that have arisen between the above mentioned Gents and Messrs. Stone and Stubbings with regard to Mr. Breedon fixing upon a Shear hog they engaged about last Michaelmas (then a Lamb) so that all parties now seem pleased and are very anxious to engage the best Sheep for another Season as the young Sheep please most I do not chuse to make any further engagements at present but have desired time to concoct a Plan in which some ten more or less of my Friends may be concerned as a Company and give me such a Sum as shall be agreed upon for the use of all my Rams they taking what they chuse for their own use and having what I can let all the others for I wish you would favor me with your Sentiments on this Subject for I do not intend to enter into any such agreement hastily but if it is entered into I should think it right to be for a term of Years or for my life—I believe I shall continue the mode of not setting price and most strongly recommend it to you both at home and at Markett as I am fully persuaded it is for the mutuall advantage of both parties last Week I took 12 Cows to Belton some of them very selling others quite the reverse practised the above method which I supposed would have made a great Bustle but they came in to it very readily and I never would make more of 6 little Cows than 110 $\text{£}$  I was bid 108 then 109 then 110 by two People I had reason afterwards to believe they were both concerned in the purchase I had two customers bid 17 $\text{£}$  for another Cow of which I made no more than  $\text{£}17-5-0$  this is coming at peoples opinion in a short time Mr. Stone had a Butcher advanced 3 $\text{£}$  from his first bidding for one beast and the Person who stood next to him abated 3 $\text{£}$  each in four Beasts from the price he first asked in short I never did so much business in so little time or with so little trouble as selling the abovementioned Beasts. After settling the conditions with Messrs. Buckley and Breedon I believe the price was agreed upon in less than Ten minutes—Upon hearing what I said of the Stock from the Ram I sent you Mr. Potts said he would write to engage the refusal of some of the Shearlings to which I have not any

objection but hope you will think of a valuable consideration for them both from him and your other customers as the Tup trade never yet bore so favorable an appearance as at present and I will endeavour to prepare Mr. Potts to give a good price and hope not to be disappointed remember there is a spirit in your countrymen if you will feel for it in a proper manner by what may be done in my way of letting them for one Season and if you find it will not do then take the old method or any other you think better calculated to have the desired effect I was not sensible of being so near the end of my paper therefore can only say I am yours, &c. &c

R.B.

*Mr. G. Culley,  
Fenton, Wooller, North.*

*23 [States his belief that the highest-priced rams have been the cheapest—Example of one of his servants selling old horse by bidding method—Brief mention of his unsatisfactory financial condition and favourable turn in this respect—Affairs of the Dishley Society—Passes on report that Irish very much prejudiced against the English sheep—Comments on state of crops.]*

*DISHLEY 18 Nov. 1789.*

Dear Sir

Your favor of the 8th currant came in due course I am very glad to hear the Ram Season has been so good in your part of the Country also am much obliged to you for the regard you paid to my advice and that you have not been disappointed it was not a hasty thought but the result of much observation and long experience and never before this Season have I had such convincing proof that if the Animal is thought good the price is not much regarded for I believe the highest priced Rams for some Seasons past have been the cheapest I dont recollect one exception, I never made near so much as this season or with so little trouble I have not fixed a price on any thing for more than twelve Months past and am fully persuaded it is the best and most expeditious Mode of doing business for both parties both at home and at Markett on the 13th a Servant of mine took an old lame Horse to Loughborough Fair and did not set price



some swore others laughed and went away others finding him positive bid money some from three to three and a half which was the most till the last bidder who gave a Guinea more, are not many Estates much Timber, the large Sales of goods at the India House and many other places disposed on in this way and who can assign any reason why it should not become general only it is not custom surely her Shackles have been worn long enough and tis high time more of them were shaken off lend us your aid much more may be done For more than 12 Months past meetings have been held at different places and very little done for want of unanimity and some One Person taking the Chair which has frequently been offered to me which on account of the state in which my affairs have been I have heretofore declined but having been again solicited and things now taking a favorable turn I have accepted and shall do every thing in my power to serve the cause I have engaged in on the other side have sent you the resolutions of the last meeting for your perusal at which happened more than I expected would have been done considering the great variety of Opinions that have hitherto prevailed and the want of confidence in each other being suspicious that each wanted to promote his private interest without so much regard as ought to be paid to public good, but I hope this is in a great measure over and that the Names of Bettison Stubbins and Stone, and I have great reason to believe Mr. Paget who was not there on account of the death of one of his Daughters will make one of us and will be either president which will be offered him or vice President with Mr. Bennitt a Northamptonshire Breeder of great Spirit and property and very hearty in the cause, he has let a Shearling now a Lamb for next season at 60 Gs his Neighbour Mr. Robinson another at the same price, Your acquaintance Mr. Buckley two price left to him and I would have done much business for next season on the same terms Mr. B has done which I have hitherto declined at present there is a very favorable prospect for the next Season both for my Friends and myself this having finished so well—I flatter myself you will give us your Name and if possible attend the next meeting and lend us your assistance that everything may be done with the mutuell approbation of all concerned—I had forgot that part of this Sheet was filled, therefore must omit answering some part of yours till my next

The prices of Grain Flesh &c You will be better informed of by the public papers than from me as I have so little concern in that way, Barley on the clay lands is very bad and of the Stafford and Burton People have not a supply from Norfolk must be very dear 9 Gallon measure now worth 5/ from 39 to 41/ a

Mr. Baker a Young Man of mine is just returned from a two Months Tour in Ireland was at Ballinasloe finds the Irish very much prejudiced against the English Sheep &c. &c. The season here much the same as with you little wheat sown and some Beans and still out of doors—dont fail being at Leicester but write as soon as convenient after the receipt of this, best wishes and best Comp<sup>ts</sup>. attend yourself and Friend

Yrs. &c &c.

R.B.

*Mr. G. Culley,  
Fenton,  
Wooller,  
North.*

*24 [Report of meeting of Dishley Society at George Inn, Loughborough—Bakewell elected President—Offer of Silver Cup for person who shall cure two sheep of complaint supposed to be “an overflowing of the gall.”]*

*George Inn, Loughborough 13<sup>th</sup> Nov. 89.*

We whose names are underwritten agree to pay into the hands of Mr. Robert Honeyborn, Treasurer, Ten Guineas each, in such Sums, at such times, and for such purposes as shall hereafter be agreed upon by the majority of Subscribers—Wm. Walker, I. P. Stone, Jn<sup>o</sup>. Bennett, John Manning, Rt. Bakewell, Nathl. Stubbins, H. Buckley, Jos<sup>h</sup>. Robinson, Francis White, John Boredon, Sam<sup>l</sup>. Knowles

Resolved That Mr. Bakewell be President

— That Mr. Bennett be Vice President

— That meetings of this Society be held on the first Tuesday in every other Month

— That whatever business be done by a majority of Members present at any general meeting be binding upon the whole

— That every absent member pay a fine of Seven Shillings and sixpence except in case of sickness

— That at every meeting the members pay their shares of the expences of the day, first deducting the fines on those absent.

— That none but members of this Society be admitted at any meeting.

— That each of the members present have two ewes spayed before the next general meeting and then report the success

— That a Silver Cup value Ten Guineas be presented to the Physician Surgeon Apothecary or other person, who shall first cure two Sheep of the complaint which has lately prevailed, supposed to be an overflowing of the Gall; or if there be two claimants at the same time, that each be presented with a cup value Five Guineas

— That every member of the Society have a copy of the proceedings of this day, to shew or read to any one, but on no account to permit copies to be taken

— That the next meeting be held at the Three Crowns Inn in Leicester on Tuesday the fifth day of January next at ten o'clock in the forenoon.

25 [*Refers to Culley becoming a member of the Society—Secrecy enjoined on all members “a kind of free Masons Club”—Bakewell’s failure to attend recent meetings owing to leg complaint—Cites “the greatest of all blessings Health of Body and Peace of Mind”—Suggests to Culley that he should form a similar Society for his own neighbourhood—Dishley Society at present confined to Ram breeders but contemplates a broadening basis for encouragement of improved livestock in Leicestershire—Mentions possible second edition of Boswell’s book (on irrigation?)—more detailed description of his use of water transport on Dishley Farm—Purchase by Mr. Wilkes, a Manchester Cotton Manufacturer, of estate and contemplated plan to irrigate 2000 acres—Comment on stock progress—Best mutton 4d.*]

DISHLEY

13 February 1790.

Dear Sir

Your Favor of the 29th Novr 89 came to hand in due course. I observe what you say about becoming a Member of our Association in which you most certainly have an undoubted right to consult your own interest, and had it been consistant with that your Name would have given a Sanction to this engagement if not you are perfectly right to decline it—There was a very respectable meeting at Leicester (Mr. Paget in the Chair) at which the business was conducted with great Spirit, Prudence and Unanimity, and I doubt not will be productive of very happy consequences, many important and well deliberated Resolutions were unanimously agreed to and many more proposed for the consideration of the next and future Meetings which I am not at liberty to mention as secrecy is injoined on all the Members which they continue in or after they go out of this Society and no new Member to be admitted without a Majority of Votes in his favor, on which account I suppose this will be considered in some degree a kind of free Masons Club as none but Members are to be admitted at any future Meeting except some unexpected alteration should be agreed. General Meetings are appointed once in Two Months and Committee meetings between each general meeting, I have not attended any since 13th November as I have since that been almost wholly confined to the

fireside owing to a complaint in one of my Legs, someone of Dr. Kirklands Family attending me twice or thrice a week on Monday I thought I was so near well that any further attendance was unnecessary, on Tuesday I walked out to look at some business in the Water way and being led on from one object to another stay'd so long and felt my Leg so much out of humour as to send again for the Dr.<sup>s</sup> assistance and when it will be prudent to take another walk is quite uncertain, I have also had a Rhumatick complaint for which I have been taking Medicines which have been of service and I flatter myself will in time remove it, Pray how have you been this fine Winter, have you had the greatest of all blessings Health of Body and peace of mind? for when these are wanting all other enjoyments avail but little—When shall we have the pleasure of waiting on you in Leicestershire, and have the opportunity of conversing about what shall be thought most proper to be done in or to promote the improvement of all kinds of Stock, as it is inconvenient to join our association would it not be for the interest of the Breeders in your Neighbourhood to form a Society amongst themselves on some such plan as shall be thought most eligible and subject to such alterations as may at any future time or times be agreed upon, Our company you see by the Names I sent you is composed of Ram Breeders only and it's the intention of the Members not to have anything but that branch of business connected with their Resolutions; but I think it not improbable but another Society may be formed in which the Ram Breeders may become Members in which the resolutions may be for the forming of any Scheme that may be thought proper for supporting the Credit of the Leicestershire kind of Stock by way of making experiments in order to ascertain which will produce most meat on different Qualities and quantities of food &c. and this Society make such resolutions as may be thought prudent for the purposes above-mentioned without having any connections with breeding of Stallion Horses Bulls or Rams, should a Scheme be formed either in your or this Neighbourhood, or both, if only one is formed, it may consist of Members from any quarter that are either Friends to or have bred from this kind of Stock, so much for Associations.

When do you suppose Mr. Boswell will publish his second Edition I become every day more fond of Water, the cut for the conveyance of

which will be found usefull for other purposes it will bring Turnips home (near a Mile) without more trouble than putting them in but the Tops, Cabbages, Carrots and some other things require boating on which account I have purchased two Boats about 5 Tons Burthen in which I propose bringing what may be wanting home and taking out the Dung in which I suppose (not having yet tried) there will be a considerable saving of labour both of Men and Horses, also trampling the Land I wish this hint may be of use to any of my Friends

Mr. Wilkes and a Manchester Cotton Manufacturer have made a purchase near Tamworth of 138,000<sup>l</sup>. 2,000 Acres may be watered and improvement I am confident Mr. W will not neglect he has already begun tho they do not enter till Ladyday He has five Steam Engines for different purposes now at work and other improvements better worth notice than at any place I have yet seen I have received the 4 Gs of Mr. Dixson, The Horse I intend shall come down at the usual time or some other, Great complaints of the rot in Sheep, and the running of the Turnips best mutton 4d. other sorts what they can get, whether there will be any advance in Mutton will depend on the Season as the Grass Mutton will be very forward should fine weather continue Grain much the same for many months past—Please to forward the inclosed as I have mislaid and forgot Mr. Potters address—Please to present the Compliments of this Family to your Brothers and others I have the Pleasure of being acquainted in part of the World.

I shall part with  
all the different  
sorts of Horned  
Sheep.

17 Feb, 90.

*Mr. Geo Culley*  
*Fenton,*  
*Wooler, North—*

I am Dear Sir

Your obliged Hble Serv<sup>t</sup>.

R. BAKEWELL

26 [*Visit of members of Dishley Association to see Bakewell's sheep—His method of exhibiting the sheep to the visitors—Suggests Culley should follow more closely example of other breeders in buying more Dishley sheep—Bakewell in most of his letters to Culley urges him to make another visit to Dishley.*]

DISHLEY

Dear Sir

9 July 1790.

Yours of the first Instant came to this place on Monday last. On your leaving Dishley I understood that you would write as soon as convenient after your arrival informing me what you saw by the way and how you found things at home and therefore on this account I waited in expectation of hearing from you.

On the 4th of June the Members of our Association (only) saw the Dishley Sheep, Messrs. Buckley and Breedon propose sending Eighty Ewes each to the two Sheep you mention and I to have the other part that is 80 more, but it is agreed to take up a part and take in 40 Ewes or more if a price is offered which we think prudent to accept Messrs. Paget and Wilkes agreed for the Sheep they had last Season, Mr. Knowles took a Shearling three others were that day let together to Messrs Bennit & Co. Northamptonshire Breeders and some Ewes taken in from that Quarter, on the 8th (the first day of Shew) more People were out than I ever knew on this business, more than 30 were that day at Dishley and to avoid confusion and prevent any signs of preference to any party four of the Company saw the first Sheep then went out of the place, then four more &c. till the last four who after having seen the first Sheep, were the first who saw the second, then the first four came in again and in this manner proceeded till the whole (30 in number) were all seen and if any party chose to see any Sheep or more a second time they were shewn as before, this has been since practised and seems to meet with general approbation and is likely to be continued till something better is thought off, the greater part of the Company were from the West Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and that way and I have the pleasure to inform you every one of them did business and since then others from that quarter with some One or more who have this kind of Sheep, On the 17th Ult I set forward was at Coventry on Friday Warwick on Saturday Shipston upon Stour on Tuesday where there was a Shew of fat Wethers by the most eminent

Breeders or Graziers, and at the request of some of those who had seen two Sheep I had they were taken to that place and I am persuaded will do much service to the cause, Mr. Fowlers Neighbours have given good prices this Season at which he is rather alarmed and I have agreed with him for a Sheep at much more money than he has ever yet given—From Shipston to another large meeting at Pershore where we had a Warwickshire Sheep killed Pelt 27 Pounds and other Offalls in proportion this I think will be of service and set the Breeders of such to make tryals of a different sort, upon this business I rambled about from Place to place till Wednesday last, and here found your Letter Yesterday forenoon I had engagements which prevented me seeing the Sheep soon enough to write that post Upon thinking of the contents of yours I am fully persuaded that for many reasons you should have Sheep from this Place for supposing ours to be as good in appearance yet they cannot have near so much of that Blood that is now most in fashion and if a Breedon and Buckley who have been the most attached to this Blood still continue to give the most money for these when they have of their own that will let for more than any others except these if a Stubbins & Stone now offer more money than has yet been given, if a Fowler & Paget who had left this Shop now return and give considerably more what better reason need be given than that you should come and do likewise?

Mr. P. some years past was told that he must come again to D but he replied if he who had been there for 30 years must still come again when would it be time to leave off, had it not been for this Speech I believe he would have come sooner, and I believe that he who has for years past had the chief of the trade into the Country above mentioned has this Season let only one to go that way and that at a lower price than any other I have heard of to go that way. I flatter myself I have some that you would like and would be of real service but I had rather you would see them if not I will reserve one or more for you and charge as low a price as other People give according to the Quality, I shall wait your Answer and will not be far from home any time this Month after then I intend going into Norfolk. With Compts. &c. I am Yours very sincerely

R. BAKEWELL.

*Mr. Geo. Culley,  
Fenton, Wooller, North.*



27 [Offers to spend a week or a month with Culley "wherever it shall be most agreeable"—Ram Company (presumably Dishley Society) now well established—Suggests such Societies should be established in many other counties—Specially commends same for Northumberland because of the number of sheep fed and bred (this country has long had an outstanding sheep population)—Commends Culley's account of Leicestershire sheep written to Mr. Young.]

*ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH**6 June 91.*

Dear Sir

Mr. Thompson his Son and Two of his acquaintance came to Dishley last Monday morning and agreed with me for two Shearling Rams and can inform you how business is going on in this Neighbourhood, when can you favor us with your company? I will spend a Week or Month with you wherever it shall be most agreeable Our Ram Company is now established upon a more solid Basis than it has been at any time before and I think will not now be shaken. Mr. T. and self thinks something of this sort should be put in motion in your part of the Country and will consult you on this Subject. Societies of this nature are going to be established in many other places and I know of no place where it is likely to be of more general utility than in your County where the Number bred and fed so far exceeds that of most other places; I intend spending most of my time between now and the middle of next October in some way or other as shall be thought likely to throw most light on this important Subject in this matter the Public are greatly indebted to you for the very ingenious account of the Leicestershire Sheep in your Letter to Mr. Young the date I do not now recollect, I think it's more likely to be of service to the cause than any thing I have yet seen for sometimes where to much is attempted little is gained but you have not said more than most Breeders will credit who are not determined to abide by old established Opinions.

Mr. Ts Friends and I have spent a very agreeable day at Measham where more improvements are going on than at any place I know. Mr. Wilkes is just returned from spending a Month at Bath in the Neighbourhood of

which they are going to introduce the Leicestershire Sheep and I doubt not with success.

More business in the Ram way is now done and at better prices than I have yet known the youngest Sheep in the highest credit, that you would come and see what is doing is the request of

R.B.

*Mr. G. Culley*

*By favor of Mr. Thompson.*

28 [*His visits to Stratford-on-Avon and other places to foster formation of Societies—Visit to Duke of Grafton and comment on nobility—Mentions Mr. Elkington of land-drainage fame—Account of various sales—His instructions given to Sir John Parnell Bart. on how to handle a sheep—Financial rule for members attending or absent from Society meetings—Intention to visit Yorkshire but prevented by ill-health—Gives Culley the title of Generalissimo of the Northern Province.*]

ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH

6 Sept. 1791.

Dear Sir

Your Favor of the 14th July came in due course and would have been sooner answered but for the reasons hereafter mentioned, On the said 14th I was attending a Meeting at Stratford upon Avon in order to form a Society in that neighbourhood in which much Unanimity prevailed; another meeting was proposed at Banbury on the 21st, Bicester the 22nd, Buckingham the 23rd all which I attended, and as much harmony prevailed as could be expected; Monday following I spent the day with the Duke of Grafton and A. Young Esq., at Wakefield Lodge in Northamptonshire. We had a ride over some of his Grace's Estates and saw many of his Tenants who are not affrighted at his approach but pleased with his good humour & familiarity he sometimes goes into a Town and visits every house beginning at one end and going to the other asking many Questions as to their Health and what is wanting to make them happy how much it is to be wished more of the Nobility and Gentry would

imitate this Noble Example of Humility and condescension it would afford them more real pleasure than can arise from the advantage gained by distressing their Tenants and making them unhappy consequently in a great measure prevent the improvements which with pleasure would be made were proper encouragement given. I had the honor to dine at his Graces Table with his Duchess and Family most of them like his Grace very thin He said B you would not like to have your Stock like my Sons and Mr. Young I replied I had frequently said I had rather keep a Fat Man for one Shilling a day than a lean One for Eighteen pence—I believe B you may say Two Shillings; a loud Laugh you may suppose.

Tuesday 26th attended a Meeting at Brackley from thence returned by way of Northampton into Leicestershire Tuesday 2nd August lay at Tamworth Wednesday breakfasted at Mr. Harrisons at Drakenridge saw his Rams which have some of the new Leicestershire in them but in a small proportion saw great improvements by draining of Bog done by a Mr. Elkington near Coventry a self taught Philosopher who without doubt has given many proofs of his being first in that line of business dined at Birmingham there by appointment met Mr. Young saw the curiosities of that place that afternoon and next day lay at Suttoncoldfield Friday 5th August saw Mr. Wilkes's purchase at Fazely price 138,000£ the improvements are immense Saturday Ashby Market Sunday afternoon and Monday at Measham—Monday saw some of the Cattle purchased of Mr. Fowler lay at Mr. Knowles's Tuesday dined at Mr. Pagets lay at Dishley Thursday afternoon Mr. Y set forward on his way home Friday 12 a Fair and Ram meeting at Loughborough Saturday lay at Derby Sunday Ashburn Monday in that Neighbourhood saw more of the Rollright Beasts also Two Rams purchased of Mr. Chaplain by order of Sir William Barker who had been informed Mr. C was the best Breeder in the Kingdom they were on their way from Mr Cs to Sir Wm. an Irish Bart. who has some of the Dishley breed of Beasts & Sheep and is going to cross them with other sorts which no doubt will make an alteration: what improvements time will shew—Tuesday 16 a Fair at Ashburn sold five Beasts in the new way without setting price which I may strongly recommend having practiced it for more than two Years past Wednesday saw some improvements near Matlock made a convert of an old London

Trader now a new Derbyshire Farmer of his own Estate Thursday Buxton much Company did some business in the Horse way for next Season saw some of the Rams in Company with Sir John Parnell Bart. and Chancellor of the Exchequer for the Kingdom of Ireland he occupies 1,000 Acres of Land but had never laid his hand upon a Sheep before I prevailed upon him to do it he is very sensible and intelligent open to conviction and willing to be informed he had purchased some Beasts and Sheep in the Neighbourhood of Ashburn before I saw him, He on Friday was with me at a Fair at Bakewell on his way to Dishley where we came on Saturday afternoon. He left on Sunday with a promise of returning our way, He was going to London offred to introduce me to Mr. Pitts Lord Hawkesby &c &c and to render me any service in his power, Monday 12th a Ram meeting at Leicester where was eight Members present, which was competent to do business when it was unanimously agreed to have another meeting at Leicester on Saturday the 8th of October and that every member who attended should receive One Guinea out of the common Stock every absent Member to pay One Guinea into the same Stock now I think we are firmly established and doubt not but much more will be done before next Season by this and other Societies that are now forming and will I think become general with those that have Sheep of the new sort After the meeting aforesaid it was my intention to set forward for Yorkshire and had designed to have given you advice but human intentions are soon frustrated. I have been better for some time past than I have been of years before but by want of a little care too much exertion or some other cause I am now under Dr. His care at this Place and fear I must continue here some Weeks how many I cannot say but no favourable Symptoms as yet appear. Sterne says if a Man is a Prisoner in Stone Walls from the Gout or any other complaint and cannot get out Patience is the best relief By a Letter received from Mr. Cleaver I am informed that Mr. Chaplain intends being at Driffield Mr. Honeyborn will be there of which I desired he would inform you, cannot you return with him into Leicestershire and see what is going on it would give your Friend much pleasure to wait on you now or at any other time that may be more convenient, I have wrote this at Ashby and sent it home to be copied as I had not wrote it upon One Sheet of Paper, I have three Rams to which I

take in Ewes should not you the Generalissimo of the Northern Provinces send to what we thought best in the South not any thing too much has yet been given in the Ram way as this years letting of Rams most fully evinces and I am persuaded that Ewes out of your Province will come Southward to be ramed, or Ewes from the South after having been ramed will come Northward

(Sheet torn off here.)

29 [*Still confined to Dishley owing to ill-health—Caponing experiment—Cup awarded to Mr. Vickers, Loughbro', for success in curing sheep (see letter 24)—Advice to Culley against acceptance of position of High Constable—Sly dig at Culley at prices he has paid for Dishley rams—Promises to supply him with information likely to be of use in forming a Northern Society—Further correction about adding Leicestershire to Loughborough in addressing his letters to Bakewell.*]

ASHBY

Sat. 22 Oct. 91.

Dear Sir

Your favor of the 30th ult. came in due course and is now before me. I am still in confinement at this place how long I must stay is uncertain but I hope not more than a week or two. I presented your compliments to the Doctor and am desired to return his to you. I dined with him today and attended the dissection of a Young dead fowl in order to try if the old custom of making capons cannot be revived more experiments are intended to be made in a few days which may be a means of introducing the attendance of the medical gentlemen to the anatomy of the brute creation or veterinarian knowledge which I think of no small importance to the breeders as the value of things now are A cup value ten guineas has been at the last ram meeting voted to a Mr. Vickers of Loughbro for his attendance and success in recovering some sheep from a disorder of which many valuable ones have been lost for some seasons past as well as the present, the particulars of which you may be better acquainted with at some future time

I Yesterday re'd a Letter from Mr. Young who is quite in high spirits he wants to have particulars of some sheep tied up two Months last summer not only of their food but the measure of their carcasses which I think not quite proper to be taken at this time of year they being nearly all rams and many of them have been with the ewes as teasers for some weeks past.

Pray are we to expect a second edition of your very ingenious and instructive publication and when? I have not any objection to your acting as a commissioner or engaging in any difficult undertaking to serve your country or friends in that which another cannot do, but however honorable the office of high constable in which you have engaged may be to another I think to you it is too great a condescension, and that your superior abilities may be employed to much more important purposes—It gives me pleasure to learn the tup trade has been so good in your part of the country; with us it has finished very well and I think wears a very favorable appearance for another season. As to the sending ewes from you to us is a matter may be further taken into consideration when you favor us with your company in Leicestershire either “as a friend or a customer again” I have observed what you say about the success of the rams you have had from Dishley and taking them in the aggregate I dont see much cause for complaint as there are very few of my customers who have paid so little money in so long a term of years or with more advantage to themselves As to H or North Star, what he has done for you I can only judge from what you say with all others who have used him he is on good credit and not less in this than in former years. You say you took him “because he was the best Sheep in your opinion I had then left” but should I charge you what some of them made I fear you would think it too much. Two of those (one of them a son of H) have this season ewes at ten guineas each. When you had H you was abated 100 on account of Rumps not answering your expectations. I shall now charge you Two Hundred Guineas for last season (being less than he ever made since a shearing) in hopes that if you can afford me 50 or 100 more you will not object it, You may make a remittance when convenient.

There will be another meeting of the Tup Society at Leicester on the 7th of December next but my attendance is uncertain but will communi-

cate the contents of yours, and inform you of any regulations there made that may be of use to you should a society be established in your Neighbourhood which I am persuaded would be of great advantage to the cause.

Last Monday Mr. Honeyborn showed some Rams in London on their way to Kent one of which some of the Salesmen and Butchers were pleased to say weighed thirty stone or sixty pounds a quarter upon the whole it was thought to be of service as it had a tendency to remove that great objection to the Leicestershire sheep having neither size nor weight—It is intended now this sheep shall be shown at Malborough on Sat. the 5th of next month, another at the agriculture meeting at Bath on the 16 of December, I wish you could attend—with best compliments where due

I am Dear Sir,

Yrs. &c. &c. &c.

R. BAKEWELL

After Loughborough you add Leicestershire; pray when you write next to London say Middlesex.

*Mr. G. Culley.*

30 [*Commends London as the greatest market in the Year on the Monday following December 16, 1791 (This will mean Smithfield Fat Stock Show)—Gift of haunch of mutton from Dishley to certain London Aldermen—Observations on state of crops, weather and prices—Asks for remittance but has little expectation of Culley being a customer—Proposal for Mr. Vickers' treatment of sick sheep to be made public—Regulations about sale of rams—Proposes to visit Culley when latter terminates his "honourable employment" (presumably High Constable's Office) or if ill-health prevents will send his nephew Honeyborn.*]

DISHLEY

15 Decr. -91.

Dear Sir

Your favor of the first of last Month came to my hands at Ashby on the 27 the Gentlemen from your quarter were at Dishley and from thence attended a Sale in Northamptonshire and then returned into Leicestershire were at Ashby on the third Instant Mr. Thompson attended a Fat Beast Fair at Atherston on the fifth and Mr. Jobson and he were to meet at Birmingham on Tuesday the Sixth, for from B towards Cirencester to see some Water Meadows in that Neighbourhood and be at Bath Agriculture meeting on Tuesday last, then go into Dorsetshire. I proposed their being in London on Monday next it being the greatest Market in the Year consequently the best School for information in the Stock way. I had yesterday a Letter from Mr. Honeyborn who was at Bath in which he does not mention their being there but he wrote in haste it being the day on which some Carcases of Leicestershire Mutton were shewn, as were at Marlborough the last Month, but none shewed against them at either place at M they gained much credit, at B not any particulars are mentioned but expect an account in a post or two, Mr. Honeyborn intends being in London next Monday and shewing a Haunch of Mutton there which I sent this week to Mr. Alderman Curtis M.P. London who is a well wisher to the cause and probably some of his brother Aldermen may be invited to partake of it and have a few Bottles on the occasion, as it will be likely some conversation on the subject will be introduced which may have a tendency to remove some prejudices that yet remain with regard to breed-



ing in general and this sort of Sheep in particular however I do not know a more likely method than what is now pursuing for the present, in future it may be varied at discretion.

Your favor of the 5th inst I recd by Mr. Willson on Saturday last who left this place yesterday morning on his way for London in expectation of meeting his acquaintances there, from thence I suppose he will go to Mr. Youngs as I informed him of the death of Lord Orford to whom Sir John Sinclair had given him directions to wait on first, and of which when Sir J is informed may order him to change his rout.

On Saturday the third in the evening a fall of Snow covered the ground, that, and the frost prevented the improvements at Measham being seen to advantage and will have the same effect on other improvements in the waterway and in this Neighbourhood I fear the Turnips are in great danger being laid bare by some rain that fell a few days past and since the frost being so keen. Hay is sold at four shillings an Hundred and straw very scarce. Mutton  $4\frac{1}{2}$  a Pound Beef worth  $4\frac{1}{2}$  a Pound alive sinking the offal & expected to advance—As to the hire of H, or Star I cannot think of making any abatement of Two Hundred Guineas and am not without hopes of more he has not made so little (except to you) since a Shearling, One Hundred Guineas any person must think enough to be abated in one Season, had you not had him he would have made more than 300 Gs and has this Season made considerably more than that Sum, and I have reason to believe a Son of his (had he been living) would have made more this Season than any other Sheep ever did. I shall be glad of a remittance as soon as convenient after this comes to hand and shall be very happy to wait on you or any of your Friends at Dishley but have little expectation of you as a Customer as I find there are so many others that are willing to give more money without thinking they are over-charged.—I believe it is not yet determined whether Mr. Vicker's mode of treating the Sheep shall be made public but probably will be at the next meeting which will be held at Leicester on the first of March, 1792, at which I wish you would make it convenient to attend—"they (the Sheep) are tinged with Yellow when dead" are seldom discovered to be ill more than 24 Hours before death, are most commonly affected when on clover but I suppose on any rich herbage, time of the year from August to November, I have learnt

that one (a wether) was lost yesterday but I will make further inquiries into this matter and give you the best information I can.

I believe few if any of our company will shew any Rams before the next meeting and it is intended to shew from the 8th of June to the 8th of July and not after that day untill the 8th of September and from that day while the season continues and in order to prevent going to market I hope it will (be) agreed on not to let a Ram to any person (live where he will) but who will engage not to sell any Rams but what he shall see killed before they go out of his hands, or take any to market but what are disposed of for the season with such other regulations as shall be thought proper several breeders have desired to become members who opposed this Society at the begining and will not now be taken in on the same terms as when the society commenced. I have the pleasure to inform you that the complaint I had is removed and not likely to return except by accident and that when you have done with your honourable employment which I now understand you was from the custom of the district you are in under a necessity of entering into, I shall be glad to attend you where ever you please in the South and if I cannot come North I intend Mr. Honeyborn shall before the next ram season is over please to present my compliments where due

I am Sir

Your obliged &c &c.

R. BAKEWELL

*Mr. G. Culley,  
Fenton Wooller North.*

31 [*Conveys his own comments on Culley's plan and also from certain members of the Dishley Society he had consulted—Promise to send all the resolutions of the Dishley Society which hitherto had been kept more or less secret—Comments on some of his cattle, and it is evident Honeyborn, his nephew, now travels round as a kind of Dishley agent—Further reference to Mr. Vickers, and to disorders in sheep.*]

DISHLEY

13 April 92.

Dear Sir

Your favour of the 23 Ult. came in due course but I was then on a Journey and since my return have waited to communicate the contents to some of the Members of our Society I proposed having a special meeting for the purpose of attending to this business but could not persuade them to be of the same opinion as our next meeting will be at Leicester on Friday the 11th of May which I wish you would attend To those with whom I have conversed on the subject of yours they are unanimous in approving of your Plan and wishing you success and have little doubt but if you persevere with firmness you will carry your point against all opposition.

That resolution of not shewing Rams after the 8th of July untill the 8th of September is confirmed. That of not letting Rams to any Person live where he will but who would engage not to take Rams to markt &c. was carried by a majority but not unanimous therefore stands over untill the next meeting and I have little doubt but will then have another majority and be confirmed also; this I say was the opinion of most but not of all that I have mentioned this matter to, and if agreeable to yourself and those of your acquaintance intending to become members of your society they wish to have the names of those persons whom you suppose most likely to oppose your scheme or come into this quarter to hire Rams for that purpose that they may be on their guard against any such attempt. I highly approve of having the Messrs. Collins join you tho I know little of them only from character with as many more of that stamp as you can find no matter where if they will follow Mr. Fox's advice to have "a long pull a strong pull and a pull all together" and if agreeable at our next

meeting I for my own part should think it right to send you a copy of all our resolutions which has hitherto been kept a kind of secret but which I now see no necessity should be so any longer

I have the pleasure to inform you the Horse and Bull trade have been very good this season last year I had a Horse in South Wales hired by a Gentleman for the use of his Tenants and this season I have one in North Wales to which they have entered into a Subscription for 100 Mares at 2 Gs and half a Crown each Mare, and Mr. Honeyborn who at this time is reconnoitering (?) that Country has engaged some Rams for next season—I have let a Bull to Mr. Astley of Odstone (neighbour to Mr. Paget) to go on the first of May and be returned the first of September. I to use him till he goes and send 10 Cows if I chuse it which I do not consider more than half a season at 152 Gs. this I should not mention but a Gentleman present at the agreement swore it should not be a secret, if longhorns are not the best they make the best prices or how do you account for the advance in this kind when little in proportion is made in any other? 50 Gs is offered for a living Calf at 14 days old cow or Bull for so many as such a Cow shall breed from that day henceforward be the same more or less. I was the more pleased at dealing with Mr. A as he and his Friend had carefully examined all the best Bulls which had been bred by the late Mr. Fowler and others in that part of the Kingdom before he saw those at this place and I am not without some expectations of letting part of another at more money but this is not certain as the old adage says things happen between Cup and Lip. There was much loss in the Turnips by the last frost. Hay is worth 4/ to 4/6 a Hundred Beef & Mutton 5d. a pound but it is thought the latter will be lower in a short time should the season continue fine as it now is prices of grain the news papers will inform you.

From all that has passed on the Subject of hiring H or North Star I do not see any reason to alter the charge, neither do I recollect that any Sum was ever mentioned but that the price was left entirely to me.

I shewed Mr. Vickers what I said about the disorder in the Sheep in answer to your queries and he was of an opinion more need not be said on that subject and that he would not give me any further information. He is now practising the culling of Sheep for the turn or Bladder in the

Brain and in some has succeeded, has done some for Mr. Paget but I have not heard with what success—with Compliments where due

I am Sir

Your obliged Hble S<sup>er</sup>.

R. BAKEWELL

P.S. this Letter mislaid and not sent to the Office untill the 17th.

*Mr. G. Culley,  
Fenton, Wooller, North.*

32 [*Advice to Culley to go forward with his resolution for a Society with "the firmness and intrepidity it so justly deserves" (how illustrative of Bakewell's character)—Invitation for representatives of the North to attend next meeting of Dishley Society at Leicester.*]

*DISHLEY,*

*28 Aug. 92.*

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 23 I have this day recd. I wish time would have permitted me to have consulted some of our Society on the subject but that not being the case I will give you my own opinion which I think would be theirs, that is not on any consideration whatsoever to act contrary to your resolutions (at least for this season) for should that be the case they will immediately conclude the whole will soon be dissolved and that would give your opponents an advantage over you I should not wish for to discourage taking to market or rather totally to abolish that practice is of more consequence than any other resolution belonging to your own or to another Association formed in Gloucestershire and adjoining Counties, therefore pay no regard to what Mr. Collins or any other may gain this Season but support your cause with that firmness and intrepidity it so justly deserves, I should think it very proper for some of your society to attend our next meeting at Leicester on Thursday the 6th of next Month if not your Letter shall be read and their opinion taken, what yours, ours, or the other Society may think proper to be done after this Season may be

deliberated upon but for the present I repeat it no alteration should be made. I have company who wait while I write let me have a letter soon after the receipt of this.

Yrs. &c. R.B.

P.S. Mr. Logan was in Leicestershire, he hired two Shear hogs and a two Shear Sheep of Mr. Wright of Spillsby (the Shearlings by the Sheep you had) Mr. Ws Servant was not to inform any person from whence they came therefore don't be too hasty in revealing the secret but hear what tale will be told

*Mr. Geo Culley,  
Fenton, Wooller, Northd.*

*Note by Mr. Culley on above letter.*

Ans'd this 4th Sep<sup>r</sup>. 92, Acknowledging the propriety of discouraging going to market &c. with Tups where people are established in Business, but the contrary in remote Countries where the merit of the Breed is not sufficiently known. There I think it benefits the Cause. Requested Mr. B's explanation of the two Shearings hired by Mr. G. Logan of Mr. Wright, as I think they can't be by Star, and we have none from Mr. B. since Rumps but Starr.

G.C.

## ROBERT BAKEWELL

The six letters which follow form The British Museum Collection. They are addressed by Bakewell to Arthur Young, the most famous agricultural writer of his time, after the date of these letters to become the first Secretary to the Board of Agriculture formed in 1793.

Originals are in the Department of Manuscripts, British Museum, London.

2. BRITISH MUSEUM COLLECTION

1

*DISHLEY,*

*26 Feb. 1783*

Dear Sir,

On Wednesday and Thursday last the Count de la Rochefoucauld and his friends were at Dishley, the former day I was not at home but spent the evening with them at Loughborough, they breakfasted here on Thursday and about noon set forward for Derby, they were very attentive and I flatter myself was pleased with what they saw.

Sometime past I send a pound of Cabbage seed for you to No. 10 Throgmorton Street, whether directions were given for it to be forwarded I am not certain, but if it is not come to hand it will be found there.

Mr. Cully left this County the beginning of January and got safe home after an absence of more than four months, which is what few farmers dare practice. Before we parted he saw four Rams let for as many Hundred Guineas for next season, which he thought a good tale to take amongst his customers.

I have many experiments now making on different kinds of Horned Cattle and Sheep which I am not without hopes will throw some light on this important subject. I wish you to come soon that you may see some of the horses before they go out and compare them with the Suffolk kind. Opinion of the true form of a horse puzzles me very much and my desire is to be open to invitation and to listen to information that may be rec'd, from any part of this or any other Kingdom.

I am Your Obedient Servant.

R. BAKEWELL

*A. Young, Esq.*



2

*BLACK BEAN  
PICCADILLY LONDON.*

*10 Mar. 88.*

Dear Sir,

I ask pardon for so long neglecting to answer yours of Dec. last but I was out when it came and it was mislaid and forgotten. I left Dishley about a fortnight past, have brought a Black Stallion to London which has been seen by the King, Prince of Wales and many other great personages to whom he gives more general satisfaction than others I have yet shown.

I propose staying here about a week longer and then return into Leicestershire, when I shall be very glad to wait on you or any of your breeds when you will find many experiments making the stock way particularly in sheep as I have now many more sorts than I ever had before. I have this day purchased the last two numbers of your very useful publication but I cannot say when I shall find time to read them. Will not you be in London about the wool business I do not now recollect what you said in your letter on that subject, I enclose you a few samples of Wool grown at Dishley but can at any time send many more sorts if you will let me know what you wish to have.

I have sold a Bull and Two Heifers which are to put on board this week to go on to Maryland N. America and if these please I hope to have further orders.

I had near an hours conversation with the King on the subject of breeding which he seemed much pleased with and listened to what I said with great attention. I expect see again in a few days. I have this day had the Earl of Hopetown in Smithfield market when his Lordship took great pains to inform himself of the utility of the different kinds he then met with and this I think much the best school for any Gentleman who has a liking to this kind of amusement.

I write this in the Turf Coffee House in great haste for fear of being too late for the post.

I am Dear Sir your much obliged and most humble servant.

R. BAKEWELL.

*A. Young, Esq.*

3

*DISHLEY,**20 Nov. 1788.*

Dear Sir,

Your favour of the 29th of Aug. came in due course, also yours of the 3rd inst. The Person who was to have had the sale of ewes near Bakewell reserved Forty of the best for himself and I by private contract bought the next Hundred which I have put to some of my best Rams and except I sell the whole together will divide them into Lots of 10 or 20 as nearly equal in goodness as they can be drawn and if you please you may have a Lot at Five Guineas or Ten of the best in One Score at Seven Guineas each, when they came they were a little affected with the Scab on which account they have not yet been shewed to any Person, but I believe they will soon be cured and about the middle of January or sooner they may be very safely put to any other sheep without any danger of spreading their complaint; but I had much rather you would come and see them and Judge for yourself as I flatter myself there are some things worth your notice particularly some of a smaller sort of black horses which am fully persuaded are able to perform as much work in the farming way as any others of greater weight and with as little food.

I should have been very glad to have accompanied you on your Tour in France and am much obliged for the information you are kind enough to give and I have not a doubt but on their land as good long wool may be grown as in any part of this Island pray of what kind or where bred these Rams you mention.

I have this day sent a Letter addressed to Mr. Chaplin which you will see in the papers in a few days what reception it will meet with I know not but it was with great difficulty I could get to the knowledge of some facts therein mentioned and whether he will make any reply I know not but however that may be I am persuaded the controversy is only just begun and that much more yet remains to be said on this very important Subject and I hope may lead on to the making some experiments on the different sorts of Sheep by either measuring of the land they go on or weighing their food this should be at public expense but I fear we have little to

expect from that quarter but what may be said probably will to some degree engage their attention.

I am, Sir

Your much obliged and humble Serv.

R. BAKEWELL.

*A. Young, Esq.*

4

*DISHLEY, 29 Nov. '88.*

Dear Sir,

Herewith enclosed I send you the letters mentioned in your favour of the 24 which came to hand yesterday and as Mr. Chaplin inserted his first letter in the weekly Papers I thought it right to do the same and had rather they do not appear in the Annals till I have his reply to my last letter as there is not any probability of the debate ending here for should he not reply I shall write again and should he reply then will be time enough to point out the Mode on which the merits of the two different kinds of Sheep may be ascertained which will be a work of some time and great attention and should be done at a Public expense but I think little is to be expected from that quarter. I have long thought that the size weight of value of any animal is not a proof of its utility but what will produce the most from any given quantity of food on management you are not unacquainted with, I much approve of your making trial of the S Dn sheep and Sussex oxen and when you see Lord Sheffield please to present my respectful compliments and inform him I much wish to have him see what has been produced from a Dishley Ram from a Hereford Ewe and many other experiments I have been making from different kinds of Sheep and Pigs. If you have any Friends in Devon here I should recommend you trying some of the Oxen from that County, they are less in size but very complete in form and in high esteem with the Smithfield Butchers.

On Tuesday the 13th of January will begin a Horse Fair at Nottingham which will continue till Friday on the Monday and Tuesday foll. will be another at Melton both which I mean to attend and shall be glad to wait on your Mr. Mairo or any other of our acquaintance at any time in that

Month that shall be most convenient—there comes another word of the Bp. of Landuff who wants me to send him a Man to Water an Area of land in Westmoreland. I cannot comply with his request but have recommended a proper Person who I doubt not will undertake his business.

I am, Sir,  
Your much obliged  
and most humble servant,  
R. BAKEWELL.

P.S. Pray give the earlier information when I may expect to have the pleasure of waiting on you at this Place that I may be at home.

*A. Young Esq.,*

5

*Aug. 1789.*

Your favour of the 18th instant I rec'd but of late have been so much engaged on the Ram business and other matters relative to my Bankruptcy which I hope will soon be settled that I have not had time to attend to anything else, and on account of the state my affairs have lately been in I should think any opinion as coming from me will rather injure than benefit any publication, and probably may have a tendency to make the whole disregarded, as most people think well or ill of any scheme by the success with which it is attended but this I leave to you.

I cannot speak of folding sheep from my own experience but will endeavour to get information from those who can, and let you know what they say of this kind of sheep.

The water meadows here are fed at Spring both with Beast and Sheep sometimes as late as the middle of May, the last Spring till June, and have since had good crops upon them.

The water rises about three miles above from springs on a Common or Forest, passes through only one village, of any other I have not had any experience but should suppose from what I have seen that when spring water can be had, that alone will make great improvement.

On a breeding farm I think it more profitable to work the cows when

Barren or late in calf heifers—I intend next spring to Plow with Heifers.

Last year I had about five acres of Carrots and have now about that quantity. All kinds of stock seem fond of and thrive well on them but I cannot ascertain the value of an acre perhaps this season may be able to say something more about them.

If you intend to say anything of the cattle or sheep on this place I much wish you would see them here, it will give me great pleasure to wait on you as I think them greatly improved particularly the sheep which have this season been let at higher prices of their age than has been in any preceeding year since I was concerned.

I shall at all times be happy in anything in my power that can be the least serviceable to you or the public whose best friend you are and to whom I think them more indebted than to all the authors on the subject.

With best wishes,

I am,

Your much obliged friend,

R.B.

*A. Young, Esq.*

6

*DISHLEY Fri: 23 Dec. '91.*

Dear Sir,

Yesterday a man forward for Bradford Hall with an Iceland Ram, a Plough . . . , I should have answered your letters and sent sooner but have waited for the ear which I have not seen but comes just as it came from Measham. The Ram I send to you to be made any use of you think proper but I believe the sort as little inclined to get fat and eat as much food as most I have yet seen. I want an ewe of the same kind if you can procure them for me they must be of the four horned kind, these are some of nearly the same colour called Spanish but differ from these, those I can have near home of such cannot be had please to send two young bred Norfolk Ewes in lamb by a Norfolk such as are commonly bred from I would not have any sort dashed with any but their own kind be that kind

what it will my reasons, you are well acquainted with, have you made any experiments from the sheep you have and from sheep of the same age for it is observed that a young sheep eats considerably more than an middle aged one of the same herd be very cautious of publishing before you have given them a fair trial lest you may injure that cause you mean to serve. I am but lately returned from my confinement at Ashley so that I shall be but little out this winter. Mr. Honeyborn was in the Mutton way at Bath on the 13th at London on Monday and is not yet returned. I see a letter addressed to you in the County Chronicle of this month of which I shall take more notice in my next, with my best wishes,

I am sir,

Your much obliged etc.

R. BAKEWELL.

*A. Young Esq.*

## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX I

### TO THE NOBILITY GENTRY AND OTHERS.

The Humble Petition of Robert Bakewell of Dishley in the County of LEICESTER

#### SHEWETH

That your Petitioner has for a Series of Years employed his Attention on a Plan for improving the Breed of Horses for Cavalry, Harness and Draught, as also of Meat Cattle and Sheep.

That your Petitioner in Pursuit of this Plan had many Difficulties to surmount having the Prejudices of other Breeders to combat and various Experiments to make in Order to ascertain which were the best kinds to breed from; and that such Experiments were attended with considerable Expense, and more trouble than he can well convey a Sense of

That your Petitioner apprehends he has brought all the Different Kinds of Stock abovementioned to a greater Degree of Perfection than has been done by any other person and thereby rendered important Services to this Country, and in this Opinion he hopes he is justified, by the best Judges having purchased from this Stock at higher Prices than from any other, and having sent them into the Counties of Bedford, Bucks, Cambridge, Chester, Cumberland, Derby, Devon, Dorset, Durham, Essex, Gloucester, Hereford, Herts, Huntingdon, Kent, Lancaster, Leicester, Lincoln, Norfolk, Northampton, Northumberland, Nottingham, Oxon, Rutland, Salop, Somerset, Southampton, Stafford, Suffolk, Sussex, Warwick, Westmoreland, Wilts, Worcester, Yorks, into North-Britain, Wales, Ireland, Germany and Jamaica.

That your Petitioner has made considerable Improvements in Agriculture, Division of Lands, Watering of Meadows, &c.

That your Petitioner in Consequence of the aforesaid Difficulties and Expenses, as well as by many great and unavoidable Losses to the Amount



of many Thousand Pounds, is rendered incapable of pursuing his Plan; and as a considerable Part of the Stock is soon to be sold, and probably will fall into the Hands of those who for want of Experience or other Causes cannot be supposed to manage it to the same Advantage, consequently little if any further Improvement can be expected therefrom.

But, if the Publick should take his Case into their Consideration and grant him such Assistance as would enable him to purchase the whole or the best part of this Stock, he is fully persuaded he could be highly instrumental to the general Good of this Nation, by continuing in his late Line of the Breeding Business, and carrying it forward in such a Manner as will be most conducive to the Public Service, and he apprehends he could make a great Improvement from the State the Stock is now in, as he has done from the State of Stock in general at the time he began this Business, an Object he thinks of great Importance to the Honour and Interest of the British Empire; for if it be allowed that the Increase of Herbage by Improvement in Agriculture is a real Advantage to the Public in general, he conceives the Improvement of Stock, so as to gain a greater Quantity and better Quality of Flesh from such Herbage to be of equal if not of greater Importance.

Your Petitioner therefore most humbly Solicits &c.

Copy

MR. BAKEWELL

Subscribers

Rutland	200	-	-
C. T. Pack	10	10	-
Ch. Dashwood	10	10	-
Shuk. Ashby	20	-	- pd
Ed. Crad. Hartopp	10	10	- pd
Lord Bangor	21	-	- pd
Sheffield	20	-	-
C. Turner	26	5	0
J. Fletcher	21	-	-
R. Burdett	20	-	-
Middleton	26	5	0 pd
J. Hutchenson	10	-	- pd
G. Savile	20	-	- pd
G. Edwards	10	10	- pd

Stamford	31	10	-
B. Smith	10	10	-
I. Robinson	10	10	-
B. Woodcock	10	-	-
Ad. Gordon	10	-	-
N. Calvert	10	-	-
W. Pulteney	10	10	-
John Thornton	10	-	-
Mr. Abney	10	10	-
Henry Lakin	10	10	-
T. Paget	20	-	-
M. Culley	{	5	5
		5	5
Thos. Thompson	1	1	-
Henry Howey	1	1	-
Chas. Selbye	1	1	-

*Copy of Financial Appeal*

183

pd	Danl. Alder	1	1	-					
	Jno. Askew	5	5	-	pd.	Mr. Robson pd.		£.	s.
pd	Hen: Grey	1	1	-	pd.	Mr. Jobson pd.		1	1
pd	Wm. Higgs	5	5	-	pd.	Mr. Rich <sup>d</sup> .		1	1
	T. Babington	10	10	-		Thompson		1	1
	R. Abney	10	10	-	pd.	Geo. Logan		1	1
	J. Wright	10	10	-	pd.	Wm. Smith		1	1
	R. Litchf. & fee	20	-	-	pd.	Mr. Ord Weetwood		1	1
	Sundry Small Sums	75	12	-	pd.	Mr. Dixon		5	5
		20	0	-	Bro <sup>t</sup> .	fm. the otherside		26	5
	F. Gascoigne	10	10	-					
	S. Salte	10	10	-					
	J. Musters	10	10	-					
		21	-	-					
	Hugo Mynell	50	-	-	By a Bill sent 14th April			37	16
	Derby	50	-	-	Ball:			30	0
	Wm. Gordon	50	-	-	Sent from Jn <sup>o</sup> . Breedon				
	Sir John Danvers	50	-	-	W. C. Shirbroke			10	10
	Wm. Pochin	20	-	-	R. Bell			10	0
	Ries <sup>d</sup> . Cleslyn	10	10	-	G. Cary			10	10
	E. Dawson	10	10	-	F. Vane			10	10
					A. B. Hawke			10	10
					Ed. Yeo			10	10
					Dean of Salisbury			10	10
								10	10
paid	I. Bickham	10	10	-	Mr. S. Smith			10	10
pd	I. Burnaby	10	10	-	R. Fowler			10	10
	J. Grundy	10	10	-	Hopitown			50	0
pd	C. Winstanly	10	10	-	Aylesford			20	0
pd	A. I. Fleck	10	10	-	S. Sole			10	10
pd	Jos. Bunney	10	10	-	H. Dundafs			15	15
	Mr. Welby	20	0	-	T. Burnstern			10	0
	Mr. Cholmondley	10	-	-	K. Steward			10	10
pd	Mr. — —	21	-	-	S. Meddows			10	10
	Wentworth	21	-	-	Small Sums			69	6
	I. P. Hungerford	20	-	-				10	10
	Fauconberg	21	-	-	R. Barber			10	10
	D. of Devonshire	50	-	-	T. Hollis			10	0
	Montagu	50	-	-					

## APPENDIX II

Letters regarding Bakewell written by George Culley to Arthur Young (originals in British Museum).

*[In 1767 George and Matthew Culley left their home at Denton near Darlington and came to the valley of the Till in Northumberland to farm at Fenton, 1,100 acres. In 1762 Matthew had visited Dishley to see Bakewell and his sheep and George a year later. The two brothers exercised very considerable influence on the improvement of farming, especially livestock, in Northumberland and prospered to the extent that in addition to Fenton they became tenants in 1786 of Wark, one of the finest farms on Tweedside, and by 1813 they occupied several farms having a rental of about £6,000 a year.]*

### EASTFIELD NEAR BERWICK.

18th Feb<sup>y</sup>. 1811.

Dear Sir,

Your kind letter of 9th instant, in consequence of what I said to Sir John Sinclair, requesting my weak aid, in your writing the life of the very celebrated Mr. Bakewell came in due course. And you may depend upon all the assistance I can give you. Because, I am rejoiced that you who are so capable, should be so kind as undertake that task. Altho' it is now 15 years gone Oct<sup>r</sup>. last since we lost that valuable man. It is not too late I trust to do justice to his extraordinary talents. Soon after his death, I took the liberty to request that some of the Association, which he presided over when living would give a history of that great man's life to the world.

But none of them would, or at least did undertake it. And I would have done it, but I found myself inadequate to the undertaking, from my advanced time of life. And I had not been so well in my health about that period, so as to have spirits and ability to undertake so important a work.

My reason for answering yours so soon is, owing to your asking me "when Mr. Bakewell was born and the time of his father's death". Because, these are questions to which I cannot answer. And as they are very necessary I must request you to apply to his Nephew Mr. Honeyborn, who succeeded his Maternal Uncle, in the Dishley farm, and who I should hope will not only answer you the above questions, but furnish you with many particulars relative to the life of his Uncle, better than any other person. To facilitate this measure, I yesterday wrote to Mr. Stubbins of Holm pierre Pont near Nottingham, desiring him to speak to Mr. Honeyborn on this business. And that he also and Mr. Paget, and others of the Society, would furnish you with such materials relative to our respectable Master, as they could recollect.

Because, now you are going to write his life, it is a pity that anything of consequence should be omitted of so valuable a man. And permit me to say, that I would wish you not to hurry this publication, for the above reasons. You may depend upon it, that the work will have an extensive and rapid sale. My reason for writing to Nath<sup>l</sup>. Stubbins in preference to Mr. Honeyborn, is owing to my corresponding frequently with Mr. Stubbins, and having had very little acquaintance or correspondence with Mr. Honeyborn.

I was at Dishley a few months before Mr. Bakewell died, in 1795, the same year I had the pleasure of seeing you in London at Whitehall. And I have not been at Dishley since altho' my son has. I would have written to Mr. Paget but have not his address. And he may be dead otherwise if living I am convinced he of all other men, is best able to give you the principal particulars of the late Mr. Bakewell's transactions. Because he was not so much younger, had been intimately connected and acquainted with him from his first commencement in business, and I think they were nearly related. However, they were always particular friends and of same religion. Protestant Dissenters. But very liberal in their way of thinking. Besides, I never knew many if any better man than Mr. Paget. And I must request you to ask Mr. Honeyborn for his address if living. Because, I am confident, that he will have much pleasure in communicating to you what he knows, which is more than any other person. He left Ipstock where he did live, and where I have spent many days and nights

most agreeably and went to an Estate he bought, I think near Market Harborough. As to myself you may depend upon all I can do, and altho' upon the verge of 80, I will begin soon and rough hew all I know with pleasure relative to that great man, and give you leave to arrange it in such a way as you best know. I have only to add at present that you may not hurry this publication. And that I am wishing every success.

Yours most faithfully,  
GEO. CULLEY.

P.S. Bakewell no doubt of it well deserved a statue erected to his memory. If you want any thing very particular from me before I commit to paper what I have to say? Be so kind as write to me again and I will readily answer you. But as I am old and slow I shall be some time in drawing up the particulars that I can recollect of Mr. Bakewell. Before whose time we were most ignorant of the true merits and properties of livestock of the quadruped kind.

*Endorsed—Arthur Young, Esq.,  
Secretary to Board of Agriculture,  
Sackville Street,  
LONDON.*

*EASTFIELD NEAR BERWICK  
9th March 1811.*

My Dear Sir,

I have now put down in writing everything that I can recollect respecting that very extraordinary Personage Robert Bakewell (who I consider as one of those remarkable beings who the Almighty sends into the world now and then to correct—amend—and improve us, in those various departments to which they apply their great talents.) I own I have done it in a very desultory manner but that I could not help. Because, I had no minutes or observations in writing to guide me. The numerous letters I received from him are unfortunately mostly destroyed. Consequently, what I have done, is entirely from memory. Nevertheless, I hope you will be able to correct and arrange such parts of it as appear to you worthy of

notice. It is just as it occurred to me, for I have not transcribed any part of it, having no one to assist me. And it would take me some time to write it over. Besides, it might by that means, be kept too long from you. However, I have carefully perused it more than once, and don't see anything which I could or would wish to alter. That part relative to Mr. Ashworth may be left out or not. It is a true account but may give pain to some of his Relations. In reading it over I made marginal marks which will lead you the reader to the different matters so as to enable you the better to arrange them. If it in any degree should meet with your approbation I shall be much gratified. If not, you must excuse an old man. And if you think me deserving, be so kind as send me two or three copies, in case you do publish. And if you have any desire to ask me any more questions I will be both ready and willing to give you the best answers I can. If you would take the trouble of reading my Treatise on Live Stock, I am persuaded that you will meet with many things in it relative to Mr. Bakewell well worth your notice.

With every good wish, I remain,

My Dear Sir,  
Your sincere friend  
and Humble Serv<sup>t</sup>.  
GEO. CULLEY.

P.S.

As the MS. is too bulky to go by Post I have taken the liberty to direct it under cover to Richard Wharton, Esq. M.P. Treasury Chambers, London. The way in which I was instructed to send Sir John Sinclair's papers. And it goes by the same post as this.

N.B. Should you write to me again, pray recollect to direct your letter by Berwick and I shall receive it directly. But if by Belford, it will come by Wooler and not reach of a week longer.

*Endorsed—Arthur Young, Esq.,  
Secretary to the Board  
of Agriculture.*

### APPENDIX III

*EXTRACT FROM*  
THE BREEDS OF THE DOMESTIC ANIMALS OF THE  
BRITISH ISLANDS.

*Described by*

DAVID LOW, ESQ., F.R.S.E.

*Professor of Agriculture in the University of Edinburgh.*

*Volume II, Page 60—"The Old Lincoln Breed."*

\* A correspondence on this subject, in the year 1788, has been preserved, between MR. CHAPLIN, a distinguished breeder of the Old Lincolns, and Mr. BAKEWELL of Dishley, which is curious, as showing the angry feelings of the time, and bringing before us, and in his own words, one so distinguished for what he has done, and so little known by any thing he has written,—Mr. BAKEWELL. It had been proposed, it seems, that a show of rams should take place at Partney, for the purpose of comparing together the old and new breeds. Mr. BAKEWELL had declined allowing his rams to be seen until they were sorted, as it is termed, but appears to have thought that there would be no great harm in taking a peep at his rival's, even in their state of disorder. Mr. CHAPLIN resenting the proceeding, thus addresses his wily opponent:—"The extraordinary art made use of in the exhibition of your stock at Dishley, points out, in the strongest manner, the impropriety of showing it in a disorderly state; and after refusal on the 21st instant to let you see my sheep before they were collected and sorted at home, I did not expect to hear of your meanly sneaking into my pastures, at Wrangle, on the 24th, with two other people, driving my sheep into the fold, and examining them. Such unwarrantable conduct can only be accounted for by your great anxiety about the show of rams at Partney, near Spilsby, on the 18th of September, which was proposed for the purpose of making the

comparison between those bred from your sheep and the original breed of this county. The small sheep that have no cross of the Durham kind, which you have had the address to impose upon the world, without size, without length, and without wool, I have always held to be unprofitable animals; but that I may not appear to be too tenacious of my own opinion, I hope you will produce them at Partney, on the 18th September next, to meet the Lincolnshire sheep, where there will be many better judges than ourselves to decide on their merits."

The reply is characteristic. "On my return home on Tuesday last, I saw your letter addressed to me of the 26th of August. In the Leicester paper of the 6th instant, in which you are pleased to notice the extraordinary art made use of in the exhibition of the stock at Dishley; which you have seen at several different times. Surely you cannot say you have observed any unfair practices, or that you was ever denied seeing what was not engaged for the season, on account of their not being sorted, or being in a disorderly state. At Horncastle, on Thursday, the 21st of August, I asked you if I might see your rams near Saltfleet. You did not say I should not, but that they were not sorted, and that when they were you would be glad to see me at Tathwell. I did not go to Saltfleet, but into the marshes, near Skegness; and from thence, on the Saturday afternoon following, to Wrangle; the next day, Sunday the 24th, to Freeston, where I met with two graziers, with whom I had not any acquaintance till that day. They proposed on Monday to go to Skegness, and asked me if I thought they could see your rams. I told them I was informed on my way to and at Wrangle, that they might. We set forward together, and called at the inn at Wrangle, which I came from the day before, and there passed what you are pleased to term, my 'meanly sneaking into your pastures on the 24th.' We asked a young man if you had any rams there, he informed us you had. 'Where are they?' 'In the close next the house.' 'May we see them?' 'Yes.' 'Who would show them?' 'I will.' From which we supposed he had frequently shown them to others. We then alighted and went into the close; he opened the pen-gate, and we assisted him in driving them in, about fourteen in number. The age or breed of any of them I do not know. From thence we went to the person who has the care of your rams, about a mile and a half nearer Skegness, and asked



if we could see them; he refused us, saying he had received orders by a letter from you not to show them to any one. He was then asked if they had not been shown before. He answered they had. 'When did he receive the order not to show them?' 'On Saturday night last.' Had we known this before, we should not have been guilty of what you term, 'such unwarrantable conduct.' I have long made it a rule not to find fault with another person's stock. Why should you be so severe upon mine? And I now take the liberty of requesting you to explain what you mean 'by sheep without size, without length, and without wool,' which you say I have had the address to impose upon the world; and of informing you that I am fully persuaded there are ten rams without a cross of the Durham, or any other kind, let for a thousand guineas more this season than the same number of the 'true Old Lincolnshire breed, of the long staple,' some of these at the highest prices, into the counties of Lincoln and Nottingham; and to breeders, many of whom have used the Dishley sort of sheep for upwards of twenty years, and who have agreed for some, and offer higher prices for others, for future seasons, than they have yet given, and may surely be supposed capable of knowing the value of what 'you have always held to be unprofitable animals,' Did they not find their interest in so doing, would they persevere? The address must be extraordinary, indeed, that could impose upon them against their interest and so long experience."

#### APPENDIX IV

*Description of the Culley Breed, in answer to Sir John Sinclair's Queries  
by Mr. George Culley of Fenton in Northumberland.*

The Breed we have, is now entirely from Mr. Bakewell's, and consequently native—To that breed we were naturally partial, knowing well that Mr. Bakewell had brought his Breed to the greatest perfection, by picking the best Ewes, from all the best flocks in his neighbourhood, and putting the most valuable Tups to them.—The Breed is compleatly domesticated, and indeed of so quiet a disposition, that it is well known, a fence of 3 feet high, will turn them at any time, the Tuping Season excepted.—This peaceable Disposition is probably One reason why they become so early fat.—That they are exceedingly hardy, is evident from this Circumstance that they can be kept in good condition, in the deepest Storms of Snow, and the Severest Storms in Winter, equal to, if not better than any other Lowland breed in the Island.—The breed may be called pure, as Mr. Bakewell has not had a crop from any other breed, for upwards of 20 years past, and for these 20 years, we have had no other Tups, but from him.

The Shape of the Breed is the Circumstance that principally distinguishes it from other Sheep—Its mould or form, being finer, and more truly proportioned, and the Sheep being thicker, and broader in proportion to its heighth than any other. It has also a greater propensity to grow fat—above all, it is remarkable, for supporting a greater weight of carcase upon a very clean small bone, than any other breed.—

The weight of these Sheep vary in proportion to their keeping, but individual ones of this breed have been fed to upwards of 50 lb. per quarter. It is supposed on the whole that it pays best to feed wethers from  $1\frac{1}{2}$  to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years old, because after that age we think they do not pay so well for what they eat, tho' they certainly keep improving till 3 years old—

Taking the medium at 2 years old, they weigh in general about 24 lb. per quarter—The number of ribs is commonly 13 on each side, but some of the breed have been killed with 14—This breed is remarkable for producing little Tallow, compared with others, and indeed it is now well known that those which are most inclined to fatten on the outside, always have the least Tallow, or rough fat within.—

This Breed is not only more inclined to fatten than any other known breed, but when fat, the meat is finer in the grain, or Texture, than any other Lowland Breed, though not equal in flavour to the Cheviot or Highland mutton. There is also a greater quantity of meat in proportion to the bones, and there is no breed (yet known to the Public) that will bring so many pounds of mutton from a given quantity of food.—

The Average weight of the fleece in this Northern County (Northumberland) taking Wether, hog and Ewes together, is about 7 pounds, and the value, according to the price of wool. In 1792 9d. per lb. or  $\frac{5}{3}$  per fleece—This is the highest price ever given for this Sort of wool in this neighbourhood. But in Yorkshire and farther South, it brings 10d. per lb. and upwards—The wool is all white, and fit for Combing, being from 5 to 15 inches long—

There are Seldom more than 2 lambs at a birth, and in general  $\frac{2}{3}$ ds of the Ewes have one lamb and  $\frac{1}{3}$  Two—They lamb at any time from Candlemas to May, but mostly in March—They are pretty well covered with wool when lambed—

The Mode of management is in general as follows—We keep the store Ewes and Ewe hogs in Summer on old pastures—The Sheep fed for the Butcher get clovers and other new Grasses in Spring, Summer and Autumn—We give Turnips to all our Sheep in Winter, except the breeding Ewes And we wish to give even these Turnips for 2 or 3 weeks before they Lamb, if we can spare them any.—

The principal disease to which this Breed is subject is here called the Midding-Ill. In other countries known under the name of the Red or black water.—The only preventative (for we know of no cure) is good keeping—This disorder attacks the hogs/ seldom “older” sheep/when sinking in condition, but if put in time on Turnips, rape, or any other good keeping, it is a certain prevention. We are seldom troubled with the

Black leg or quarter ill, as it is called in different counties, and not much of late with the Halt or Footrot except in wet Seasons (as in Summer last 1792). Paring the hoof, and applying corrosives will generally do if not very bad, but if proud flesh appears between the hoofs, then poultices are necessary, and the Strongest Caustics to subdue the proud flesh.—

The fleece is clipt but once a year, generally in June—None of the breeders in this part of the Kingdom have hitherto attempted to improve the fleece, either in quantity or quality—What effect the present advance in the price of wool may have is not yet known—but so thoroughly are we convinced of the profit of good Carcases and so much do we find by experience that the breed that has the greatest tendency to fatten has the best constitution/a most essential point in a cold and frozen climate/that whatever wool we grow we must in the first place attend to carcase—at the same time we have no doubt that we could by attention, perseverance and proper crossing cover our breed with either coarse or fine wool as might be thought most advisable.

**Additional Queries.**

1. At what *age* do you give your Ewes the Tup, and at what season of the year?

**Answers.**

We never put our females to the Tup till once clipt or shorn, when they are generally called Gimmers and we seldom give these the Tup untill 10 days after the Ewes, because from their youth they are often scarce of Milk in the lambing time untill grass becomes plentiful.

**Ansr. to 2nd Qn.**

2. At what age do you commonly draw your breeding Ewes and sell them of?

I believe the genl. custom is to draw the Ewes at 3 & 4 yrs. old. But the method we pursue is to draw the worst of all ages and keep the most valuable Ewes as long as they will breed. Nay we have sometimes kept a favorite Ewe when she no longer was able to milk but put her produce out to nurse on anor Ewe. We always fatten our Draught or Culled Ewes. But the Ewes in general in this County are sold into Yorkshire to breed fat lambs and are most commonly draughted as soon as the Lambs are weaned, which is from the middle to the latter end of June.

## 3rd Qn.

3. Is that on account of their getting too old for breeding of lambs or, is it to bring forward your young stores?

This seems to be answered in the 2nd.

## 4th Qn.

4. How many Ewes do you allow for each ram?

We allow 80 or 90 Ewes to a yr. old Tup, called in this Country a Diamond. And 120 to all above that age. I mean these Nos. when used singly, but if used along with more than one Tup in large flocks, not more than 50 or 60 to above and 80 to older.

*An Account of the Pedigree of Mr. Culley's Tups, 1797.*

Mr. Bakewell's old A<sup>+</sup> was the sire of the 40 gns. tup, which we hired.

\* The 40 gns. Tup was the Sire of the famous Twins, which were the leading Tups at Dishley at that time, especially the fat one T which fat twin was the Sire of young A, or Mr. Robys Sheep, that Mr. Ashworth offered to sell to Mr. Roby during the Interregnum, if Jn<sup>o</sup> Breedon Mr. Bakewells most valuable Shepherd, had not luckily prevented him.

o Young A alias Robys Tup was the Sire of the lame A Tup, Carcass, Bosom &c. &c. which lame Tup was sent to us by Mr. Bakewell as a present, in remembrance of the small pecuniary assistance, which we procured for him in this Neighbourhood. We used him two years, and bred many good Tups from him. The best of which was called Baloon. He was the Sire of Bates, and Bates was the Sire of Barber, which Tup is in the recollection of most Sheep breeders in this Country. Barber was the Sire of the present Tups Charles, Shoulders. Bluecap &c. &c. now 4 Shears—and Charles is the Sire of Young A, C & Bros. now Sheerings.

+ Old A was the first Tup Mr. Bakewell had that was remarked for that fine form over the Shoulders, Crop or Chine and true Carcass.

\* The 40 gns. Tup was the first Tup Mr. B. let for so much money before his failure.

T One of the Twins inclined to fat & the other to wool. And it is

truly worthy of remark that their produce inherited the Disposition of their Parents.

o Young A was the sheep which Mr. Ashworth would have sold to Mr. Roby if Jn<sup>o</sup>. Breedon had not convinced him of his folly. At that time they had two favorite Tups at Dishley—Viz—Charles and Young A. Mr. Ashworth who had the principal direction of the business during the Bankruptcy, had used Charles two Seasons, contrary to Jno. Breedons Superior Judgement and at the last would have sold A to Mr. Roby if Breedon had not fortunately prevented him. The Season following used A and got right again, otherwise if A had been sold they wd. in all probability have lost the best Blood, Because many of the best old Ewes would have been going off.

A This lame Tup was used to 3 or 4 Ewes at Dishley, the year he was sent to us, and these Ewes produced 3 Tups. Two of which were the leading Tups at Dishley when they came forward & were called Shoulders & Cambells (from particulars in those parts) as soon as Mr. Bakewell saw how these Tups excelled he immediately sent for the lame Tup, to Mr. Thompsons of Lilburn, who had hired him for the ensuing Season after our using him two Seasons. Mr. B. sent Mr. Thompson down the Tup called Hunter in lieu of him.

B The first Tups we got from Dishley, was in the year 1764, and which Tups were hired by my Brother Matt<sup>w</sup>. Culley, they were called Punch and the Large Tup. The next we hired was called Easy John or Sober John, which Tup was Contemporary with Old A. which latter Tup we should have hired, but were foolish enough at that Period to think the price too high. He A was that same year hired to a Mr. Lee of Linton & was ever afterwards used by Mr. Bakewell himself.

*Account of the Northumberland Breed of Sheep and the progressive Improvements made thereupon—(Anonymous)—A Northumberland Farmer. The Farmer's Magazine, Vol. IV, 1803.*

Previous to the improvement by introduction of Dishley breed the general breed of sheep were called *Mugs*; a name descriptive of their nature. Wool grew over all their faces and down to their toes. Their

loins were high and narrow, their shoulders sharp and hollow behind; their sides flat; and their wool short and not at all fine: such is the description given by this writer.

About the year 1767 the Messrs. Culleys entered upon the farm of Fenton, near Wooler and introduced the Dishley or Bakewell breed so called "from the high merit of that extraordinary man who was certainly the first person that made the proper discriminations between size, form and disposition to fatten."

The writer, whilst admitting that "it is not at present easy to ascertain whence Mr. Bakewell obtained tups for crossing his breed" states that on the female side "Mr. Bakewell was allowed the pick of all the principal flocks of ewes in the neighbourhood, at the rate of 20s. or 21s. per head; and when the price was afterwards advanced upon him to 42s, he gave up, as, by that time he had possessed himself of the best ewes in that part of the kingdom."

He also refers to the opposition on the part of some breeders "who, either from *pride* or *obstinacy* would not allow merit to the Bakewell blood, and, for a number of years, threw cold water on this valuable breed."

In time, due to its wonderful propensity to fatten he observes its popularity became firmly established. "The Dishley sheep pay more for what they eat than those of any other kind we know of. It may also be observed that the superiority of the Dishley blood was early found out by all the sheep breeders who were open to conviction, both in Northumberland and the Scottish Borders; that the breed spread in those districts with a rapidity which has not perhaps been equalled in any other part of the island; and does high credit to the candour of the Border Breeders in general."

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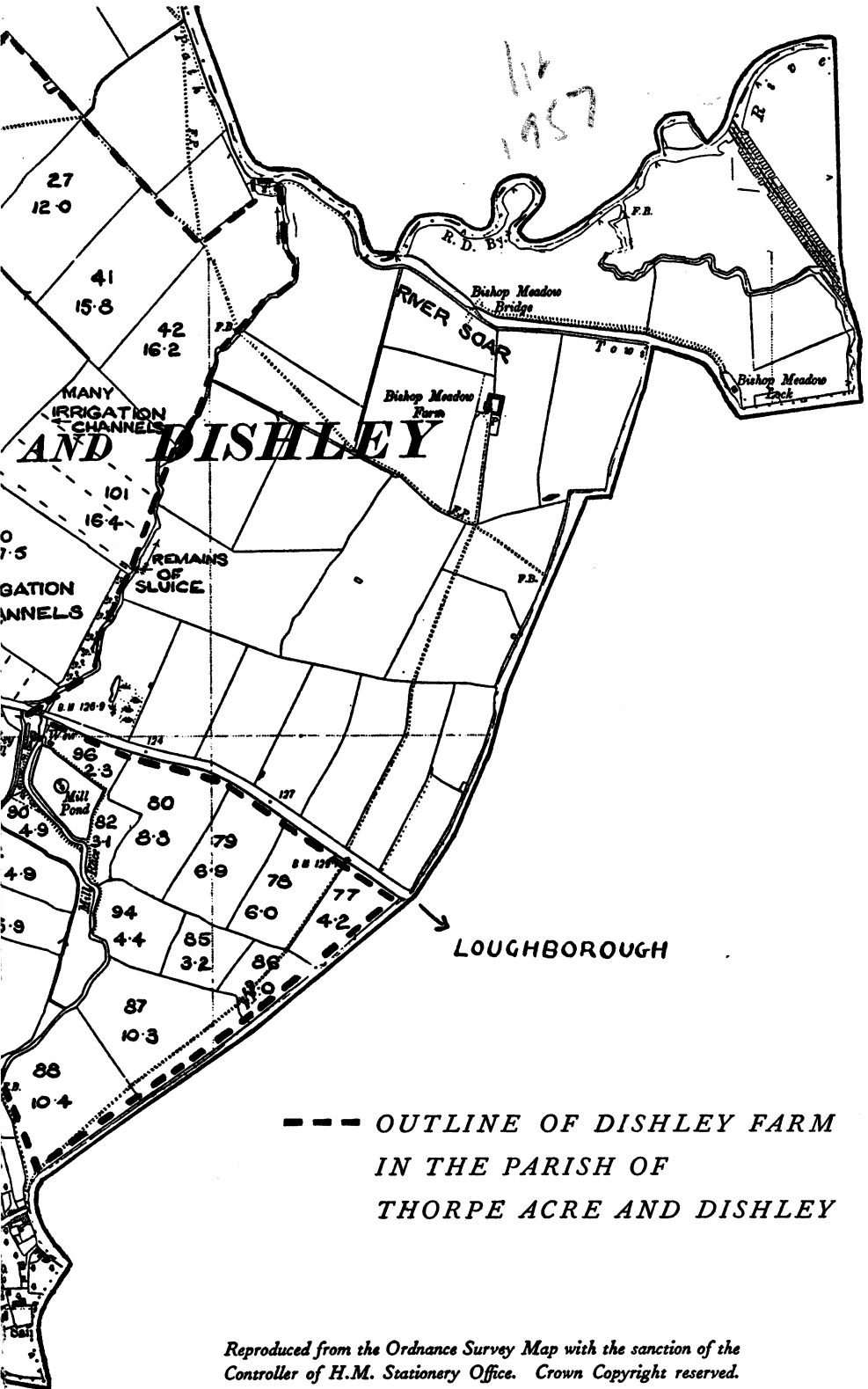
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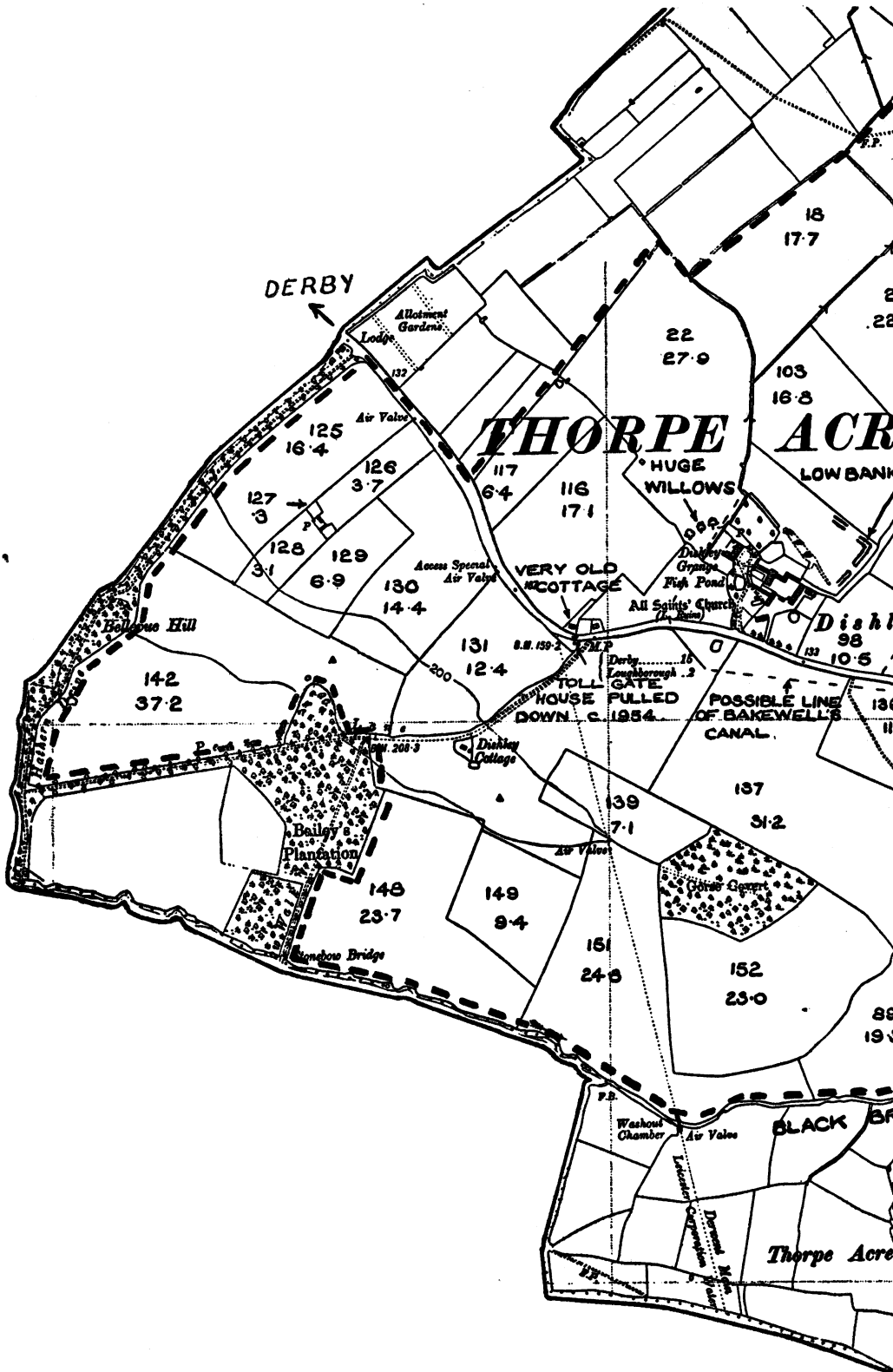
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ROBERT BAKEWELL

*Pioneer Livestock Breeder*



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DERBY

# THORPE ACRE

Allotment Gardens  
Lodge

Air Valves

VERY OLD COTTAGE

HUGE WILLOWS

LOW BANK

Boulogne Hill

Access Special Air Valves

All Saints' Church

Dishley

142  
37.2

TOLL GATE HOUSE PULLED DOWN C. 1954

POSSIBLE LINE OF BAKEWELL'S CANAL

Bailey's Plantation

Dishley Cottage

148  
23.7

149  
9.4

157  
31.2

Rainbow Bridge

151  
24.8

152  
23.0

Washout Chamber

Air Valves

BLACK BR

Thorpe Acre

125  
16.4

127  
3

128  
3.1

129  
6.9

130  
14.4

131  
12.4

117  
6.4

116  
17.1

22  
27.9

103  
16.8

139  
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88  
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