

At the same time as I was working on the History Newmarket Racing Stables, David Boyd was independently working on a biographical Dictionary of Newmarket Trainers between 1850 and 1939. Unfortunately, David died in 2021 before his work could be published, but with the agreement of his brother William, I am delighted to include David's Introduction in full below.

First, a general note about geography. Newmarket is now in Suffolk but for most of its history it has been in two counties. As its name implies it is not old, being created out of small parts of two much older and larger parishes. 250 acres came from Exning in Suffolk and 300 acres from Woodditton in Cambridgeshire. This resulted in two of the smallest parishes both civil and ecclesiastical in England, each the size of what would once have been an average farm. Newmarket St Mary's in Suffolk started on the north side of the High Street while Newmarket All Saints is the southern side downwards. A very short walk north (or east for that matter) took one into Exning and likewise southwards took one into Woodditton. This had legal and other implications. To put it into perspective Tom Jennings, the archetypal "Newmarket" trainer never trained or lived in Newmarket and the sad death of Fred Archer in his great house never occurred there either. Both were residents of the parish of Exning, though a fair distance from Exning village. The stables along Bury Road, even further from that village, still lay in that same parish and this still shows ecclesiastically since the Duchess of Montrose's little church of St Agnes (1884) remains St Agnes's, Exning, not St Agnes's, Newmarket [rumour has it incidentally that the Duchess paid her chaplain £100 a year and her jockey £1,500]. One has to be pragmatic though and it seems reasonable to call Tom Jennings a Newmarket trainer while, say, Percy Peck up at Harraton is an Exning trainer. These boundaries were responsible for some resentment in Newmarket itself, since many stables did not pay their rates to the town, notably Bedford Lodge for many years the largest and most valuable of the establishments. Over the years there were some boundary alterations, mostly following the creation of Newmarket Urban District and Newmarket Rural District in the final years of the nineteenth century. The "racing villages" adjoining are also split between counties. Exning, Moulton and Kentford are on a distinctive salient of Suffolk extending into Cambridgeshire, while Stetchworth, Woodditton and Cheveley all lie in the latter.

Secondly, the development of the stables in the nineteenth century. This was entirely on an *ad hoc* basis, with some having better access to the Heath than others. Sometimes, but not always, the stables adjoined the major owners' racing boxes. Proximity to the racecourses was a lesser priority. An additional factor which soon began to have significance was the location of the (old) railway station. The results may be described as haphazard. Stables formed on each side of the High Street, in the streets north - the Mill Hill area in particular but not necessarily - and in the south especially in the area known as the Shagbag. This remains historically probably the most interesting part of racing Newmarket today. Gradually eyes turned a little further west to the Bury Road. This road was initially largely empty apart from the "Bedfords" - none of which incidentally were built by the Dukes of that name. Eventually Sefton Lodge took its place on the south side (with the actual stables coming some years later) and the purpose-built Abington Lodge was built in solitary state at the end. The rest of this now racing road was largely the creation of one man, Mr Alfred Stedall. The 1890s was the great national period of the suburban villa. Town after town had similar developments with large houses built for prosperous tradesmen who no longer wished to live above the shop. Those who recall their *Forsyte Saga* (or to be more specific *The Man of Property*) will remember how Soames Forsyte built himself a house at Mapledurham. This was based on a real 1890s development, a string of houses built alongside the Thames aimed largely at the richer shopkeepers of Reading. Behind such ventures there was usually a speculator and it was in no sense a licence to print money. Many of those involved soon found their way to Carey Street. And when Mr Stedall bought some 80 acres along the Bury Road from the executors of the Duchess of Montrose, the good citizens of Newmarket (who had no intention of buying anything and, to be honest, not the means) watched

and waited with polite interest for him to file his petition. Ten plots had gone on the market in the road back in May 1894 and provoked no interest. However, Mr Stedall, fortunately, was no penniless chancer but exceedingly rich. His business empire was based in south London where he was what was called a mantle manufacturer - which is to say outer clothing, coats, furs and the like. These he sold through shops all over the world. Some of the Bury Road he developed himself and some of the plots he sold off so others could build what they liked. His aide was the Newmarket builder Humphrey King (*d*1920). Stedall's main monument is his own stable, ornate and in the words of one contemporary "a trifle overdone". Mr Stedall drank two bottles of ruby port a day and was a frequent visitor to the Heath. He owned many singularly useless racehorses and his executors were still trying to sell other properties in Bury Road ten years after his death. But it did not matter. He had created a racing road - as the Jockey Club was to do in Hamilton Road some ninety years later. By the end of Edwardian England Newmarket looked very different from the town of thirty or forty years before. The High Street for many years was used by strings of horses; now Stockbridge House alone is the only stable that has to use the road - fortunately for only a few yards. Having said that, the right of trainers to use the High Street remains.

Thirdly, licences. These require some explanation as they are mentioned throughout what follows and - being Newmarket - they are not as straightforward as elsewhere. The first jockeys' licences were issued in 1880; National Hunt at the beginning of the year, Flat in the spring and eventually all (or almost all) professional riders held them. This rare unity under both rules is thanks to Mr W G Craven (to whom is also owed the automatic payment of jockeys provided they weigh out [also from 1880]). Trainers' licences however were not in unison, this largely being after Mr Craven's time - he was better at racing administration than he was with his own fortune. They came in two stages, Flat in the spring of 1905 and National Hunt at the beginning of 1911 - the jumping season then still running from January to December. Racehorses, of course, could still continue to be trained "privately" without licence and this continued even after the first permit holders (October 1948) with hunter-chasers and the like. However, Newmarket had also its own additional quite separate licensing scheme. Originally from the 1820s trainers received permission to use the Jockey Club's training grounds. This was on a fairly informal basis and established trainers found as time went by that they were being joined by unknown "trainers" with a couple of hacks who seemed to be rather more interested in monitoring the performance of other racehorses than exercising their own. Eventually the Club from 1 January 1873 began a formal licensing scheme, each licence running from the beginning of the year. This allowed the Club to control, to some extent who actually trained at Newmarket (and in passing made the collection of Heath fees much easier). Those they did not want, for one reason or another, were refused [*e.g.* young Alfred Day, son of the notorious William] and were very welcome to train elsewhere, this then ceasing to be a Newmarket problem. In the 1880s in particular they began to crack down on those whose behaviour they did not like. Some had difficulty in renewing licences and some, like Mr Abington Baird, found that his trainers were refused; he reacted by simply using his own private gallops. But for most trainers, one of the reasons for coming to Newmarket was the Heath, so few followed his example. There are better training grounds in England, but none so extensive. From 1885 a similar licencing scheme started on the Curragh. One consequence of the new tighter rules was the end of longer visits by the provincial trainers. John Porter, for example in the Hawley days, had brought his horses to Newmarket before the First October Meeting and kept them there for over a month until the end of the Houghton Meeting. The Jockey Club began to insist on visitors paying Heath Tax after a week, so the Porter horses remained at Kingsclere. As time proceeded the qualifications for licences became more stringent. Certain categories of owners were gradually excluded (especially bookmakers who were not allowed back at Newmarket as owners until November 1954). No new owners could be taken on without official approval and no owners could be poached as such. Ultimately these restrictions were not to Newmarket's advantage, but this did not fully show until the early 1950s when the lack of horses in training on the Heath became a matter of some concern.

Arising from the Newmarket licences come the Gallops, the most famous in the world. Their development and history are complicated. The members of the Jockey Club may in general have been rich, but the Club was not. They had no land to start with, and while they bought a little most they had was leased. The Club's own premises had been bought in 1772 on a site previously occupied by a coffee house, but as late as 1873 they owned a mere 55 acres in Suffolk and 485 in Cambridgeshire. Even the July Course was nominally leased up to 1874. The Club had negotiated long leases over several thousand acres. Some of these formal tenancies came surprisingly late, as, e.g. Long Hill and Side Hill which came into their hands at the end of 1862 though long used as gallops. Always, though, their tenure depended on the goodwill and financial security of their landlords. The potential problems always in the background were to come to a head in the last thirty years of the nineteenth century, hastened by the agricultural depression which started in the early 1870s and lasted until the later 1890s. Land abruptly ceased both to be a capital investment and to provide an income. In some cases it lost three-quarters of its value. The Club was beholden to three great landowners, all of whom were now receiving much reduced rents. The first of these to get into difficulties were the Dobedes [John Dobede (d1875) and his son and heir Henry(d1912)]. Sometime millers and corn merchants, they had acquired over the years some 2,700 acres in Suffolk and the same in Cambridgeshire. They were hopelessly over-extended. Much of their land was heavily mortgaged and the family had hovered on the brink of bankruptcy for many years. Their Cambridgeshire property centred on Soham and was of little racing interest; this mostly went in 1876 and 1877, though a little survived to 1891 when it was bought by the ex-jockey Charles Morbey. The Dobede great house was up in Exning village, though they could no longer afford to live there. While John Dobede was friendly to racing [though more than willing to make a profit from the Club when he could] the family's main sport was coursing. There were widely-spread if malicious rumours about the private life of Mr Henry Dobede (who liked to wear "white kid gloves and drove a pony carriage with milk-white reins" and never went racing) which did not help. The inevitable crash came in 1881. The mortgagees put the Suffolk land up for sale. The land lay on the west [Racecourse] side and included vast swathes of gallops. An additional threat, quite apart from its sale, was the strong - and well-advertised - possibility of housing development alongside the racecourses by any new owner. The Jockey Club had enclosed them but they were vulnerable to unofficial stands. To its credit it acted quickly and decisively. It bought over 2,500 acres of the Suffolk holding for a considerable sum - some £190,000. It was far more than it was worth, but the alternative was worse. Realising the money nearly bankrupted the Club - its income was a few thousand a year and an annual profit of a thousand was regarded as satisfactory - and left it with mortgages almost as large as the previous owner's. Per acre it was the most the Club ever paid for many years. It also left the Club with an unwanted country house - which it managed to let on and off after unsuccessfully trying to sell it in 1882 - and more unwanted farmland; the Jockey Club was always a reluctant and not especially expert farmer. But - for the moment - it had solved one problem. The next was soon to come, and this time it was on Bury Side.

Much has been written on Mr Abington Baird (including a biography *The Squire* by Richard Onslow, published in 1980). Three early inheritances (from an appalling father and possibly even more appalling uncles) and spells at Eton (short) and Cambridge (not long) did little for this ironmaster's son. His two redeeming attributes were that he was the finest amateur of his day (helped, admittedly, by being able to buy the best horses) and that he was more loyal to his cronies than they ever were to him. His determination to win on the racecourse soon led to him being briefly warned off (perhaps a trifle unfairly) but he did not go away. It soon became known that he was interested in buying either the Limekilns itself or the entire Chippenham Park holding which included this, the finest of all the Newmarket gallops. The estate was some 6,000 acres and lay to the east. It belonged to the second of the great landowning families, the Tharps. This, too, had become a problem property. For about sixty years it had been in Chancery (usually fatal as *Bleak House* demonstrates)

but in 1875 Mr William Montagu Tharp became its absolute owner. The Tharps weren't especially interested in racing, the Jockey Club had no money at all, and Mr Baird a very great deal. There was no prospect of ever out-bidding him and the Club saw a grim potential future in which they might become (probably not for long) the tenants of a warned-off undesirable who was quite capable of taking a plough to the Limekilns. A year after buying their Exning property the Club had somehow managed to raise extra funds to buy part of Waterhall and a section of the Limekilns but the bulk of the eastern gallops was far beyond their resources. This time they used flattery. They cultivated Mr Tharp and were able to negotiate a further long lease. For the moment they had saved the day and the future Colonel Tharp and his wife quite enjoyed the social benefits which came with the Colonel's honorary membership of the Jockey Club - the Club had very wisely elected him back in 1880.

The third and final of the landowners was the Duke of Rutland. The Manners family were in fact lords of the manor of Newmarket and their local seat was Cheveley Park. The Dukes had mostly been racing enthusiasts, the 5th Duke (d1857) especially so. A leading owner, remembered outside racing for largely rebuilding Belvoir, he abandoned Cheveley during his time at Newmarket, preferring to live in the town at his little part of the remnants of the old royal palace; he rented this fairly humble abode, but as he owned the Rutland Arms, a few yards away, he was able to live there in some comfort. He was succeeded in turn by two of his sons, the first of whom, the 6th Duke (d1888) was not unfriendly to racing but remained largely uninvolved. His brother and heir was the then Lord John Manners, a politician who went on at considerable length about the costs of running large estates during hard times and made very clear his dislike of racing. The 6th Duke was landlord to Links Farm and much more. The Club had been leasing Cheveley heathland for many years - it was renting 345 acres as far back as 1838. Surprisingly the problems began with him rather than his brother. In 1884, unexpectedly, he had a fence put on part of the Cambridge Course which went down badly with his tenant. He began to sell off parts of the estate and his brother (who never visited the area) was to sell off the rest. Property in and around the town, some 455 acres, went up for auction in May 1887. The Jockey Club watched helplessly, but once again was lucky. The 7th Duke immediately tried to let Cheveley Park itself and in 1890 finally found a tenant in Mr (later Colonel) Harry McCalmont, heir to an eccentric great-uncle whose fortune matched that of Mr Baird - the house had earlier nearly become the home of Sir Edward Guinness who hated racing. In 1892 the Duke sold everything left - about 8,000 acres - to McCalmont's great-uncle's trustees; the price was initially said to be £350,000 but was probably about £100,000 less. Both figures must have given the impoverished Jockey Club food for thought. Ever anxious to cultivate a good neighbour the Club fortunately found young McCalmont to be a racing enthusiast. Advised by Captain Machell, he was a very lucky one too and owned Isinglass, the 1893 triple crown winner, later to be buried in the garden of the new (and unmemorable) house with which he replaced the old Cheveley Park. So far, so good. And the Club had been lucky elsewhere too. They had put some 1,230 (unwanted) acres of the old Dobede property on the market and succeeded in selling most of it at reasonable prices in June 1891. The sale made £70,000, a very satisfactory figure. Ironically, Exning House and an initial 302 acres went to Mr Edward ("Ned") Baird, cousin of Mr Abington. This rather different Baird they were happy to encourage. He too joined the Jockey Club alongside Colonels McCalmont and Tharp. Other purchasers included Lord Durham and Mr Charles Morbey, both friends of racing. Problems however didn't stop here. Colonel McCalmont found he could make Cheveley pay its way, but he died suddenly in 1902. His widow and the rest of his family had a difficult relationship with each other and over the years the future of Cheveley remained in doubt. In spring 1920 the Jockey Club, now a little richer and with a well-organised plan, bought much of the Colonel's property. They separated the parts they did not want (some 1,938 acres in all) and sold most of them at auction in September 1920. The rather tasteless main house was demolished in 1921 and a substantial holding around it was bought by the trainer/breeder Mr Robert Sherwood. The west side was now secured and, as a curiosity, they now owned the old steeplechase course. A purchase of 440 acres from the

Allix estate at about this time gave them the freehold of the Beacon Course (and additional land which later formed part of the National Stud). On the east they now owned all the Bury Side gallops except the Limekilns. The owner of the latter, Colonel Tharp had died in 1899, but his widow remained on good terms with the Club. There was a hiccup in 1912 when she unsuccessfully tried to sell Chippenham Park - Sir Charles Rose, classic-winning owner, Birmingham banker and the model for his neighbour Kenneth Grahame's Mr Toad, (possibly encouraged by the Jockey Club) was rumoured to be interested. A further 21-year lease of 654 acres was agreed in 1913. Mrs Tharp died in 1929 as that lease approached its renewal date. The Tharp heir would have preferred to continue with a similar arrangement. The Jockey Club however by now had had enough of over forty years of worry. It made it clear it had no interest in renting further and wished to buy only; the Chippenham estate reluctantly agreed. With hindsight it proved a fortunate purchase. Without the freehold it would have been harder to save the gallops from the wartime plough. The Jockey Club, over the years, had also acquired small parcels of land from its own members and the gallops jigsaw was now largely complete. They now controlled 2,000 acres of training grounds [with slightly more on Bury Side than on Racecourse Side] in addition to two racecourses and large areas of accommodation land. As a curiosity in 1926 the Club said that since 1882 (*i.e.* after its major purchases of 1881) it had never paid more than £30 an acre for any of its acquisitions.

One question over the years was how many horses could the gallops sustain? A few hundred was no problem and the figure while slowly growing (estimated at "nearly 200" in 1802, calculated probably accurately at about 425 in 1835 and increasing to over 800 in the 1870s) remained in the region of a thousand for the years around the turn of the century. The number of stables using the Heath stood at 31 in 1882 [housing 820 horses] and reached the late forties by the 1890s, twice the figure of fifty years before. This number - apart from 1914 to 1918 - remained fairly constant up to the last War, but not the size of the stables. In February 1901 the stewards announced they were not prepared to entertain any further applications for licences for new stables. Typically, at the beginning of 1905 there were 48 trainers; this figure was down to 45 the following year, but there were applicants for licenses ready to fill the vacancies. Different types of gallops continued to be developed. These included tan gallops [from the 1860s, the first being laid down in 1860/61], hated in particular by Tom Jennings *snr* [popular opinion held tan was bad for heels], but invaluable when drought led to little grass; and later moss litters for similar conditions. In the frosts though exercise still tended to be confined to straw and the roads. The excellent jumping facilities at Links Farm always received only moderate use reflecting the limited local interest in NH racing and the hostility of some members of the Jockey Club and its agent. By the 1930s about 1,500 horses were in training on the Heath, and during the early part of this decade several new trainers were refused Newmarket licences on the grounds of space, even though sometimes as many as four or five well-known establishments lay vacant. Death and retirement were the only easy ways to get into Newmarket. The Leach brothers with lifetime links to the town were an exception. Back in the 1920s even Alec Waugh of the Waugh family had found it very hard to obtain permission. One innocent victim was Fred Winter *snr*, a long-time resident of Newmarket, who had to set up at Epsom instead. Even Frank Barling had difficulty in obtaining a licence again after his first parting with Lord Glanely on the basis that his previous licence had been granted for a specific owner only. The Second World War provided its own challenges. Post-War austerity provided some leeway and it took many years for the number of horses to match pre-War figures, but in 1965 the number of horses reached 2,000 for the first time. By then the Club had the freehold of 4,500 acres and was planning to convert further farmland into gallops. Ultimately this led to all-weather surfaces [the Al Bahathri Polytrack dates back to 1985] and the development of Hamilton Road (mostly in the five years from autumn 1986, though the pioneer stables were built back in 1967 and 1970 for Doug Smith and Henry Cecil respectively) but that along with today's 2,800 acres of varied gallops is another story.

Pre-War gallop expenditure was limited. Heath tax was paid by every horse, but income seldom met

expenditure. The Jockey Club tried at intervals to have the rateable value reduced, arguing that the trainers could not pay more and that realistically gallops have all the disadvantages of farmland with none of the benefits. Investment in improving the gallops was very limited. The Club continued to farm on a large but unadventurous scale but this was simply to provide services for the gallops. An awesome presence was the Jockey Club agent, easily the most powerful man in Newmarket. What now seems remarkable is how well this all worked. This was still the age when great estates had an actual estate staff comprising a horse, a cart and two men. The Jockey Club, which effectively operated as an owner/occupier, had a somewhat larger gallops workforce but the principle remained much the same.

Between 1939 and 1945 many stables closed for the duration of the War, many trainers and staff went to War, and war-time racing was strictly limited. And the vast Jockey Club lands were pulled into war service. History generalises and talks of the wholesale cultivation of racing gallops. In practice though from an arable point of view they are not good land. A little was ploughed up at Lambourn. At Royston a historic gallop dating back to Charles II disappeared. Predictably the Army requisitioned training grounds round Heddington and Tilshead on the edge of Salisbury Plain. At Newmarket most of the gallops were requisitioned. By 1942 the racing acreage had been reduced to 2,359 acres. Of this, 1,668 acres was in the hands of the Army. Only 196 acres had been ploughed up and was more in theory rather than practice being cultivated, while 493 acres was left to the remaining trainers. One gallop that did disappear under the plough was the former Blundell Maple property on the Norwich road. This had been bought after his death by the Jockey Club, but was not later considered of great value and in 1924 had been sold by the Club to Lord Derby and used by the Hon George Lambton and P P Gilpin. Various of the stables too were in Army or government use, especially as food stores. The number of horses in training everywhere was much reduced: 2,400 at the beginning of 1941 became 1,600 by June that year and was soon restricted to 1,200. A greater casualty at Newmarket were the local stud farms. These were estimated to total 7,950 acres, of which 2,910 acres had been turned to crops, while dairy herds grazed much of the rest. Digging for victory was a case of short-term necessity rather than economic sense. Not that a later generation would notice much loss - "miles and miles of bugger all", as one Newmarket trainer elegantly put it, still summarizes the area rather well.