

Object(s): Poultry Club Certificate

Object Number(s): STMEA:2014-94

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Poultry Club Certificate

During work on the Abbots Hall Stables, staff came across this object in our collection, pinned to the stable wall. It is a First Prize certificate awarded at the Ipswich and District Poultry Club, 14th Annual Great Open Show, held on December 7th and 8th, 1926.

This prize category was sponsored by R&W Paul Ltd of Ipswich who supplied cooked cereal feeds for poultry, under the marketing campaign slogan of “Egg-em-On”. This slogan was first used in 1907.

Who was the certificate awarded to?

In 1926 Abbots Hall was owned by the Longe family, who played a significant part in local life for over 60 years. Their legacy lives on in our Museum site today.

Captain Herbert Davey Longe bought Abbots Hall in 1903 and farmed the estate of some 89 acres together with Combs Lane Farm which had a further 114 acres of land. He was passionate about protecting rare breeds such as Suffolk Red Poll cattle and the Suffolk Punch Horse, the same breed you can see at the Museum today.

He was also a passionate breeder of Silver Laced Wyandotte Bantam Hens, many of which he exhibited at poultry shows locally and further afield. In 1926, his daughter Ena carried on the hobby continuing to exhibit her Silver Laced Wyandotte Bantams around the country, winning several prizes. Ena Longe would often make use of the rail network to send her hens to shows across the country.



Image: Silver Lacing Wyandotte Rooster¹.

¹ By ripperda - wyandotte haan, CC BY 2.0. [Internet] accessed 2nd June 2020.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10682244>

Ena Longe probably won this First Prize at the Ipswich and District Poultry Club, 14th Annual Great Open Show in 1926. It was possibly her first major win since taking over responsibility for the flock from her father.



Image: Extract reporting the win in the Feathered World 24th December 1926. ©Museum of East Anglian Life²

The Sponsors

R&W Paul Ltd were established in 1842³ and became one of the many household names in Ipswich, employing many local people in their various businesses which, in addition to a maltings, included; a brewery and 15 tied public houses, wine and spirit merchants, ironmongery and freight. The company had a substantial fleet of steam ships, sailing barges and lighters which they used to transport grain into Ipswich docks for use in their maltings building. This building can still be seen on Ipswich waterfront today.

² Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket [cited 2nd June 2020].

³ Loon B. Paul's Malting [Internet]. Ipswich Historic Lettering Site. 2004 [cited 3 June 2020]. Available from: <http://www.ipswich-lettering.co.uk/paulsmalting.html>

The Paul family were great local philanthropists, setting up several trusts to support the people of the town.

By the beginning of the 20th Century Pauls turned their attention to animal feed, developing a product known as “Kositos” which they made from cooked flaked maize. The marketing of this innovative product required the use of a new slogan. This is when “Egg-em-On” was first developed.

The business continued to expand, buying further malting businesses across the country, including one in Stowmarket. The malting side of the business was eventually bought by Greencore an Irish firm, whilst the animal foods division continued to trade following a merger in 1992 with BOCM from Germany under the name of BOCM Pauls⁴. By 2014, Pauls name was finally dropped.

Poultry Shows

Poultry shows were promoted in the middle of the 19th Century, as a means of detracting from the tradition of cock fighting and into more wholesome appreciation of British poultry. Cock Fighting was banned by The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act in 1849⁵. The first ‘British Poultry Standard’ (the standard poultry features used by judges to grade show entries) was produced in 1865. By 1877, the British Poultry Club had been established.⁶

Poultry shows rapidly gained popularity; appearing all around the country and supported by poultry keepers from all classes of society. Queen Victoria and Charles Darwin both entered birds into competitions.

The most prestigious British event in the poultry show world, was the Crystal Palace show, which ran for nearly 80 years from 1857 to 1936⁷, when Crystal Palace was destroyed by a fire. At its height in 1907, the show attracted filled cages of more than 10,500 birds and domestic rabbits. This may well have persuaded R&W Paul to diversify into animal feeds.

Crystal Palace had originally been constructed under the supervision of Prince Albert, to house the 1851 Great Exhibition, which gives some indication of how prestigious this event would have been in its heyday. It is therefore a massive tribute to the quality of the flock at Abbots Hall, that Miss Ena Longe was awarded four prizes at the 1935 Crystal Palace show on 19th November:

1. The Queen Victoria Memorial Trophy;
2. The Fifteen Guinea Challenge Cup for the best heavy breed pullet;
3. The Five Guinea Challenge Cup for the best Wyandotte pullet; and

⁴ BOCM Pauls [Internet]. En.wikipedia.org. 2020 [cited 3 June 2020]. Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/BOCM_Pauls

⁵ Poultry show [Internet]. En.wikipedia.org. 2020 [cited 3 June 2020]. Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poultry_show

⁶ Home ‐ The Poultry Club of Great Britain [Internet]. Poultryclub.org. 2020 [cited 3 June 2020]. Available from: <https://www.poultryclub.org/>

⁷ The Crystal Palace Poultry Show [Internet]. En.wikipedia.org. 2020 [cited 3 June 2020]. Available from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Crystal_Palace_Poultry_Show

4. The Ceylon Club's Silver Medal for the best bird.

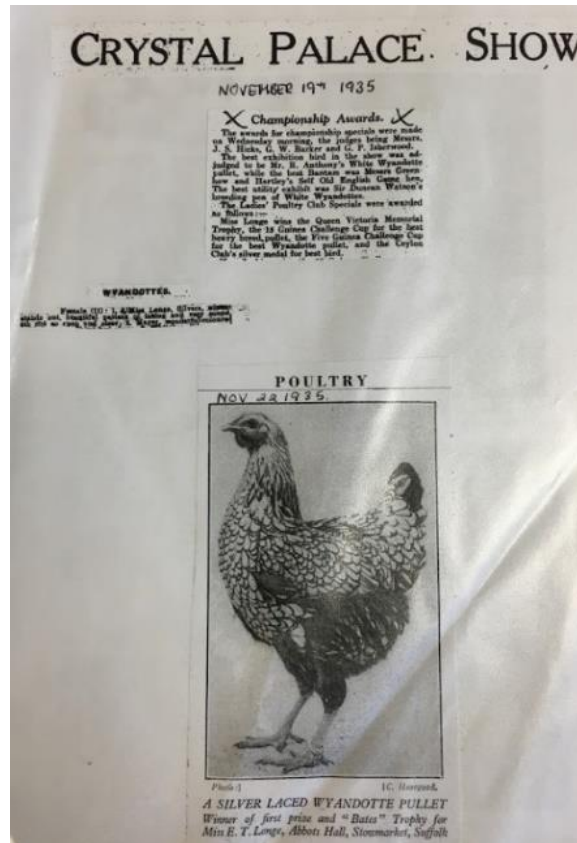


Image: Championship Awards at the Crystal Palace Show, 19th November 1935. ©Museum of East Anglian Life⁸

Many poultry shows continue to run today, although they may have been subsumed into larger Agricultural Shows. There is still a huge interest in poultry showing. The Poultry Club of Great Britain⁹ lists more than 70 shows and events with over 170 affiliates on their website.

Local Poultry clubs and shows

Alas no trace can be found of the Ipswich and District Poultry Club, who awarded our certificate in 1926. However, Suffolk still has members of the Poultry Club who exhibit both locally and further afield. Clubs exist for both Colchester and Suffolk & Essex as well as in Norfolk. There are regular exhibitions held at the County Shows in Norfolk and Suffolk too.

Indeed, you might safely say that the Herbert and Ena Longe's poultry showing legacy is alive and well throughout East Anglia.

⁸ Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket [cited 2nd June 2020].

⁹ Home & dash; The Poultry Club of Great Britain [Internet]. Poultryclub.org. 2020 [cited 3 June 2020]. Available from: <https://www.poultryclub.org/>