Memorial Plaque for Robert Bakewell

On December 17th 2019 the New Dishley Society was delighted to see the installation and formal unveiling of a memorial plaque to Leicestershire’s most famous farmer and stockbreeder, Robert Bakewell of Dishley Grange, near Loughborough. We have been working to get a statue with or without representative animals, but this has not happened.

A new opportunity arose when Melton Mowbray Market began to redevelop its site. It is Leicestershire’s last livestock market and as it has been on its present site for 150 years its owners wanted to celebrate its success. The market has a much longer history, probably starting under Edward the Confessor (1042-1066) in the town’s streets. It is one of the few markets mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086 and when that survey was made it was the only one in Leicestershire.

When the Society approached the market’s staff about placing a memorial in the new auction buildings they took up the idea and suggested extending it to include information boards on the history of Bakewell’s breed types. In a series of meetings between the market staff, New Dishley Society members and a representative of the Leicester Longwool Sheep Breeders Association we agreed that the New Dishley Society would supply a plaque made from local Swinland slate. It depicts each of his famous breeds: the Midland Longhorn cow, the Dishley or New Leicester sheep and the Black Horse, later developed into the Shire. Each of these images is based on a contemporary portrait or engraving. Information boards on each animal, and on Bakewell himself and Dishley Grange, were provided by the New Dishley Society and the Leicester Longwool Sheep Breeders Association. Further material on Bakewell’s life and influence, the history of agriculture and the history of fatstock markets has been supplied for leaflets.

The plaque has been installed in the café area of the auction buildings – sooner or later, everyone goes there and will see it. The information boards will be put up along the adjoining sections of the wall. We are delighted to celebrate the life and work of Robert Bakewell in such an appropriate setting. It supplements the plaque already placed at Brooksby Hall, the county’s agricultural college.

The New Dishley Society would like to thank the following people for their support in preparing this project.

Mr Hugh Brown, Mr Mark Wicks and Ms Laura Hall from Melton Mowbray Market (www.meltonmowbraymarket.co.uk).
Mrs Sue Hatton, Leicester Longwool Sheep Breeders Association (www.llsba.co.uk).
Mr Graeme Mitchison, the sculptor of the plaque (www.chisel.it.co.uk).
Mark Brooks & Dave Brewin for the board designs (www.digitaldeadline.co.uk).
Mrs Pam Posnett M.B.E., Chairman of Leicestershire County Council and Melton Borough Councillor, who ceremonially unveiled the plaque.
Ms Pam Confort, Consort of the Chairman, for supporting the event.
Mr Hugh Brown (Melton Market) and NDS President Mrs Pat Stanley who addressed Leicestershire County Councillor Mrs Pam Posnett MBE and her Consort Ms Pam Confort.

Mrs Posnett unveils the plaque, with Mrs Stanley and Mr Brown.

NDS Chairman Mr Tim Bacon, Mrs Posnett, Mrs Stanley & Mr Brown.
The New Dishley Society Committee.

Display of information board proofs.

Market staff, NDS members and guests.