

July 1846: Strickland's invitation to the first meeting of the Cotswold Club

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Abstract

Sir Thomas Tancred, the first Secretary and Editor of the Cotswold Club, wrote two letters to Hugh Strickland which have been discovered in the latter's archives. These reveal a little about the early days of the Field Club, and also a few snippets of general history: they are published here for the first time.

The Cotteswold (or Cotswold) Naturalists' Club was founded on 7 July 1846. In its structure it followed the example of the Berwickshire Club in 1832, of which Prideaux John Selby (1788-1867) was an active member. When his son-in-law Sir Thomas Tancred (1808-1880), 7th Baronet of Boroughbridge, moved to Stratton near Cirencester, the idea of a club of people interested in various branches of natural history came up. The idea was supported by two members of the University of Oxford, Charles Giles Bridle Daubeny (1795-1867), Professor of Chemistry and Hugh Edwin Strickland (1811-1853), Deputy Reader in Geology, as well as by some professors of the Agricultural College at Cirencester founded in 1845 (Jardine 1858: ccliii).

It may be interesting to put on record two letters which refer to the first meeting of the Cotswold Naturalists' Club. They are found among the correspondence left by H.E. Strickland, since 1867 preserved at the University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, together with his ornithological collection (Strickland Archives: English Correspondence, 1416 and 1417).

The first letter (no. 1417) by Sir Thomas Tancred to Hugh Strickland predates the founding date by just three days, bearing witness to the speed of postal communication in the 1840s. Tancred wrote as follows (fig. 1):

“Stratton, Cirencester
July 4 / 46.

Dr Sir, Dr Daubery informs me that he will mention that the Cotswold Club proposes to meet to form itself at the Black Horse Inn at Birdlip on Tuesday

July 7 at 9 A.M. - I write however because I fear I said to Dr Daubery Brinscombe by mistake, instead of Birdlip, & to inform you that the latter is the place of meeting. Also would you kindly inform Dr Daubery that if he can reach Birdlip by a later train, so as to arrive in the course of the day we will excuse his being at breakfast, as we have a long walk to make in Cranham woods, where some disputed points of Geology are to be settled, & there is good Botanisng & entomology. I hope you will manage to come with Dr Daubery (or the evening before as far as convenient) as the great western would bring you here, & it is only 10 miles to drive a gig; or you could get within 7 miles if you went to Stroud or Gloucester but uphill & bad road from latter. - Hoping to see you both by dinner time at any rate at Birdlip.

Yours very truly, Thos. Tancred.
P.S. Selby Esq. will be there.”

The meeting obviously was to be an excursion into the countryside as well as formal discussion at the Inn to formalize the existence of the Club. Tancred was elected Honorary Secretary. It is not certain if Strickland actually attended the meeting. In any case, two days later Tancred wrote to him with the information of his election as a member (archive no. 1416, fig. 2):

“Cirencester
July 9 / 46

Dear Sir, I have the pleasure of informing you that you were elected a Member of the Cotswold Naturalists' Club at their first meeting at Birdlip on Tuesday last the 7th Inst:

I am yours very truly, Thomas Tancred, Hon.

1417

Stratton

Lincoln

July 1846

For Lamborne informs

me that he will mention

that the last night's clock

has been found to give effect

at the Black Horse Inn at

Windsor on Tuesday night

at 9 o'clock. - I am, Sir, your

as the good Western world

bring you here, & it is only

10 miles to drive a gig: on

you could get within 10 miles

of your way to the station in the motor

carriage & you would find it very

pleasant to drive your dog

hoping to see you a day

Yours very truly

Thos. Tanager

Figure 1. First and last page of letter by Thomas Tanager to Hugh Strickland on 4 July 1846 about the first meeting of the Cotswold Club (University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, Strickland Archives, no. 1417).

1916

Leicester
July 9/16
Dear Sir I have the pleasure
in informing you that you
have been elected a member of
the Cotteswold Naturalists'
Club at their first
meeting on Monday

on Tuesday last the
7th inst:
I am yours very truly
Thomas Strickland
Hon. Secretary
N.E. Cotteswold
Naturalists' Club

Figure 2. Letter by Thomas Tancered to Hugh Edwin Strickland (University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge, Strickland Archives, no. 1416).

Secretary

[To] H.E.Strickland Esq., 12 Merton St., Oxford."

Strickland was an enthusiastic and knowledgeable naturalist, who enjoyed geologizing in the field whenever he had an opportunity. According to the biography written after his early death by his father-in-law Sir William Jardine (1858: ccliii), Strickland gave three open-air lectures to members of the Cotteswold Club, sometimes combined with delegates of the Berwickshire and Tyneside (founded in 1846) Clubs. The first address was delivered at Painswick Beacon, the second at Stinchcombe Hill, while the last assembled a small crowd on the summit of Ragged Stone Hill near Eastnor.

Finally, in a letter written by Tancred to Strickland on 23 January 1850, there is reference to a paper about the geology of Leckhampton Hill, proposed to be printed by the Club in their Proceedings. There is no indication that this ever happened, but a summary of the contribution appeared in 1850 in one of the early volumes of the *Journal of the Geological Society of London* (Strickland 1850).

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References

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