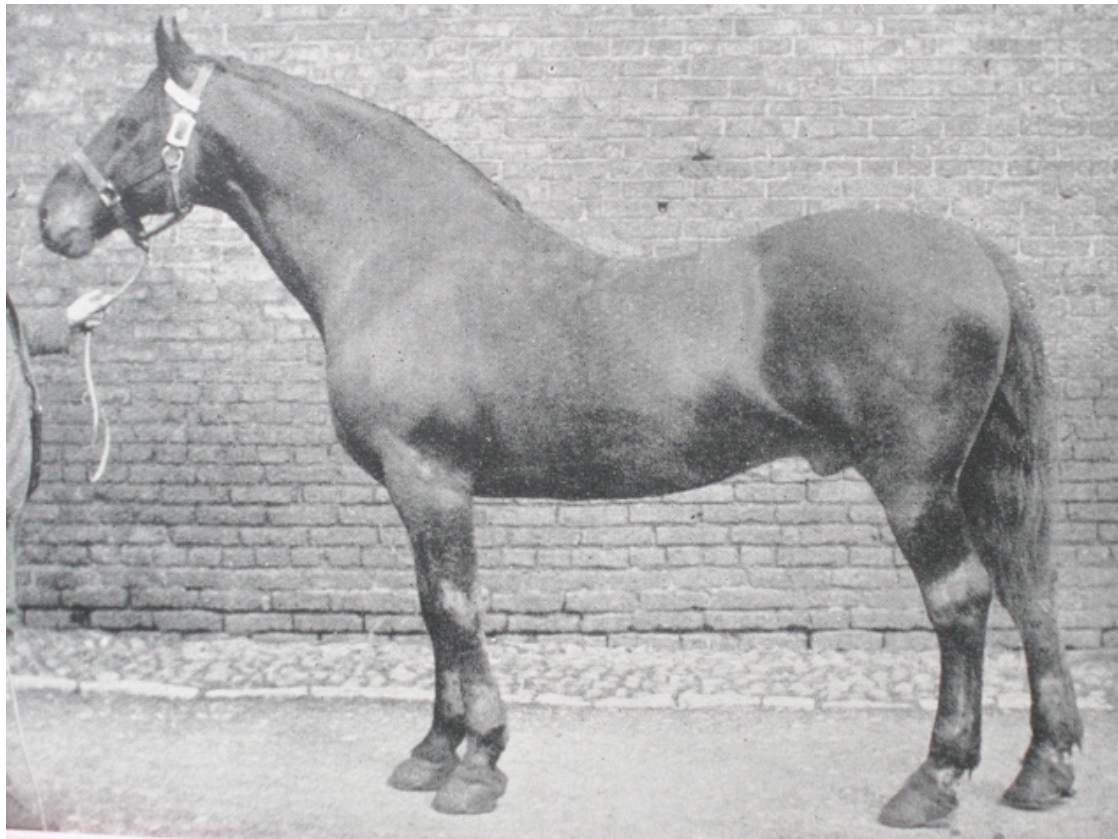


The Cleveland Bay Horse Society – 1884

The fact that the Cleveland Bay Horse Society continues with its task of preserving the existence of the breed after such a period of time is a remarkable achievement. It is maybe no coincidence that it started life supported by some of the great leaders of the day and this may explain its durability and ability to survive change the like of which had never been seen before.

I thought that it would be of interest to members of the Society and those interested in the breed if I set out some of the events and the characters that were instrumental in the formation of the CBHS in 1884. To put the year in context, 1884 was a year in which William Gladstone was Prime Minister, General Gordon was besieged in Khartoum fighting the Mardhi and farm workers were allowed to vote for the first time – a very different age.

More importantly the horse was an integral part of everyday life.



Fidius Dios (SB 107) Described as “a Chapman type” born in 1871. A popular choice of stallion for the first of the CBHS members in 1884.

The Cleveland Bay was not the first horse by a long way to have its interests protected by the formation of a breed society. It was clear to some influential horse breeders that Societies were the way forward for any breed of horse and it was not long after the creation of the Clydesdale and Hackney Horse Societies that the Cleveland supporters started to plan for the future. Had they not formed a Society

then the breed would undoubtedly have ceased to exist within a very short period of time.

The process of forming a society began with a series of letters canvassing support for the breed appearing in influential newspapers of the time such as the Yorkshire Post. Alfred Pease and William Scarth Dixon were instrumental in this correspondence process and soon others joined in.

This exchange led to a series of Public meetings the most crucial of which were held in the Black Lion Hotel in Stockton in January and February of 1884 chaired respectively by Earl Cathcart and James Rutherford. It was not long before the Society officially came into being with its first president The Right Honourable James Lowther MP and its first Honorary Secretary Mr William Scarth Dixon elected to office.

By the end of that first year the Society had amassed 100 members and the process of establishing the Cleveland Bay Horse Society had been proclaimed a success.

William Scarth Dixon

As effectively the first Studbook editor Dixon set about the task of creating the first studbook which was a retrospective volume recording the stallions only that had been foaled prior to January 1st 1880. There were 567 such horses which were recorded into three different sections of the stud book.

Part 1 - Contained the horses of known purity of breeding. This was the largest section

Part 2 - Contained the horses whose breeding was insufficiently detailed to list in Part 1. It was conceded that some of these horses had a distant cross of Thoroughbred.

Part 3 - Contained the details of older pedigrees where it had been impossible to verify their breeding but there was internal evidence that they were of pure breeding and deserving of a record.

Dixon then utilised the advice of the Hackney horse Society and went to the Mercury Steam Works who were printers in Norwich, to create what is now one of the most valuable works on the breed. Volume 1 appeared in September 1884.

The following extract is taken from a newspaper report. This records the formal creation of the Cleveland Bay Horse Society in one of the most popular newspapers in the region at that time – This was a momentous day for the breed and one of sufficient newsworthy importance it appears to merit a full report of the proceedings in the newspaper.

Darlington & Stockton Times February 23 1884

Cleveland Bay Horse Society

On Wednesday afternoon a meeting of the members of the above society was held at the Black Lion Hotel Stockton for the purpose of receiving the report of the committee and electing the first council. There was a large attendance. Mr James Rutherford of Kirkleatham occupied the chair and briefly introduced the proceedings. Mr Wm Scarth Dixon (secretary) read the report of the provisional committee. It stated that the committee had had two meetings and had carefully considered the bye-laws for the Society which would be submitted to that meeting for adoption. The committee had pleasure in reporting that they had received considerable financial support and were confident that when the society and its work became more widely known there would be a large increase of members. At the meeting held on the 30th January an informal discussion took place as to the eligibility of admitting horses and mares into the stud book and the committee, whilst acknowledging the subject to be somewhat out of their province thought it might be advantageous if the result of their deliberations were made known to the Society. They therefore respectfully recommend to the council that all horses or mares possessing three clear crosses of reputed Cleveland blood should be eligible for entry in the stud book and they earnestly impressed upon them the necessity of avoiding any mixture of black or carting breeding. It had also been suggested that in the case of mares whose pedigree might have been lost that they should be entered in a foundation book if they possessed the characteristics of the Cleveland Bay breed to the satisfaction of the editing committee of whom they might appoint. The offspring of such mares would of course be eligible to the stud book. A similar plan had been adopted by the Jersey Herd stud book society and had answered extremely well. The committee congratulated the society on the rapid progress they had made and impressed upon the members the advantage to be obtained by individual exertion in obtaining support as well as looking up mares and stallions eligible for entry in the stud book. On the motion of the Chairman seconded by Mr Hindson of Ugthorpe the report was adopted. The bye -laws of the Society were then submitted by Mr Dixon and from these it appears that the society will consist of life governors, life members and annual members resident within the United Kingdom and honorary members to be elected by council. The council is to consist of 30 members and an editing and Finance committee will be appointed. The entrants fee for the life governor is fixed at £10, life members £5 and annual members are to pay a minimal subscription of £0.10 /- each - A council was then elected.

As the above report confirms that the Council numbered 30 including the President and Vice President and there were two committees, Editing (of the Studbook) which had 9 members and Finance which had 5 including 2 members who were also on the Editing Committee.

Volume 2 of the studbook appeared in late 1885 and this brought the breed up to date with registrations and included mares for the first time.



William Scarth Dixon a prolific writer on Men, Horses and Hunting – The first Secretary of the CBHS.

Dixon set about his task as the first Secretary with great vigour and it was not long before he was writing about the breed in every publication that would accept his articles and he later freely admitted that he was able to develop his reputation as a writer on the back of his knowledge of the breed.

His two most famous works detailing the Breed are without doubt “In the North Countree” and “The Influence of Racing and the Thoroughbred Horse on Light Horse Breeding” although there are several others. Many of these books are still freely available through antiquarian outlets and are recommended reading for the serious Cleveland Bay enthusiast. Dixon became a prolific writer on Yorkshire life and Hunting in particular and remained Secretary of the Society for a further ten years and then for a period as President.

The Pease Family

No work on the creation of the CBHS would be complete without reference to this family. Sir Alfred Pease who is perhaps its most celebrated member in horse terms was part of a dynasty that supported the breed with great vigour and undoubtedly secured its backing from others with power and influence that gave the breed great credibility.

The Pease family were Quakers. They had developed numerous business interests over the 150 years prior to the CBHS being formed as they gained a stronghold in the Darlington area of County Durham.

The family were responsible for the founding of the town of Middlesbrough as a major commercial site. Their business interests were extremely diverse and ranged from coal mining to banking with a heavy dose of politics thrown in the mix for good measure. Several family members represented local constituencies in Parliament including Sir Alfred. They were at one time probably most well known for their involvement in the development of the Railway and in particular their links to the Stockton Darlington line and its famous locomotive – The Rocket. The family later became probably better known for other reasons however, which I will deal with later.

The Pease involvement was good news for the Cleveland Bay as these were men with tremendous wealth, power and influence. Sir Joseph Whitwell Pease (1st Baronet of Hutton Lowcross and Pinchinthorpe) and his son Alfred Edward Pease (Later Sir Alfred upon inheriting his fathers title) were named as subscribers to the new Society in the first ever Memorandum of Association. Further family members Arthur, Henry and Edward Lloyd Pease were owners and/or breeders

The involvement of Alfred Edward Pease as a founder of the breed was acknowledged in the Centenary Studbook by the then stud book editor Mr Syd Emmerson and readers are referred to that work. Sir Alfred Pease became a lifelong supporter of the breed although he spent many years abroad following the collapse of the Pease empire in the early 1900's.

Unfortunately it all started to go badly wrong for the Pease family following a lengthy dispute over the management of a Trust fund by Sir Joseph following the death of his brother. The Trust property and Sir Josephs business interests became completely

interlinked causing Joseph to delay the payment of monies due. This led to his niece Beatrice becoming increasingly frustrated by her inability to access her inheritance so she took him to Court to recover monies she alleged she was due under the Trust.

Protracted legal proceedings and a ferocious courtroom battle followed. In a case which at the time attracted significant national attention, Beatrice won and Sir Joseph was publicly humiliated by the Judge who questioned his integrity. The effect of the case didn't stop there as it ruined the Pease financial empire virtually overnight and the former evidence of wealth was quickly dispersed with Grand houses, Farms and horses all being sold to meet the consequences of the debt owed to Beatrice. Sir Alfred later painfully recorded having to sell his yearlings and broodmares and the childrens ponies almost immediately. It was only the intervention of friends who provided emergency financial support that prevented total financial disaster.

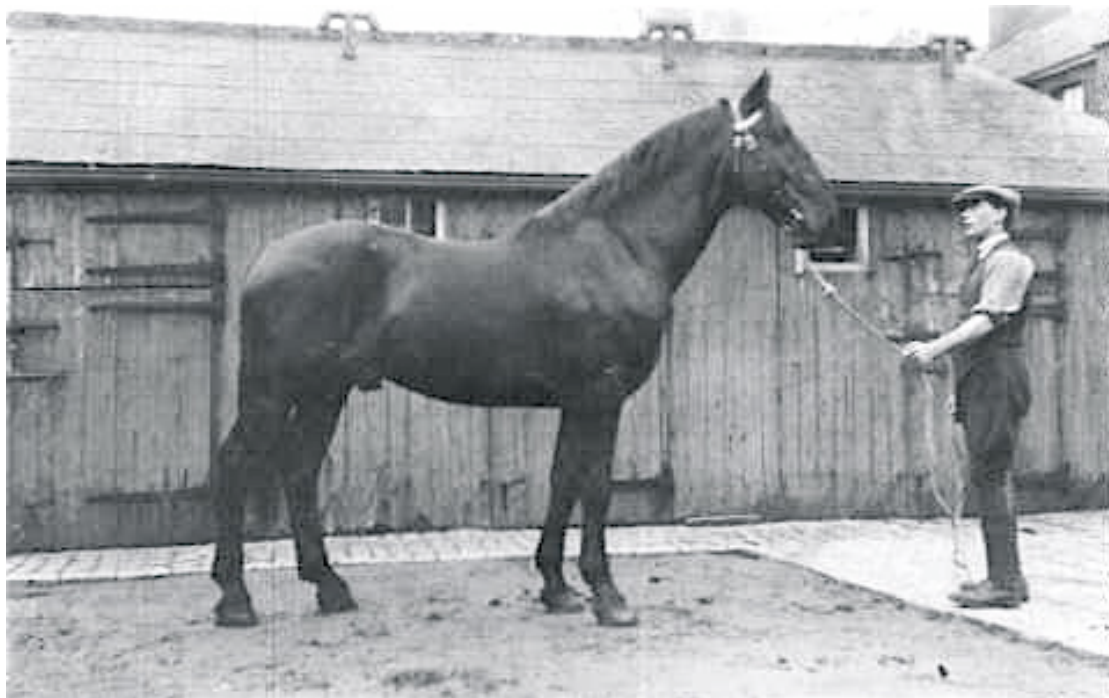


Sir Alfred Pease (1857 – 1939)

Sir Joseph Pease died a broken man in 1903.

Sir Alfred who already had links with Africa prior to the crash left to find work there as a Magistrate in order to survive financially. He was already internationally recognised as a big game hunter and went on to form a strong friendship with the former US President Colonel Theodore Roosevelt.

Sir Alfred eventually returned to England to Pinchinthorpe House a short distance away from his fathers former estate at Hutton Lowcross where his involvement with the breed resumed and continued right up until his death in 1939. He was very heavily involved with the Cleveland Bay Horse Society just after the first war when the breed was at one of its lowest points. He was instrumental in the Cleveland Bay Syndicate which evolved to ensure that suitable and diverse stallions were purchased and leased so they were available to be used by members of the Society.



Cholderton Ryecroft (SB 1757) - A Cleveland Bay “Syndicate” Stallion born in 1921. He appears in most modern day pedigrees.

One of the last colts bred by Sir Alfred in 1937 was Lucifer (SB 1809). Lucifer was bought by Joe Sunley in 1939 to start his up-grading programme and this in turn led to many Gerrick Grading Register Cleveland Bays being registered. Lucifer was also the sire of Cholderton Druid, Grand sire of the famous Mulgrave Supreme.

