

The Cleveland Bay Breed

In the days before steam-power and the internal combustion engine, the Cleveland Bay was essential to local farming, transport and travel. Today, there are perhaps as many "Cleveland Bay" and "Bay Horse" pub signs as there are actual horses to be seen around Cleveland, but the very presence of these signs signifies just how important this breed was to local economy.

The history of the Cleveland Bay, Britain's oldest breed of horse, is well documented.^{1,2} Throughout the Middle Ages, the Monastic Houses bred horses suitable to act as pack animals, for transporting goods between abbeys and monasteries. These were known as Chapman horses, after the name given to the packmen and itinerant pedlars. During the seventeenth century, stallions imported from North Africa were crossed with Chapman mares. Later, during the eighteenth century, the weight and size of these horses increased to become the Cleveland Bay. Then some Cleveland Bays were crossed with strong thoroughbred horses to produce the Yorkshire Coach Horse. Both types of horse, the Chapman and the Yorkshire Coach Horse seem to be referred to as "Cleveland Bays".

The Cleveland Bay was a superior coach horse, noted for stamina and even temperament. With a reputation for fast times between London and the North pulling mail coaches, the animals were much in demand both in Britain and Europe. Dealers travelled from all over the country to buy Cleveland Bays. Queen Victoria owned several of these distinguished animals³. Interestingly while English buyers only wanted bays, Europeans were not so fussy about colours and would pay good prices for the greys. They were a great favourite in Vienna, a city more usually associated with the famous Lipizzaner horses⁴.

Sir Alfred Pease noted, in his Cleveland Bay Stud Book, that one did the 202 miles from York to London in three days, while another took its rider the 40 miles to Newcastle and back at night, swimming the Tees on each journey!⁵

Locally, Cleveland Bays could be seen on every farm. They could be used for most farm work, and also for riding. A feature of the breed is their absence of 'feather' (hair on the lower legs and fetlocks) unlike many of the heavier draught horses such as Clydesdales. This was supposedly important because of the predominantly clay soils of Cleveland didn't stick to their legs, but in fact on the heavy soils a pair of Shires or Clydesdales were needed to pull a plough⁶.

The rise of the railways spelled the death of the coaching trade, and so brought about a vast reduction in the numbers of Cleveland Bays. By the end of the century the breed was heading for extinction, and the Cleveland Bay Horse Society was formed in 1884 to preserve the breed⁷. The inaugural meetings were held in the Black Lion Hotel, Stockton on Tees, where the first president, the Right Honourable James Lowther MP was elected, with William Scarth Dixon as secretary. The Society listed stallions in a Stud Book, and later registered mares. The Pease family were strong supporters of the new society.

Cleveland Bays were popular with the British Army. Smaller Cleveland Bays were used to carry British troopers, and larger members of the breed pulled gun carriages. Sadly, many were lost during the First World War.

By the middle of the twentieth century, the breed was again under threat. At one point, only five studs remained. Then Her Majesty the Queen made her Cleveland Bay 'Mulgrave Supreme' available at public stud, and interest was revived. The Duke of Edinburgh drove a team of Cleveland Bays in events. This revival was short lived, but as the new millennium dawned, the Cleveland Bay was establishing itself as a competition horse in show jumping, dressage and driving events.

Cleveland Bays in Great Ayton

By the end of the nineteenth century, every farm in Cleveland would have used Cleveland Bays. On the smaller hill farms, where only one horse would be kept, it would be a Cleveland Bay. The breed was capable of doing most farm jobs; ploughing (on the sandier and hence lighter land higher up towards the hills), hay making, pulling carts, and for riding and hunting⁸. Bill Cowley, the famous farmer of Goulton Grange at Potto, related the tale of his neighbour Arthur Bell who was ploughing with his Cleveland Bay⁵. The Hunt swept past in full cry, and the Cleveland Bay was

off after them, plough and all, so Arthur cut the traces, jumped on its back and went off after the fox. He was presented with its brush, and then returned to the ploughing!

On larger farms, and for ploughing the heavy local clay, there may have been heavier horses, such as Clydesdales.

We know that horses were bred at Aireyholme in 1881⁹ since James Foster, a horse breaker, was lodging at the farm.

It is difficult to know just how many Cleveland Bays there were in Great Ayton; animals do not feature in census returns, and the Finance Act (1909-10) surveys only covered farm buildings and land. The 1941 Farm Surveys¹⁰ did include livestock, but the horses were not divided into individual breeds. The 1941 surveys recorded 143 horses on the farms of Great Ayton and Little Ayton (and, incidentally, just 13 tractors). The largest farms, East Angrove and Stanley Grange, each had 9 horses, the smallest farms had one or two. It is reasonable to assume that a good proportion of these horses would have been Cleveland Bays.

The Hutchinsons at Bank House Farm

Bank House Farm was situated at the top of Dikes Lane, just to the south of Gribdale Terrace. In the twentieth century, it ceased to be a farm and became two dwellings, the original Bank House Farm house remained and the large barn was converted into 'Red Roofs'.

For several generations, the Hutchinson family farmed the 100 acres of Bank House Farm. In 1871¹¹ the tenant farmer there was Thomas Hutchinson senior, with his wife and four children. Although chiefly occupied as a farmer, Thomas had a thriving business breeding Cleveland Bay horses¹². His son, Thomas junior, shared his father's interest in horses, and in 1885 (when he would have been 29) he was advertising the services of *Young Recruit*, a rising 2 year-old pure bred Cleveland Bay with an impeccable pedigree¹³. *Young Recruit* served mares for one pound and ten shillings, with an extra half crown for the groom. Prospective customers were to note that no business was done at Great Ayton Banks on Sundays.

When Thomas junior died, his obituary included the following comment on Cleveland Bays.¹⁴

“The name of Thomas Hutchinson appears with regular frequency in the earlier volumes of the Cleveland Bay Horse Society's Stud Books. Mr Hutchinson had lived in an age when, almost without exception, every farm in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire had one or more Clevelands as part of their economy. When these horses were annually exported in their hundreds to the States, Mr Hutchinson's stock was eagerly sought after by American buyers. Amongst those which he exported were the appropriately named *American Friend*, *American Queen* and *Young Recruit*, *Young Volunteer* and *Diamond Merchant*. In the is connection, Mr Hutchinson was offered, by a prominent American breeder, an important position as manager of his considerable stud, but devotion to his then ageing parents led to his declining the offer.”

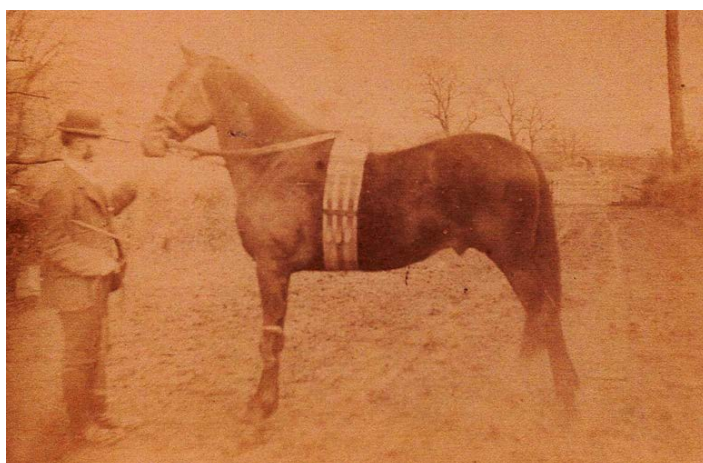
Some of the Cleveland Bays owned by Thomas Hutchinson junior

Source: Incomplete set of *The Cleveland Bay Stud Book* from 1880 onwards¹⁴.

Name	Date foaled	Bred by	Property of
<i>Fan</i> (mare)	4 June 1873	George Pickering Summer Hill Farm	Thomas Hutchinson jun
<i>Yorkshire Lass</i> (mare)	10 June 1881	George Pickering Summer Hill Farm	1) Thomas Hutchinson jun 2) William Hutchinson
Young Volunteer (stallion)	6 June 1882	George Pickering Summer Hill Farm	Thomas Hutchinson jun
<i>Young Recruit</i> (stallion)	14 June 1883	Thomas Hutchinson jun	Thomas Hutchinson jun
<i>American Friend</i> (stallion)	20 May 1884	Thomas Hutchinson jun	1) Thomas Hutchinson jun 2) William Hutchinson, Gunby, Selby 3) W M Fields & Brother, Cedar Falls, Iowa, USA*
<i>Grace Darling</i> (mare)	18 May 1885	Thomas Hutchinson jun	Thomas Hutchinson jun
<i>Diamond Merchant</i> (stallion)	4 April 1887	Thomas Hutchinson jun	Thomas Hutchinson jun
<i>Tradesman</i> (stallion)	15 May 1887	Mrs Webster Commondale	Thomas Hutchinson jun
<i>Yorkshire Tyke</i> (stallion)	14 June 1887	Thomas Hutchinson jun	Thomas Hutchinson jun
<i>American Queen</i> (mare)	29 April 1888	Thomas Hutchinson jun	Thomas Hutchinson jun
<i>Plantagenet</i> (stallion)	27 June 1888	Thomas Hutchinson jun	Thomas Hutchinson jun
<i>Ayton Lad</i> (stallion)	1895	Thomas Hutchinson jun	Thomas Hutchinson jun

The Americans W M Fields and Brother owned other Cleveland bays; *Egton Boy* and *Prince Albert Victor* are both mentioned in the *Cleveland Bay Stud Book*.

Thomas Hutchinson with two of his Cleveland Bay stallions



1885 *Recruit*

~~YOUNG RECRUIT~~

THE PROPERTY OF

THOMAS HUTCHINSON, Junr., Great Ayton Banks.

R
YOUNG RECRUIT is a pure bred Cleveland Bay, rising 2 years old; he is a rich Bay Horse with black legs clear of white, with superior action, free from all blemishes. He was got by Fidius dius, Fidius dius by Mr. J. Pearson's Old Roseberry, Airyhome.

R
YOUNG RECRUIT was bred by the owner. Old Roseberry was got by Wonderful Lad. Fidius dius's dam by Grand Turk, grandam by Old Barnaby, g. grandam by Old Roseberry. YOUNG RECRUIT's dam by Identical, grandam by Cleveland Lad, g g. d. dam by Old Volunteer.

R
YOUNG RECRUIT is a registered Horse in the Cleveland Bay Stud Book.

R
YOUNG RECRUIT's Dam is a registered Mare in the Cleveland Bay Stud Book.

R
YOUNG RECRUIT will serve Mares this season, 1885, at his own stable, at a fee of £1 10/-, and 2/6 the groom to be paid first time of serving; 15/- to be paid in the first week in July, and the rest when the mare proves in foal. If not paid in the first week in July, 5/- extras will be charged for collecting.

R
All Mares tried by YOUNG RECRUIT and served by any other horse will be liable for the full season fees.

I call your attention particularly that no business is done here on Sundays.

The Dam of Fidius dius took prizes when a foal in 1863, and every year up to 1872. She took the first prize at Whitby in 1865, among the Coaching two year olds fillies, and at the same Show a silver cup among the mares of the Cleveland or Coaching breed. Her first foal in 1866 took the first prize in South Stockton for Cleveland Bay Colts, and likewise prizes at other places. In 1872 she took the first prize of £10 at Redcar, and her foal (own sister to Fidius dius,) the first prize amongst the Cleveland Bays; they were shown other three times in the same year and took six prizes.

The Mares has taken altogether above thirty prizes, and her stock have all been winners. Roseberry's dam and grandam's stock have won about one hundred prizes, thus proving YOUNG RECRUIT to be one of the best bred Cleveland Bay Horses in England.

Recruit
The Stock of Fidius dius have taken prizes wherever shown.

References

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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cleveland_Bay
- 2 Cleveland Bay Horse Society
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John Walker Ord
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- 4 Lipizzaner Stables Museum, Reitschulgasse, Vienna
- 5 *Farming in Yorkshire*
Bill Cowley, The Dalesman Publishing Company Ltd, 1972
- 6 Oral testimony from Alan Atkinson, 107 Wheatlands, Great Ayton
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- 7 *Cleveland Bay Horse Society*
Darlington & Stockton Times, 23 February 1884
- 8 Cleveland Bay Horse Society
www.equine-world.co.uk
- 9 1881 Census records at
www.greatayton.wikidot.com
- 10 Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Agricultural Returns 4 June 1941
Reference MAF 32/1087/436
National Archives, Kew
- 11 1871 Census records at
www.greatayton.wikidot.com
- 12 Oral evidence from Bill Hutchinson, 130 Newton Road, Great Ayton
Collected by Ian Pearce on 13 October 2001
- 13 Advertising card owned by Bill Hutchinson
- 14 *The Cleveland Bay Stud Book* (various volumes held in Stokesley Library)
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Cleveland Bay Horse Society
- 15 Darlington & Stockton Times, 18 September 1943