



# THE SURTEESIAN 2019-20

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# INTRODUCTION

*By the Chairman*

It’s an over-used metaphor, but 2021 has been like hitching on an Ivor Williams, in the dark.

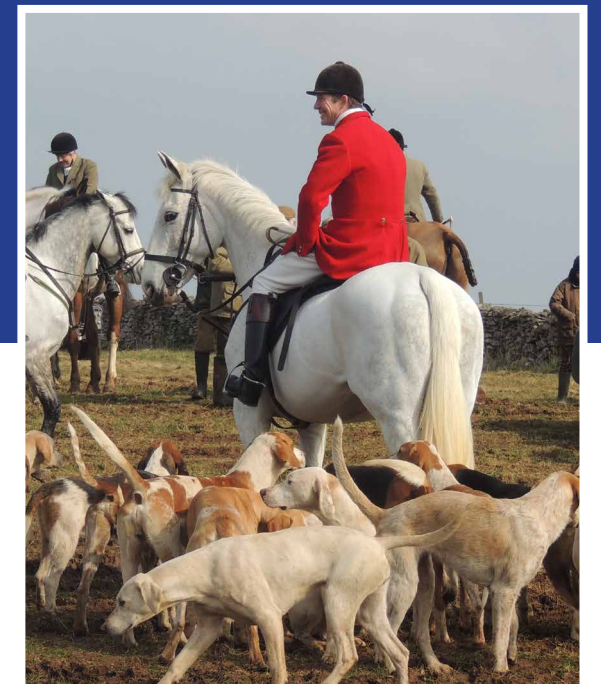
Having reversed to the right place, you stoop forward. You haven’t reversed to the right place. Inexplicably, you feel capable of moving 675kgs of steel up and sideways. Your back goes. In that moment, the icy rain ... that has been waiting on the trailer roof like a Welsh hill tribe... leaps down the back of your neck.

For the Society, the Northern trip to Nantclwyd was the joyous clunk before Corona splashed down our collective backs. With their hospitality, their kindness and their forbearance, two great families of foxhunting - Naylor-Leyland and Willoughby - gave us some superb memories before the Government Lockdowns started.

Since then, we had to scratch on the AGM, but then bravely managed micro-dinners of the Surtees heifer up and down the country, thanks to an unbowed membership. The icy splosh put paid to our 2021 Northern Trip at Sir Humphry Wakefield’s, though.

“  
Finally, my beloved  
’earers, one plea -  
when this is all over,  
seize every opportunity  
that comes your way,  
with both hands.  
”

Of course Surtees dearly loved to see a muddled politician, as we read in Hillingdon Hall. In the absence of Surtees himself, Lord Sumption, whose mother Hedy was one of the founders of the RSSS, has been consistently nose down and stern up on the subject.



Captain Chelton RN and Colin Franklin sadly went aloft, but we have welcomed Mrs Anya Pardoe, Lady Georgiana Campbell and Sir Philip Naylor Leyland Bt to the Executive Committee.

A new-look Committee, then. And Charles Moore - in the only recorded instance of his being inconsiderate - was ennobled just after the letterheads were printed. We also brought back onto the shelves two smashing hunting books – ‘Mr Facey Romford’s Hounds’ by the great man with original illustrations, and ‘Come & Hunt’ by the Hon Charles Willoughby.

I cannot end without saying that it has been a battering period for hunting, of course. After Hunting Leaks no sane person can still support the “Everyone keep quiet or it might make things worse” mantra. Of course we have to act, in different ways, to try to bring about change before its too late. Whatever we can do as individuals, though, our firm commitment to keep hunting books in print is crucial. As history shows, you cannot destroy a thing if its literature keeps it alive.

I hope you are staying strong, seeing the funny side where you can and cheering up everyone around you. As Robert Smith Surtees would have done. Finally, my beloved ‘earers, one plea - when this is all over, seize every opportunity that comes your way, with both hands.

Rob Williams | Chairman



# SURTEES AND THE LAW

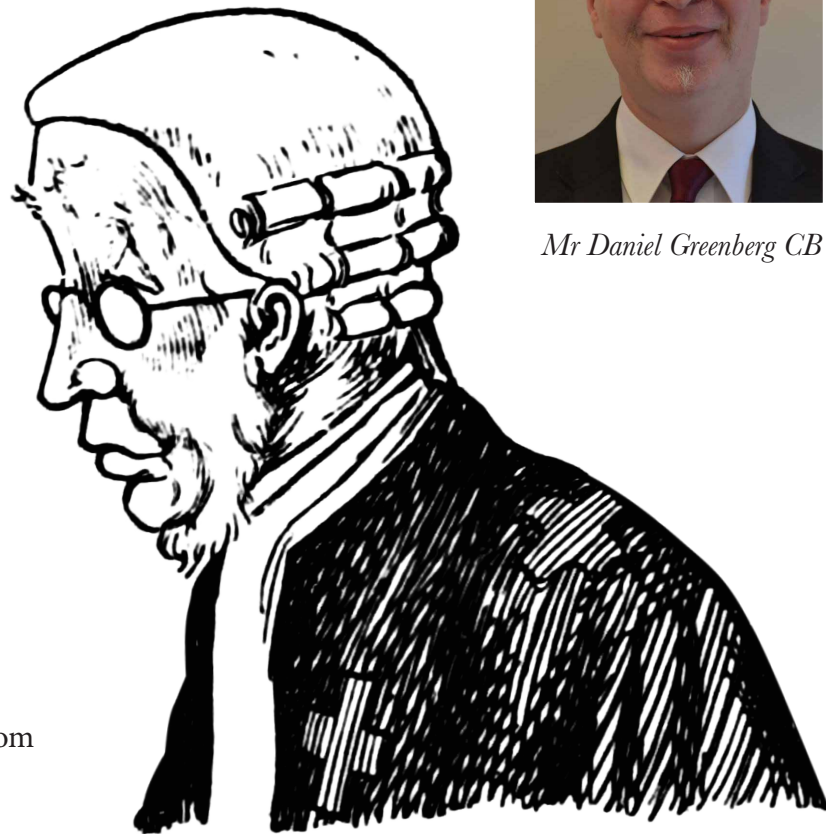
By Mr Daniel Greenberg CB

To anyone interested in the history of the law, the writings of Surtees are a treasure house; not so much because they provide technical information about legal history that is not available from other sources, but because his references to matters of law are woven into the fabric of his fiction in such a way as to give perhaps unparalleled glimpses of the social impact of the law in the 19th century.

Having been trained in the law, it is only to be expected that Surtees would have maintained an interest in it; but the value of the legal references in his writings is that he shows readers the law through the eyes of those who encountered it then in the course of their ordinary lives, and not from the technical perspective of a practitioner.

When Trollope gets excited by the law, it imperils the effectiveness of his narrative as he almost suspends the story so as to luxuriate in technical details that can be of little interest to the ordinary reader; and he fails even to attempt a realistic presentation of the social impact of those details at the time. The most egregious example is obviously John Caldigate, which disintegrates into a technical treatise on the law of bigamy and practically abandons the plot in the process. That may be the strongest example but there are many others: the Barchester Chronicles are frequently hijacked, for example, by technicalities of the law of simony in a way that may say more about the interests of the writer than either the probable interests of the reader or the writer's perception of the true social impact of the law at the time. Similarly, it is easy to imagine that many or most readers caught up in the story of the *Eustace Diamonds* skip over with a certain amount of frustration "Turtle Dove's" tortuous analysis of the law of heirlooms, in an effort to get back to the plot.

Not so Surtees: although both learned in the law and clearly interested in its social impact, he has no more illusions about its efficacy or glamour than did Dickens in *Pickwick* or *Bleak House*; but his treatment is equally frank while being incomparably



Mr Daniel Greenberg CB

economical and, perhaps, more effective as a result. For example, Dickens' and Surtees' treatments of the social impact of the law of breach of promise are similar, but Surtees' treatment is less forensic and more laconic; compare, for example, the casual reference in passing to Mr Jogglebury-Crowdey's "green and gold purse, a souvenir of Miss Smiler (the plaintiff in the breach of promise action, *Smiler v Jogglebury*)", with the rather more elaborate treatment of *Bardell v Pickwick*.

In general, Surtees is as clear about the unsatisfactory nature of litigation as was Dickens:

**“ The glorious uncertainty of the law has long been proverbial; but in no one of its multitudinous branches is this saying more applicable than to the uncertainty of the law of warranty on the purchase and sale of horses. ”**



But although he was, as a lawyer, capable of dealing with legal infelicities at a technical level and in considerable detail, as is the case in his treatise on warranties on horse sales, Surtees is able to express his general contempt for the legal practices, or malpractices, of the time no less scathingly than Dickens, but with incomparable economy. Nowhere is it more evident than in relation to the legal practice of Mr Twister (a name whose lack of subtlety would have pleased Dickens himself) on which Bill Bowker depended so heavily:

“Mr Twister was one of those legal nuisances called conveyancers, whom it is to be hoped some contrivance will be found to extinguish, and he could find a loophole for an unwilling purchaser to creep out of in the very best of titles. Having plenty to do himself, he took as many pupils as ever he could get, to help each other to do nothing. Each of these paid him 100 guineas a year, in return for which they had the run of a dingy, carpetless room, the use of some repulsive-looking desks, and liberty to copy 20 volumes of manuscript precedents, that the great Mr Twister had copied himself when a pupil with great Mr Somebody Else.”

It is often noticed that some remarkably realistic lawyers are touchingly naïve in the matter of politics, while many knowledgeable and perspicacious politicians are touchingly naïve in the matter of law. With that in mind it is comforting to note that Surtees was ruthlessly realistic in relation to both: see, for example, where Bill Bowker turns his attention from his Master's (now named Snarle) diminishing law practice and takes up the Anti-corn Law league Association, in response to which Mr Jorrocks gives a timeless summary of the nature of the legislative lobbying industry in general:

**“ But I’m a deviatin’ from my text, which ought to be congratulations to you for bein taken up by the League, instead of denouncing the ‘umbuggery of its ways. In course you, as a traveller o’ the concern, will do your best to further its interests – and feather your own nest. So shall you better yourself, and secure the everlasting esteem of – yours to serve, John Jorrocks. ”**



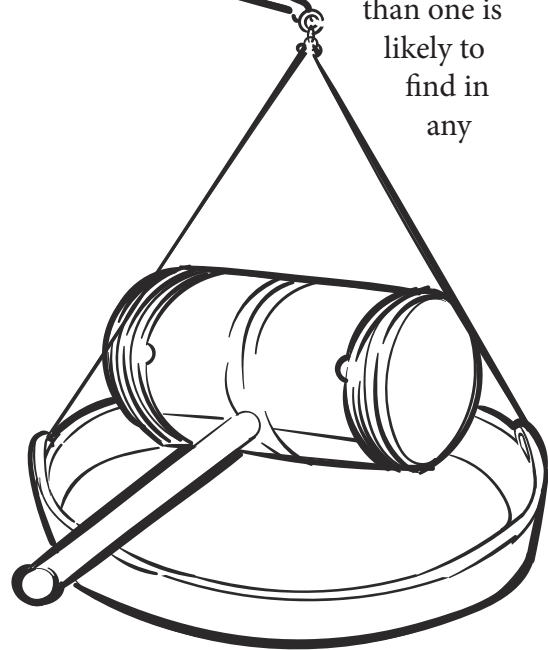
Nor are the pomposities and circumlocutions of the public service spared exposure and ridicule by Surtees: but, again, what Dickens explores at length in *Little Dorrit*, Surtees achieves both more effectively and more economically in the correspondence between Jorrocks and “the Great Mr Prettyfat – Deputy Surveyor of the wretched forest of Pinch me near”; and in the delightful interlude exposing the pretensions of “William the Conqueror; or, the ADC”, who despite all the excited local speculations as to his importance turns out to be an assistant drainage commissioner. Although those interested in legal history will, in general, learn more about its social impact from the pages of Surtees than they will improve their technical historical knowledge, there are some exceptions. Despite some facetiousness, someone wanting to understand the early and developing law relating to the powers of local police will do well to study the doings and attempted charges of Superintendent Constables Shark and Chizzler, at least as an introduction or accompaniment to any more technical works that he or she may consult; and



despite being one of his particularly successful comic pastiches, the famous discussion between Jorrocks and the Lord Chancellor is an accurate and graphic illustration of the personal and penetrating nature of the Lord Chancellor's original visitation jurisdiction. Once again, that is every bit as vivid and revealing as the openings of *Bleak House* in relation to the Chancellor's wardship jurisdiction, but ever so much more effectively and economically handled. And, of course, anyone wishing to trace and understand the early history of negotiable instruments will understand more from Facey Romford's final fraud upon the Jogglebury-Crowdeys and Jasper Goldfink's treatment at the combined hands of O'Dicey and Wanless than from any textbook about deeds; while the opening pages of *Ask Mama* will teach the reader more about the practical perils of family trusts at the time than they are likely to glean from any textbook.

Similarly, the social and economic implications of changes in the gambling and tobacco licensing laws are expounded more vividly in the description of the changing fortunes of the Sponge Cigar and Betting Rooms and Bill Bowker's Wholesale

Snuff and Tobacco Warehouse than one is likely to find in any



history textbook.

Attitudes and expectations in relation to the institutions of the law, as well as the law itself, are explored copiously in *Surtees*. For example, the developing institution of justices of the peace, together with its corruptions and inefficiencies, are brilliantly and comically exposed by Mr Marmaduke Muleygrub JP's description of his use of vagrants and vagabonds as free out-of-door labour and, generally, in Mr Jorrocks' brilliantly comical misunderstandings of his role as a magistrate. Who, in particular, can forget the beautiful way in which he massacres the oath of allegiance? And who can forget Mr Jorrocks' touching confidence in the all-encompassing "Fifth of George the Fourth", not to mention his masterly summary of the justice's jurisdiction:

**“ Nullum tempus occurrit somethin’ - the Queen stands no nonsense ”**

And the accuracy of the description of a local JP's role in the community is enhanced by the completely plausible office which Mr Jorrocks establishes in order to carry on his "law business", including "a fine old edition of Burns Justice" which was indeed the standard work for magistrates and other local practitioners at the time, along with Stones Pocket Manual, which continued to be a standard work for many decades. Nor is there anything improbable about the following description of the social impact of the rural magistracy:

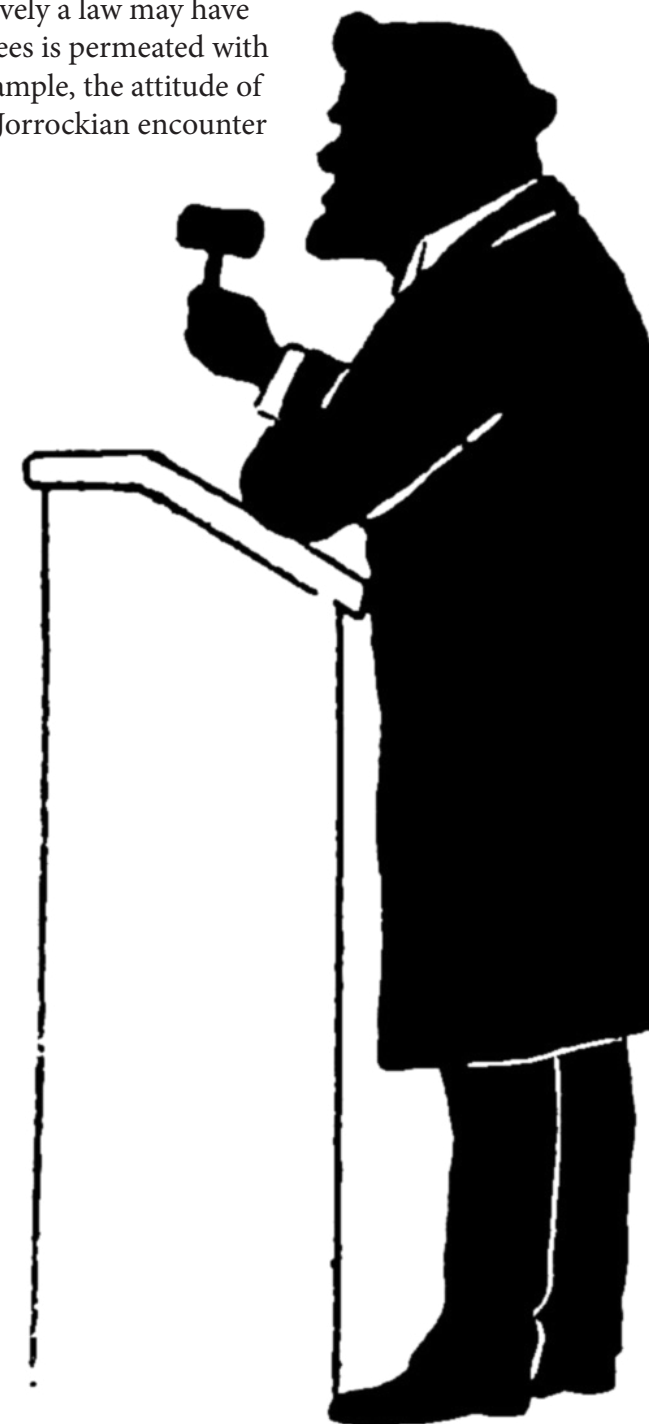
**“ Mr Jorrocks began with the G's at game and went regularly through them ... but there was nothing about gooseberry ... 'I will deal summarily with the case. Take him to Betsey with my compliments, and say I'll thank her to take him into the laundry and give him a good bastinadoing – good strapping, that is to say. ”**

Reading old statutes and text books is a good way of finding out what the law may have been at a particular time; but it tells you nothing about how effectively a law may have been enforced, or how it was generally regarded. Again here, *Surtees* is permeated with telling allusions to the impact and enforcement of law. See, for example, the attitude of the trading public to the gaming laws as hinted at in the beautiful Jorrocksian encounter with the fruiterers selling grouse before 12 August; or the various discussions of Facey Romford's and others' attitudes to rural trespass for the purposes of hunting.

**“ In illustrating the social impact of law at the time when he was writing, Surtees illuminates a number of important general contrasts between the law of his day and the law of ours. ”**

Perhaps the most extreme example relates to family law: as a general area of practice today this is perhaps more about pursuing and arranging financial settlements on divorce than about any other one single subject; and of course that subject was practically unheard of in *Surtees'* days because of the unavailability of divorces for most purposes. In those days, the principal obsession of family law as a practice was in relation to matrimonial settlements, an area of practice which is perhaps most thoroughly illuminated in *Plain or Ringlets?*, although matrimonial expectations appear frequently in *Surtees*, and are even the subject of a discussion which mixes fact and fiction to an unusual degree in *Town and Country Papers*. The subject appears both as a constant undercurrent and in the form of frequent express allusions in *Plain or Ringlets?*, from the early reference to "stiffish lawyers' bills" accompanying proposals for settlement returned on Mr Bunting's hands to the final legal interrogation of Mr Bunting, leading to the downfall of his latest matrimonial expectations.

This paper has merely touched on a few random examples of the brilliance with which *Surtees'* fiction encapsulates aspects of the social impact of the law. There remains to be carried out a full study of legal issues arising in *Surtees'* works, hopefully culminating in an authoritative annotation of those works drawing attention to the light they throw on the practice and perception of particular aspects of the law in the 19th century. As a neophyte *Surteesian*, I look forward very much to learning in converse with my fellow *Surteesians* which other aspects of social history (including, perhaps, medicine, transport and financial services) are illuminated effectively and economically by the works which our society assists in preserving and celebrating.





# LORD MIDDLETON KICKS ON...

*By Rob Williams*

It was the end of the season, and Frank Houghton Brown had brought hounds to Hovingham Hall for some spring hunting. Unexpectedly, he saw that grey eyeful of a horse “Conman” hacking on. Odd, because it was an unfashionable woodland meet at Sir Marcus Worsley’s. Only one man would be riding Conman, of course. In his seventies now, Lord Middleton was getting in every day he could before the end of his last season’s hunting.

Frank drew Hovingham High Wood in the pouring rain – a roomy 500 acres with plenty of thick. Hounds tended to rattle about in it all day long. But not that day. The Field were on the road, and the huntsman went to open side...

Hounds came away almost immediately, hunting hard. They ran strongly through the valley below them and Frank had to hustle to stay with them. He imagined, with regret, that he’d be the only one who saw this run.

Not so.

Looking back, he saw Conman appear from nowhere, and come after him down the valley with a wet sail. “I looked behind and there was just one man with me. I was on a huge horse called Sherpa, that Mick Easterby had let me ride. He was some horse – but completely unstoppable when he set his neck.”

In the second field downhill, they met a stream with blackthorn banks and a sleeper bridge across it. On the bridge was a five bar wooden gate. On the gate – about 4 ins above it – was a strand of barbed wire stapled on.

“It was wet as hell, and I tried to slow Easterby’s horse down but he cocked his jaw and I completely lost control. The horse aimed at the gate so four strides away I dropped the reins and prayed. He jumped, hit the wire and pecked, then aquaplaned the whole length of the bridge. Terrifying.”

“Turning, I saw Lord M galloping after us. “Oh Christ.” I thought. “He thinks I jumped it on purpose!””

Behind Frank, the septagenarian Lord Middleton and Conman were at full gallop. He hadn’t seen the wire, and they were accelerating down the hill with ears cocked, leaving great trenches in the turf. Frank was cheerfully cursing Mick Easterby, when he saw that his Joint Master was kicking into it. Clearly, Lord M thought he had taken that mad risk deliberately.

“I shouted... then I realised the only thing to do was shut up and leave the old horse to concentrate.” The dip-backed old campaigners steadied themselves... and pinged over, clearing the wire and smashing off Lord Middleton’s hat on the branches overhead – just like the great Leech painting of Facey Romford.

Conman landed on the slick water sitting on the railway sleepers and started aquaplaning – skating the whole way across the bridge, legs everywhere. Lord Middleton reined up next to Frank, imperturbable. Frank dismounted to go and collect the hat. “He wasn’t frightened. He wasn’t bothered at all. I don’t think he knew he was a hair’s breadth from being killed. He just thought “This is what we do.”

In this painting of four players from that typical hunting day’s drama, the bitches from the old tail lines of the Middleton are in the picture – going back to Warwickshire Comfort 1820.





# "Martin the Menace" makes a move

Enchanted by Birdsall, the Martin Family put in an offer...



1

That's a very fine house, Alastair...

You have a point, mum... ok I'll buy it for you - but 'how' will need a bit of thinking about!!

This'll be interesting...



2

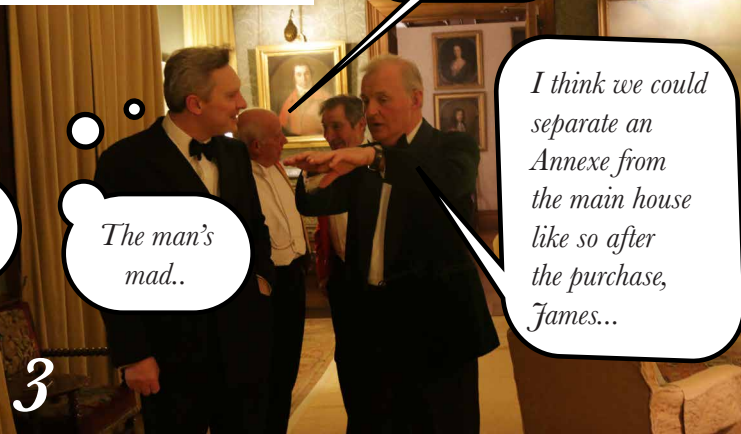
Look Johnny, I just think it would be better coming from you...

Have you got a stab vest under there Johnny?

I didn't sign up for this...

After Hunting...

Before Dinner...



3

He's not seriously going to ask him?

The man's mad..

I think we could separate an Annexe from the main house like so after the purchase, James...



4

Hang on a minute!

Hell. Where's Martin gone?...

But Alastair is upstairs with a stethoscope... cracking the safe!



5

The Martins are therefore happy to go up to 300 million...

Going once...

Going twice...

Keep going Buckman - fillibuster it out. We just need to buy Alastair a few more minutes on the safe...



6

Heh heh - best if I take care of the Deeds...!



Even from Frank, I'm not sure how well this is going to go down...

Now, we must turn to the Middleton fixtures and fittings...

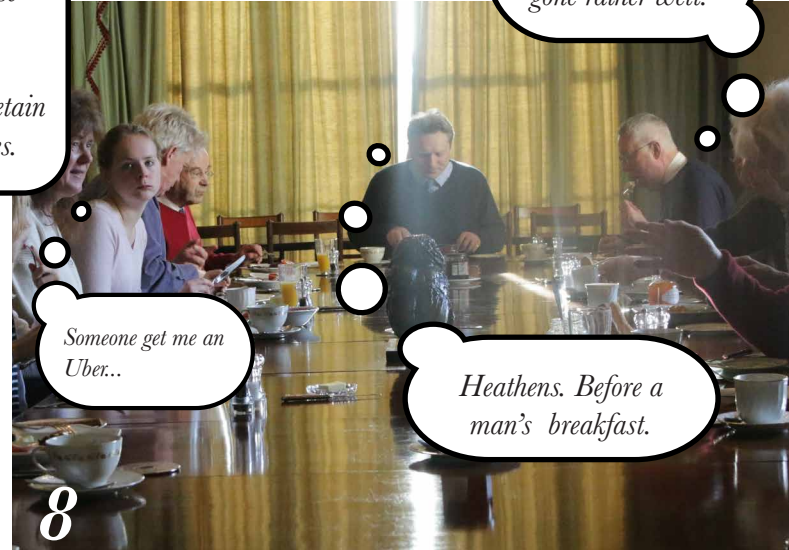
Breakfast the next morning...



7

This is getting worse...

The Diocese would of course be happy to retain the churches.



8

Someone get me an Uber...

Yes. I think that's gone rather well!

Heathens. Before a man's breakfast.

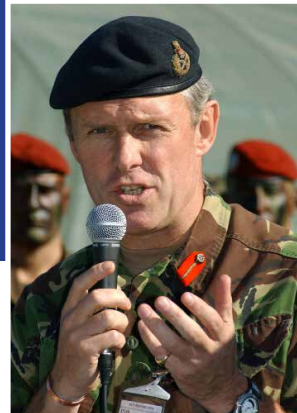


# ‘THE CRIMINALISATION OF WAR’,

By General Sir Jack Deverell KCB OBE

In 2011, I was in The Hague to advise the defence team of Colonel General Ivan Cermak, a Croatian officer indicted on seven counts of war crimes. He and his compatriots, Generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markac, had been involved in ‘Operation Storm’, a three-month offensive in Croatia which took place in 1995 during which the Croats expelled the Serbs from the ‘Krajina’ region of Croatia that they had occupied since 1992. He was one of 161 indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague as a result of the war crimes committed during that conflict. . My primary task was to determine Cermak’s command authority, and thus his command responsibility. This was a crucial element in ascertaining whether his actions were lawful when set against the Geneva Convention, the Laws of Armed Conflict and other elements of international law.

Nearly 10 years before, one of Her Majesty’s frigates was providing naval gunfire support to Land Forces operating in Sierra Leone. I was questioned by the commanding officer as to whether the Rules of Engagement entitled him to open fire in response to a request by ground forces. His concern was whether he had the authority to fire without an officer from his ship being able to confirm that it was a legitimate target. I stated that, in my judgement, he did and that I was prepared to order him to carry out any fire missions requested.



General Sir Jack Deverell  
KCB OBE

British soldiers on the streets of Derry, 1975.  
Photograph: Alain Le Garsmeur/Getty Images



“ He then questioned -  
respectfully - whether my  
order would be legal. ”

The two events are, of course, totally distinct. However, the thread that connects them – the perception and operation of law in a conflict environment – is becoming more and more problematic.

In a trial that lasted nearly three years, Cermak was found not guilty and Gotovina and Markac were found not guilty on appeal. My time as an expert witness, particularly my two days in the witness box, were eye opening. They gave me an insight into the workings of international law and its application to the modern battlefield, and lead me to a clear conclusion: the conduct of effective military operations within existing legislation is becoming extremely complex, to the disadvantage of our forces and the benefit of our adversaries. This is because two things have happened at once: first, new technology has changed the modern battlefield at an unprecedented speed; second, the reach of international law has increased exponentially. These two factors have made command and control far more difficult. As Judge Theodor Meron noted a decade ago - the creation of

There have always been rules governing war, created, not least because the laws of peace were no longer applicable. The current structure stems from conventions agreed in the middle of the 19th century, much refined by the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907 and subsequent legislation. The emphasis then was on protecting those who fell outside the existing rules of warfare. Of particular concern was the treatment of civilians, non-combatants, prisoners, the sick and wounded, and banning certain types of weapon, from ‘dum-dum’ bullets to gas. Why, then, should such well- established and well-meaning legislation begin to be perceived as a threat to those tasked with fighting their country’s wars?

The answer is that those who have not experienced war, struggle to comprehend its dynamics. War presents the human race with its most profound moral, physical and conceptual challenge. The natural state of war is chaotic, and the conduct of operations rendered imperfect. Every level of command is under relentless pressure to act, often with incomplete information and inadequate resources. Indecision normally makes a bad situation worse and the taking of operational risk becomes inevitable when confronted by a dynamic and dangerous enemy. Such decisions determine the success or otherwise of an operation, and the human cost.





Over the past three decades, human rights legislation has increasingly intruded into the conflict environment, specifically, its two associates; 'duty of care' and 'health and safety', and this has presented a serious challenge to the military. For some years there has been a tension between the need for military training to be conducted in the most testing of conditions in order to prepare soldiers for the shock of war, whilst having to conform with regulations designed to create the safest possible working conditions. Limitations imposed upon our training regimes have often been the result of high-profile cases supported by well-organised, well-funded, and well-meaning activists. In the same way, international agreements that banned the use of weapons such as anti-personnel mines have been the result of intensive and high-profile media campaigns aimed at the public and government. The consequences have limited the military options available to our forces. Almost certainly our likely adversaries have little or no inclination to abide by such rules.

The Laws of Armed Conflict were drafted specifically to meet the challenges of war. The intrusion of Human Rights legislation – drafted for completely different purposes – poses a threat to our war-fighting capability. In addition, the loss of Crown Immunity has significantly increased the liability of the British military. The British government has more recently indicated that the MOD can be taken to court if an alleged lack of equipment availability or equipment failure is believed to have contributed to death or injury...

“ **How long before a commander's plan is scrutinized by a court of law to identify whether it is in breach of the 'right to life', or fails to meet 'duty of care' criteria?** ”

The involvement of Coroners Courts in the repatriation of the dead has been another area of contention. The comments of some Coroners in their judgements have demonstrated a profound misunderstanding of the nature of the operational environment, and in particular operational risk. This has

been particularly so when dealing with such matters as friendly fire incidents and equipment availability and reliability. It is too easy to judge the military against criteria that are largely unachievable in close combat and can, paradoxically, undermine effectiveness. Such concerns should not be dismissed, but the lack of military experience in society can afford such comments a legitimacy they do not deserve and make it easier for those with other agendas to control the narrative. This presents a challenge to the effective prosecution of operations and to armed forces morale.

The spread of irregular and hybrid war in which our adversary shows little concern for international law, but when democratic governments are reluctant to afford them combatant status and then fail to create adequate legal structures to deal with them a criminals, is placing the military in a legal no-man's land. In Afghanistan, the British Army had no proper powers of arrest, only the authority to detain suspects, limited by time.

“ **At least Afghanistan had a legal system of sorts, but coalition forces were criticized for both detaining without trial and for handing over suspected terrorists to a regime that “condoned torture”.** ”

Somewhat perversely, serious public concern was raised by the case of Marine A. The MOD was castigated for upholding the Geneva Convention by prosecuting Marine A who, by his own admission, shot and killed a wounded Taliban. The case highlighted the military, legal and moral dilemmas of balancing the safety of a unit against the legal and moral responsibilities to an adversary.

A lawyer recently told me that, in his view, there will soon be little distinction in the eyes of the law between soldiers representing legitimate democratic bodies, and insurgents or terrorists. At this point, the prosecution of war in itself starts to become a crime for which soldiers become retrospectively accountable. Army recruitment has never been tougher, and perhaps it is no coincidence.

“ **My career in the army was spent trying to uphold certain values in which I believed, one being the rule of law.** ”

However, unless such laws can be exercised proportionately and with discretion, we are moving into dangerous and uncharted waters.

*A British soldier patrols near a church on the edge of the Falls Road District of Belfast, Northern Ireland, on April 3, 1972. (AP Photo)*



## Replacing the Hunting Act

It has been a disaster both for rural hunting communities and animal welfare; now is the time to pick up the hammer and fashion its replacement, as Rob Williams explains

WHILE having a knife fight in a telephone box with the animal rights lobby, we forgot the deeper argument about country life and country sports. We forgot that we live in a free country. We forgot that we are a minority, too. And we forgot that those who like to talk about celebrating diversity can be politely held to account. The Dutch have an apt phrase for what's happened, adjacent to our one about hitting the nail on the head. They say: "You missed the plank."

Rather than indulge in hand-wringing expressions about how 'unfair' it all is, we need to pick up the hammer. Now, our way of life hangs by a thread. Even more animal welfare legislation, rumoured to be even more discriminatory, is imminent. Fine. For starters, we need to get the Hunting Act 2004 replaced as quickly as possible. Because the right thing to do about bad law is not to break it but to replace it.

So I called Daniel Greenberg, the Parliamentary Counsel who drafted the hunting legislation, and I asked him how we get that done. To set the scene, Greenberg is not pro-foxhunting.



QQ A moral judgement is being imposed on a minority - and I thought we didn't do that?



Frankly, he sees hunting as more or less irrelevant. He's also the man who drafted the legislation for the Good Friday Agreement, so he knows a thing or two about polarised debate and compromise. He may not be pro-hunting but he's strongly pro the rights of minorities. So, in 2004, when the Government was using the Parliament Act to force through the Bill, he felt uncomfortable for the first time in his professional career. "What was bothering me, sitting in the official's box, was that what's actually happening here is a moral judgement is being

imposed on a minority – and I thought we didn't do that?" So did we, but a minority that fails to identify itself is in peril. Getting protections enshrined in law is a bit like getting the straight fencing rails at Mole Valley Farmers – they are there but you need to ask for them. So we need to ask for them. A small group of us needs to draft a proposal designed to secure a list of protected characteristics for rural hunting communities under the Equality Act 2006. Those characteristics will document and explain the way in which hunting forms a part of our cultural and rural heritage. Then, since

those protections cannot be enacted through subordinate legislation, we probably need primary legislation – but narrowly focused and clearly circumscribed. Perhaps we need to remember the upside of living in a great parliamentary democracy. And the data's now in. Lord Burns, who chaired the inquiry, has accepted, in plain English, that hunting is not cruel. Without doubt, the Hunting Act 2004 has been a disastrous failure. The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) – can you easily imagine a more gentle, disinterested, humane body? – reveals that, since the ban, the population of wild red

foxes has crashed, varying according to region, by between 20% and 50%. It is odd the BTO needed to do this research. Surely the anti-hunt lobby would have commissioned a host of studies to confirm the animal welfare benefits of the animal welfare Bill that cost them more than £10m? In fact, since getting the ban imposed, they have not spent a single penny on finding out whether it has worked. If they have they are not choosing to share the results.

But, of course, it's nothing like enough. Before we get too giddy, we need to be ready to compromise. On just about anything. We, by which I mean people who want our children to be able to enjoy hunting, need to put our house in order, to accept that everything has changed.

First, we need to forget about trying to 'win'. To secure the future of venery this cannot be about 'Repeal', and it must be about 'Replacement'. Second, we must accept a licensing system with teeth, enforced by a body that represents all the stakeholders. Chris Packham is not an enemy, he's a voice. Because if we try to achieve victory, we guarantee defeat. Third, we need to be sensible about what the table stakes look like – no more ugly scenes of terriermen mistreating foxes, no more JCBs pushing piles of pheasants as big as a house. On every side of the debate, we profess to abhor inflicting unnecessary suffering on animals, as Lord Donoghue's Bill in Ireland put it. So there, right there, is common ground.

Let's be clear: in the list of 'topics to avoid at a parents' evening', foxhunting is always going to be up there. Perhaps now, however, when everyone has felt what it means to have liberties taken away, people are ready to listen. As we watch the new Government 'instructions' appearing hard upon each other, people are tired of the age old 'Mother knows best' approach to government. That said, we live in a Rule of Law country. It is impossible to stress how important that is. This is bad law: the Prime Minister who implemented it is on record to say he wishes he hadn't; MPs who voted for it have admitted it was 'revenge for the miners'; the Parliamentary Counsel who drafted it sees it as unfinished business; and the data shows it has been disastrous for animal welfare. It's bad law, let's replace it.

*This article was first published in the April 2021 edition of The Field magazine. That magazine was set up by RS Surtees, and it's now edited by our member Alexandra Henton, who hunts with the Quorn. Really, we should all subscribe so please visit [www.magazinesdirect.com](http://www.magazinesdirect.com)*



# SPEECH TO THE ANNUAL DINNER OF THE RS SURTEES SOCIETY 2018

By Captain Ian Farquhar M.F.H LVO

Let's start with hounds – because Surtees always does and so do I. Man befriended *Lupus familiaris* quite a long time before Christ – about 15 times longer in fact – 300,000 years ago. That's a sobering thought, isn't it? That from those little scruffy things they put in baskets for film stars, to the noble fox hound and everything else that we come across, it all goes back to that *lupus familiaris* of 300,000 years ago. I think that's rather intriguing. They have been our friends ever since, and that is where everything Surtees writes about, everything connected with foxhunting, ultimately comes from.

If we look a little bit closer than that, the hound of ancient time sort of worked its way through when the Italians started getting involved. The Greeks had rather a good sort of dog which chased things by sight – a gazehound. Then the Romans did the same. But I'm afraid to say – and it's rather embarrassing to admit – that it was the bloody French who brought over a Talbot that actually started hunting by nose.

You think about hunting in those days – going back to the 1700s, 1600s, 1500s. It was a Nob's game, wasn't it? Empresses, kings, they were all at it. They loved it. Why? Because it was so bloody exciting – and they were



By Captain Ian Farquhar



*The Invasion*

followed by all the people who worked for them, worked with them, and looked after them and did the horses - and always hunting was the name of the game.

But then, Surtees started to write about it. And there came about all these extraordinarily funny stories. I am not really a Surtees man, but I've been reading him quite a lot recently. In fact, in the last few days, I doubt anyone on earth has read more Surtees than me! The characters that Surtees wrote about, the dialogue of the common man. The dialogue of the people that followed hounds. It's absolutely fascinating

“ **For example, who would dream up James Pigg? Facey Romford? Soapy Sponge? Lucy Glitters? In fact I married Lucy Glitters!** ”

What I see is that this is not something anybody will ever go away from. His characters, and the situations that they get themselves into, are timeless.

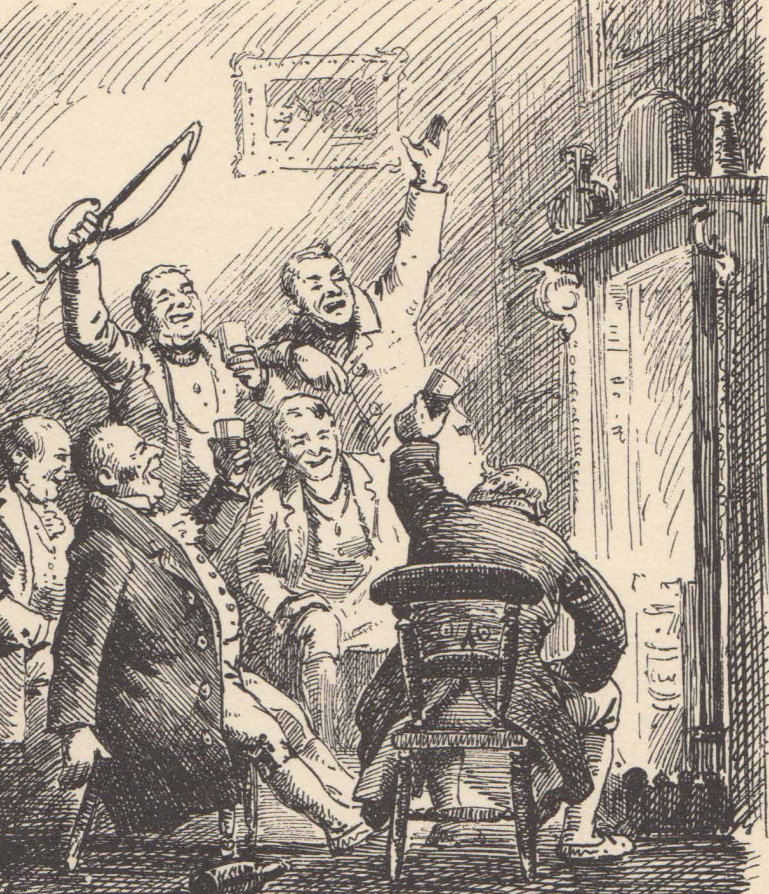
You see variations on his themes often. As a young man, my father hunted a pack of hounds before the war, and afterwards where I was brought up in Dor-

set. When Dorset was very rural, we lived in a place called Turnworth. It was a lovely old Jacobean house. Rather a nice place, really. But it was too big, and it was pulled down which was very sad.

In Turnworth, there was a nice village with just four cars. One belonged to the parson, one to the farmer, and two belonged to my father. Back then there were still horse and carts, and I remember a man called Eddie Wills, who was the local carter, and the Tory's who were the local farmers in Turnworth. Mrs Tory used to go out every single morning of her life and scrub her front doorstep like some sort of dervish, because that's what people did in those days. One day, as children, we came around the corner to find old Eddie Wills with his muck cart. The wheel had fallen off and the whole lot had landed on Mrs Tory's doorstep. Well, that's pure Surtees for you, isn't it?

My father was then the Master. I remember going around with him as a boy when we went to see an old farmer called Mr Rose. Mr Rose had 80 acres of grass down in the Portland Vale. 'Why you called Twy?', I asked him. 'Well,' he said, 'one day your father was hunting these hounds, a fox came out and he said who's that fucking idiot up there whose fallen on his face?' 'Twere I, Sir Peter!' cried the farmer, waving his hat.





He was known as Twy Rose forever more! And Twy Rose – Jorlocks would have loved this, Surtees too – Twy Rose had a rick of hay. I remember going down with my father to say, come on Mr Rose, would you sell that hay?  
‘He’s got to pay for it, you know, got to pay. Pound a bale, you know, pound a bale. There’s twenty bales there, that’s twenty quid.’  
‘Twenty quid, Mr Rose, that’s a lot of money.’  
‘Well come in and have a glass of whisky, we’ll talk about it.’  
Over the next three years we came back, and every year we bought the same rick of hay – and they never moved it once!

My father had a joint Master at one stage. I mean, in that sort of bizarre time in the fifties when you had binders instead of combines and all that sort of business. His joint Master was called Miss Helion Forrester-Walker, who was a very, very old-fashioned spinster. Of course, she had a bob or two, so she was asked into the Mastership because she thought she might be able to help things along a little.

At the Annual General Meeting of the Portman Fox Hounds in 1950-something, Miss Forrester-Walker was elected as one of the joint Masters for the next year. The Chairman, quite rightly, said ‘Miss Forrester-Walker, would you like to say a word or two?’ ‘Oh’, she said. ‘I want to be very sincere about this. I don’t really want to play any part whatsoever. I just want to be Sir Peter Farquhar’s sleeping partner!’

In the 1970s, after a year or two in the army, I finished up at the Bicester. Once again, there were wonderful Surtees characters there too, one of whom was Vince Kenny, who was the most drunken Irishman you’ve ever come across in your life. He had a great friend called Roy Strudwick, who was a builder from the east end of London, and who made a fortune. Well Roy Strudwick had got bucked off his horse one day. Vince had picked him up as a rough Irishman who could ride like a dervish. They came galloping past me with Roy riding pillion to Vince, saying ‘God this is fun!’ Roy put £2000 into the Beaufort next year and became a joint Master. Wouldn’t Surtees have loved that?

I’ll never forget Houghton Brown’s father having a fall in the Bicester country. I’d bought a horse for 400 quid in the Heythrop country, which was quite cheap in those days. And it fell jumping a fence and landed on me in a ditch and was lying there. Could I get it off? Not a bit. It just lay there. Houghton Brown came galloping past with a good Surtees remark, because he yelled at me: ‘That’ll teach you to ride common horses.’

Going back to those days, Frank Tut was my first terrier man. I never, ever, in five years, knew what Frank was up to. I used to say to him, ‘Frank, we’re down at Marsh Gibbon. This is a big day; we’ve got this, that and whoever it is out. Where are we going to find a fox?’  
‘You’ll be right’. That’s all he ever said. And we always were. And I never once got out of Frank what he’d been up to.

But who can imagine now of somebody like Frank Tut? Who’s quite a small farmer, and the most delightful man. I saw Mrs Tut one day, and I said, ‘Have you seen Frank? Where’s he been?’  
‘I don’t know’, she said. ‘He left on Friday, and he said he was going down to get fish.’ He came back the Friday afterwards – a week later with a bootful. He’d gone to the West Country for a week, but he’d only said to Mrs Tut that he was going to nip out for fish. Those characters just don’t exist anymore.

In some respects my life wouldn’t have been out of place in a Surtees novel, so you’ll excuse me if I tell you stories he could have written. At our last meet at the Bicester in 2005, it was foggy, and we met for an hour and a half. And they drank, and they drank, and they drank. At about 12.45, somebody came

into the kitchen where I was trying to brew up some more booze and said, ‘You know old Fred from Long Crendon?’ I said yes. ‘Well he’s dead Master!’

“ ‘What do you mean, he’s dead?’

‘Well, he’s dead.’ ‘

What have you done with him?’ I asked.

‘We’ve rolled him in a tarpaulin in the garage, and we’re stepping over him... and he’s dead.’ ”

I thought, this is a little bit serious, really. So I went and got hold of the doctor and I said, do you think old Fred’s dead? And he said, ‘Yes he is Ian – he’s dead.’

Well I did what you would have done – I went to find a vet. So I got hold of dear old Bob Baskerville, who was our vet and I said, ‘Bob, get off your horse and give me a second opinion. Is Fred dead?’ And he had bit of a rummage. ‘No, he’s not dead,’ he said. ‘He’s just drunk too much. In fact, he’s in a deep coma!’

So, the moral is you always get a second opinion and always trust your vet, not a bloody doctor!

One of the most interesting things, looking back, is the annoyance and the anger that we faced in those

days. The way that we were treated by the government then was, quite frankly, perfectly disgusting. Every single person who had a brain in this country said that hunting was a good game compared with what was going on against it. That all the animal welfare arguments stacked up in favour of it. And what happened? Those twerps, Blair and his friends, took absolutely no notice whatsoever and we paid the price in 2015. I still feel incredibly angry about it.

I think one of the interesting things at the time was the first meet in Badminton after 2015, when Kate Hoey actually came, amongst others, and we thought we were in trouble. And we said that because the law is so bad, if we play it carefully and keep going, we probably will find a way through it. And we did, up to a point, and we have done.

I think we still are, although it’s not the same. Grand dinners like this are still going on, with all the fine faces from our sport sat at them. There are still foxhounds all through England. They are still looking to stay in the law and doing a good job. And that is the way we should keep it.

“ **We’re all still here. It’s still going on, and I’ll tell you why in Surtees’ own words: ‘Show me a fox hunter, and I loves ‘im at once.’** ”





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## EXTRACT FROM ‘MARGARET THATCHER: THE AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY’ VOLUME THREE: HERSELF ALONE’

*By Lord Moore of Etchingham*

It had been prearranged that Reagan would visit London on his way back from Moscow. According to Jim Hooley, ‘I don’t think anybody could have convinced President Reagan to have stopped anywhere else coming back from Moscow. But I think it was very important symbolically. Things were going in the right direction. There was a sense that the two of them had done this.’ Mrs Thatcher was doubly happy, because she had already been privately informed, before Reagan visited Moscow, that he had, in turn, invited her to Washington in November, shortly before he was due to leave office. Her visit was to be a central part of the plan to round off Reagan’s eight-year reign and, as Nancy Reagan put it, ‘tie it up with a bow’.

Reagan and Mrs Thatcher met in London on 3 June 1988, almost exactly four years since they had last met in the same city and discussed the then chilly state of the Cold War. It was ‘difficult to see’, Mrs Thatcher had said back then, ‘how we could break the isolation of the Soviet leadership, except by trying to persuade some of its members to visit the West’. Five months later, Mikhail Gorbachev had come to see her at Chequers. Now, all was transformed. Reagan, who had first pro-

posed the zero option over six years ago, had now returned from Moscow with the instruments of INF ratification exchanged, abolishing these missiles entirely. ‘It was not yet generally perceived’, Mrs Thatcher told him, ‘how much the President had succeeded in changing the nature of East/West relations.’ Not far below the surface was a sense that the ideological struggle of the Cold War was drawing to an end.

In a speech in Guildhall that day, Reagan referred to his previous setpiece speech in London, in June 1982, just as Britain was winning the Falklands War. Then he had spoken of his ‘forward strategy of freedom’, combining strong criticism of totalitarianism with ‘vigorous diplomatic engagement’. ‘The pursuit of this policy’, he continued, ‘has just now taken me to Moscow, and, let me say, I believe this policy is bearing fruit. Quite possibly, we’re beginning to take down the barriers of the postwar era; quite possibly, we are entering a new era in history, a time of lasting change in the Soviet Union.’

As was surprisingly often the case for a woman who enjoyed very good health, Mrs Thatcher had a nasty cold. Her voice held out for the arrival ceremony, but at a meeting with Reagan in the Oval Office, it began to fail. Reagan became consumed by a desire to help her. Duberstein remembered: ‘I had never seen Ronald Reagan dote over somebody before. He himself got her a pot of tea. He himself found her tissues... I remember him scurrying around the Oval Office trying to make her comfortable... It said everything about their relationship.’



*Lord Moore of Etchingham*

## REVIEW OF “HOOVES, MUSCLES AND SWEAT” BY KATIE BLOOM

*By Anya Buchan*

It is possible that leaving ‘hooves’ out of the title may have found a wider audience for this excellent book. An eastern European father, a Yorkshire childhood, 6th form at a boy’s school, events officer for Young Farmers, student physiotherapist at Manchester Royal Infirmary during the Yorkshire Ripper years, intrepid pioneer of sidesaddle hunting, commander-in-chief to a notorious political husband - these are just some of the themes that make this new book so compelling.

But what really makes this story so remarkable is the author herself, and the focus and determination with which she drew on her experiences to influence her unique and transformative career as one of the county’s leading equine physiotherapy specialists.

Mirroring the way Katie and her husband tackle life, this book challenges the ‘rules’ to create something refreshingly new.

Instead of taking the easy option of writing a book about the evolution of modern equine physiotherapy, Katie has found a bewitching way to envelop it within her own story – her autobiography – as an irresistible means for growing wider interest in this fascinating topic.

So, Katie’s readers will typically come from two camps: lovers of biography who will relish the page-turning way that she relates her escapades and life-forming experiences; and equestrians (professional and amateur alike) who eagerly absorb

every detail and colour as she describes her experience breeding, showing, training, hunting and, of course, healing horses.

Thus, whilst this is a ‘horsey’ book, the ultimate test will be the number of readers from the biography camp who thoroughly enjoy their dip into the equine world with Katie as guide. And in this book that is a given. The book is so well thought out that by the time the horse novice reaches the treatment descriptions, they will feel that they have known horses all their life.

There is a serious vein in the book too. As an expert in her field, Katie has seen the very best and the very worst of equine care. And being a true Yorkshire lass, she calls a spade a spade and may shock

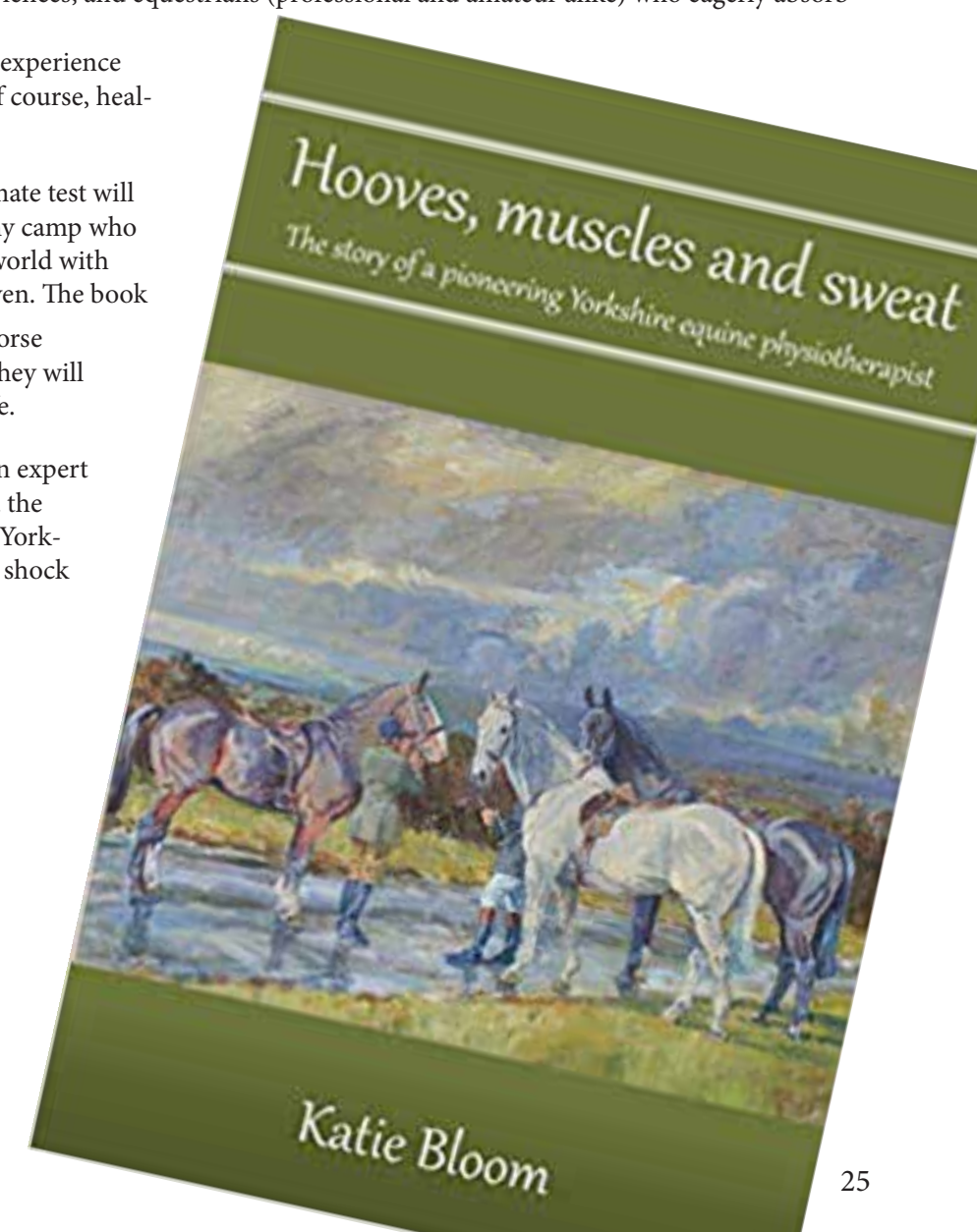
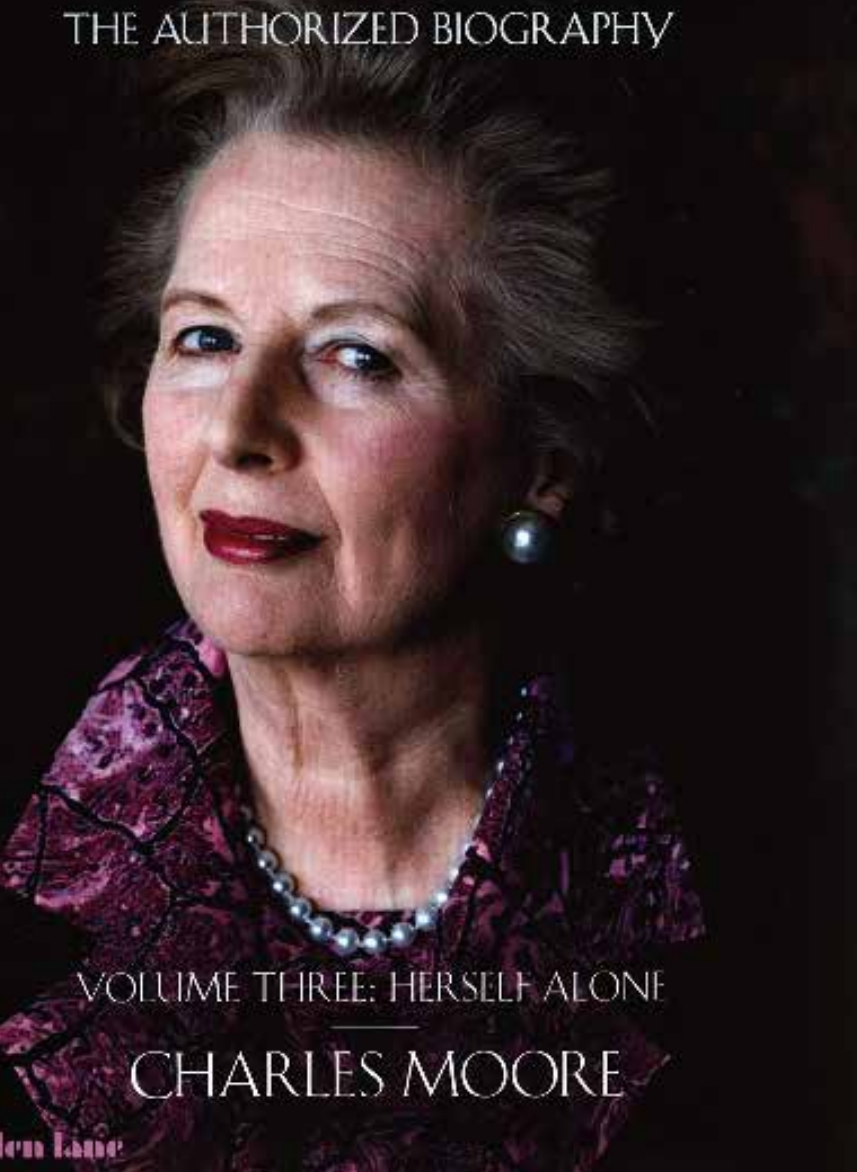
some people with some of her astute observations. The hope is that this will also inspire a more responsible and realistic approach to horse ownership and particularly to equine health and injuries.

With some beautiful real-life equine photography and a never-before shared insight, this book is a fantastic read for horse lovers and newbies alike. And as with all of the best biographies, by the end you will feel you have known Katie all of your life – and will celebrate that too.



*Katie Bloom*

## MARGARET THATCHER THE AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY







## THE NORTHERN TOUR 2019

*By Mrs Camilla Corrie M.FH*



*Ms Camilla Corrie*

The plans for the 2018 northern tour were honed and prepared to perfection until Surtees decided to reach out and have a little mischief from the grave. Whilst I doubt our chum Jack Spraggon would have noticed having a book launch without books, he would certainly have been downhearted at finding no cases of wine. Our Chairman had been embroiled in a catalogue of catastrophes leaving him stranded several hundred miles south with his young son Buck, a lorry loaded with horses, boxes of newly published books and all the wine for the weekend. Despite a rescue party racing to save the day, time was against them and the plentiful guests started to arrive up the grand front steps of Birdsall House. Our wonderful hosts, James and Cara Willoughby delved calmly into their cellars emerging with enough liquid sustenance to keep even F Scott Fitzgerald content.



Anne Henson's lifelong passion for hunting and infinite knowledge on Middleton hounds was the inspiration behind the drive to re-publish "Come and Hunt". This wonderful book was written by our hosts' great, great uncle, the Hon Charles

Willoughby. The invitation list stretched well outside the boundaries of the Surtees Society as the house filled with guests from across Yorkshire and beyond. The eagerly awaited books finally arrived in dramatic style and a flurry of cold air as the doors burst open halfway through drinks. We then celebrated the official launch followed by a beautifully read extract by thirteen-year-old, Buck Williams. The 'simple kitchen supper' that had been billed was somehow transformed by the Willoughby's into a fabulous dinner party where everyone made merry before making their way to bed.

Saturday dawned clear and bright as we pulled on our breeches and eased on our boots. Some headed for Benoit's pack of Beagles, but we gathered at the front of the house after breakfast, a member, who shall remain nameless, requested a comprehensive quality control test of every available hip flask. So complete was his survey that we were left with



wretchedly depleted flasks before even setting eyes on a pack of hounds. We set off to find our horses in a nearby yard before hacking back to the meet in Birdsall Park in front of the house. It had been an incredibly sad and very difficult week for the Middleton hunt, they had tragically just lost one of their greatest members in a hunting fall. It was testament to the hunt that they managed to give us such an incredibly warm welcome and a wonderful day despite their keen loss.

I found myself on a very jolly cob who crossed the Middleton country with reassuring aplomb until late in the day, when perhaps feeling a little too confident, and as always happens, in front of plenty of spectating followers, I set him at some healthy timber rails on to the road. It goes without saying that we made a hash of it and knocked off the top rail with a splintering of wood. The countrymen were mending it within seconds, in fact so speedy was their work that they found themselves replacing





it twice more before the rest of the field had taken it on. The grand Middleton country didn't let us down and we were treated to wonderful views across the Wolds. This landscape was to be strikingly re evoked and brought vividly to life a few hours later at the Goose and Dumpling Dinner as our speaker, Frank Houghton Brown told the heart aching romantic tale depicted in Charles Simpson's book 'Trencher & Kennel'. It is so beautifully written

that any attempt at an abridgement would be a travesty,

(If you haven't read it, you must!) but it culminates in the joining, through marriage, of the Willoughby family and the Birdsall Estate in the eighteenth century. The permanence of the landscape, the families and the centuries of hunting tradition are so irrevocably sewn together here that it is almost tangible. Hunting threads connecting and entwining. On which note the lantern-jawed Sir Nesbit Willoughby - a mad ancestor and brave as a lion soldier of fortune was

hanging in the hall. You would have been hard put to tell him apart from

our much loved member, Robin Smith-Ryland.

A triumphantly delicious dinner was served in the magnificent dining room, the volume rising as bottles were replenished and the chance of erudite conversation steadily diminished. The nameless man of the hipflasks told me a story relating to a former Master of my hunt. Even for the eccentric and unorthodox standards of the Surtees' Society for which I stand devotedly, it was

wholly and in every respect unrepeatable, in fact I found myself so utterly speechless that I might have committed the most unladylike of sins and stood with my mouth ajar. Only a Surtees' member could dare to recount such a tale, and without apparently even a notion that it was so deeply & politically incorrect. It remains a treasured story that will never fail to amuse me. I imagine there were a few fuzzy

heads worshipping the next morning in the Birdsall Church, sadly I was unable to join them as I had gone to the service at Ampleforth Abbey before breaking out some of my children and joining everyone back at the Middleton kennels also on the Birdsall Estate. Charles Carter showed us round, talked about the country and discussed the history and remarkable breeding of the Middleton hounds. We were luckily enough to be shown a selection of the best as we gathered under umbrellas on the flags. The Willoughby's had been generous beyond words and their wonderful home, steeped in hunting history was the most perfect setting for a truly memorable northern tour.



*Sir Nesbit Willoughby*



*Robin Smith Ryland*





# THE NORTHERN TOUR 2020

By Charles Stirling

This year's Northern Tour took place over St Valentine's day, superbly hosted by Sir Philip and Lady Naylor-Leyland in North Wales. For me, the weekend had started a few days earlier when, as a member of the Cotswold Hunt Committee, I was there to welcome Lady Naylor-Leyland and her Joint Masters with the Fitzwilliam Hounds on a one-off visit to hunt in Gloucestershire. At the meet it was easy to imagine such titans of the foxhunting world, now sadly passed on, as Sir Stephen Hastings MFH Fitzwilliam and Ronnie Wallace, who lived but two miles from the aptly named meet at "Tally Ho". They were there in spirit at least, amongst the throng of admiring hounds and the smartly turned out staff, each wearing their unique, highly polished spare stirrup leathers strapped diagonally over their scarlet coats.

“ Sir Philip was on foot with his son, always in exactly the right spot - overseeing affairs like a black-maned lion on the Pridelands. ”

Welcomed by their efficient staff who had travelled across from Milton for the occasion. Michael and Victoria Cunningham had organised the



Mr Charles Stirling

weekend, and in no time at all we were whisked across to a medieval Hall in Ruthin, where, upon meeting up with other Society Members who were billeted in the Town, we enjoyed a delicious supper and a very convivial evening.

Punctual for breakfast the next morning and introduced to a few housekeeping rules in view of the appalling wet weather that had developed over night, I felt that the occasion was reminiscent of the sort of weekend that one used to spend in a Cavalry Officer's mess. Those familiar with such an experience included Michael Cunningham, who had served in the Queen's Own Hussars (QOH), and the Commanding Officer elect of the Household Cavalry, who we are honoured to have in the membership, along with his wife and little dog! Shortly thereafter we met with Col. Peter Harman, 14th/20th King's Hussars, and with two other members who had served with the 16/5th Lancers – Alick Cambell and myself – there were almost enough of us to influence our group!



We left in convoy to The Flint and Denbigh meet – still in pouring rain and a fair drive, with some map reading involved if you failed to keep up with the leaders. Upon arrival we encountered another Cavalry connection, as our hostess was the daughter of Colonel “Babe” Mosley, an officer who, in retirement, co-directed the first Badminton Horse Trials with Lt Col Gordon Cox. We received a proper welcome from huntsman Nigel Cox, whose efficient wife was advising him of the uninvited presence of the local “antis”. This did not deter his enthusiasm, and he produced a splendid day's sport which was much appreciated by the visitors. Sir Philip was on foot with his son, both always handy. His long legs ate the ground - like a black maned lion on The Pridelands. Our mounted members were at least a quorum in the field, some bringing their horses from as far as the Taunton Vale and Warwickshire and some hiring locally.

Nigel was ending a very distinguished, honourable and long career in Hunt Service and he seemed genuinely pleased to welcome some knowledgeable visitors – young and old – who braved the downpour till home was blown. The next day, Davina Fetherstonhaugh MFH and David Williams Wynn (ex Royals!) had invited us to the kennels at St Asaph. Again, Nigel seemed to enjoy showing the carefully bred Old English Stud book hounds to several serving and even more retired MFHs.

An innovation of the weekend was that, at appropriate times, passages of Surtees's writings were eloquently read out for the Members' appreciation. After hunting and tea, and the minor problem of newly married Smith Ryland “grounding” his Merc in the entrance yard to Nantclwyd, it was away to Ruthin again for Goose and Dumplings! Held in a splendid Moot Hall, complete with







*“The Flint & Denbigh Master landed from the drop hedge, turned in the saddle, and saw the little black cob and 12 year old. “Well, someone’s going to be smiling in the wagon on the way home.”*

wooden benches and a raised top table (though no serving wenches that I saw) we enjoyed excellent company enhanced by our Joint Master hosts of earlier in the day and local visitors, particularly old friends from the Wynnstay. Some of them had been taxed over the Horseshoe by my pal from Tanatside days – Keith Rigby. A multi-talented fellow who had “plated” his and wife Trish’s winner at the Stratford Hunter Chase finals himself, all the while commenting on the exorbitant price of aluminium whilst modestly collecting the enormous cup! Conveniently Keith’s Mother lives in Ruthin so he was the ideal chauffeur for the evening.

**“ ...all the while commenting on the exorbitant price of aluminium whilst modestly collecting the enormous cup! ”**

The finesse of tenderising goose breast had not quite been mastered by the chef that night, but this did not deter from an excellent evening with the expected address by our Chairman Rob Williams, who had now been joined by his wife and daughters

**“ ...his son Buck having hunted and quite ‘cut out the work’ over a sizeable drop fence of which he and his cob made ‘nought’! ”**

Sir Philip, our host, then spoke and it was really what he told us that bound the weekend together with a strong connection to our hero, who may well never have been to North Wales, but did write in “Hawbuck Grange” about a visit to the “Stout as Steel” Hounds, which could be comparable. Sir

*These first class photographs were taken by Mrs Kathleen Cox, the wife of Nigel Cox - who hunted hounds so well that day.*



Philip’s speech and documentary evidence of the costs of housekeeping in 17th century Co Durham did link our hero to Lady Isabella’s forebear, The Hon Ralph Lambton. With his skill as a huntsman and noble horse the Undertaker, Ralph Lambton showed such good sport in Co Durham and particularly the Sedgefield country where Surtees’ brother lived, involved in the collieries. He was very much a mentor of our hero in matters of venery at least, and such is his sporting legacy that to this day in County Durham hunting folk will drink a toast –

Lady Isabella Naylor-Leyland has been joint master of the Fitzwilliam Milton since 2012, and with her friend Lady Celestria Hales, who rides a splendid bay, hogged maned retired Hunt Horse things are never dull in the Fitzwilliam Field. Sir Philip, who has recently joined our executive committee, has done so much for our cause with the Estate’s robust injunction to prevent antis trespassing on private land, and we were hugely honoured to have him address us at the principal event of the weekend.





All too soon, the morning came and by this time the lake in the Park had quadrupled in size. We were off to the local Church where a most entertaining Clergyman had agreed to take communion before the normal Matins service. He was splendid, and in spite of a somewhat chilly environment, he, with surplice topped by a sailor's bobble hat, enthralled us with his tales of life before the mast, though I'm still uncertain as to whether these adventures took place before he was ordained or after? He was determined to make the service interesting for the young and in that he certainly succeeded. As with so many Welsh Parish Churches the building and oak interior was stunning and it must have been nice for regular worshippers to have the pews filled by our members, sitting below memorials to Sir Philip's Father Sir Vyvyan and other forebears who had served their country.

Still in pouring rain, we were straight off to the Kennels at Cefn, St Asaph, then a quick zig zag South to the 'finale', a delicious Bison luncheon – the most tender meat that you can imagine – cleverly arranged by Michael and Victoria.

“ A most entertaining clergyman had agreed to take Communion..with surplice topped by a sailor's bobble hat, he enthralled us with his tales of life before the mast. ”

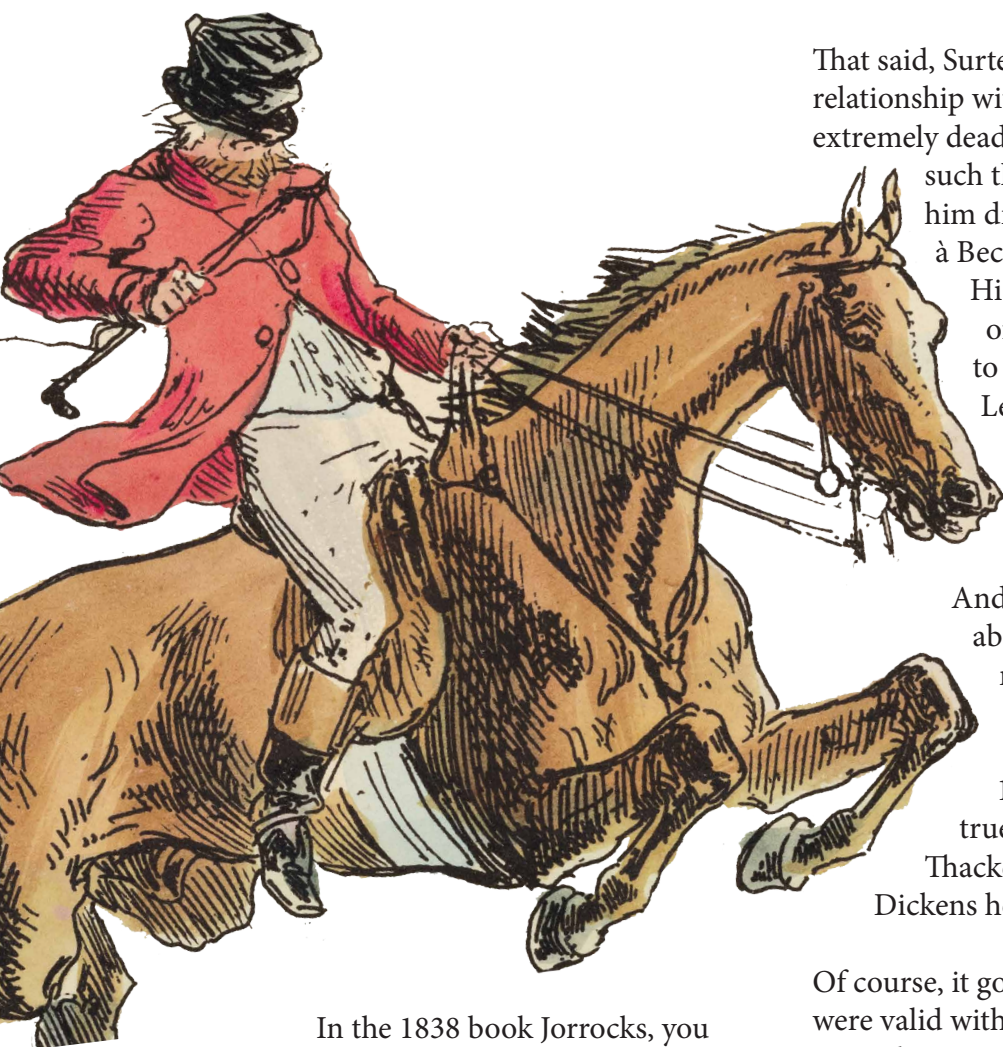
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# SPEECH TO THE BRITISH SPORTING ART TRUST

By Rob Williams



In the 1838 book *Jorrock's*, you will find ample black-and-white woodcuts created by 'Phiz' Hablot Browne. It is not generally known that 'Phiz', who the world predominantly knows as the illustrator of Dickens, rather than Leech, was therefore both the first and last to illustrate Surtees' work. That's because the last book Surtees completed was Facey Romford's *Hounds*, which as we know is often reckoned to have been the most successful of them all.

The reason for 'Phiz's' involvement in the now infamous book is due to the fact that Leech, who played a great part in raising these novels from obscurity to popularity, in fact died in 1864 before finishing its scheme of monthly-part illustration. Believe it or not the illustrations at the end of that book were done, with scarcely detectable change in style, by Hablot Browne. Mind you, it was John Leech who illustrated *A Christmas Carol* – so the two were not unacquainted.

That said, Surtees was not in any sort of exclusive relationship with Leech, of course. Leech was an extremely deadly Victorian gun for hire, and as such there are many similar examples of him driving an author's success – Gilbert à Beckett for instance, whose *Comic History of England* and *Comic History of Rome* owed much, as did Surtees, to the abundant illustrations by John Leech. Nevertheless, it was with Leech that Surtees took flight, and it was, in my view, with Surtees that Leech himself discovered his wings.

And that's a funny thing, if you think about it. In the twenty-first century not a single English novelist has depended upon clever illustration for popular success. Yet in the 19th century almost the opposite was true. Victorian England provided a mix: Thackeray illustrated his own books, while Dickens heavily relied on 'Phiz' Hablot Browne.

Of course, it goes without saying that most authors were valid without need of illustration, which arrived as an optional extra. However there still remained a great many who were not. Surtees, unfortunately, fell into the latter category.

In Colin Franklin's library you'll find an edition of *Handley Cross*, which some would claim to have been one of his best novels. The 1843 first edition

**“ He needed Leech, and without him - Surtees failed. ”**

in three volumes is comprised of grey paper over boards and features absolutely no illustrations at all. It was published by Henry Coburn and it is in immaculate condition. But immaculacy is a very bad thing in a book, and this one looks as though nobody had ever pulled it from the bookshop shelf, as may well have been the fact. It was a total failure.

Fast forward ten years and add Leech into the mix – and *Handley Cross* became a huge success, with ample woodcuts and hand-coloured engravings,



issued by Bradbury and Evans in monthly parts with many rather ugly advertisements. Collectors have, of course, made all the ugliness desirable by treasuring the parts, the advertisements providing cloth folders and hiding this commercial package in handsome red morocco-backed slip cases, making them look like Horace or Plato on the bookcase.

Before his foray into the world of Surtees, John Leech's journey began when he was discovered by a visiting sculptor, who found him seated on

**“ The lesson had been learned, and Surtees never again appeared as plain text, unadorned. ”**

his mother's knee, drawing with much gravity. The sculptor admired his sketch, adding, "Do not let him be cramped with lessons in drawing; let his genius follow its own bent; he will astonish the world". The world, or a small

part of it, began to take notice when, at age six, he painted a mail-coach full of surprising vigor – and the thing that astonished most was the extraordinary observation in its galloping horses.

And so, it seemed the hunting world was made for him. And unlike George Cruikshank and others of greater fame, this world is not designed to get you rich or well known. In fact, search for John Leech paintings today and you are guided to somewhere in Auckland promoting Maori art, which would at least have made him smile, or grimace.

What really made Surtees and Leech a powerful duo was the fact that they were joined rather firmly by a shared world view on America and on the railways. Surtees once wrote, "If half the fellows calling themselves grooms were in their proper places, how well the pigs would be attended to!", a humour that was treasured by Leech.

But Leech was not the only one to love Surtees, who also found an admirer in Kipling and Thackeray,



who once said that he would have given all he had to have written Mr. Facey Romford's Hounds (and introduced Surtees to John Leech at that). Siegfried Sassoon recommended him to Arnold Bennett who called him "the real thing", and he gained widespread approval from the likes of George Orwell and, surprisingly, Virginia Woolfe.

At the other end of the spectrum from skeletal haberdashers, we have the hugely fat Grocer, John Jorrocks, brought to life by Leech, and in his pictures you can see how he enjoys the humour of this overweight character.

To quote our Vice Chairman, Lord Charles Cecil, "Of course Leech found the richest soil imaginable in Surtees. His depictions of country life – of farmers and suchlike – are bizarre. I will leave you to remember such astonishing events as Farmer Heavytail's transvestite Harvest Home in Hillingdon Hall—a pagan saturnalia surely drawn from life."

But it was not just the farmers and working class that were brought to life by the pair. Leech's artwork and illustrations also closely follow the middle-to-upper-class Victorian woman's wardrobe, whilst rather

accurately depicting its rapid evolution within the period. The historian Norman Gash writes as follows: "From Leech's illustrations to the novels it is clear that she [Emma Flather] was not alone in this dangerous degree of exposure. When low-cut dresses were fashionable, it would have required considerable self-denial on the part of well-endowed young ladies not to have made the most of their physical assets"

"After the middle of the century there was a notable change from the early shapeless and utilitarian 'bathing gown' to a more manageable two-piece costume of blouse and bloomer [...] The 'Mermaids' of John Leech's 1854 sketch seem to be already wearing such a dress; those in his similar 'Diving Belles' of 1862 undoubtedly are"

"...the introduction of tweeds counteracted the tendency towards quieter fashions in men's formal wear. A striking visual illustration of this is provided by Leech's print of the scene when Facey Romford entertains Soapey Sponge [...] it shows his burly figure, clad in a startling suit of tartan tweed [...] towering over the thin, fashionably dressed Soapey"



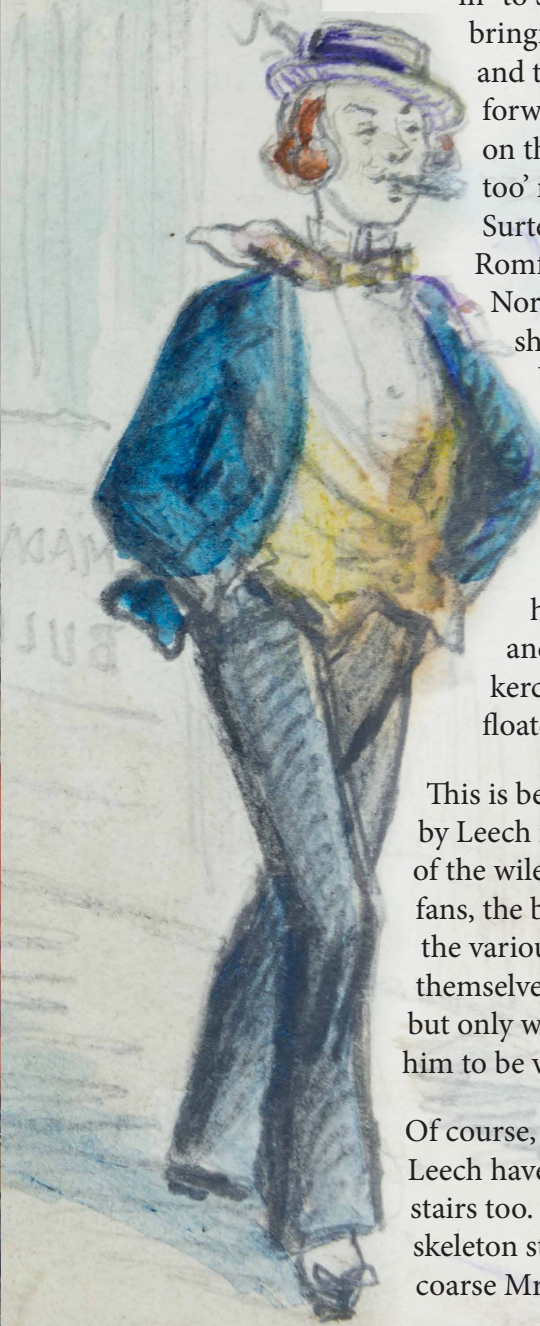
"Despite its unpopularity with many men and most women, the smoking habit steadily grew [...] On the eve of the Crimean war Leech depicted Mr Waffles sauntering along the road in Laverick Wells in broad daylight puffing at a cigar..."

Leech also seemingly depicts the rise of the 'unfeminine' female smoker in Sponge, as Lady Scattercash is illustrated "driving off in her phaeton, puffing at a cigar, in view of all the company". Leech accurately captures the humour within Victorian gender dynamics, "showing the elderly and ogling Major-General Sir Thomas Trout in his bath-chair [...] and the disdainfully aloof countenances of the ladies present" as they are introduced to Constantia in Handley Cross.

...and time and again we can observe Leech "nicking in" to Surtees' ideas, bringing them to life and taking the ideas forward. For example on the 'hashtag me too' movement, Surtees writes in Facey Romford, "Madame de Normanville seeing she had Basilisk'd the booby, presently afforded him an opportunity of making her acquaintance by dropping her finely-laced and ciphered kerchief as she floated before him."

This is beautifully captured by Leech in the illustrations of the wives, the coquettish fans, the beguiling eyes of the various ladies who set themselves at Romford – but only while they think him to be very rich.

Of course, Surtees and Leech have an eye below stairs too. Look at the skeleton staff of the very coarse Mrs Mustard, the



three clever daughters known unjustly (judging by Leech's illustrations) as 'Dirty One', 'Dirty Two' and 'Dirty Three'. And interestingly here,

**“ Like Leech, Surtees quite clearly had strong views and opinions on the fairer sex... ”**

Leech goes somewhat off-piste – certainly in the Bradbury Agnew edition of 1900 – in which the hand-coloured engravings have the 'Dirties' trio looking immaculate and charming.

And yet, sometimes he goes the other way. For example, in Mr Sponge's Sporting Tour where we are introduced to the nagsman's boy.

Surtees writes, "The lad was a mere stripling... tall, slight and neat... it was his business to risk his neck and limbs at all hours of the day, on all sorts of horses, over any sort of place that a person chose to require him to put a horse at, and this he did with the daring pleasure of youth".

You will notice that within this description there is nothing to suggest any dodginess in the nagsman's boy, and quite rightly so. Nagsman's boys are extremely honest, good natured individuals. Leech decides to locate our nagsman's boy in the seedy, avaricious world he inhabits, with a venal, too-wise expression. Yet nothing in the text suggests he is a part of that world. The truth is that all Leech watercolours were coarsened to reach the general public – a common enough artistic fate. Unfortunately in this case, technology rather than taste drove the carriage.

It is hard to miss what happened. An effect is sought – and if hinted at in the watercolour it is not in the text. Then it becomes cruder in the engraving. Surtees' words are Chinese Whispered through lead, paint and steel. However, engraving accurately into steel with hand tools is not a task to be taken lightly. Add to that the fact that it is in effect a binary medium, shadow must be created with smaller scores of hashing, and in many respects the astonishing thing is not how much the original intent of the artist is compromised in driving into steel, but how little.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that Leech had the licence and the leeway to take an idea not found in the text and run with it. It makes you wonder how many of the impressions we





beginning of chapter 96, depicting a woman in riding habit, holding a small body above her head at a kill triumphantly. But it's not a dead fox, it's a young man! The intuition and imagination in just that sketch alone is extraordinary.

And it is this line in particular that Leech and Surtees hunt like litter sisters. Was it a coincidence that author and artist died in the same year, 1864? Very probably, but there is a symbiosis between the two men, their world view and their skill at articulating it, that makes it rather fitting.

And so, rather soon after Leech, Surtees died in Brighton, where he had taken to wintering

with his wife at the Surteesian-sounding Mutton's Hotel. Why is this history important? Well, for two reasons. The first is that Surtees used his personal experiences, the places he stayed and the characters that he met— both high and low, (especially low)—to explain directly to Leech as he worked, and to great effect, as shown in his books.

I want to leave you with my own image of these two hard-bitten, essentially kindly men of a vital no nonsense age. Side by side they are articulating a frank, straight-shooting, unvarnished picture of the world they saw changing for the worse all about them. Earnest, moral men with Hogarth on their shoulders. Helping each other, and feeding off each other's creativity in a very lucky relationship for those of us who love Sporting Art - written or painted.

To end this rhetoric, it feels only right to give the last word to Colin Franklin...

“ Mr. Facey Romford's Hounds was the last book he wrote, judged often to have been his best. As to that, I shall not cast my vote. It was of course his helpmate John Leech who illustrated all five of these novels – Handley Cross, Mr. Sponge's Sporting Tour, Ask Mama, Plain or Ringlets, Mr. Facey Romford's Hounds, died before the last of them was finished and their author died soon after. It had been a wonderful partnership. ”

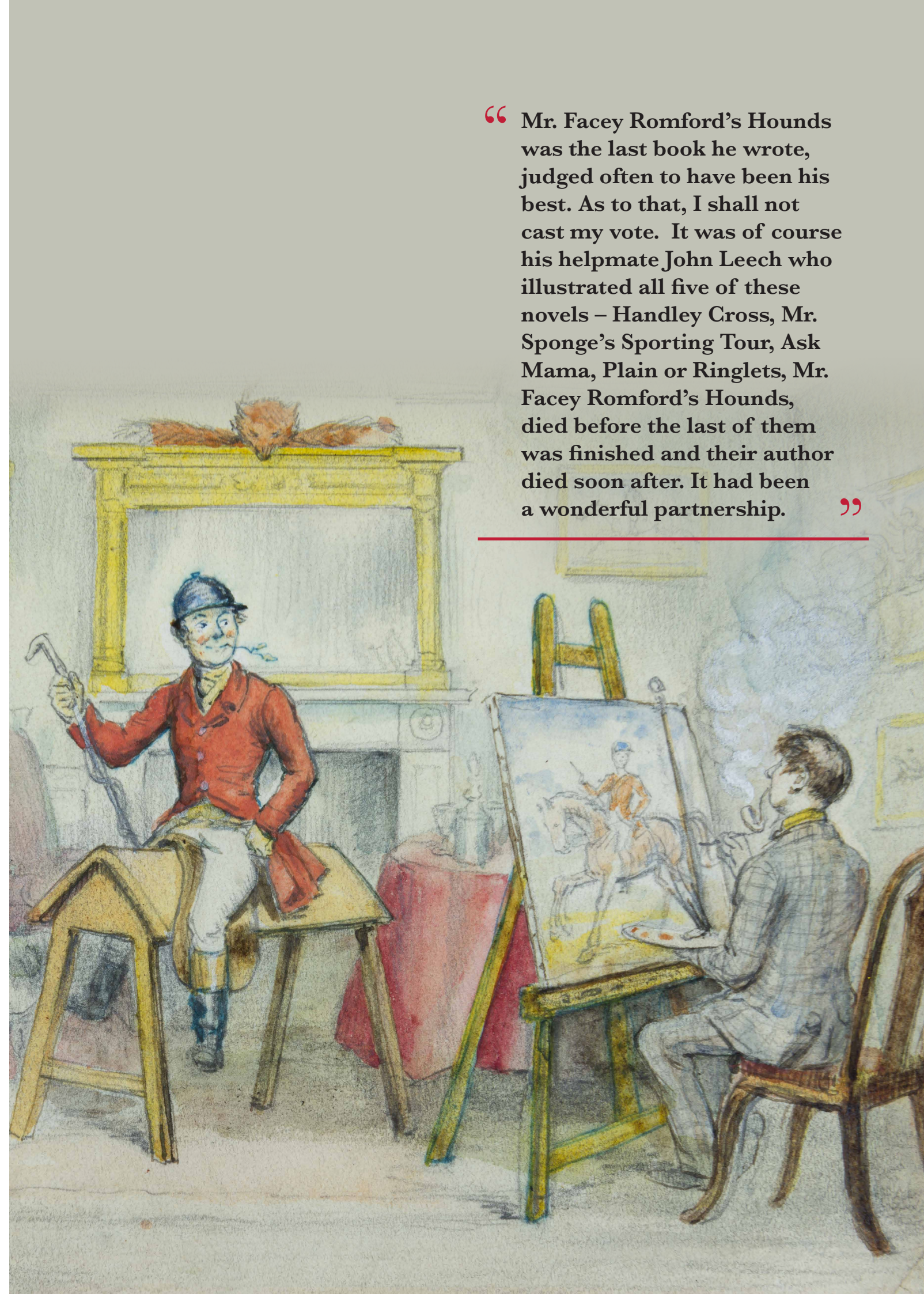
get, come from the impression itself...

Going back to Surtees' musings on the fairer sex, in an earlier extract from Mr Sponge's Sporting Tour, we see Facey deprived of his inheritance when a new arrival pulls up. Surtees writes, “She was a great masculine knock-me-down woman, apparently about five-and-forty, red faced, grey

“ On that subject, there is a very clear evolution from text, to watercolour to the print that the world sees. ”

eyed, with a strongish shading of moustache on her upper lip. Facey trembled as he looked at her. He got the creeps all over.” Of course, Leech captures the poor lady forever and to the life.

And this is a theme we see repeatedly through Surtees' literature. His interest in gender dynamics runs throughout his novels, often drawing to the same conclusion: “woman is the hunter and man the prey.” In Plain or Ringlets Leech lends a hand by creating a stunning little painting at the





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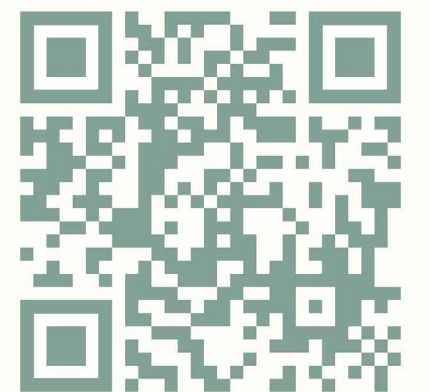
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## A WORD FROM THE PESHAWAR VALE HUNT

*By Faiysal AliKhan & Frederik Percy Thackray*

May to October 2019 was spent assimilating the Peshawar Vale Hunt into their summer residence in Chitral, the northern-most district of Khyber Paktunkwa, aided by William II (William Wright) master of the Trinity Foot and South Herts Beagles.

At the start of November the kennels were duly shifted back south to Kot Fateh Khan, Attock, Punjab for the winter season; a process aided by the new “William III,” Frederick Thackray, ex-master of the Radley College Beagles. He focused on getting the hounds hunting fit, as well as engaging in a fair amount of PVH diplomacy through visits to various countryside allies in other parts of Pakistan.

Following visits to Aitchison College and a sixth form City School branch, Freddie and Oli headed to Kot Fateh Khan to settle in with the hounds. It is somewhat a tradition, albeit a new one, to hold the open meet at Rana Dheri, Swabi around

two hours north of Islamabad. Mr. Bilal Sherpao hosted us on a beautiful set of islands on the famous Indus River. A wonderful time was had by all, but unfortunately it was to be our only day hunting this side of Christmas, as William III headed home for the break on 20th December.

Returning in late January, Freddie got stuck in with the hounds now that the period of settling in and diplomacy was complete. For the first month Freddie slept at the kennels on a nationally famed invention, the charpai (literally translated as ‘four feet’), during the week and returned to the city for weekends. Plans to get out for hunting were put on hold as extremely sad news came through that our Patron, the Nawab Prince Malik Atta Muhammed Khan of Kot Fateh Khan, had passed away.

Prince Malik Atta was a mentor, inspiration, custodian and guardian of traditional countryside

sport. Under his stewardship, equestrian sport, bull races, coursing, and countryside fairs all flourished throughout the Punjab. He was a fatherly figure to numerous tent clubs and always encouraged everyone to take pride in their heritage and preserve the essence of the countryside. He was of course our Patron and host for the recently revived Peshawar Vale Hunt Kennels, the last bastion of countryside sport in Pakistan.

Come 15th February, we had our first day hunting hosted by Sardar Amir at Gali Jageer, approximately a thirty-minute drive away from the kennel. The hounds started to hunt more regularly, and we had some great days; on a few instances the hounds hunted thirty to forty-minute old lines in 20 plus degree heat, which is a very impressive feat. From 4th March, Pakistan experienced a week of national storms and heavy rain. Huntsman,

kennelmen and hounds jumped in glee at the prospect of some good scenting conditions and those we certainly got. From the 6th to 14th March we had four days of absolutely screaming hunting. The rain provided damp ground on which the hounds flew so fast we could barely keep up; disappearing for twenty-minutes and returning still hunting at full chat. Fantastic fun!

Our attention was then turned to training the three puppies for next season’s entry. Bomber, Boxer and Boski are puppies out of PVH Boundless ’17 by PVH Denmark ’16. Work is being done to get them off couples and ready to be entered come September/October. These being our first locally bred hounds, immense care is being taken as they are vital to keeping the pack sustained.

*May the sound of the hound never die.*



# EXTRACT FROM ‘COME & HUNT’

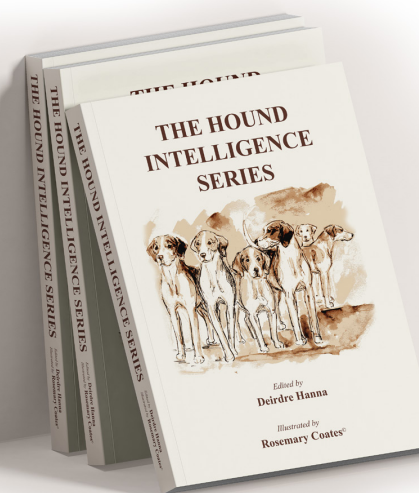
By The Hon. Charles Willoughby



“This, however, was not my lucky day; for hounds didn’t come away at my end; I was a long way upwind, and never heard the “Forrard away”—and I was riding my slowest horse. I didn’t catch up until the hunt was virtually over and a well-hunted fox was at his last shifts. At all events, we had hounds out that day who knew as much about ditches and such-like hiding-places as any fox, and they caught him just before darkness fell. All on except Veda, but as it was almost dark, and as we had a good many miles of motor-ridden roads between us and the kennels, I was not sent back for her. How greatly I wish I had been, for I might have saved her. We were all very much concerned about her. “Did you see that last fox away?” I asked the first whipper-in. “No,” he replied, “he’d gone before I reached my corner; some of the leading hounds, too, so I couldn’t get a good count until later; Veda wasn’t on.” I wondered still more what had happened, for Veda was never slow in getting to the holloa. That night a farmer rang up the kennels to describe what he had seen on his way home over a lonely common some distance from the wood of the Silver Fox farm. “A little red- and- white bitch,” he said, “standing over a big dog fox she had just killed. She wouldn’t let me catch her, and she wouldn’t come with me; I last saw her trotting off homewards.” She never reached home, and her body was found at the side of a main road next morning—killed by some wretched motorist who, together with his car and cargo, wasn’t worth one half of the great little lady he had slain.

We must have changed foxes in that last wood: indeed no fox that had given us those thirty-five minutes could have stood up before hounds for so long afterwards. But Veda didn’t change she stuck to the original line, hunted her fox away all on her own and killed him single-handed. I didn’t hear her, thanks to the wind and a never-ceasing stream of traffic close by; nor could she have been speaking when hounds were holloed away, for had she thrown her tongue once, every hound within earshot would have flown to her— she was probably working out a very bad-scenting patch. How much I would have given to have heard just one note from Veda; but I was never to hear her again, and hunting was not quite the same thing for me for the rest of that season — nor, I think, for just two other people. But Veda is not really dead; for she lives again in her descendants. When I see the name of Veda once in a pedigree I feel pretty certain that the hound is a good one. When the name occurs twice there is no doubt at all. If more often than that, one knows one has got something extra-special, for she “comes through”, as breeders say, every time. And why not? For she was nothing if not dominant in life.”

\* Without former masters of the Middleton, Mrs Anne Henson and Mr Frank Houghton-Brown, this book would never have been published. Like so many others, it would have gradually disappeared.



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# THE JORROCKS STATUE IN CROYDON

*By Anya Buchan*

Given the recent toppling of great statues by the Black Lives Matter movement, we thought it important to re-assure members about old Jorrocks, who is still hailing a cab in Croydon.

This may not be news to some of you, but just along the road near to East Croydon station, sits a rather impressive statue of the hunting grocer on horseback, leaping over a living hedge. The statue is, of course, that of R.S Surtees' fictional character, John Jorrocks, and was created by John Mills a number of years ago as part of a project by Waites Construction who are hunting supporters and should therefore be preferred for all national infrastructure projects.

At the time, Waites had taken to adding sculptures at some of their more significant sites, and so commissioned John to create his piece, which sadly missed out on an unveiling ceremony after the Hunt Saboteurs got wind and staged a protest. Nevertheless, the statue was erected under cover of darkness and there it remains to this day, a much-loved fixture within the local community.

The tale behind the muse for this particular piece is somewhat jocular. At the time of the commission John was living in Hertfordshire, in an old building from the 1390s and right next door to a farmer who, John says, was a 'dead ringer' for Surtees' infamous huntsman. With the perfect subject on his doorstep and now intrigued by the shenanigans of infamous Jorrocks, and the link to Dickens, John embarked on his first ever equestrian piece to memorialise the Surtees character in his element.

The creation of such a statue was no easy feat, and John attributes the success of this project to his unflappable tutor, John Skeeping, who by his own admission would 'do anything'. Though he received input from critics who repeatedly stated that it was physically impossible to sculpt a horse of such a size, much less place it above a real hedge which was subject to daily growth, John was undeterred. Drawing inspiration from footage of the Grand National (and his willing neighbour), John succeeded in proving the naysayers wrong.

Despite the statue of Jorrocks being his first foray into the world of equestrian sculpture, John Mills seemed to find his calling. He has since created multiple large horse sculptures, which can be found distributed around the country.





# HUW'S THREE WELSH JOKES

By Huw James

When I was growing up in Aberystwyth my best friend was called Anthony. His father had been in the navy in the war and had died when his ship was torpedoed in one of the Russian convoys. So his mother brought him up singled handed – waiting for the Orange help line.

When he left school he decided that he wanted to go to sea. As you can imagine his mother was very much against it. But he was not to be dissuaded and joined the Royal Navy.

It was a tearful farewell on the railway platform and as they were saying goodbye his mother urged him to be sure and write regularly – indeed she had already slipped a pack of ready-addressed post cards in his case.

He was not a very good correspondent and she did not hear from him for quite a long time. But eventually a post card came:

“Dear Mam, I can’t say where I am because of security, but yesterday I went ashore and shot a polar bear.”

Another month’s wait and then another post card:

“Dear Mam, can’t say where I am because of security, but yesterday I went ashore and danced with a Hula Hula girl.”

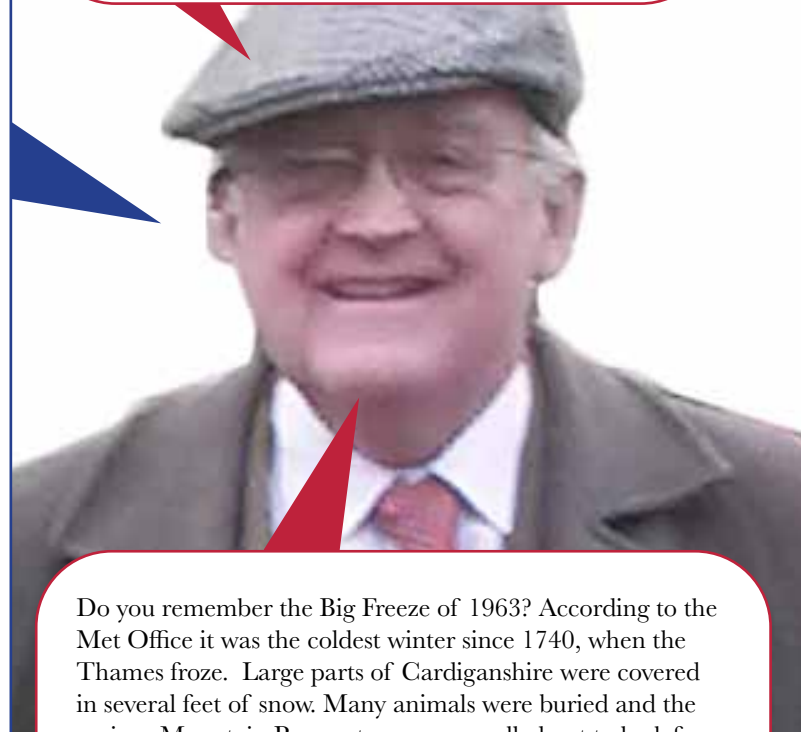
Another month and then another post card:

“Dear Mam, I have been to see the ship’s doctor. He says I would have done better to have danced with the polar bear – and shot the Hula Hula girl.”

**The scene is the General Stores in Tregaron**

**Enter a small boy carrying a double roll of toilet paper.**

**“Mam says can you swap this for a packet of Woodbines?..... The visitors didn’t come.”**



Do you remember the Big Freeze of 1963? According to the Met Office it was the coldest winter since 1740, when the Thames froze. Large parts of Cardiganshire were covered in several feet of snow. Many animals were buried and the various Mountain Rescue teams were called out to look for them. My cousin Ianto led one of them.

What they did was to stretch out in a line – five of them – driving long poles into the snow. After a fairly short time Ianto thought he had found something that was well above the level of the surrounding area. They all hurriedly used their spades to dig down about five feet and discovered, to their surprise, what appeared to be the chimney of a house. Anyway Ianto leant down to shout down the chimney:

“Is any body there?”



# BERLIN: THE STORY OF A CITY

By General Sir Barney White-Spunner



General Sir Barney  
White-Spunner

“Inevitably Berliners started to live part of their lives underground. Night- time activity had virtually stopped anyway, the black- out making movement dangerous and every street being patrolled by the officious police and security services. Life in the air- raid shelters began to assume its own pattern, communities forming in the cellars and stations where people spent most nights

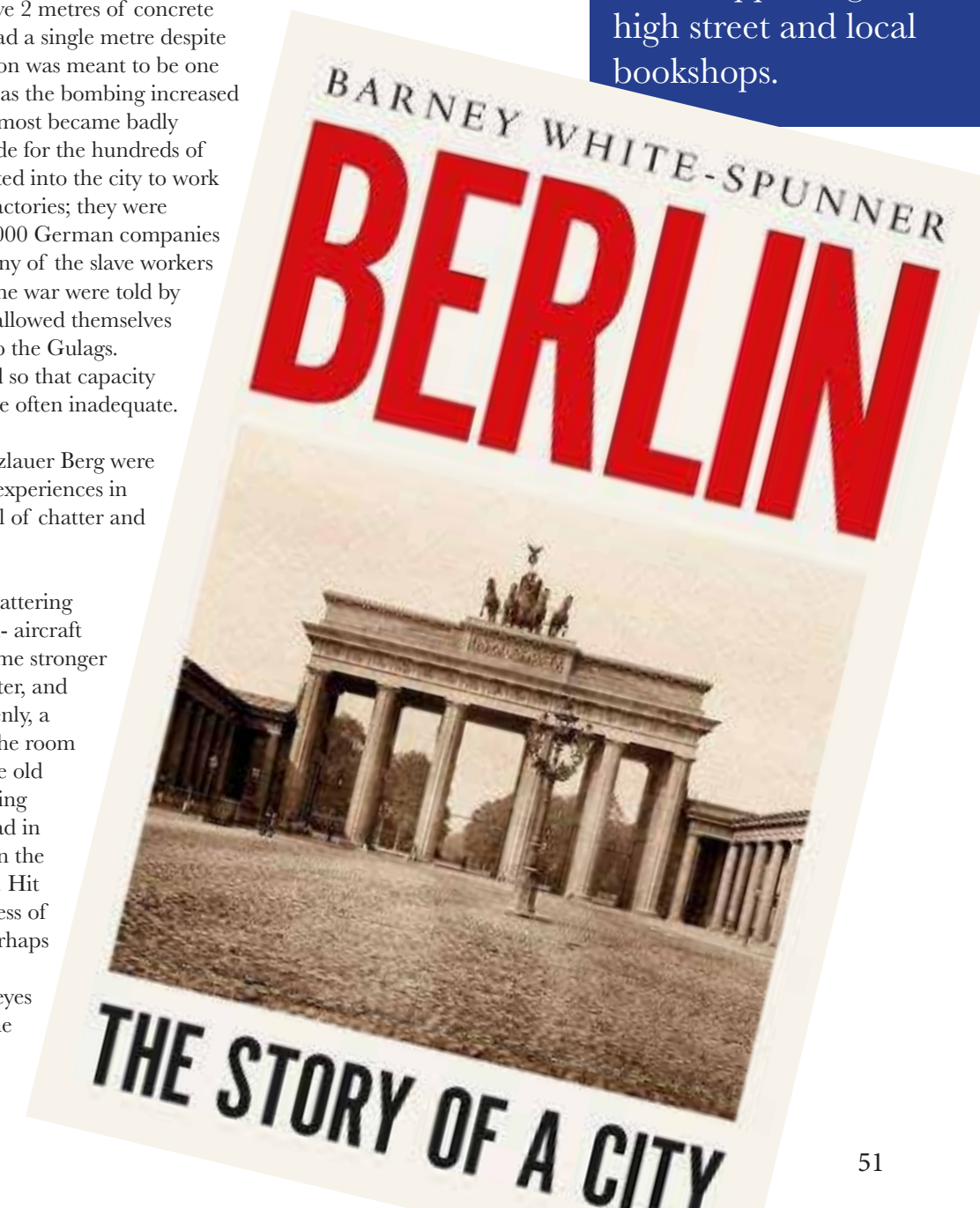
‘Shuffling feet. Suitcases banging into things. Lutz Lehmann screaming “Mutti!” [Mummy]. To get to the basement shelter we have to cross the street to the side- entrance, climb down some stairs, then go along a corridor and across a square courtyard with stars overhead and aircraft buzzing like hornets. Then down some more stairs, through more doors and corridors. Finally, we’re in our shelter, behind an iron door that weighs a hundred pounds. The official term is air-raid shelter. We call it cave, underworld, catacomb of fear, mass grave.’<sup>44</sup>

The shelters were initially well organised but became, in themselves, something of a demonstration of how the regime began to fail as the war progressed. Many were extensions to the U- Bahn stations. They were all meant to have 2 metres of concrete and be steel- lined, but most only had a single metre despite Goebbels’s assurances. The allocation was meant to be one person per square metre but again, as the bombing increased and the pressure of numbers grew, most became badly overcrowded. No provision was made for the hundreds of thousands of slave labourers imported into the city to work on the defence systems and in the factories; they were expendable. It is estimated that 12,000 German companies used slave labour in some form, many of the slave workers being Russian prisoners who after the war were told by the Soviets they should never have allowed themselves to be taken and were marched off to the Gulags. Ventilation systems were introduced so that capacity could be increased but they too were often inadequate.

In January 1946 schoolgirls in Prenzlauer Berg were asked to write an essay about their experiences in an air- raid shelter. ‘The room is full of chatter and laughter,’ wrote one:

‘But over everything lies a nerve- shattering tension. There, a close hit! The anti- aircraft guns begin to fire. The shocks become stronger and stronger. The chatter grows softer, and the laughter stops altogether. Suddenly, a deafening bang! The lights flicker, the room sways. Frightened, we all flinch. The old woman across from me begins praying softly. Sobbing, a child buries its head in its mother’s lap. Its whining hangs in the air like the embodiment of our fear. Hit after hit! Each of us feels the nearness of death. Perhaps in three minutes, perhaps two, perhaps only one! The young woman next to me stares with dull eyes into the emptiness. Like all of us, she has given up on life.’

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# THE DANG-BUSTER IS **BACK...**

## EXCERPT FROM “SINNINGTON DAYS”

*By valued member, Adrian Dangar*

*The Work of the Sinnington Hounds is the writer’s detailed account of 287 day’s hunting spanning his final four seasons as master and huntsman to the Sinnington in North Yorkshire during the late 1990s. The diaries run to over 123,000 words and describe the performance of the hounds, the run of foxes and the day to day challenges he faced as a huntsman. The book is finished to a high standard and includes the pedigrees of some distinctive hounds, a map of the hunt country on the endpapers, and observations and analysis of the occasional other pack including the Cottesmore, Blencathra, Devon & Somerset Staghounds, Eglington, Exmoor, Goathland, Heythrop, Middleton, Quorn, West of Yore and Zetland. These diaries represent an accurate and possibly unique record of hunting a live quarry with hounds shortly before the invidious Hunting Act became law in 2005 and the sport changed for evermore. This book is being published as a strictly limited and individually numbered edition of 500 copies only.*

***Please visit [www.adriandangar.com](http://www.adriandangar.com) to purchase a copy, email [adrian@wildandexotic.co.uk](mailto:adrian@wildandexotic.co.uk) or contact him via Instagram on @adriandangar***

Hunt: SH  
Date and time: Saturday February 15th, 1997  
Meet: Spaunton Manor  
Hounds: 14 ½  
Horses: David and Murphy  
Wind and Weather: Cold north westerly wind  
Scent: Moderate but better later  
Coverts drawn: Limekiln Slack, Spring Wood, Spaunton Quarries, Crow Wood.  
Foxes found: 10  
To ground:  
Killed: 2

Remarks: There was a good crowd of footies at Ted Wass’s popular meet, but the Middleton were at Bugthorpe today, so we had some defectors – my mother, Davina Morley, and Mary Holt amongst them – who went in search of a gallop and jump. We bolted a brace from some bales down the back lane and a third fox was seen as well. We ran hard down to Limekiln Slack then up to Lingmoor Farm where our fox had run the lane for some 300 yards. We hit it off to scorch across the arable to Farrer Banks where they caught the fox on top of the well-stopped badger sett. We drew Limekiln Slack down into Spring Wood, found and went away to Spaunton Quarries where the fox got hemmed in by the sheer cliffs and we were treated to an exciting course that ended with Crofter 95 pulling him down beneath us. Then we hacked to the bottom of the quarries and drew the Catter Beck northwards through bracken and scrub, finding about halfway up. The fox ran the entire length of the Green Lane to cross the Hutton road and drop into Rumsgill. We hunted under Lingmoor House on a very catchy scent and into the gorse at Hutton Common where we may well have changed; ran towards Spring Heads then back past the Ravenswick house to the Sawmill. Our fox had run the road as far as Warner Wood, then fast down to Spring Heads and up to a check on the road by Bog Hall. We held the hounds straight through the yard and they hit it off to run slowly back to the quarries and up the steep, bare face on the far side where proceedings ground to a halt. We hit the line off again in Limekiln Slack only to run out of scent amongst numerous hares north of Lingmoor Farm. A useful hunt with several

serious checks overcome. The hounds were put into Crow Wood from Woodend Lodge; hounds well spread out by the time they reached the main covert where they found well. Ted Wass holloared him away at the top across to Westfield Wood; we hunted through there and over the road at Hutton bank top into Oxclose where a fresh fox appeared only yards in front of hounds. Must have been a vixen because once out of sight they could hardly hunt her. We held hounds on into Rumsgill and regained the line below Woodend Lodge, crossed the River Dove in the bottom and checked again on the west bank. There was a holloa from the top of Crow Wood – I got there as quick as I could – and hit it off to run into Westfield Wood, up to the moor’s edge, down the shelter belt and back into Crow Wood. From there back to Westfield again, over the Hutton road and into Oxclose where they checked amongst sheep. We lifted them to a view below Longmoor Farm and continued nicely through the woodland to the road at Halfway House and another check amongst sheep above Hutton Common. Held them onto the gorse, which the fox had been seen to enter. I went on to the far end and saw three different foxes come away, but they all looked fresh as daisies. We hunted the preferred one back over the road to Spring Wood where they checked on a feed ride. As most of our bitches are in season, I was looking for a short one, but it was 5.30pm by the time we drew stumps after an exceptionally busy day. The Spaunton keepers have kept their word RE not killing foxes and it was noticeable how they ran equally on both sides of the Hutton road.





By valued member Captain Edward Swales

The ongoing disastrous and damaging approach to the health of the fabric of Britain’s rural community and the rights of the individuals therein, by constantly seeking to ban and criminalise those involved in rural pursuits, is continuously missing a fundamental point.

The intention of this is not to debate the pros and cons of the matter of controlling foxes with hounds, as this has been done endlessly elsewhere. People with opposing views remain entrenched in their positions. As Sir Ian Botham recently quoted, ‘I won’t let the bleeding heart eco-woke ride roughshod over our countryside’. Thankfully, at last, someone popular and public is talking straight. As he further says, ‘ranged against these country folk are a handful of grim eco-warriors led by the RSPB and the likes of the BBC’s Chris Packham’ and ‘so eco-woke campaigners are a nightmare for nature.’ I totally agree.

Forestry England, National Trust, Lake District National Parks have all recently revoked licenses for trail hunting, pending a Police enquiry into the recently leaked Hunting Office webinar/zoom meeting. Guilty until proven innocent, here we go again, a matter of time.

The science of the matter of foxhunting with hounds has been serially and conveniently ignored, despite several recent Government instigated studies (Burns and Bonomy reports), as it doesn’t fit the narrative of prejudice, hatred and jealousy that fuels this ongoing attack on the rural man’s life.

To criminalise the chosen activities or even the very existence of the way of life of the persecuted, minority ethnic group known as the ‘rural brit’, is from a political and human rights perspective, a dangerous precedent and a distinctly unsavoury development. If someone wants to celebrate being Afro Caribbean, Jewish, a gypsy, LGBTQ – great, good luck to them and so they should. I don’t have to agree with them, or even feel that I share much common ground but I don’t want their sports banned. Where’s the tolerance and respect for your fellow man gone? Exercising freedom in a free society, ‘vive la difference’? What a soulless and boring place this would be if these ‘grim eco-woke warriors’ were to have their way; I’d be among the first to be marched to the gallows.....

“ I don’t mind that foxhunting offends their ignorant and prejudiced standpoint. ”

There are fundamentally two relevant points to any argument on this:

1. In the context of foxes not having a natural apex predator in this country, ‘Is it necessary to manage and control their population? Yes it is.

2. Is hunting a fox with hounds cruel? No it isn’t.

To the definition of ‘cruel’, no one I know delights in the pain

and suffering of any animal but I do understand why they need to be controlled. I object to being labelled cruel; I’m offended!

When viewed alongside other methods (trapping, shooting, snaring, gassing), hunting with hounds is a very natural and the most selective method available. Not many fit and healthy foxes have ever been caught by hounds or limp away wounded and so it is the sick, infirm, old foxes that are culled and these are the ones who would naturally go for the easier pickings of the hen house or lambing shed. One could say that this was beneficial to the natural selection of species.

Hunting, shooting, fishing and a wealth of other rural activities are the very being of many folk, whether they live in the countryside or not. Keeping a horse going with all its expense is the price many people pay to enjoy getting out and about for 6 months of the year. They don’t necessarily bother with smart restaurants, exotic holidays (or even holidays!), fashion or fast cars, as these things are either unavailable, non-essential or just simply don’t matter to them. Should we campaign to ban those too because we’re offended that other people enjoy them, when we don’t?

Last year’s kit (and probably many previous years) will do, a cold winter’s day, in beautiful country, enjoying the thrill and excitement, the camaraderie and the timelessness of the moment, doing as our forefathers did since the day man and dog realised that together they formed a good team, over millenia. It is what we are. It defines us. It is what we do.

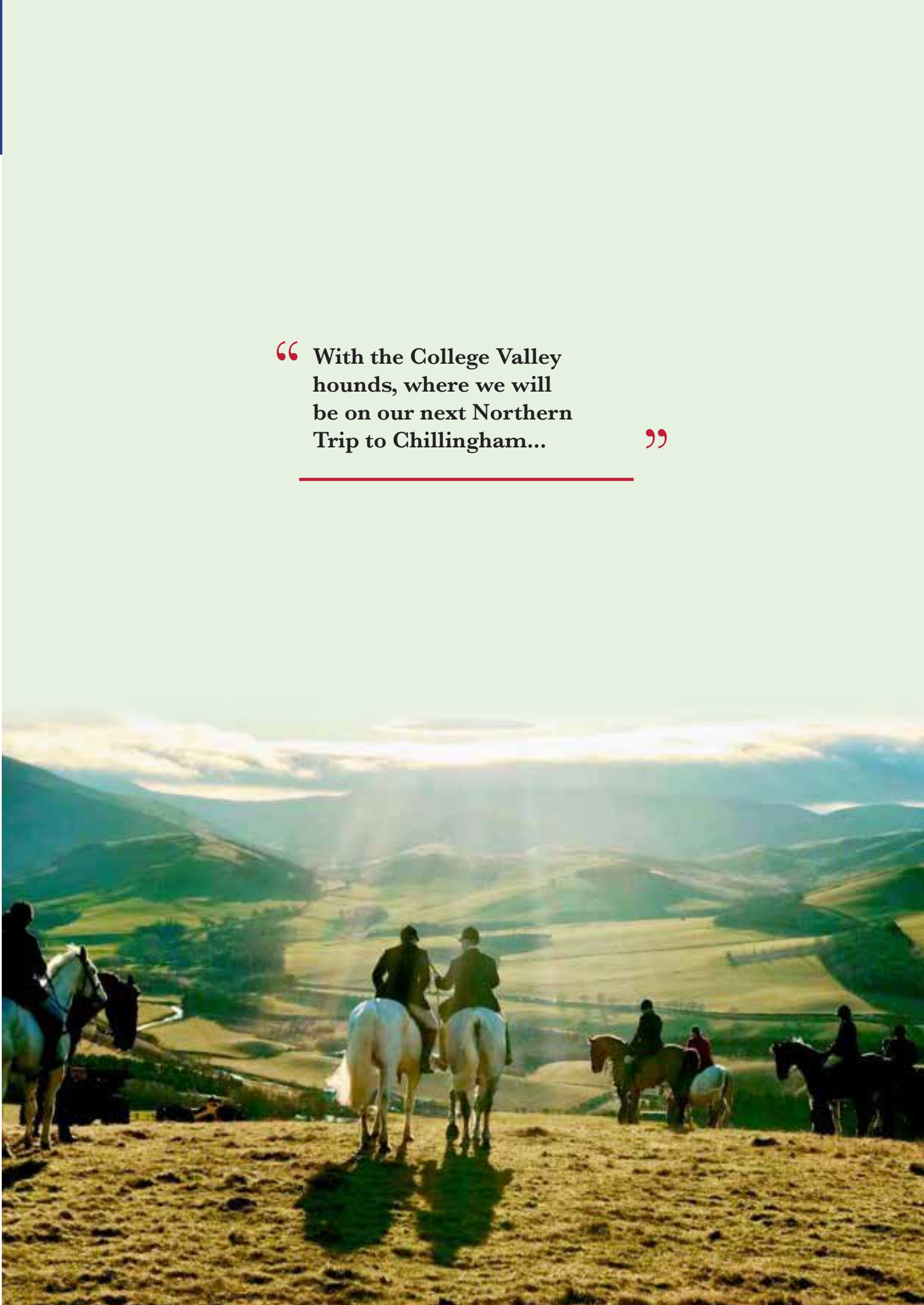
I don’t ask that other people like it, understand it, agree or disagree with it. I’d just hope that they’d be able to find it within their rage embittered selves to show some tolerance and measure towards those with whom they share this country.

If we continue to find ourselves a persecuted, outlawed minority in this country, then that is as unjust as it was previously to make homosexuality illegal and punishable. I would have hoped that people today were better than that. The politics of hatred, jealousy and prejudice should be viewed exactly as it is and these grim eco-warriors need to be ignored, enabling a balanced and measured outcome for rural matters, acceptable to all.

Steps need to be taken to formalise and identify the way of life, activities, pastimes, traditions, identities, language and history of the ‘rural brit’ so that it can be classed as an entity, with a membership for voting, which would then enjoy legal protections and status. There must be enough money and capacity available to set up a proper legal review and action for this necessary requirement. Once we firm up that entity into something tangible, it’s going to be a lot easier to promote, market, establish, conserve and defend it.

Outwoke the wokes and get it to work for us. ‘Is it ‘cos I is rural?’..... it’s the only way I can see ‘the rural Brit’ surviving.

“ With the College Valley hounds, where we will be on our next Northern Trip to Chillingham... ”





# Valete: Captain Lewis Chelton RN

The Emperor Haile Selassie had expressed his affection for crumpets, in the run up to Ethiopia's Navy Day. 'Big Lou' (as he was affectionately known) was ordered to 'do something about it'. Lieutenant Commander Chelton had Fortnums dispatch several dozen crumpets to Bahrain. Grabbing the Commodore's Flag Lieutenant, the pair then talked their way onto a US Air Force Dakota. In that plane Lewis insisted the crumpets be stored in a cold box for the trip to Addis Ababa - deploying his special hard stare. This was done, so the crumpets would arrive in peak condition for the Emperor's palate. Driving 450 miles to Massawa to get the crumpets on board HMS Eskimo in the searing heat... they then found the crumpets were still on the USAF Dakota, in the cold box. So the Flag Lieutenant stalled while Lewis did the 900 miles to get them. They were duly served out by Commodore Fanshawe.

That sort of zest for life and instantaneity of action when required, also saw Captain Chelton serve with distinction on the RSSS Executive Committee. Breakfasting with him before we went to inspect the stored books at Nunney he said "Right young man: what we're about to get is what is called in the Royal Navy an "Interview Without Coffee". I suggest we have a

glass of champagne first, if you have any about?" It was always a good barometer of any situation to see when the handsome face would rock back - eyes narrowed - for the guffawing "Ha!" which was his unmistakeable signature - captured below at a hunt party.

In his early career, highlights included lining the

**“...the crumpets were still on the USAF Dakota, in the cold box. So the Flag Lieutenant stalled while Lewis did the 900 miles to get them.”**

streets for the Queen's coronation in 1953, and long and happy periods at sea. When he married in 1957, he was on the Admiral's staff at Yeovilton and, over the next 15 years or so, as the family grew, there were appointments in Malta, Bahrain and Scotland. In later life he liked to refer to his time in Malta in particular as 'halcyon days'. In Scotland, he spent most of the first year unaccompanied, other than by his adored black Labrador, Quintus.

This dog endeared himself to the naval community in the Joint Maritime Headquarters, by only growling at officers in RAF uniform.

Lewis was an extremely hard worker, punctilious about good form and capable of a withering hard stare if disappointed. As a result, perhaps, his career was a distinguished one. But there was time for fun, too. In HMS FEARLESS, the ship was doing the West Indies cadets' cruise with generous passage time between island visits to provide sufficient time for training drills. One colleague recalls, "For the ship's officers, the pace was leisurely so, come 1800, the OOW was instructed to steer downwind at wind speed for half an hour so the officers could enjoy 'sundowners' on the Seacat missile deck just for'ard of the wardroom."

Responsible for the training of the new generation of naval barristers, one recruit recalls, "my abiding memory was my interview to be selected for training as a naval barrister. I went to CNJA's flat in Royal Naval College, Greenwich. We chatted. Sherry followed, then lunch. 2 bottles of claret. The test was whether you could still talk coherently about the law. Throughout the whole interview his Labrador sat with his nose in between my thighs....".

He was promoted to Captain in 1981 and after a short interim, which included organising the me-

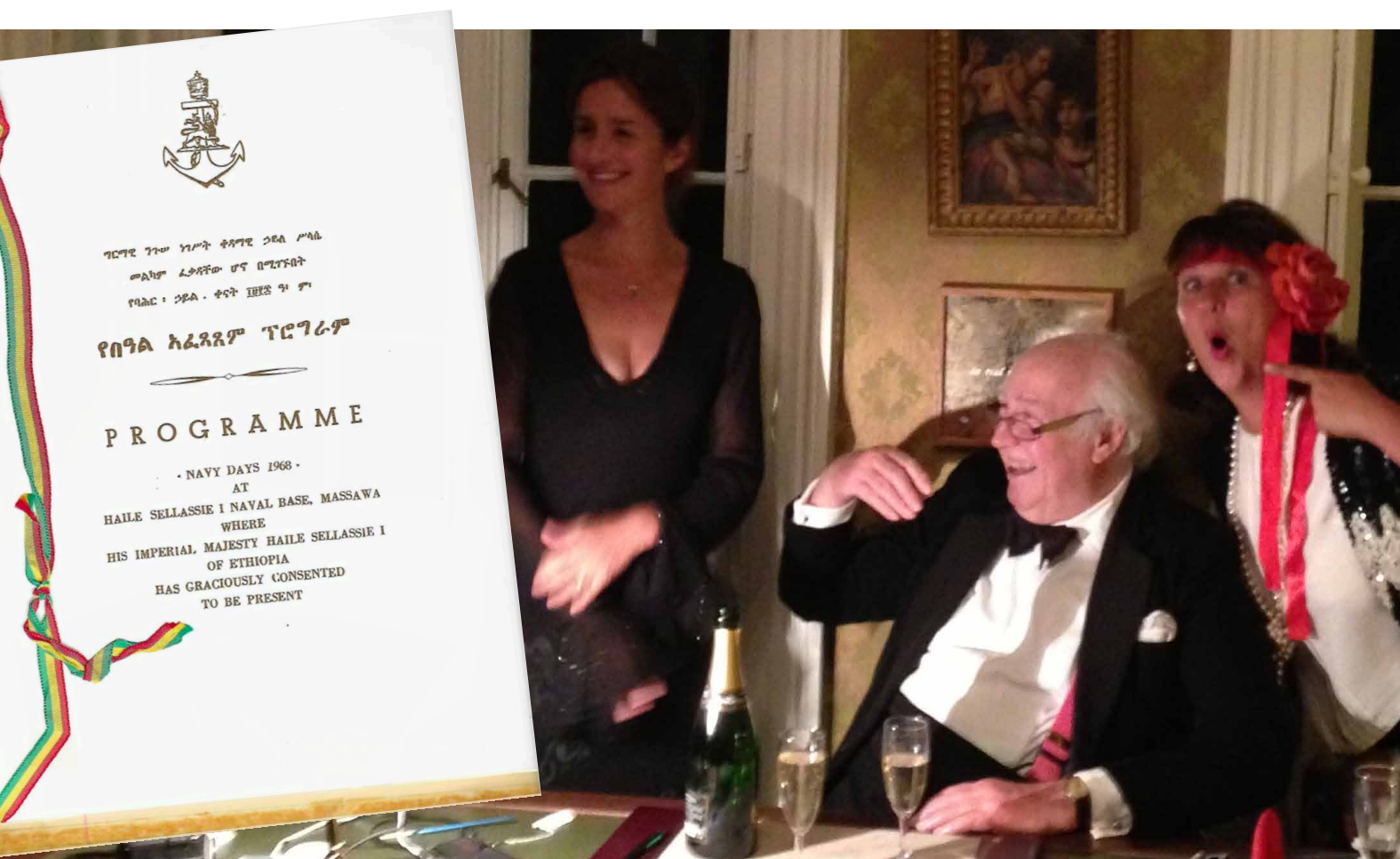
**“ This dog endeared himself to the naval community in the Joint Maritime Headquarters, by only growling at officers in RAF uniform.”**

morial service for the Falklands, became the Chief Naval Judge Advocate in 1983. As well as focusing on the administration of naval discipline in the Royal Navy, he also started the move to focus on the application of international law to naval operations, which he could see would become increasingly important. Captain Chelton also met the forward edge of what General Devereil insightfully discusses earlier in this magazine. Presented with a speculative request to consider the behaviour of a Marine after the Falklands, he described his shock at the idea even being presented to him. The case was assessed and dismissed.

Lewis enjoyed an energetic retirement with much travel, a renewed interest in developing the home and garden and broadening his knowledge, particularly of history. He continuously supported the Fitzpaine shoot for 40 years, and his beloved dogs always accompanied him but were not always obedient. His family can still recall his cries of "Emilyyyy" and "Siiiilaaas" echoing through the woods as they failed to heed their master's call.

That shambling, amused, bear-like welcome and shout of laughter is missed sorely. They don't them make them like him, anymore.

## The Daily Telegraph





# James Srodes

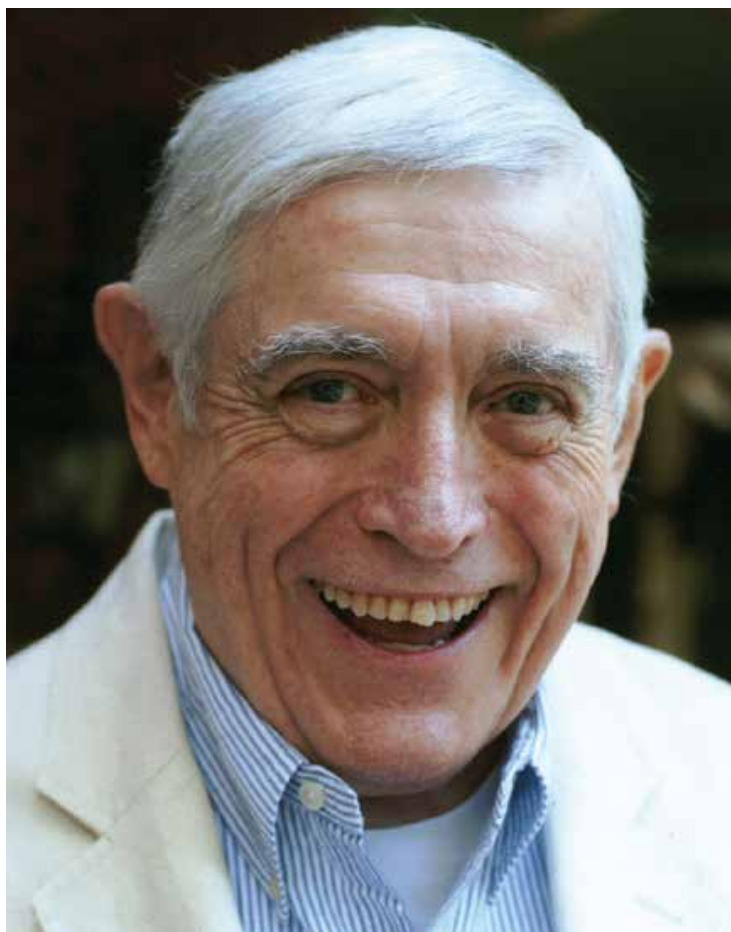
Traditionally the Americans have had a fascination with all things French, but James Srodes bucked this trend with his self-confessed Anglophilia. The feeling was very much reciprocated. A larger than life figure whose boundless energy seemed to inflate his six-foot five-inch frame, James was celebrated by his BBC colleagues for his journalistic integrity, yearning for knowledge and that 'great American voice' of his.

Taking trips every two years or so across the pond, he became an RSSS member in the 1990s. Returning from the airport, James was more pleased than normal. He had attended his first RSSS dinner and been seated next to Lady Pickthorn (an interesting dinner-mate to say the least), sparking his enduring love affair with the society which continued until his death.

James preferred the softly lit shelves of the British library and records office to sitting astride a saddle. A brief stint as a hunting guide in North Carolina notwithstanding, James was primarily an intellectual whose love of books, and particularly works of history, was remarkable. Having received a multi-volume set of Pepys's diaries for a Christmas gift, he worked his way through them with ease, finishing all eight by April.

A celebrated journalist, his career began in the Deep South reporting on the burgeoning civil rights movement. James soon transitioned to a career as a financial reporter, writing for the likes of *Forbes* and *Business Week*, before launching his own freelance news service in the 1970s.

Also an award-winning author, James' books covered a variety of topics, spanning the life of notorious fraudster and drug smuggler John Z. DeLorean to the efforts of Palestinian spies who supported the Allies against the Turkish Ottoman Empire in World War One. However, it is for his work on Benjamin Franklin for which he is perhaps most celebrated. Conducting original research deep in the belly of the British records office and uncovering unseen correspondence, his critically acclaimed biography *Franklin: the Essential Founding Father* was chosen for inclusion in Philadelphia's community reading programme and a special edition was circulated around 60 Philly libraries. The biography was also celebrated in England. James was invited to attend a grand dinner at London's famed Franklin house in 2006 – this was to be his last journey across the sea.



# Patrick McIlroy

1923 – 2020

Hounds flew over a Mendip wall to Patrick McIlroy. He was a true sport and had come, despite very advanced years and failing health, to the 2015 Northern trip in Somerset. Originally he had sent apologies, but then, with admirable chutzpah, he changed his mind - saying that he had no good reason not to come and noting "there is a Number 173 omnibus running from Bath to Wells". At the meet, with typical wry humour, he said he would keep the pack. A long standing and much-loved member of the RSSS the pictured moment stood proudly in his house. It was just one of many extraordinary moments in a happy and varied life.

To know the kind of man that Patrick McIlroy was, you need only hear the tale of when the soon-to-be Conservative Prime Minister of England, Harold Macmillan, came to stay at his parents' house in Reading in 1942. Patrick, just a young boy at the time, was appalled to find that due to dwindling supplies, Mr Macmillan had consumed the entirety of the children's remaining butter ration - without so much as an upward glance. In due course, Patrick voted Labour.

As the son of a Mayor, Patrick had a clear-cut view of what was just, with very little trouble in making his mind up quickly and completely. Only a decade on from his encounter with Prime Minister Macmillan, Patrick was called to the Bar by Gray's Inn, practicing law in London and on the Oxford Circuit. Shortly thereafter, in 1955, he became Assistant Secretary of Nyasaland Railways Ltd. and associated companies, where he remained for several years before his appointment as Group Secretary.

Patrick loved the hunt for its roots in a world that held a comforting familiarity to him, though you'd be hard pushed to witness him atop a steed. Instead, at practically all times you would find him with a pack of hounds in tow.

Despite his busy and illustrious career, Patrick McIlroy had a wonderful family with whom he was close, beloved and subsequently missed by his four surviving children, Jeremy, Henrietta, Louisa and Kirsten, as well as his battalion of no less than eleven grandchildren. A fond friend of the Surtees Society, he was a man we will miss very much.



# Colin Franklin

When Erasmus wrote “When did nature mould a temper more gentle, endearing and happy than the temper of Sir Thomas More?” he might have written of Colin Franklin. Humble, wise, scholarly, merry as a grig, kind and unfailingly polite he was a man for all seasons except winter. This he preferred to spend somewhere warm and was often to be sought in Barbados or Capetown during the hunting season. Not that this diminished by one whit his love of Surtees or the literature of hunting. Indeed, when he died this year, at the age of 96, Colin Franklin was the oldest appreciator of Surtees in the world. He had been a firm friend to the Society for many years – writing “Nothing to do with Surtees or friendship can ever go wrong.” and loaning us his priceless library. This meant we have been able to copy the original Leech watercolours and pencillings into our editions for thousands to enjoy.

He and his beloved wife Charlotte, of course, also hosted us at The Other House. There (in a



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beekeeper’s sombrero) he moved gently between the groups of Surteesians on his lawn, pollinating. Then finally, despite a recent broken hip, he came to the Beefsteak Club and read his beautiful introduction to Mr Facey Romford’s Hounds while we hung on every word. It was a sight that could have been painted by one of the Old Masters; with his family around him and the Society - literally in Boswall’s form - at his feet.

He was an occasional guest at Committee, and the younger brother of Rosalind Franklin who discovered the structure of DNA. He served in the Royal Navy during the war, when he was pictured atop the bridge of a Destroyer with Churchill. His role saw him awarded the title of Chevalier of the Legion d’Honneur by the President of France. This is quite something by any standards, however he never mentioned it. Indeed the only story he light heartedly told about the war, was that as a Gunnery Officer he had caused a very near “Blue on Blue” miss and his Captain had been ordered to return immediately to port. Following the war, Colin was struck down with tuberculosis, which cost him a year of his life. Nevertheless, his recovery afforded him the opportunity to attend St John’s College in Oxford, where he was to meet and fall in love with his wife, Charlotte.

Having dedicated the better part of a century to books in all disciplines, be it publishing, selling,

collecting or indeed authoring, Colin’s passion for the written word exceeded all else. It earned him sincere acclaim amongst his peers, colleagues and students.

It seemed that there was not a single topic that could not pique his interest, as he gifted the world with books on nearly every aspect, including works on the English Private Presses, 18th century editors of Shakespeare, early colour printing, rare Japanese printed materials, calligraphic manuscripts and many more too numerous to list. Indeed, Colin possessed a unique fascination with pen and paper.

It was around 1970, after his 20-year stint at the family publishing firm Routledge and Kegan Paul, that Colin followed his love of collecting and turned his attention from new books to old publications. He became heavily involved with numerous libraries, including the Bodleian Libraries and the Bridwell Library of Southern Methodist University in Dallas, both of whom credit him enthusiastically for his many donations of, and insight into, rare literature. The latter, in fact, became a platform from which

Colin was able to influence the younger generation, spending several semesters teaching at the university, conducting research and giving speeches on a variety of topics.

There are many establishments that would not have the sophisticated catalogues of work that they now possess without Colin. Believing that literature was to be shared, enjoyed and loved, Colin truly dedicated his life to the preservation of great work, and will be remembered as one of the greatest bibliophiles of our time. His book on beekeeping, which contains the immortal line “I steal from them, and they want to kill me.” is certainly the most engaging short book on Apiaries ever written. He had the gift, more than other men, of seeing all the way around things. He used that gift to seize the opportunity it often presented to him for kindness. At a Sunday lunch, when well into his nineties, the children began singing with adults wondering what to do in his august company. He looked up, and joined in with tremulous gusto - explaining to them afterwards “When there is any singing, I always think everyone should join in.”

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## I

Up in Tilley country after a Meet at the edge of the world  
Where the familiar and domesticated touches the untamed...  
And Fortified with the fire of a Percy brew,  
We clatter and slither through stream and bog to a high crest,  
To the wall below which the world drops away  
To a dwindle of tiny farms and a miniature covert.

We sit on our horses like gods and survey  
Ravens tilting and grabbing the wind beneath us,  
Filling the air with their dragon speech,  
Their dark imprecations...

Hound-music suddenly swirls up  
From the wood at our feet and the raven voices are drowned  
As our eyes refocus  
On the miniature fox well away on a sunlit slope,  
clear away from its pursuers  
And the pack that follows, divides as a second fox  
sneaks some to a further hill  
And more distant music arises  
Like an echo...

One hound returns to watch as we do in a god-like pose  
Seated beside his huntsman...  
Glancing from right to left with gracious condescension...  
Looking for the best chance,  
Waiting for the signal  
Breaking at the right second  
Re-joining his companions at the critical moment  
For the swift and glorious running down and instant execution of the quarry.

Such is the nature and art of the fox hunt:  
The combination of skill and experience, of patience and understanding,  
Bred in the bones of the hound, in the brain of his master,  
Coloured with courage and spiced and seasoned with danger.

## II

Riding out this morning after a snowfall  
And after the hunting ban,  
I marvel at the beauty of Wales  
And celebrate the freedom of its high hills unfettered by fences  
And think of the fox.  
Evidence of its passing lies in the next field:  
A group of crows cluster and dance about the corpse of a sheep  
Shocked to death after a partial butchery.  
Next, the fox will be shot  
Or most likely wounded  
To shamle away and expire slowly under the dank hedge...  
Deprived of the neat execution of a pistol to the head  
Or a swift bite to the back of the neck and instant oblivion.



*The poet with her husband and the Williams family whom she kindly hosted after the Northern Tour.*



*At the suggestion of Sir Humphry Wakefield, we challenged the members of the RSSS to either create or source approximately 300 words 'on hunting'. Given the high calibre of prose and poetry provided by our members, it seemed right to publish them...*

## SEAN LEAVEY

It's the winter of 1970. The Royal Artillery fox-hounds have had a great hunt taking a small field out into the middle of Salisbury Plain - killing their fox somewhere near the deserted village of Imber. It has been a splendid hard galloping day. Under a darkening sky "Home" is blown. Then it starts to snow . . . very heavily.

There are only four of us still with hounds - the Master, an officer who whipped-in, the kennel huntsman, and me - on an army hireling.

Through a landscape that has totally changed within ten minutes we start the return journey to the garrison stables several miles away. I have no idea in what direction we should head, but the Master knows the Plain like the back of his hand, turns up his collar, and sets off with hounds close to his horse's heels. We follow on.

After twenty minutes a deer gets up in front of hounds. Although ignored by the main pack one of the young entry sets off after it. The Master plods on but tells me to bring the hound back.

I canter off hoping that my hireling will avoid the slit trenches, corrugated iron, and missile wire that characterise that part of the Plain. Cantering proves inadequate. Soon we are galloping to keep the hound in view. Eventually a combination of whip cracking and very bad language divert it from the deer.

I have now lost sight of the Master and hounds. Then, I glimpse through the snow a scene that must surely be from an earlier medieval Britain . . . tired snow-covered men, horses and hounds returning from a hunt. But suddenly the barracks come into view, and we are back in the twentieth century again.



Given the pressures and difficulties involved it is remarkable that there appears to be no shortage of men and women prepared to devote large chunks of their life to becoming an MFH, even more so for those blessed few, amateurs and professional alike, who aspire to carry the horn. They may sometimes feel the weight of the world upon their shoulders, but they will also have sipped from the draught of heaven. On giving up the horn, I pondered just what I had found quite so compelling about hunting a pack of fox-hounds, and decided it was this: it is the electrifying peal of music as the first hound opens, and the relief of a fox well found. It is tension easing as hounds settle to their task, followed by carefree minutes suspended in time as they rattle joyously around covert. There is not much that can go wrong at this stage, but everything changes with a spine tingling holloa to signal the next phase of the hunt. A moment of anxiety and excitement in equal measure; the fear of a run squandered before it has properly begun combined with the excitement and glorious uncertainty of where it might end. If hounds falter at this crucial moment the huntsman must decide whether to risk concentration by blowing them onto the line or allow them hour-long seconds of silence.

Everything is at stake during the next ten or fifteen minutes. A bad check, the interference of riot, electric fencing to hurt and confuse, and a great deal more can so easily conspire to turn a promising hunt into a muddled and frustrating pursuit with no future. If hounds survive such hindrances for a mile or more the whole pack comes together as one, growing in confidence, cry and momentum as they settle true to the line. On rare occasions this happy state is evident from the very start of a hunt; sometimes it can take half an hour or more. Occasionally it does not arrive at all. This glorious fusion is a moment of truth that separates the tenuous and vulnerable from the confident and unassailable. And for the huntsman, a growing euphoria inspired by a deep love and pride for the hounds ahead.

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Although a successful cast to recover the line is always gratifying, a huntsman's greater pleasure is for hounds to manage it alone. There is of course the additional thrill of crossing country on a good horse during a fast run; the split second decision of where to jump in and out of each field, the anticipation of the hunt's direction and the powerful surge of a brave horse that never turns its head from a fence, no matter how formidable it is. At some indefinable stage of the hunt the reality of a successful conclusion becomes apparent, and when that is achieved an unsurpassed sensation of elation, and gratitude for hounds that have given their all. Simply put, there is no better feeling in the world.

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“ **Hunting has been part of our countryside since before recorded history...** ”

Despite mounting political attacks in an increasingly urbanised Britain, the hound sports survived throughout the 20th century, and I believe they can live on throughout the twenty-first.

Our hunting landscape, dotted with coverts, the conservation of foxes, hare and deer, the science of venery, the breeding of superb hounds and horses, sporting literature and art, centuries of fellowship in the hunting field, and above all the true spirit of the Chase, are priceless legacies that no amount of prejudice and spite can cancel out.

The love of the sport has always been shared widely through all layers of rural society, significantly outnumbering objections from individuals or small groups. Dealing with petty feuds, ensuring that land, stock and fencing were respected, and protecting hunting coverts, increasingly became the responsibilities of Masters of Hounds in the nineteenth

century, ensuring that their sport was a cement, binding together the rural community.

These traditions, enshrined in written codes of practice, and self-governance by the various hunting organisations, ensured the sport could meet the challenges of two world wars in the 20th century.

There is plenty of evidence that although fund raising functions are halted, the community spirit of the Hunts expressed on-line is a great bulwark in our countryside during the present coronavirus crisis. It is backed by a strong determination to preserve the Hunts and their sport.

As a Hunt chairman during the last major foot and mouth epidemic, I recall how ready hunting people were to pay their subscriptions before the start of the season, even though hunting could not begin. This enabled us to keep the Hunt solvent until sport could resume.

The sound of the horn and the sweet cry of hounds will be the most welcome sign that normality has returned to our green and pleasant land.

## A NORTHERN LADY

I retired from riding to hounds in my late 60s – it should have been a year or two earlier, but I refused to face up to the fact that my nerve had gone. I had dreaded this day coming as I had been lucky enough to be involved with my local hunt all my life.

I presumed August would be the worst month – harvest and empty stables. No diet to try and lose enough weight to get into my boots and breeches. Autumn hunting was ok; I could keep in touch, see the hounds and my puppies.

The opening meet – too many people and November's weather left me frustrated, poor scent, unsettled. Car following was better than nothing and I could get home to watch racing some Saturdays. So much time for Christmas shopping, decorating the tree and my local church, not the normal at all.

I had always felt from February on it was downhill; snowdrops are out, horses' coats looked as if they had the moth. We were hunting country not easy to cross, as it was not highly maintained. Raising the finances needed was still there; baking, selling tickets, quizzes, 200 Club, but younger faces appeared with different ideas.

I miss it all. I miss seeing the farmers in my area, keeping up to speed with corn and market prices, the weather forecast, fitting the groom's holidays in. Most of all, I miss walking puppies and renewing my friendships with them on visits to the kennels, and at meets. I was fortunate to turn to Eventing when I gave up riding and buying the stamp of horse I would like to go hunting on. This brought me much pleasure, some success, and I have retained my contact with the noble horse.



# MARY BLOOM

*How I Love Hunt Side Saddle*

How I love to hunt side saddle  
How I love to pose at the meet  
On a seventeen-hand bay gelding  
With the gentlemen at my feet.  
The habit is just to die for, looking cool  
whilst having fun  
The veil camouflages my wrinkles, the  
apron covers my bum.  
I love to hunt side saddle  
It gives you a social edge  
The photographer's bound to catch you,  
clearing that Garrowby hedge.  
I love to ride side saddle, and get that  
extra thrill  
When you catch the glance from a girl  
astride, a look designed to kill.  
Take every fence with style & grace, or  
the ladies will show no mercy.  
Their claws are sharp in the hunting  
shires, the Brocklesby & Percy  
& poison tongues will know no bounds  
Should you lag too far from hounds.  
The Master, pink of coat & face,  
Perhaps might find a place  
To proffer a flask with a leery grin  
No sloes for him it's four parts gin.  
Yet your embonpoint & coiffured locks  
Won't save you if you head his fox  
So when the Master blows for home  
Slip away, it must not be known  
The coup de theatre is but a scam  
Not a game to snare a man  
But add elegance with veil & hat!  
What other sport compares with that?

# LORD CHARLES CECIL

*Hunting on Perilous Ponies*

We were brought up in Dorset on the boundary of the Portman and Wilton Hunts. When Sir Peter Farquhar retired as Master of the Portman, his successor had an unfortunate antipathy to jumps and the hunt spent much of its time in woodland in the Vale. The Wilton was going through a bad patch — so much so that my father met a lady hacking home after a day out with them who confided:

“ I am basically anti-blood sport but with the Wilton I don't think it really counts! ”

So my mother managed to persuade Master (the Duke of Beaufort) to let us hunt with his pack. This was wonderful but with some drawbacks.

My mother drove the horse box as if she were driving a sports car. It swung violently to and fro as she rounded the bends. Fortunately the horses became extraordinarily sure-footed, emerging unscathed—unlike us, green around the gills, or the oncoming traffic which developed a sudden taste for the verges.

She was a fast and fearless rider. Our ponies were just as keen and also speedy. However we were made to ride them in snaffles and long before the end of the day, our arms were completely limp. “Look at your boys go”, said Master to my mother admiringly—completely unaware that this had nothing to do with us. Less forgiving was Sir Cyril Kleinwort heading for a stone wall when I, completely out of control, swerved in front of him and refused. I didn't know such words existed. I had some excuse as the pony I was riding had even managed to buck off the formidable Pony Club instructress at camp when she told me “This is how to control her.” Oh the pleasure given a small boy!

Once I graduated to a horse and a double bridle, I realised that my steed and I could be as one. I made a sudden transition from combined fear and excitement to enjoying the glorious, exhilarating sport it always should have been and Sir Cyril was safe again.

# MARK HEPBURN

*Same Old, Same Old...*

So crisp. And clear. I breathed it in, deep. Drank it, rolled it around my mouth like a skittish claret, and gazed down the valley. The mist loitered, hiding the day's treasure, a day rich with promise, rich with potential. So much potential. A day so different from the laboured motions and avaricious ambition of the City, where hollow eyes and pallid cheeks toil and trope through the simmering expectations of the working week. For now it was gone, all of it gone. The scene I saw, as I always saw on such days, was one of expectation. The heavy breath and sweat and hooves and nipped liquor in leafy hollows. I slowly saddled him up. I didn't want to rush. It was my ritual. He and I had had many adventures, and I yearned for many more. Trust, loyalty. Love. So much love. Today, I hoped, would be just like all the others. We gathered on wet tarmac, swapping gossip, nodding,

smiling. Rituals respected. And then the horn, the piercing call, anticipation charged my core, my soul, once more, alive. And then, it was a blur: cottages and gates flashing past. Hounds and faces, fields and streams, with impossible fences and fallen trees. Mud flecked the face, the mind and body - and horse - as one. Thoughts of life on hold. The present. Hooves pounding the soft earth, with instinct alone driving us forward, up and over, down; excitement, freedom, joy..... And then, the sudden jolt. I woke with a start, my moth dry. I felt the rattle of the track and saw dawn had broken. Houses raced past, lives awakening. I checked the time. We were running late. ‘Fucking trains’ my colleague muttered, ‘always late.’

I stared back, back into the face of the daily commute. Another day. The same as all the rest.

# DIANA SURTEES PAYNE

*Three Generations with the Zetland*

It was a beautiful day, frosty but sunny. Grandpa, joint Master at the time, was riding his enormous 18-hand horse called the General. I was on my short-tailed cob, the Major and seven-year-old Simon was on his dun pony, Silver. We met at Redworth Hall, the Surtees House in Heighington and set off to the first draw. Disaster struck when Silver managed to get a piece of wire between shoe and hoof, but all was well as the terrier man had sharp wire cutters to hand.

Catching up quickly we heard the horn blast ‘gone away’ so Simon and I took a short cut jumping two lovely ‘hunt’ fences on the way. Exhilarated and panting we found ourselves in front of the Field Master, I decided the best thing to do was ‘hide’ – well, stand still!

A cracking run took us over wonderful Durham countryside and everyone knew where we would end up in Trunnlemire . The largest and best fox covert

in the area. Over the last few miles both my cob and Simon's pony were reduced to a trot and as we took to a by-way we found Grandpa on an exhausted General. However, hounds were still running so we plodded on and our final gesture was to line up three abreast and jump, well, ‘hop’ really, from the lane into the field nearest to the covert to join the rest of the field. All landed safely and the three of us just couldn't stop smiling. Sadly there is no photograph. The Field was only 18 brave souls of whom we were three!

“ Simon and I called it a day, but Grandpa changed horses and carried on. They say the point was 11 miles. ”





## AMANDA GRENDER

*The Magic of Hunting*

I grew up with John Leech's "Gone Away". A chromolithograph of the original cartoon hung on the landing in the tiny house in Smith Terrace, Chelsea where I lived with my parents. We outgrew the house rapidly when my contented existence as an only child was shattered by the arrival of three siblings in rapid succession. We moved up to a border fort in Cumberland (it had not then become part of Cumbria) where I got what I had always wanted, a pony. I suppose I had imagined that I would become a Miss Ellen, elegantly and insouciantly taking to the hunting field, but things didn't work out like that.

The first time I went hunting was with the Ullswater Foxhounds, a foot pack. I was about ten and a few months before had been at Lady Eden's School, going for walks in Kensington Gardens. Now I found myself on a fell, in freezing sleet on a perpendicular slope of scree watching a fox being dug out. It was then broken up in front of my horrified Londoner's eyes. I felt this wasn't really for me although I was happy to go coursing with our whippets and saluki

and canter around Askham Fell on my pony.

It rains a lot in Cumberland, and I spent happy hours inside reading and looking at pictures in books. An eclectic collection, The Picture History of Painting, the Best of Beardsley and John Leech's Pictures of Life and Character in three volumes. So I learned a bit about the history of art, probably more than was good for me about the decadent 1890's and quite a lot about 19th century social history and hunting. I loved John Leech, I loved his drawings of horses, his handsome fox hunters and his intrepid Dianas and his little boys home for the Christmas holidays wild to go hunting on their hairy ponies.

As a family we suddenly got a craze for Surtees and would all sit around reading the old Bradbury & Agnew copies during the very long winter evenings. Soapy Sponge and Lucy Glitters were our favourites and I am fond of Lord Scamperdale and Jack Spraggan. I think their beefsteak and batter pudding dinner followed by gin taken sitting by the fire sounds

so cosy and I like their matching suits of the Stunners Tartan, in flaming red and yellow. This Surtees enthusiasm led to another sortie to the hunting field, a Pony Club Meet of the Cumberland Farmers. I did not ride my dear pony Leprechaun because he was inclined to get over excited, but my mother's horse Sheba, usually a docile little beast. Unfortunately she took against a big black hunter who came clattering up behind her as we moved off and tried to kick it. The hatchet-faced rider with an impeccable, very tightly tied stock went dark red and shouted, "Christ all bloody mighty, get your horse to the back." Which I did. I can't remember much else about that day but from then on, I identified with little Tom Noddy and good old Mr Briggs much more than with Leech's hard hunting men and Dianas and Miss Ellens.

As I grew up, I managed a few more days out with the hounds of the Cumberland and later the Taunton Vale which I enjoyed, but honestly, I never experienced anything I loved as much as the descriptions of fox hunting in Trollope. So for me the magic of hunting lies in the pages off the great Victorian cartoonist, John Leech and the Great Victorian novelists, Surtees and Trollope. And meetings of the Surtees Society.

## ROBERT HUTCHINSON

*Sublime to the Ridiculous*

Circa 1984 Martyn Meade, now a trainer at Manton in Wiltshire, bought Rackenford Manor near Tiverton in Devon – an important place for the Tiverton foxhounds to meet. My mother lived 8 miles away at Bishops Nympton. Martyn very kindly asked people in the neighbourhood for drinks at the Manor. When I spoke to him, I said that I was having a marvellous time hunting in Ireland, wonderful hirelings provided by my Flurry Knox – Aidan O'Connell. He replied that if I could organise the hunting, he would organise the transport.

On a Thursday afternoon, he came and picked me up from Eccleston Square in Pimlico in his Ferrari. We drove to Slough where we took a helicopter to Luton. We then got on board a 12-seater private plane and flew to Dublin. We stayed in a hotel and had a good night out. In the meantime, Martyn's driver had driven from Rackenford Manor in Martyn's Range Rover to Dublin and the next day drove us north of Dublin to hunt with the Ward Union where, uniquely, they use a carted stag. After the hunt, the driver drove us back to Dublin airport where we got on the same plane and flew to Shannon airport. We then taxied to the Dunraven arms in Adare co. Limerick – a hotel for hunters and as it happens there was a hunt ball that night which we attended and to use an Irish term, 'it was great craic'.

The next morning Martyn's driver took us to go hunting with the Galway Blazers – a good wall country. After the hunt it was suddenly apparent to

me that Martyn was going to see his trainer north of Dublin and I was going stay with my friend Gerry Albertini south of Dublin, but how was I going to get there? As we were travelling eastwards, we spotted a blue Range Rover with gloves and a scarf in the Welsh colours stuck onto the back window.

“ **That weekend was the Irish/Welsh rugby match and Martyn and I both worked out that the occupants of the car must have sold their match tickets and gone** ”

As it happens, we were correct. We waved them down and the driver obligingly stopped. He was the only one not passed out and I asked him if he could give me a lift towards Dublin and he kindly agreed. I then sat between the driver and the front passenger in my pink coat and top hat on top of the hand brake. When one of the Welsh men woke up, he couldn't believe what he saw! After a while we stopped, and I rang Gerry who drove to an agreed meeting place and normality was resumed. A bit of a far cry from flying in a private jet!



Jack Snape was a fiery horseman;  
A man who knew no fear.  
He'd made his name as a thruster,  
A rider without peer.

‘Young Snape’s a good man on a horse,’  
So all the old men said.  
The ladies always swooned and sighed;  
Jack was a thoroughbred.

When leaping over rails and banks  
He always led the field.  
He cut the finest figure; so  
Refined and so well-heeled.

Though Snape was blessed with talent he  
Had arrogance as well.  
No man could tell him anything.  
He never ever fell.

He'd spied the Squire's daughter once,  
Out cantering in the ride.  
He'd set his cap to win her heart  
And have her for his bride.

The Squire wasn't so inclined  
To have Jack for a son.  
‘But if you match this task,’ he said  
‘My daughter's hand is won.’

‘If you dare kill the old White Hart,  
That lives out on the moor  
And bring his body back to me,  
I'll cede your overture.’

The next day riding out Jack met  
An old crone on the track:  
‘Beware the legend of the Hart,’  
These words took him aback.

‘I've seen your future in the stars;  
Please don't ignore my mark.’  
‘Who kills the White Hart seals his fate;  
He'll surely die by dark.’

‘I've no time for your fairy tales;  
No witch can frighten me.’  
‘I'll kill the Hart and claim my prize;  
Tomorrow you will see.’

Jack gathered hounds around him then  
And called the huntsman in.  
The harbourer had done his job.  
Jack gave the word; ‘Begin.’

The White Hart led the pack a dance  
All day across the coombes,  
But late on in the afternoon,  
Hounds found him in the gloom.

The old Hart stood at bay at last;  
Jack's pistol did the rest.  
‘Where are you now you wizened crone;  
I've passed the Squire's test.’

The Squire's daughter waits in vain,  
There is no sign of Jack.  
She hears the huntsman's limping horse,  
She hears the whimpering pack.

Then flickering in the shadows, as  
The huntsman blows for home;  
Beside the shape of a ghost white Hart,  
A horse trots home alone.

For many years I made a feeble and unsustained effort to cook and clean my kitchen and now I have simply given up. One of the last straws occurred many years ago when I peeled and sliced 35 pounds of onions and then tipped the whole lot into the slops bucket by mistake. You may well wonder how any-one could be such a fool, but it was 11.30 on a Friday night after a day at the office. A dinner for 100 guests was to be the following evening to launch my sister's book.

The next morning there were two school runs – this was Saturday mind – starting at 7.30 in the morning. The car and I have been known to do 185 miles on

a Saturday, what with rehearsal pick-ups, orchestra drop offs, drop outs etc. not forgetting beagling and the Christmas meet, which I was not going to miss. The meets were usually 20 miles in the opposite direction from anything else. Yes, my car and I spent a lot of time together. Most of the cooking, cleaning, and washing up started after the running ceased, late at night in a haze of drink, heat, burnt saucepans and unacceptable levels of temperament.

So here is a recipe for field sportsman, which even with variations, are definitely inedible, so, understandably, we are, as a general rule, a thin family!

Plastered Piglet en Masse (feeds 100)

Get a wild boar, or a wild pig, or alternatively an utter bore – as it suits – and deal with it.

Slice and sauté thirty pounds of onions - with ten pounds of apples, until frazzled.

Pour one glass of a nice Riesling hock and drink it yourself watching out for the kick in it.

Pan broil twenty pounds of mushrooms, carelessly in the scullery.

Skilfully dice two tons of pork and then simmer it ferociously in a great vat of hock, up to the neck ad nauseum, until exhausted.

Pour out more hock and this time make sure you don't make a pig of yourself.

Make a sweet and sour sauce according to your temper or ability and use it intentionally from time to time.

Introduce a large trough, or bath without trotters, and dredge all the ingredients, hotly, with a large pig stick, ad libitum.



# CAMILLA CORRIE

*The Perfect Demise*

He pressed his body along the horse’s neck as they thundered between the trees, the track virtually unseen amongst the fallen boughs cloaked with last years’ briers. An overhanging branch whipped at his cap, his hand instinctively shot up to save it, but in vain as it spun and was lost to the woodland floor. His trust hung on his mare’s sure feet, her stride stretching and shortening as she took account of the hostile ground. He kept his head low and his eyes pinched shut, only daring to snatch scanty glances between the hanging boughs that kept rushing towards him.

Man’s instinct was upon him. His heart aflame as up ahead the hounds’ cries encompassed the air and echoed through the trees. As the plantation thinned, their voices opened up and ran clear, the old man knew they were already away, streaking across the grass with only one impulse between them. With no time to dither, he quietly lowered his hands and then spurred his horse over a rickety fence, a stumble and jolt as an unseen ditch unexpectedly came to meet them. No matter. Unscathed and quickly forgotten, he glimpsed the hounds already pressing into a distant field. No need for the horn, a blessing as the huntsman was nowhere in sight.

His horse needed little urging as they sped across turf, an impenetrable tree line loomed up ahead, but a twitch in the old man’s memory guided him up hill, and there, shrouded behind a gnarled ancient oak, hung an old iron gate. Over they flew, as clean as a whistle and on up the headland of a new wheat field. Hardly a pause as the mare skipped over a sodden ditch and then back to the pleasure of pasture.

More hedges and fences came up to meet them, but he kept his line true as the irresistible cry of hounds lured him forever forward and onwards. He was nearly upon them, their frenzied screaming filled his ears, his blood racing ever harder and faster. An unconscious smile tinkered on his wise weathered face as he was lost to the joy of the chase.

Their pace had not slackened, and his senses were taut as the hounds, just ahead pushed hard through a dense sprawling hedge. He scoured its line for a weakness, but none could be found. The ground deep and sucking and his mare labouring hard, he turned her and paused. Leaning forward, a hand on her neck, he whispered sweet words in her ear, then, gathering her up, their courage united, he asked the mare for one final act. Out of the mire she leapt, striving and reaching as they soared over the darkened blackthorn below and safely on to the grass beyond.

Before them, the hounds were jostling and scrabbling, their feverish cry insane with their lust as the noble quarry finally succumbed to the most honest and honourable of ends. The old man loosened his reins and with a hand on her shoulder he slipped to the ground, relieving his exhausted horse of his weight, the mare lowered her head and exhaled with a wearied heave.

Time lapsed and the air grew chilled, finally the flushed and perspiring young huntsman came galloping up. His pack of hounds by now quietly lingering, but as their master drew near, they came expectantly towards him and revealed the stillness of three lying corpses, a fox, an old man and his mare.

# STEVEN WILSHIRE

*Hound Music*

Hark to me Prosper and Holloa away  
From High Wood to Snorscomb and up to the ridge.  
Lieu in their Chorus and join in the fray  
Back through the spinney and down to Church Bridge.  
Come Marble and Matson and forrard the chase  
Let’s head him off sideways along Woodford Brake.  
We’ll fly down through Eydon and pick up the pace

And leave the field trailing in hound music’s wake.

We’re screaming to Ashby like shot from a gun  
Then check right at Adstone, pell-mell to The Mill.  
Eight miles on the same line; by God what a run.  
Then just as old Casket moved in for the kill  
The scent stood up straight in two acres of rape.  
Whilst casting around Charlie made his escape.

# HESTER DALTON

*Great Memories, Great Fun*

Sir – As the new hunting season begins, I would encourage anyone who hasn’t given hunting a go to try it.

As I was packing for university last weekend, I came upon this photo. Taken about five years ago, it shows me, my sister Nelly, brother Jimmy and cousin Max starting the half-hour hack home at the end of the day from the Puckeridge’s Boxing Day meet.

It is still up there with one of the best days I’ve ever had. With the sun setting, neither we nor our ponies showed any signs of tiredness as they jogged the whole way home, and we chatted and relived the brilliant day we had just had.

We always stayed out all day with our fabulous, scruffy little ponies, come rain or shine, and never without a huge (if slightly muddy) grin on our faces. Not only has it done wonders for my riding, it has given me so many happy memories that I’ll take with me to university. Hopefully, there’ll be many more to come.





# JOHNNY SUMPTION

*London Boy Goes Hunting*

Peter, eighteen years old, from London was asking about hunting at a family gathering. I told him it was the Autumn stag hunting season and that I was going next Saturday.

“ ‘Can I come too as I would love to see what it is all about’ he said with enthusiasm. ”

Now Peter had never been hunting and done very little riding but was full of excitement for the day.

We met at Yarde Down with the D&S and it was pouring with rain. My heart sank – he will get cold, bored and will want to go home after a couple of hours. He was riding a polo pony who I knew was good across the moor. I couldn’t have been more wrong as they got a stag away after about an hour and the hunt was on. Now Peter’s polo pony was faster than my hunter and he was always in front and I was always playing catch up and, when I did catch up, he was all smiles and declared that this was the best fun he had ever had. We went on past Simons-bath across The Chains to Shallowford and then right-handed down to Farley Water Farm near where the stag was taken.

At the kill Peter jumps off his now exhausted pony and inspects the stag. He is asked by one of the

masters if he had enjoyed his day. Peter replied, “very much and it is my first day’s hunting!”. “Peter, have a slot,” says Mr Greengrass with his long beard looking quite spooky in the evening light.

Now, knowing that it was a good twelve-mile hack back to the lorry and, it would be dark in an hour or so, I had to get a lift to fetch the lorry. Mr Greengrass was my only option with his Land Rover and told Peter to stay with the horses until I returned.

However, Mr Greengrass said to me, “if you want a lift that boy will have to have my horse as well and ride with them to Brendon Two Gates and we will meet him on the road.”

I thought I would never see Peter or the horses again, BUT on my return with the lorry Peter was riding one and leading two and had managed to find Brendon Two Gates. It was such a relief to see him in the gloaming. So I asked him what he thought of that for a day out.

“ ‘Bloody brilliant!’ he said with his big smile. ”

So now the slot hangs proudly in his bedroom in London.

# CONOR LYNCH

*Covert Side*

No later than twelve,  
we rode from the meet,  
hounds drew the first covert,  
we heard not a peep.

We stood at a distance,  
the huntsman in sight,  
the hounds they gave cry,  
oh what a delight!

The horn sounded loudly,  
we arose to the chase,  
across fields ‘n hedgerow,  
we kept up the pace!

Charlie was cunning,  
he sent hounds awry,  
‘the next covert’ said huntsman,  
the whip, he said aye!

# REVEREND CANON JOHN FELLOWS

*The Times They Are a’Changing*

I normally got my hair cut on a Wednesday, but one November the young lad who normally cut my hair started having Wednesday as his day off. So I went on a Thursday. And he always seemed in a good mood, if sometimes a little stiff, unless it had been very frosty on the Wednesday, in which case he was a bit down. I couldn’t work it out.

But when April came, he was very down in the mouth, so I asked what the matter was. Looking around the room slightly furtively he bent over and very conspiratorially said “I’ve taken up fox hunting and the season has just finished.”

“ ‘Hunting? You?’ I said, trying to hide my surprise. ”

“Keep your voice down please, Sir. It wouldn’t do my street cred any good if they knew that here.” “Don’t take this the wrong way but isn’t it unusual for a guy like you to be hunting? What do the diehards and toffs make of it?”

“Oh, it’s very inclusive these days. Gays, ethnic minorities, men who are faithful to their wives. The Master now, he’s a cockney, retired grocer, a good sport, but no finesse whatsoever.” “All sorts and conditions, eh?” I said. “Whatever” came the slightly puzzled reply.

When the season started again, one Thursday he looked very upset.

“What on earth is eating you?” “I got shouted at by the Master yesterday.” “So? it happens to the best of us.” “Yes but do you know what he said? ‘Old ‘ard, h’officer.’ I ain’t a h’officer. I’m an ‘airdresser. Well ‘old ‘ard you ‘airdresser what looks like a h’officer. I have never been so insulted in all my life.”

Hmm, I thought, Tempora mutantur. And no bad thing at that.

# FIONA OOMES

*My Irish Adventure*

When I was seventeen (now in my seventies) I look back with fondness to a week I spent in Ireland as the guest of my uncle, Neville Cairns, who was Master of the Wexford hounds. What a week! I took trains from Edinburgh to New Ross where he met me, and the adventure began. I hunted five days with the Wexford and Waterford and went to three hunt balls. They were great days on young ‘Debenture’ (I later discovered he had only been broken the week before and was sold on as experience ladies hunter) and ‘Sammy’ (no one told me that he would try to get rid of me in the first field) fortunately I stuck on and we climbed or jumped the huge ditches and banks to get across the country. On one day the girth broke - my uncle galloped past shouting why did you get off? Within ten minutes a new girth had appeared, and I was remounted. There were few people out during the week, but they were very friendly and as the youngest I was expected to get off to open the occasional gate. Later in the evenings, we danced the nights away, tiaras mixing with the farmers in a riotous way. I returned home to the quiet respectability of the East Lothian completely exhausted!



# CHARLES STIRLING

*Unsung Heroes*

Tom was 1st kennelman at Chipping Norton for many years, he is Sidney Bailey, the retired long serving Huntsman of the VWH's, Father. With the impending Heythrop move to new kennels at Swinbrook it may be of interest to record some of the remarkable men who have worked at the famous old kennels with all their nooks and crannies, boiler rooms and dark passages.

To expand the senior or first kennelman occupies a position of responsibility as when the k-h or Huntsman is out hunting it is he who is in charge – as well as hunting 4 or 5 days each week in Tom's day the Heythrop visited Exmoor each spring – leaving just as many hounds if not more behind and bitches to whelp as well as late visiting bitches to the much sought after stallion hounds. All this would have been Tom's responsibility.

Many hunting counties enjoy remarkable goodwill, and one has got to think that a great deal of the groundwork for this was generated by men like Tom who went around collecting fallen stock and talking to farmers when they were actually doing something to help them. As with other Northerners Tom could be quite direct and a local friend remembers going to visit the kennels flesh house to enquire as to cause of death of one of his valuable cows – “difficult to tell Sir when she has been hit by an axe” was the reply – a felling axe being a time honoured dismembering tool. Tom had learnt his trade in the Shotley Bridge Kennels of the Braes of Derwent and married one of his bosses – Hunstman Alfred Littleworth's – daughters.

# CLARE JORDAN

*The Taunton Vale*

One of my happiest childhood memories is of the Taunton Vale children's meets which used to take place at Lillesdon Green courtesy of Mark Stevens. It was one of the highlights of the Christmas holidays.

The previous day was always enjoyable as preparations were made. Tack was cleaned and hooves were oiled. Excitement mounted as the day wore on culminating in clothes being brushed and laid out in readiness for the morning. An early night was essential...

Living in the Vale meant that a lot of the meets were in hacking distance which was good. Others had to box over and it was always fun seeing the array of trailers on the verges as one neared the meet. This sight combined with the sharp winter morning and the increasing evidence of foot followers added to the atmosphere.

The most thrilling feature of the Children's meet in those days was that some of the children were invited to ride with the hunt servants. In the year of which I write I was asked to accompany Daisy Carne Williams one of the joint Masters. I could not have felt prouder! I can't recall whether Daisy was riding her one-eyed hunter which was a source of constant fascination to us youngsters but no matter. I was over the moon in my tweed jacket and brown jodhpurs and boots, a poor escort for the elegant Daisy, I fear. It was a wonderful day indeed.

What is it about hunting which never leaves one? Is it the silence, the calm before the storm? The sound of the horn and the music of the hounds? The beauty of the horses and the courage of their riders? I suggest that it is all these things combined with a love of our countryside and rural way of life. Hunting is a beloved combination of tradition and ceremony in the best of ways. Long may it continue.

# SIR HUMPHREY WAKEFIELD BT

*Hunting in Ireland*

Hunting excitements vary constantly, fast changing and different as faces on a moving staircase. This is just one day I love to remember.

In Ireland long ago, when I was living at Lough Cutra Castle in County Galway, I hunted the full seven days of the week. One could just about manage, boxing here and there and hunting with Harriers on a Sunday. On the Tuesday, in early spring, I rode out in the west of Ireland with the Limerick Hunt, with their emerald velvet collars and scarlet coats. The distant hills were bright in the sun and a slight rain kept the ground soft and green.

I knew I was to be faced with broad open ditches and high 'Irish banks' - vertical turf walls broad enough for a horse to stand on, utterly unknown to my English hunting world. I prayed they would be known to my locally hired horse, a chestnut quarterbred rig (a 'half-stallion') called Danny. He was small for my weight, but I loved him at once. At the meet he danced rather than stood, hazarding my grabbed gulps of cherry brandy, a drink much needed for the long-imagined challenges to come. They had told me Danny kicked and he had a red ribbon tied to his plaited tail giving warning to stay clear of his heels.

“ **They also told me he ‘punched’ but, early in the day, as I dismounted to help a friend tangled in wire, he stood like a lamb: Danny had decided to enjoy his day rather than fight.** ”

As hounds moved off, I looked for a likely local to follow. One does that in a strange country, rather than become embroiled in the crowds, and I saw an elegant, competent looking lady on a promising mount. She looked like one well used to taking her own line and, sure enough, when the hounds moved off, she set off at a sharp pace in a different direction to the rest of the field. I kept my distance, not wanting her to warn me away and, so far as I could tell, she remained unaware of her keen follower. We flew over wide ditches, great canal-like expanses of

water never experienced by me before; we leaped and scrambled up those Irish banks, higher than a horse, paused on the top and struck out into space. I clung fast and followed, quite as amazed by my brave red Danny as by my dashing leader. Patronising views of lady riders melted there and then. At the end of a long and exciting day, never having had a moment to talk, my dream leader lady trotted off home into the dusk as I, muddy, drenched and happy plodded home to my memories.

I never saw her again till I was old. Though, not to my surprise, in the meantime I found she was Annie Townsend, the international rider who had just won the International Show Jumping in Berlin. Annie was mounted on Olympic rider Angar Lillingston's famous 'Battleship'.

It was more than 50 years later that I met her, far from County Limerick, down on the Suffolk coast. I said how grateful I was, how vividly the memory clung, and asked if she had even glimpsed her scraggy shadow. 'You were riding Danny,' she said.

# ANONYMOUS

*One Hunt*

Hunting:  
With horn  
With horse  
With hound  
Timeless  
A Mammalian continuum  
One mammal  
Bestride another  
following a third  
To hunt a fourth.

The four corners  
Of a natural circle  
Of living in our world;  
In that world  
As they live in their own world  
And our world  
One circle, one world  
One Hunt.



EXCERPTS

Not to be outdone by the creative writers of our society, the extract portion of our first Writing Competition turned up some hidden gems. From short tales hand-written on torn paper to poetry penned by long forgotten grooms, our members submitted some of the best literature on hunting through the centuries.

MEYRICK CHAPMAN

4 Short Poems, Various Authors

1. Carlton Scroop:

A small twelfth century church;  
stained glass of rare import  
with donor and wife (dressed as a nun),  
submitting a shield of arms to Christ, Maiestas Domini.  
The splendid view  
dwindles yearly with the spread of beech.

“We drew the Carlton osier beds blank, and then  
found in the Bedlam Plantation a twisting, scentless  
customer, who led us slowly to Normanton Top.”

A repeater station;  
300 steel feet of I-beams  
in three diminishing sections.  
Raised in 1965, its footings exhumed  
from clay some thousands of trilobites  
resembling small stones,  
identically inscribed.

Mapletoft, Pegg, Topps, Fear

2. Normanton-On-Cliffe:

Purportedly a telephone link,  
the true intent was to furnish,  
in the event of nuclear war,  
the MoD with emergency  
communications.

“Now this, thought I, was the “bonne bouche” of  
the day. The beauties streamed hotly along through  
fields o’ grass. Big open ditches on the taking-off side  
called for very little “doing”. Yet we thinned the com-

pany to very attenuated proportions.”

Mapletoft, Pegg, Codd, Pass, Burt, Rainthorpe

3. Fulbeck:

“The colonel was decisive; led us over one or two  
nasty fences and we were on top of the hunt as we  
crammed along towards Fulbeck. We killed him in  
the open, three fields from Hough Gorse; an excel-  
lent finish to a fine ride of fifty-three minutes.”

Fane in the army,  
Fane in the navy.  
A minor classic,  
The Hall marks four  
Cavalier centuries of  
A squandered name repaired, and quietly  
familiar to modern ears,  
till that beautiful and tragic wife.  
The auction and a course of events barred,  
treasures stacked to the rafters.  
That rejected pass over cognac.

Regret.

Fane, Pheasant, Pridgeon, Codd, Bugg, Burt, Hus-  
bands

4. Coda:

“Fences cleared, streams or, more oft, laid hedges  
With some deuced fierce jumps at the end of the day.  
No slight pace maintained through ground so heavy  
as,  
Fetlock-deep, to hold them in tenacious clay.”

ADRIAN DANGAR

Reynard the Fox, John Masefield

They were a lovely pack for looks;  
Their forelegs drums ticked without crooks,  
Straight, without over-tread or bend,  
Muscled to gallop to the end,  
With neat feet round as any cat’s.  
Great-chested, muscled in the slats,  
Bright, clean, short-coated, broad in shoulder,  
With stag-like eyes that seemed to smoulder.  
The heads well-cocked, the clean necks strong,  
Brows broad, ears close, the muzzles long,  
And all like racers in the thighs;  
Their noses exquisitely wise,

Their minds being memories of smells;  
Their voices like a ring of bells;  
Their sterns all spirit, cock and feather;  
Their colours like the English weather,  
Magpie and hare, and badger pye,  
Like minglings in a double dye,  
Some smutty-nosed, some tan, none bald;  
Their manners were to come when called,  
Their flesh was sinew knit to bone,  
Their courage like a banner blown.  
Their joy to push him out of cover,  
And hunt him till they rolled him over.

CHARLOTTE DEADMAN

Lady Gregory the Journals Volume Two

August 28 [1925]

‘...I was at Burren yesterday for Anne’s birthday [her  
14th] ...Anne liked her 101 little cakes and the orna-  
ment for the top-figure of herself shooting a pheas-  
ant with a rabbit sitting up and saying, “That’s right  
dear; always aim high”’

8 March [1928]

‘...The children... today put a bridle on poor old  
Sarsfield, who has not been ridden for many a year,  
not since before the war. He went pretty well, jumped  
the sticks they have put here and there in the wood  
paths, but then finding he could kick them aside,  
did so. But when they came into the hobble field, he  
made for the high jump Robert had put up to train  
him, but Anne stopped him in time or there would  
have been a catastrophe. He must have thought him-  
self young again, after all these years of vacancy...’

February [1930]

‘...And as Yeats wanted to see Ballylee, or the new  
thatch, we went there in the afternoon. Anne here

too, motoring off to meets — & thank God, so far  
returning safely. And one day she motored to Lady  
Nelson who had broken her ribs in a fall ...& has  
been to see her, in the interval of meets several times  
since.’  
‘...And Anne has been hunting three days of this  
week gone to shoot at the Concannons today. Yes-  
terday she led the hunt for a while! Motoring herself  
back from Craugharell late — after 10 o.c. it is always  
a relief the she comes in safe!

March 21 [1930]

‘...Anne’s last meet yesterday. And the “Blazers”  
haven’t heard of a new master & are querulous [?] —  
(as one of Anne’s poems has for refrain ‘Howl on ye  
faithfully hounds!’).



## AMANDA GRENDER

*Phineas Finn, Anthony Trollope*

“ **The hounds were running well in sight to their right, and Phineas began to feel some of that pride which a man indulges when he becomes aware that he has taken his place comfortably, has left the squad behind, and is going well.** ”

---

There were men nearer the hounds than he was, but he was near enough even for ambition. There had already been enough of the run to make him sure that it would be a “good thing”, and enough to make him aware also that probably it might be too good. When a run is over, men are very apt to regret the termination, who a minute or two before were anxiously longing that the hounds might pull down their game. To finish well is everything in hunting. To have led for over an hour is nothing, let the pace and country have been what they might, if you are all away during the last half mile. Therefore it is that the hounds behind hope that the fox may make this or that a cover, while the forward men long to see him turned over in every field. To ride to hounds is very glorious; but to have ridden to hounds is more glorious still.

## SIMON ROBERTS

*Oh Tell me Mr Blair, A Hartas*

Oh please tell me Mr Blair  
why it is you say you care.  
We're telling you it can't be denied  
you know nothing of our countryside.  
I know you've heard this many times before with  
letters/songs and rhymes galore  
but surely you can hear our cry  
not to let tradition die.  
With jobs, careers and lives at stake please come on  
give us a break.  
We all work hard with tremendous pride  
loving and caring for our countryside, valleys,  
moors/ trees and lakes.  
We keep it all going for our children's sake we hunt  
a few foxes on our own land but city folk have the  
upper hand.  
You try to dictate what you think is right but honest-  
ly it's a load of tripe.  
People aren't all that's employed hounds and horses  
they'll be annoyed  
to think of their family and friends destroyed.  
Can you tell them one good reason  
why they'll all be shot next season?

“ **Oh you're not needed quite the same, it's Tony Blair that is to blame.** ”

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How ever will you sleep at night,  
Wondering if what you did was right?  
All my life I've done my best  
now here comes just one request.  
I've done no crime, I pay my tax  
but please remember all the facts.  
When it's finally judgement day  
who is really going to pay?  
Is it you or is it me?  
No! it's the animals you see!  
Without the cycle of hundreds of years  
Of humane killing of fox and deers.  
Can you foresee what lies ahead?  
With gunshot and poison they'll all be dead.  
So please sir do what you can  
please don't bring the hunting ban!

## GODFREY BLOOM

*The Crime of Brigadier Gerard, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*

It is incredible the insolence of these English! What do you suppose Milord Wellington had done when he found that Massena had blockaded him & that he could not move his army? I might give you many guesses. You might say that he had raged, that he had despaired, that he had brought his troops together & spoken to them about glory & the fatherland before leading them into one last battle. No milord did none of these things. But he sent a fleet to England to bring him a number of fox-dogs; & with this his officers settled down to chase the fox. It is true what I tell you. Behind the lines of Torres Vedras these mad Englishmen made the fox chase three days a week.

We had heard of it in the camp, and now I was, myself to see it true.

For along the road which I have described, there came these very dogs, thirty or forty of them, white & brown, each with its tail at the same angle, like the bayonets of the Old Guard. My faith, but it was a pretty sight! And behind and amidst them there rose three men with peaked caps & red coats, whom I understood to be the hunters.

They did not seem to be going above a trot, it appeared to me that it must indeed be a slow fox they hoped to catch.

## STEVEN WILSHIRE

*The Merest Loss, Steven Neil – Chapter Two*

Carter's confidence he will soon find another fox is not misplaced. Almost as soon as he puts hounds into covert, a black dog fox jumps into the lane and slips down the hill along the gorse bushes. Hounds fly in pursuit with Skinner, the whipper-in, close on their heels as they go out of sight beyond the cross-roads. Everyone follows in behind, clattering down the lane; sparks flying from the metalled hooves. Carter and the Duke see the line the hounds take and cantering on, they go side by side at a wide, hawthorn hedge and ditch, off the lane. Both horses refuse and hit the hedge chest high, leaving the riders hanging around their necks in rather ungainly fashion.

'Can someone get a bloody gate open?' shouts Carter.

Two riders trot along the lane about fifty yards, jump down from their mounts and make to open up the six bar gate. Meanwhile, the young man, who Tom noted at the Maidford road, spins his pony around, gives him a kick in the ribs with his spurs,

lands him a hefty blow on his backside with his whip, jumps the hawthorn hedge and ditch off two strides and goes off hollering and whooping down the hill like a demented cur. A nervous moment's silence ensues, as everyone waits to see how the Duke reacts.

'Who the blazes is that boy?' he splutters.

It turns out no one knows him. The regulars assume he is one of the guests, and the guests assume he is

“ **Well he can bloody well ride whoever he is. Best catch the bugger and find out!** ”

---

one of the regulars. Carter breaks the tension.

And with that, they all file through the gateway and gallop on after the mystery boy and the coloured pony.





## STEVEN WILSHIRE

*The Merest Loss, Steven Neil – Chapter Three*

“ **A new rider appears at second horses: Jem Mason, Tom’s friend and colleague, who is schooling some horses locally that morning.** ”

He borrows a mount to hack on to intercept the field at change of horses and to enjoy the afternoon’s sport.

The sun has burned through by this time and the morning riders wait for those with fresh horses to join in. Hounds are scampering about on imaginary trails, nose to the ground. Other hounds are rolling on their backs, feet in the air, enjoying the warmth of the autumn sun.

The two jockeys draw alongside each other. Jem looks as immaculate as ever. He is always attired in the finest tailoring that Jermyn Street can supply and from the highly polished top boots, to the silver handled hunting crop, he looks quite the gentleman.

‘Are you going to introduce us?’ says Jem to Tom, looking towards Eliza.

A tangible spark flies between them. Tom’s visions of romance are snuffed out rather harshly, as Jem and Eliza spent the rest of the afternoon inseparable. Everyone trails in their wake, as they both display the easy elegance that only the most naturally talented riders possess: as if horse and rider are one flowing entity. Wherever Carter goes, however severe the fences, Jem and Eliza can be seen close in behind, topping the hedges like birds.

At the hunting tea, laid on by the Duke, the talk is of little else than the beautiful Elizabeth Ann Harryet and the dashing Jem Mason. As the assembled riders take their places at the tables, Tom looks around the room. There are two notable absentees.

## JANET MENZIES M.F.H

*The Colonel’s Dream, Unknown*

It was in the Season 1882-3 that the Spade had not only been called into action by the Master of the Hambledon Hounds unusually often, but on several occasions, the excavations had lasted hours, even far into the night. Under the circumstances, Colonel Small, a former Master had the following dream, which he related thus –

“ **I dreamt that I saw Walter Newman (the first whip) mounted and ready to start for hunting and he had a very strange looking box fastened to his saddle, so I said, What have you got there Walter? (W) Oh, it’s just a fiddle, Colonel. (CS) But what do you want a fiddle for? (W) Oh, Sir, the whips always take fiddle with them, to play for the ladies and gentlemen to dance to whilst we’re digging out the foxes.** ”

”

## STEVEN WILSHIRE

*Some Experiences of an Irish R.M, Edith Somerville – Chapter Six*

Always ahead of me was Flurry Knox, going as a man goes who knows his country, who knows his horse, and whose heart is wholly and absolutely in the right place. Do what I would, Sorcerer’s implacable stride carried me closer and closer to the brown mare, till, as I thundered down the slope of a long field, I was not twenty yards behind Flurry. Sorcerer had stiffened his neck to iron, and to slow him down was beyond me; but I fought his head away to the right, and found myself coming hard and steady at a stonefaced bank with broken ground in front of it. Flurry bore away to the left, shouting something that I did not understand. That Sorcerer shortened his stride at the right moment was entirely due to his own judgment; standing well away from the jump, he rose like a stag out of the tussocky ground, and as he swung my twelve stone six into the air the obstacle

revealed itself to him and me as consisting not of one bank but of two, and between the two lay a deep grassy lane, half choked with furze. I have often been asked to state the width of the bohoreen, and can only reply that in my opinion it was at least eighteen feet; Flurry Knox and Dr. Hickey, who did not jump it, say that it is not more than five. What Sorcerer did with it I cannot say; the sensation was of a towering flight with a kick back in it, a biggish drop, and a landing on cee-springs, still on the downhill grade. That was how one of the best horses in Ireland took one of Ireland’s most ignorant riders over a very nasty place.



JOHN SIMPSON

On Hunting, Sir Roger Scruton

By now I had led Dumbo to one side and was edging down the road towards the turning which would take us home. Suddenly the Huntsman’s horn stuttered out its excited semiquavers. The hounds, which had been drifting round the trotting horse like gulls around a fishing boat, instantly form a line, running one behind the other towards the copse, each hound breaking into song as it jumped the low stone wall that crossed the valley. There was a commotion behind me.

“ I turned to see the Master swing his horse towards the rails that border the road on this side of the valley and then rush at them with a scraping of hooves. ”

The other riders followed, some 40 or more, each horse fired with enthusiasm pulling its rider into the jump and following the herd in its downhill stampede towards the river, into which they plunged like the Gararene swine. Dumbo was rearing in my hand, and I was tempted to let him go. But soon the hunt had waded the shallow stream, and galloped off behind the copse and was lost to view. Dumbo allowed me to mount him for the journey home, setting off at once in an excited trot, ears pricked, eyes searching the horizon to every side, hoping for a miraculous vision to be granted again. Only when the familiar houses of his village lined the road, did he returned to his plodding gait. And I noted that he was drooping and covered in sweat. Thus it was that I resolved to take up hunting during this, the best part of my life.

CAROLYN HUMPHREY

Nostalgia, Willy Poole

“I’ll bet you miss it sometimes?” What should I miss of it? Piles of manky sheep to skin and barrow loads of shit; The endless hours in soggy clothes (while influenza pale) Soothing feathers ruffled by what you did in the vale.

A screaming midnight forest, all roaring in the storm, And somewhere 7 couple, that just might hear your horn. The telephone that never stops from early to late, To have to stomach the abuse, whilst food dries on the plate.

Endless committee meetings that seem to stretch to dawn, Because the folk of Hill and Vale are at daggers drawn. The Chairman has “one of his turns” and swift to home departs; Just guess which silly sod is left to keep the clans apart.

To stagger home exhausted to another scene of strife: The whipper-in has run off with the Stud Groom’s new blond wife, There’s piles of bills and more phone calls and bank state-ments in the red

“What me miss being a Master? you must be off your head!”

Then one summer morning, they brought hounds for me to see They were happy with their huntsman and played and gambolled free. I looked upon their waving sterns, the shining eyes and coats, Then I felt a wet nose in my hand and something blocked my throat.

I gave the men some whisky (hoped they’d see nothing odd) As I watched the hounds that once were mine and thought of me as God. One word from Jack they gathered up and stood there in their pride I smiled and thanked them as they left; then went indoors and cried.

ANYA PARDOE

Who mourns the soul of a hound when he dies?  
Who even knows that he is gone?  
The Master, the Huntsman, they miss him perhaps,  
And the farm where his walking was done,  
But when once again on the Opening Day,  
The Season’s first music rings clear,  
Which of us misses the voice that is gone,  
Or spares him a sorrowful tear?  
They try for us, cry for us, gallop and fly for us ~  
Gad how the beauties can move!  
In the whole of the Shires not a pack to touch ours,  
But it’s hounds, not the hound, that we love.  
There’s few of us see in the course of a day  
How Harmony worked out that line;

How Destiny’s Dabster takes after his dam,  
Or the work of that new bitch, Divine.  
Each has his temperament, each has his tricks  
The joy of them few of us know;  
Few of us worry, and few of us care ~  
We still have the pack when they go.  
Only the Master, who growls out to Tom  
In a voice gone surprisingly gruff ~  
“Sexton must go, Tom, he’s getting damn’ slow ~  
God knows we shall miss him enough.”  
But if he goes lonely, unwept and unsung,  
That Foxhound forgotten too soon,  
I like to think that the pack sings his dirge  
In the night when they sing to the moon.

JOHN SIMPSON

Riding Reflections, Major Piero Santini

Like James 1st in his ‘A Kings Christian duty to-wards God,’ I cannot admit heere, the hunting, namely, with running houndes, which is the most honourable and noblest sport thereof’, to which Maggiore Santini added the forward seat when properly understood and freed from exaggerations and mannerisms the show ring has developed, is supremely adapted.

“ The hunting man - always provided he intends to be with hounds - is every moment confronted with new problems requiring courage, coolness, intelligence, decisions and judgement in the highest degree. ”

Since we, like that much quoted sportsman Mr Jor-rocks, cannot disassociate in our minds sport from war, we require the former to bring out the qualities we would ask of a soldier. War and the chase have gone hand-in-hand through the centuries, and are still the expression of deeply rooted instincts of a primitiveness which should not be deformed by love of the purely spectacular, or emasculated by artifi-cialities. Hunting, like everything else worth doing, should be based on the survival of the fittest, and no good sportsman should wish for things to be made easy for him. If, for lack of heart, advancing years, or other reasons, we cannot face obstacles as we find them, let us be content to get our fun from the back of a cob through a pair of field glasses!



# REVEREND CANON JOHN FELLOWS

*The Adventure of Brigadier Gerard, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle*

“**“Hold hard, sir! Hold hard!” cried the huntsman.**”

He was uneasy for me, this good old man, but I re-assured him by a wave and a smile. The dogs opened in front of me. One or two may have been hurt, but what would you have? The egg must be broken for the omelette. I could hear the huntsman shouting his congratulations behind me. One more effort, and the dogs were all behind me. Only the fox was in front.

Ah, the joy and pride of that moment! To know that I had beaten the English at their own sport. Here were three hundred, all thirsting for the life of this animal, and yet it was I who was about to take it. Every instant brought me nearer to the fox. The moment for action had arrived, so I unsheathed my

sabre. I waved it in the air, and the brave English all shouted behind me.

Only then did I understand how difficult is this fox chase, for one may cut again and again at the creature and never strike him once. He is small, and turns quickly from a blow. At every cut I heard those shouts of encouragement from behind me, and they spurred me to yet another effort. And then at last the supreme moment of my triumph arrived. In the very act of turning I caught him fair with such another back-handed cut as that with which I killed the aide-de-camp of the Emperor of Russia..... I looked back and waved the blood-stained sabre in the air. For the moment I was exalted--superb!

Ah! how I should have loved to have waited to have received the congratulations of these generous enemies. There were fifty of them in sight and not one who was not waving his hand and shouting.

# SUE FARRINGTON

*Portrait of a Hunt: Mr Roffe-Silvester's Foxhounds, Chipstable Hunt Committee*

“...That is the great thing about the Roffe-Silvesters - they are a timeless part of the English countryside and of a way of life that has maintained for centuries and which we are struggling to maintain to this day. It is a way of life that represents everything that is good about being English. If this country has a soul then it is rooted in the countryside and its life. ...

“...Hunting days often began with a car being push-started in order to tow a Land Rover in order to pull a tractor in order to tow the lorry! When these vehicles eventually gave up the ghost completely, they would not be scrapped but put out to grass in a paddock like faithful old horses.

“If a hound did something out hunting and Michael didn't see the hound do it, he still knew that it had. He always said: 'Never wait until a hound does something. You always catch him before he does it.' We would go out exercising and Michael would suddenly look at a hound and go 'Grrrrrr'. I would ask: 'What is it?' 'I saw him thinking about looking into the field of sheep,' Michael would reply. Michael knew these things before the hound did.”

“... to underline the Chipstable Hunt ethos. The Hunt was indigenous - rooted in the life and work of the country that was hunted. Almost everyone who followed - be they on foot, on a bicycle, by car or mounted - earned their keep in the locality - even the parson who put in his one day a week! The Chipstable Hunt was in direct line of all those small West Country packs that hunted in the days of Parson Jack Russell. Such packs represent the spirit of foxhunting ...”

# CONOR LYNCH

*On Hunting, Sir Roger Scruton*

Hounds are most beautiful when hunting on a line - each speaking to the scent, and trusting both himself and the one who gallops just ahead of him. But because the hound has poor vision, he depends upon the scent to find his quarry, and the scent may be spoiled or scattered; it may hang in patches or be blown by the wind. Indeed, there is no medium for conveying information that is more vacillating than scent; nor is there a huntsman who can tell you which conditions are good for scenting, and which conditions bad. All that the huntsman knows is that the hounds rely on him when the scent runs cold. Without him, they will feather away from the line and lose their collective momentum.

# CLARE JORDAN

*The Pursuit of Love, Nancy Mitford*

“**“You're not to go hunting, Linda” said Aunt Sadie the next day, when Linda came downstairs in her riding habit, “it's too rude, you must stay and look after your guests. You can't leave them like that.”**”

“Darling, darling Mummie” said Linda, “the meet's at Cocks Barn, and you know how one can't resist. And Flora hasn't been out for a week, she'll go mad. Be a love and take them to see the Roman villa or something, and I swear to come back early. And they've got Fanny and Louisa after all.”

It was this unlucky hunt that clinched matters as far as Linda was concerned. The first person she saw at the meet was Tony, on a splendid chestnut horse. Linda herself was always beautifully mounted. Uncle Matthew was proud of her horsemanship and had given her two pretty, lively little horses. They found at once, and there was a short, sharp run, during which Linda and Tony, both in a somewhat showing-off mood, rode side by side over stone walls. Presently, on a village green, they checked. One or

two of the hounds put up a hare, which lost its head, jumped into a duckpond, and began to swim about in a hopeless sort of way. Linda's eyes filled with tears.

“Oh the poor hare!”

Tony got off his horse, and plunged into the pond. He rescued the hare, waded out again, his fine white breeches covered with green muck, and put it, wet and gasping, into Linda's lap. It was the one romantic gesture of his life.

At the end of the day Linda left hounds to take a short cut home across country. Tony opened a gate for her, took off his hat, and said: “You are the most beautiful rider, you know. Good night, when I'm back at Oxford I'll ring you up.”

When Linda got home she rushed me off to the Cons' cupboard and told me all this. She was in love.



# CHARLES STIRLING

*Writing on the Eton College Hunt, Major Fleming*

It was not a country to appeal to your galloping fox-hunter, Thames Big Field, Cippenham Big Field, the Sewage Farm, they were all plough, and good strong plough at that, with a few islands of grass on which to cast hounds hopefully on a bad scenting day. But there was always the “glorious h’uncertainty of the Chase!” One day hounds would take to the river in spate, and the Master would commandeer a fisherman’s punt and with, I fear, the bloodthirstiness of

youth, relentlessly pursue poor puss to the Windsor side and continue the tantivy round the racecourse. The occasional fox too, would provide an exciting diversion, boldly bursting from a field of kale and, with a whisk of his brush, contemptuously dare the little beagles and their young huntsman to put him to any discomfort!, little thinking that a year or two later they would actually account for one or two of his tribe!

# JOHN DOBLE

*March Past, Lord Lovat*

After the hunting season was over (the Beaufort hounds still kill a many fox) ratting provided a social occasion. The Old Duke put in an appearance at these events for a chat with his tenants and to see the young terriers blooded.

“ A great man in every sense of the word, he weighed nineteen stone without a saddle and carried the horn for forty-seven seasons, hunting five days a week with his own hounds. ”

said he knew better than the fox, which way to run and was there or thereabouts at the end of the fastest hunt. The Duke of Beaufort lived for Gloucestershire and the land. His simple tastes and unassuming manner made him a kind in his own country, where blood sports were the order of the day. The few pheasants around were virtually raised for the benefit of the foxes. The closed season dragged interminably, so the ratting of long ago was something of an event. Farmers and their wives trapped over from far and wide in Sunday best to see the fun. The men wore brown bowler hats, breeches and leggings, most of them carried a terrier... The womenfolk retired to the parlour, to partake of cowslip wine or maybe something stronger... The Duke of Beaufort sat it out quietly and unconcerned in the middle, an old dog firmly gripped and quivering on his knees.

He had suffered a recent accident. While trying to break two hunters into harness they had misbehaved, broken a shaft and tipped the carriage over. He fell out and the wheels passed over his body breaking both his legs. But that did not stop the old man, who followed hounds in a dog-cart, with a small boy handy to jump out and open the field gates. It was



“...those fellows in spectacles (are) divine, and Scamperdale’s character perfectly odious and admirable.”

William Makepeace Thackeray



‘I am glad you like Surtees. I think after being so long abandoned to the hunting people, who I don’t suppose read him, he is beginning to be appreciated again’

George Orwell



‘It is recorded of Thackeray that he declared Surtees’s power of characterisation the only power he envied in anyone. Elsewhere he said he would give all he had to have written Facey Romford’s Hounds’

Siegfried Sassoon



‘Robert Surtees is a sport, in both senses of the term, who flashes in and out of the English novel, excites hope and reduces the critical factions to silence. He has all the dash, all the partiality and all the prospect of an amateur. There is a rush of air, a shower of rain drops from the branches, a burst of thundering mud, a crashing of hazel, the sight of a pink coat, and as far as the English novel is concerned, he is gone ...’

V.S. Pritchett



‘a heavy-eating, hard-drinking hell of horse-copers, swindlers, match-making mothers, economically dependent virgins selling themselves blushing for cash and land, Jews, tradesmen and an ill-considered spawn of Dickens and horse dung characters’

Rudyard Kipling



Mr Sponge’s Sporting Tour is a masterpiece in its own way. It is the story of a crook. Sponge has an arrangement with a horse coper to take from him to take from him two thoroughly dangerous horses and hunt them as his own in the hope of selling them. He relies on his horsemanship to make them behave. What is remarkable is the portrait not only of Sponge, but of the whole society in which he moves. It is an extraordinarily tough society, without any of that self-consciousness that belongs to Hemingway’s heroes’

Joyce Cary



‘I’m for Gibbon and Surtees, not those etiolated continentals’

Hugh Trevor-Roper



