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Horse Racing and British Society in the Long Eighteenth Century



Frontispiece: Thomas Rowlandson (1757–1827) ‘The Jockey Club’, 1811, courtesy of the Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017.

Horse Racing and British Society in the Long Eighteenth Century

Mike Huggins

THE BOYDELL PRESS

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Further Matter

Currency and its value: English eighteenth-century currency was pounds (£). Twenty shillings (s) made a pound; and twelve pence (d) made a shilling. However, in the racing world the guinea (twenty-one shillings) was often used.

Average English national family yearly income in 1688 was about £39, in 1760 about £46 and in 1803 about £93, but for most families very little was discretionary – it was spent on necessities. The late-century period was one of inflation: £100 in 1755 would have purchased £18,578 worth of goods in 2011. In 1775, £100 would have purchased £13,175 worth of goods in 2011; in 1795 £9,842; and in 1815 £7,320. (See R. D.Hume, 'The Value of Money in Eighteenth-Century England: Incomes, Prices, Buying Power – and Some Problems in Cultural Economics', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 77, 4 (2015), 373–416; Grahame Allen, 'Inflation: The Value of the Pound 1750–2011 RESEARCH PAPER 12/31 29 May 2012', House of Commons Library).

Distances: one English mile was 1.6 kilometres (km). Eight furlongs (f.) made one mile.

Weights: one English stone (st) is 5.35 kilogrammes (kg); 14 pounds (lb) made one stone.

For those readers whose interests are in the history of sport rather than the long eighteenth century, and who may be unfamiliar with early modern spelling and punctuation, quotations are in modern form.

In discussion of horses' ages, it should be noted that all horses took their age from Mayday onwards of their birth year during the eighteenth century, not from 1 January.