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CHAPTER 3

THE HORSERACING INDUSTRY

Introduction

Historical accounts of the racing industry tend to focus particularly on the Jockey Club, racing's original regulatory body (Mortimer 1958; Tyrrel 1997). This approach overlooks the fact that the industry comprises myriad small organisations, such as the Racehorse Owners' Association and the Thoroughbred Breeders' Association, at the operational level of racehorse training. These organisations represent the collective interests of their particular constituents on industry bodies and to government enquiries such as the Rothschild Commission on Gambling (1978 Command 7200). While this report noted that racing was comprised of a large number of bodies, it also pointed out that they often showed conflicting views, which is supported by Hill (1998:3) in his study of the politics of racing:

One cannot talk about 'racing' as a whole. It is far too complex a series of overlapping circles between and within which there is conflict and cooperation.

More recently, the British Horseracing Board (BHB)¹ has argued that these bodies are 'a number of interdependent participants' which make up an integrated industry (BHB 2003:2). While the main focus of this thesis is the labour process in racing stables, it will be argued that this did not develop in a vacuum. It is also difficult to argue that the many bodies which make up modern racing would have developed without the development of the thoroughbred horse and the early sport of racing, pursued by royalty and the wealthy. This chapter therefore establishes the industry context of the labour process in racing stables. The discussion addresses the three main elements of horseracing in the United Kingdom: the regulatory bodies which control racing at the national level; the trading and market bodies, eg Racehorse Owners' Association, which

¹ Now the British Horseracing Authority

represent different interest groups; and the racing stables where racehorse training takes place and the labour process is located.

The chapter is structured in seven sections: the development of UK horseracing; the product of racing stables; the structure of the industry; the regulatory bodies; the market and trade bodies; training stables and trainers; concluding with the nexus of control. Where relevant to the analysis, sections are prefaced by the historical context in which the modern industry developed. It will be argued that the regulatory forces, trade and market bodies, and small firms are strongly interwoven and that the labour process in racing stables has developed within a web of controlling interests. These serve to structure the labour process at that level and to structurally disadvantage the labour force.

The development of UK horseracing

The racing of thoroughbreds developed from within the feudal system, being established by the 1580s but only for the nobility and the monarchy. In this early racing world, only horses native to the UK were used, rather than the thoroughbred to which the racing world is now accustomed. All racing thoroughbreds originated from just three stallions, the Byerley Turk, the Goldolphin Arabian and the Darley Arabian, which were brought to Britain in the 18th century. As already observed, before that time the racing of horses was provided by native animals, bred in the stables of the monarch, until the Royal Studs were dispersed on the execution of Charles I in 1649. In the 18th century, therefore, technology in the form of breeding first entered the racing system, and as time elapsed, the thoroughbred racehorse became the specialised animal that it is today. It is thus apparent that there is an inextricable and symbiotic link between racing and breeding, described by Hill (1988:1) as ‘interlocking activities’.

By the 17th century, as noted by Thirsk (1984:376), horses were needed ‘for horse racing, the new recreation of the upper classes...’ which then was a matter of speed and

distance between two matched animals. The mass entertainment and betting opportunity which racing has become now did not start to emerge until the late 18th century when it took two distinct forms (or codes which is the currently favoured term) – racing ‘on the Flat’ which, as the name suggests, involves no physical obstacles to surmount and jump racing (or National Hunt racing) which involves large hedges or slightly smaller hurdles. In the absence of fixed and enclosed racecourses, organisation was informal but started to be regulated by the Jockey Club (Flat racing) from the 1790s and the National Hunt Committee (Jump Racing) from the 1860s². Jump Racing was seen as an inferior form of the sport, tied to country sports rather than to the lucrative breeding of racehorses.

Hill (1988) points out that racing did not come to be regarded as an industry until the post second world war years, being presented as a sport and run by a club of landowners and racehorse owners/breeders, namely the Jockey Club (the Club). The Club’s members derived from the British aristocracy, retaining 18th and 19th century social values until well into the 20th century. If one looks at the membership of both the Club and the British Horseracing Board, it can be seen that the self-same groups still control racing on a practical daily basis, although greater State regulation via the laws on betting started to impinge from the 1960s. Increasing employment law from the 1970s onwards augmented the role of the State. However, even in this regard, Hill (ibid) points out that the Club was (and still is) able to count on direct access to Parliament, particularly as many senior racing figures are also members of the House of Lords. As Huggins records (2000:10) ‘Conventional wisdom sees the Jockey Club as having a key role, even at times able to control legislation’.

Research undertaken by the consulting firm, Racing Economics (2003), showed that the British racing industry directly employs 60,000 people in racing and breeding. As the

² These remained separate bodies until the 1960s.

eleventh largest industrial sector in the UK it is a larger employer than traditional manufacturing sectors such as the automotive industry (ibid) in terms of employment. An interesting comment on the significance of the racing industry was provided by Thirsk (1984:401) who found that horse keeping developed as a business which made beasts accessible to all classes, to an international market, and:

Created work that distributed profits from the horse trade among large numbers of working people. It forms an instructive parallel with the car industry in the later 20th century.

The report by Racing Economics (2003:1) further pointed out that racing:

Also supports an enormous network of subsidiary businesses that supply services to it, varying from feed merchants to horsebox hauliers, vets and suppliers of bed and breakfast accommodation.

The Respondent D3³ held that racing was most definitely an industry and that trainers were part of that industry. For him:

Sport resides at the Pony Club level and the industry starts where organisations like Ladbroke's are making large profits [from racing] on which their hotel building programme depends, ie racing provides business opportunities for large companies.

Respondent D4⁴ concurred with this, saying that racing had been 'a sport to begin with, but it has become an industry now to secure finance' in terms of government grant and financial backing from sponsors on which the industry increasingly had to rely.

At the heart of all this enterprise is the thoroughbred racehorse, which is the primary product of the racing stables and the discussion now turns to this product.

The product of racing stables

The value of a racehorse is vested in three sources: prize money, betting and breeding. The first two apply to all racehorses, whether on the Flat or National Hunt while the third applies in the main to stallions raced on the Flat. However, prize money is greater on the Flat as Table 3.1 shows:

³ Former Chief Executive of NTF Interviewed at Weatherby's September 2003

⁴ Member of NTF Council Interviewed at his stables October 2003

Table 3.1
Comparison of prize money 2006/7

Year	Flat racing	National Hunt racing	Total
2006	£66,243,811	£36,852,112	£103,095,922
2007	£63,153,933	£35,273,135	98,427,068

Source: BHB 2008

There is a strong relationship between racing thoroughbred horses and breeding from them. The most profitable part of the industry is breeding, specifically stallions' fees at stud. This means that profitability is skewed in favour of the Flat racing branch of the industry, since National Hunt horses run as mares or geldings, while Flat racing horses run as fillies or colts (ie young stallions). As revealed in an interview (Goldenberg 2003:3) with one of the owners of the highly successful American racehorse (Funny Cide):

For all the fat purses Funny Cide might bring in on the race course, the syndicate cannot cash in on the real money in thoroughbred racing – stud fees. Had Funny Cide been whole [ie a stallion], he would have sold for \$40m.

Structure of industry bodies

There are some fourteen major organisations that make up the industry *in toto*; thirteen are discussed in this chapter since they comprise the forces of capital. The fourteenth, the Stable Lads' Association, is effectively excluded from these decision-making circles and will be discussed separately and as part of the chapters on labour issues. Figure 3.1 shows the industry structure and the relationships between these organisations.

While there are two regulatory organisations, the Jockey Club and the British Horseracing Board, their relationship with the other industry bodies is not entirely hierarchical. To better understand these relationships, we now turn to discuss the first of three levels of organisation, those bodies that control the running of racing and its daily delivery to UK racecourses.

The regulatory bodies

The Jockey Club

The Jockey Club (the Club) was formed in the 18th century and was considered both inside and outside racing circles as the lead representative body of the industry. It was originally founded as a gentleman's club, drawing its membership from the aristocracy and the landed gentry (Tyrrel 1997) and commencing its activities 'in the coffee houses of St James's and mostly at the Star and Garter in Pall Mall' (ibid:10). Its original aims were those of any club of the time – good companionship and good sport amongst like-minded gentlemen – and not in any way as a regulatory body. Its first formal administrative headquarters was established in London at the premises of Messrs Weatherby, the Club's agents, but club premises were soon sought in Newmarket, the main centre of Flat racing. Newmarket had regained its former prominence as a racing centre on the restoration of the monarchy in the mid-17th century and it is from this association that racing on the Flat earned its nickname of the 'Sport of Kings'.

The commercialisation of racing increased throughout the 19th century and the Jockey Club emerged alongside this as a regulatory body. As Huggins (2000:174) puts it:

Changing economic imperatives, kinds of investment in racing and more commercialism gave an impetus to the rise of the Jockey Club in the later nineteenth century, and thus to the centralisation of racing.

He is critical of other social historians who place this development much earlier in the 19th century but goes on to point out that their analysis was often limited by lack of detailed source material.

What is clear from most accounts is that the Club retained a substantial role in controlling racing until well into the 20th century for, as Hill observes (1988:147), by the 1950s it was:

A group of friends, many of whom were substantial owners and breeders, who not only thought they were the natural rulers of racing but actually often were.

This was still the experience of at least some in racing in the late 20th century, summed up by the former trainer, Charlie Brooks (1999:231), when he recorded in his autobiography that the Jockey Club still represented not only the old guard but the aristocracy, still living in a bygone era.

The Club was formed to create and administer the rules of racing and to settle disputes, to develop the breed of thoroughbred horse and eventually to licence trainers, jockeys and racecourses (BHB 2003). Since 2007, its regulatory functions have transferred to the British Horseracing Authority (BHA)⁵. The Club is still a major landowner, especially in Newmarket where it owns training gallops – strips of land on which horses are put through their paces during the daily exercise routine. It also owns training gallops in Lambourn. It owns several racecourses and is now responsible for the National Stud. Until 2007, and the creation of the BHA, the Club enforced discipline of trainers and jockeys; it could ban horses; it had a legal enforcement role (warning off) in preventing the participation in any aspect of racing by individuals with a criminal background or connections; and it had a security role with regard to banned substances being administered to horses; it also kept a register of stable staff and issued race course security passes to them. Lee (2003:39) offers the example of the eight-year warning off period served on the former jockey, Graham Bradley, after his admission in court that he had ‘passed privileged information to Brian Wright, a fugitive criminal’. Also during 2003, the Jockey Club sought to tighten racecourse security by the banning of mobile phone usage by jockeys, an initiative that resulted in ‘industrial action’ on the part of jockeys who withdrew their labour for a brief period.

This wide-ranging and influential remit is reinforced by the fact that, according to Hill (1988:141):

⁵ The British Horse racing Authority is the successor body to the British Horseracing Board, carrying forward the existing tasks of the BHB along with regulatory functions, such as licensing trainers and jockeys, which it has inherited from the Jockey Club

The social composition of the Club has not changed very markedly since the 18th century. The members are, on the whole, upper class and many are rich, and they are still served by Weatherby's, the firm of hereditary 'civil servants' which they have employed as agents for over two hundred years.

Following the transfer of its regulatory role to the BHA in 2007, the Jockey Club thus retained to itself the following objectives: improving the sport and investing in its future and promoting the quality, diversity and integrity of British racing (Jockey Club 2008).

Jockey Club members hold expert knowledge of horses combining three main elements – how to breed horses, how to race them and how to govern racing. The Club is a non-profit making body, with 123 ordinary members elected for their experience and knowledge and 17 honorary non-voting members. Moreover, even with House of Lords reform, they have long enjoyed direct access to Parliament via 'dual membership' of both bodies.

Table 3.2 shows the composition of the Jockey Club council in 2008, confirming the enduring nature of the relationship with the House of Lords and also showing the intersection of racing, breeding and owning amongst Stewards.

Table 3.2
The Jockey Club Council

Julian Richmond-Watson	Senior Steward	Member of BHB; owner and breeder of racehorses
Sir Michael Connell	Deputy Senior Steward	Member of BHB; racehorse owner
Nicholas Wrigley	Steward	Chair of York Race Committee
The Duke of Roxburghe	Steward	Owner and breeder of racehorses; member of Parliamentary Racing Committee
Jeff Smith	Steward	Breeder of racehorses; Chair of Injured Jockeys' Fund
Sir Ian Good	Steward	Racehorse owner; chair of Hamilton Park Racecourse

Source: The Jockey Club 2008

The Club directly employs around 40 staff in London but also has substantial interests in racecourse provision through the 13 courses it owns through its subsidiary the Racecourse Holdings Trust (RHT). The RHT is a non-profit making organisation, with all surpluses re-invested to enhance the quality of British racing and build its future success. It was formed in 1964 with the primary objective of securing racecourses for horseracing (The Jockey Club 2008).

The Jockey Club is also a substantial landowner, again through a separately managed company, Jockey Club Estates. All the profits from Jockey Club Estates are re-invested in British racing. Jockey Club Estates is responsible for the management and administration of 4500 acres of land in and around Newmarket, as well as over eighty-five residential and commercial properties, two studs, twelve leasehold training yards and the Jockey Club Rooms. Also included in the property portfolio are the Rowley Mile and July Racecourses, the National Stud land, the National Horseracing Museum and tenanted farmland.

It can thus be seen that the Club concerns itself with a variety of technical matters that it considers are integral to the running of a successful and profitable racing industry.

The British Horseracing Board

The British Horseracing Board (BHB)⁶ had been the industry's commercial arm in 1993, as a result of the proactive role taken by Lord Hartington, the Jockey Club's senior steward from 1989-1994. The industry had long been riven with dissension and warring factions and had lost influence in government circles as a result, with an important and adverse effect on funding (Tyrrel 1997). The Rothschild Commission on Gambling (Command 7200:75), reporting in 1978, concluded that:

The racing world is divided into a large number of interested factions, most of whom hold strong and frequently opposing views about how the sport should be

⁶ The British Horseracing Authority (BHA) was formed in 2007 when the British Horseracing Board (BHB) took on additional responsibility for regulation of horseracing from the Jockey Club.

run. We probably received more evidence on this subject [finances and organisation of horseracing] than everything else put together.

Hartington set about reforming the Jockey Club with the chief aim of modernising its operations, bringing some business acumen to bear and improving the industry's financial position. It rapidly became apparent that the Jockey Club was not able to achieve all its aims and that a new executive body was required, to which the Club would cede some of its traditional powers. As cited by Tyrrel (1997:168) the Home Affairs Select Committee had reached a similar conclusion in its own review of the industry's financial structure, stating that

It is vital in their own financial interests for the fragmented racing industry...to find and follow strong and unified commercial leadership. Racing's power structure must be modernised to meet the challenge of the 1990s.

Table 3.3 sets out the structure of Board from which it can be seen that there are distinct links with the Jockey Club, the Racecourse Association, the Thoroughbred Breeders Association, the Racehorse Owners Association and the National Trainers Federation. The membership is all male bar one member, the President of the Countryside Alliance. The British Horseracing Board took up its activities in June 1993, comprising 15 Board members and employing a small executive staff. The BHB shares offices with the Jockey Club in central London. The National Trainers Federation is also represented on the Board's Industry Committee but not the Stable Lads Association. It is also obvious that a tightly-knit group of influential figures in the industry have dual membership of the Board and of their relevant interest group. There is also a significant crossover between the Board and the Jockey Club which has earned it the accusations that it is 'the Jockey Club in sheep's clothing' and that, despite what was seen as some by a revolution in racing's administration, all that has really happened is that 'Everything has to change so that nothing does' (de Moubray cited in Tyrrel 1997:172-173).

In 2006 the BHB's responsibilities surrounded 'the governance and improvement of the British Racing product as a 'whole show' (BHB 2006). Its objects, including its powers

Table 3.3
Structure of the British Horseracing Board

<u>Directors</u>	Appointed by	Racing interests of current postholder
Director & Chairman	The Board	30 horses in training; stud in Ireland
Director	The Board	5 horses in training
Director	The Board	President of the Countryside Alliance
Director	Racecourse Association	Chairman of RA; owns horses in syndicate
Director	Racecourse Association	Director of RA; Clerk of Course at Pontefract
Director	Industry Committee	Member of British Horseracing Training Board; owner/breeder of racehorses
Director	Industry Committee	Chairman of BHTB; breeder of racehorses
Director	Thoroughbred Breeders Association	Breeder and owner of racehorses; trustee of British Racing School
Director	Racehorse Owners' Association	President of ROA; owner/breeder
Director	Racehorse Owners' Association	ROA Council; owner of stud and of racehorses
Director	Jockey Club	Senior Steward; owner/breeder
Director	Jockey Club	MD of Timeform; Channel 4 racing commentator
Director	Jockey Club	Deputy Senior Steward; owner/breeder
Director	Race Planning Committee	Co-opted, Chair of Race Planning Committee
Director	National Trainers Federation	Co-opted, Chief Executive of NTF

Source: The BHB 2007

in relation to fixtures and race programming, prize money values and race entries and declarations, exist only in order to further British Racing and its governance, integrity and other qualities. On a practical level, the BHB set the Fixture List (annual calendar of races); it owned and sold betting data; and it was responsible for expansion of racing to a seven-day a week pattern. In 2007, British Horseracing Authority (BHA) was

created from the existing BHB, also taking over from the Jockey Club the licensing of jockeys and trainers, the stewarding of race meetings, the rules of racing and the registration of stable staff. The creation of the BHA completed modernisation of the industry's regulatory bodies commenced in 1993.

The industry is gendered amongst the industry's regulatory bodies. There are no women amongst the Stewards of the Jockey Club and there is but one lone woman Director on the British Horseracing Board. This reflects two centuries of male domination of the industry, where women were not allowed to become Jockey Club members until 1977.

When considering the other spheres of influence discussed below, it must be noted that women are owners, breeders, and bookmakers, and run racecourses. However, their numbers are still low when compared to men.

Weatherby's

As recorded above, the Jockey Club has retained Weatherby's as its agents for the last two hundred years. It is an old family firm founded in 1770 that acts as racing's administrators through its contract with the Jockey Club⁷. It administers racehorse owners' accounts, the racing colours which signify the ownership of the horse and are worn by jockeys as 'racing silks'; it maintains the official register of horse names and holds the stud book in which all thoroughbred pedigrees are recorded. It is also a major source of data on racing about which Respondent D3⁸ observed that:

The industry is obsessed with data, I can access details of worldwide racing performance, stallion success rates and breeding lines which is updated on a daily basis and disseminated through the Internet.

Weatherby's has recently been registered as a bank, providing a variety of financial services as well as those outlined above (Cassidy 2002). It employs in the region of 250 staff and is now located in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire.

⁷ <http://www.weatherbys.co.uk/> Accessed 16 January 2008

⁸ Interviewed at Weatherby's September 2003

Horserace Betting Levy Board

The Board (HBLB) was created by the State in 1961, following lengthy debates on the need for racing to be subsidised from betting revenues (Hill 1988). Prominent in the debate was the view held by the Jockey Club that a levy was an essential contribution to the future of the industry; it was held that the Jockey Club had made the provision of a levy a condition of its support for the eradication of illegal, on-street betting, being in a position to mobilise the support of Tory backbenchers to defeat the Betting and Gaming Bill (Hill *ibid*) through which the government was promoting the legalisation of off-course betting, albeit on social grounds. A levy was not an entirely new thing but the Jockey Club had seen the need (and the opportunity) for fresh money to be injected into the industry, the source being a tax on profits from the expanded and legal betting industry, rather than a deduction from on-course betting and from the charges levied on bookmakers by racecourses to gain entry on race days.

The Board is a statutory body whose duties are to raise and spend a 10% levy on bookmaker profits, including the state-run Tote, with money to be re-invested in racing. Its principal aims, as recorded by Hill (1988:77), are to improve breeds of horses, to improve horseracing and to support and develop veterinary science and veterinary education. More recently its role has been expanded to include financial support for staff training and education⁹.

The British Racing School and the Northern Racing College

While not regulatory bodies in a strict sense, the British Racing School¹⁰ and Northern Racing College¹¹ play an important role in the racing labour process since they provide mandatory training for young entrants to the industry aged 16-22. Instruction is given in all aspects of stable management and horse management, as well as basic riding skills, and successful completion of the course will result in a placement in a racing

⁸ www.hblb.org.uk accessed 30 July 2007

¹⁰ <http://www.brs.org.uk/Home/> accessed January 2009

¹¹ <http://www.northernracingcollege.co.uk/> accessed January 2009

stables. Both establishments also offer training courses for jockeys, head lads, trainers, as well as a programme of NVQ courses in horsecare aimed at developing stable staff during their racing careers. Both establishments therefore have a very strong link with the labour process in racing stables since they give trainee stable staff their first taste of working life in the industry. It is here that attitudes and understanding start to be formed, instruction being given by former stable staff and jockeys. As with other industry level bodies, Table 3.4 shows that the BRS board of trustees comprises

Table 3.4
Composition of the British Racing School Board of Trustees

Trustee	Racing interests
Nigel Elwes	Breeds thoroughbreds; racehorse owner; chair of Racing Welfare; director of Kempton Park Racecourse
Michael Caulfield	Sport psychologist; former Chief Executive of Jockeys Association of Great Britain
John Dunlop	Racehorse trainer
Alistair Macdonald-Buchanan	Breeds thoroughbreds; member of Jockey Club; Director of Jockey Club Estates
Lydia Hislop	Racing journalist; member of BHA Flat Racing Advisory Committee
James Given	Veterinary surgeon, racehorse trainer
Alan King	Racehorse trainer
Martin Mitchell	Sales Director of Tattersalls; member of the Thoroughbred Breeders Association Council; racehorse owner
Grant Harris	Former Chief Executive of NTF; former Assistant Racing Director at BHB; head of Business Development at Weatherbys
Simon Eliot	Headmaster of Sherborne School; lifelong interest in racing, sometimes as an owner

Source: British Racing School 2008

prominent industry figures with long experience of the racing industry (the Northern Racing College did not provide this information). Both the BRS and NRC are funded by the State via the Learning and Skills Council, by the industry and through charging for courses other than the basic stable staff training course.

Trainees are treated as if they were stable staff, their day being organised around the typical split shift worked in racing stables, with riding lessons and lectures on horse management undertaken once the morning stables routine is completed. Their day starts at 6.30 am and finishes round 5 pm, and they work one weekend in two. The Director of the British Racing School¹² said that:

We've got to get some hard messages across, it is a hard job, all hours, there is a risk factor. There's a lot of effort for low wages. Training has got to be realistic and to get across the fact that horses are a seven-day a week responsibility. The kids live here in a hostel and they are not allowed off site.

He went on to say that the School applied extremely high standards and that trainees led an 'ordered life'. Their rooms had to be tidy and they had to jobs round the hostel. They were 'required to be respectful'. The School was very selective in the trainees it would take and regularly reviewed progress during the ten week course, as not all entrants would make the grade.

The Northern Racing College also ran a ten week course which was again structured around a typical working day. They did not select through an interview but found interested candidates through the Careers Officers at local schools. They seemed to have a more relaxed regime than the BRS but they still had to convey to students the realities of working the industry, relying on instructors who had worked in racing stables to handle this.

The trading and market bodies

The Tote

The Totalisator Board was formed in 1961 and is owned and run by the state; it is the fourth largest bookmaker in the UK¹³ and controls the monopoly of pool betting and owns 400 betting shops. Following a finding by the Office of Fair Trading that the Tote monopoly is anti-competitive, the Government intends that it be privatised, either by selling it to the industry or to one of the major bookmakers. Selling the Tote on the

¹² Interviewed in September 2000

¹³ (www.totesport.com Accessed 30 July 2007).

open market ‘could raise as much as £700 million’ (Porter 2003:1), whereas handing over the Tote to the Racing Trust (the Government’s original plan) would only raise £200 million. A report in the Racing Post (5 January 2004) suggests that negotiations to secure the delivery of the Tote into the hands of the racing industry were advancing. However, following an investigation by the European Commission and an attempt to sell the Tote to a consortium of the Racehorse Owners Association, the Race Course Association and the Racecourse Holdings Trust, the Treasury withdrew from the planned sale in April 2007¹⁴. At present no new plans or offers have been revealed.

The Association of British Bookmakers

Off course cash betting was legalised in 1960 by the Betting and Gaming Act. In the wake of this, bookmakers’ shops were established, while the state established a levy on betting to be invested in racing by the HBLB as discussed above. The current Association was established in 2002, following the merger of the British Betting Office Association (BBOA), representing independent bookmakers, and the Betting Office Licensees Association (BOLA), representing the major chains of bookmakers. Its aims surround the promotion of betting in the UK¹⁵. The betting industry is a major source of revenue for UK racing through the statutory levy on gross win; the revenue thereby generated being used to fund either prize money or to develop the industry (BHA 2009).

The Racecourse Association

There are 59 racecourses in the UK, some are profitable, and some are not. They are owned in consortia such as Arena Leisure, by the Jockey Club (through the Racecourse Holdings Trust), or independently. There is a Racecourse Association, which was founded in 1907¹⁶. It is involved in race planning and development and maintenance of racecourses; the latter being partly funded from the statutory levy. While not in a direct relationship with racing stables, it will become clear that the maintenance of staff

¹⁴ www.thisismoney.co.uk accessed 6 July 2007)

¹⁵ (www.abb.uk.com accessed 30 July 2007).

¹⁶ (www.britishracecourses.org accessed 30 July 2007)

facilities at racecourses has an important effect on the racing labour process. This is a prime issue for stable staff, and for some trainers, since the ‘going racing’ part of the labour process inevitably means that staff will attend at different racecourses throughout the year. The provision of racecourse facilities therefore is an informal part of the employment conditions of stable staff.

The Racehorse Owners’ Association

The Owners Association was established in 1945 and seeks to promote owners’ interests with particular regard to the financial structure of the industry and prize money¹⁷. Racehorse owners contract with trainers for their horse(s) to be prepared to race and it is said that they are ‘the single biggest contributors to the funding of racing’ through purchase of horses, training fees and payments to jockeys (British Horseracing Authority 2009:27). The BHA (ibid) estimates that in 2008 around 40,000 individuals were involved in racehorse ownership, including part ownership through syndicates and racing clubs. They also estimate that total operating expenditure for all owners was in the region of £347 million, which when offset by prize money and sponsorship reduces to £255 million. Put another way, the average cost of training a racehorse in 2008 was £18501 for a Flat racing horse and £16717 for a National Hunt racing horse. Costs are highly regionalised, with Newmarket and Lambourn commanding the highest training fee rates, reflecting the high costs of operating in both of these racing towns.

Racehorse owners have an intermittent relationship with stable staff, mediated through the trainer, although it is not uncommon for owners to give financial ‘presents’ to staff after a particularly successful win. Owners will visit the stables and trainers often arrange social events at stables, particularly for syndicate and racing club members.

¹⁷ (www.racehorseowners.net accessed 30 July 2007)

The Thoroughbred Breeders' Association

The interests of breeders of racehorses are represented by the Thoroughbred Breeders Association which was founded 1917. The practical organisation of breeding is divided between the National Stud, founded in 1916 and located in Newmarket on land rented from the Jockey Club, and private studs throughout the UK¹⁸. The TBA also acts as the employers' association for stud staff. It is estimated by the TBA that the capital value of studs is £20 billion and that there are 4000 full time employees and 4000 part time employees in the breeding industry (BHA 2009).

Tattersall's

Tattersall's is the firm of thoroughbred racehorse auctioneers, originally a family firm but no longer family owned or run (Cassidy 2002). Like the Jockey Club, it too was founded in the 1750s and its history and development are, to an extent, bound up with and parallel to those of the Club, having relocated its sales operations to Newmarket in the late 18th century to coincide with the development of racing from the Club's new headquarters in that town. Cassidy regards Tattersall's as 'perhaps the most prestigious bloodstock auctioneers in the world' (ibid:3), a point echoed by Thompson (2000:309) when she comments that when Tattersall's relocated entirely to Newmarket after the second world war 'its pre-eminence as a bloodstock auction house was confirmed beyond question'.

Training stables and trainers

Trainers operate primarily in a rural location, even where stables are clustered together in small towns such as Newmarket and Lambourn. This is bound to be the case for the practical reasons of stabling and exercise but development of racehorse training into the small firms of today has always been tied to the land. Many trainers have sprung from a rural and often a farming background¹⁹ and evidence from 2000 and 2003 also showed

¹⁸ (www.thetba.co.uk accessed 30 July 2007).

¹⁹ Interview with former Chief Executive of NTF September 2003

that some trainers, at least, continue to farm in order to provide feed for their horses. The training labour process involves working with a live animal, out of doors, in all weathers and is bounded by the two seasons of National Hunt (autumn and winter) and Flat (spring and summer) racing.

The development of racehorse training

This section gives a brief account of the emergence of trainers as an identifiable group which is variously recorded in social histories of the racing industry. Munting (1987) notes that trainers of National Hunt horses could be identified as separate economic entities by the late 19th century while private trainers on the Flat were to be found in 200 training centres as recorded by Huggins (2000: 35-36):

In 1800 most horses at a meeting came from nearby. Horses were often not privately trained on aristocratic estates but based at one of some 200 training centres scattered throughout the country. These provided the bases from which horses were walked to the six overlapping regional racing circuits to compete for prizes.

Trainers were free to enter into commercial contracts with those who wished their thoroughbred horse to be trained to race but their actions were regulated by the Jockey Club for Flat racing trainers or the National Hunt Committee²⁰ in steeple chasing through the Rules of Racing. Thus, trainers became owners of small businesses but they were also still competing as sportsmen (women were not permitted to be trainers until the second half of the 20th century). They were (and remain) horse(wo)men, displaying a blend of skills around riding, training, racing, animal husbandry, understanding equine behaviour and knowledge of veterinary medicine. However, unless landowners in their own right, they were often still dependent on landowners for access to a property, at which to establish training stables, and to land on which to exercise and feed horses in their care.

²⁰ The National Hunt Committee remained a separate body until it amalgamated with the Jockey Club in the 1960s. National Hunt racing was often regarded as the poor relation to racing on the Flat, since it sprang from country sports and the lucrative breeding industry is firmly attached to Flat racing

Different social histories of the industry give slightly different accounts of the emergence of trainers as economic entities, but this does seem to have been completed no later than the commercialisation of the sport in the late 19th century. Huggins (2000: 165) tells us that:

The evidence of *Ruff's Guide* suggests that in spring 1900 there were about 1300 owners, 164 trainers, 95 jockeys and 92 apprentices...The training stables would have needed about 1500 stable lads...

Munting (1987) pointed to the introduction of licensing of trainers by the Jockey Club in 1905 which in turn meant that by 1913 there were 229 licensed trainers in Britain, and by 1926 this figure had grown to 281.

One aspect, which various historians are agreed on and recorded by Munting (1987:119), is that

Trainers have experienced the greatest change of status of any occupation within the sport of racing.

When steeple chasing began in the early 19th century, trainers were (ibid):

Little more than an exercise groom....By the last quarter of the 19th century racehorse trainers were established as a profession.

Although saying essentially the same things, Vamplew (1976:173) put a slightly different spin on it:

At the beginning of the 19th century many trainers were nothing more than training grooms, low paid servants with few social graces...The contrast [with late 19th century trainers] was a result of the commercialisation of racing.

Finally, Bernard (1997:67) recorded that:

Originally they were known as 'training grooms'. The title was appropriate. They fed and cantered the horses and took their orders from owners who knew as much about the business as they did.

As trainers emerged from their origins in the servant class 'The 1920s saw changes amongst trainers themselves' (Munting 1987:120) and 'public school accents began to be heard across Newmarket Heath' (Vamplew 1976:174). Much the same was true of National Hunt racing - trainers started to emulate their patrons.

Racehorse training continued to develop throughout the 20th century, despite disruption in two world wars and economic depression, and the emergence of training as part of the small firms sector is discussed in Chapter 4. What is also clear is that trainers came to inhabit a niche. Most significant for the purposes of this chapter is the identification by Barrett & Rainnie (1999: 12) of ‘isolation’ as a type of relationship between small and large firms, explaining that ‘Isolated small firms operate in specialised niches of demand or geographically discrete markets...’ (ibid) and this is one factor which starts to identify and define the type of small firm that the racing stables might be, since they do operate in a highly specialised product market. There is also the literal isolation of stables which, of necessity, are located in remote rural locations which offer access to appropriate training facilities such as gallops and sufficient stabling and land to keep the horses while in training. As Barrett & Rainnie (ibid) argue ‘isolation’ also means that such firms operate in markets that are not financially attractive to large organisations. This is true of racehorse training, the typical view from within being that trainers are a breed apart and a lunatic breed at that, since there is no effective way to make the business pay on its own – a trainer cannot rely on winnings or training fees and must find other sources of income such as breeding and dealing in horses. Race training stables are therefore small firms in the sports sector, ie they are in a niche market.

In 2005 there were some 612 licensed trainers of racehorses in the UK (BHB 2006), a licence to train then being granted by the Jockey Club, as part of its regulatory function. Table 3.5 shows the British Horseracing Board’s statistics on trainers from 2001-2006, which generally shows a rising trend amongst all licensed trainers.

Most trainers hold a ‘combined’ licence, which means that they can train horses for both codes of racing, although in reality they are likely to specialise in either Flat racing or National Hunt. Interestingly, one National Hunt trainer interviewed at the beginning of

the field work phase revealed that he was intending to start training more Flat racing horses on the grounds that they offered a better return on the investment for owners²¹.

Table 3.5

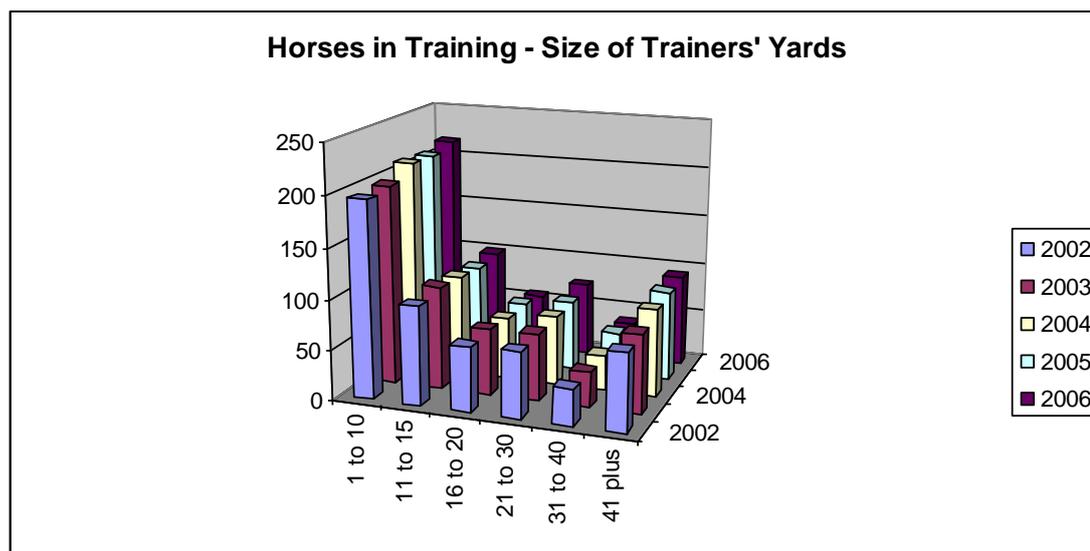
Annual Average of Licensed Trainers

Year	Combined license	Flat only license	Jump Only license	All
2001/2	475	43	68	586
2002/3	479	45	73	597
2003/4	498	50	71	619
2004/5	511	48	61	620
2005/6	503	48	61	612

Source: British Horseracing Board 2006

If these statistics are disaggregated, it can be revealed that the size of enterprise, when measured by numbers of horses in training, is quite varied, as Figure 3.2 reveals.

Figure 3.2



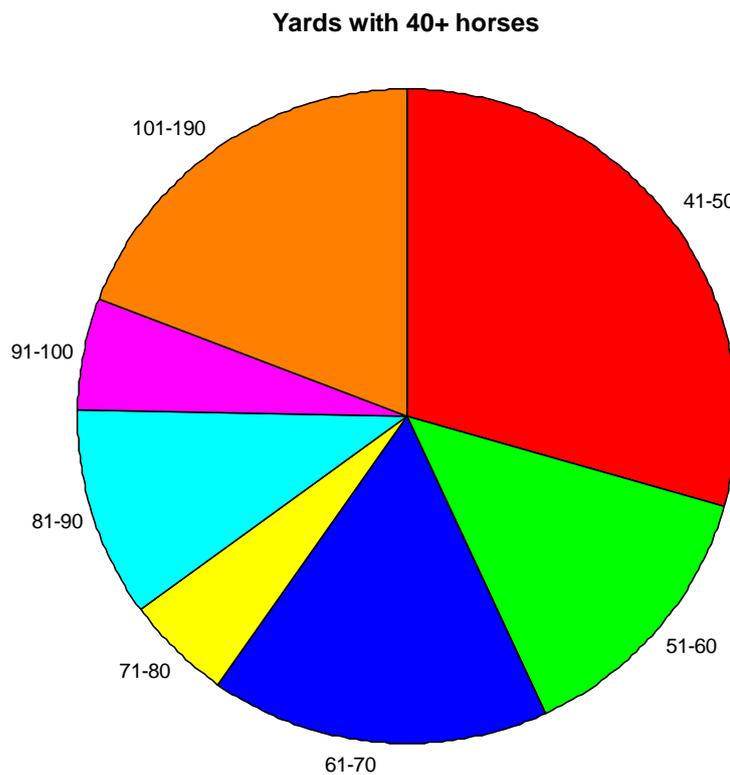
Source: British Horseracing Board 2006

This in turn gives an indication of the size of establishment in terms of staff numbers, taking the racing convention that one member of staff 'does' (ie has responsibility for) three horses per day. On the basis of this ratio, it immediately becomes apparent that

²¹ Interview with NTF Council member, 16 October 2003

the majority of yards are likely to employ no more than 20 staff, with a very few employing between 20 and 70. Racing stables fall firmly within the definition of a small firm (DTI 2004). A further analysis, drawing on statistics contained in the Raceform publication 'Horses in Training 2006', reveals that for yards training 40+ horses, the most significant group clusters around 41-50 horses (see Figure 3.3), with 32

Figure 3.3



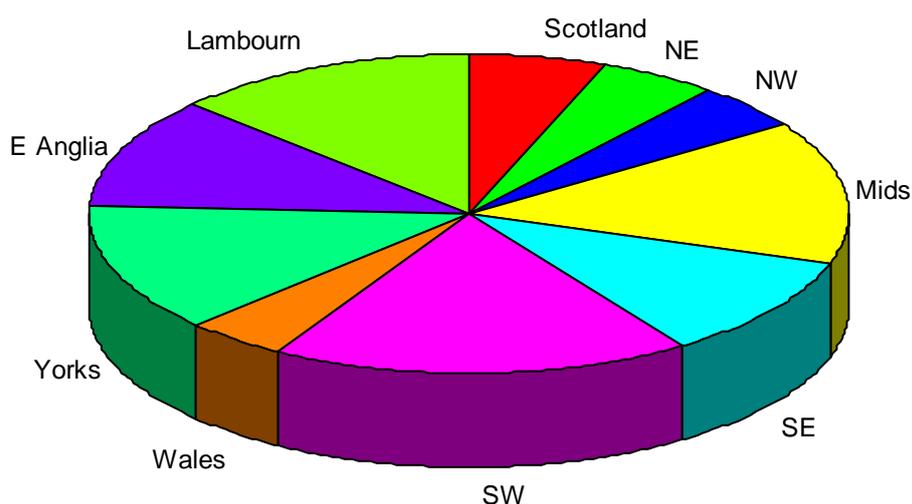
Source: Horses in training 2006

trainers having 41-50 horses while all trainers with 100+ horses total no more than 21. While this does not provide an exact comparison with the BHB statistics contained in Table 3.5 above, it still means that something in the region of 88% of all training establishments employ fewer than 20 staff.

However, while yards can be found throughout the UK, there are high centres of concentration in Newmarket (East Anglia), Lambourn (in the Thames Valley), and the South West, as figure 3.4 shows.

Figure 3.4

Trainers by region 2003



Source: Horses in Training 2006

Statistics compiled for the British Horseracing Board in 2006 (Table 3.6) revealed a rising trend in the numbers of horses in training, from 13,183 in 2002 to 14,501 in 2006 (BHB 2007).

Table 3.6
Total horses in training 2002-2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
TOTAL	13183	13292	14129	14568	14501

Source: BHB 2007

Over the same period, numbers of fixtures rose as Table 3.7 reveals:

Table 3.7
Total number of fixtures 2002-2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
TOTAL	1233	1288	1341	1349	1391

Source: BHB 2007

Over the same period, numbers of stable staff also rose as shown in Table 3.8.

Table 3.8
Total numbers of stable staff 2002-2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
TOTAL	5691	5813	5937	6145	6299

Source: BHB 2007

It can thus be seen that the rising numbers of horses in training and rising numbers of race meetings has encouraged the formation of new racing stables and the employment of increasing numbers of stable staff.

From his long experience, Respondent D3²² was able to say that trainers now come from a variety of backgrounds. Some come originally from farming, expanding or diversifying into racing then passing their training business on to subsequent generations, others come from being jockeys, still others from non-racing business backgrounds, some even from being stable lads. Most pride themselves in their abilities as a complete horse(wo)man. Respondent D3 said that for all new entrants to racing there is a high start up cost which he had seen accomplished through wealthy backers or inherited wealth or inherited business. This was confirmed in an interview with Respondent D2 at the British Horseracing Board²³. Start up costs will include the purchase of a property comprising the trainer's house, stables and land (unless diversifying from farming); the purchase or rental of training gallops; stables

²² Former Chief Executive of the National Trainers Federation interviewed September 2003

²³ Interview with member of British Horseracing Board 7 March 2003

equipment, eg for mucking out; a mechanised horse walker; horse lorry(ies); and then the necessary marketing work of attracting owners and their horses.

Like the majority of farmers observed by Newby et al (1978), trainers live at their place of work, with no separation between home and workplace, or leisure and workplace; racehorse training occupies the same space as farming, namely it is a way of life where the working week of trainers (as is the case for farmers) ‘will therefore constitute virtually his entire waking hours’ (Newby et al 1978:147). In racing, also, the working year is arranged around the seasons although slightly differently from the way this is meant for farming by Newby and his colleagues, since racehorse training and racing happen throughout the year, only being abandoned in the foulest weather.

Women were not permitted to be trainers by the Jockey Club until 1966 and in 2006 there were 106 women trainers, approaching 20% of trainers in the UK (Horses in Training 2006). As the former leading trainer Jenny Pitman recorded (1998:83), with regard to her own successful application for a licence to train in 1975, ‘it was only thirty years since Miss Norah Wilmot’s application for trainer’s licence had been turned down with the words ‘Women are not persons within the meaning of the Rules [of Racing]’. Previously a woman could only operate as a trainer through the fiction of her husband or a male employee holding the license.

A prime criticism pointed at the small firms’ literature is that it is overshadowed by considerations of employment in the large firm (Thompson and McHugh 2002) with theories simply being read across to the small firm. At the same time, it is said that small firms are different merely by function of their size and therein must lie the explanation for employer and worker behaviours. Respondent D3²⁴ held that ‘a trainer is not a classic capitalist and will bankrupt him/herself to continue training’ and went on to comment further that ‘trainers are not business people’ and ‘no quantitative methods

²⁴ Former Chief Executive of NTF

of tracking business are used by trainers generally'. Nevertheless, the evidence is that these small firms have continued to grow in number; many trainers have been in business for a long time; and it is not unusual for the business to pass from one generation to the next as a thriving organisation. Respondent D4²⁵ said he had always trained at his property which he had inherited from his father and was in the process of passing it on to his son, once the Jockey Club had granted him a trainer's licence. Similarly, Respondent A6²⁶ had inherited from her father and Respondent A14²⁷, while still training at the age of 80, was in the process of relinquishing the role to his daughter and son.

This section therefore argues that racing's small firms should be considered as small capitals located in the economics of the market, without undue emphasis being placed on their small employment numbers. As small capitals they must in turn deal with the social relations of production under capitalism, evidenced by Sosteric (1996) in his study of the labour process in a small nightclub. Racehorse trainers do employ waged labour, even if this is in low numbers (as discussed in Chapter 4) and thus are more like the small capitals argued for by Aldrich and Weiss (1981:280) who state that small employers are in 'a contradictory location within class relations' being neither part of the petite bourgeoisie nor part of the bourgeoisie. They (ibid:287) were examining the effect of workforce size on the generation of surplus value, finding that this was 'clearly the most important predictor of income differences amongst small capitalists'. Racing stables are small firms; with the exception of the two largest stables, they fall within the Department of Business, Employment and Regulatory Reform (2007) definition of the small firm, employing fewer than 50 employees, many falling within the definition of the micro firm, ie fewer than 10 employees. They operate in a niche market for a high

²⁵ NTF Council Member

²⁶ Trainer respondent interviewed May 2000 at her stables in West Sussex

²⁷ Trainer interviewed May 2000 at his stables in West Midlands

value product and monopoly capital does not appear to be interested in exploiting this market (Rainnie 1989; Scase 1995; Andrews and Phillips 2004).

Trainers also operate in a niche labour market with regard to the physical characteristics of their labour force, namely lightweight and small frame, which are a particular requirement for riding with thoroughbred racehorses. Although stable staff do not have to maintain the same low weights as jockeys, they are nevertheless expected to keep their weight down. Training stables must respond to the need to ensure 'production for capital accumulation' (Edwards 1990:128). The small capitalist must extract actual labour from labour power purchased and must also extract as much value as possible, exactly the same position as that of monopoly capital (Aldrich and Weiss 1981). Further, the small capitalist, having bought labour power, exploited it and appropriated the surplus value thereby created, will consume part of the surplus value and plough part of it back in to his/her business. Thus, the function of labour in small capitals, is no different from its function under monopoly capitalism, that is to say to valorise capital and thus work, according to Salaman (1980:13), should be:

Designed to maximize profitability, to direct and regulate, and to control the activities of employees whose interests are at odds with those of their employers.

Moreover, Braverman (1974) directs us to the production of surplus value and how this is achieved. Spencer (2000) reinforces this, arguing that we should return to this focal point and 'rejuvenate the radicalism' of labour process analysis.

Rural employment, particularly in farming, is the most immediate reference group that presents itself when considering the particular situation of racehorse trainers. It has been found, however, that agriculture has tended to be excluded from rural small business research because it is in decline (Carter et al 1998). Nevertheless, agriculture continues to contribute to local economies and rural business development, either as farming or as food processing and packing, as well as supplying market opportunities to other rural small firms, such as veterinary practices, feed suppliers, solicitors,

transportation firms, farm shops to name but a few. Carter et al (ibid) look upon farms as indigenous rural firms which can display business growth, operate in different product and labour markets, generate sales revenue and profitability and operate within various business constraints. It must be pointed out that farming, as rural employment, does not figure heavily in the small firms literature.

The National Trainers' Federation

The Benson Committee of Inquiry into racing industry finances (Jockey Club 1968) recorded that a National Trainers Association and National Hunt Trainers Association were set up respectively in 1964 and 1962. The National Trainers Federation was set up to reflect the fact that the National Hunt Committee had become part of the Jockey Club in the 1960s. The Blackwell report, discussed in Chapter 4, notes that in 1974 the National Trainers Federation was 'in its infancy' (Joint Racing Board 1974:8) but believed that this was the appropriate body to represent the interests of trainers in a national collective bargaining arena. This was supported by the settlement of the 1975 stable lads' strike. The Chairman of the Levy Board, then Desmond Plummer, made the establishment of national collective bargaining machinery a condition of settling the dispute (Hill 1988), and the original signatories to the national agreement were the National Trainers' Federation, the Transport and General Workers' Union and the newly-created Stable Lads' Association. Thus the National Joint Council for Stable Staff was created.

In the current day, the NTF is funded by a percentage deduction from prize money. It has a dual role, as do many such associations, namely that of employers' association and trade/professional association (Windmuller 1984; Sisson 1987). Windmuller (1984:1), in examining the origins of employers' organisations, pointed out a range of reasons why such bodies occur in most Western industrialised countries – such as the regulation:

Of trade and competition by mutual agreement...to erect a united front in dealing with trade unions; to provide services in labor relations.

amongst other things. He pointed (ibid) to the fact that commercial interests in common between organisations led to the establishment of trade associations, while:

Where issues centred on the employment relationship, the desire for joint action led to the formation of employers associations.

He does also recognise that often one organisation serves both needs and that such ‘organizational dualism...has important advantages’ for members, affording a great measure of control over all aspects of an organisation’s business.

It has unfortunately proved impossible to produce a history of the Federation for want of archived material as recorded above in Chapter 2. However, its aims are set out on its website as: ‘To represent and protect trainers’ interests and to be a reliable and respected source of information, advice and support’²⁸. The Federation acts in the dual capacity of industry professional body and as an employers’ association within the context of the National Joint Council for Stable Staff (NJCSS), which as it will be seen from the research it has dominated since the creation of the NJCSS in 1975.

The NTF is a member of a variety of racing industry committees, such as the Racing Planning Committee of the British Horseracing Board, and represents any of its members involved in disciplinary proceedings at the hands of the Jockey Club²⁹. Respondent D3³⁰ said that the NTF had ‘a tremendous input on Rule changes’ with the Jockey Club when it was considering the Rules of Racing, to the extent that the Club would not ‘change the Rules without consulting the NTF’. As already noted above, it is a co-opted member of the BHB. With regard to its employers’ association role, the Federation has a negotiating sub-committee comprising members of its Council. The sub-committee is responsible for the annual pay negotiation.

²⁸ (www.racehorsetrainers.org accessed July 2007)

²⁹ Now the BHA

³⁰ Former Chief Executive of NTF

Looking at the composition of its Council (Table 3.9), the picture which emerges is that the majority of senior positions are held by trainers of Flat racing horses, with a minority training horses for National Hunt racing or holding a license to train both (dual purpose).

Table 3.9
Council of the National Trainers' Federation

Chairman 86 horses Flat	Deputy Chairman 178 horses Flat	Deputy Chairman 78 horses Flat
North Region Chairman 12 horses Dual Purpose	Deputy Chairman (as above)	Deputy Chairman 80 horses National Hunt
Mids Region Chairman 55 horses National Hunt	Deputy Chairman 29 horses Dual Purpose	Deputy Chairman 28 horses National Hunt
E Anglia Region Chairman 49 horses Flat	Deputy Chairman 70 horses Flat	Deputy Chairman 17 horses Flat
S West Region Chairman 112 horses National Hunt	Deputy Chairman 86 horses Flat (also national chair)	Deputy Chairman 58 horses Flat
Thames Valley Region Chairman No stats available	Deputy Chairman 44 horses Dual purpose	Deputy Chairman 58 horses Flat
S East Region Chairman 47 horses Dual purpose	Deputy Chairman 17 horses National Hunt	Deputy Chairman 100 horses Flat

Source: NTF 2007

Interviewed in September 2003³¹, the former Chief Executive of the Federation said that the NTF had always tried to strike a balance on its Council between the two branches of racing, Flat and National Hunt, and also between large and small yards. While a complete historical picture is not available, currently it would appear that the balance is not equal.

Part of the task of the National Trainers Federation is to set national terms and conditions, in theory bargaining with the workers' organisation, the Stable Lads'

³¹ Interview on 29 September 2003

Association. The NTF also provides employment advice throughout the year to its members. Scott et al (1989:94), in looking at management strategies in small firms, found that:

Employers' associations are used by firms on a pragmatic basis, typically for help and advice, rather than as evidence of some ideological commitment to collective employer action.

The evidence in this study was that the NTF had a much stronger role than the SLA with regard to employment relations. Windmuller (1984:7) points out that employers' associations are essentially conservative bodies which, while they may 'endorse the maintenance of free collective bargaining', they also seek to protect 'management's right to manage, and curbs on union powers deemed to be excessive'. The evidence pointed to the fact that the NJCSS had been created to regain management control in the wake of the 1975 stable lads' strike and that creation of the NTF and SLA had effectively achieved that aim. Sisson (1987:45) provides one answer when he states that 'Employers' organizations are one of the most important private interest groups in the five countries' that he studied. He points out that such groups are not without their problems, bearing in mind that their constituents are more likely than not to be in competition with each other, in product and labour markets. This is certainly the case in racing, with the additional overlay of sporting competition. There is thus no obvious 'rational reason why...the individual employer should make sacrifices in the interests of [the common] good' (ibid). Sisson recognises that the ways in which employers reconcile conflicting goals is in turn dependent on the ways in which their associations are structured and, in particular, governed. The structure of the NTF shows that it has a strong regional and national presence. It is a well-resourced organisation, funded by a percentage deduction from prize money, offering professional and employment services to its members, including legal advice.

Single product, single market, same labour process

Although small firms occur in many industrial sectors, there are few if any which occupy the position of racing's small firms. Racing stables not only produce a single product, the racehorse, but also sell into a single, mainly domestic, market. They adopt the same working practices, which have remained largely unchanged since the development of commercial racing stables in the late 19th century. There is a common set of working practice not only between individual stables, but also between Flat and National Hunt racing. This is thus a group of small firms that is likely to share a common labour process, which makes them analytically distinctive.

Conclusion - The nexus of control

This chapter has reviewed the structure of racing and found that there are eighteen different interest groups that make up the total industry. Taken together, racing can be regarded as an economic system, at the heart of which lies the production of racehorses and race meetings; connected also with breeding of horses and the bloodstock industry. At the level of racing stables, there is a specific labour process that has been structured by a range of powerful industry bodies to ensure the production of racehorses and racing. It is difficult to depict this in a linear fashion, as different groups have developed at different rates. Amongst these interest groups, the relationships between the Jockey Club, British Horseracing Board, Racehorse Owners and Breeders and the National Trainers' Federation form a formidable nexus of controlling interests from which stable staff are excluded.

The Jockey Club has traditionally been in a most influential position – including an ability to influence Parliament (Hill 1988). Its primary role is to regulate the conduct of racing, including security and safety. It is composed of wealthy and powerful racehorse owners and breeders (see Table 3.1), who have a direct relationship with trainers and their staff through the racehorse as outlined below.

The British Horseracing Board was established to expand and market racing to a wider audience and, again, comprises wealthy and influential figures such as breeders and owners (see Table 3.2). Other influential figures are drawn from the racecourses and trainers also have a seat on the Board. It will be apparent that most stakeholder interests are being represented but stable staff are conspicuous by their absence. The only Committee on which staff have been represented in recent times is the Stable Staffs Resources Study Group, which was set up in 1999 to tackle the labour shortage amongst stable staff (BHB 2000; Winters 2000a) and address working practices. However, the BHB has increasingly sought to intervene in stable employment issues, particularly since it decided to expand the pattern of Flat racing to a seven-day per week pattern. Apart from the Resources Study Group, it has commissioned two further reports on staffing since this decision was taken in 1999 (Winters 2000a; BHB 2004) that are discussed elsewhere in this thesis.

The Jockey Club has three members on the British Horseracing Board, showing an overlap between the two regulatory organisations. It is linked into the stables labour process by virtue of its regulation of race meetings, where stable staff also work; and it maintains a register of stable staff for security purposes as outlined above. As many of its members are also racehorse owners, there is a linkage here also to the daily life of racing stables.

We have also discussed, where appropriate, the fact that, through their members or their business activities, other industry bodies have relationships of influence on the labour process, particularly racecourses where stable staff also work on race days. On race days, the racecourses provide stabling for horses and accommodation for stable staff when travelling to race meetings. They therefore provide the premises for the second part of the racing labour process. Racecourses also provide a staff canteen that is available not only to stable staff but also to trainers and racecourse employees.

Racehorse owners have a direct relationship with the labour process at the level of the stables where their horse is being trained; it is their animals that bring in training fees and provide employment. While stable staff have a close daily relationship with this high value product, they do not stand to gain directly from its value. As Cassidy observes (2002:111) 'By taking control of a racehorse on the Heath [in Newmarket] the lad exercises an element of control over the owner of that horse, momentarily reversing the relationship between the two in which the lad is apparently so structurally disadvantaged'.

In 2000-2002 the Racing Post ran a campaign in support of better terms and conditions for stable staff, a subject it returns to from time to time. As discussed in Chapter 4, this is part of a long tradition of speaking out for staff, commenced at the time of the 1975 stable lads' strike.

Turning to the organisations that have the most direct relationship with stable staff, it is clear that the two training colleges form part of the socialisation process which accustoms workers to the message that working with horses means low pay; evidence from the research for the Low Pay Commission (Phase B) confirms that low pay is still an issue. This is a message taken up by trainers, both individually and through the NTF, and not one that has been successfully rebutted by the SLA. Evidence from the research in Phase A revealed that workers were not consulted on the decision to expand Flat racing, either by trainers or by the British Horseracing Board.

The interconnectedness of racing's organisations is also representative of the binding culture of the racing industry which has traditionally valued deference on the part of its employees and traditionally rewarded such deference by paternalistic means such as tied housing and individual gifts from owners, rather than higher wages and a more confident approach to collective representation. Racehorse training thus exemplifies Ram and Edwards' (2003:726) view that it is important to acknowledge 'the familial

and other networks in which small firms are often embedded'. The label of stable 'lad' or 'girl', applied to workers aged from 16-80, serves to underline the potential familial nature of racing stables.

Data has also been presented on the numbers of racing stables and levels of employment in those stables. It has been found that there is a common labour process and a common product, sold into one sole market. It has also been found that these are small firms that operate in a rural location from the practical necessity of access to land. The research has shown that trainers often come from a background with horses, which may imply a rural background also. This may also imply that there may be comparisons to be made with agricultural employment. There is a national collective bargaining agreement under the National Joint Council for Stable Staff, which sets minimum wages and conditions of service but is dominated by a strong and historically well resourced employers' association, the National Trainers Federation, with an historically under-resourced workers' association, the Stable Lads' Association, unable to effectively represent its members' interests.

Chapter 4 next presents a discussion of the key events in the history of the industrial relations surrounding the labour process and the current employment position of workers at racing stables.