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Introduction

Pathos and Poetry

The first episode of *Luck*, a television series created by David Milch (*NYPD Blue*, *Deadwood*), directed by Michael Mann (*Manhunter*, *Heat*) and filmed at Santa Anita Park in California, aired on Home Box Office in December 2011. It was immediately taken into a second season and broadcast in Britain in early 2012. In the conservative world of television writing, David Milch is regarded as a maverick genius, known for his uncompromising take on American life. *Luck* is no *Seabiscuit*. The first episode weaves together a number of stories: the release from prison of Chester ‘Ace’ Bernstein (Dustin Hoffman), a racehorse owner with links to organised crime; a pick-six attempt by four inveterate gamblers or ‘railbirds’; and a hard boot trainer (Nick Nolte) with a dark horse. It also includes the humane destruction of a horse on the track, its head cradled in the arms of a tearful bug boy. *Luck* is a complex, unflinching portrayal of violence and corruption at the track. Dialogue- and character-driven, it invites reflection and understanding rather than judgement. Milch, a lifelong race fan and winner of two Breeders Cups, describes his series as ‘a love letter’, albeit an unsentimental one: ‘To me, the track is what the river was to Mark Twain. Where you see the most life and interesting people, go there. That’s what I’ve done.’¹ In March 2012, halfway through filming the second episode of the second season, production of *Luck* was permanently suspended by HBO, when a third horse had to be euthanized as a result of an accident on the set.²

As the brief lifespan of *Luck* indicates, representing racing is a fraught and complex endeavour. Death stalks the racecourse, along with joy and rapture – something that *Luck* confronted head on. When, in the first episode, the bug asks a ruined old jockey how to cope with the death of a horse, the jock, played with convincing bitterness by Hall of Famer Gary Stevens, replies, ‘You’ll get over it. That’s why they make Jim Beam.’ This was not a series that ignored or glorified the deaths of animals on the track,

but one which encouraged us to confront the costs of our entanglements with animals in a thoughtful and progressive way. To cancel it because of the death of a horse, which died when she reared up, fell and banged her head while being led back to a barn, is to foreclose a potentially productive discussion about welfare. It allows people to return, chomping on cheap burgers, to a comfortable world in which the exploitation of animals can continue as long as it happens off screen.

The reactions of racing enthusiasts to the series, collected in the pages of the *Daily Racing Form*, were mixed.³ Some complained that *Luck* was not an accurate representation of the track. Others lamented that this representation would not attract the new fans the sport craves. Although the jury is still out on *Luck*, part of the purpose of this book is to explore how the morally opaque, troubling image of racing that it presents coexists with alternative historical and contemporary representations which stress its elitist and conservative credentials.

Until recently, a division of labour existed between historians of racing and fiction writers exploring the same subject. As Jane Smiley shows in Chapter 3 of this volume, racing fiction includes murder, conspiracy, cross-class indiscretion and failure. Great authors including Anthony Trollope, George Moore and Ernest Hemingway have used racing as a backdrop to muse on inequality of opportunity, the small tragedies of ordinary lives blighted by bad decisions and the blindness of fate. Many horses and jockeys have died in tragic circumstances on the fictional tracks created by racing's greatest writers. Historians, until recently, stuck to lists of winners, descriptions of famous races, horses, owners and breeders. Artists fell into both categories. As Douglas Fordham describes in Chapter 2 of the present volume, many painted order and hierarchy, in the image of the establishment they served. Some, like William Powell Frith in *Derby Day*, turned their backs on the horses and depicted crowds that included thimble riggers, mistresses and infamous murderers. *Derby Day* is the Victorian equivalent of an episode of *Luck*, and when the National Gallery first exhibited it in 1858, it had to erect a barrier to protect it from the large crowds it drew. The Queen loved it too.

New writing about racing is beginning to look beyond descriptions of regal influence and equine heroism to more nuanced, inclusive representations. In North America, Edward Hotaling has described the contribution made by black jockeys to the sport and Steven Riess has exposed the relationship between racing administration and organised crime in New York between 1865 and 1913. In the United Kingdom, Mike Huggins has meticulously documented the often overlooked participation of the middle classes and women in the sport and Donna Landry has unravelled the connections

between the Middle East and Europe that framed the creation of the thoroughbred. In Australia, John Maynard has written about Aboriginal jockeys and Wayne Peake has told the story of Sydney's pony racecourses, the one-time competitor to thoroughbred racing. These and other works urge us to rethink conventional descriptions of racing as an invention of the English aristocracy, which has been exported, unchanged, to the New World. Part of the purpose of this volume is to understand why ideas such as these have endured in place of cosmopolitan alternatives.⁴

A National Sport?

According to Thomas Egerton, the second Earl of Wilton, writing in 1868, horseracing was a reflection of the essential character of the Englishman in the same way as the theatre represented the French and the bullfight the Spanish. This vision included fair play, muscular athleticism, determination and beauty, indeed: 'Sportsmanship is the ideal of racing. It is its foundation.'⁵ In practice, twenty-four years after the Running Rein Derby, when the winner was found to be an ineligible horse named Maccabeus, English racing was still far from pristine. However, the idea of racing as a quintessentially English sporting tradition, nurtured through administration by a private club for 250 years, was remarkably resilient. This idea retarded changes to the sport and underplayed the cosmopolitan and cross-class exchanges that characterised the development of the thoroughbred and racing in England and beyond.⁶

At the start of the twentieth century, a row broke out about the status of the thoroughbred racehorse. In some ways it was clearly an English horse, racing in England, bred on English studs, patronised by kings and queens. But in another, it was the offspring of imported stallions, described as Barbs, Turks and Arabian, and mares of indeterminate origin. In what sense could it be claimed as 'English' at all? One of the primary characters in this battle was the Arabian horse enthusiast Lady Wentworth, who, in 1945, published a vast volume, the purpose of which was to prove that the thoroughbred was descended entirely from Arab horses and was indeed an Arabian horse itself (of a kind inferior to those bred in the desert). She called this topic 'historical dynamite', and said that in raising it she risked 'receiving a bomb by post the day after publication'.⁷ Richard Nash's chapter, which opens this volume, provides a new perspective on this incendiary argument. He shows how ideas of 'Englishness', continuity and descent battled with environmental determinism in the succession of kings as well as stallions. In Nash's chapter, racing is a form of politics: race meetings serve as rallies for Jacobite rebellions, and gifts of horses communicate diplomatic messages between

international allies. According to Nash, ‘the “sport of kings” is born from the same cultural ferment that marked the end of absolute monarchy’.

The thoroughbred was the product of international exchanges of horses, people and ideas which had taken place since at least 1576 when Elizabeth I commissioned the Neapolitan Prospero d’Osma to report on the state of the royal studs.⁸ Once the breed was established, through the crossing of Arab and other horses, English racing and the thoroughbred became more insular, exporting a template and horses to the colonies and seeking to preserve a breed and practice that had always been hybrid, according to a new ideal of purity. The Jersey Act of 1913, which restricted entry to the *General Stud Book (GSB)* to horses who could trace their ancestry without flaw to those already registered, epitomised this insularity and was repealed in 1949. The Jersey Act proved that the Jockey Club was out of touch. Horses had travelled for stud purposes for several centuries. Horses bred overseas had also successfully competed in the European blue-ribbon events for more than thirty years: the American horse Iroquois won the Epsom Derby in 1881. Post-Second World War, French horses won nineteen classics between 1947 and 1959. The repeal of the Jersey Act was partly motivated by the ridiculousness of having French and then American Epsom Derby winners in 1947 and 1948, neither of which were eligible for entry in the *GSB*.⁹

Soon after the repeal of the Jersey Act, the movement of horses by air became routine, and racing entered a new era of internationalism, reflected in the international flat race pattern created by Lord Porchester and agreed by the French, Irish and English authorities in 1970.¹⁰ Various races and series, with ‘World Championship’ pretensions including the Breeders Cup (first run in 1984) and the Dubai World Cup (first run in 1996), have since emerged. The internationalism of these competitions has been moderated by the continuing importance of local conditions ranging from epidemiology and breeding incentives to track conditions and race tactics. Chapters in this volume by Wayne Peake (Chapter 9) and Chris McConville (Chapter 14) show that the New World has produced influential horses, techniques and personnel, as well as vital technology including the starting stalls and pari-mutuel. Racing is not simply exported and replicated wholesale in new jurisdictions, colonial or otherwise.

The increased availability of air transport since the 1960s also profoundly affected the bloodstock industry. Northern Dancer (1961–1990) the most influential sire of the twentieth century, was a Canadian-bred Kentucky Derby winner who stood only in North America, but nevertheless produced North American, Japanese, European and Australian champions. Among his many grandson stallions, High Chaparral (b.1999) is typically well travelled. He was bred in Ireland, bought by Coolmore at Tattersalls in Newmarket,

returned to Ireland to be trained by Aiden O'Brien, raced in England, Ireland and the United States and has stood as a stallion in New Zealand, Australia and Ireland. Ease of transport has not, however, created a single type of 'international' thoroughbred, valued equally in all jurisdictions. The preference for dirt sprinters in North America and stayers in Europe still produces different kinds of horses, with recognisable pedigrees and phenotypes. As McConville argues in his chapter, the majority of horses and races continue to be produced for regional markets that serve geographically proximate national racing cultures. The animated discussions regarding the relative merits of horses in England and the United States that took place when Diomed won the Epsom Derby in 1881 are just as lively today, although they take place online rather than in the pages of the racing press.¹¹

Making Racing

The fusion of betting – an anarchic means of distributing wealth which has no minimum price – with the expensive business of producing and maintaining fragile thoroughbred horses generates many of the paradoxes that enliven racing. Nevertheless, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, racing historians distinguished sharply between these activities. Egerton's vision of racing as epitomising the English character, for example, explicitly excludes betting, which he sees as an unfortunate side effect of the sport, reluctantly acknowledging that 'turf gambling has arisen from horseracing ... and to a very alarming extent; but it does not belong to racing as a sport'.¹² Fifteen years earlier, in the *Sporting Review* of 1853, Craven (John Carleton) had complained that 'Epsom's "pride, pomp and circumstance" are on the wane, no longer as of yore may it be said – "there all is gentle and aristocratic."' Systematic bookmaking or 'betting in the round' was emerging at the time, replacing matched bets between known individuals. Craven described this new system as having 'elbowed a way to place and power wholly unbeseeming'. He concluded by reinforcing the distinction made by Egerton: 'The turf is not intended for the trade of tout or tapster. ... As already aforesaid, betting has nothing to do with racing.'¹³

At times, this distinction has been politically expedient and even necessary for racing to survive. In post-Revolutionary New York, for example, 'Knickerbockers' – racing supporters drawn from the Long Island gentry – formed the Society for the Promotion of the Useful Arts and exhibited racehorses at agricultural fairs. They were rewarded in 1821 by a bill which permitted two racing seasons in Queens County.¹⁴ In the United Kingdom, the distinction between racing and betting endured in divisions between regulatory bodies including the Jockey Club, the National Bookmakers

Protection Association (formed in 1932) and the Horserace Betting Levy Board (formed in 1961 to raise and distribute a levy from bookmakers on behalf of racing). In 1975, Phil Bull, the founder of Timeform and one of the great racing minds, told journalist Hugh McIlvanney that ‘what is so sad and alarming regarding the future of racing is the refusal to admit the obvious, that the vital audience for the sport is no longer on the course but in the betting shops.... This is, above all, an entertainment industry and it is the audience that matters.’¹⁵ The Jockey Club relinquished its control over English racing in 2006, but the administrative and regulatory structure of racing continued to reproduce the divisions between racing and betting that concerned Bull in the 1970s. In 2011, the government minister responsible for managing negotiations between racing and the betting industry likened his role to finding peace in the Middle East. The consequences of these structural divisions are discussed in more detail in Mark Davies’s chapter in this volume (Chapter 13).

It has been conventional to present betting and breeding and testing horses against one another for the purposes of their improvement as mutually exclusive and even antagonistic. However, these different activities do not produce an exclusive set of binary oppositions between, for example, lower-class gamblers and upper-class owners. On the contrary, these categories are blurred and overlapping. Eclipse (1764–1789) – who appears in the pedigrees of more than 90 per cent of thoroughbreds racing today – was owned by a meat salesman and a madam at various points in his career. Eclipse’s most famous owner was the son of an Irish smallholder whose first job was carrying the front half of a sedan chair. Dennis O’Kelly was mocked by the English establishment for his Irish accent, but, unlike ruined eighteenth-century aristocrats such as John Damer, eldest son of Lord Milton, who committed suicide after building up gambling debts of £60,000, O’Kelly left his heirs a fortune based on Eclipse’s stud fees. More recently, Londoner Michael Tabor sold his betting shop chain for a reported £27 million in 2003 and has since won two Epsom Derbies (with Galileo and High Chaparral) and a Kentucky Derby (with Thunder Gulch). Irishman J.P. McManus, currently the most powerful owner in British jumps racing, became a bookmaker at a greyhound track at the age of twenty.

Wealth creators and the international super rich have had at least as much influence over the development of the thoroughbred as have royalty and the local establishment. The Rothschild family, their vast fortune based on Nathan Mayer von Rothschild’s role in organising the financing of the Napoleonic Wars, were hugely successful owners-breeders in England and France throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹⁶ Nineteen-time leading owner and seventeen-time leading breeder Marcel Boussac

dominated French racing in the twentieth century and made his fortune in textiles and newspapers. Colonel Hall-Walker (later Lord Wavertree), whose wealth came from the brewing industry in Liverpool, is known among the racing fraternity for using astrology to guide his breeding plans. He was also responsible for introducing the third Aga Khan to racing on a visit to his stud in Tully, initiating a successful and ongoing involvement in racing by the Imams of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. In 2011, the extent of the involvement of the royal families of Saudi Arabia and Dubai (and particularly Sheikh Mohammed, Prince Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum and Khalid Abdullah) led Newmarket trainer Jon Scargill to describe British racing as ‘three funerals away from a holocaust’.¹⁷

In the United States, influential owners and breeders have been drawn from a mix of established wealth, including Guggenheims, Mellons, Hunts and Hancocks, and self-made men. John Mabee, tireless promoter of California racing and breeding, moved from Iowa in the 1950s because of ill health and made his fortune from a chain of grocery stores. Breeder and racetrack owner Frank Stronach dominated Canadian racing, having emigrated from Austria in 1954 to make a fortune from manufacturing automotive parts in Montreal. In the past twenty years, Internet millionaire Satish Sanan has spent an estimated \$150 million on bloodstock in North America, having discovered racing as a student in the betting shops of England. In 2011, the top five buyers at the Keeneland September Sale included two members of the Dubai ruling family, Florida health care executive Ben Leon, telemarketing billionaires Gary and Mary West and Irishman John Magnier’s breeding and racing operation, Coolmore.¹⁸ In Australia, the Melbourne Cup has been won four times (in 1974, 1975, 1996 and 2008) by Malaysian entrepreneur Dato Tan Chin Nam, whose first venture was selling chickens on the side of the road after leaving school at age sixteen. This cosmopolitan mix of new and more established wealth is *de rigueur* on racecourses and at bloodstock auctions all over the world.

Old Histories, New Histories

Despite good claims to having been a national sport at one time or another in England, Australia and the United States, to many people today racing is a complete mystery, couched in an arcane and mysterious language of ‘odds’, ‘distaff lines’, ‘blinkers’, ‘fetlocks’ and ‘Furosemide’. For some enthusiasts it appears to encapsulate the whole challenging business of life, but racing is a relatively small village. The population is boosted annually by events such as the Grand National in England or the Melbourne Cup, ‘the race that stops a nation’, in Australia. The sport has not lost

the elegant simplicity that attracted a crowd of seventy thousand people to see Seabiscuit win the Santa Anita in 1940: 106,322 came to a Tokyo racecourse in 2010 to watch Rose Kingdom win the Japan Cup in the stewards' room, and in the United Kingdom annual racecourse attendance figures reached record levels in 2011.¹⁹ Interest in racing has recently been boosted by two wonder horses – Frankel in Europe and Black Caviar in Australia. Black Caviar's incredible unbeaten run has drawn vast crowds, and this mare is truly modern – she Tweets and has her own Facebook page. Despite these lifts, the size of the racing village is dwindling, and new investors and audiences must be found, perhaps in new markets, including China, considered in Mark Godfrey's chapter of this volume (Chapter 12), or through appealing to new kinds of fans. Racing faces stiff competition from sports which are more accessible to amateur participation and simpler to understand, as well as from increasingly diverse and accessible gambling products.

The United Kingdom recently modernised its gambling laws, enabling bookmakers to advertise, but also opening up the market to competition from other sports and online competition.²⁰ Neither racecourses nor High Street shops hold monopolies on off-course betting any longer: this generation can bet on the majority of sports at home, online, or through their telephones or televisions. Those who have remained in the shops to bet in cash are able to choose between machines, virtual racing and sports with much higher public profiles, better returns and simpler rules than racing. As Davies describes in his chapter, changes in technology and regulation have affected racing all over the world. In the United States, 'handle' (the total amount wagered) is down 37 per cent and attendance by 30 per cent over the past decade. Racing in the United States faces competition from casinos, which grew by 34 per cent between 2001 and 2010 and now outnumber racetracks by a ratio of 6 to 1.²¹ Even in Hong Kong, where a phenomenal average of HK\$150 million is bet on every race (fifty times the average at U.S. tracks in 2010), Winfried Engelbrecht-Bresges, the Jockey Club's CEO, estimates that the annual revenue lost to illegal online gambling is between one-third and 100 per cent of the Jockey Club's receipts. Worldwide, having once dominated the field, racing now competes with other betting media, legal and illegal, for air time, customers and investors.

Racing administrators are aware that in order to widen the appeal of horseracing to a new generation of potential investors, the product must both be 'clean' and also be perceived as such. This problem is particularly acute in the United States where federal bodies lack authority and the use of race-day medication is an established local practice. In 2012, the

Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders Association's American Graded Stakes Committee announced that a ban on race-day medication for two-year-olds in graded stakes races would not be enforced because of 'the nature of the various entities involved in implementation of rules governing racing'.²² In the United Kingdom, where race-day medication has not been permitted since 1904, new whip rules show that administrators have begun to engage with arguments about horse welfare.²³ The popularity of the play and film *War Horse* shows that people are fascinated by animals and their relationships with people, and that, under certain circumstances, sacrifices made by animals can be viewed as heroic. The extreme demands placed on racehorses are more likely to be understood and accepted by a wider audience if the horse is seen as a willing participant. Race-day medication, surgical procedures and whips alienate people, including the vast numbers who own pets or ride horses, because they militate against the idea that racing is the natural expression of instinctive competition.

If racing is to reach out to new audiences, it also needs to be mindful of the heuristic effects of the ways in which it presents itself. In the introduction to a book of short stories published in the United States in 1986, the editor describes racing as

an integral part of British history, a vivid and colourful pageant of people, courses and, above all, great horses, stretching back over three hundred years to the reign of that great sporting monarch, Charles II. He it was who first instituted races across the glorious heath at Newmarket which has rightly come to be known as the 'Horse Racing Capital of the World'. In Britain too, we created the thoroughbred racehorse.²⁴

This description makes racing sound irrelevant and parochial: a white, Anglophile, upper-class sport. It was written twenty-five years ago, but similar ideas are still recycled on racecourse Web sites and in sundry media. The alternatives presented in this collection (and in *Luck*) are so much more interesting. Isn't it time to ditch old histories in favour of more exciting, accurate and inclusive alternatives?

This book examines thoroughbred racing as it developed in Britain and was adopted and adapted elsewhere. Each chapter allows an expert in his or her field to unpick the diverse interests and priorities of racing's participants, undermining common misapprehensions and opening up new topics for academic and popular debate. The chapters may be read in any order, and no attempt has been made to standardise opinions because, as Mark Twain said, 'it is difference of opinion that make horse-races'.²⁵ Nevertheless, certain common themes emerge, including: cosmopolitanism

and cross-class contributions to racing; internationalism, regionalism and localism; racing and politics; the commercialisation of racing and breeding; the funding of racing by betting; and the depiction of racing in popular culture. Several chapters illustrate how these shared themes are instantiated differently ‘on the ground’ at different times and in various racing jurisdictions.

Why bother to scrutinise racing in this way? Won’t claims of Englishness, stories about great victories and the intrinsic beauty and power of individual thoroughbreds be sufficient to ensure a future for the sport? The response presented in this collection is that more critical, dynamic and inclusive writing about racing is not only more accurate but also more likely to interest new audiences. From this perspective, *Luck* is not an exposé of the underbelly of track life, as some have suggested, but an invitation to hang out with the crooks and rogues, horses, heroes and ordinary people who between them create the racing spectacle.

NOTES

- 1 L. Pugmire, ‘Q&A: David Milch on horse racing and iconic TV series’, *Los Angeles Times*, 25 December 2011. Available at: www.articles.latimes.com/2011/dec/25/sports/la-sp-pugmire-qa-20111226. Accessed 6 February 2012.
- 2 BBC News, ‘HBO cancels Dustin Hoffman drama *Luck* after horse death’, 15 March 2012. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-17364029. Accessed 19 March 2012.
- 3 For mixed reactions to *Luck* in the pages of the *Daily Racing Form*, see, for example: www.drff.com/blogs/luck-episode-3-recap-ace-bernstein-takes-reins. For reactions on a UK-hosted racing forum, see: www.theracingforum.co.uk/horse-racing-forum/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=89554&start=0. Both accessed 27 February 2012.
- 4 E. Hotaling, *The Great Black Jockeys: The Lives and Times of the Men Who Dominated America’s First National Sport* (New York: Prima, 1999); S. Reiss, *The Sport of Kings and the Kings of Crime: Horse Racing, Politics and Organised Crime in New York 1865–1913* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011); M. Huggins, *Flat Racing and British Society 1790–1914* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); M. Huggins, *Horseracing and the British, 1919–1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); D. Landry, *Noble Brutes: How Eastern Horses Transformed English Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); J. Maynard, *Aboriginal Stars of the Turf* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2007); W. Peake, *Sydney’s Pony Racecourses: An Alternative Racing History* (Sydney, N.S.W.: Walla Walla Press, 2006).
- 5 T. Egerton, *On the Sports and Pursuits of the English, as Bearing upon Their National Character* (Unknown binding, 1868), p. 1.
- 6 For the invention of the thoroughbred, see D. Landry, *Noble Brutes*. For a description of the cross-class development of horseracing in England, see M. Huggins, *Flat Racing and British Society* and *Horseracing and the British*.

Introduction

- 7 J. Blunt-Lytton (Lady Wentworth), *The Authentic Arabian Horse and His Descendants* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1945), p. 31.
- 8 For an authoritative description of the exchanges of ideas, horses and personnel between Europe and England at this time, see J. Thirsk, *Horses in Early Modern England: For Service, for Pleasure, for Power* (Reading: University of Reading Press, 1978).
- 9 For a discussion of the Jersey Act, see C. Leicester, *Bloodstock Breeding*, 2nd ed., revised by H. Wright (1957; London: J.A. Allen, 1983).
- 10 C. Hill, *Horse Power: The Politics of the Turf* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), p. 188.
- 11 For discussions of the relative merits of the North American thoroughbred, see: <http://cs.bloodhorse.com/blogs/market-watch/archive/2010/09/23/is-the-american-thoroughbred-a-separate-breed.aspx>. Accessed 29 February 2012.
- 12 Egerton, *Sports and Pursuits*, p. 1.
- 13 Carleton, J. (Craven) (ed.), *The Sporting Review* (London, 1854), pp. 6, 12.
- 14 Reiss, *The Sport of Kings and the Kings of Crime*, p. 9.
- 15 H. McIlvanney, *McIlvanney on Horseracing* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company, 1995), p. 64. Math teacher and chess player turned professional gambler Phil Bull formed Portway Press in 1948 and began to publish annuals containing statistical information about every horse running. After Bull's death in 1989, Timeform has continued to give each horse in training a rating expressed as a single number. The company was sold to Betfair for a reported £15 million in December 2006. For more information about this important racing figure, see H. Wright, *Bull – The Biography* (Halifax: Timeform, 1995).
- 16 Nathaniel de Rothschild was one of the first Jews to be elected to the notoriously exclusive French Jockey Club. For more details, see D. Stone, 'The Racing Rothschilds: The Sportsmen, the Maverick and the Legend', *Rothschild Archive Review of the Year, April 2008–March 2009*. Available at: www.rothschildarchive.org/ib/articles/AR2009Stone.pdf. Accessed 5 March 2012.
- 17 Quoted by M. Engel, 'British Institutions: Horse Racing', *Financial Times*, 10 June 2011. The relationship between Sheik Mohammed, tourism in Dubai and international racing is discussed by Rachel Pagones in this volume (Chapter 11).
- 18 More information about Coolmore can be found in Michael Hinds's chapter in this volume (Chapter 8).
- 19 M. Curry, 'Rose Kingdom Stuns Buena Vista via DQ in Japan Cup', *Thoroughbred Times*, 28 November 2010. The Racecourse Association Limited, 'Racecourse attendances hit record high in 2011', 24 January 2012. Available at: britishracecourses.org/news/racecourse-attendances-hit-record-high-in-2011/. Accessed 5 March 2012.
- 20 The text of the United Kingdom Gambling Act 2005 can be accessed here: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/19/contents. Accessed 5 March 2012.
- 21 For more statistics about racing in North America, see: www.jockeyclub.com/ROUNDTABLE.asp. Accessed 5 March 2012.
- 22 Blood-Horse Staff, 'AGSC will not enact raceday medication ban' *The Blood-Horse*, 26 February 2012. Available at: www.bloodhorse.com/horse-racing/articles/67648/agsc-will-not-enact-race-day-medication-ban. Accessed 28 February 2012.

- 23 British Horseracing Authority policy on whip use and specification is available at: www.britishhorseracing.com/inside_horseracing/about/whatwedo/disciplinary/whipuse.asp. Accessed 29 February 2012.
- 24 R. Peyton, *At the Track: A Treasury of Horse Racing Stories* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1986), p. 9.
- 25 M. Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (London: Charles L. Webster, 1894).

HORSERACING: A CHRONOLOGY

- Eighth century BC Homer describes a chariot race won by Diomedes (with some assistance from Athena).
- 16 BC Ovid provides a literary account of a day at the races in book III of *Amores*.
- 1539 Henry Gee, mayor of Chester, replaces a violent football match with a horserace to be run for the prize of a silver bell donated by the Saddler's company on Shrove Tuesday on the Roodee at Chester.
- c. 1560 *The Art of Riding*, an adaptation/translation of Frederico Grisone's Italian work of the same name, becomes the first work concerned with horsemanship to be published in England, reflecting the energetic exchanges of equine ideas and personnel that were taking place between England, Spain and Italy at the time.
- 1585 Horse races at Salisbury were attended by the Earls of Cumberland, Warwick, Pembroke and Essex. Prizes included a golden bell and a golden snaffle.
- 1593 Gervase Markham publishes *A Discourse of Horsemanship*, the first of several works on horses. Markham's *Cavalartice*, published in 1607, is thought to contain the first instructions for race riding.
- 1619 Salisbury Corporation takes charge of a fund 'for the encouragement of the races'.
- 1654 Cromwell bans horseracing for six months, citing 'the evil use made thereof by such ill-disposed Persons as watch for opportunities to raise New Troubles ... [and threaten] the Peace and Security of this Nation'.

- 1673 William Temple proposes to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland that three days of horseracing should be held near Dublin.
- c. 1674 Spanker is foaled and is later described as the best horse to run at Newmarket during the reign of Charles II. None of his achievements are recorded.
- 1680 Lord Monmouth, the oldest illegitimate son of Charles II, embarks on his ‘progresses’ around Britain, taking in several race meetings and competing himself, on horses provided by Thomas Wharton. He is arrested and banished in 1682 before leading an unsuccessful rebellion in 1685, after which he is beheaded on Tower Hill in London.
- 1683 Louis XVI hosts a race at Aix–St Germain, which is won by the Wharton gelding racing in the name of Lord Monmouth.
- 1683 The Rye House plot to assassinate Charles II and James, Duke of York, on their way back to London from racing at Newmarket is foiled when the races are cancelled after a fire in the town.
- 1690 The Byerley Turk carries English army officer Captain Robert Byerley (d. 1714) at the Battle of the Boyne. Legend has it that Byerley narrowly avoided capture while reconnoitring thanks to the great speed of his mount. The Byerley Turk dies, having been bred to relatively few mares, in 1703. His most important offspring was Basto.
- 1695 Catholics in England are prohibited from owning horses worth more than 5 pounds by the ‘Act for the better securing the government, by disarming papists’.
- 1704 The Darley Arabian arrives at Aldby Park, Buttercrambe, Yorkshire, England, from Aleppo via Kinsale, Ireland. He is at stud between 1706 and 1715, and his most important progeny were Flying or Devonshire Childers and Bartlett’s or Bleeding Childers.
- 1711 Queen Anne initiates racing at Ascot.
- 1715 Flying Childers is born and goes unbeaten in six races as a six- and seven-year-old, winning him the title of the first great racehorse.

- 1715 Lord Derwentwater assembles his forces at Dilston races in Northumbria. Tory gentry also converge on Bath races to take part in the Jacobite rebellion known as ‘The Fifteen’, but they are too late.
- 1727 John Cheny publishes the first annual *Historical Lists* of races; a pedigree index is added in 1743.
- 1730 The Godolphin Arabian produces his first crop for Edward Coke at Longford Hall in Derbyshire. The timing of his arrival in England is obscure. Romantic stories about him pulling a cart in Paris and fighting another stallion, Hobgoblin, for the right to cover Roxana are unsupported.
- 1733 Edward Coke dies and the Godolphin Arabian is passed to his friend, Roger Williams, who sells him to the second Earl of Godolphin. The horse is moved to a stud near Newmarket in Cambridgeshire. The focus of English horse breeding moves south.
- 1750 A reminder of a meeting of the Jockey Club appears in *The General Advertiser*, and Pond’s *Sporting Kalender* refers to a race to be held between horses owned by members.
- 1752 Steeplechasing begins with a race between the parish churches of Buttevant and Doneraile in Cork.
- 1764 Eclipse is born. Unbeaten in eighteen starts, he becomes the best horse of the eighteenth century. Although he was never better than second (most often to Herod) in the leading sire list, he is a tail male ancestor of 95 per cent of modern thoroughbreds.
- 1766 George Stubbs publishes *The Anatomy of the Horse*.
- 1776 First running of the St Leger at Doncaster.
- 1777 The Madras Race Club is formed.
- 1779 The Oaks is staged at Epsom.
- 1780 The first running of the Derby is run over a mile at Epsom and won by Diomed, owned by Sir Charles Bunbury, the first great racing administrator.
- 1790 First publication of the *Irish Racing Calendar* by the Irish Turf Club.

- 1794 George Stubbs's Turf Gallery opens in Conduit Street, London.
- 1806 George Stubbs dies on 10 July, at the age of eighty-one.
- 1809 First running of the 2,000 Guineas at Newmarket.
- 1810 The first fully sanctioned race meeting occurs in Sydney.
- 1814 First running of the 1,000 Guineas at Newmarket.
- 1825 Brazil's first formal race meeting is held at Praia Vermelha in Botafogo, Rio de Janeiro.
- 1827 Great racing administrator and inventor of the weight-for-age scale in 1855, Admiral Rous arrives in Sydney from England to return in 1829 via a posting in India. While in Australia, he stands an English horse, the well-named Emigrant.
- 1829 The foundation stone for a racecourse at Aintree is laid by Lord Sefton. Historian John Pinfold has suggested that a race in 1836 should be recognised as the first Grand National. Other historians suggest that the first running of the race was in 1839, won by a horse called Lottery.
- 1830s Races are held at Tirranna near Goulbourn, providing a template for picnic racing all over Australia. Tirranna is immortalised by George Lambert in 1929 in a painting that captures the bucolic pleasures of bush racing.
- 1833 Sheikh Maktoum bin Buti, of the Al Bu Falasah sector of the Bani Yas tribe, along with nearly 1,000 tribesmen, secedes from Abu Dhabi.
- 1844 The infamous Running Rein Derby. The winner is disqualified after it is discovered that he is an ineligible four-year-old named Maccabeus.
- 1845 Happy Valley Racecourse is built for the British in Hong Kong.
- 1848 Turf reformer Lord George Bentinck dies at age forty-six.
- 1848 Trollope publishes *The Kellys and the O'Kellys* in which the character of Dot Blake provides an early study of a canny professional trainer.

- 1849 Foreign Residents Club members pool resources to found Foreign Amateurs Racing Society to stage race meetings in Argentina.
- 1853 Western Australia becomes the first horse to win the English Triple Crown.
- 1856 The first running of the Viceroy's Cup is held at Hastings Racecourse in Calcutta.
- 1857 Longchamp racecourse opens, Paris's first metropolitan track.
- 1858 Exhibition of William Powell Frith's *The Derby Day* at the Royal Academy of Arts, London.
- 1861 The first Melbourne Cup is won by Archer who wins again the following year – the first of four horses to win consecutive cups.
- 1863 The first running of the Grand Prix de Paris, a champion race for three-year-olds held at Longchamp, is won by an English colt, The Ranger.
- 1863 John Hunter and William R. Travers build Saratoga racecourse following the success of a four-day meeting in the town organised by former bare knuckles boxing champion and congressman, John Morrissey. Saratoga claims to be the oldest organised sporting venue in the United States.
- 1864 The first Travers Stakes at Saratoga is won by Travers's horse, Kentucky.
- 1865 Gladiateur becomes the second winner of the English Triple Crown. The first foreign-bred winner of the Derby, he is dubbed 'the Avenger of Waterloo' by the French.
- 1867 Joseph Oller, a Catalonian bookmaker living in Paris, invents the pari-mutuel system of wagering. It is mechanised by Englishman George Julius, who had moved to New Zealand in 1889 when his father was nominated to the diocese of Christchurch.
- 1870 The Jockey Club assumes control over flat racing in Britain.
- 1880 Zola brings to life the excesses of the Parisian racecourse in *Nana*.

- 1881 Iroquois, owned by tobacco millionaire Pierre Lorillard IV, becomes the first American-owned and -bred winner of the Derby. He also wins the St Leger.
- 1882 The Argentinean Jockey Club is formed following a visit by four founding members to the French Derby at Chantilly. The first Argentinean Derby is run in 1884. The Hipódromo Argentino de Palermo, the first racecourse in Argentina, was established in 1876.
- 1884 Prolific English-born author Nat Gould embarks on an eleven-year sojourn to Australia, during which he chronicles the lives and times of the racing and betting industries.
- 1886 The most brilliant jockey of his generation, Fred Archer, known as The Tinman, commits suicide at age twenty-nine in a fit of depression caused by the death of his wife, Helen Rose. According to local legend, the ghost of Archer is said to ride a grey horse through Pegasus Stables in Newmarket.
- 1886 Ladbrokes is founded as commission agents for horses trained at Ladbroke Hall in Worcestershire. The name Ladbrokes was adopted in 1902 when operations were moved to London.
- 1886 Robert Black describes the Anglicisation of French racing, claiming that trainers in France are ‘English to a man’.
- 1894 Novelist George Moore describes the mortal threat posed by horseracing for servants and stable boys in *Esther Waters*.
- 1894 Alexander Gray’s single-strand barrier is used at a race meeting in Australia. It is used in the United Kingdom from 1897.
- 1903 The Jockey Club bans doping after trainer George Lambton dopes his own horses to draw attention to the problem, brought to Newmarket as part of what Lambton refers to as the ‘American invasion’.
- 1905 Belmont Park opens in New York to a crowd of forty thousand.
- 1906 Sydney, with a population of less than half a million, stages more race meetings (236) annually on the flat than in all of the United Kingdom, with a population of around forty million.

- 1907 Toasted by the Protestant students of Trinity College and running with a rosary in his bridle, Orby becomes the first Irish-trained horse to win the Epsom Derby.
- 1908 The original stands in the Hipódromo Argentino de Palermo are replaced by a Beaux Arts tribute designed by Louis Faure-Dujarric.
- 1913 Suffragette Emily Davison dies after throwing herself in front of the king's horse in the Epsom Derby.
- 1913 The first totaliser system is installed at Ellerslie Racecourse, Auckland, New Zealand, and is manually operated. The second, at Gloucester Park Racetrack in Western Australia, is electrically driven.
- 1914 AB 'Banjo' Paterson hangs up his guitar long enough to write the first sociology of Australian racing, referring to the *cognoscenti* as 'knowledge boxes' and bemoaning the influence of 'the machine' (the pari-mutuel).
- 1915 Regret becomes the first filly to win the Kentucky Derby.
- 1918 Five hundred ninety people are killed in a fire after a temporary grandstand collapses at Happy Valley Racecourse, Hong Kong.
- 1919 Sir Barton is the first horse to win the American Triple Crown. After eleven unsuccessful seasons at stud, he served at the U.S. Army Remount service before being bought by a rancher from Wyoming.
- 1920 First running of the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe at Longchamp is won by an English-bred and -owned colt, Comrade, ridden by the Australian Frank Bullock.
- 1924 First running of the Cheltenham Gold Cup is won by Red Splash.
- 1924 Skull caps become compulsory for jump jockeys in the United Kingdom after amateur rider Captain 'Tuppy' Bennett is killed at Wolverhampton racecourse after being kicked in a fall from Ardene in the Oteley Handicap Steeplechase.
- 1925 Gordon Richards wins the first UK jump jockeys' championship.

- 1926 UK trade papers agree on a starting price system to be determined by the betting market on course.
- 1926 Winston Churchill introduces a tax on betting, which is abandoned three years later. It was reintroduced in 1967.
- 1927 The Epsom Derby is broadcast on the radio for the first time.
- 1927 The first running of the Champion Hurdle at Cheltenham is won by Blaris.
- 1929 The UK Tote operates for the first time at Newmarket and Carlisle.
- 1930 Phar Lap wins the Melbourne Cup at 8-11.
- 1930 Irish Hospital Sweepstakes legalized by Public Charitable Hospitals Act.
- 1932 The first televised Epsom Derby.
- 1932 Australia mourns Phar Lap, aged only five, as he dies in the arms of his groom, Tommy Woodcock. Despite being born in New Zealand, Phar Lap had come to represent Depression-era Australia, battling back from finishing last in his first race to winning the Melbourne Cup and thirty-six of his other fifty starts.
- 1932 Golden Miller records the first of five consecutive triumphs in the Cheltenham Gold Cup.
- 1934 William Hill is founded as a telephone and postal betting service.
- 1934 Shirley Temple makes her debut in the film version of Runyon's *Little Miss Marker*. The shocking story of a little girl left as collateral with a bookie operating among the New York demimonde is leavened by the curls and dimples of the original child star.
- 1935 Foxbridge is imported to New Zealand from England. His progeny dominate New Zealand racing in the 1940s.
- 1935 *National Velvet* is published. Generations of girls grow up dreaming of winning a racehorse and riding it in the Grand National.

- 1939 Clay Puett's electric starting gate is used at Landsdowne Park, Vancouver. The design remains basically the same to this day. Starting gates were not introduced by the English Jockey Club until 1965.
- 1942 Wartime restrictions, including a ban on midweek racing and one raceless Saturday a month, are introduced in Sydney. Similar measures are enforced across Australia. The last-ever meeting is held on a Sydney 'pony' racecourse.
- 1943 A wartime restriction on fuel prevents Kentucky breeders from transporting their yearlings to Saratoga to be sold. Instead, a sale is held in a tent in the track paddock at Keeneland. Keeneland develops to become the most important sales company in the world.
- 1947 Sayajirao wins the St Leger for the Maharaja of Baroda, ridden by Australian Edgar Britt.
- 1948 *King of the Wind* adds another layer to the fantastical stories that surround the origin of the Godolphin Arabian. Author Marguerite Henry merges half-truths and fiction to dramatic effect.
- 1953 Vincent O'Brien trains the winners of the Cheltenham Gold Cup (Knock Hard), the Aintree Grand National (Early Mist) and The Irish Derby (Larkspur). He also wins the Grand National in 1954 (Royal Tan) and 1955 (Quare Times).
- 1955 The not-for-profit Greater New York Association (which became the New York Racing Association in 1958) is created.
- 1957 Bookies begin to bet 'each way' in Sydney.
- 1961 Betting shops are legalized in the United Kingdom. Cash betting off course is decriminalized overnight.
- 1961 Northern Dancer, the most successful sire of the twentieth century, is foaled in Canada. Having failed to meet his \$25,000 reserve price as a yearling, he is retained by Windfields Farm for whom he wins fourteen out of his eighteen starts, including the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness. He stands at Windfields Farm in Maryland until his death in 1990.

- 1962 The first running of the Washington International takes place at Laurel Park.
- 1962 Vincent O'Brien wins the first of six Epsom Derbies with Larkspur, owned by Raymond Guest, U.S. ambassador to Ireland.
- 1963 The Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Act is passed, regulating betting in the United Kingdom, including defining the role of a 'bookmaker', until it is superseded by the 2005 Gambling Act.
- 1964 Arkle wins the first of three consecutive Cheltenham Gold Cups.
- 1964 Russian champion Anilin is allowed to run in the Washington International. He finishes third in 1964 and second in 1966.
- 1970 Nijinsky wins the English Triple Crown for trainer Vincent O'Brien.
- 1973 The first of Red Rum's three victories in the Grand National. In addition to winning in 1974 and 1977, he finishes second twice.
- 1976 The first yearling to be sold for more than \$1 million goes through the Keeneland July Sale. Canadian Bound was sold by Nelson Bunker Hunt and bought for \$1.5 million by a Canadian syndicate. He raced four times, without success.
- 1976 Wray Vamplew publishes *The Turf* and establishes a new direction for the study of horseracing.
- 1977 The trifecta comes to Australian racecourses.
- 1980 Irishmen Tommy Ryan and Joe Byrne are banned from riding in Britain for an unprecedented three months for misuse of the whip at the Cheltenham festival.
- 1981 Shergar wins the Epsom Derby by a record margin. In 1983, he is kidnapped from the Aga Khan's Ballymany stud by the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA). No ransom is paid, and his body is never found.
- 1981 First running of the Japan Cup. Participants were restricted to those trained in Japan, the United States, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and India, or by invitation. This restriction was dropped in 1982, but the race remains an invitational.

- 1984 Dawn Run becomes the only racehorse to have won both the Champion Hurdle and the Cheltenham Gold Cup. She also is the only horse to have won the English, French and Irish Champion hurdles.
- 1985 Seattle Dancer, a colt by Nijinsky, is sold at Keeneland for £13.1 million, the highest price ever paid for a yearling at public auction, and the high-water mark of the 1980s bloodstock bubble during which ten colts by Northern Dancer and his son Nijinsky realised \$4 million or more each.
- 1990 U.S.-bred, Irish-owned Danehill becomes the first high-profile shuttle stallion, covering mares in both hemispheres. He goes on to be leading sire in Australia on nine occasions, in Britain and Ireland three times and in France on two occasions.
- 1993 The International Federation of Horseracing Authorities is established.
- 1993 Mark Wallinger acquires the racehorse which he names A Real Work of Art.
- 1994 Balanchine provides the first Group One winner for Godolphin.
- 1994 The National Lottery is launched in the United Kingdom. Bookies face extra competition, initially from prize draws and, after 1995, scratchcards.
- 1995 Happy Valley Racecourse is rebuilt.
- 1995 Northern Irish jockey A. P. McCoy begins his unbroken dominance of the British jump racing championship.
- 1996 Inaugural running of the Dubai World Cup, with prize money of \$4 million, a figure intended to ensure the participation of the top U.S. horse and eventual winner, Cigar.
- 1996 Frankie Dettori wins all seven races on the card at Ascot. Bookmaker Gary Wiltshire sells his house and car in order to pay back the £800,000 he owes to winning punters.
- 1997 The Grand National is postponed after two coded bomb threats are received from the IRA.
- 1998 The first of Istabraq's three consecutive victories in the Champion Hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival.

- 2000 Betfair launches, offering its first market on the Oaks, won by Love Divine.
- 2001 Racing fiction gets its own equine narrators. *Horse Heaven* provides a nod to *Black Beauty* by reflecting on a horse's-eye view of racing in the United States and Europe.
- 2001 The UK government introduces a gross profits tax scheme designed to encourage the largest betting operators to return from their offshore locations. At the 2002 British Horseracing Board AGM, then-chairman of William Hill, John Brown, describes it as the 'single most important and influential development in betting and racing in 30 years'.
- 2002 In-running betting is offered by Betfair.
- 2003 Betfair agrees on a Memorandum of Understanding with the Jockey Club. The MoU allows the Jockey Club to request information that enables them to identify individuals behind activities that gave rise to a strong suspicion that the Rules of Racing have been broken.
- 2004 Australian Racing Board CEO Andrew Harding describes permitting betting exchanges as 'a suicide pill'.
- 2004 Emirates, the Dubai national airline, secures sponsorship of Arsenal football club's stadium and becomes a commonplace brand encountered throughout the sporting media.
- 2004 Ladbrokes' CEO Chris Bell tells the BBC's Money Program that 'at least a race a day, if not more, is now being corrupted by the availability of laying horses to lose on betting exchanges'.
- 2004 Kieren Fallon drops his hands, losing a nineteen-length lead on Ballinger Ridge at Lingfield Park. Sean Fox falls off Ice Saint at the first at Fontwell six days later. The two events prompt a flurry of media reports about corruption in racing, focusing particularly on the role of the recently established betting exchanges and their facility to bet against horses.
- 2005 The Gambling Act transforms laws dating back as far as 1845 and attempts to future-proof gambling regulation under the guidance of the newly created Gambling Commission.
- 2006 Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum becomes ruler of Dubai upon the death of his brother, Sheikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum.

- 2007 Turf TV/Racing UK is created with the intention to foster competition in the market, on the basis that racecourses would be paid more for their rights if rival broadcasters had to bid against each other for contracts.
- 2008 Former Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, tells the Mahon tribunal that substantial amounts of sterling deposited into his account are racecourse ‘winnings’.
- 2008 The Green Monkey retires. Bought in 2006 for a record \$16 million, he ran three times without winning. He joins Snaafi Dancer, bought for \$10.2 million in 1983, as an example of a famous, and expensive, failure. Snaafi Dancer was unraced and suffered from fertility problems.
- 2009 Mark Wallinger is selected as the winner of the Ebbsfleet, Kent, public art competition, for his 50-foot-high sculpture of a white horse.
- 2010 A joint venture between the two British broadcasters, Racing UK and At The Races, called GBI, is formed to sell picture rights internationally.
- 2010 A law is passed in France whereby horseracing can only be bet on through the totalisator system or PMU.
- 2010 According to the BBC, 4,618 thoroughbreds are slaughtered in abattoirs in Ireland, casualties of overproduction and the economic crisis.
- 2010 Dick Francis, jockey and novelist, dies.
- 2010 Meydan opens. Sixty-seven million square feet of luxury and technology set new standards for racecourse construction, reinforcing the ongoing relevance of the connection between the fortunes of Dubai and international horseracing.
- 2011 Australian trainer Bart Cummings tells *The Racing Post* that racing in Ireland ‘isn’t worth two bob’.
- 2011 Betting firm BetFred buys the Horseracing Totalisator Board and with it the right to provide pari-mutuel betting in the United Kingdom.
- 2011 Queen Elizabeth II visits the Irish National Stud.