

Captains Courageous: Gentlemen Riders in British Horseracing 1866-1914.¹

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I

The first day of June 1904, a wet Wednesday at Epsom Downs, and leading professional jockey Kempton Cannon piloted St Amant home to win the Derby, the blue riband classic of the British turf. Three lengths behind was second favourite John o'Gaunt in the Cambridge blue and white colours of Sir John Thursby but under an amateur, his half-brother George. Behind George were six other professionals. 'Mr' Thursby had already ridden his sibling's horse into second place in the Two Thousand Guineas that year, again beaten by St Amant. This was not the end of his riding achievements in the classics. Two years later he repeated his Derby feat on Picton and in 1908 was yet again second in the Two Thousand Guineas, this time on Sir Archibald. Four places in elite races says much about Thursby's riding skills, but that was the sum of success by amateur riders at the highest level of British flat racing.

Over fences the situation was very different. Between 1871 and 1885 gentlemen riders won 12 Grand Nationals, the premier event of the National Hunt calendar, five more between 1885 and 1897, and a further three by 1915. In their riding 'careers' Arthur Yates won 460 races, including 67 in season 1872/73 a record for an amateur, and Roddy Owen 254.² Several amateurs actually won the National Hunt Riders championship including John Randolph 'Jack' Anthony, one of three Carmarthenshire brothers who all became racehorse trainers.

II

Victorian and Edwardian racing possessed two distinct strands, races on the flat and those over jumps, be they fences or hurdles.³ Flat racing had the longest history, dating back in organised form to the seventeenth century, a time when many owners rode their own horses. During the nineteenth century it became increasingly commercialised and professionalized and from 1873 all jockeys competing in open events had to be licensed by the Jockey Club [a misnomer in that it was for the rulers of racing not riders].⁴

In 1870 at least 60 amateurs took part in open races against professionals, gaining 23 winners and a further 43 places. While most of these riders participated at only one meeting almost a third competed at two or more though usually within a particular area. Yet by 1911 there were no gentlemen competing against the professionals. The intervening years had seen the introduction (in 1889) of Jockey Club Rule 96 which stated that

Any gentleman wishing to ride in races on even terms with jockeys shall
Obtain a permission, current till revoked, from the Stewards of the Jockey

Club, and make a donation of £5 to the Bentinck Benevolent Fund.

From 1897 lists of licensed jockeys and gentlemen riders were published in the *Racing Calendar*. In that year there were 35 amateurs, around 12 per cent of the total number of approved jockeys and riders. In 1901 the number of gentlemen had risen to 39 but this had collapsed to only 9 by the next season. The reason for this was an amended Rule 96 by which

Any gentleman wishing to ride in races other than those open to gentlemen riders must obtain an annual permission from the Stewards of the Jockey Club and pay a yearly subscription of 5 sovereigns to the Bentinck Benevolent Fund.⁵

Charity still benefited but the fee was now required annually. Clearly in 1902 only nine gentlemen were serious enough about their sport to be willing to pay more than once for the pleasure.⁶ Yet even these seldom rode against professionals. In contrast to George Thursby who competed in 18 open races, securing 9 wins and 4 places, the others totalled 12 such races between them and gained only one third place. Four of these were part of a group of 36 amateurs who rode in flat races specifically for gentlemen riders under the Rules of Racing. Gentlemen thus had not abandoned the flat, merely shifted the focus of their competition. Yet even those races purely for gentlemen riders or welter races in which professional jockeys could compete against the amateur with a 7 lb penalty were lessening in number. In 1870 39 courses offered 64 such races; in 1913 18 courses staged 39.

Even in 1870 gentlemen riders rarely rode in open competition in major races or at elite racecourses. Thursby aside, few amateurs could give the professionals a run for their money. George Baird, who raced as Mr Abington [initially to hide his activities from his trustees], inherited a fortune from his ironmaster father and another from his uncle and virtually bought his way to the gentlemen riders' title between 1885 and 1891 by spending money on quality horses, but in his title-winning year of 1889 he gained 48 of his victories against professional opposition.⁷ Arthur Coventry, later to become Jockey Club starter, also could hold his own: a fellow amateur, George Lambton, brother of Lord Durham, remembered champion professional Fred Archer saying that there was no jockey living who could give Mr Coventry 5 pounds.⁸ Generally, however, the paid jockey dominated flat racing.

Steeplechasing emerged from matches between individuals over hunting country, eventually becoming races for several participants over constructed courses. Commercialisation began in the 1830s, first at St Albans and then at Aintree where the Grand National was inaugurated.⁹ Most National Hunt racing was over fences but there were also hurdle races run at a faster pace often involving flat-race horses seeking to extend their careers. The sport became formally organised in 1866 with the formation of the National Hunt Committee which also began to issue licences to riders. There was a substantial expansion after the 1870s following the Jockey Club imposition of a minimum prize-money regulation for flat racing which pushed many race committees to convert to National Hunt racing where there was no such rule.¹⁰ In 1911 there were 235 professional jockeys who had received licences to ride but, in contrast to the situation on the flat, the list also contained 55 qualified (i.e. amateur) riders. Yet these were listed only if they qualified by 'election' rather than by status as a

gentleman or farmer (see Appendix) so the actual number of amateur riders was significantly higher. Most National Hunt races were open to all comers but many more than on the flat, especially at meetings hosted by hunts and racing clubs, were restricted to amateur riders, usually socially defined but often with the addition of residential, occupational or hunting qualifications. Hence there were substantial openings for the amateur rider to compete either against professionals or just among fellow gentlemen riders.¹¹

If 1902 is examined in detail it is apparent that, although some amateurs rode at only one or two local meetings, there was a hard core of about 25 who raced at multiple meetings, both against professional riders and other amateurs. The races they took part in were a mixture of National Hunt flat races, open welter races, steeplechases and hurdles; unlike flat racing no race specifically stated that it was for 'gentlemen riders'. Of the 1626 races in the National Hunt calendar 225 (14%) were competed for by professionals only. Amateur riders took part in the remainder. In 201 (12%) races only amateurs competed but in 1200 (74%) jockeys were a mixture of amateurs and professionals. Over twelve months amateurs won about a third of these open races which suggests that many gentlemen riders were competent in the saddle and able to compete effectively with professionals.

For those who felt that even National Hunt racing had become too professionalized there remained point-to-point events run over natural terrain with no prize money at stake. Popular from the 1880s, these were for horses that had been hunted and amateur jockeys who had ridden to hounds. Here no licence was required, merely a certificate from the local Master. Indeed most were hosted and organised by local hunts even when the races were for members of the Stock Exchange or the legal fraternity of the Pegasus Club. Initially each meeting set its own rules but in 1913 the Master of Hounds Point-to-Point Association established a national set of regulations, an unanticipated outcome of which was that between 1913-29 women were allowed to compete against men, as, unlike those of the Jockey Club and the National Hunt Committee, their rules did not specifically exclude female riders.¹²

III

Relative opportunity was one reason for the differential level of participation of amateurs on the flat and over the sticks. Another was simply that too much of the good life might have to be sacrificed for an amateur to ride consistently and successfully on the flat.¹³ Baird wasted as hard as he rode. His last ride was on his thirty-first birthday when he got down to only 9 stones 5 pounds to ride Alice to victory in the Edinburgh Gold Cup at Musselburgh. Like all the jockeys in the Derby George Thursby weighed out at just 9 stones, but this was towards the upper level in conventional flat racing. In 1850 the minimum weight set by the Jockey Club was a mere 4 stones and although this rose to 5 stones 7 pounds in 1875 it remained at this level until after the First World War.¹⁴ Few riders, even professionals, raced at these weights but they are an indicator that weights carried by runners on the flat could be artificially low. It was not always so. In the mid-eighteenth century 9 stones seems to have been the *minimum* for normal thoroughbred racing and hence at that time owners could often ride their own horses without serious disadvantage. The emergence of lighter weights probably owes something to gambling owners - and most of them

were – realising that not only did this lessen the risk of a valuable horse breaking down under the weight of a heavy jockey but it could also improve the chances of beating other animals with heavier riders. In contrast in National Hunt racing - perhaps because of its origins in the hunting field - the weights carried were on average 2 to 3 stones higher than on the flat and even greater in many of the events restricted to amateurs. Gentlemen riding over jumps thus could maintain a more normal physique. Nevertheless although the lighter weights carried on the flat might have deterred some potential amateur jockeys, its effect should not be exaggerated as on a fifth of the occasions on which amateurs rode on the flat against professionals in 1870 they weighed out at 9 stones or under and of the nine gentlemen licensed to compete against professionals in 1902 four were able to ride at such a weight.

IV

The widespread development of professionalism in late nineteenth century British sport led to controversy and debate as to whether the ruling bodies should recognise it and, if so, what safeguards should be imposed in the interests of amateur participants, the professionals themselves, and society in general. The common theme of all the major criticisms was that of class antagonism, a fear by the middle-class players and administrators that they might lose both social position and sporting supremacy. Unlike most other sports there was a history of professionalism in flat racing so there was less need for the sports authorities to pass legislation to protect the interests of the amateurs: indeed, in a reverse of what was happening in other sports, the licensing of jockeys was introduced in 1873 to prevent incompetent amateurs ruining the sport of the professionals (and, of course, risking investment in valuable thoroughbred racing stock).

In National Hunt racing, however, as shown in the appendix below, the gentleman rider had a complex and exhaustive definition designed to exclude persons of inferior social status.

So what or who was a ‘gentleman rider’? A Yorkshire rider in the 1830s had no doubts as to his eligibility. ‘I subscribes to a pack o’ dogs. I hunts three days a week. I drinks wine to my dinner. And I keeps a mistress!’¹⁵ Three decades later there were complaints that ‘grooms, broken-down riding masters and stable-keepers’ were riding under the title and an appeal was made for ‘a rule to be framed of sufficient strength’ to prevent such misrepresentation.¹⁶ The elasticity of the definition was reduced when the National Hunt Committee established its regulatory code. A qualified amateur rider had to belong to one of a select list of clubs or be an officer of either service on full pay, a magistrate, a peer, or bear a courtesy title. Persons of lower social standing could be balloted in, but they had to be nominated by men holding the club or commission qualification. There had been modifications to these rules by the end of the century, particularly after the reorganisation of the National Hunt Committee in 1883. The list of approved clubs was extended and farmers (and their sons) with a minimum occupation of 100 acres became eligible, but those seeking entry by ballot had to be proposed and seconded by members of the National Hunt Committee itself.¹⁷

Horseracing was a sport that demanded courage: more than in football and rugby, both of which had become more civilised with the prohibition of hacking; more than in cricket which had a hard missile but protective pads and a bat with which to defend oneself. Racing was the supreme test of sporting courage. Trying to control 500 kilos of horseflesh travelling at 25-40 kilometres an hour whilst sometimes also attempting to jump obstacles en route is not an activity for the faint-hearted. National Hunt riders are always just one fall away from paralysis. Modern statistics show that a fall can be expected every fourteen rides over jumps and hurdles and an injury every eighty.¹⁸ Admittedly riding styles and tactics have changed since the late nineteenth century but so too has protective equipment and medical knowledge; hence it is likely that racing then was as dangerous as it is today. Fox Russell, a cross-country rider in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, recorded that 'I have had my fair share of accidents, and have broken ribs, collar bones, and arm, some two or three times each, and once sustained a slight concussion of the brain, but have never been seriously, that is, dangerously, injured in my life except once, when a horse rolled on me.'¹⁹ Some were less fortunate. The inaugural St Albans Steeplechase saw the first recorded National Hunt fatality when Mr Stretfield's mount Teddy the Tyke fell over a gate and crushed his rider.²⁰ The first two decades at Sandown, a course opened in the 1870s, witnessed the deaths in falls of Greville Nugent, Mr Goodwin and Captain Boyce. Lord Rossmore was also killed in a racing fall, this one at Windsor.²¹ Jump racing proved fatal to several leading amateur riders such as George Ede and Charles Cunningham. Old Etonian, George Ede, who rode as 'Mr Edwards', had 306 winners between 1856 and 1870 including a victorious Grand National on The Lamb.²² When riding in a hurdle race at Aintree in 1870, the day after participating in another National, his mount Chippenham fell and rolled on him. Ede died without regaining consciousness.²³ A serious fall in 1890 from which he never fully recovered contributed to the early death of 'Charlie' Cunningham who, in one three-year period, won 144 out of 276 races, a remarkably high percentage.²⁴ Hugh Nugent, second in the Grand National of 1902 died later that year after a fall in a hurdle race in Ostend.²⁵

To get into the saddle knowing that injury was not just probable but inevitable requires bravery of a special kind. This aspect of manliness, unlike that of the middle-class (amateur by implication) footballer, rugby player or cricketer, was not the direct product of a public school education as no public school in the period studied offered hunting or riding, let alone racing, as an extracurricular pursuit.²⁶ So where did it originate?

One avenue would be via the military, an institution still obsessed with the horse and where the ability to travel on horseback at high speed was an admired trait. Allegedly the first St Albans Steeplechase organised by hotelier Thomas Coleman was at the behest of officers from the 1st Life Guards following a dinner at Coleman's Turf Hotel.²⁷ Military meetings themselves started as races casually organised by cavalry officers though some, like the Grand Military Gold Cup, became permanent features of the National Hunt social and racing calendar. Some jump meetings organised for military men often had a course deliberately more severe than at conventional steeplechases. At Aldershot, for example, 'the water jump is of a width to test the

stride of a horse; there is an open brook, unguarded in any way; a drop over one of the obstacles' so that 'altogether the course more nearly resembles the typical fair hunting country'.²⁸ To one supporter, writing in the late 1880s, it was unfortunate that other, less testing courses were now being chosen to host military events 'principally for social reasons'.²⁹

Turning to individual military riders, it was Captain 'Josey' Little who won the Grand National on Chandler in 1848.³⁰ The late 1860s and early 1870s saw the two Colonels, Knox and Harford, win Grand Military Steeplechases but also participate widely and successfully in non-military events.³¹ Captain E. R. 'Roddy' Owen, the 'acknowledged head of the active soldier brigade', was an army officer who had 254 winners from 812 mounts in the decade from 1882 and then, immediately after winning the Grand National on Father O'Flynn, gave up the sport to focus more on his army career.³² Captain Lee Barber won many races and was described as 'the Fred Archer of the soldiers'.³³ Captain Arthur Smith too had a name as a fine horseman and rider to hounds.³⁴ Two officers in the Northumberland Fusiliers, Charles Lambton and Captain Whitaker, also had reputations as horsemen.³⁵ A correspondent in *Bell's Life* argued that senior officers encouraged their juniors to ride in steeplechases 'because it excites that courage, presence of mind and skill in horsemanship without which their glorious achievements of Balaclava and Inkermann would never have been recorded'.³⁶ There were other, equally practical reasons: the writer added that it also checked 'riotous living and its worst accessory, the use of the gaming table'.

Another source of courageous horsemen, and to some extent associated with the military, was the hunting field where chasing Reynard involved jumping real fences. The Vale of Aylesbury Steeplechase, first run in 1835, was the brainchild of a party of hunting men dining at Crockfords.³⁷ Hugh Owen, brother of Roddy, was rated as 'one of the best men to hounds in England'.³⁸ George Ede lived with Lord Poulett at Waterloo and assisted him with the mastership of the Hambledon Hunt.³⁹ Maunsell Richardson, who won the Grand National twice was a brilliant rider to hounds and eventually retired from the turf to concentrate on hunting.⁴⁰ Many others, less successful over jumps than these, also combined the two sports.

The courage was there but what about the skills? For professionals these were developed through an apprenticeship in a training stables which involved not just riding horses but grooming them, feeding them and mucking out. No amateur would risk social contamination by sinking so low, though several would go as guests to training establishments and learn by helping to school the horses and ride them in trials and gallops. George Ede was taught by Ben Land, a noted cross-country rider and later trainer.⁴¹ Others to follow this path included Captain Little, Thomas Towneley, 'Mr Thomas' (i.e. Mr T.F. Pickernell who won three Grand Nationals), Captains Scobell, Tempest, and Henry 'Bee' Coventry, and Fothergill Rowlands, who gave up his medical practice to become a gentleman rider.⁴² Arthur Coventry learned the tactics of race riding under the tuition of Tom Cannon, a professional jockey who became a trainer with a reputation for producing skilled apprentices.⁴³ In the 1880s there were hunters' flat races at almost every meeting, winter and summer, in which horses would carry heavy amateur riders. George Lambton, gentleman-rider brother of Lord Durham, maintained that these were an ideal nursery for amateurs to experience race-riding.⁴⁴

VI

In many sports a distinctive amateur ethos emerged under the influence of the public schools, their old boys and other Corinthians. Its ideal[istic]-type central features focused on a 'contained competitiveness' in which the process of how the game was played was regarded as more important than the actual outcome, which itself should be acknowledged by 'gracious winners' and 'good losers'.⁴⁵ Part of this process was that both opponents and the rules should be respected and neither ever taken advantage of. To the amateur, participation was all and no cognisance was taken of any need to entertain the spectator.

Although aspects of these can be found among some gentlemen riders no specific amateur ethos has been identified with horseracing. Even when racing featured in a series on the unwritten rules of sport in the *Badminton Magazine*, a periodical devoted primarily to field sports and an elite readership, there was no mention of gentlemen riders. Instead the emphasis was on honest and trustworthy relationships between owners and trainers, particularly in regard to insider information and betting.⁴⁶ Possibly it is this intimate relationship with gambling that prevented any real amateur ethos developing in the sport. As one historian of the Jockey Club aptly put it 'betting is the manure to which the enormous crop of horse racing and racehorse breeding ... is to a large extent due.'⁴⁷ Such an involvement may have precluded style and process from undermining the necessity to win. In contrast, most other amateur-led sports had thrown off their Georgian inheritance and now viewed gambling with abhorrence: unlike racing they had cleansed their stables.

Gambling may also have encouraged corruption within racing even among its amateur participants. A common thread of the late nineteenth-century debate over the introduction of professionalism into many sports was a concern that professionals, whose livelihoods were at stake, either would commit fouls to avoid defeat or be susceptible to corruption to ensure it. The experience of racing with its long history of paid jockeys and associated misconduct would not have calmed their fears. Yet research has suggested that amateur cricketers and rugby players, among others, were not averse to gamesmanship. So the question to be asked is whether the sporting conduct of gentlemen riders was better than that of their counterparts in other sports, particular considering that horseracing was a sport driven by gambling. Clearly many gentlemen riders bet on racing. George Lambton, for instance, recalls that he had Lord Lurgan act as his commissioner to place most of his bets when he was riding.⁴⁸ Whether this was because they needed the money, wanted to add extra excitement to their ride, or just to challenge the bookmakers with their [inside] knowledge is not known. Whether this led to deviant activity is also conjectural.

One amateur rider often accused of unsporting practices was 'Mr Abington', one of the first gentleman rider to gain Jockey Club permission to ride on the flat against professionals. If many gentlemen riders can be seen as one of Emsley's courageous 'plucky chaps', George Baird, in contrast, was the middle-class version of the 'hard man', oozing toughness, exuding an air of menace and being not quite respectable.⁴⁹ In 1882 he was warned off by the National Hunt Committee for threatening to put a fellow rider over the rails. The Jockey Club extended the suspension to meetings

under their jurisdiction but the continental authorities did not follow suit and he continued to race in France. On his reinstatement in 1884 he appears to have ridden hard but more fairly, though he continually flouted Jockey Club regulations on running horses in other people's names, partly to create an impression that he was securing outside rides.⁵⁰ Yet many of the social establishment would argue that he was not even a gentleman let alone a gentleman rider. His background was that of new money, made out of Scotland's industrialisation, and his behaviour had little regard for social niceties. Yet Baird may not have been the worst offender. The Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire argued that too many gentlemen riders possessed 'dubious integrity' and 'that the regular "wrong one" should continue to flourish in our midst as he does is the worst blot on the reputation of the Turf.' He felt that they got away with sharp practice because of the incompetence of many gentlemen riders so that 'the gradual development of clumsiness into skilful knavery often passes unnoticed (by the stewards).'⁵¹

Most illicit activity by amateur riders centred on trying to beat the definitional regulations which often restricted entry to those of particular social standing or locality. The defence of the gentlemen rider was straightforward: those who committed these transgressions were not true *gentlemen* riders. Hence the term became a self-fulfilling descriptor which argued that gentlemen did not cheat and that anyone who did break the rules was thus not a gentleman. So it was that Arthur Coventry and his fellow author noted that it was a 'so-called gentleman rider' who took a small farm in a district hunted by several packs so that he might label himself a farmer and qualify for the local races.⁵² Such races were eventually abolished as the local clerks of courses had become too lax regarding qualification and 'many people rode as gentlemen riders who were very far from meriting that distinction'.⁵³ It is noteworthy that in one of the few late nineteenth-century stories to have a corrupt amateur rider as its focus, 'To Win a Race' by turf authority Alfred Watson, the villain is actually a professional masquerading as the appropriately named 'Mr Sharpe', a gentleman rider.⁵⁴

National Hunt racing, like cricket, was a sport in which middle-class shamateurism developed on a significant scale. Admittedly some clerks of the course took a lenient attitude to gentlemen riders of obscure pedigree, but mainly it was the economic qualification that was abused, with supposedly amateur jockeys obtaining retainers and liberal fees when they were not legitimately entitled even to out-of-pocket expenses. It was open to owners, however, to object to the suspect gentlemen riders. One such objection to Mr Frank Lotan, after he won the National Hunt Chase at Melton, led to his disqualification on the grounds of having received payment to ride on previous occasions and brought the whole issue into the open.⁵⁵ Following the reorganisation of the National Hunt Committee in 1883, the regulations were tightened, but some owners were still willing to condone shamateurism. They purchased the services of men qualified to ride on social grounds and found their way round the 'not having ridden for hire' regulations by laying a bet with the proceeds going as a present to the rider.⁵⁶ Some owners found that hotel and other expenses could make it dearer to put up a gentleman than pay a fee to a professional but presumably they thought it was worth it.⁵⁷

Suspensions of shamateurism have to be raised in the cases of Messrs Garnett and Gordon, both elected as qualified riders in 1902 and who raced at between 20 and 30

meetings that year; at the two Nugents who rode at between 35 and 45 meetings; and against R.H. Harper and H.S. Sydney who both attended over 40 meetings. And what about Frank Hartigan, a member of a prominent Irish racing family? As an amateur he travelled to 43 meetings at 23 different courses, mostly in the south but as far north as Nottingham and Liverpool. He won on 30 of his 125 mounts and was placed a further 34 times, both a workload and a success rate worthy of a paid rider. Some credence to a claim that he was a shamateur was the fact that he later turned professional and in 1913, when a trainer, he showed little respect for the rules when he rode in a race as Mr Hartigan with no evidence that he had ever been reinstated as a gentleman rider. In contrast to these amateurs who possibly sought to make money out of their sport, the often maligned Mr Abington spent a fortune becoming a successful rider, the power of his purse being used to purchase quality horses which he could ride to victory.

VII

For the professional rider there was the carrot of income – at least for the successful – but why should amateurs risk serious injury or even death in the name of sport? It can be hazarded that gentlemen riders were men of courage who were seeking the action and excitement that jump racing in particular provided. For the amateur, as distinct from the shamateur, peer recognition and social kudos probably played a part. As huntsmen and cavalry officers many were good horsemen and could compete effectively against their paid counterparts. But the times were changing. The deaths of many officers in the Boer War and the abandonment of hunters' flat races in the early twentieth century further contributed to the decline in the numbers of gentlemen riders from 101 in 1887 to only 62 in 1912.

As National Hunt racing became more commercialised, owners sought the best riders and increasingly these were professionals who devoted themselves full time to their trade. In 1919 Harry Brown, the younger of two gentlemen rider brothers, won the National Hunt jockeys title. He was the last amateur to do so.

Appendix

Riders, Gentlemen Riders, Qualified Riders, Jockeys etc. Rules 91 and 92 of National Hunt Racing

Rule 91

- (1) Persons who have never ridden for hire, and who are not otherwise disqualified under these Rules, need no qualification to ride in steeple chases or hurdle races unless the conditions of any such steeple chase or hurdle race requires a particular condition, but for welter flat races riders must be "Qualified Riders" or Jockeys holding licences under these Rules.
- (2) Qualified Riders under these Rules are persons who have never ridden for hire, and who are qualified either [a] as Gentlemen, [b] as farmers, [c] by election, [d] Yeomen when riding at their own Regimental Meeting.

[a] Riders qualified as Gentlemen must be Members of the National Hunt Committee, the Irish National Hunt Steeple Chase Committee, or one of the following Clubs: Jockey Club, Turf Club of Ireland, Jockey Club of Paris, Jockey Club of Berlin, Jockey Club of Vienna, New Rooms at Newmarket, Bibury, Croxton Park, Ludlow, Southdown, Army and Navy, Junior Army and Navy, Guards', Cavalry, Navy and Military, United Service, Junior United Service, East India United Service, Arthur's, Badminton, Boodle's, Brooks', Carlton, Junior Carlton, Conservative, Devonshire, Oxford and Cambridge, New University, United University, Oriental, Pratt's, St James', Travellers', Turf, Union, Wellington, White's, Windham, Western Meeting (Ayr), Kildare Street (Dublin), Sackville Street (Dublin), Hibernian United Service (Dublin), Stephen's Green (Dublin).

Or that they be persons holding commissions under the Crown, or bearing titles in their own right, or by courtesy.

[b] Riders qualified as farmers, must now be farming at least 100 acres of land, and their Sons if following the same occupation. A "*Farmer*" shall be understood to mean one who resides permanently on his farm, working it himself, and deriving therefrom his principal and ostensible means of subsistence.

[c] Persons not qualified as "Gentlemen Riders" or "Farmers" who are desirous of becoming "Qualified Riders" must send their names in for election, with the names of their proposer and seconder, who must be members of the National Hunt Committee, to the Registry Office for publication in at least one Calendar before the day of the election. The names of the persons elected must be submitted annually to the Committee at the General Meeting on the second Monday in December, for re-election. The fee to be paid for election, or re-election, is 1 sov.

Rule 92

Should any Qualified Rider *at any time* ride for hire, *he shall thereupon cease to be a "Qualified Rider"*, or *should his name appear upon the Forfeit List*, or he be reported by the Committee at Tattersall's as being a defaulter for bets lost on horse racing, *he will, at the discretion of the Stewards of the National Hunt Committee, lose his qualification*, and if he be a qualified rider by election, his name *may* be erased from the list of Qualified Riders.

Source: *Racing Calendar: Steeple Chases Past* (London: Weatherbys, 1906) pp. liv-iv.

¹ All calculations are based on information drawn from the *Racing Calendar*.

² David H. Munroe, *The Grand National 1839-1931* (London, 1931), pp. 99-101.

³ For more on the history of the structure of racing see Wray Vamplew & Joyce Kay, *The encyclopedia of British horseracing* (London, 2005).

⁴ For more detail on the Jockey Club and its regulatory powers see Wray Vamplew, 'Reduced horsepower: the Jockey Club and the regulation of British horseracing', *Journal of Entertainment Law*, (2003), pp. 94-111.

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- ⁵ Minutes of Jockey Club, *Racing Calendar* 1901, p. lxix. It has not been possible to determine why the terminology changed from 'on equal terms' to 'other than those open to gentlemen riders'.
- ⁶ Though a search of the results for 1902 suggests that a further four rode either without permission or obtained it during the year and then did not renew it for the following season.
- ⁷ Roger Onslow, *The Squire: a life of George Alexander Baird gentleman rider 1861-1893* (London, 1980).
- ⁸ Lambton, G., *Men and horses I have known* (London, 1986, facsimile of 1923 first edition), p. 156.
- ⁹ John Pinfold, 'Where the champion horses run: the origins of Aintree racecourse and the Grand National', *International Journal of the History of Sport* 15.2 (1998), pp. 137-151.
- ¹⁰ John Tolson & Wray Vamplew, 'Facilitation not revolution: railways and British flat racing 1830-1914', *Sport in History*, (2003), pp. 103-104.
- ¹¹ Although jump and flat racing were separately organised there was no strict demarcation between riding under either code. In 1902 roughly a fifth of professionals were licensed under both codes and 34 of the 45 amateurs who raced on the flat also raced under National Hunt rules.
- ¹² A few women did ride against men in the 1920s, sometimes successfully. Michael Williams, *Point-to-pointing in our time* (London, 1998), 4-5, 25.
- ¹³ George Thompson was unusual for an amateur jockey and weighed only seven and a half stone. Indeed on one occasion when riding in a hunter flat race his horse carried 14 stones and he had to get permission from the stewards to have assistance in carrying his saddle and weight cloths to the scales. Lambton, *Men and horses*, p.27.
- ¹⁴ Such weights contradict the oft-used nineteenth-century rationale for horseracing that it was the racecourse test which produced horses from which to breed army remounts. Army officers rarely weighed less than 8 stones.
- ¹⁵ Quoted in J. Fairfax-Blakeborough, *The analysis of the turf* (London, 1927), p.143.
- ¹⁶ The Gentleman in Black, 'Gentlemen-Jockeys', *Bailey's Magazine* XI (1866), p. 5.
- ¹⁷ Earl of Suffolk, 'Gentlemen riders', *Badminton Magazine* II (1896), p.495.
- ¹⁸ Based on information supplied by Dr. Michael Turner, Senior Medical Advisor to the Jockey Club. A further breakdown suggests a fall every 8 mounts over fences and every 27 over hurdles.
- ¹⁹ Fox Russell, *In scarlet and silk* (London, 1896), p. 221.
- ²⁰ Michael Williams, *The continuing story of point-to-point racing* (London, 1970), p. 19.
- ²¹ Roger Munting, *Hedges and hurdles* (London, 1987), p. 132.
- ²² 'Our twelve best of today: gentlemen riders', *Baily's Magazine* LXXXI (1904), p.39.
- ²³ Edward Spencer, 'Some turf casualties', *Baily's Magazine* LXVI (1896), p. 273.
- ²⁴ Munroe, *Grand National*, p. 109.
- ²⁵ 'Our twelve best of today', p. 42.
- ²⁶ Information supplied by Professor Timothy Chandler, Kent State University. Of course the fact that the boys did not have these activities at school does not mean that they did not participate fully as 'young gentlemen' during the holidays.
- ²⁷ Williams, *Point-to-point*, p. 19.
- ²⁸ Arthur Coventry & A.E. Watson, 'Steeplechasing' in Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire, *Racing and steeplechasing* (London, 1889) p. 327.
- ²⁹ Coventry & Watson, *Racing*, p. 347.
- ³⁰ It should be noted that the military rank of the famous Captain Becher, commemorated in Becher's Brook at Aintree, was in fact an honorary one in the Buckinghamshire Yeomanry, but this allowed him to compete as a gentleman even though it was common knowledge that he was receiving payment for riding. Vamplew & Kay, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 43-44.
- ³¹ 'Our twelve best of today', p. 41.
- ³² 'Captain E.R. Owen', *Baily's Magazine* LIII (1890), p. 218; Lambton, *Men and horses*, p. 30.
- ³³ Lambton, *Men and horses*, p.73.
- ³⁴ Munroe, *Grand National*, pp. 110-111.
- ³⁵ Lambton, *Men and horses*, p. 197.
- ³⁶ Quoted in Michael Seth-Smith et. al, *The history of steeplechasing* (London, 1966), p.42. See also C. Stein, 'Soldiering and Sport', *Baily's Magazine* LXXIV (1900), pp. 235-240.
- ³⁷ Williams, *Point-to-point*, p. 20.
- ³⁸ Lambton, *Men and horses*, p. 29.
- ³⁹ Seth-Smith, *Steeplechasing*, p. 47.
- ⁴⁰ Munroe, *Grand National*, p. 96.
- ⁴¹ Seth-Smith, *Steeplechasing*, p. 47.
- ⁴² Earl of Suffolk, 'Gentlemen riders', p. 497; Seth-Smith, *Steeplechasing*, p. 45.

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- ⁴³ 'Mr Arthur Coventry', *Baily's Magazine* LXXIX (1903), p. 238.
- ⁴⁴ Lambton, *Men and horses*, p. 24.
- ⁴⁵ Norman Baker, 'Whose hegemony? the origins of the amateur ethos in nineteenth-century English society', *Sport in History* 24.1 (2004), p. 1.
- ⁴⁶ Alfred E. Watson, 'The unwritten laws of sport: racing', *Badminton Magazine* XX (1905), pp. 365-373.
- ⁴⁷ R. Black, *The Jockey Club and its founders* quoted in Wray Vamplew, *The turf* (London, 1975), p. 197.
- ⁴⁸ Lambton, *Men and horses*, p. 70.
- ⁴⁹ Clive Emsley, *Hard men: violence in England since 1750* (London, 2005), p. ix.
- ⁵⁰ Vamplew & Kay, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 42-43.
- ⁵¹ Earl of Suffolk, 'Gentlemen Riders', p. 500.
- ⁵² Coventry & Watson, *Racing*, p. 314.
- ⁵³ Lambton, *Men and horses*, p. 25.
- ⁵⁴ Watson, the turf correspondent for the *Illustrated London News*, wrote the entry on horseracing for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, was an editor of the *Badminton Library* and penned several authoritative studies of the racing world, using the more libellous material in fictional form, most of which appeared in *Longman's Magazine*.
- ⁵⁵ Earl of Suffolk, 'Gentlemen riders', p. 496.
- ⁵⁶ Earl of Suffolk, 'Gentlemen riders', pp. 495-6.
- ⁵⁷ 'The amateur', *Baily's Magazine* LXXX (1903), p. 252.