

## Sir William Strickland, York House, The Talbot Hotel and Langton Wold Racecourse



The association between York House and the Strickland Hunting Lodge and the Langton Wold Racecourse and the racing industry in Malton and Norton is strong and significant. The site of the Talbot Hotel was purchased by Strickland from the Hebblethwaite's in 1672. York House belonged to Strickland after 1684 and his passion for racing, horse-breeding and his role as Master of Ceremonies at Langton Wold seems to have informed the architectural design of the garden front off York House (see above). York House in its exterior appearance as well as its interior lay-out and design, and that of its gardens was transformed by Strickland as a vehicle of display and ceremony associated not only with his role as MP for the town but in his role and status within the local and regional horse-racing fraternity. It was a place for business meetings and social events. York House may have briefly become the Malton residence of the Watson Wentworths after 1739 when they acquired it from the executors of the 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet's estate. The Marquess of Rockingham was, of course, himself an avid racehorse breeder and owner and ran horses in the area and the role for York House that Strickland created will have continued

during Rockingham's time, for all that at this time he was mainly resident at Wentworth Woodhouse, one of Europe's largest houses, works to which by John Carr would be continued by his son Charles after 1760 and would include the construction after 1766 of grand stables for some 84 horses, of which Whistlejacket had already become the most famous, winning the 2,000 Guineas at York in 1759 and being painted by George Stubbs in 1762. Apocryphally, the stable block construction was reputedly financed by Whistlejacket's winnings, but those of other successful Rockingham horses – Allabacullia, Sampson, Bay Malton and Scrubb will also have contributed. (Howse 2002 32).

The old Strickland Hunting Lodge was hugely altered and overhauled by Rockingham after his purchase of the property probably in 1713 (Hudleston mistakenly says 1739, but the tenancy of the building is recorded in the 1730 Terrier and it already belonged to the Watson Wentworths by then, clearly) to fashion the New Talbot Hotel, the first hotel in Malton, specifically to cater to the higher status members of the local and regional racing fraternity.

Hudleston:

"The Talbot Hotel...is inseparable from the early sporting history of Malton. It was here owners stayed when they came to see their horses, it was here trainers and others foregathered to revive and carry on the Malton Race fixture, it was here the Malton Race fixture drew, knowing that they would find congenial company. Many important sales of bloodstock have been arranged in the commodious Talbot, many Turf secrets told, many coups arranged and many a bottle cracked to celebrate them" (Hudleston 162)

By the time of its loss to enclosure and the plough in 1862, Langton Wold had come to be regarded as one of the finest courses in England; John Scott had levelled and improved it even as late as 1861.

"The closure in the year 1862 will witness the destruction – it has been termed the desecration – of the finest site in England for the sports of the field" " wrote a racing correspondent quoted without attribution in Hudleston.

Modern horse-racing probably originated in North and East Yorkshire, very much in the hands of the gentry and landed classes.

"Races were ...run by 1602 at Black Hambleton. Viscount Dunbar took the Hambleton Gold Bell and another won the Silver Bowl. Bagby Moor, and Studford above Ampleforth also saw races for a Silver Cup. Nunnington had some sort of racecourse by 1630". (Rushton 2003)

The Langton Wold race meeting had begun before 1692 – an advertisement in the London Gazette of this year announces that “A plate, as has been usual, will be run for on Langton Wolds, near Malton”.

Rushton records that “James Hebblethwaite of Norton entered his horse Daudler for the Owner’s Plate, when he and seven others raced horses on Langton Wold in 1692” (238).

In these years, Hambleton and Newmarket were the premier racecourses in England. The first King’s Cup was raced for at Hambleton in 1715. (Rushton 279)

Still in 1740, Hambleton was important – rules regulating racing and betting were introduced after 1740 and a statute limited matches raced for money, plate or prizes, to Newmarket and Black Hambleton, confirming the status of both.

Even before this, betting restrictions had been introduced after a famous encounter between Sir William Strickland’s Merlin and another at Newmarket:

“Strickland was an enthusiastic owner and breeder of racehorses, and one of his horses, the Acaster Turk, was Champion Sire in 1721. Strickland was a central character in one of early racing’s greatest causes celebres, **The Merlin Match**. Many of the exact details, even the date and the correct names of the horses involved are unknown; almost all that is certain is that the match took place. This was a head-to-head match at [Newmarket](#) between Strickland’s horse, called Merlin (or possibly Old Merlin or Ancaster Merlin or Little Merlin) and a horse belonging to the Royal trainer [Tregonwell Frampton](#); it was seen as being a symbolic race between the champions of North and South, or of the Provinces and the racing establishment, and attracted widespread interest and heavy betting.

According to the accepted legend, shortly before the race was due to take place Strickland’s groom, one Hesseltine, was approached by Frampton’s groom, who proposed a secret trial of the horses over the full distance, to give them both inside information and ensure they could bet wisely. Hesseltine agreed and the trial was run, Merlin winning narrowly; but Frampton and Strickland each had instructed their groom to double-cross the other by secretly adding extra weight to their own horse, and both therefore believed they would win the race easily! In the event Merlin won the race much as he had won the trial, as recorded in a popular ballad of the time:

*And now, Little Merlin has won the day,  
And all for his master’s gain  
Guarded him to stable  
again, again  
Guarded him to stable again,  
And as they rode through Newmarket,  
Many curses on them did fall,*

*A curse light on these Yorkshire knights,  
And their horses and riders  
and all, and all,  
and their horses and riders and all.*

Huge sums were won and lost, with many of those who had bet on Frampton's horse ruined. As a result the law was soon afterwards changed to make it legally impossible to recover more than £10 of a gambling debt." (Wikipedia, Sir William Strickland, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baronet)

Langton Wold continued to grow in reputation, however, and "became regular meetings, with one event a day, but each with three or four heats. Malton and Norton had some of the top breeders, newspapers advertised the races which gained reputation steadily. Soon there were mains of cocks and assemblies. The horse fair at Malton was linked to the races [*this was held on a site next to the cattle market, as Horse Market Road suggests*]. Owners of the horses were required to make early registration at those Malton inns with stables...Entries widened to include horses entered by Ayrton and Fenton [*one of the leaseholders of the Navigation*] of Malton, Preston of Burythorpe, Sykes of Sledmere and George Searle training for Henry Goodricke of Sutton-on Forest." (Rushton 280)

The St Quentins of Scampston Hall and others were already regulars at Langton Wold and by the close of the C18,

"Langton Wold was in a different class, taking the place that Hambleton had enjoyed in the region, and was given a grandstand in 1801" (Rushton 281). Some accounts speak of the demolition of the grandstand. Hudleston says that it was converted into farm buildings. There is a surviving building on the site, which has recently fallen empty once more which may represent a remnant of the Grandstand building. Reference to Carr's classical grandstand at York will confirm that these were not as may be conjured in the modern mind. The run of high first floor windows and the relative absence of openings below suggest that this structure at West Wold Farm might be a surviving part, at least, of the 1801 grandstand.



Throughout the first 60 years of the C19, Malton trainers dominated the great race events of the country.

John Scott dominated the sport between 1832 and 1862 (see John Stone, below). His stables were at Whitewall. When William l'Anson's Blink Bonnie won the Epsom Derby in 1857 "Malton church bells rang...and the pubs stayed open all night." (Rushton 354).



*William l'Anson (left); Blink Bonnie (above)*







*Highfield House, Norton*

Writing in 1862, the author of an article decrying the loss of the racecourse asserted that at that time it had existed for two centuries (Hudleston 162)

A race track also existed on Malton Moor, but was lost to enclosure in 1794.

After the enforced closure of the Langton Wold track in 1862, racing (National Hunt racing/Steeplechasing) took place at Orchard Fields 1867-70. National Hunt racing was revived once more after 1882 at Highfield, adjoining William l'Anson's training grounds, close to the Beverley Road in Norton. Meets were held every year until 1903 when l'Anson extended his training grounds onto the racecourse site.

Sir William Strickland was central to Malton's racing industry during the later C17 and early C18 and racing, as well as hunting, was central to polite Malton Society during this period, as well, increasingly to the Malton economy. The Wentworth's embraced this thriving appetite for racing and did much to develop the industry and society locally. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquess of Rockingham was a very successful owner (see above).

"The Talbot Hotel – or the New Talbot, as it was originally called – is inseparable from the early sporting history of Malton. It was here owners stayed when they came to see their horses, it was here the trainers and others foregathered to revive and carry on the Malton race fixture, it was here the sporting fraternity drew, knowing they would find congenial company. Many important sales of bloodstock have been arranged in the commodious Talbot, many Turf secrets told, many coups arranged and many a bottle cracked to celebrate them. The Talbot was once the hunting box of Sir William Strickland, and was purchased in 1739 (*but probably*

1713, in fact)) by the Earl Fitzwilliam, who saw the need for a good hotel and coursing.” (Hudleston p162)

In summary, the breeding, training and racing of thoroughbred horses forms a significant if generally overlooked and forgotten aspect of the history and cultural identity of Malton and Norton. It survives in shadow form, its footprints upon the natural and the built landscape of the towns, but remains largely inaccessible to all but local historians and aficionados. This is to be regretted.

The most comprehensive survey of the later industry is that written by John Stone in 2008. This is reproduced below.

### **HORSE RACING AT NORTON.**

1692: Malton Races had been established some years, vide announcement in the London Gazette; 'On Tuesday 6th September, a plate as been usual, will be run for on Langton Wolds, near Malton, and another on the Thursday following, according to articles.

1713: Articles agreed by the founders for a plate to be run for on Langton Wolds, near New Malton, on Thursday, the 1st day of October.



### **TRAINERS OF RACE HORSES.**

1823. John Shepherd. Horse Jockeys – James Garbutt, John Gray.

1834. Samuel King – **Grove House**. Job Marson – **Bellevue**. John Scott – **Whitewall Corner**. Richard Shepherd – **Wold Cottage**.

1840. Saml. King – **Sutton Grove**. Job Marson – **Whitewall Corner**, John Scott. - **Whitewall Corner**. Ann Shepherd – **Wold Cottage**. Jockeys only. Jas. Garbutt, John Holmes, Thomas Nicholas. John Wray.

1844. Chas. Peck – **Grove House**. John Marston – **Bellevue**. John Scott – **Whitewall Corner**. John Shepherd – **Wold Cottage**. James Wardell – Horse Breaker in Low Street.

1846. Job Marson – **Whitewall Corner**. Rd. Peck – **High Field**. John Scott – **Whitewall Corner**. W. Scott – **High Field**. Jockeys- John Gray, John Holmes, T. Nicholson.

1848. Charles Peck – **Grove House**. John Scott – **Whitewall House**. William Scott – **Highfield House**. John Shepherd – **Wold Cottage**.

1851. Thomas Cunningham – **Highfield House**. Charles Farrar – Norton. William I'Anson - **Spring Cottage**. Chas. Peck – **Grove House**. Richard Peck – Norton. John Scott – **Whitewall House**. J. Shepherd – **Wold House**. Jockeys – John Holmes, W. Oates – Geo

Simpson – **Whitewall Cottage.**

1855. Thos. Cunningham – **Highfield House.** William I'Anson – **Spring Cottage.** Charles Peck – **Grove House.** John Scott – **Whitewall House.** John Shepherd – **Wold Cottage.**

1858. Thos. Cunningham – Wm. I'Anson – Charles Peck – John Scott – John Shepherd – Jockeys John Charlton, John Holmes, Henry Robertson.

1864. Thos. Cunningham – **Highfield House.** William I'Anson – **Spring Cottage.** Charles Peck. John Scott – **Whitewall House.** John Shepherd – **Wold Cottage.**

1867. Thos. Cunningham – **Commercial Street.** Wm. I'Anson – **Spring Cottage.** Chas. Peck – **Grove House.** James Perren – **Bellevue.** John Scott – **Whitewall House.** Jno Shepherd – **Wold Cottage.**

1872. The training of Race Horse on Langton Wold, about 1.5 miles of soft pasture grass, main principal establishments are C. Lund, **Highfield**, and James Perren, **Wold Cottage.**

William I'Anson – **Hungerford House.**

1879. William I'Anson – **Hungerford House.** William I'Anson Jnr – **Highfield.** Charles Lund – **Grove House.** James Perren – **Wold Cottage.**

1889. William Binnie – **Grove House,** Wold Rd. William I'Anson – **Highfield.** Charles Lund – **Spring Cottage,** Wold Rd. William Sanderson – **Wold House.**

1897. William Binnie – **Horton Cottage.** Thomas Bruckshaw – **Whitewall House.** Miles S. I. I'Anson – Clerk of Course & breeder of race horses. – **Hungerford House.** William I'Anson – Highfield. Charles Lund – **Spring Cottage,** Wold Rd. William Sanderson – **Wold House.** Ernest Tinsley – **Scarborough Road.**

**WHITEWALL HOUSE.** Mr. John Scott. 4th October 1871. The veteran trainer, Mr. Jno. Scott, died at Whitewall House, Malton at 2 p.m. close upon his 77th birthday. Mr. Scott was born at Chippenham, near Newmarket, on November 8th 1794, and commenced his career almost as soon as he could walk, in his father's stable. Mr. Scott was at first light-weight for Sir Watkin Wynn, then private trainer to Mr. Houldsworth, at Rockhill, and afterwards with Mr. Petre, Whitewall House and stables being vacant in 1825, he purchases them, and had resided there ever since, his horses won 16 St. Ledgers. 6 Derbys 8 Oakes, 8 Two Thousand and 4 One Thousand, - an amazing record never since equalled. He trained at times 80 to 100 horses. Capt. J. R. Renwick and he was followed by Mr. J. Bellerby. Mr. William I'Anson and his father, William who died on the 10th January 1881 aged 70 who lived at Hungerford House, Langton Road were Racehorse Trainers. 16th September 1933 Mr. William I'Anson (Jnr.) well known ex-trainer, celebrates his 87th birthday. 29th April 1934 Sudden death at Scarborough of Mr. William I'Anson, the well-known trainer, aged 87 years. 14th November 1902. Accounted today that Mr. Alfred Haley had bought the Whitewall establishment. 5th February 1903 Sale of Mr. T. Bruckshaw's racing effects in Malton Corn Exchange – Mr. Bruckshaw leaves Whitewall.

Jim Perrin was with John Scott and when he died began training on his own at **WOLD HOUSE** He trained horses belonging to Mr. Bowes of Streatlam Castle, after Mr. Perrin's death. Mr. William Sanderson took over and he died on the 6th June 1920 aged 80. He was succeeded by Mr. William Binnie. 6th March 1937 Death of Mr. W. Binnie, well-known trainer, aged 74. Mr. Pollock succeeded Mr. Binnie.

2nd September 1904. Sale of Hackneys at Whitewall - Mr Haley's; Highest price made 320 guineas.

**SPRING COTTAGE** was also a training establishment the first tenant was Mr. William I'Anson. Snr, he was succeeded by Mr. Tom Challoner, then Mr. Charles Lund, until his death on the 7th May 1905 aged 59, and then Mr. Bazley

**GROVE HOUSE** Mr. Charles Peck he died on the 16th January 1867 aged 64 ( a Charles Peck of Malton, the well-known trainer, died suddenly, aged 41, it was supposed from injury



to the bowels. ?) and was followed by Mr. Charles Lund who moved from Highfield House and later moved to Spring Cottage Mr. Binnie Snr succeeded him. 2nd April 1912 Grove House, Norton offered for sale by auction, No bid, and lot as withdrawn. 24th March 1914 Grove House offered for sale. No bid received. Adjoining paddock withdrawn at £470. Later it was sold privately to Sir John Scott for £2,500, who appointed Mr. Ernest Tinsley as his trainer. Grove House was demolished and Mr. James Fagen who died on the 20th January 1932 rebuilt it. He moved here from Leat House, it was later occupied by Dr. McCormick and later his widow. Mr. Easterby had his racing stables behind Grove House (Tinsley Dutton, Rohan).

April 12th 1884. John Andrews, died aged 76 yrs, he was Stud Groom & Headman to the late Charles Peck Snr, at Gove House, also to Charles Jnr.(dec) and Robert Peck.



**HIGHFIELD HOUSE** John Scott's Brother, William, was almost as famous as his brother in that he rode winners of six Two thousand Guineas, some of One Thousand Guineas and nine Champagne Stakes, three Oaks, four Derbys, and nine St. Legers. He trained and died at Highfield. Norton.

Mr. William I'Anson built the present house circa 1900 on the site of the old house, he had a son called Tatton. 23rd January 1909 Sale of William I'Anson's farm stock & horses. 29th January 1909 Announced that Mr. William I'Anson had taken Stratford House, Newmarket and left on the 10th February.

**HIGHFIELD RACING QUARTERS** the modern construction was built on Grimston Road by Sir. John Thursby, horses were later trained by Captain Eley.

5th January 1920. Announced that the HIGHFIELD TRAINING ESTABLISHMENT and GROVE HOUSE had been sold to Mr. C. F. Kenyon. 20th September 1920 ,BLINK BONNY ESTATE sold to Mr. C. F. Kenyon. 11th September 1925 The Highfield Training Establishment sold for £14,000 to Mr. H. D. Bazley.



**ATHOL HOUSE STABLES** where occupied by Mr. Ernest Tinsley who later moved to Grove House and trained for Mr. Scott of Newcastle. The stables were demolished and private houses have been built and the stables converted in to small houses

**BLINK BONNY STUD FARM** Mr. Miles I'Anson brother of William employed a large number of hands. He was also Clerk of the Course at Doncaster, York, Newcastle, Beverley & Thirsk. He lived in Hungerford House, Langton Road and died on the 13th February 1912 aged 61. 4th October 1905, Sale of Mr. Miles I'Anson's stock at the Blink Bonny Stud Farm. 21st March 1912, Blair Athol's van removed from Blink Bonny Stud Farm to Scarborough 1st January 1912 Announced that the Langton Wold Training Ground has been taken over by Mr. Baron Mortimer. The Blink Bonny Estate sold to Mr. R. F. Kenyon on 20th September 1920

4th January 1913 announced that Mr. J. R. Renwick had leased Langton Wold Training Ground.

26th February 1912 announced that Mr. E. G. de Mestre, Ripon had taken Danby House Training Establishment, Norton, in succession to Mr. B. Mortimer. 21st January 1926 Sale of Blink Bonny Stud Farm to Col. Bryan Fairfax of York.

8th Sept 1900 Will. Chilvers leaves Blink Bonny Establishment, Norton, after a long service.

**WOLD COTTAGE** One of the principal Racing Establishments.



List of occupiers. :-1840 – Ann Shepherd. 1844 – John Shepherd. 1846 – Mrs. Shepherd. 1848 – John Shepherd. 1872 – James Perren. 1887 – James Fagan. 1887 – William Sanderson (Wold House) (29th December 1899 Death of Mrs Sanderson, Wold House, Norton ). 1913 – William Binnie. 1937 – Walter Pollock.

**DANBY HOUSE** 26th February 1912. Announced that Mr. E. G. de Mestre, Ripon, had taken

Danby House Training Establishment, Norton, in succession to Mr. B. Mortimer.

1st January 1912 – Announced that the Langton Wold Training Ground has been taken over by Mr. Baron Mortimer.

When racehorses were walked to the various race meetings, a sensation was caused when the late Mr. William I'Anson had a horse box built which was horse-drawn and in which Blink Bonny, the Derby winner, was conveyed. For many years the horse box stood in a field at Howe Hill, Norton. Many years ago steeplechases were held at Howe Hill, and the previously mentioned Horse Box was used to convey Welshers offenders against the law to the local police station.

21st March 1912 Blair Athol's van removed from Blink Bonny Stud Farm to Scarborough.

2nd September 1904 – Announced to-day that there would be no more Steeplechases at Malton – Highfield committee finally abandoning them.

20th September 1904 – Sale of fittings of Malton Steeplechase Course.

23rd. November 1917 Part of the Langton Wold Training ground ploughed up.

3rd September 1912 – Wold Cottage, Norton, sold by auction for £1,240 to Mrs. Dawson.

### **HORSES IN TRAINING IN 1869**

Mr. John Scott's, Whitewell 22

Mr. Charles Peck's, Grove House 14

Mr. Robert Peck's, Spring Cottage 7

Mr. Thomas I'Anson, Highfield 8

Mr. John Shepherd's, Wold Cottage 6

Total 57

### **HORSES IN TRAINING IN 1936**

Mr. H. D. Bazely, Spring Cottage 12

Mr. R. P. Botterill, Norton House 8

Mr. E. Davey, Wood Street 13

Mr. W. Easterby, Grove Cottage 46

Capt. G. F. Elsey, Highfield 47

Mr. W. J. Bellerby, Whitewall 13

Mr. W. Binnie, Wold House 2

Mr. Mason, Scarborough Road 2

Mr. T. H. Threlfell 2

Total 145

**BLINK BONNY.** This racehorse won the Derby and Oaks Stakes at Epsom in 1857. The Property of and Bred by William I'Anson and ridden by J. Charlton.

**CLASSICAL WINNERS TRAINED** by the late **JOHN SCOTT** – The Wizard of the North.

### **TWO THOUSAND.**

Mr. Bowes' – Meteor 1842. Mr. Bowes' – Cotherstone 1843. Mr. Hills' – Pitsford 1850. Mr. Bowes' – West Australian 1853. Lord Derby's – Fazzolette 1856. Mr. Nichols; -- The Wizard 1860. Hon. S. Hawke's – The Marquis 1862.

### **ONE THOUSAND.**

Lord Stanley's – Canezon 1848. Baron Rothschild's – Mentmore Lass 1853. Mr. Scott's – Imperieuse 1857. Lord Derby's – Sagitta 1860.

### **DERBY.**

Mr. Risdale's – St. Giles 1832. Mr. Bowes' – Mundig 1835. General Anson's – Attila 1842. Mr. Bowes' – Cotherstone 1843. Mr. Bowes' – Daniel O'Rourke 1852. Mr. Bowes' – West

Australian 1853.

**OAKS.**

Mr. Scott's – Cyprian 1836. Lord Chesterfield's – Industry 1838. Marquis of Westminster's – Ghuznee 1841. General Anson's – Princess 1844. Lord Derby's – Iris 1851. Mr. Scott's – Songstress 1852. Hon. Stanhope Hawke's – Marchioness 1855. Lord Falmouth's – Queen Bertha 1863.

**ST. LEGER.**

Hon. E. Petre's – Matilda 1827. Hon. E. Petre's – The Colonel 1828. Hon. E. Petre's – Rowton 1829. Mr. Gully's – Margrave 1832. Marquis of Westminster's – Touchstone 1834. Lord Chesterfield's – Don John 1838. Major Yarburgh's – Charles the 12th 1839. Marquis of Westminster's – Launcelot 1840. Marquis of Westminster's – Satirist 1841. Mr. Watt's – The Baron 1845. Mr. Nichol's – Newminster 1851. Mr. Bowes' – West Australian 1853. Mr. Nichol's – Warlobck 1856. Mr. Scott's – Imperieuse 1857. Sir. Charles Monck;s – Gamester 1859. Hon. S. Hawke's – The Marquis 1862.



