

BULLS WITH BLUE BLOOD. 1916

This account describes the way a dairy bull was chosen in the days before the science of genetics, when one hoped that he would be as good as his ancestors. Nowadays it is accepted that a bull can only be valued by the performance of his daughters, by which time he will be at least six years old.

THE LONGRIDGE & DISTRICT BULL SOCIETY

was formed with the intention of improving the dairy cattle in the district by providing subsidised "Government" bulls to which local farmers could take their cows. It had already placed ten bulls, and was becoming "one of the largest and most vigorous in Lancashire and Cheshire, if not in the whole country". Mr John Procter of Higher Cock Hill, Hothersall, Longridge was the secretary. Mr Percy Middleton, the County Livestock Officer had to find suitable bulls and helpful farmers who were prepared to keep them on their premises. Visits to two of these farms in the Chipping area were described in the "Preston Guardian" of 14th October 1916. Mr Procter drove the party round in his own turnout.

★ DAIRY BARN FARM Mr J. Dewhurst ★

"The choice of date (Wednesday, 11th October) was unfortunate. There were heavy showers in the forenoon, a stiff nor'-wester sent the clouds scudding across leaden skies, and even the most lowly of the fells wore vapoury shrouds. We drove in pelting rain along the western foot of the cloud-wreathed Longridge Fell, over the Loud, swollen by recent rains, thence alongside Chipping Brook, in which a solitary weather-proofed angler sought the elusive sea trout, and passing through time-honoured Chipping, reached our first destination, Mr J. Dewhurst's Dairy Barn Farm, on the Leagram Hall Estate."

"The Dewhurst family have been in occupation of Dairy Barn for something like a century, for the present tenant was born on the place which was farmed by his father and grandfather. On this 160 acre holding there are 70 cattle, a very choice, straight, robust lot, and all the more creditable for the fact that nearly all of them have been bred and reared on the sound healthy uplands of Dairy Barn. Fifteen heifers come into the herd every year. Twenty-four cows are milked, and at the present time a cheese a day is being made, though up to nine and ten per week are made during the summer flush of milk. The flock consists of 70 lambing ewes, 50 Blackfaced Scots, and a score of Lonks, and with both these breeds a Wensleydale ram is used. Half a dozen Middle White pigs are fed off for the butcher each year."

"After a long period of waiting the clouds lifted a little and the light improved, but was by no means ideal for photography. There was then brought out for inspection and for pictorial purposes the "Government" bull, Fancy's Pride, by Gainford Ruth's Pride (115495), out of Miss Fancy, by Royal Fancy (103700), going back to the 17th dam, and probably further still if the lineage chart had made provision for additional entries. He was bred by Mr Wm Kendall at Natland Park, Kendal, and comes down from an old family of Shorthorns noted for their excellent udders and dairy characteristics. Mr Dewhurst, and Mr Reuben Ross of Thornley who is also keenly interested in the scheme, and Mr Percy Middleton paid a private visit to Natland Park in February last, and Fancy's Pride, which had passed the tuberculin test and had Mr Middleton's approval, was purchased. Calved in March, 1915, he is yet little more than a stirk, but he impresses one as having the merits of constitution and pre-potency. He is level, exceptionally well grown for his age, carries a rare masculine napper over a wide front, and has a mossy and beautiful mellow hide. He walks as a bull should do."