

Waltham Agricultural Society

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Richard Westbrook Baker

The Age of the Red Steer
Two articles from The Times - Spring 1842

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Report taken from The Times – March 30th 1842

Waltham Agricultural Society

From the Nottingham Journal

Atrocious Agricultural Fracas

On Wednesday last, the 23rd instant, the members of the above society, held a special meeting in the Agricultural Hall in town. Upwards of 70 gentleman assembled; amongst those we noticed with Rev. Mr Gillet, the Rev. E Manners, the Hon. W H Wilson, Mr Norman, Mr Manners, Mr Frewin, Mr Clarke, Mr Larrett, Mr Finch, Mr Laren, Mr Baker, Mr Wellalt, Mr Clarke, of Bescoby, Mr Spencer, and Mr Allsop.

The Hon. W Wilson was unanimously voted into the chair, and, on taking that situation, said, they were already aware, from the circular calling the meeting, that they were assembled to hear the evidence to be offered in support of a charge against Mr Baker, of Cottesmore, for falsely entering the age of his red steer; and also to hear what that gentleman had to offer in reply to that charge. He trusted the meeting would hear both sides patiently, and judge impartially; he trusted they would support the authority of the chair.

Having called upon the stewards, the following document, as their report, was read:—

"Mr Chairman and Gentleman, - As Stewards of this Society we beg leave to make a few remarks respecting the case of Mr Baker; and we feel satisfied that when a fair statement of the subject is presented to you, it will not require much consideration before you come to a final settlement of the question. In the first place gentleman, a protest respecting the exhibition of the steer class 6. was entered by Mr Thomas Healy of Ashwell: and, as a matter of course, the society was bound to have the subject brought before a committee. It was then satisfactorily proved that a strong case of circumstantial evidence had been adduced; the committee, thereof being anxious to arrive at the truth, unanimously passed a resolution that Mr Baker be requested to produce his herd book to the stewards at some future meeting. That meeting took place, and Mr Baker presented his documents, which proved unsatisfactory to the stewards, being in their opinion, anything but a herd book. In fact, it was merely six sheets of paper, pinned together and evidently made up for the occasion, for the writing as far as appearance went was all written at the same time, although it professes to be an account of Mr Baker's herd from the year 1820 to the present time. Being anxious to afford Mr Baker every opportunity of vindicating himself before the society as an honourable man, he was repeatedly asked by us as to the genuineness of the papers produced, he protested, as a man and a gentleman, that the document he had given them was the only one he had in the world connected with his herd. Feeling satisfied that a true statement had not been given in, as the writing was certainly of a later date than 1830 on examination of the paper, we found the watermarks were of the date of 1838 and 1839; and feeling that a great reputation was at stake, and not wishing to take the whole responsibility on ourselves, Mr Beazley and Mr Clark of Bescoby, were sent for to give their opinion on the subject. Many of the gentleman now present we believe are aware that Mr Clarke's opinion was similar to our own; and Mr Healey expressed himself to be nearly to the same effect. It is quite evident, therefore, gentleman that a wilful misstatement was made in the entry of the red steer; and so far from Mr Baker's statement being true that he had no other documents than those produced respecting his herd, Mr Carter received a letter from Mr Baker, stating that his herd book was kept Cottesmore, for the inspection of the curious. After this statement we think no reasonable man can have a doubt as to the conclusion we should come to."

James Musson

R Allen

W Humberstone

In order to bring the case fairly before the meeting, the secretary (Mr Thomas Carter Jnr.) stated, that in consequence of the protest made by Mr Thomas Healy, at a committee meeting held on 5th January, the following resolution was passed: – “That the secretary write to Mr Baker, of Cottesmore, requesting him to produce his herd book on 23rd February, when another meeting would be held.”

At the meeting on the 23rd, the Stewards reported as follows:– “That the Stewards, in examining the documents produced by Mr Baker, come to the conclusion that the evidence is not satisfactory.” After a long discussion a resolution was carried, “That no decision be then come to,” and the meeting adjourned. The meeting had since been held, but Mr Baker not being present, it was adjourned until the present day.

Mr Baker called his bailiff, John Turner, who gave testimony as to the red steer in dispute being the same that was entered at Oakham, in 1839, 1840, 1841, and at Waltham at the last September show. He also proved that at the show in 1840, an enquiry was made as to the red steer's eligibility to be shown in class VII., It having taken a prize in that class the year before, and that satisfactory evidence was given to the Stewards that it was under two years old at the show in 1840; and that at the suggestion of the Stewards, who were averse to a precedent being established of two prizes being given to one animal in the same class at successive shows, Mr Baker agreed to withdraw them, and the following was appended in the published awards to the entry of Mr Baker's steers:– “These steers were eligible to be shown in the class, but Mr Baker withdrew them at the suggestion of the Stewards, and one of them being exhibited in the same last year.”

Witness was then cross-examined at great length by Mr Healey, principally with regard to the keep of the steer in question, and from the evident attempts at equivocation with respect to the size of the field where they were grazed in, and other particulars, the value of his evidence appeared to be considerably lessened.

In answer to a question from Mr Musson, The witness said, that no herd book was produced to certify the age of the red steer in 1840.

Mr Rudkin, secretary to the Rutland agricultural Society, recollects the red steer at the 1839 exhibition, and it then appeared to be under a year old.

Cross-examined, – Was a tenant of the Earl of Gainsborough. Never said to Mr C Smith, a reference to the entry of the red steer, “Did you ever see such a rascally business as this?” Did not say. “This is too bad; I have not shown this year, and I will never show again.”

Amos Hibbett, Shepherd to Mr Baker, gave similar testimony to that of Turner, and was severely cross-examined by Mr Healey.

Mr Waite had been Mr Baker's clerk for 14 years; the six sheets shown to the stewards were commenced in the spring of 1839, and finished at the latter end of December in that year, or the beginning of January, 1840. When Mr Baker contemplated declining his breeding stock, those papers were made for the purpose of catalogue. Witness was ill for some time, which caused it to be so long in making. It was taken partly from the farm book, partly from Coates's herd book, from memorandums witness kept himself, from Mr Baker's pocketbook, from the bull book, and from an old railway book tacked together with two pieces of pasteboard. It was one of a set of books made for a railway survey. They were so constructed that if an error were made this sheet might be taken out. Nearly all the leaves were out of this one. Never saw a herd book of Mr Baker's. Never saw any

complete account of Mr Baker's beast. The papers from which the six sheets were compiled were all destroyed. Mr Baker's papers respecting his stock were always kept in the draw, which has no lock, and witness could get at them at any time. Mr Baker had two sales of his stock, one in 1839 and one in 1840. All his beasts were disposed of except three steers. (Cross-examined by Mr Healey.) Does not think that six sheets could contain a statement of Mr Baker's herd for twenty-two years. Did not state at a meeting in that room, that "Mr Baker had a book at home which would give an account of the exact age of the Ox, but I have not got it with me."

Two other clerks of Mr Baker were called to corroborate the above evidence.

Mr Musson, one of the stewards, stated that Mr Baker was asked if the papers he had produced were the only documents he had relating to his herd; he said in reply, "As a man and a gentleman, and I call God to witness, that I have no other herd book, and that they are the only documents I possess." The entries appeared to be made in a regular manner, but on examining the watermarks on the sheets, they found that the paper was not made until the years 1838 in 1839; consequently the entries could not have been made prior to those years.

Mr Baker – Did I not say that this was the only document I ever had that contained a full account of all my beasts of any consequence and breed.

Mr Musson – You did not; you said what I have just stated.

Mr Allen corroborated Mr Musson's statement as to what took place when Mr Baker was asked if those were all the documents he had.

At the request of the stewards, and by those of the meeting, the letter addressed by Mr Baker to the secretary, in reply to an application for his herd book, was read as follows: –

Cottesmore, February 14, 1842

"Sir. – Your letter, dated 19 January, desiring me to produce my private her books at the Waltham meeting on the 23rd instant., May be amusing to the gentleman who have thought proper to impose that task upon me, for in all probability I shall have to come out of Kent, or from London, purposely to attend the meeting, therefore must request that you will see some of those gentlemen concerned, and learn what our I must attend, that I may take a suitable train if I am so circumstanced, to return immediately to town. As I said before, I stand upon my certificate. If examining my herd book or memorandums about my base would afford any pleasure to the curious, they may see them any day when I'm at home, or at my office".

Your early answer will oblige,

Yours and &c.,

Mr Carter, Secretary.

RW Baker.

Mr R Smith of Burley, had seen Mr Baker's herd book on more than one occasion; it was at least an inch thick, and appeared to be kept in the regular way. It was ruled, witness believe, with blue lines, but was not certain.

Cross-examined by Mr Baker – It was a regular herd book, not with a printed head, but kept in a similar manner to the six sheets then on the table. Could not swear to the colour of it, but thinks it was covered with paper to preserve the covers, which were quite stiff, like pasteboard. It lay before Mr Baker in his dining or drawing-room on one occasion when witness called respecting the stock

Mr Baker had to sell. It was in reference to the best breed ones that this book was looked at. Had seen it several times. Mr Saville was present on one occasion when he saw it.

Mr J Clark said that Mr Saville, who was unavoidably absent, had distinctly stated that he had seen Mr Baker's herd book.

Mr Smith's cross examination continued – Can't say whether it contained an account of all Mr Baker's beasts. There were nearer fifty leaves in the book than three. Saw a book of that description which Mr Baker called his herd book.

Mr Baker said, that he had some books made for the railway, of which he had no doubt this was the one spoken of by Waite. There was one in the possession of the Clerk of the Peace, and he should like Mr Smith to see it. We then understood Mr Baker to enquire if the meeting might be adjourned, that it might be produced, but the members were not willing to do so, as they had had so many meetings already on the subject.

Mr Smith had a most perfect recollection of there being sheets in the book; saw entries, and they made references to particular beasts that Mr Baker said witnesses ought to buy; took extracts from the book.

Two or three other witnesses were examined, and Mr Baker addressed the meeting; he declared his entire innocence of the charge, and after a review of the evidence, concluded by saying he would not trouble the Chairman to sum up, and he perceived his presence there were no longer desired, he would take his name out. He should not bear them any ill-will, and he hoped they would treat him with the same consideration.

Mr Baker then withdrew.

The fifth rule was then read, which states that "no subscription will be considered to cease until 12 months' notice thereof be given to the secretary."

Mr Bradford proposed, and Mr Allsop seconded, as follows: –

"Resolved, that after a lengthened and protracted examination of the evidence supporting the charge against Richard Westbrook Baker, Esq., of having wilfully misstated the age and keeping of his red steer, exhibited at the Waltham show, in September 1841, this meeting is of the opinion that the charge is substantiated; and that in accordance with the regulations of this society, Mr Baker be expelled."

Mr Wellfit proposed, and Mr Gorrett seconded, that as Mr Baker had resigned, there was no necessity for his expulsion.

The original motion was carried by large majority; only eight hands being held up for the amendment. The thanks of the meeting were given to the chairman; thanks were also voted to Mr Healey, for his exertions in bringing the charge to an issue.

The business of the meeting (which commenced at three o'clock in the afternoon) did not close till half-past 10.

This case has excited the greatest interest in the agricultural world, from the prominent part taken by Mr Baker in agricultural societies, he being an influential member in several country ones, and in the Council of the Royal English Agricultural Society. Mr Baker is High Sheriff this year of the County of Rutland.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30, 1842.

AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

(From the *National Journal*.)

CRIMINAL AGRICULTURE. PARTS.

On Wednesday last, the 23d instant, the members of the above society held a special meeting in the Agricultural Hall in that town. Upwards of 70 gentlemen assembled; amongst those we notice were the Rev. Mr. Gill, the Rev. E. Manners, the Hon. W. H. Wilson, Mr. Norman, Mr. Manners, Mr. Frewin, Mr. Clark, Mr. Larratt, Mr. Finch, Mr. Laton, Mr. Baker, Mr. Wellatt, Mr. Clarke, of Boscob, Mr. Spencer, and Mr. Allsopp.

The Hon. W. Wilson was unanimously voted into the chair, and, on taking that situation, said, they were already aware, from the circular calling the meeting, that they were ascertained to hear the evidence to be offered in support of a charge made against Mr. Baker, of Cottesmore, for falsely entering the age of his red steer; and also to hear what that gentleman had to offer in reply to that charge. He trusted the meeting would hear both sides patiently, and judge impartially; he trusted they would support the authority of the chair.

Having called upon the stewards, the following document, as their report, was read:—

"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen.—As stewards of this society we beg leave to make a few remarks respecting the case of Mr. Baker; and we feel satisfied that when a fair statement of the subject is presented to you, it will not require much consideration before you come to a final settlement of the question. In the first place, gentlemen, a protest respecting the exhibition of the steer-in-class 6, was entered by Mr. Thomas Healey, of Ashwell; and, as a matter of course, the Society was bound to have the subject brought before a committee. It was then satisfactorily proved that a strong case of circumstantial evidence had been adduced; the committee, therefore, anxious to arrive at the truth, unanimously passed a resolution that Mr. Baker be requested to produce his herd-book to the stewards at some future meeting. That meeting took place, and Mr. Baker presented his documents, which proved unsatisfactory to the stewards, being, in their opinion, anything but a herd-book. In fact, it was merely six sheets of paper, pinned together, and evidently made up for the occasion, for the writing, as far as appearance went, was all written at the same time, although it professed to be an account of Mr. Baker's herd from the year 1830 to the present time. Being anxious to afford Mr. Baker every opportunity of vindicating himself before the society as an honourable man, he was repeatedly asked by us as to the genuineness of the papers produced, he protested, as a man and a gentleman, that the document he had given them was the only one he had in the world connected with his herd. Feeling satisfied that a true statement had not been given in, as the writing was certainly of a later date than 1830; for, on examination of the paper, we found the water-marks were of the date of 1838 and 1839; and feeling that a great question was at stake, and not wishing to take the whole responsibility on ourselves, Mr. Healey and Mr. Clark, of Boscob, were sent for to give their opinion on the subject. Many of the gentlemen now present we believe are aware that Mr. Clark's opinion was similar to our own; and Mr. Healey expressed himself to us nearly to the same effect. It is quite evident, therefore, gentlemen, that a wilful misstatement was made in the entry of the red steer; and so far from Mr. Baker's statement being true, that he had no other documents than those produced respecting his herd, Mr. Carter received a letter from Mr. Baker, stating that his herd-book was kept at Cottesmore, for the inspection of the curators. After this statement, we think no reasonable man can have a doubt as to the conclusion we should come to."

"JAMES MUSSON."

"R. ALLEN."

"W. HUMBERSTONE."

In order to bring the case fairly before the meeting, the Secretary (Mr. Thomas Carter, jun.) stated, that in consequence of the protest made by Mr. Thomas Healey, at a committee meeting held on the 5th of January, the following resolution was passed:—"That the Secretary write to Mr. Baker, of Cottesmore, requesting him to produce his herd-book on the 23d of February, when another meeting would be held."

At the meeting on the 23d, the Stewards reported as follows:—"That the Stewards, in examining the documents produced by Mr. Baker, came to the conclusion that the evidence is not satisfactory." After a long discussion, a resolution was carried, "That no decision be then come to," and the meeting adjourned. A meeting had since been held, but Mr. Baker not being present, it was adjourned until the present day.

Mr. Baker called his bailiff, John Turner, who gave testimony as to the red steer in dispute being the same that was entered at Okeham, in 1839, &c. 1841, and at Waltham at the last September show. He also proved that at the show in 1840, an inquiry was made as to the red steer's eligibility to be shown in class VII, it having taken a prize in that class the year before, and that satisfactory evidence was given to the Stewards that it was under two years old at the show in 1840; and that at the suggestion of the Stewards, who were averse to a precedent being established of two prizes being given to one animal in the same class at successive shows, Mr. Baker agreed to withdraw them, and the following was appended in the published awards to the entry of Mr. Baker's steers:—"These steers were eligible to be shown in the class, but Mr. Baker withdrew them at the suggestion of the Stewards, and one of them being exhibited in the same last year."

Witness was then cross-examined at great length by Mr. Healey, principally with regard to the keep of the steer in question, and from the evident attempts at evocation with respect to the size of the field they were grazed in, and other particulars, the value of his evidence appeared to be considerably lessened.

In answer to a question from Mr. Musson,

The witness said, that no herd-book was produced to certify the age of the red steer in 1840.

Mr. Rudkin, secretary to the Rutland Agricultural Society, recollects the red steer at the 1839 exhibition, and it then appeared to be under a year old.

Cross-examined.—Was a tenant of the Earl of Gainsborough. Never said to Mr. C. Smith, in reference to the entry of the red steer, "Did you ever see such a rascally business as this?" Did not say, "This is too bad; I have not shown this year, and I will never show again."

Amos Hibbett, shepherd to Mr. Baker, gave similar testimony to that of Turner, and was severely cross-examined by Mr. Healey.

Mr. Waite had been Mr. Baker's clerk for 14 years; the six sheets shown to the stewards were commenced in the spring of 1839, and finished at the latter end of December in that year, or the beginning of January, 1840. When Mr. Baker contemplated declining his breeding stock, those papers were made for the purposes of catalogue. Witness was ill for some time, which caused it to be so long in making. It was taken partly from the farm-book, partly from Coates's herd-book, from memorandum witness kept himself, from Mr. Baker's pocket book, from the bull-book, and from an old railway book tacked together with two pieces of pasteboard. It was one of a set of books made for a railway survey. They were so constructed that if an error were made the sheet might be taken out. Nearly all the leaves were out of this one. Never saw a herd-book of Mr. Baker's. Never saw any complete account of Mr. Baker's beasts. The papers from which the six sheets were compiled were all destroyed. Mr. Baker's papers respecting his stock were always kept in a drawer, which had no lock, and witness could get to them at any time. (Mr. Baker had two sales of his stock, one in 1839, and one in 1840. All his beasts were disposed of, except three steers. (Cross examined by Mr. Healey.) Does not think that six sheets could contain a statement of Mr. Baker's herd for twenty-two years. Did not state at a meeting in that room, that "Mr. Baker had a book at home which would give an account of the exact age of the ox, but I have not got it with me."

Two other clerks of Mr. Baker were called to corroborate the above evidence.

Mr. Musson, one of the stewards, stated that Mr. Baker was asked if the papers he had produced were the only documents he had relating to his herd; he said in reply, "As a man and a gentleman, and I call God to witness, that I have no other herd-book, and that they are the only documents I possess." The entries appeared to be made in a regular manner, but on examining the water-marks on the sheets, they found that the paper was not made until the year 1838 and 1839; consequently the entries could not have been made prior to those years.

Mr. Baker.—Did I not say that this was the only document I ever had that contained a full account of all my beasts of any consequence and breed.

Mr. Musson.—You did not; you said what I have just stated.

Mr. Allen corroborated Mr. Musson's statement as to what took place when Mr. Baker was asked if those were all the documents he had.

Cross-examined.—Was a tenant of the Earl of Gainsborough. Never said to Mr. C. Smith, in reference to the entry of the red steer, "Did you ever see such a rascally business as this?" Did not say, "This is too bad; I have not shown this year, and I will never show again."

Mr. Wellatt proposed, and Mr. Gorrett seconded, that as Mr. Baker had resigned, there was no necessity for his expulsion.

The original motion was carried by a large majority; only eight hands being held up for the amendment.

The thanks of the meeting were given to the Chairman; thanks were also voted to Mr. Healey, for his exertions in bringing the charge to an issue.

The business of the meeting (which commenced at 3 o'clock in the afternoon) did not close till half-past 10.

This case has excited the greatest interest in the agricultural world, from the prominent part taken by Mr. Baker in agricultural societies, he being an influential member in several country ones, and in the Council of the Royal English Agricultural Society. Mr. Baker is High Sheriff this year of the county of Rutland.

The Times 20th April 1842

The Waltham Agricultural Society

Statement of Mr Baker

The charges preferred against me are these: – That I have wilfully misstated the age of the steer at the last Waltham show, in order to obtain a prize of £3; and that having given that false certificate, I have endeavoured to support it by placing before the stewards documents evidently made up for the purpose; and that I have withheld the herd book said to be in my possession.

In order that the case may be understood by those who have not taken part in the discussions that have occurred concerning the age of the steer, I will as briefly as possible state the facts: – I sent this steer to the Waltham Agricultural Show on 27 September, 1841, to be exhibited in class six: – "I, Richard Westbrook Baker, of Cottesmore, in the County of Rutland, do hereby certify that my steer, to be shown in class 6, is in every way qualified for a premium of £3. As a steer under three years old."

The judges awarded the prize of £3 to the steer, and the stewards handed over the amount to my Bailiff, without any objection whatever being made.

It was not until 27 December that I was apprised by the secretary that a protest had been made on 23 December against the age and feeding of the steer. The red steer in dispute was calved February, 1839. It was first shown, as one of a pair, at Oakham, on the 3 December 1839, in a class of steers under two years old. At Oakham it was exhibited as under two years old, at the show on 2 December, 1840; and it is this circumstance I have no doubt that has given rise to the present controversy.

It was thought that the precedent of showing in the same class for two years together was a bad one and unsatisfactory to the public. I withdrew the pair of steers at the wish of the stewards, who in the catalogue stated the steers were eligible to be shown in the class, but Mr Baker withdrew them (at the suggestion of the stewards), one of them having been exhibited in the same class last year. On 5 January my Bailiff went there to investigate the question. What took place at the meeting I am unable to say, he not having been allowed to hear the proceedings, and the secretary having subsequently informed me that the minutes of the evidence were not entered in the minute book.

On 23 February last, the members of the Waltham society dined together about three o'clock, and at about half past 9 in the evening I was called upon by the stewards to produce my "private herd book." I therefore retired with them to the opposite end of the hall, and put into their hands the document which is called the 6 sheets of paper, and also my pocket books for the years 1839 and 1840, the two latter containing various entries made at the time concerning my beasts; and among others an entry in the pocket book of 1839 of the birth of this very steer.

The meeting concluded, after 11 o'clock at night, by resolution, – "that the stewards, in examining the documents produced by Mr Baker, come to the conclusion that the evidence is not satisfactory. That no decision be come to; and that the meeting do now adjourn."

Unsatisfactory as this was, I concluded – as everybody else did – that the matter was thus terminated; and I was not singular in this opinion; for a few days afterwards I received a letter from Mr Beazley, the chairman, saying, – "You will hear no more of disputed certificates from Waltham. All right minded men are heartily tired of it, and consider it at an end."

However, to my great astonishment, on 2 March, I received notice of another meeting for 3 March, which was adjourned to the 23rd.

This meeting was attended by upwards of 130 members, the greater number, I believe, that had ever attended any other meeting of the society; certainly a far greater number than attended the meeting on 23 February (where only about 40 or 50 were present), and than attended on 4 January, when only about 30 were present. It is therefore clear that the greatest part of the gentleman present on 23 March had never heard a word of the previous proceedings – had never heard the statements made by the parties who been brought before the meetings as witnesses.

What was my astonishment, then, when we proceeded to business on 23 March, to receive a statement or report of the stewards, in which they, in point of fact, decided the question? The report bears no date, certainly, but I assume it was made on that day; for if it was made before, how much more unfair it was to me – that members, instead of coming with their opinions unbiased, should have had their minds impressed with a report from the offices of the society by which the question was, in fact, decided; so that in effect the meeting was called upon not to go into the case as affecting my certificate, but decide between me and the stewards report?

It was no desire of mine that I was thus brought into collision with the stewards, and I requested, and it was formally moved, that the business of the day should be preceded with by taking up my certificate and the protest.

Had this been adopted, everyone would have heard the whole case through, and they would have judged for themselves upon the statements and the evidence layed before them. But this was opposed by one of the stewards, who moved that their statements or report should be then read, and that I should be called upon to rebut the document, and urging as a reason – "that it would be an affront to the gentleman acting in that capacity if their statements were to be passed over without notice."

This resolution was of course carried. I can say of course, because everyone coming into the meeting without knowledge of what had actually taken place before, would upon such a statement and appeal naturally support their own offices.

I now come to the most serious part of the steward's report – namely, that I produced six sheets of paper, pinned together, and evidently made up for the purpose. I distinctly assert that I then told them that they were mistaken in saying it been put into their hands as an account entered from day-to-day since 1820, but that it was a document, compiled at the end of 1839 and beginning of 1840, and there could be no mistake about it, because I wrote to Mr Beazley the next morning distinctly giving the explanation of what the document was, and what it profess to be. The appearances of the writing must speak for themselves. It will be seen that there are different handwritings, both in ink and pencil; the Ink in different shades, and the writing of different degrees as the pen happened to be good or bad – steel or quill. But all doubt is removed by its having been recognised and identified

by Mr Payne, the respectable auctioneer, at Leicester, as being "the document which the catalogue was made out of from the sale by auction of my short horns, in March, 1840.

With regard to the charge that "I possess a regular herd book, which I have withheld, and which I have denied the existence," the facts are as follow: —

I first exhibited my stock as a competitor for prizes in the year 1831. I kept no account of them beyond various detached memoranda, but about the year 1830 or 1831 I collected together these various memoranda, and entered an account of the best of my stock in a book like a boys copybook containing twelve leaves, which had been before that time used to enter a terrier of lands through which the projected railway was to pass.

This book, however, was incomplete; many of my stock still remained un-entered; and in the autumn and winter of 1839, I resolved upon making out a more comprehensive account of all my good stock from the commencement. The entries made in the new account comprise the whole of those entered in the old book, with many additions.

These entries were contained in the six sheets of paper so often spoken of, and upon these entries being completed, all the old memoranda were considered useless, and destroyed, and the six sheets are made out in the columns, with the name, description, sire, dam, how acquired required, when calved, how disposed of, and contains in its proper place the entry of the beast in question.

The testimony of the persons brought forward by me is clear and decisive, and though doubt is attempted to be thrown upon their evidence, because they are in my employ, let me ask who are the persons to give evidence, in reference to the private affairs of any man, but those who are employed about his premises?

Thus, then, the meeting, in their eagerness for my expulsion, entirely overlooked two incongruities in their resolution.

I trust that all who read this paper will rise from the perusal of it with the conviction that I have not misstated the age of the steer; that the apparent inconsistency of it having been exhibited at Oakham, in December 1839, as then under one year and six months, is explained by the correspondence which took place in the year following, when it was distinctly admitted that the animal was then qualified to be exhibited as being at the time under two years old; that I have shown the fallacy of the statement made in the stewards report, that I produced to them documents made up for the purpose; and, lastly that the assertion that I have withheld a particular book, called "the herd book." Has no foundation whatever in fact.

I have omitted to mention that it was proposed by Mr Thomas Healy (at the meeting of the 23rd March), but not carried, that the expulsion should be advertised in all the local papers, at the expense of the society. And also, that although the persons brought forward by me at the meeting as witnesses were carefully excluded from the room, both Mr R Smith and Mr Allsop, who gave evidence in support of the stewards report (the former being an exhibitor of stock, and a competitor in the same class with my steer), actually remained in the room during all the previous and subsequent discussions, as members of the committee.

THE TIMES, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 1842.

THE WALTHAM AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

STATEMENT OF MR. BAKER.

The charges preferred against me are these:—That I have wilfully misstated the age of a steer at the last Waltham Show, in order to obtain a prize of 3l.; and that having given that false certificate, I have endeavoured to support it by placing before the stewards documents evidently made up for the purpose; and that I have withheld a herd-book said to be in my possession.

In order that the case may be understood by those who have not taken part in the discussions that have occurred concerning the age of this steer, I will as briefly as possible state the facts:—I sent this steer to the Waltham Agricultural Show on the 27th September, 1841, to be exhibited in class 6:—"I, Richard Westbrook Baker, of Cottenham, in the county of Rutland, do hereby certify that my steer, to be shown in class 6, is in every way qualified for a premium of 3l. as a steer under three years old."

The judges awarded the prize of 3l. to the steer, and the stewards handed over the amount to my bailiff, without any objection whatever being made.

It was not until the 27th of December that I was apprised by the Secretary that a protest had been made on the 23d of December against the age and feeding of the steer. The red steer in dispute was calved February, 1839. It was first shown, as one of a pair, at Okeham, on the 3d December, 1839, in a class of steers under two years old. At Okeham it was exhibited as under two years old, at the show on the 2d of December, 1840; and it is this circumstance I have no doubt that has given rise to the present controversy.

It was thought that the precedent of showing in the same class for two years together was a bad one and unsatisfactory to the public. I withdrew the pair of steers at the wish of the stewards, who in the catalogue stated these steers were eligible to be shown in the class, but Mr. Baker withdrew them (at the suggestion of the stewards), one of them having been exhibited in the same class last year. On the 5th of January my bailiff went there to investigate the question. What took place at the meeting I am unable to say, he not having been allowed to hear the proceedings, and the secretary having subsequently informed me that the minutes of the evidence were not entered in the minute book.

On the 23d of February last, the members of the Waltham Society dined together about 3 o'clock, and about half-past 9 in the evening I was called upon by the stewards to produce my "private herd-book." I therefore retired with them to the opposite end of the hall, and put into their hands the document which is called the six sheets of paper, and also my pocket-books for the years 1839 and 1840, the two latter containing various entries made at the time concerning my beasts; and among others an entry in the pocket-book of 1839 of the birth of this very steer.

The meeting concluded, after 11 o'clock at night, by a resolution,—"That the stewards, in examining the documents produced by Mr. Baker, come to the conclusion that the evidence is not satisfactory. That no decision be come to; and that the meeting do now adjourn."

Unsatisfactory as this was, I concluded—as everybody else did—that the matter was thus terminated; and I was not singular in this opinion; for a few days afterwards I received a letter from Mr. Beasley, the chairman, saying,—"You will bear no more of disputed certificates from Waltham. All right-minded men are heartily tired of it, and consider it at an end."

However, to my great astonishment, on the 2d of March, I received notice of another meeting for the 3d of March, which was adjourned to the 23d.

This meeting was attended by upwards of 130 members, a greater number, I believe, than had ever attended any other meeting of the society; certainly a far greater number than attended the meeting of the 23d of February (where only about 40 or 50 were present), and than attended on the 4th of January, when only about 30 were present. It is therefore clear that the greatest part of the gentlemen present on the 23d of March had never heard a word of the previous proceedings—had never heard the statements made by the parties who had been brought before the meetings as witnesses.

What was my astonishment, then, when we proceeded to business on the 23d of March, to receive a statement or report of the stewards, in which they, in point of fact, decided the question! The report bears no date, certainly, but I assume it was made on that day; for if it was made before, how much more unfair it was to me—that members, instead of coming with their opinions unbiased, should have had their minds impressed with a report from the officers of the society by which the question was, in fact, decided; so that in effect the meeting was called upon not to go into the case as affecting my certificate, but to decide between me and the stewards' report?

It was no desire of mine that I was thus brought into collision with the stewards, and I requested, and it was formally moved, that the business of the day should be proceeded with by taking up my certificate and the protest.

Had this been adopted, every one would have heard the whole case through, and they would have judged for themselves upon the statements and the evidence laid before them. But this was opposed by one of the stewards, who moved that their statements or report should be then read, and that I should be called upon to rebut that document, and urging as a reason—"That it would be an affront to the gentlemen acting in that capacity if their statements were to be passed over without notice."

This resolution was of course carried. I say of course, because every one coming into a meeting without knowledge of what had actually taken place before, would upon such a statement and appeal naturally support their own officers.

I now come to the most serious part of the stewards' report—namely, that I produced six sheets of paper, pinned together, and evidently made up for the purpose. I distinctly assert that I then told them that they were mistaken in saying it had been put into their hands as an account entered from day to day since 1820, but that it was a document, compiled at the end of 1839 and beginning of 1840, and there could be no mistake about it, because I wrote to Mr. Beasley the next morning distinctly giving the explanation of what that document was, and what it professed to be. The appearances of the writing must speak for themselves. It will be seen that there are different hand-writings, both in ink and pencil; the ink of different shades, and the writing of different degrees, as the pen happened to be good or bad—steel or quill. But all doubt is removed by its having been recognized and identified by Mr. Payne, the respectable auctioneer, at Leicester, as being "the document which the catalogue was made out from the sale by auction of my short-horns, in March, 1840."

With regard to the charge that "I possess a regular herd-book, which I have withheld, and which I have denied the existence," the facts are as follow:—

I first exhibited my stock as a competitor for prizes in the year 1831. I kept no account of them beyond various detached memoranda, but about the year 1830 or 1831 I collected together these various memoranda, and entered an account of the best of my stock in a book like a boy's copy-book containing twelve leaves, which had been before that time used to enter a terrier of lands through which a projected railway was to pass.

This book, however, was incomplete; many of my stock still remained unentered; and in the autumn and winter of 1839, I resolved upon making out a more comprehensive account of all my good stock from the commencement. The entries made in the new account comprised the whole of those entered in the old book, with many additions.

These entries were contained in the six sheets of paper so often spoken of, and upon these entries being completed, all the old memoranda were considered useless, and destroyed, and the six sheets are made out in columns, with the name, description, sire, dam, how acquired, when calved, how disposed of, and contains in its proper place the entry of the beast in question.

The testimony of the persons brought forward by me is clear and decisive, and though doubt is attempted to be thrown upon their evidence, because they are in my employ, let me ask who are the persons to give evidence, in reference to the private affairs of any man, but those who are employed about his premises!

Thus, then, the meeting, in their eagerness for my expulsion, entirely overlooked two incongruities in their resolution.

I trust that all who read this paper will rise from the perusal of it with the conviction that I have not misstated the age of the steer; that the apparent inconsistency of its having been exhibited at Okeham, in December, 1839, as then under one year and six months, is explained by the correspondence which took place in the year following, when it was distinctly admitted that the animal was then qualified to be exhibited as being at that time under two years old; that I have shown the fallacy of the statement made in the stewards' report, that I produced to them documents made up for the purpose; and, lastly, that the assertion that I have withheld a particular book, called "The Herd-Book," has no foundation whatever in fact.

* I have omitted to mention that it was proposed by Mr. Thomas Neale (at the meeting of the 23d March), but not carried, that the expulsion should be advertised in all the local papers, at the expense of the society. And also, that although the persons brought forward by me at that meeting as witnesses were carefully excluded from the room, both Mr. R. Smith and Mr. Allsopp, who gave evidence in support of the stewards' report (the former being an exhibitor of stock, and a competitor in the same class with my steer), actually remained in the room during all the previous and subsequent discussions, as members of the committee.