"Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them, but to stop there is not enough. We have a higher mission — to be of service to them whenever they require it."
St. Francis of Assisi

HOWL

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FOX-HUNTING UNNATURAL

In the last edition of HOWL John Bryant's article 'Don't Let Them Fox You' argued that the fox population required no man induced controls. In this edition Ralph Cook refutes the arguments often quoted that 'Foxhunting is only natural' and explains why scenes like this are not only unnecessary but also unnatural.



BY RALPH COOK

"When a wild animal passes his prime no family provides for him what he cannot provide for himself. Nothing arrests the deterioration of lungs, limbs, eyes and teeth, nor mitigates the consequences to the sufferer. In wild life only the fit survive: the unfit are left to the gradual process of starvation and disease. Merely to leave a wild animal alive is not to spare him suffering.

From the viewpoint, therefore, of animals which are hunted the only relevant question is whether hunting on the whole introduces into their lives any element of suffering that would otherwise not be there".

Earl of Halifax, K.G., P.C., O.M. "The Truth About Foxhunting".
B.F.S.S. leaflet 1957 and reprinted 1974.

Too often when defending their "sport" foxhunters are allowed to state that there is nothing unusual or unnatural from the fox's point of view in being hunted; they claim that it is a normal hazard to life in the wild to be hunted, only the weak or infirm die, the fit get away, and that therefore the hunt is acting as a natural method of culling the fox population and incorporating natural selection. Further, that since all living creatures have to die by nature's laws, death induced at man's discretion and by his hand is not cruel unless the method of killing caused his victim to suffer in an unnatural manner. The facts upon which the hunting fraternity base these theories are as fallacious as their claim that the fox population needs to be culled, (see John Bryant's excellent article in the last issue of "HOWL").

MAN ADOPT'S PREDATOR ROLE

The red fox across its whole range, including North America, Europe, Asia and Australia, has no specialised natural predator in the way that the deer or rabbit has. Man, however, has taken it upon himself to fulfill this role yet his hostility must be of fairly recent origin — at least in evolutionary terms. Prior to Man's experiments with animal husbandry the fox posed little threat to him and being a small creature would not have been worth his while hunting for food or clothing.

As man began to domesticate animals, some 13,000 years ago, he might occasionally have had cause to hurl stones at the occassional fox found within the confines of his settlements but in general while large predators like wolves and bears still roamed in numbers the fox must have figured extremely low on his list of priorities. As the wolf became progressively rarer, however, so the occasional depredations of the fox upon animals farmed by Man assumed more and more importance. It is notable that in England our first references to organised fox killing came during the 15th Century and that the last British wolf was hunted and killed in the early part of the 16th Century.

Although Queen Elizabeth I is known to have had a pack of foxhounds in her household, they were not thought to have been hunted for sport. Hunting with hounds in the way that we understand it began as recently as 300 years ago. This change was brought about by a shift in emphasis from hunting for food to hunting for sport. At first the quarry was deer, but deer head for forest when being hunted and tracking as a process of attrition was not all that interesting. As the emphasis shifted from hunting for food to hunting for sport the hare was chosen as the quarry. At the advent of fashionable sport hunting, the circular run of the hare became too easy. With the changes brought about by the agricultural revolution (land clearance and forcible enclosure of land) hunting the fox, previously deemed to be unworthy of the noble art of venery, took off. It was discovered that the animal often gave long runs from covert to covert and provided entertainment for both the expert of hound work and for those only interested in exciting gallops over fields and leaps over ditches and hedges. Until then most fox killing would have been carried out at denning time when whole families of foxes would be vulnerable in their cubbing earths.

FOX NEVER EVOLVED FOR SPEED

Thus, with no natural predator that would pursue him in the open for mile after mile with determination and speed (until the advent of foxhunting for sport) and being a member of the predator/scavenger family of carnivores with a list of prey species not known to include any great animal athletes, (except for the hare which it rarely eats), the fox has never needed to evolve the speed and stamina which is a characteristic of all species that are regularly hunted by natural predators. The ancestors of our present fox population had therefore never needed to run for any length of time from anything. In evolutionary terms the prolonged pursuit of the fox by any enemy, hounds included, is an entirely new

Continued on back page



Is it? . . . No it can't be! . . . Yes it is, Dave Callender (Contact Liaison Officer) as never seen before, washed, clean (even the feet) and dressed in a suit. The occasion was his marriage with Fiona Hughes last May at Guildford United Reformed Church. The Bride looked radiant dressed in white and the Groom sported an arm in a sling. Apparently Fiona slammed a heavy glass door onto Dave the night before the wedding, resulting in hospital treatment. Whether Dave was having last minute doubts or Fiona was giving him a taste of things to come, we don't know. We also don't know if Dave's injury spoilt the honeymoon. However, we send congratulations to both on their permanent liaison.

A.G.M. Report

This years A.G.M. was held on Saturday the 3rd July at Strathclyde University Students Union, Glasgow and was attended by about 80 people, many of whom travelled from different parts of England. The meeting was chaired by Dave Wetton and our Guest Speaker was Denis Canavan MP.

Mr. Canavan pointed out that pressure against bloodsports must continue to come from outside Parliament as well as within and he praised sabs part in that pressure. After his speech there was a question and answer session which was followed by a series of reports from officers of last years committee, which took the meeting through to the lunch break.

The afternoon session was taken up with discussion and voting on the proposed amendments and additions to the constitution (a copy of which should be enclosed with this mail-out) and the meeting eventually ended at 5.30 p.m.

In the evening a disco was arranged at a local hostelry and congratulations are due to those who organised it for the good time that was had. Highlight of the evening was a horn blowing contest which was won by Colin Lewis with Bill Kilvington a very close second. The prize for the winner was a 'Cotswold' hunting horn and it is hoped to repeat the event after next year's A.G.M.

Appointment of Committee Officers

At the first meeting of the new committee the following were co-opted onto the committee — Aubrey Thomas, Dave Callender, Graham Clarke and one delegate each from the Scottish and Tyneside Groups.

The following officers were then appointed:—

Chairperson	Bryan Hudson
Secretary	Bob August
Treasurer	Colin Lewis
Press Officer (South)	Aubrey Thomas
Press Officer (North)	Rod Kirk
Contact Liaison Officer	Dave Callender
Tactics Officer	John Hale
Legal Officer	Miriam Hollis
Sales Goods Officer	Fiona Callender
Recruitment & Student Liaison	Graham Clarke
Education & Research Officer	Ralph Cook
Hon. Membership Secretary	Dave Wetton
HOWL Co-ordinator	Nigel Bellamy

Now that you know who does what, if you want to ask anything, you can write direct to the relevant person c/o P.O. Box 19.

PREY SPECIES

A fox destruction society operating from south Lancs and taking 'no pleasure in their work' failed to kill a fox on a work-out in Holcombe Hunt country. For them 'fox destruction is a necessary job', keeping the fox population as low as possible. Very low it seems — the hunt recently failed to find too.

HOUNDS SAVAGE PETS

Even before the season had started the Belvoir Hunt had massacred two family pets, BOTH ON THE SAME DAY. The pack of 80 hounds were being exercised through the quiet village of Branston when they suddenly broke away to chase 'Whiskey' the 14 year old cat of Dennis Headworth, a lorry driver. In his cottage garden the hounds cornered the cat and bit him to death.

One would expect the kennel staff at that point to return to the kennels after such a tragic occurrence, but no, so great is their faith in their own superiority that they simply carried on the exercise to the next village, Knipton. Here the hounds chased two dogs before finally spotting, chasing and killing 'Tiny' a Jack Russell terrier owned by 72 year old Tom Fletcher. The dog was his only company since the recent death of his wife.

The hunt described the occurrences as 'a one-off incident'. Small comfort for 'Whiskey' and 'Tiny'; one-off is true for them, after all one can only die once.



Dear HOWL,
I watched with great interest the television programme "Forty Minutes" and thought that overall our case came out rather well.

I do feel, however, that if we wish to appeal to a wider audience our appearance could have been better. I recognise the right of anybody to have long hair, eccentric clothes, etc., but for the purposes of that film could we not have had a hair cut or worn a short wig for the occasion. By not doing so we are playing into the hands of the Hunts People who just like to dismiss us as "rentamob", "revolutionaries" layabouts or whatever.

Similarly perhaps the photographs in HOWL could present a more "clean cut" image. For example two of the sabs shown on page four of the Spring edition of HOWL could possibly bring forth the same dismissive attitude to a would be recruit. I try to leave my copies of HOWL in public places after having read it but wonder whether this might not be counter-productive in some instances.

Incidentally it was a splendid piece of martyrdom for the cause by the sab that got beat up in front of the cameras – short hair an' all as I remember. You really would have thought that the hunt heavies would have more sense in view of the cameras.
Yours
Melvyn White

Dear SABS,
How I admire your compassionate concern and courage to put an end to the present heartless and barbaric cruelty to animals.

God bless you – every success in your efforts.
Sincerely,
Florence Harding (71 years old)

Dear SABS,
I fervently wish I could go out with you, but as I am nearly 70 I am not fit enough. It is extremely encouraging, however to read just how active you all are. I do not feel so despairing that it is all fair weather these days for the hunts, it damned well is not, not with so many of you grand folk around.

Bless you and best of luck.
Yours sincerely,
Mollie Watson (Mrs)

Dear HOWL,
I agree with the letter from S. Warner in HOWL 20 complaining about the elements of violence creeping into the HSA. Our detractors statements about our being vicious, mindless yobs will then be true and we shall lose all public sympathy.

Another aspect of HSA policy which has worried me for sometime is the left wing politics which seems to intrude into your articles and reporting. To quote just a few examples from HOWL 20, under the heading "Hunt Cuisine" you make fun of a young deb eating fish and chips prior to a hunt with a silver knife and fork. It doesn't matter to me if she was eating with her fingers and wearing a cloth cap! The point is that we believe that anyone of whatever social standing who supports hunting is wrong.

The same thread runs through your paragraph relating to the cost of "Red Hunting Coats". You say it wouldn't be economical to wear any other colour – "think of the cleaning costs for removing all those blood stains old boy!" Not everyone who indulges in blood sports is a member of the so-called upper classes.

Finally in your book review of the "Fettered Kingdoms", the author is described as the "Tony Benn of the UK animal rights movement". To those of us who do not support the Labour Party and regard Tony Benn as a complete hypocrite, this is hardly a compliment to the author!

I joined HSA because I was concerned about cruelty to animals and I still think that we should be aiming at the abolition of the cruelty irrespective of our own political beliefs and those of the people we oppose.
Yours sincerely,
Sylvia Skelt (Mrs)

Dear HOWL,
I was most surprised to read in your Issue 21 the bald assertion from the Dorest Inter-parliamentary Co-ordinating Animal Welfare Group that 'there is no political party which has a working group specifically concerned with this subject (animal rights)'.

The Ecology Party has for a long time had an Animal Rights Working Party (Convenor: Ann de Boisgelin, Felin Newydd, Gellywen, Carmarthen, Dyfed, Wales). The policy paper produced from this working party was passed by the Ecology Party Conference last year, and now appears in our Manifesto. (Copies available from the Ecology Party at the below address). We believe it to be a humane and progressive document, which, if implemented, could do much to alleviate the immense unnecessary suffering endured by animals at the hands of humanity.

If anyone would be interested in exploring further the links between animal rights and political ecology, I would, of course, be delighted to answer their queries if they would like to get in touch with me.
Yours sincerely,
Paul Ekins
General Secretary

National Office: 36/38, Clapham Road, London, SW9 0JQ. Tel: 01 735 2485

Dear HOWL,
The Church has, once again, come down on the side of those who consider that the suffering of animals does not matter when financial considerations are involved.

The attitude of the Church to animals appals me. I always, at my services, pray for animals but I seemed to be, amongst the clergy, in a minority of one.

Most people, I found, could not understand my happiness at preaching at animal services.

My own feeling is that the Church should excommunicate those who take part in hunting animals as breaking the Christian law of love, but it seems that we – who stand up for the rights of animals – are the ones to be banned.

I sent you two letters of mine which were published in the local press calling for the excommunication of fox hunters – I did not receive a single letter of support.

I am happy however to be classed with that minority who follow the patron saint of animals – St. Francis of Assisi.

I should add that a little time back, Janet Fookes, the M.P. for Devonport, a member of the Council of the RSPCA, and a great animal lover, was in contact with me about my being a member again of the RSPCA Council – I used to be. However she said that many of the Council members were against me – and they, it seems, form the majority.

With every good wish for your splendid work.
Yours sincerely,
Rev. Ronald Adkins

Dear HOWL,
I thought you might be interested in the row over Councillor Wells of Bexhill-on-Sea connection with the RSPCA and the East Sussex and Romney Marsh hunt. It first blew up last November when he was pictured in the local paper receiving a cheque on behalf of the local RSPCA (he was then vice-chairman). Local hunt saboteurs wrote to the paper expressing their disgust at his hypocrisy. After a lot of other letters were published in the paper critisising Councillor Wells the local RSPCA decided to meet and decide what to do with him – they didn't kick him out as we expected but promoted him to Chairman! I then sent all the information and press cuttings to Dick Course of the league who brought the issue up with the national executive committee of the RSPCA.

Cllr. Wells thought twice and decided to resign (what a shame). I think this is a prime example of animal exploitees who infiltrate the RSPCA and shows how important it is to vote at RSPCA AGM'S and get them thrown out.
Yours,
Bridget Bird

PS – One of our members who visited Cllr. Wells house a couple of years ago saw one of his prize possessions – a stuffed fox in his sitting room.

First of the Season

Cubbing started early as usual in the New Forest with the first hit catching them three weeks into their 'dirty' season.

Sabs from Portsmouth, Exeter and the New Forest plus a large contingent from Clydeside HSA, (Clive Swinscoe) met on what turned into a glorious sunny day, with plentry of warm air to disperse the scent.

After the successful drawing of a terrier man from his hole just outside the forest, we found our quarry (Sir Newton Rycroft and other social delinquents) on the edge of the western side of the forest at Newlands Plantation, at approx six a.m.

Two sabs were sent to reconnoitre and relay information back to the others via radio.

As the huntsman and hounds entered the covert, two groups of sabs did likewise, keeping in touch, with the aforementioned radios, which proved to be very useful in saving much time and legwork.

The Portsmouth group very soon ran into a large and jovial band of terrier men, one of whom raised his fist and asked us to leave what he claimed was private property. As according to our map it most certainly wasn't, we pointed this out, adding that hitting someone is assault and likely to lead to all sorts of dire consequences.

Having persuaded them that perhaps we were not sabs after all but rather a group of orienteering lawyers, they decided that to tangle with us would be foolhardy, and left us to go on our way.

Meanwhile 'Alpha two' had scaled the adjacent hill where they could observe the hunt and its few supporters, once more relaying intelligence to 'our' forces on the ground.

The Exeter group, anarchists down to last one of them, decided to split off and do their own thing, which resulted in certain areas of the plantation retaining a strong smell of anti-mate for most of the morning.

The hounds frequently spoke and ran in circles around the covert though horn blowing from assorted directions succeeded in drawing off some hounds, breaking down the pack and generally causing confusion all round.

Eventually the huntsman was heard marking to ground on the eastern side of the plantation. As we strode confidently to the fore a clapping of hands accompanied by gruff shouts of leave it cleared hounds from the earth. The huntsman bitterly complained about all the noise, only to repeat his marking to ground call with the horn about six inches from my ear. With saboteurs buttocks fixed firmly in the entrances to the earth, neither police or huntsperson seemed particularly motivated to move us.

Eventually the hunt, with most of their hounds picnicking elsewhere, decided that enough was enough and called it a day.

In the opinion of those present a good job had been done, with no live kills, no violence, no arrests despite a large police presence, and with hounds having to think twice in future every time they hear a horn. All in all a good days sport.

Malcolm Leick

HOWL MAGAZINE

This edition was produced by:-

Bob August
N. Bellamy
Elaine Bellamy
Ralph Cook
Dave Callender
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Richard Farnhall
Ali Haynes
Mirriam Hollis
Chris Jones
Malcolm Leick
Colin Lewis
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Mark Connors (Mink Illustration)

Next edition due out February 1983. All contributions should be sent to HOWL P.O. Box 19, London SE22 9LR to arrive no later than 31st December 1982.

The points of view expressed in HOWL do not necessarily reflect those of the Hunt Saboteurs Association.

A.L.F. NEWS

The recent increase in ALF activity has unfortunately meant more animal activists being arrested and charged with a variety of offences.

Nine members were each given six month jail sentences, suspended for two years following an attempt to rescue cats from Hill Grove Farm, Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire, which supplies the animals to vivisection labs.

Fines ranging from £50 to £200 were also imposed. The ALF has condemned the sentences as extremely vicious for what was, after all, intended as an act of compassion.

Financial help is needed to help with the fines which totalled £1,400 and donations should be sent to Cambridge 11 Defence Fund, c/o ALF, Box 190, Peace News, 8 Elm Avenue, Nottingham.

Mr. Laurence Bromfield who sells mice to laboratories, was also paid a visit. Four people have been charged with criminal damage and burglary. Donations to help with legal expenses or fines should be sent to Triangle 4 Defence Fund at the above address.

Several more people have now been charged following the ALF raid on the Life Science Research lab. in Essex. A disturbing aspect of this is that most of those charged were among a group of peaceful protesters and did not take part in the actual raid. This could clearly pose a severe threat to the right to demonstrate against these atrocities. Donations should be sent to Operation Valentine Defence Fund at the Nottingham address.

Cruelty at the May and Baker drugs firm was publicized by ALF activists, who sprayed slogans on a wall outside the firm which will be seen by thousands of commuters every day. A placard protest was also held outside the company, which said their animal experiments were strictly controlled by the Government (yawn)!

Another success was had in Stratford's shopping centre when butchers and furriers shops were treated to paint jobs.

Chessington Zoo was also treated to a paint job and not for the first time. A zoo spokesman seemed mainly concerned about the hours of work it took to remove the slogans!

Once again family pets have been rescued from a laboratory. This time from Leeds University. Six dogs, labradors and mongrels and a cat were rescued and later found good homes.



Pet Rescued from Vivisection

Raiders discovered Poole's Mayor Mrs. Edna Adams was setting a rather bad example to the community when they visited her Canford Magna battery hen houses. Over 40,000 birds were cramped into tiny cages and four were rescued and photographed. Mrs. Adams, who denied cruelty and called herself an 'animal lover' said "If hens were given enough room they would peck each other because they are cannibalistic." However did they survive before the battery system was introduced?

Notorious Club Row animal dealer Lil Taylor was unable to get to the market to set up her stall one Sunday. The reason? ALF activists had paid a latenight visit and added a couple of bags of sugar to the fuel tank of her van.

On the lighter side, when ALF activists struck an egg packing factory in Kent, their ALF slogans were mistaken for the daubings of a vandal named Alf!

TATICS CONFERENCE

Group Contacts and other experienced sabs from across the country, came together at the end of August for a weekend of intensive tactics discussion. Following a successful hit on the Hampshire Hunt in the early hours of Saturday morning, John Bryant, author of 'Fettered Kingdoms', opened the meeting with a talk on the quarry species and their natural habits. Apart from being one of the most interesting and enjoyable talks of the weekend, John Bryant raised a number of points that relate directly to the practice of hunt sabotage itself. His observations of Foxes at Fern Animal sanctuary have led him to believe that many foxes are heavy sleepers, which supports the notion of pre-meet beating of coverts as a method of alerting foxes to the approach of the hunt. He also refuted the argument that the hunt have merely entered the ecological niche left vacant by the demise of the wolf, stating that in his opinion deer would be a far more plentiful and reliable food source for the wolf pack than the relatively small fox carcass. He also doubted the claim that hunting provides any kind of population control in view of the relatively small numbers killed and the fact that territorial vacuums created by hunting merely encourage further breeding and movement within the population as a whole.

ledge. The next time they have their heads lopped off with a terrier mans shovel there is no 'leader' left and consequently no group.

Dave Callender, Contacts Liaison Officer, re-iterated the importance of local and national communication. For their own sakes, he advised contacts to spread the load of their position in order to last the strain of more than a couple of seasons. Dave went on to talk about pre-meet work, particularly in relation to beating (coverts, not hunt supporters!). The general principle is that if the hunt can't find a fox to chase in the first place, then it makes your job a lot easier and safer later in the day.

Avoiding confrontations, arrest and what to do if you don't, was the major concern of Mirriam Hollis, Legal Officer, who began the Sunday afternoon session. With what John Percival, producer of the BBC's Forty Minutes programme, described as her "dry sense of humour", she delivered a strong and convincing argument in favour of increased professionalism, both in attitude and action. Many sabs will already have had the benefit of Mirriams's wisdom as she is willing to travel anywhere, to any group, simply for the price of a train ticket. Apart from basic legal information, she also touched on a subject that overlaps with tactics itself,



Mirriam Hollis addressing the Tactics Meeting

Flod Pamet, ex tactics officer and chief contributor to the 'Tactics Booklet 1980', followed with information on hunting technique in relation to all forms of quarry. He pointed out that to improve our knowledge in this area, we have to turn to those with most experience and in this case it is undoubtedly the huntsmen and Masters themselves. Information sources range from the hunting press and books to attendance at hunts as a supporter, so gaining the opportunity to pick the small brains of those directly involved in everyday hunting.

Someone who has been doing both for many years is Aubrey Thomas who spent most of the afternoon explaining his 'advanced' and still somewhat controversial beagling tactics, which it is claimed hold the key to all forms of hound sports/sabotage. Though for most of us they remain theories yet to be proved in the field, the overall tone of the discussion emphasized the importance of sabs using their brains to decipher and act upon all the information that is available to them, whether it be the implications of hound breeding or the effects of scenting conditions.

Some contacts questioned the ability of many sabs to absorb even the most basic information and were worried that more complex theories may merely increase their confusion. However, responsibility for educating and motivating local members lies squarely on the shoulders of the contacts. If they are experienced sabs then they must get other sabs thinking and working for themselves. We have to break away from the idea of leaders guiding their otherwise ignorant band of devotees from covert to covert, whilst emanating some aura of mystic knowthat of appearance in the field. Many sabs are of the opinion that wearing enough badges will deflect anything up to and including light machine gun fire. This usually results in hunt supporters dismissing them as idiots and is somewhat akin to strolling through Nazi occupied France wearing a T-shirt bearing the slogan "I'm a member of the French Resistance". Conversely one well placed British Field Sports Society badge and flat cap, can work wonders when telling the huntsman that some ficticious fox has crossed the road, or when other hunt supporters are telling you where they're drawing next. Again intelligence with a dash of deception was being recommended.

The talk eventually wound up with a more general discussion on tactics, encompassing such things as regional variations in spraying of scent dullers, use of drags and more information on cub-hunting and hound training. In this case, tactics officer John Hale chaired the discussion.

Mirriam Hollis closed the meeting by reminding contacts that committee members are always willing to give local groups the benefit of their limited knowledge, either by letter or where necessary by visiting them. She also appealed for more contacts and experienced members in general to stand for election to the committee in order to ensure that all areas and views are represented.

So ended a stimulating and informative weekend which must surely form the basis for similar future meetings. It's a shame that more contacts couldn't have taken the trouble to attend as it is their local members that will ultimately suffer. However, the talks were recorded and may be made available in some form in the future. For those of you who did attend, we would welcome any feedback on the discussion.

Tactical Tips

This is the first in a series of articles on tactics. This regular column (which can be cut-out and kept) is a supplement to the Tactics Book.

CUB HUNTING

It is recommended that sabs re-read the relevant sections in the tactics booklet and bear in mind the objects of cub hunting. To avoid the inherent difficulties of effective sabbing when the hunt have ringed a wood, it is important to flush the woods well, before the hunt starts, using thorough beating methods. It is very important to check whether earths are blocked or not. If you find earths blocked a few hours before the hunt is due to start, then an efficient beat will cause the hunt to draw blank. A horn call by the huntsman to this effect will let you know. If you are some distance away from the hunt, try to learn what is going on by listening, whenever you can to hunting calls etc.

Horn calls and holloas that pull the hounds out of covert when no foxes are about, of course, are very desirable (see tactics booklet - cub hunt tactics).

Remember that in large woodlands, supporters will position themselves along rides and paths until they trap a cub in a small section of the wood. Beware of walking into lines of supporters unexpectedly.

It is not always good in cub hunting for the hunt to always holloa a fox and the hounds to be put on the line of the fox by the huntsman; after all the hounds have to learn to work the line out for themselves. Therefore, good holloas and horn blowing by sabs, that is seen to work on the pack, is good sabbing. However, if coverts are drawn blank by the hunt, in cub hunting it is, of course, the ideal situation from the sabs point of view and 100% frustrating for the hunt.

Efficient well made plans are called for before the sab starts. As it may be dark, everyone should know exactly what to do and plenty of time should be allowed to thoroughly beat the coverts. Stopping vehicles outside farm houses etc., and slamming car doors in the early hours is bad practice.

So remember the important objects of cub hunting. It is vital for hounds to be blooded if they are to be a killing pack. Cub hunting teaches young hounds to go up and 'tackle' a fox. A hound can have learnt to hunt, but not yet learnt to kill. A pack that are 'running for blood' are noticeably 'better' than a pack not 'in blood'. This is why drag hunting is not favoured by the bloodsports hardcore. Stopping a hunt reaching this peak of efficiency in killing foxes is one of the main aims in sabbing cub hunts.

BIRD SCARING ROPES

Any members using bird scaring ropes, i.e. rookies, are requested to be as careful as possible when using them to clear coverts.

Do not separate them from the fuse rope.

Never use them if there is any fire risk.

Always make sure they are firmly fixed as high as possible, well away from paths and in evergreen trees or bushes etc., if possible.

It is important to use rookies in a responsible manner as they are very effective, especially in cub hunting.

JOHN HALE, Tatics Officer.

Tactics Booklets, Hunting Tapes available from P.O. Box 19, London SE22.

GROUP NEWS

Essex University H.S.A. group have a new contact. He would like to hear from all sabs living in the Colchester area to help form a more 'stable' group than has existed in the past. The group is all set for the new season and assure us that the malicious rumour put around about their members "piddling in Churchyards" is untrue. Steps are being taken to investigate the matter and any culprits found will have the appropriate offending parts of their anatomy lopped off immediately! This action might well leave the group looking for new 'members'.

Fifteen members of the **Tonbridge Group** dragged towels soaked in scent-killing solution along the river bank near Chittenden causing the Tandridge Mink Hounds to draw a blank. Again!

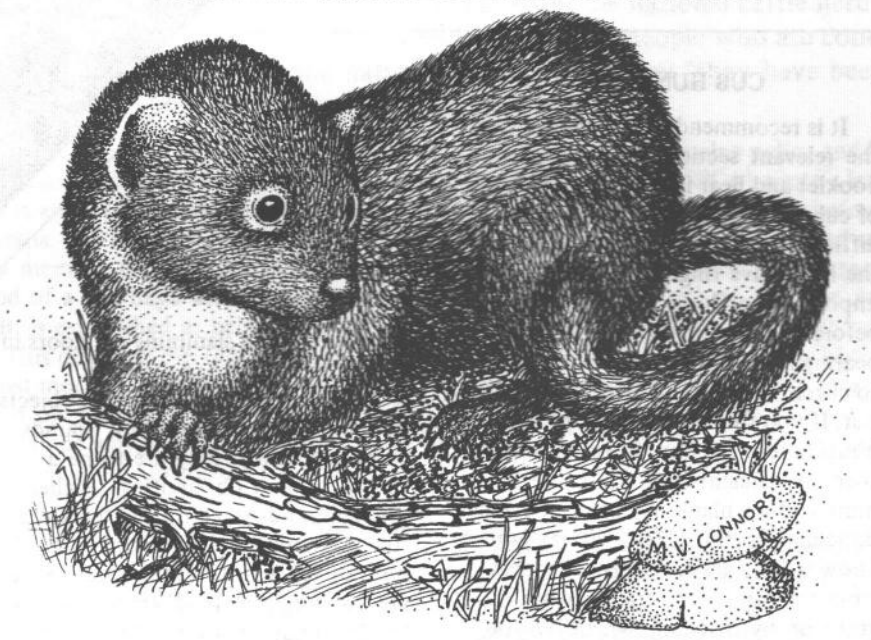
Merseyside H.S.A. spent most of the summer fund-raising and recruiting around Merseyside at various fetes, shows and in the city centre with their portable stall. They now have comprehensive files on all their local hunts which should make their sabbing a lot easier. H.S.A. members were prominent in the organising of several campaigns against Gandleys and Robert Fossetts circus around Merseyside. Both circuses were heavily hampered by cancelled notices, hoax adverts in local papers and a massive campaign against the shops that advertised their programme. A lot of effort was also put into the week long showing of the 'Animals Film' in Liverpool, the first showing outside London. Four hundred people saw the film many of whom are now involved in the activities of the group.

The **Cleveland H.S.A.** have been keeping busy during the summer months. At the Sedgefield Show held in August, 4 sabs held a run-on banner demo when the South Durham hunt paraded their hounds. This action was greeted by a few cheers from the crowd and good publicity in the local press. Later in the month 18 sabs participated in a 'Help the Hunted' sponsored walk. Although they got cold and wet (it was August) they managed to raise £50 towards financing this season's sabotage.

Y.A.C.S. (Youth Against Cruel Sports) based in Corby have proved that petitions sometimes work. During the summer they collected signatures calling for the banning of hunting on Council land in their area. After submitting it to the Corby District Council, they received a letter from them saying "..... the Council feel sympathetic towards your cause and has decided to prohibit any field sports (sic) involving hunting from taking place on land owned by the District Council".

MINK MYTHS

THE FACTS BEHIND THE SENSATIONALIST MEDIA REPORTING, RURAL MYTHS AND B.F.S.S. PROPAGANDA



The North American Mink *(Mustela Vison)*, is the only exotic carnivore to have successfully established itself in the British Isles and as such seems destined to suffer unrelenting persecution from man. First imported into Britain in 1929 to cater for the fashionable tastes of the rich, the Houdini-like creatures soon began escaping from their farms and establishing themselves as part of the local fauna. Little was done about farm security and no legislation laid down regulations on the keeping of mink. Supplemented by regular escapes the feral population bred successfully and expanded its range. By the late 1950's it was finally realised that mink were surviving and breeding in the wild. Today few counties of mainland Britain can claim to be free of mink.

The questions relating to the mink's role in its new environment have for the most part been asked and answered by biologists working in the field and laboratory on the ecology of the feral mink in Britain. Meanwhile rural gossip-lines and the media have been conducting their own "studies" of the mink. Emotive and sensationalist reporting, devoid of any real understanding of the animal or its habits has been the hallmark of media interest at both local and national levels. Serious study has failed to penetrate the popular image of the "voracious alien carnivore" (a phrase invented by the "naturalist", Sir Christopher Lever and much used by mink-hunters), with the result that nationwide the mink is regarded with distaste as an unmitigated pest.

It seems to be true that during the early stages of the mink's colonisation of these islands they were responsible for a large number of mass-killing attacks on poultry. During the years 1962-1969 there were reports of 36 such attacks, involving 364 head of poultry. This sounds bad but a further look at the figures reveals an interesting trend. Of the 36 cases, most (29 cases), are attributed to newly escaped mink, with another case attributed to a mink of unknown origin. In recent years little has been heard of such attacks. One, reported a few years ago in Yorkshire was attributed again to newly escaped mink.* A similar pattern has been reported in Sweden where mink were able to establish themselves much faster than on this side of the North Sea.** This would suggest, that at first mink are apt to take easily available food following recent escape but that they loose the habit once they have adapted to taking natural sources of food.

MINK DIET

Despite the decrease in the reported incidents a mink plague is a potent part of rural paranoia, how much is it justified? Scientists have been studying the mink in Britain and Sweden for some years now concentrating especially on its diet, since it is in its predatory character, that it is thought it will have the most on our native fauna and our farmers. These studies have revealed that:

1. the mink is a generalist predator, exploiting a wide variety of prey species, dividing its attention roughly three ways between fish, mammals and birds.
2. the mink is an opportunistic hunter, generally taking the most abundant prey targets and giving other species proportionately less attention but shifting to alternative prey in the event of the principal species becoming relatively less available.

Together these trends limit the mink's impact upon the native funa, since its diversity of diet makes it less competative with other animals such as the otter which almost exclusively eats fish, while both its diverse and opportunistic feeding habits prevent the risk of hunting any species to extinction.

All the studies published have revealed that the mink's diet is virtually unspecific apart from the general rule that it be split between fish, bird and mammal.

Of the mammals the mink ate, most were considered agricultural pests and that therefore the mink could be regarded as an ally. Rats, moles, mice, insectivores and rabbits were all found to be heavily exploited by mink in all areas. Of the birds preyed upon, water-birds such as coots and moorhens (themselves considered as pests), were prime targets, next came the passerines (small perching birds, songbirds etc.) ducks were also utilised and the occasional poultry remains signified mink predation on unprotected birds. Game birds were also target species and figured quite prominently in the mink diet probably because of the artificially high levels at which their populations are maintained. Finally fish were exploited in many different ways; in Scotland they were found to eat salmonids (trout and salmon) almost exclusively while in Dorset their fish diet consisted predominantly of eels. In other areas where perhaps prey species were more evenly matched prey was diversified among several species with the most abundant being exploited most heavily: everywhere it was noted that mink caught fish of a smaller size than those taken by otters.

VACANT ECOLOGICAL NICHE

How does all this relate to fears that mink are eliminating our native wildlife? Firstly it must be remembered that all wildlife, unless there are overwhelming pressures levelled against them, such as habitat destruction, disease or massive population reduction, have an inbuilt ability to regenerate numbers to compensate for depredation. If their were no predators the surplus would have to die anyway. The killing of individual animals should not therefore be taken as indicative of the destruction of a species.

Next, although the mink is undoubtedly an alien to Britain this does not mean that its role will automatically be disastrous. An exotic species only became a threat to native fauna if its hunting techniques are also alien and such that the evolved protection for a prey species is no defence against the new aggressor. A good example is the defence evolved by the hedgehog against predators but which offers no security against the alien motorcar. The mink is a member of the mustelid family which includes among its members, the stoat, weasel, polecat, pine-marten, otter, badger and ferret. All of these apart from the last is a native of this country, mink share with them not only kinship but similar hunting and feeding habits. It has no super-technique with which it can wipe out entire species of animals; any animal evolved to defend itself against any of its brothers can do so against the mink. The irony of the whole issue is that those who now complain so bitterly about the mink are probably most to blame for its success. Farmers, "sportsmen" and other country dwellers have been responsible for a constant war against our native mustelids, who would almost certainly have opposed the mink's rapid expansion.

Despite the fact that the mink has proved to be a fairly innocuous animal which has simply occupied a vacant ecological niche, it is still regarded as vermin by the know-alls in the Ministry of Agriculture (M.A.F.F.) and is therefore subject to control. In the 1960's MAFF launched an expensive and totally unsuccessful programme of extermination, killing 7,000 mink and then abandoning the whole effort. The conclusion was that wholesale extermination would be prohibitively expensive and local control was of no use whatsoever since the success of one year would be lost as vacant territory was invaded from other areas.

THREAT TO OTTERS

Despite all this the B.F.S.S. has officially recognised the role of otter-hunts in the control of mink. For individual mink this is not very pleasant, for the species it is of no account whatsoever, but for the otter it is a different matter altogether. It is generally agreed that disturbance by humans and habitat destruction are to blame for the decline of the otter in Britain, hunting may have had only minimal effect when compared to the tidying-up activities of waterboards or tourism, but today, with a sparse and insecure population any pressure no matter how small might be enough to tip the balance against the otters' continued survival: mink-hunting might just be that final straw.

RALPH COOK

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FOREIGN NEWS

SABOTAGE ACROSS THE ATLANTIC

Tactics employed by HSA members in this country are at last being recognised as appropriate for stateside situations. Greenpeace members whose methods, according to a hunting reporter in Ohio, "border on terrorism" are facing up to hunters in the Spatsizi Plateau Wilderness Park.

The Park was created by an order which required that the area be maintained as a wilderness landscape in which natural communities are preserved intact and progression of the natural systems may proceed without alteration. However the powerful hunting lobby persuaded the government to exempt big game!

The Minister of Parks, Jim Chabot, said that "limited hunting should be allowed for the sake of the animals, otherwise they may become small and stunted". (Sound familiar?) Considering only the best animals are taken for trophies the opposite is more likely to be true besides, wouldn't you rather be small and stunted than dead?

So after trying all the usual polite channels anti-hunters have resorted to the inevitable in the face of bigotry.

Elsewhere in the States (so we're reliably told by Shooting Times, Feb 82) antis are being a bit of a nuisance! Friends of Animals, with whom we have strong links, have apparently produced a "Hints for Hunter Saboteurs" booklet, presumably based on UK ideas. One tactic employed by anti-hunters in Conneticut is partially sawing through struts supporting tree hides!

Our American and Canadian counterparts, however, have a tougher job on their hands, because of more liberal gun laws there are more gun-toting nutters per acre, all hell-bent on killing something to prove their manhood – and intent on keeping it that way.

BEAR BAITING

Jake Crawford, of Louisiana, was charged with arson for setting fire to his teddy bear because it was "possessed by demons".

ELKS GET THEIR OWN BACK

A dozen elks ambushed a motorist on an angling trip in northern Sweden. As he drew level with two elks on a narrow forested road, others moved out of the trees and charging the car the animals reduced it to a wreck leaving the driver with a broken arm and multiple cuts and bruises. Experts are baffled about the animals' behaviour. . . .

An orphaned elk, hand raised by a young Swede and returned to the wild ten years ago, turned up in March – shot by a hunter. Before setting the young buck free the rescuer had tattooed his phone number in the animal's ear and the hunter had rung him up to give him the news.

BACK TO THE SANDS

The Arabian oryx, driven to extinction by hunters 10 years ago, has just made a come-back care of western conservation societies. The re-instated herd is part of a group raised in America during the last 20 years and will be guarded from poachers by a 500-strong tribe of nomads appointed by the Shah of Oman.

At a rough guess it'll be another 20 years before the arabs can get back in their jeeps, hoist up their machine guns and get back to their favorite sport. Good luck oryx!

GAME OF DEATH

In the mountains of southern Spain, each March at Carnival time, hundreds flock to take part in a cruel and sickening sideshow. Live rabbits, hens and doves are tied by their hind legs to stakes whilst competitors pay to throw stones at them. If they manage to kill the shrieking, helpless creatures they win a prize. The lucky ones die instantly, others endure 10-15 hits and suffer a slow painful death.

PIG PATIENTS

Pigs in Sweden are being anaesthetised then subjected to gunshot, grenade and other wounds of varying severity. They are used as live hospital training casualties in military hospitals. The reason: military surgeons in peace-loving Sweden get no experience in dealing with gun-shot wounds. Any offers!

GONE TO THE DOGS

The Chinese government has diagnosed a new western disease – 'dogism'. They describe the symptons as fawning over dogs and a squeamishness about eating dog meat. In China dog meat is a delicacy and sells for about 50p per lb.

'CROC-TAIL COCKTAIL'

With an international ban on hunting crocodiles and alligators in the wild, crocodile farming is now an expanding industry in Zimbabwe. The soft underbelly skin is still much prized by makers of handbags and shoes. Meanwhile in the top hotels further up the Zambezi River crocodile tails are served with lettuce as a "Croc-tail Cocktail".

PORTON DOWN

On the 24th of April 1982, 5,000 anti-vivisectionists marched from Salisbury to the Ministry of Defence Chemical and Biological Warfare Centre at Porton Down. The event was organised by the B.U.A.V. and was to end with a rally outside the main gates to the establishment. Towards the conclusion of the 9 mile march the adrenaline was set running by the recorded simulation of an air raid warning and a dog barking. At this point members of the Northern Animal Liberation League moved towards the front of the march in order to co-ordinate the loud chanting of slogans such as "Porton Down – Occupy it Now". Fireworks, air-raid warnings, chanting and an effigy of the A.T.C.'s Director served to prepare the invaders for action.

Security had much improved since the last assault on the centre, two years previous and behind the gleaming new 15 foot high steel gates stood a body of Wiltshire policemen. A few diversionary tactics occupied the attention of these fellows while to one side a well-planned "spontaneous" action was taking place. Boltcutters served to cut a hole in the steel fencing through which in a matter of minutes a sizeable proportion of the assembled company went.

The police made a few half-hearted attempts to protect three livestock fences that barred the way by linking arms and trying to frighten the 2,000 protesters with police dogs who appeared not to be enjoying their role. But at the final barbed wire fence the police stood their ground and the protesters had to console themselves by throwing stones at the windows of a gymnasium. At this point and in the middle of the crowd a policeman was, incredibly, able to effect an arrest.

Despite the satisfaction of many of the participants in getting so far in to Britains most secret research establishment they should remember that had the authorities wished to do so they could have prevented even that limited success. The cynicism of authority was total, the police were organised so as to dissuade the less committed to direct-action of this sought, to protect the last fence at all costs and to allow the enthusiasm and dynamism of the tired marchers to die from within rather than crush it immediately which would have left much bitterness and frustration.

Nevertheless from the anti-vivisectionists point of view it achieved some of its aims; the publicity gained, despite the Falklands War was quite good. It must have demonstrated to the authorities that they are not content with the situation regarding animal experiments and that changes will be forced upon them if they do not act. To that end the invasion was worth a million petition signatures. Also it brought many hundreds of people who would otherwise never think of it to break the law and confront authority on a very important issue and this can only strengthen their hand in the future.



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A BAG OF CHESTNUTS

Ian Coghill, hunter of mink, fox, hare and anything alcoholic, penned this predictable diatribe which appeared in the Hereford Times.

Too far . . .

THERE can be no doubt that many people in Great Britain take a concern for what they see as animal welfare beyond reasonable bounds.

An overdeveloped concern for species other than our own is no guide to a person's humanity, morality or intelligence. Those who are tempted to criticise fellow citizens who do not share their extreme views about animals would do well to remember that Adolf Hitler was a vegetarian and anti-foxhunter on what he considered were "moral grounds."

It is not unreasonable for field sportsmen, who find themselves being criticised or even on occasion lied about, to examine the moral credentials of their attackers. Frequently such people are found to be throwing stones from positions that are clearly inside glass-houses.

We live in a world where a billion people are starving to death, where millions are dying going blind or becoming crippled. Much of this can be put right by money. A cateract operation costing a few rupees, some DDT or a little dried milk and the scales can be tipped in the favour of a human being. His misery can be relieved, his sight restored, even his life saved.

When people contribute their time and money to anti-field sports bodies such as the League Against Cruel Sports and the Hunt Saboteurs Association they have made a decision. That decision is that stopping hunting and shooting is more important than saving human life. Every penny that such organisations take is a penny that could have gone to save a child.

I am a hunting man, I am most certainly no saint, I'm not even particularly good. I am just an Englishman who likes to mind his own business, who likes to make his own mind up about what's right and wrong and who just occasionally gets tired of self-righteous old women.

IAN S. COGHILL
30 Carters Lane,
Lapal,
Halesowen,
Worcestershire.

Ian, like most of his tribe, neglects to mention all the highly obnoxious individuals who have walked the surface of the planet managing to avoid both vegetarianism and/or membership of the hunt saboteurs. Ghengis Kahn, Mussolini and Stalin for instance, whose exploits rival even those of Mr. Coghill.

He somewhat misses the point when he accuses 'antis' of a lack of concern for their fellow man/woman. Does he not realise that his precious diet of carcass and two veg. supports a system that wastes millions of tons of grain on animal feed every year, rather than sending it to Mr. Coghill's starving billion. Does he not also realise that the world's ecology is being seriously and possibly irreversibly destroyed as thousands of acres of rain forest are lost every week to provide cheap grazing, for cheap meat to feed, not the starving billion, but the already obese industrial West; the so called 'Hamburger Connection'. Of course, being a member of the BFSS and a conservationist, none of this is new to Mr. Coghill.

In one respect I totally agree with him. Of course it is criminal to deprive people of a 'few rupees' for basic medical aid and the much greater amounts required for real agricultural independence, but in this case is it not Mr. Coghill's 'glasshouse' that stands in ruins!

While some choose to extend their concern for fellow humans to a concern for all animals, whatever their species, Mr. Coghill chooses to extend his 'concern' to a preoccupation with killing anything he can get his hounds on.

I advise him to contact the BFSS immediately requesting the dissolution of the BFSS Fighting Fund (now standing at several hundred thousand pounds), all of which is being carefully nurtured to protect the right to kill for enjoyment. They can then send the money to a more worthy cause and lets face it, anything would be more worthy than the purpose for which the fund is intended. I suggest that in future Mr. Coghill directs his criticism at those who can still afford to ride or run to hounds several times a week or perhaps pay thousands of pounds each year for the right to blast birds out of the sky.

As for those who are prepared to share their more limited incomes in order to alleviate suffering in some small way, I think most would be rather disgusted at Mr. Coghill's attempts to 'cash in' on human suffering in order to justify his own extermination programmes.

MALCOLM LEICK

THE VEGAN WAY
by Laurence Main

Cruelty to animals is just one symptom of a diseased attitude to life. Cruelty is indivisible. A true opponent of such evil will go beyond the easily apparent externals to strike at the very heart of the problem. This involves re-assessment of personal habits and life-style, in order to accord with our professed attitude towards life. A part of this process must be a switch to a vegan diet. We have to eat in order to live and by eating as compassionately as possible we are practising what many preach.

A major cause of animal suffering is the "daily pinta". What right have we to tell the Japanese not to kill whales if we remain a milk-consuming nation? The Japanese, like most people of the world, are not addicted to cow's milk. Hasn't the cow as much right to liberation as the whale? Milk-drinking is an evil which has been disguised for too long by the dairy industry's multi-million pound advertising campaigns. Cow's milk is an unnatural food for man, its production requires the greatest cruelty and it is completely unnecessary.

Many vegetarians and supporters of animal welfare groups fail to recognise that milk production means both slaughter and prolonged suffering. Even if factory-farms were abolished, the farmer would still have to arrange for cows to give birth in order to lactate. Their offspring must then be snatched away to be fed on a substitute so that humans can consume a product which their stomachs ceased to demand when they were but one or two, and then the natural supply would have come from their human mothers. The harsh economic fact that the farmer cannot provide for these calves results in the meat industry being little more than a by-product of the dairy. Some calves are killed at birth – the rennet from their stomachs is used to make cheese. Many go to the veal industry to be imprisoned for their short lives. Most male calves must face castration and the impending death sentence, while female calves can look forward to enduring repeated frustrating pregnancies before also being despatched to the abattoir as soon as their milk yield drops.

The realisation that a truly compassionate diet could not contain dairy products led to the formation of the Vegan Society in 1944. It is hard for us to imagine their practical difficulties. Without many imported foods, isolated and with few shops catering for them, they managed to pioneer a way of life which has now been properly researched by nutritionists and is recognised as being as healthy as a conventional diet and, even, possibly a healing diet for cancer and heart disease. The thousands of vegans living in Great Britain today are living examples of this. One of them has won the English Channel Swimming Race, while others have run in marathons. The general progress and health of vegan children refutes earlier myths made by an ill-informed orthodoxy.

Such was official hostility during the last war that vegans were discriminated against. Unlike vegetarians, who were allowed extra rations of dairy produce instead of meat, the vegans were told that the government wasn't going to help them to an early grave by similarly encouraging their unorthodox diet. Now that the war-clouds are assembling again, it is ironic to think that the nation may be forced to think in terms of adopting a vegan diet for its very survival. Despite our highly-mechanised, artificially-fertilised, hedgerow-less and momocultured 47 million acres of agricultural land, we still have to import about half our food. The humble vegan, demanding little more than compost, simple tools and a pair of hands, is a witness to the fact that Britain could be self-sufficient in food on about a quarter of this acreage. Nine-tenths of our present agricultural land is used to support livestock. As animals are extremely inefficient transformers of plant protein and energy into animal food, we would use much less land if we ate plant foods direct. Something like 36 million acres would be released for better purposes.

Animals and birds should live in freedom. A vegan Britain would have the land to spare for wildlife sanctuaries. Ironically it is the meat-eating hunters whose land-gobbling diet is destroying our wildlife habitats. They get away with the myth that hunting preserves land for wildlife, however, because so few anti-hunting people realise what an animal product diet is doing to our landscape and even indulge in meat and milk themselves! Our present farm-animals are, of course, examples of how man has gone against nature by deliberately breeding creatures for his own exploitation. Since 1953, the farm animal population of this country has risen by about 50%, often through artificial conception. This is a deliberately man-made second population explosion which is unnatural and unsustainable. At the same time, our wildlife has disappeared at an alarming rate as a result of more land being used to grow crops for factory-farm animals and these crops being "protected" with poisons.

A natural habitat for many species is the forest. Millions of acres could be replanted with trees, to the benefit of people, the creatures and the soil. Forests and wild places are a source of recreation, a place to regain our sense of right and wrong, so abused in a "civilisation" based on violence and exploitation. Trees are vital for oxygenating the air, controlling the water cycle, maintaining soil fertility, as shelter-belts for crops, for food and renewable raw materials. Even more significant now that the nuclear spectre haunts us is the fact that we can now make alternatives to petrol and gas from trees and other "energy-crops". We would have a safe, renewable, source of energy which would obviate the need for nuclear power. We could restore the original deciduous tree cover to much of our land, especially in the "marginal" uplands where crops cannot be grown but where forestry and tourism are needed to provide employment. All we need is the land – it's ours if we will only change our diet in accordance with our new attitude to life.

There are those who belive we are entering a New Age. If so, it can only be based upon Truth and Compassion. The vegans have proved that to exploit animals for food is unnecessary and wasteful. If we are to reform the world we must reform ourselves first. We cannot escape the act of eating, so consistency demands the adoption of a vegan diet. It is a surprisingly easy and delightful step to take. We have the benefit of others' experience. There are local groups of vegans all over the country to provide sympathetic support. A start can be made by sending for a free leaflet pack and the booklet "Introduction to Practical Veganism", which costs only 60p including postage, from the Vegan Society Ltd, 9 Mawddwy Cottages, Minllyn, Dinas Mawddwy, Machynlleth, SY20 9LW, Wales.

NO REPRIEVE FOR BADGERS

The apparent about face announced by Mr. Peter Walker, the Minister for Agriculture on 1st of July on the policy of gassing badgers as part of a programme to eliminate Bovine Tuberculosis from the national cattle herd has left cow dung on at least one face while also leaving many people who are concerned about badgers believing as one national paper put it, that 'they have been reprieved', Nothing could be further from the truth.

In certain areas of the South-West, Staffordshire, West Sussex and Wales, badgers are being trapped in large "humane" live-traps. The aim now it seems is to remove every member of a badger group over a period of a few days with these traps if B.T.B. is established as being present in a sett. This diagnosis can only be carried out by post-mortem. Thus where-ever cattle are known and badgers are suspected of having B.T.B. traps will be set and captives killed for examination. Obviously if you find such a trap your'll know what action to take, but look around the area, especially near other badger setts. It is also well worth while noting the locations of all traps found and badger setts in the area for future reference. Each trap we are told is worth from £30.00 to £40.00.

Mr. Walker's proclamation is in itself quite interesting, part of the statement made on the 1st July reads:

"The results . . . . . (of the experiments conducted at Porton Down using badgers and ferrets with Cyanide Gas), do however imply that there must be some doubt whether all the badgers in a gassed sett die quickly and therefore whether they die humanely".

Reading between the lines we can assume that the experiments carried out on Badgers at that unmentional place must have revealed an incredible amount of suffering to get that hard-hearted Ministry to make such a statement.

Members of the Dartmoor Badgers Protection League, however, had presented evidence to Lord Zuckerman during his enquiry in 1979 which conclusively proved that gassing was cruel. At the time the evidence received the kind of reply that only a government department could get away with; now the evidence has been bourne out to be true. Ironically the evidence was supplied in the form of two sworn statements from the Master and Terrierman of the South-Devon Foxhunt, a couple not known for sentimental attitudes towards animals, bless them. Their testimonies revealed that while in pursuit of their normal quarry they discovered a half-dead badger in a badger sett that had been gassed and sealed up a week before!

Now for the man with the dung-covered face. Mr. Booty (a member of the Consultative Panel, set up in 1979 to advise the Ministry on its gassing policy and Wildlife officer for the RSPCA) wrote a letter to Mrs. Ruth Murray just two days before Mr. Walker made his announcement and several days after the suspension of the gassing operations on the 26th of June. He claimed that cyanide gassing was the most humane way to kill badgers! It seems Mr. Walker had not even bothered to inform his advisers of his impending decision. It does much to reveal the true nature of such advisory panels as the FAWC.



Badger Digging

Clifford John Squire of Island Farm Coryton, Devon was fined a miserable £30 for cruelly ill-treating a badger in Feburary.

The badger had been caught in a snare laid by Squire to "protect" his pheasants. Instead of removing the animal he hit it on the head with a stick, leaving it for dead. He returned later to find it still breathing and hit it again with a hatchet.

The badger was finally rescued, covered with blow flies, and nursed back to health by badger experts Ruth and David Murray.

The RSPCA has been staking out badger setts in South Notts after an outbreak of badger baiting, and in Cheshire a 24 hour watch is being kept on a sett near Saughall.

The sett has already been attacked six times by diggers and dogs. The Wirral & Cheshire Badger Group operates with CB radios bought with money donated by Merseyside County Council and the vice-chairman of the group. They have been successful so far in driving the diggers away.

In Ulster badger baiting is still a recognised Sunday sport. According to a columnist in N. Ireland big meets are held during the year when captive badgers, kept for these organised gatherings, are used. He had spoken to several people involved in badger digging and when asked why they do such cruel things the answer is always the same, "sure, what use are they". He also spoke to a gamekeeper who had killed 60 badgers in six months on an estate near Lisburn.

In N. Ireland it seems that the badger has much the same reputation as the fox here, handed down by one generation to the next, that it is an inveterate killer of lambs and chickens. Some foxhunts maintain that badgers kill fox cubs thus threatening their sport.

The Glamorgan Nature Trust have launched a major scheme to combat badger diggers. According to their spokesperson seventy per cent of setts in the Gower peninsular have been dug out in the past two months.

In January John Watkinson, of Cumberland Avenue, Wade Hall, Leyland, and Barry Mills, of Leyland Lane, Leyland, were fined £50 each for digging out badgers in Lancashire. Near one sett initials were found carved on a tree – JW and BM.

In February the case against four men accused of badger digging at Stock Lane, Warley, Halifax, Yorks, was adjourned until the end of March.

Since February of this year the maximum penalty for killing a badger has been increased from £100 to £1000. Although this may prove to be a deterrent what's really needed is a test case.

Sir Newton Rycroft, master of the New Forest FH is up to his neck in trouble again after two badger setts were found dug up by members of his hunt in pursuance of their fox.

In the first incident, on the 6th January, a sett given special protection by the New Forest Badger Protection Group was destroyed by two massive six foot deep trenches being excavated. A member of the Group, Ken James, who was on a routine inspection tour, caught about eight hunt followers, including a red coat, digging out the sett and heard terriers yapping underground. Apparently the hunted fox had gone to ground there after a four mile chase from Burley. The police were called and the dig stopped; names and addresses of those involved were taken.

Naturally all of the senior members of the hunt denied knowledge of the dig. Sir Newton (known as The Newt to local sabs) was apparently miles behind with a lame horse, the Chairman, Mr. Rickman, although hunting was not present and the secretary, the other joint master and the whipper-in were absent.

All the Chairman would say was that "everyone in the hunt has absolutely strict instructions from Sir Newton that no badger sett is to be interferred with *in any way at all*". (Our emphasis) Badger protector and hunt follower (!) Jill Livock added that "Anyone who knew the hunt would not send a dog down a sett. A terrier would be dead if it went down a hole, the badgers would finish them. I would be the first to kick up a fuss if badgers were being harmed".

A few weeks later another ancient and well-established sett in Denny Wood was partially destroyed by a trench four feet long and three feet deep. Other holes in the sett had been blocked by bracken and sand well stamped down.

The damage was discovered by Andrew Cleave, a specialist lecturer in natural history at Vyne Comprehensive School in Basingstoke, who has been taking pupils to badger watch at the sett for the last five years. He visited Rycroft, to complain about the damage, who told him that he'd been informed by a forest keeper that the site was not occupied by badgers all year round. He admitted that the hunt had dug out the sett.

Sir Newton Rycroft is a member of the New Forest Badger Protection Group.

Letters to local papers following the incidents actually supported the hunt, claiming that digging up setts did no harm. One, from a master of hounds, positively endorsed the sport of badger digging! a retired head keeper went on to suggest that Eric Ashby (a nationally recognised wildlife expert who lives on the Forest) was more likely to disturb the animals with his filming.

The most interesting comment was made by a metal detector enthusiast who, upon applying to the Forestry Commission for permission to search for small objects in the area was told that he would be prosecuted under a by-law which forbids disturbance of the surface of the Forest. Doubtless the hunt will be prosecuted under this law?

THE ANIMALS SHOP - LIVERPOOL

Liverpool became the second city in Britain to see a small animal rights shop open up to the general public. Merseyside HSA played a prominent role in the opening of this venture, the idea of the local regional Animal Rights Committee, a body that co-ordinates the activities of local anti-vivisection, environmental and marine groups. Special thanks must go to the League Against Cruel Sports and BUAV who helped put the idea on firm legs by sharing the rent for the first 3 months. In the first few months it has been open, the volunteers who run the shop have sent out over £1000 to various groups, although it is felt that the main purpose of the venture is in being a permanent propaganda outlet.

Any HSA members in the area, please call and give them your support. The shop is located at 104 Bold Street, Liverpool.

PRICKED CONSCIENCE

The hedgehog has at last found a champion in Shropshire Councillor Major Adrian Coles (Retired). After finding a hedgehog struggling in a cattlegrid the Major persuaded Shropshire CC to fit concrete escape ramps in all grids owned by them. Since then the British Hedgehog Preservation Sec. has been formed and is receiving thousands of enquiries a week.

Sadly this poor beast is still viewed by gamekeepers as a pest (still isn't everything?).

FARMER CLAIMS HUNT KILLED HIS FATHER

Farmer Arthur Alsop whose father died while trying to stop the Warwickshire Hunt crossing his land claims huntsmen are still defying his orders to keep off.

The feud dates back to 1969 when his 63 year old father died trying to prevent the defiant Hunt crossing their Meir Farm land. The coroner's verdict was death by misadventure following a heart attack. The Alsops however suspect their father died after being hit by a loose horse.

Since that fateful day Arthur Alsop has experienced continued hassle from the Hunt. Although he has made it clear that he doesn't want the Hunt anywhere near his land his wishes have often been ignored.

Another farmer, Arthur Noon, who owns Ventor Farm, Calcutt, Stockton, also has trouble with the Warwick which must be one of the most unpopular hunts in the country.

He complains about the Hunt trespassing on his land but to no avail, although he sometimes receives letters of apology after a particular incident.

What annoys him most is that hounds are exempt from the section of the Countryside Act which makes it an offence to have dogs out of control on farm land irrespective of whether it is worrying livestock or not.

He also points out that it is not worth taking your case to court because the people on the bench are the very people who go hunting. A fact that some unfortunate sabs have come across!

The Hunt has five masters and one, Mr John Thorne of Moreton Morrell, strongly denies accusations of trespass. When interviewed by the Leamington Spa Courier he insisted that the Hunt enjoyed excellent relations with local farmers (the usual story).

When asked about Arthur Alsop he replied; "Mr Alsop has a grudge against the Hunt, anyway we certainly do not go near his place". Is it surprising he has a grudge?

The Warwickshire Hunt like its counterparts has once again shown that the hunting fraternity believes that it is a law unto itself. Any farmer having difficulties with hunts invading land should contact the League Against Cruel Sports for free legal advice.

VERMIN SHOOTERS

A 'vermin' hunt near Bedford went tragically wrong when a man took a shot at a fox, missed and hit his own brother in the chest. He died instantly, the inquest verdict recorded accidental death.

Another man who boasted he'd shot a fox and a deer went on to shoot a friend's husband in the head because 'he fancied his wife'. He was sentenced to life imprisonment.

We suspect that BASC would still maintain that stronger gun legislation isn't necessary.

HOUSE OF HORROR

The "Rutland Arms Hotel" in Ilkeston has just been completely refurbished and decorated on the theme of animal exploitation. The barbaric and evil decor includes prints of fox-hunting scenes, dogs with dead birds hanging from their mouths and fighting cocks. In display cases there are stuffed animals and even the lampshades depict hunting. The worst picture, entitled 'The Death' shows a pack of hounds leaping at a fox, which the huntsman holds just beyond reach of their snapping jaws.

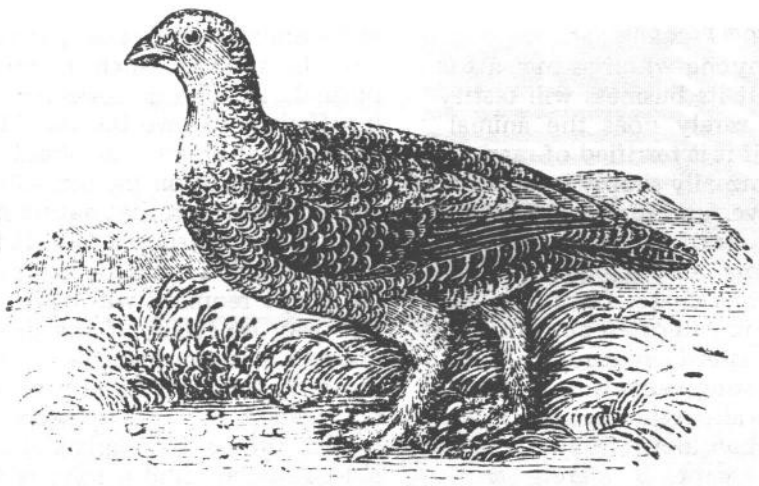
MITCHAM MASSACRE

Angry residents protested and children cried as Lakeland terriers ripped two fox cubs to pieces at Greenwood Primary School, Mitcham.

The dogs were controlled by a pest control officer who had instructions to destroy nine cubs and a vixen after a complaint that they made too much noise at night.

The foxes, who had become local celebrities, were 'despatched' in full view of houses and were either mauled to death or shot through the head with an air rifle.

Merton Council's chief environmental health officer, Mr Jim Smith said: "We never destroy animals unless there is a complaint". Complaints about Mr Smith's action should be sent to Merton Council!



GROUSE MOORS

BY CHRIS JONES

Of the four species of grouse resident in Britain and Ireland it is the Red Grouse which accounts for almost all the 500,000 grouse shot annually for 'sport'. The British Red Grouse is one of the sixteen races of Red or Willow Grouse which occur over Northern Europe, right across Asia to Alaska and North Canada.

One of the main arguments put forward by the shooting lobby is that without the extensive management of moorland for grouse there would be no grouse at all in Britain. The historical record does not bear this out, as the grouse seem to have adapted to various changes in climate and environment. As the ice retreated after the last of the Ice Ages, it left behind a treeless, tundra like wilderness with an abundance of crowberry and alpine flora. Ideal conditions for grouse and they must have flourished then as never before (or since!). As the climate warmed, further trees began to appear on the uplands until the whole of Britain, up to the tree-line, was swathed in a great forest of oak, birch and juniper. There was now much less habitat for grouse and they existed in the marginal areas around the tree-line. This situation prevailed for thousands of years until Man started clearing the forests, first for timber, then for farming. As more and more heather became available, the grouse expanded down the hillside to take advantage of it. The regeneration of the trees was prevented owing to heavy grazing by cattle and sheep and sporadic burning.

By about 1850 sheep farming was rapidly declining and with the newly expanding railways offering increasingly easy transport for the wealthy upper middle classes in the South and a Victorian enthusiasm for shooting anything that flew, landowners began to exploit the moors for grouse shooting.

This is essentially the situation today with five million acres of moorland in Britain kept almost exclusively for grouse. However, despite all the efforts of keepers and landowners, the grouse population has been in a steady decline since the 1920's. This decline is caused by several factors, not all fully understood. Most grouse moor is based on granite or deep peat and is naturally deficient in certain minerals such as calcium and phosphorus. The main source of these minerals for the grouse are young heather shoots so keepers try to maintain enough young heather by systematic burning. However, this burning, when out of control, can devaste large tracts of moor. Sheep and cattle have played an important part in the nutrient cycle on these acidic moors in the past, but as sheep are farmed less and less so another source of nutrients disappear. There is much evidence to support the theory that it is loss of fertility on these acidic moors that is the major factor in the grouse decline.

Another aspect of grouse management is the blind destruction of any bird of prey straying over a moor. Internationally important populations of Peregrines, Golden Eagle and Hen Harriers still suffer from this persecution even though it is widely accepted that it is the populations of the Prey species that controls the number of predators and not the reverse. With over 200 incidents of deliberate poisoning of protected species of Raptors in the 1970's the vast majority of offences go undetected, occurring as they do on private land where access is difficult and adequate supervision impossible. Gamekeepers are hardly the conservationists they pretend to be! Landowners claim to be doing a public service by preserving these large areas of moorland 'for everyone', yet many moors are private and inaccessible. Even on those which are available for recreation, access is denied from the 'Glorious 12th' onwards. In the Cairngorms Nature Reserve, bulldozed landrover tracks to shooting butts have accelerated erosion and are visible for miles, scarring the hills.

The grouse industry claims to provide jobs and bring money into neglected areas. Yes, money does come in - but it goes out again in the pockets of the wealthy landowners who now employ fewer staff than ever before.

At a time when forests the world over face enormous pressures, the demand for timber is ever increasing and so little replanting is carried out, we cannot ignore the alternative that forestry provides. Forestry is essentially a labour intensive industry potentially providing many more jobs than present grouse management. There are few, if any, moors where growing conditions are impossble and in the more infertile moors the presence of trees would actually increase the soil fertility. The potential for recreation in forests is much higher than open moorland. Woodland is able to absorb a far greater number of people without appearing overcrowded and the vegetation and wildlife are overall more attractive in afforested areas.

Now that the Forestry Commission is moving away from the cultivation of whole forests of a single, exotic conifer, there seems no reason why more of Britains's uplands cannot be recalimed for use by all, rather than reserved for the archaic pleasures of a tiny minority.

CHRIS JONES

RAMBLER'S GROUSE

The Glorious Twelth saw a mass trespass on one grouse shoot in South Yorkshire. No it wasn't the HSA although sabs from Merseyside, Huddersfield, Sheffield and N.A.L.L. were there, but a planned demonstration by Sheffield Campaign For Access To The Moorlands, comprised mostly of ramblers, climbers and orienteering enthusiasts. The majority of them were opposed to grouse shooting , but their main objection was that thousands of acres of moorland should be closed to the public all the year round. Not many people realise it, but a lot of grouse moors, in the hands of the rich, outside the National Parks, will never allow even the most innocent walking parties onto their land. The beauty of these moors is reserved only for the wealthy few who are intent on destroying the wildlife there.

Sixty people accompanied by Yorkshire Television spent the day tramping round Bradfield Moors, ten miles west of Sheffield, where for the first time since the Second World War there was no grouse shooting.

However, on neighbouring Broomhead Moors it was a different story. The trespassers left after being told by the police that there would be no more shooting that day. Ten minutes later a large shooting party was escorted on by the same boys in blue, leaving ten rather worried and lonely sabs in the middle; which just goes to show you can never trust a copper.

B.F.S.S. HUNG-UP

On hearing that a grouse was to be shot at 4.30 a.m. on the morning of the Glorious Twelth, so that it could be served for breakfast in a North Yorkshire Hotel a B.F.S.S. spokesman commented, "This is barbaric. Grouse should be hung for at least a week." How long the perpetrator of this act should be hung is open for debate.

YOUR COMMITTEE

This is the first of a series of articles which will be appearing in HOWL featuring members of the Executive Committee and the office that s/he holds.

LEGAL OFFICER:

At the AGM of 1980 held in Derby it seemed to be the unanimous opinion of the members that they wanted the HSA to provide some sort of legal service so that each member would know to whom to turn for advice, practical help, how to contact a solicitor, or, if necessary to contact someone who would be able to set the wheels in motion to get them out of a police cell as quickly as possible should the need arise.

It was a coincidence that a Law graduate was standing for election that year and the buck stopped here.

It became apparent that many Hunt Saboteurs are not interested in what their legal and civil rights are until they are actually on their way to a police station. On one occasion a sab had bought a book recommended as a good guide to your rights but didn't attempt to read it until the police were escorting them all to the police station. Nothing came of it as it happens – but who in their right mind would begin their examination studies outside the exam room!

I still travel to any part of the country to give a local group a talk about our rights and what we are legally entitled to do in order to achieve our aims, and to answer any questions. It is very important for us to realize that keeping out of trouble is a question of attitude.

Tempers inevitably flare whether hunt supporter or anti, but the hunt supporter is less likely to end up at the police station for his/her trouble. It is far better for the sab to remember that we go out to save lives and not to enter into some intellectual discussion with someone who is too much on the defensive to be persuaded to our point of view by rational and logical argument. The place for discussion is in the debating chamber.

It is also important to remember that whatever the reason the police are detaining you, it is more often the case that you have agitated yourself into the situation. Much is gained by keeping calm, polite and confident that you are in the right.

I will not dwell here on what rights you do have as most of you will have received the advice sheets or your local contact has, if not advice sheets can be obtained from P.O. Box 19 covering most things from Your Rights, Binding Over, Contempt of Court, Legal Aid, Legal Hit Reports, Complaints Against the Police and what to do in the event of a car accident on a sab and how to instigate a private prosecution. Please write and ask for them if you have not received them yet. Also request a Legal Talk so that you are fully equipped to deal with situations before they arise.

We are also building up a list of solicitors and barristers who support us and will represent us in various parts of the country so if you know of anyone you could recommend please let us know. Meanwhile, if we do not have a solicitor known to us in your area we have all the Legal Aid Solicitor's listings for England and Wales, and the support of the organisation Release. So help, if you should need it, is only a phone call away, but it is far better to be prepared before you start.

Do remember that if you are attacked on a sab and the police may be reluctant to assist you, do take colour photographs of all your injuries as soon as you possibly can, photographs of your assailant or his car if that's the best you can get, do report the incident to the police and insist that they record the complaint, and go immediately to the nearest hospital for a thorough medical examination and tell the doctor how you received your injuries. This should arm you with good prosecution evidence and you should go and see a solicitor. If you have time off work as a result of your injuries you can try and get compensation for this. However, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board will award a sum in respect of your injuries even if your assailant is not brought to court, provided you reported the incident to the police. You should see a solicitor to collect one of these forms even if nothing else comes of your case. At least two Masters of Foxhounds have been brought before the courts and found guilty of actual or grievous bodily harm attacks on saboteurs e.g. Sir Newton Rycroft and Maurice Bell.

One point that may be of interest to the Vegans amongst us is that under no circumstances are you obliged to allow the police to photograph you, unless of course you go to prison. But if you are arrested and charged you are not legally obliged to allow yourself to be photographed, regardless of what the police may tell you.

If you do find yourself in any of these circumstances, even if you are in complete control and have appointed your own solicitor, do write as full an account as you can and send it to me. It is your experiences that helps us to prepare the rest of us for the next round and to take suitable advice on the legality of it.

If we can help you we will, and if we can't we will try and find ways in which we can.

Good Luck to you all this season.

MIRRIAM HOLLIS -Legal Officer.

RECOMMENDED READING:

H.S.A. Advice Sheets.

'Trouble with the Law: The Release Bust Book' pub. Pluto Press, 1978 £1.95.

'Civil Liberties: The NCCL Guide to Your Rights' III edition, 1978 £1.95.

APPEAL FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

Any photographs of injuries sustained, aggressive behaviour by hunt thugs, of interactions with the police are urgently required so that they can be put together to illustrate a Legal Film which when completed can be lent to local groups. This is now a very urgent project and your help in this way is badly needed to help complete it. Photographs, please, to Malcolm Leick c/o P.O. Box 19, London SE22 9LR.

HUNT HORSES SHOT

Three horses belonging to Leicestershire landowner and hunter Lord Cromwell, were senselessly destroyed when he died after falling from one of them.

His widow Lady Cromwell, of The Manor House, Great Milton, Oxfordshire, passed the death sentence on Grey Lad, Mercury and Jason about 24 hours before her husband's death.

Immediately after hearing about this, local HSA member Chris Williamson rang Lady Cromwell and in a bid to save the animals offered her £500 for each horse. The gracious lady refused to speak to him and passed on a message that this was "out of the question."

Lord Cromwell, who rode with the Pytchley and Fernie Hunts, is believed to have been riding without a hat at the time of the accident.

"Animal lovers", including Pytchley huntsman Peter Jones who was to have carried out the deed and chairman Lord Pritchard, tried to talk her out of the decision, but their efforts were wasted.

Villagers of Walcote, where the horses were kept, staged a protest outside Warren Farm and believed they had been successful, but Lady Cromwell, who had persistently refused to talk to the Press, finally made a statement saying that the animals had been shot on the day of protest.

Cromwell's daughter Mrs. Anne Runciman said the horses were killed: "In accordance with the usual practice for hunters no longer suitable to be sold or passed to other owners." The very age of the horses when destroyed shows this to be untrue, as does the opposition to the killings by other members of the hunting fraternity.

RICHARD BECKETT - AN OBITUARY

Our close friend and fellow fighter Richard Beckett died at his home in Bolton on August 17th 1982. He had been suffering from cancer of the lymphatic system for about six months and had eaten hardly any food in that time. Doctors sent him to Manchester for 'treatment', but Richard refused all treatment that involved modern drugs. He discharged himself after about 10 days and went home where he bravely waited the inevitable. During that time he was always delighted to receive correspondence from friends and strangers in the animal rights movement.

Each year he organised in Bolton an anti-hunt march which achieved much publicity. As an HSA member he turned out regularly on hunts where he was beaten up several times by the Holkham Harriers Hunt heavies.

Richard Beckett had only one purpose in life and that was to leave this world in a better state than he found it - he succeeded in doing this by sacrificing all his personal interests to that of the great masses of suffering exploited animals.

COCK OF THE NORTH

Hull publican, John Foy, of the Bean Hotel, was convicted in February of allowing cockfighting to take place in the hotel yard and fined £100 with £61 costs. He has been dismissed by the owners, North Country Breweries.

THE FOX AND HARE COMPETITION RESULTS



Pictured here are the prizes chosen by the winners of the Fox and Hare competition. Two engraved glass tankards flank the hunting horn won by a London H.S.A. member. One tankard went to a Midlands member and the other a little further North to Lancashire. Thanks go to all those who supported the competition the results of which took some deliberation with ruler, compasses and the like by the HSA committee who chose the winning entries. The hunting horn is a genuine professional huntsman's horn and will be in action this season, doubtless the tankards will be seeing a different kind of action!

Another chance for you to win a hunting horn or hand held C.B. radio is enclosed with this copy of HOWL. Please don't delay, send off your entry NOW.

PSYCHO OZZY (AGAIN)

Musician Ozzy Osbourne (of bat-eating fame) has successfully encouraged his fans to commit similar obscenities.

One demented follower killed a cat and tied it around his waist whilst others threw dog carcasses, rats, snakes, an ox's head and a skinned bullfrog onto the stage. A truly sick bastard at one gig chucked live birds on stage with their wings broken and feet tied.

Ozzy meanwhile has stated that anti-rabies injections (compliments of the bat) resembled having an apple "up yer arse". If anyone would know, he would.

Fortunately, some hands are taking a positive stance against animal explotation. Vice Squad, The Business and Yes have between them recorded tracks condemning hunting, vivisection and whaling.

Please give bands such as these your support.

BARGAIN BASEMENT
Nothing over £5

BOY'S cycle, Raleigh Olympus, 18in. frame, £10. Gosham 378756.

JOINT Master, hardly used, v.g.c., £5. — Gosport 26154.

From the 'Portsmouth Times'

WINO HUNTSMEN LAND IN THE DRINK

Members of the North Warwickshire Hunt were enjoying a quiet drink at the Friendly Inn, a pub in Frankton near Rugby recently, when the impossible happened - a police raid!

Were the intrepid hunters under age? Had the police stumbled upon an illegal poker game or opium den? No, the fact of the matter was that the binge was taking place 30 minutes BEFORE opening time. Tut, tut!

One can just imagine the scene before the police arrived. Weary huntsmen, exhausted after a day of massacaring foxes, getting fired up on scotch, whilst discussing if there was anything in the rumour that Cynthia was having it away with the terrier man!

The raid took place following a tip-off. On arrival the police discovered a number of trailers in the forecourt and 25 people drinking and laughing in the bar.

When the huntsmen realised what was happening understandably many of them panicked, anxious to avoid having their names plastered all over the Daily Smut. Some even tried to hide their drinks under the counter oblivious to the fact that the bar was littered with glasses and empties!

Michael Coombes, the licensee, admitted selling drinks out of hours after a request from members of the hunt to open early. He was fined £120 by Rugby magistrates.

For some strange reason however, only two hunt members, Allen Smith of Dunnspite Farm, Kenilworth and Warwick Aldersley of St. Michael's Stud, Meer End Road, Kenilworth, were convicted. Both received fines of £10 each for aiding and abetting. The others got away with a slap on the wrist.

Having discovered that the hunting fraternity are partial to the demon brew, perhaps the time is right for a "Don't Drink and Ride" campaign in which policemen are instructed to stop huntsmen at random and confront them with the proverbial "Would you mind blowing into this bag sir?"

WE NEED HELP!

We need all the active members we can get but if, for some reason, you cannot come out on sabs due to health or work commitments, there is another way you can join in the active fight against bloodsports.

You can help us through a donation, no matter how small. You can be guaranteed that every penny will go towards our active campaign, since we have no office or staff to cost us overheads.

Please send whatever you can spare, filling in the attached slip if you wish.

To: Hunt Saboteurs Association, PO Box 19, London S.E.22

I enclose my donation of £..... Date.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

Continued from page one

hazard. Anyone who has met a fox going about its business will testify that only rarely does the animal behave as if it is terrified of man, the fox will normally simply head for the nearest cover and disappear. This is the behaviour of a creature not used to predators and ill-equipped to survive a long chase. During an easy hunt the fox will often perform short bursts of speed intermixed with steady trotting; surprisingly it will often stop altogether, sit down and appear to consider its options. This form of escape is merely an exaggeration of the more typical avoidance tactics that humans witness when seeing a fox who is aware of their presence. During the cub-hunting season one of the primary objectives of the huntsman is to teach the cubs in his country that safety lies in flight from the home covert. Thus any cub that flees by breaking through the cordon of riders surrounding the covert is allowed to go; thus ensuring that there will be some good fast running hunts after these foxes later in the season. Meanwhile the other cubs contained in the covert will be adopting the typical avoidance tactics developed by the species to tackle a single non-specialised predator such as a lone wolf or an eagle.

THE TRAUMA OF THE LONG CHASE

The huntsman's lie is displayed on occasions when the fox is hardpressed to escape the hounds, such as when scenting conditions are very favourable to the hounds. Foxhounds have been developed for great speed and stamina far surpassing that of the fox, thus under such conditions normal avoidance measures are insufficient to save the fox's life, it must run full pelt to stand any chance. Very soon the fox will tire for the simple reason that nature has not equipped it for such a task. If the fox survives such a hunt the energy which its escape required will leave it in a bad way especially if the ground covered was considerable, it may be seriously affected. Life in the wild is maintained by a fine balance of health, fitness and vigilance, a long hard run requiring a long recovery period can lead to a cycle of exhaustion leading to illness and death. The exhausted fox, too tired to hunt has no sustenance to help build up depleted reserves, becomes vulnerable to illness and, too weak for its body to fight back, dies. Yet prior to being hunted, this animal may have been in prime condition. Among animals such as gazelle, caribou and hares which are regularly hunted by natural predators it is noticed that in general the healthy animals are more than a match for their enemies which encourages the predator to hunt weaker animals, the old or sick. Not so the fox, on a good scenting day it stands little chance of escape be it fit or weak.

The fox is a sensitive creature, not evolved to undergo the trauma of being hunted, nor is it evolved for quick recovery from a long hunt during which it rapidly tires; it is for these reasons that hunting must introduce into the lives of foxes an element of suffering that would otherwise not be there.

The following quotations help qualify the preceding arguments.

"The fox is not a very fast animal. From a standing start I doubt if it is as fast as a fit domestic cat over a distance of ten to twenty yards . . . I would put 30m.p.h. as the absolute maximum for a really exceptional fox . . . . A fox whose maximum speed is 28m.p.h. would, on good going, probably be able to maintain 20m.p.h. over a distance of four or five miles . . . . even a light boned harrier would wear a fox down over that distance".
Town Fox, Country Fox. Brian Vesey — Fitzgerald. P.54.

"It will be seen that in the matter of stamina too, the dice are not loaded in the fox's favour". (ibid). P.55.

"I, myself, in mid-Wales, once almost stepped on a sleeping fox. I did not, in fact, know it was there. It was November and latish evening, but still light enough. I stepped into a small clearing in a gorse brake; and there was the fox curled up on the ground. I bent down to touch it, but it heard me just in time, got up and made off; though very stiffly for a fox. That too was a tired fox. Hounds had been in the area earlier in the day and had lost their fox after a long run. I think mine was that fox and that it was at the end of its tether".
(ibid). P.34. First published 1965.

"Many a good fox who has fooled and baffled the hounds and given them a glorious run has won his freedom at the cost of his constitutional fitness. Emerging at length from his sanctuary after a rest of many hours, he is no longer the wonderful running machine that he was when the hounds took up his scent, but is now a broken creature, lungs gone, merely a physical wreck".
Mortimer Batten, "British Wild Animals".

"Another curious incident happened when Mr. J. Chaworth-Masters was hunting the Quorn . . . . Hounds lost their fox in a drain. . . . They had lost a fox in the same drain several times that season. So the Master had the drain opened up. Inside, they found the skeletons of no fewer than ten foxes; all no doubt, had died as the result of crawling into a damp drain when they were over-heated, for in spite of their tremendous courage, tenacity and wiry energy, foxes are highly nervous, sensitive animals. . ."
Wentworth Day, "Country Life". 4/7/1947.

"A fine dog fox. . . . hunt was successfully concluded at Braida Garth. It is estimated that hounds ran some 30 miles on this game fox, totally unaided by the hunt staff".
Lunesdale F.H., H & H, 20/3/1981.

"By this time both fox and hounds were in view. . . and the fox was eventually put to ground at Clwydygraig after a 4hr. hunt".
Talybont F.H., (ibid).

". . . to account for their fox on Willey Farm after 80 minutes, having covered 12 miles of undulating country. A very hard day for the horses".
Sir Williams-Watkins Wynn's Foxhunt, (ibid).

"Then at 12 o'clock the pack got together and brought off a spectacular hunt of over an hour. The first 50 minutes of it were fast, and the last 15 very difficult. The problems, however, were eventually sorted out, and a beaten fox was caught in Threlkeld Quarry".
Blencathra Foxhunt, "The Field", Christmas number 1981.

"A beaten fox shows his condition by his arched back, trailing brush and lolling tongue".
Richard Clapham, "Foxes, Foxhounds and Foxhunting".

"When a fox is very tired at the end of a run he is said to be sinking".
C.E. Hare, "The Language of Sport".

"I have heard it said that a dead-beat fox does not look back when hounds are near; but time and time again I have been in a position to see a weary fox snatch a quick glance over his shoulder in exactly the same way that we would were we being pursued to the death".
The Duke of Beaufort, "Foxhunting", 1980.

"You know that the worse the scent, the slower the hounds will hunt. Therefore they will be further and further away from their fox all the time unless it is taking a rest or has dropped dead in its stride".
The Duke of Beaufort, "Foxhunting", 1980.

"A very tired fox was holloaed away, making for Falcutt Hall and the old railway line below Glebe Farm. After hunting for 2hrs and 20mins hounds had their just reward, having covered 12 miles".
Grafton F.H., "Horse & Hounds", 25/12/1981.