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John Chapman's Maps of Newmarket

C.P. Lewis

The land surveyor and engraver John Chapman (d. 1778) produced two splendid maps of Newmarket which repay detailed study into the topography of the town and the heath in the late eighteenth century.¹ The *Plan of Newmarket* (Plate 1) shows the streets and lanes of the town, names public buildings and inns, and locates two dozen of the training stables belonging to noblemen and gentlemen.² The *Map of Newmarket Heath* (Plate 2) depicts the town in miniature, the racecourses on the heath, and ten surrounding villages.³ Both are fine specimens of map-making from a competent surveyor and accomplished engraver. Together, they provide a point of entry to the town's history at a time when Newmarket's split personality as small market town and capital city of English racing was becoming acute. The personal names make the maps a valuable source for the social history of the town as well as for its physical fabric. Their utility is enhanced by the fact that after Chapman's death they were revised and reissued in 1787. This article, however, is concerned not so much with the maps as historical evidence but rather with the circumstances of their creation, since it is only by discovering when and why they were made that we can make best use of their picture of Newmarket.

Neither of Chapman's maps is dated, but they are datable by the terms in which the antiquary Richard Gough wrote of them in the

Additions and Corrections tacked on to his *Anecdotes of British Topography*, published in 1768: 'John Chapman has just engraved a plan of Newmarket in one sheet; with the Heath, in two sheets, expressing the several courses, stands, roads, and every thing remarkable on it, from an actual survey.'⁴ There is no doubt that Gough was describing the two maps under discussion, particularly as the heath map was indeed printed from two copper plates on two sheets of paper, glued together vertically. Gough's knowledge of the maps means that they must have appeared no later than 1768, though they might conceivably be earlier. Gough's undated preface gives no clue to the chronology of the writing and publication of the *Anecdotes*, though the insertion of the note about John Chapman into the Additions rather than the body of the book, and the speed of eighteenth-century typesetting and book production, strongly imply that the words 'has just engraved' should be taken as referring to 1768 rather than any earlier year.

It is also important to note that Chapman had produced two maps from one survey. This point about their contemporaneity was obscured when Gough brought out a second edition of the *Anecdotes*, under a different title, some years later: 'John Chapman engraved a plan of Newmarket in one sheet; with the Heath, in two sheets, expressing the several courses, stands, roads, and every thing remarkable on it, from an actual survey. Also a plan of the town.'⁵ The sentence added at the end could

¹ Much help and encouragement in the preparation of this article has been given by Dr A.S. Bendall of Emmanuel College, Cambridge. Mr R.H. Fairclough, map librarian of Cambridge University Library, discovered the crucial reference in note 4 below, and discussed the maps with me at length.

² I have consulted the copies in Cambridge University Library, Maps.aa.17.g.19; and British Library, Maps K.8, no. 74.

³ B.L., Maps K.8, no. 70; C.U.L. houses only a photocopy (Maps.aa.86.95.1¹).

⁴ [R. Gough], *Anecdotes of British Topography, or, An Historical Account of What Has Been Done for Illustrating the Topographical Antiquities of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1768): 705.

⁵ [R. Gough], *British Topography, or, An Historical Account of What Has Been Done for Illustrating the Topographical Antiquities of Great Britain and Ireland*, 2 vols. (London, 1780), 1: 207.





Plate 2. John Chapman's Map of Newmarket Heath, as first published in 1768.

easily mislead the reader into dissociating the town plan from the survey of the heath, and perhaps into thinking that only the latter should be dated to 1768 or a little earlier. A consideration of other evidence for the date of the maps is therefore justified.

Gough's implied date can be corroborated from the contents of the two maps, since both incorporated the names of identifiable people, and the heath map gave details of the annual programme of racing at Newmarket, in which there were datable changes during the third quarter of the eighteenth century. The internal evidence, though not affording a precise date, is consistent with Gough's 1768.

Eleven noblemen are named on the *Plan of Newmarket* in an inset key to the racing stables scattered throughout the town: the dukes of Grafton, Ancaster, Kingston, Bridgwater, and Northumberland, the Marquess of Rockingham, the earls of Eglinton, March, Orford, and Gower, and Viscount Bolingbroke. Chapman engraved only their titles, not their forenames, so they can be used for dating the map only from the small number of peerage creations and extinctions spanned by their lives and deaths. Those circumstances do, nevertheless, indicate a narrow range in the period between 22 October 1766, when Hugh Smithson was created Duke of Northumberland, and 23 September 1773, when the last Duke of Kingston died.⁶

The fourteen gentlemen named in the same inset are Messrs Panton, Popham, Wentworth, Vernon, Crofts, Burton, Errett, Adams, Tuting, Larkins, Stamford, South, Marshall, and Johnson. Without forenames it would be futile to attempt to assign a date to the map on the basis of their careers on the Turf. Thomas Panton (d. 1808), Keeper of the King's Horses, and Richard Vernon, M.P. (d. 1800), a founding member of the Jockey Club and in time regarded as 'Father of the Turf', are the ones whose memory has survived best.⁷ The others can all be traced in racing and town records of the time. For instance, Thomas Stamford and William Crofts can be identified as owners of stables in Shagbag, a corner of the town at the south-eastern end of High Street which

happened to lie within the well-documented manor of Saxton Hall in Woodditton parish.⁸

The date of the town plan can be narrowed further by its dedication to William Douglas (d. 1810), Earl of March and from 1778 Duke of Queensberry and the increasingly notorious lecher 'Old Q'. Among his offices specified in the dedication, the patent for his appointment as Vice-Admiral of Scotland was issued on 22 August 1767.⁹ On internal evidence alone, the town plan could therefore be dated in the period 1767–73. The Earl's Admiralty appointment fixes the earliest moment by which the town plan could have come to Richard Gough's notice and thus dates the map to late 1767 or 1768.

The heath map was dedicated to the Duke of Ancaster and named twelve other individuals: five noblemen and gentlemen with stables in the country round Newmarket and seven other landowners. The stable owners were the Duke of Bridgwater at Old Hare Park, Lord Grosvenor at New Hare Park, Lord Farnham and Sir John Moore at Six Mile Bottom, and Captain Shafto at Valley House. The landowners were Thomas Watson Ward of Wilbraham Temple, Soame Jenyns of Bottisham, Charles Alex of Swaffham Prior, Mr Strong of Exning, Charles Manners (Lord Roos) of Cheveley Park, John Fleming of Stetchworth and Christopher Jeafferson of Dullingham. The names as a whole secure the date of the heath map between 13 December 1766, when the Duke of Ancaster was made Master of the Horse (an office alluded to in the dedication),¹⁰ and 18 October 1770, when Charles Manners succeeded his father in the courtesy title of Marquess of Granby and so dropped the style of Lord Roos.¹¹ Again taking Gough into account, they put the map in 1767 or 1768 (or the last fortnight of 1766).

As for the race meetings, the heath map mentions the July meeting, a regular fixture from 1765 after a single match in July 1764, but not the Houghton or Craven meetings, first staged in November 1770 and March 1771 respectively.¹² The July meeting was a distinctive fixture. Whereas the other fixed meetings at Newmarket began on the Monday and lasted all week, the July meeting was

⁶ G.E.C[okayne] and others, *The Complete Peerage*, new ed., 12 vols. (London, 1910–59) I: 128–9 (Ancaster); II: 207–8 (Bolingbroke), 314 (Bridgwater); V: 23–4 (Eglinton); VI: 38 (Gower), 46–8 (Grafton); VII: 308–9 (Kingston); VIII: 457–8 (March); IX: 743–4 (Northumberland); X: 86–7 (Orford); XI: 60–2 (Rockingham).

⁷ *Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. L. Stephens and S. Lee.

⁸ Cambridgeshire Record Office, Saxton Hall court books: R 52/5/4a, ff.22–3, 30–1, 55 and v, 79–80; R 52/5/4b, ff.67 and v, 71.

⁹ Public Record Office, HCA 51/2 (Index to Admiralty Muniment Books): 309. The date is wrongly given as August 1766 in the entry for Douglas in *D.N.B.*

¹⁰ *Complete Peerage*, I: 128–9.

¹¹ *Ibid.* XI: 269.

¹² *Victoria History of the Counties of England: A History of the County of Cambridge*, V: 282.

normally held on the 10th and 11th of the month, whatever days of the week they happened to be (apart from Sunday). This led to difficulties when arranging matches and sweepstakes years in advance, as was the normal practice. The keeper of the match-book clearly did not have the use of a perpetual calendar. Prospective races listed in 1766 included ones for Thursday 10 July 1767 and Thursday 10 July 1768, dates which were actually a Friday and a Sunday. Owners soon came to plan for the uncertain vagaries of the real calendar: a typical entry reads, 'If the 10th of July 1770, happens to be on a Saturday or Sunday, then the match to be on the 11th or 12th'. The July meeting actually took place on the 10th and 11th in each of the first three years when it was a regular feature, 1765 (Wednesday and Thursday), 1766 (Thursday and Friday), and 1767 (Friday and Saturday). In 1768, the 10th fell on a Sunday and so the meeting was staged on Monday 11th and Tuesday 12th. In 1769, it might have taken place on Monday 10th and Tuesday 11th but was actually held on the Wednesday and Thursday, for no apparent reason.¹³ These variations would have been helpful for dating the map if Chapman had not been content to record only the basic formula, 'July meeting the 10th and 11th of July'.

Beyond the contents of the maps, there is also the external evidence of Chapman's advertisement, 'Proposals for Publishing by Subscription, engraved from an Actual Survey, a Map of Newmarket'.¹⁴ Chapman's London agent for the map was Mrs Mary Ann Rocque, widow of the great cartographer John Rocque, at premises near Old Round Court north of the Strand.¹⁵ This dates the proposal between

1762, when John Rocque died, and the end of 1769, when Mrs. Rocque left that address.¹⁶ The proposal might well have predated the publication of the map by some time, especially since it expects only one map when Chapman in fact decided to make two.

To summarize the dating evidence, there is nothing in the maps themselves or in the proposal to contradict Gough's date of 1768 for both the town plan and the map of the heath. They were therefore made at the very beginning of Chapman's career as a surveyor and engraver, since no independent work by him earlier than 1768 is known, though he had apparently been employed by Peter Burdett on the survey of Derbyshire before 1767. At about the same time or shortly afterwards he was involved in underwriting the publication of a map of county Durham and engraving illustrations for a history of Essex, and his later work as surveyor and engraver included county maps of Essex, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire and Lancashire, besides maps of Orford marshes on the Suffolk coast and the liberty of Havering in Essex. His career thus saw a progression from small jobs to the county surveys which represented the pinnacle of the eighteenth-century map-maker's craft, with Newmarket as the means by which he levered himself from the lower level to the higher.¹⁷

John Chapman lived, apparently for all the time that we know about him, at Dalham in Suffolk, only six miles from Newmarket.¹⁸ His residence might be taken as an explanation of his first maps, though we could never know for certain whether he chose Newmarket because it was near, or moved to Dalham in order to work on Newmarket. The necessity of choosing between those two glosses can be circumvented for a moment, and perhaps in part answered later, by concentrating on Chapman's personal circumstances in 1768, rather than his place of residence. So far as we know, he was a talented surveyor and engraver without a map to his name or indeed a name known at all to the map-buying public. How did such a man launch himself into the lucrative but risky business of making maps?

The choice of Newmarket for a first venture needs to be seen from the point of view of the economics of the trade. A man might make a

¹³ R. Heber, *An Historical List of Horse-Matches Run; and of Plates and Prizes Run for in Great Britain and Ireland in the Year 1765* (London, 1766); 1766 (London, 1767); 1767 (London, 1768); 1768 (London, 1769); the lists for 1769 and 1770 appeared under two rival imprints: W. Tuting and T. Fawcener, *The Sporting Calendar: Containing an Account of the Plates, Matches, and Sweepstakes that have been Run for in Great-Britain and Ireland in the Year, 1769* (London, 1770); 1770 (London, 1771); B. Walker, *An Historical List of Horse-Matches, Plates and Prizes, Run for in Great-Britain and Ireland, in the Year 1769* (London, 1770); 1770 (London, 1771). In each case the list comprises a record of race results for the previous year and a list of races arranged for coming seasons.

¹⁴ Title quoted in A.S. Mason, 'In search of Chapman', *Romford Record*, XV (1983): 7.

¹⁵ For the location of Old Round Court, destroyed when Agar Street was built in the 1830s, see Rocque's own map of London, reprinted as *The A to Z of Georgian London*, ed. R. Hyde (London Topographical Society, 1982, publication no. 126); *The London*

Encyclopaedia, ed. B. Weinreb and C. Hibbert (London, 1983): 830.

¹⁶ Mason, 'Chapman': 8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*: 7–10 and errata slip; for the work in Derbyshire (not mentioned by Mason) see J.B. Harley, *A Map of the County of Lancashire, 1786*, by William Yates (Liverpool, 1968): 9.

¹⁸ Mason, 'Chapman': 7, 9.

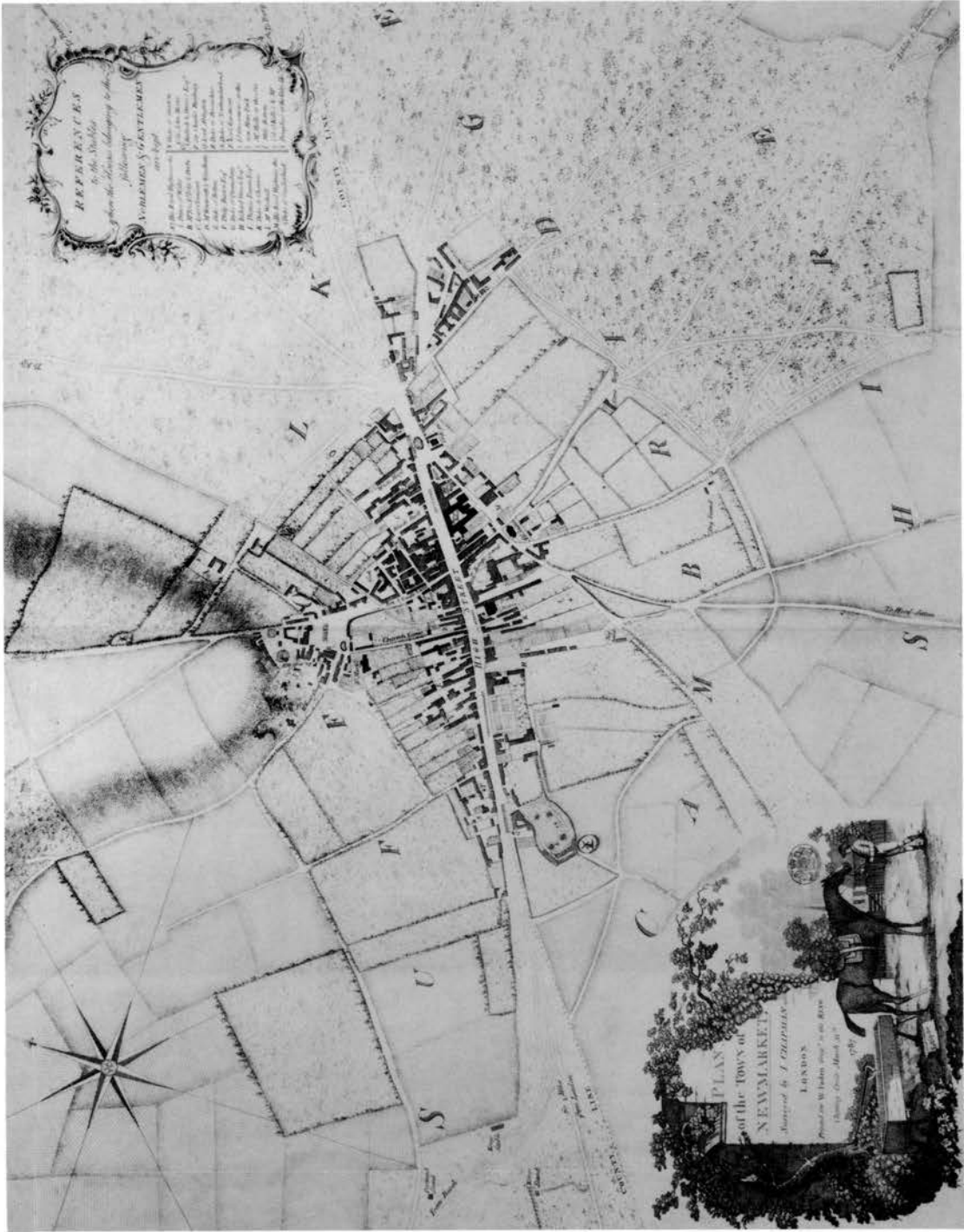


Plate 3. John Chapman's Plan of Newmarket, as republished by William Faden in 1787.



Plate 4. John Chapman's Map of Newmarket Heath, as republished by William Faden in 1787.

decent living from drawing inclosure maps, estate plans, and canal surveys, but they were not work for a skilled engraver. Many engravers were content to recycle earlier maps, adding nothing to already inaccurate surveys but their own imprints, but that was not surveyor's work. Anyone possessing the hard-won skills of both surveyor and engraver, and with ambition and confidence in his own abilities, would want to use all his talents to the best effect. County maps were prestigious and fashionable, but preparing one from scratch was a huge undertaking that devoured capital and could ruin the ablest of surveyors.¹⁹ Town plans had a much smaller market, and generally speaking there would be sufficient sales only in a larger place that would take correspondingly more time and money to survey. Newmarket was an exception: the most aristocratic small town in England, crowded with titled and wealthy residents and visitors, a household name in the households of the horse-racing classes.²⁰ Probably nowhere else in England could a small town and its hinterland, easy to survey on grounds of size, yield so many potential sales.

There is a further important point to be made about the market for Chapman's maps of Newmarket. Between perhaps the late 1730s and the mid-1740s the racing season on the heath had almost come to a halt, to be revived c. 1750 by the members of the newly-formed Jockey Club, a coterie of mostly young aristocrats and gentlemen intent on the pleasures of the Turf. The earliest members were almost all of one generation, that of the dukes of Cumberland (b. 1721) and Hamilton (b. 1724), the earls of Eglinton (b. 1723) and March (b. 1725), Richard Vernon (b. 1726), Earl Grosvenor (b. 1731), and Thomas Panton (b. 1731). By 1768 death had removed some of the founders, though the survivors were men in their prime. Remarkably, it was still the case that no more than 25 years' difference in age separated the oldest nobleman named on Chapman's maps (the Duke of Kingston, b. 1711) from the youngest (the Duke of Bridgwater, b. 1736). Chapman's market, in short, was an exceptionally close group of friends and rivals with mutual interests far closer than any county community of the mid-eighteenth century. If one or two could be persuaded to support a map designed to

display the splendours of Newmarket Heath, they might well all do so.

I have been speculating about what may have gone through John Chapman's mind. If he articulated the same thoughts and plumped for Newmarket without the benefit of hindsight, he was showing a keen sense of the business on which he was about to embark.²¹ Time spent at Dalham before beginning the survey may have given him an instinctive grasp of the magnificent business opportunity which Newmarket offered to an aspiring map-maker.

Chapman nevertheless hedged his bets. Although the maps were produced together, they are not a pair. They are in different sizes, printed on different sized paper, and use varying scripts and decorative devices. The north points, for example, share some similarities but are different, superficially a waste of the engraver's ingenuity. The casual observer would not necessarily guess that the two maps were prepared by the same hand at one time.

Closer observation reveals the crucial link that they are from the same survey, as Gough implied. The town of Newmarket is shown on both maps and at very different sizes, but despite the great reduction necessary for the heath map, the town there conforms exactly to the larger plan in the shapes of surrounding closes, the course of streets, and the location of buildings (compare Plates 1 and 5). Although Chapman had to sacrifice some detail for the heath map, there are certain buildings with distinctive outlines that are as clear in miniature as they are at the more ample scale.

There is a second technical link between the maps which is not immediately obvious: connected scales. The point is difficult to prove conclusively because of Chapman's choice of very irregular scales. The 200-yard scale bar on the town plan measures approximately $2^{11}/_{64}$ inches, and the mile scale on the map of the heath approximately $3^{29}/_{32}$ inches, representing scales of about 1:3315 and 1:16,220 respectively. The larger scale is thus something around 4.8928 times the smaller scale. Allowing for paper distortion, ink smudging, the thickness of the lines forming the start and end of the scale bars, and the difficulties now of taking accurate measurements, it is reasonable to regard the heath map as having been engraved at one-fifth of the scale of the town plan. A connection in scales makes sense of the physical similarities of the large and small outlines of the town:

¹⁹ J.B. Harley, 'The re-mapping of England, 1750–1800', *Imago Mundi*, XIX (1965): 56–67.

²⁰ P. May, *The Changing Face of Newmarket, 1600–1760* (privately printed, 1984); R. Onslow, *Headquarters: A History of Newmarket and its Racing* (Cambridge, 1983): 15–45.

²¹ Mason, 'Chapman': 10, is unconvinced by Chapman's business ability, on the basis on a different episode capable of other interpretations.



Plate. 5. Detail of the town of Newmarket
from John Chapman's *Map of Newmarket Heath*, 1768 edition.

Chapman presumably used a pantograph or a grid to scale down from the town plan for the purposes of including an outline of the town on the heath map.

The motive for introducing stylistic differences in lettering, layout and decoration is clearly indicated by the separate dedications of the maps: the town to William Douglas, Earl of March, and the heath to Peregrine Bertie, Duke of Ancaster. The maps were a business initiative, intended to attract the attention of purchasers and patrons to the work of a new cartographer. Just as much as convention required the flowery language of the dedications, so business sense demanded that the two men be offered different products. In deciding to engrave maps of Newmarket town and heath, John Chapman thus fed demand in a natural but unexploited outlet close to his home base, and skilfully fashioned two saleable commodities at the cost of only one survey.

The commercial success of Chapman's first independent business venture is impossible to ascertain. His proposal invited subscriptions, half the ten shilling price to be paid in and 13 advance.²² The 24 names on the town plan

on the map of the heath ought to have guaranteed orders for at least 37 maps and brought in at least £18 10s. It is anybody's guess how much Chapman laid out directly in surveying, engraving, printing, advertising, and selling the maps, or how much he expected to earn as profit, though the subscriptions which came in were clearly sufficient to give him the confidence to engrave the plates and have the maps printed.

It is also difficult to judge the success of the Newmarket maps as a career move. In the year after their appearance, 1769, Chapman was surveying Orford marshes in Suffolk, and during the years 1769–71 he worked for Lionel Hassall, drawing and engraving views of Essex. The undoubted technical and artistic success of the Newmarket maps was rewarded only in 1772 when the established cartographer Peter André joined Chapman in beginning the survey for a county map of Essex.²³ Thereafter John Chapman was an established figure himself, and it was probably only premature death in 1778 that stopped him from figuring more prominently than he does in the story of late eighteenth-century map-making.

²² *Ibid.*: 7.

²³ *Ibid.*: 7–8.

The afterlife of Chapman's maps demonstrates the continuing importance of the market in determining what maps were produced. The plates were auctioned along with the rest of Chapman's stock-in-trade after his widow's death in 1784,²⁴ and came into the hands of William Faden, a leading map-maker, who reissued them in March 1787 (Plates 3 and 4). The alterations which Faden had made were probably the minimum consistent with attracting new sales. The lists of owners of racing stables and the details of race meetings were brought up to date, the latter not carefully enough, since although the Craven meeting at the start of the year was added, the Houghton meeting at the end of the year was not. Changing the names of the stable owners would have needed a certain amount of effort in researching the facts and re-engraving the plates, but Faden did not take any great pains to bring the map up to date in other respects. The only substantial alterations to the town plan were the addition of three buildings, all connected with horses and their owners: the Portland stand on the heath, and new buildings at the Prince of Wales' stables north of High Street and at Sir John Moore's in Shagbag. It is difficult to believe that Newmarket changed so little in twenty years. Both maps were retitled, naming Chapman as the surveyor and Faden as the publisher, and dispensing with any dedication. By 1787, Faden held the post of Geographer to the King and did not need to flatter the aristocracy so obviously as Chapman did as an unknown newcomer twenty years before. Faden also altered the decorative vignettes, catering for public sentiment by including on the town plan an engraving of the greatest racehorse of the age, Eclipse.²⁵

The reissue of the maps, just as much as the original enterprise, shows that Faden and Chapman were in the business of creating and selling maps tailored to a particular market. The difficulty inherent in selling maps of Newmarket which featured leading patrons of the Turf and the dates of race meetings is obvious: they were subject to change so rapid that the maps were soon out of date. To take the eleven noblemen named on Chapman's town plan: within a year of publication the Earl of Eglinton was dead (though succeeded by a brother), and within five the dukedom of Kingston had lapsed and the Earl of Orford had gone mad. It was the same with Faden's re-issue. A map featuring prominently the Prince

of Wales' Newmarket stables was a positive embarrassment after 1791, the year in which the Stewards of the Jockey Club ruled that the Prince's jockey had pulled his horse Escape in one race in order to secure favourable odds in another, as a result of which the Prince sold all his racehorses and left the Turf for ever.²⁶

No-one would buy such maps as these except fresh from the press. To make periodic revisions of the legend in the hope of new sales was impracticable. The changing personnel of racing therefore shortened the lifespan of individual editions of the maps to an unacceptable degree. Worse, the changing structure of racing undermined the market as a whole. The 1780s were precisely the decade which saw the establishment of the first public training stables in the town, owned and managed by middle-class professionals who trained horses for anyone who cared to pay.²⁷ Their rise mirrored the slow decline of the private aristocratic training establishments. The market for a town plan simply disappeared as a result, and there was no further edition of Chapman's maps, nor indeed of any other town plan of Newmarket designed to appeal to the leading patrons of the Turf.

Appendix

Description of the Maps

1. *Plan of Newmarket* [1768] (Plate 1)
Title To the Right Honourable William Earl of March & Ruglen, Baron Douglas of Nidpath, Lymn & Maner, Vice Admiral of Scotland, one of the Lords of His Majesty's Bed Chamber, Knight of the Most Antient & Noble Order of the Thistle &c. &c. This plan of Newmarket is humbly inscribed by his Lordship's most humble & obedient servant I. Chapman.

Size of paper 538 mm high x 692 mm wide

Size of border 505 mm high x 650 mm wide

Scale 200 yards = 2 ¹¹/₆₄ inches (55.5 mm)

2. *Map of Newmarket Heath* [1768] (Plate 2)
Title To the high, puissant, and most noble prince, Peregrine, Duke of Ancaster and Kesteven, Marquis and Earl of Lindsey, Baron Willoughby of Eresby, Hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain of England, Master of the Horse, Lord Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the county of Lincoln, &c. This map of Newmarket Heath, & the adjacent villages, is humbly inscribed, by His Grace's most humble & most obedient servant I. Chapman.

²⁴ *Ibid.*: 9–10.

²⁵ B.L., Maps K.8, nos 71, 75.

²⁶ Onslow, *Headquarters*: 30–2.

²⁷ V.C.H. *Cambs.*, V: 281.

Size of paper 675 mm high x 1007 mm wide
Size of border 651 mm high x 982 mm wide
Scale 1 mile = $3 \frac{29}{32}$ inches (99.5 mm)

3 *Plan of town of Newmarket* (1787) (Plate 3)
Title Plan, of the town of Newmarket, surveyed by I. Chapman. London: printed for W. Faden, Geographer to the King, Charing Cross, March 31st 1787.

Size of paper 531 mm high x 684 mm wide
Size of border 505 mm high x 650 mm wide
Scale no scale shown, actually same as no. 1

4 *Plan of Newmarket Heath* (1787) (Plate 4)
Title A plan, of Newmarket Heath, and the

country adjacent; describing all the race courses now used. Surveyed by I. Chapman. London: printed for W. Faden, Geographer to the King, Charing Cross, March 31st 1787.

Size of paper 678 mm high x 1115 mm wide
Size of border 651 mm high x 982 mm wide
Scale 1 mile = $3 \frac{29}{32}$ inches (99.5 mm)

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