

THE LEICESTER MONUMENT

Narrative of Proceedings

Regarding the erection of

THE LEICESTER MONUMENT

With

A statement of account and list of Subscribers

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A meeting was called by the tenants of Lord Leicester and local gentry, the day after he died, 2nd July 1842, to consider raising a monument in his memory. Robert Leamon of Whitwell Hall was elected Chairman of the meeting. Eight years later on 12th December 1850 he issued his report and accounts on the completion of the work to explain the reasons for the delays and the difficulties that had had to be overcome before such a fine monument could be safely erected.

The enthusiastic first meeting was reported in the local papers and further meetings were held in Norwich, Fakenham and Holkham. As more and more people subscribed the views of the Subscribers developed. There was discussion about where to erect the monument, should it be a museum, almshouses, a model farm, a statue or a monument? Should it be in a public place in Norwich or on private land at Holkham. Who could vote on these matters? (The gentry were outraged when the 10/- subscribers outvoted them and tried to make retrospective voting rules).

Leamon reports it all, quoting from the 800 letters he received and from the minutes of the Proceedings. Within 3 years nearly £5,000 had been raised. When a decision was made to erect the monument at Holkham the architect and the engineer disagreed about the construction. Should the base be bricks or stone, should the panels around the base be stone or bronze. Each debate caused 'a great loss of time'. A Mr Bacon alleged that the final design was his and not the architects and the Committee agreed Mr. Bacon's statement of proof.

The monument was completed and still stands today 165 years later. The final meeting of the committee was held in July 1850. The Accounts show that the work was completed within budget and there was a final balance of £3. 1. 8d.