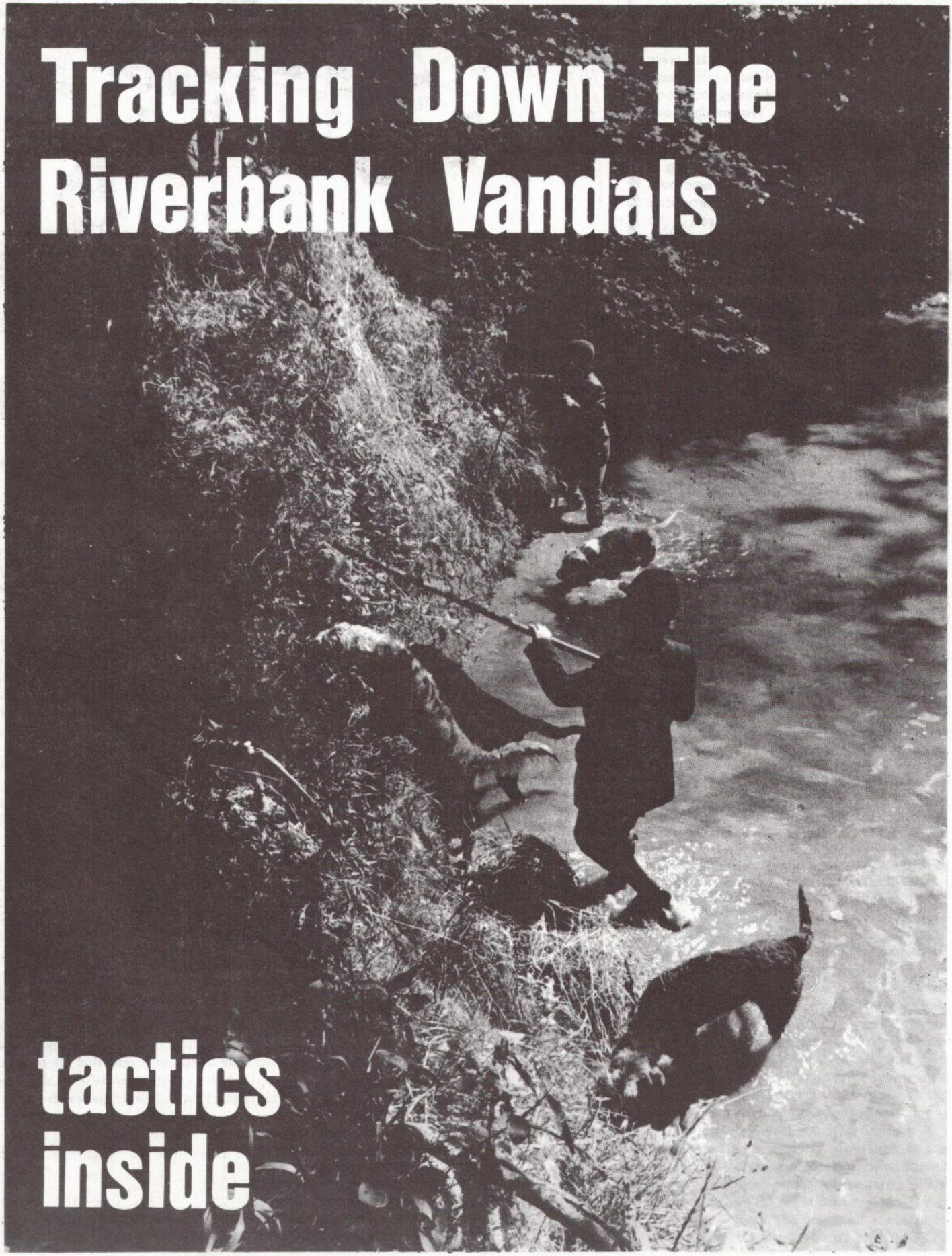
"Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them, but to stop there is not enough. We have a higher mission – to be of service to them whenever they require it" St. Francis of Assissi

HSW

15p

Magazine of the HUNT SABOTEURS ASSOCIATION, PO Box 19, London S.E. 22 No.33 Summer 1986

Tracking Down The Riverbank Vandals



tactics inside

SABS ANGRY AFTER MINIBUS ATTACKED

A serious attack by supporters of the United FH upon Bangor HSA's minibus on March 8th has left the group in bitter mood over the lack of support they are getting from other groups.

Trapped at a bend in the road not far from Montgomery, the 12 sabs in the van were surrounded by about 50 followers who were, in the words of one sab 'obviously intent on murdering the lot of us'. The minibus was rocked and kicked and three tyres were let down before the thugs realised that the back doors were not locked and began trying to coax the sabs out for a fight. Then a landrover was brought up and a tow-chain produced which they tried to attach to the back of the minibus. The idea was to pull it up a farm track, out of sight of the road, and where they could be as violent as they liked.

Crashed

The sabs' driver slammed the vehicle into reverse, knocked over two of the thugs and accelerated forwards through the gap created by the landrover. But after a mile of driving on flat tyres, the bus skidded off the road and ploughed into a large bank of earth where it became lodged. A car-load of pursuing psychos double backed to inform their mates of the good news and the sabs had to abandon the vehicle and make off across country. After a three mile walk they found a public phone and called the police who arrived 1 hour and 15 minutes later by which time, naturally, there was not a hunt follower to be found. The minibus had been broken into and ransacked.

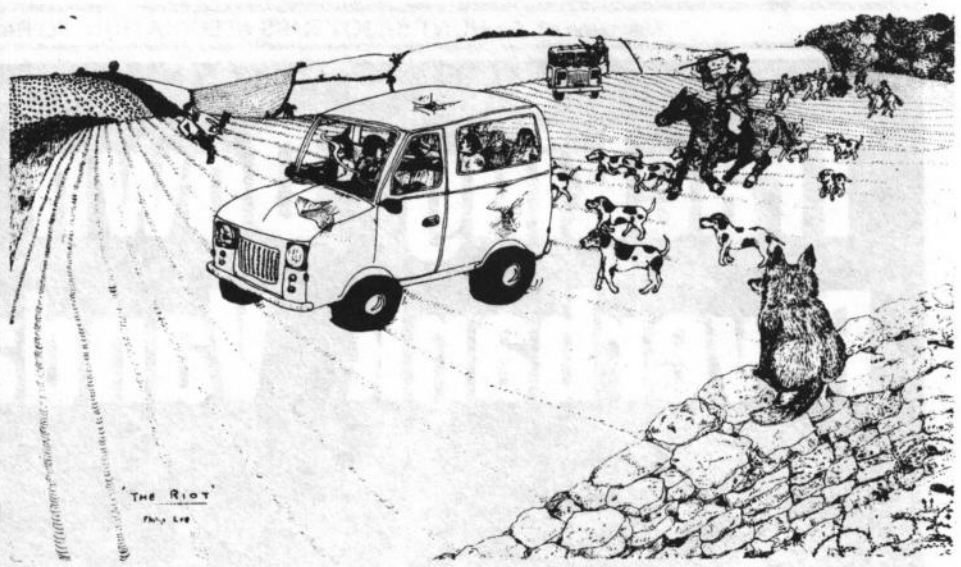
Support Wanted

Bangor HSA are angry, not just because of the actions of the thugs, or the indifference of the authorities, but because they frequently find themselves having to sab the United alone - a hunt which they believe it important to sab and which they often travel up to 100 miles to reach.

S.C.A.R. NEWS

After being re-activated last summer the Student Campaign for Animal Rights held a meeting in February to discuss the organisation of campaigns. It was decided to spread the workload by creating a system of regional SCAR contacts. Volunteer contacts were recieved for the following areas; Midlands, South East, South West, North West, North East and Northern Ireland. As yet there is no Scottish contact, so any student interested should contact us at at the address below. We are able to offer help and advice to students on any topic concerning animal rights. Already we've helped with enquiries ranging from the school person who wanted help with her 'O' level Biology project on animal experimentation, to the student in South Wales who wanted help in setting up a group and dealing with his Students Union.

A mail-out is planed for the near future, so any student groups with an event to advertise should send us details as soon as possible. If you are a student or school person and would like to get involved in SCAR's activities write to us at the following addresses:—S.C.A.R PO Box B20, Huddersfield, DH1 1XS



Hunt 'Havoc Hunt 'Ha

RIOTING SPREADS!

Rioting has been spreading across Britain out of control in recent months. In January the Cambridgeshire FH ran riot throught the village of southoe, chasing a fox through peoples back gardens. The huntsmen then followed, tipping their hats and saying 'Good morning'.

The villagers were understandably furious and at a meeting with hunt representative Lady Crossman said "Stay out of our village and play your games somewhere else". In defence of the hunt Lady Crossman said "the hounds are quite safe, they've only knocked children over on one or two occasions".

When the Fitzwilliam FH rode roughshod over a garden in Molesworth one rider laughed and said as long as the hunt hadn't killed a cat, it had done nothing wrong.

The owner of the garden does not agree, Mrs Edmunds who has three cats and an elderly dog said "The hunt has destroyed my peace of mind, that is priceless, how can I ever again allow my pets to play unattended in a garden which may be suddenly turned into hell by a horde of hounds and their attendant yobs.

Huntsman of the Derwent FH Mr Simon Roberts admitted that his hounds were out of control when they attacked and killed a Roe deer at Deepdale in North Yorkshire. The incident was witnessed by Forestry Commission workers on February 4th who saw the hounds emerge from a thicket attacking a yearling Roe deer. The deer was 'torn to pieces'. Huntsman Roberts excuse was that some of the hounds were young and inexperienced. The Forestry Commission accepted his explanation and did not prosecute. It seems strange to use the excuse that the hounds were young and inexperienced in February, four months after the end of cub hunting when the young hounds are trained.

Fallow deer were in trouble when the Bicester & Warden Hill FH let thier dogs riot in Bernwood Forest near Oxford on March 20th. Several deer were chased; one with an injured leg only getting away after the Master was assisted by two sabs in rating the pack. The sabs were later called to help by the Whipper-in as he fought to hold the pack back from a knot of four deer.

Again in March, the WEST KENT FH suddenly took off after a domestic dog which was being walked by its owner along a public footpath near Langton. The huntsman failed to pull them up and six hounds brought the dog down, causing injuries from which it died in the hands of a vet several hours later. A quick clean kill it was not. Joint master, Tim Lyle, put the blame on the owner of the dog for not controlling it properly and complained that the incident had 'spoilt the day for the hunt' (!)

Twenty young Girl Guides were recently treated to the grim spectacle of the DEVON AND SOMERSET STAGHOUNDS accounting for their quarry only 30 yards from the camp at Horner Woods near Porlock. The Guide Leader pleaded with the huntsman not to kill the deer in front of the girls but he was presumably in too much of a frenzy to take any notice. 'We always take great trouble to avoid upsetting the public', said Joint Master Maurice Scott afterwards. But in fact this is the third time in recent monts that his hunt has killed in front of frightened children at Horner. The last victims were a troop of cub scouts.





Aldershot beagler in tourniquet makes a grab for a more comfortable looking coat.

ISLE OF WIGHT HUNTSMAN IN COURT

Winner of this years Horse & Hound hunting horn competition I.O.W. FH Huntsman Mr Michael Poland found himself in court recently – unfortunately he was not the one in the dock. It appears that Poland, his wife and kennel huntsman were exercising the hounds on the road when a car travelling in the opposite direction was forced to break suddenly to avoid the hounds. When the driver of the car asked why the hunt could not leave the foxes alone, Poland decided that along with foxes and hunt saboteurs motorists were now also fair game, he cracked his whip through the open window of the car narrowly missing hiting the driver in the face.

The result of the incident was predictable – instead of Poland being charged with assault, the driver of the car was charged and later convicted of driving without reasonable consideration. It seems that being a company director, Lloyds underwriter and MFH has its advantages on the Isle of Wight.

RED FACES AT THE BADSWORTH

Earth stopper Mr Downham of Stombeck Farm, Stapleton N. Yorks, recieved a slap on the wrist from joint master of the Badsworth FH Mr D. C. Hawking, after being caught out blocking badger setts in woods owned by the Yorkshire Naturalists Trust. After the warden of the wood contacted the Police, the Police 'phoned a local saboteur to enquire as to the activities of Mr Downham. They were duely informed about the methods used by earth stoppers, and urged to take the strongest possible action against Downham. This they were reluctant to do, and Downham was let off with a slap on the wrist and no doubt being told to carry on as usual but not to get caught in future.

UNIVERSITY BLOODSPORTS CLUB BOOTED OUT

Students at Newcastle University voted by 185 votes to 107 to de-ratify the Union-endorsed 'Sporting Club' on May 1st. The motion was put forward by the relatively small Hunt Saboteurs Society with the support of an overwhelming number of students. The club was the pride of the BFSS who held it up as an example of how their barbarous medieval pursuits were supported by supposedly intelligent young people in higher education.

The Student Union is also writing to the University Chancellor, the foxhunting Duke of Northumberland, expressing its disgust at his activities and calling on him to resign his office.

DOG BAITER'S HOME ATTACKED

The home of convicted Tyneside dog-baiter Richard Hossell was painted with slogans and windows broken by local residents on May 1st. It was the third attack on Hossell's property since Xmas when he was given lenient treatment by the courts.

HUNT SABOTEURS AID "AMPHIBIOUS LOVE-MAKING"

Hunt Saboteurs in Scotland are extending their activities to include 'Toad Rescue'. The sabs gave their help to the Glenburn Toad Rescue Squad during March this year when the toads had to cross a busy road to reach their mating grounds. The sabs offered to help after organiser Hilda Briagi appeared on TV asking for helpers to carry the toads across the road. The previous year up to 1/3 of the toad "flock" had been killed by cars. Volunteers waited on standby for a wet, mild night, when the toads would start their journey to a nearby dam for 'amphibious love-making sessions'. Sabs from Oxford are also involved in a similar project.

MOUNTIES DISMOUTED

The fiasco that blew up around Hampshire Police wanting to use Army horses for policing hunts has now more or less come to an end. Hants police use Royal Military Police horses to train riders, but a spokesman for the RMP said "It's a non-event, there is no question of the Police using our horses, they are already committed for our MOD land around the Aldershot Garrison. We have n't the time or the money to lend them out". So it seems that for the moment the Hampshire constabulary will remain with their feet firmly on the ground.

Having mounted police at anti hunt demonstrations is no new thing, The Holcombe Hunt Action Group have had to contend with mounted thugs in uniform for over a year now. The 'mounties' gallop across fields damaging crops, and regularly grab sabs by the hair and drag them along.

More recently mounted police have been used at meets of the Beaufort FH in Gloucestershire. But where the hunt servants change horses half way through the day, the police continue to ride the same horses. The result is that the police horses are totally exhausted at the end of the day. Saboteurs have expressed their concern as to the walfare of the horses, but the police seem as disinterested with the welfare of their own animals, as they do with that of the hunted animal.

POLICE SWAMP BEAUFORT CEREMONY

From our court correspondant

Everyone sent someone to the 10th Duke of Beaufort's memorial service in Gloucester Cathedral on April 14th. Buckingham Palace sent 6 of its top Royals led by the Queen; the anti-bloodsports Sherriff of Gloucester sent a refusal to attend; Cotswold HSA sent a few appropriate banners and Scotland Yard sent its crack anti-animal rights terror squad lest some awful outrage be perpetrated.

The cunning sleuths mingled with bemused crowds (and 1000 other policemen) in camouflage (animal aid badges on their helmets) and jumped smartly on 4 sabs who had the temerity to unfurl a banner in front of the Queen bearing the slogan 'Murder is a crime – not a sport'. They were later released without charge. However, a man who shouted something at the Royal convoy as it swept past is understood to be awaiting the electric chair.

NEW ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUP

Readers in the west of England may like to know of the formation of the Western Animal Rights Alliance. WARA has been set up to organise and co-ordinate campaigns against all forms of animal abuse in the Bristol, Bath and Weston-super-Mare areas. It also supports the local HSA group. Membership is £2.50 for one year, members receive a quarterly newsletter and information about campaigns. You can contact WARA at Box 174, 37 Stokes Croft, Bristol BS2 3PY.

SEA SHEPHERD NEWS

1986 marks the ninth year since the founding of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. After nine years, the Society continues to operate as an all volunteer organization. Sea Shepherd is the only organisation to halt the slaughter of pilot whales by the Foroese. Not a single Faroese depends on Whaling for an income, the hunt is done for sport. Despite the 1000's of postcards and petitions recieved by the P.M. Atli P. Dam, of the Faroes, the Faroese have announced their intention to resume the slaughter of the whales in May 1986.

The "Sea Shepherd" is presently in Plymouth, England, preparing for a summer campaign on the Faroe Island. They are looking for volunteer crewmembers, and as usual seeking funds for fuel, oil, provisions and equipmen in exchange for the lives of hundreds of PILOT WHALES. PLEASE LEND YOUR SUPPORT.

Despite the fact that Timber Wolves are protected for the Spring of '86, the government of the Province of British Columbia is attempting to resurrect the extermination campaign for Winter '86. SS are presently making plans to oppose this bloody slaughter if and when it begins anew.

For more info on sea shepherd plus the project WOLF, write to: Sea Shepherd, P.O. Box 114, Plymouth, PL1 1DR.

FAROES ACTION GROUP

Another group trying to stop the Pilot Whales slaughter is the Faroes Action Group. They are encouraging boycotts of Danish Fish, and can be contacted at 38b Portland Rd, Hove, East Sussex BN3 5SH.



ALF NEWS

Animal Liberation Front groups have been active in many areas of Britain, attacking premises involved in hunting, shooting and fishing, and releasing animals back into the wild.

Gunshops have been damaged in Stirling, Scotland and Pokesdown in Dorset. A fishing tackle shop in Yeovil also had its windows smashed.

Holcombe Hunt secretary Mr Ray Longster of Frodsham in Cheshire has his horse box set alight, 16 windows damaged with glass etching fluid, locks glued and slogans painted on his house.

In Dorset, slogans were painted on the Queen Elizabeth School at Wimbourne which was holding a course on shooting, and also on the HQ of Excelsior Coaches which transported hunt supporters to Boxing Day meets. The cars of a wild animal trapper living in Poole had paint stripper poured over them at the end of December. Cars belonging to a known dogfighter were also damaged in December in Lincolnshire, as were four vehicles belonging to the Dunston Harriers in Norfolk.

Hundreds of partridges that were due to be shot were freed from rearing pens at Lynch Hill Farm, Stanton Harcourt Oxfordshire on Christmas Day. A similar number of hares were released from an enclosure near Cork, Eire where they were being kept for coursing.

For more information about the Animal Liberation Front and it's activities write to: A.L.F. Supporters Group, BCM 1160 London.



Beaufort FH supporter helps scruffy Bristol sab to straighten his tie.

DRIVERS WANTED!

After an influx of new members, Mansfield HSA are looking for drivers for sabbing. The group now has enough members to fill three or four vans. Offers of help should be sent to Mansfield HSA c/o PO Box 19, London.

The Brighton HSA group are in a similar situation, any members in their area who can help contact them at PO Box 307, Ship St, Brighton, East Sussex.

SOLO SAB SCHOOL, two day course during foxhunting season 1986/87, bookings being taken., Tactical/suppot section for your local group, representatives require five sabbing days fieldwork for eligibility. To be recommended by group leader or similar. CV to TSS, HSA, PO Box 19, London SE22 9LR.

DON'T NEGLECT THE BADGER

Whilst obviously foxes suffer most from foxhunts, badgers also suffer greatly. The badger setts are stopped in by the hunt in the 24 hours before the hunt, usually most of the holes are blocked during th afternoon and evening before the hunt, being checked and completed between 9am and 11am on the day of the hunt.

In my locality, most sett exits are blocked with turf and earth but also used are fertiliser sacks full of clay, rocks and tree stumps. I have not yet known a hunt to unblock afterwards. Holes blocked with earth can easily be unblocked by the badger, but they have to tunnel around the heavier obstructions, and all in all, this practice must cause considerable stress to the badgers, particularly in early spring when they have cubs. It might cause them to move house. Badgers also go into semi-hibernation in very cold weather and there must therefore be a risk of suffocation when setts are blocked in these conditions.

Badger baiting has close links with foxhunting, as the terrier man may help the baiting terrier clubs to find badgers as they know where the setts are, and might even supply them with live badgers.

The Royal Society for Nature Conservation, through their 44 County Trusts, are in many cases instigating badger watches with a view to guarding against baiters I therefore suggest that sabs who can afford it join their local Trust and help guard the setts against baiters. They will then gain the local knowledge of where the setts are and may be able to persuade the Trust to help prevent the stopping in of the setts - which should be illegal; its unlawful to dig at badger setts.

If the badger setts are not stopped in, and the hunt can be prevented from digging out or bolting (they cannot dig big setts in very rocky ground or in woods - only in soft ground), then kills of foxes will be greatly reduced. At the very least, its a kindness to badgers to unblock the holes after the hunt has gone.

The RSNC can be contacted at The Green, Nettleham, Lincoln LN2 2NR (Tel: 0522 752326).

Mac.

ANIMAL RIGHTS PRISONERS

At the present time there are over twenty people in prison as a result of animal actions. Some are serving sentences, others are on remand awaiting trial. More information about these prisoners can be obtained from: Support Animal Rights Prisoners, BCS 5911 WC2 3XX.

There are five Animal Rights prisoners on remand in Hull prison at the moment. Hall Prisoners Support Group has been set up to provide them with vegan food and pay the travelling costs of visitors. They are in desparate need of funds, so donations should sent to: HSPG 100 Boulevard, Hull. HU3.



Sabs watch helplessly as exhausted hare takes refuge in elderly Major's bottom (Aldershot Beagles).

COURSING THUGS PARADISE

Lurcher boys, terrier men and other thugs were attracted to Clonmel, Eire in February for the three day National Hare Coursing meeting. The "Ascot of coursing" as it is known. They spent the three days getting drunk every night and watching greyhounds rip hares to pieces every day. On the first day of the meeting alone, 33 hares were killed.

Commandant Joe FitzPatrick, secretary of the Irish Coursing Club defends this sadistic passtime saying "what people forget is that hares were born to be hunted". Try explaining that to the 130 hares that had to run for their lives during the three day event.

PUTTING THE PROBLEM TO ONE SIDE

If there's one thing calculated to put the average saboteur's back up, its having your van blocked in by hunt supporters.

North Wales HSA now have a clear policy for dealing with this little irritant and it works because everybody is briefed beforehand about the procedure to be taken.

Firstly, ALL sabs leave the minibus and stand on either side of the offending vehicle. One sab politely asks the driver to move. If he/she fails to do so, the sabs simply pick it up and move it to the side of the road.

This manoeuver was successfully carried out against the potentially violent Flint & Denbigh FH with a terrier man's Daihatsu in February. The sabs' calm self assurance took the occupants completely by surprise and prevented any confrontation from taking place.

WANTED – Long wheel based hard top Land Rover for use by active group in Midlands. Will buy. Write to HSA, PO Box 19, London SE22 9LR (c/o Derby HSA).



LAW REPORT

A regular review of courts and coppers . . .



Master of the Cotswold Vale Farmers FH appealing for help from the police to evict 35 Hereford and Worcester sabs on January 18th. On this occasion the police told him the sabs had a perfect right to be there and the hunt continued without a kill.

Breach of the Peace charges dismissed in Scotland

The steady stream of sabs still being arrested for the ridiculous crimes of hornblowing and holloaing are, as usual, being aquitted by most law courts. Three sabs from Stirling and one from Edinburgh were found not guilty of behaviour likely to cause a breach of the peace in February after police evidence concerning the use of horns and shouting was dismissed by magistrates in Stirlingshire.

. . . and in Dorset

The two cases arising out of the incident referred to in Exeter's group news in HOWL 32 have now come to court. To recap, frustrated Cattistock huntsman, Alistair Jackson, led his field into a violent assault upon 6 saboteurs in December at the end of a particularly successful day's sabbing. The sabs were hit about their heads with whip handles, one was punched slowly through a hedge and one 16-year-old sab had to have 16 stitches to close a massive head wound. Police dived in and arrested 3 battered saboteurs, one with blood pouring from his head. No hunt members were arrested.

At the station, the worst hurt saboteur was released without charge, but the other two were detained until 8 pm. Both were then charged with 'threatening, insulting, and abusive behaviour' and one with an additional count of assault upon Alistair Jackson (!) and possession of an offensive weapon. They made no statements and answered all questions with a polite 'no comment', thereby giving the police no clue as to the line the defence case would take.

On April 8th, magistrates heard the case against the first sab for threatening behaviour. Jackson appeared as a witness and ranted with such wildness about 'extremists' and 'balaclava-clad IRA types bent on trouble' that he had to be calmed down by the magistrates. He told the court that although he had been subjected to a 'violent physical attack' he was pleased to say that his hunt had a policy of non-retaliation. This unfortunately left him at a loss to explain the injuries to the 6 saboteurs. The police case rested upon the assertion that the accused had driven recklessly and also waved his arms about in a manner that might be frightening to horses and shouted 'bastards' a few times. The fact that he was actually defending himself against crop blows at the time was overlooked.

The bench took half an hour to find the sab Not Guilty. His co-defendant had meanwhile opted for trial by jury since the case against him was more serious. In the interim however, the police dropped the charges of assault and possession of an offensive weapon and when he appeared in court at the end of April, they dropped the remaining charges as well. He was awarded full costs.

CB Vandalism

Robert Howarth, whipper in for the Linlighgow and Stirlingshire FH, was found guilty in April of damaging a CB radio aerial belonging to Edinburgh HSA and ordered to pay the group the princely sum of £10.00 for a new one.

SCCL to monitor policing

An observer from the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties who witnessed the policing of a sab on the Fife FH on December 7th, has prepared a report recommending that the police keep intervention to the absolute minimum in future. This followed a day on which one sab was pestered with an arbitrary breathaliser test and several were forcibly evicted from a dig-out (as reported in HOWL 32) SCCL recommended the HSA to pass on reports of any future bad policing as they are interested in monitoring the situation and helping to work out a feasible policy between ourselves and the police.

No Justice for Assaulted Sabs (again)

South Dorset FH kennelman, Nicholas Stevens and two of his henchmen were bound over by Dorchester magistrates in February. The three were in court after cornering 3 sabs in a field on December 28th and attacking them. 'We were acting in self defence'(!) they told police afterwards.

Magistrates were obviously impressed by this and the helpful information of their counsel that all saboteurs were 'juvenile delinquents and hooligans in IRA-style uniforms' who 'shout obscenities at nine-year old children'. The learned counsel was in fact Robert Unwin, secretary of the neighbouring Cattistock FH. In the light of remarks made by Alistair Jackson (noted above) we presume it is now Cattistock policy to regard all hunt saboteurs as members of the IRA. Not only did the hunt thugs get off without a fine, but the three assaulted saboteurs were bound over as well for good measure.

And now the good new . . .

Although many police forces seem to see it as part of their job to prevent the sabotage of hunting, its good to see there are still places where the right to protest is upheld.

In January, Surrey Union Joint Master, Michael Taylor instructed police attending a meet at Chilworth Manor not to allow sabs to blow horns, shout or holloa. The police told him that sabs could shout and holloa where and whenever they liked though they might draw the line at hornblowing. A whipper in was later made to dismount when the police caught him riding on a public footpath.

Again, in March, hunt attempts to evict sabs from a field were foiled by the insistence of the police that the sabs were on a public footpath and had every right to use it. 'The police presence was inadequate to deal with the situation', moaned a dejected Taylor at the end of another humiliating attempt at hunting. 'I feel some of them were just glad to see the end of the season and wanted a quiet life.'

Asked why his men had made such little effort to stop saboteurs, Supt. Breckell of Guildford said he was unaware of any offence having been committed: 'I saw one man wearing a balaclava', he remembered, 'but you can't arrest somebody for that.' (Don't you believe it chum. Devon and Cornwall police consider the wearing of a balaclava is 'Action Likely. . . . .' and have amused themselves in the past by pulling them off sabs' heads and filming the result.)

Cases on the skyline

The 26 sabs from Cambridge and Northampton arrested for entering the kennels of the Trinity Foot Beagles in February have made a preliminary appearance and had the case adjourned to an unspecified date.

John Curtin and Terry Helsby, accused of attempting to dig up the corpse of the 10th Duke of Beaufort in December '84 are finally due in court during July at Bristol. More on this in the next HOWL.

Hunting Prints for the Police

Although the army has now withdrawn permission for their horses to be used as part of Hampshire Chief Constable John Duke's special anit-sab hit squad, police fascination for hunting continues unabashed. A recent edition of 'Police' magazine offered ('By Demand') officers the chance to invest in signed, limited edition foxhunting prints by naff cartoonist JEDD at £9.20 a piece. Hurry folks, only 6,000 left. . . . .

THE PUBLIC ORDER BILL – CAUSE FOR CONCERN?

Recently, an unprecedented growth of police powers has taken place, backed willingly by the courts. The Public Order Bill (POB) is expected to be passed by parliament in the Autumn and become law soon afterwards. What will be its effect upon the HSA!

Depending upon the numbers you take out and the discretion of the police in defining sabotage as a 'demonstration', the first area in which we might fall foul of the POB is in failing to give the police 7 days notice of intended actions or failing to comply with their specifications if we do.

The penalties for this range from fines of £400 for participants to £1000 for organisers. It should be noted that some groups already give the police notice of a sab and feel it improves, rather than detracts from, good relations with the local force.

Violent Clauses

The various clauses of the Bill itself cover offences from Riot to Disorderly Conduct (which is a cover-all measure a bit like 'wearing a loud tie in a built up area'). As far as Riot and Violent Disorder are concerned, it is clearly up to sabs to impress upon both police and the courts if necessary that our intentions are at all times non-violent. The prosecution will have ot show that Sid or Doris Normal, passing by, would have been afraid that violence was being used or threatened by our actions or manner and appearance.

Threatening Behaviour is supposed to cover the use of spoken threats. The choice of words, rather than the expected result of using them in a particular case, is what will be considered, but some fear of violence must be shown.

Disorderly Conduct

Disorderly Conduct, since it is supposed to cover anything not covered by the other clauses, was considered ambiguous enough for it to be withdrawn for re-drafting. It is the one under which the BFSS hopes the HSA will be 'brought to heel'. It hangs upon a sab's general conduct being thought likely in the eyes of a police officer, and ultimately a court of law, to strike alarm, harrassment or distress into the hearts of peaceful hunting folk.

It is not substantially different from the charge of Action Likely under which sabs are presently arrested for just about anything but often aquitted by the courts. There is no reason to suppose that the new law will bring any different results since most impartial observers would agree that there is nothing alarming, distressing or harrassing about the sound of a hunting horn, rating of hounds or the spreading of anti-mate fluid. In a nutshell, textbook sabbing should be under no more of a threat than it is already.

Fighting each case

The difference is in the severity of sentence. What was once a binding over order is set to become a £400 fine; but as one sab recently remarked, 'Its still £1.00 a week if you're unemployed!' Legal opinion now suggests that the law may work against the police anyway since the seriousness of a conviction will lead many more sabs to fight their case with a good solicitor than is currently usual.



The long arm of the law collars another sab on a typically over-policed meet of the Holcombe Harriers.

The BFSS were hoping that a simple case of Trespass would become criminalised through this clause, but their Old Etonian chum, Douglas Hurd, has disappointed them – apparently because he is fearful of the backlash from ramblers.

Finally, the police have powers to ban (with £400 fines for non-compliance) static assemblies of more than 19 people (ammended from 3). Kennel blockaders should do their sums right before leaving home!

False alarms

The POB should not be viewed with too much apprehension by sabs. We should realise that most clauses were drafted out for the repression of Trades Union picketing or the control of so-called 'football hooligans' and not the HSA. The police are not unaware that they already have the power to prevent the sabotage of hunting using the existing Action Likely laws. The Police and Criminal Evidence Act did little in the end to hamper the HSA and it seems quite possible that the POB will go the same way. The Establishment is well aware of the dangers of forcing a mass-movement completely underground and if sensible, will avoid doing so.

Taking our own action

The new powers make it vitally important however for all HSA groups to lobby against biased policing. Every County Council has a Police Policy Committee whose role it is to advice the police on general policy. The Chief Constable is directly answerable to this committee although it has no formal powers. Several groups have noticed a marked improvement in police behaviour after lodging a complaint with it. If unfair policing does persist, it is usually worthwhile exposing it in the media.

The onus of proof will be on you. It is therefore vital that sabs take photographs, use tape recorders and take statements from sabs involved in incidents. Under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act, the police have to give you a slip of paper every time they search you or your vehicle. Make sure they do it. This has written upon it the reason for carrying out the search – and should be kept to build up a record of police interference. Local observers from the NCCL might be persuaded to accompany your group if you think it warrants it.

A lot of police interference comes as a result of them not understanding HSA policy. For example, anti-mate is used to cover the scent of the hunted animal – it is not a dangerous substance used to attack hounds. A hand-out is availalbe form PO Box 19 to give to the police to explain what we do.

If you have any legal enquiries, write to the Legal Officer c/o HSA at the usual address.

GRAHAM CLARKE & STEVE POOLE.

COMMITTEE ELECTION ADDRESSES 1986-7

CHRIS BISHOP

Age 24, vegan, final year student at Portsmouth Poly. HSA member for 4 years.

The HSA exists in order to encourage people to go out and save the lives of hunted animals and to provide them with the resources to do so. The only future worth considering is an end to all bloodsports.

I wish to stand for the position of Membership Secretary. If elected, I would first ensure that the administrative side runs efficiently; letters get answered by return of post, contacts are immediately notified of new members and records updated, and secondly I would do all I can to recruit new members and so encourage more people to join the HSA and become active in the field.

When a person joins the HSA or a new group is formed, the HSA should be there to provide whatever help they need to get out in the field and start saving lives, whether this means tactical advice, a hunting horn, or finance. The Association could obviously give more support to individuals and groups if it has access to greater finance. In my view, fund-raising should be undertaken on a national basis, with the resulting money being ploughed into the areas where it is most needed, particularly recruitment and helping newly established groups get off the ground. One solution is the appointment of a fund-raising officer, the other possibility is re-organising the HSA's supporting membership along the lines of the ALF Supporters Group.

Above all, it is clear that the HSA must grow if it is ever to end bloodsports.

ANNE BLUNDEN

I would like to see this next year work towards educating children about preservation and protection of wildlife and the countryside.

I have already started this process with a small magazine for children from ages 7 to 14. I think it is vital that we let the children know what is going on around them and to try to get them to take part in projects which will benefit not only themselves but the wildlife we are trying to protect. I have been vegetarian for 5 years and vegan for 4. I also think it important to bring vegetarianism into the education of children. If we teach the children now, we won't have to recruit them at a later stage. They would automatically want to join the HSA because of them being taught right from wrong at an early age!

MARK BREEDON

Aged 22, student, Vegan.

I've been an HSA member for 4 years and contact for the Leeds group for three of those years, during which time I have been active nearly every week.

I see the HSA committee as being important to co-ordinate activities throughout the country, enabling local groups to effectively sabotage hunts, saving animals lives. It is important to keep adminstration within the HSA running smoothly.

I'd like to continue the work I've just begun on the committee with more help for local groups, with fund raising in particular.

DUGGS CARRE

Age 21, vegan, animal rights activist who signs on.

Last year, I was on the committee doing the job of Student Liason. During that time, I contacted all the University and Poly animal rights groups and started the Student Campaign for Animal Rights (SCAR). I feel I did the job pretty well until I got sent to prison for my connection with the Unilever raid in '84. I hope to be out of prison before the new cubbing season and continue to build on the Student contacts I had already made. I am an active saboteur with the Huddersfield group and have been sabbing for three years.

I think it important to have a committee made up of sabs from all over the country because, as we all know, different regions have different tactics and problems. I see the job of the committee to raise money, produce and distribute sales goods and information, and act as a base for discussion of ideas and a contact point for active sabs (new and old). The committee should in no way dictate to the members and those elected should be prepared to do the more mundane tasks involved and work as a team.

I hope you'll give me another 'crack of the whip' and in return I'll try not to get caught again.

GRAHAM CLARKE

Aged 23, Vegan.

I have been an active member of HSA for 6 years during which time I have sabotaged a wide variety of hunts all over Britain. At present I am working for a wholefood retailing co-operative.

I have started and run two very successful local HSA groups (Aston University and Huddersfield Polytechnic). For the past year, I have been a Committee member and have worked as tactics officer, and more recently, legal officer. For these positions I have organised two tactics meetings in Birmingham, done several tactics talks to local groups and answered any enquiries in these fields. I have also written articles for HOWL on swamping tactics, pre-meeting, and a legal advice article on the new police Public Order Bill.

I believe that the future success of the HSA lies in the strength of local groups. However, a national HSA committee has a role in organising support, by distributing information and advice to local groups, regional hunt action groups and, in particular, new groups. I think that this year's committee has been an important improvement on the negative thinking and stagnant previous committee. This is partly illustrated by the general content in the Spring 1986 HOWL. However, on the negative side, I feel this year's committee has failed to support local groups in organising a National Anti-Hunt Day (perhaps opening meets) with the prime intention being to gain TV and newspaper press coverage on both the local and national level. If the HSA is going to attract more support, we must realise the importance of good publicity.

The aim of the HSA must always be to use non-violent direct action to create mass public opposition to ALL bloodsports so that the government is forced to ban them.

RALPH COOK

Vegan, Tour Guide with Exeter City Council.

I am standing once again for the post of Research Officer which I have occupied for several years. During the past year I have produced the texts of the proposed fishing leaflet and for a number of fact sheets on hunting, wild animals affected by bloodsports, shooting and fishing. I am gathering material at present for fact sheets on the lesser known bloodsports such as falconry, badger baiting etc. Production of these has been held up by lack of money.

I believe that the current crisis in the HSA is due to a lack of long term planning by previous committees and the fact that most people who stand for posts on the committee do not realise until they have served on it for a few months that the role of a committee member is purely an adminstrative and advisory one and lacks the excitement of the active struggle. The HSA, if it is to survive and serve as a useful organ to the activist must recognise its role in the struggle for animal rights and all who serve on its committee must recognise and fulfil the roles as set out for them.

I believe that in the last few years, whilst being an activist on Saturdays and on occasional mid-week days, I have also, as far as circumstances have allowed, fulfilled my obligations to the HSA committee and to the members of the Association who elected me.

JOHN DOWLE

Aged 22, self unemployed , Vegan.

This is my second attempt to be elected to committee. I am willing to take on any job offered and carry it out with energy, enthusiasm, and to my best ability. Recently, due to the resignation of Mark Browne from committee, I have taken over the job of Membership Secretary. Therefore to save time and avoid inefficiency, I would be willing to carry on providing this service if I am elected. I feel that the work of the committee is very important to the continuance and relative smooth running of the HSA.

Following the recent formation of SABS, it seems that the future existance and necessity of the HSA has been called into question. I feel that the HSA should continue as a national body but I do not condemn the formation of regional groups. For this reason it is important for the membership to regionalise its representation on the committee, making sure that all areas of the country are included. Regional groups are important but we must stick together in order to be strong.

I want to see an office set up as soon as possible so that saboteurs and their committee can concentrate on the important issues facing sabs in the field (such as the effects of the Police Bill) and leave the mundane administrative work to the office volunteers. Even if you don't know me personally, please vote for me.

RICHARD FARHALL

I am a 24 year old National Health Service Administrator living in Folkestone, Kent.

A vegan for four years, I have been an active sab for 5 years. I acted as Folkestone HSA contact during the 1985/86 season. I initiated the formation of the Kent Animal Rights Alliance (KARA) which has improved co-ordination between Kent HSA contacts.

COMMITTEE ELECTION ADDRESSES 1986-7

I am director of the Campaign for the Abolition of Angling (formally the Council for the Prevention of Cruelty by Angling) and am editor of its quarterly newsletter – 'PISCES'.

I am once again standing for election to the National Council of the RSPCA in an attempt to alter its reactionary composition. I would describe myself as a 'realistic radical'.

I firmly believe the future of the HSA lies with local initiative and organisation. The committee should concentrate on supporting the activists, principally through the production and dissemination of advice, information and publicity materials.

I am an administrator by trade and an organiser by nature. I believe I possess the necessary committment and experience to make a positive contribution to the effective running of the Association.

JOHN HALE

Vegan lifestyle, longstanding committee member; therefore I am certain I know the present and future problems the HSA faces. I have strong views on the areas the HSA should direct its energies towards to reduce or resolve these problems.

The committee does form policy, eg anti-angling, and tactics, eg stopping hounds with whips, both excellent measures. However, it risks irresolvable academic conflict on certain issues, eg not to support a ban. A convoluted strategy which I feel is not supported by the membership who clearly want a ban. Currently, autonomous regionalisation threatens national HSA structure in certain areas. I consider this bad for the direct action movement. These stifle sound policy and have disrupted HSA administration.

The role of National HSA is to a) provide sound policy, strategy and tactics. This it does well and has been my long-standing interest. b) provide communication through HOWL, contacts mailouts, tactics and contacts meetings, talks, fact sheets and training in the field etc.

National HSA has funded groups at the expense of its development. It must rearrange itself internally before it can continue this policy. Membership must be increased. Sabs must be encouraged to join by Standing Order if possible. Then HOWL can be vastly improved along with the other services listed above, and an office set up that can take care of sales goods.'

I am certain HSA now needs this period of interospection and internal reorganisation. With new police powers and an impending Public Order Act, the central base of the HSA now needs strengthening more than ever before

JOE HASHMAN

I am eighteen, vegan, and a life member of the HSA, I am unemployed, but training in freelance journalism. I have been sabbing since 1982, and am the contact for Oxford.

I am dedicated to the struggle for *all* animal liberation. Being unemployed, I take my campaign of non violent direct action to at least three meets a week during the winter. I strongly believe that shooting and fishing must suffer increased pressure.

I believe the HSA must take its campaign to the public as a whole, and harness the support that exists. They are the people we must inspire. There is mass public outrage against bloodsports. This can and will finally trash the hunt.

I am standing for committee because sabbing is the most important thing in my life, and I want to do everything I can to stop hunting. I believe that I can be a positive addition to the committee, given a chance. I will tackle any job, but have an interest in public relations.

WENDY HOLBOROW

Teacher, vegan (99%)

After one year as general secretary of the HSA, I have decided to stand again for this post. I feel continuity is important in the running of a national organisation and some of the problems experienced by the organisation have been as a result of too much change-over in committee members and their roles.

I feel that the HSA is a very necessary part of the anti-bloodsports movement but it must increase its membership and grow if the cruelty of bloodsports is to be put to an end. It also needs to look closely at its aims and objectives and the way it supports both its members and its regular activists.

Until last year, I was an active sab and general animal rights activist and have been arrested for ALF activities. However, due to the birth of my daughter (vegan) I have had to curtail the majority of active campaigning although I have still been the mid-pennine contact and have been the contact number for many of the Holcombe Action Group sabs. I have also been able to contribute to the movement by using my organisational skills as secretary and would like to continue to do so.

JOHN INNES

Aged 24, Vegan, active in HSA for five years with Clydeside group.

I am a member of a film and video co-operative and feel I could be of use in helping groups make more use of this medium at local level to publicise our cause and expose the realities of local hunts to local people.

I feel that Scotland and the north should be better represented at committee level and I was instrumental in setting up the Scottish HSA which co-ordiunates Scottish groups within the national HSA. I also feel more effort should be put into publicising the cruelties inflicted on the hunt animals, ie. horses and hounds.

MARY INNES

Age 22, Vegan, Civil Servant.

I have been sabbing for four years, starting with the Clydeside group and for the past two years I have been helping to organise the Edinburgh group.

At the moment I am the secretary of Scottish HSA which co-ordinates the Scottish sab groups. I think that this sort of regional group within the HSA is a good idea in that we can try and start new local groups and also share ideas, tactics and experiences gained throughout our area with all our sabs, which isn't really practical at national level to the same extent.

I feel it is vital, especially with the new Public Order bill coming into force that we encourage more people to join the HSA. At the moment many people are put off initially by the image (however false) of sabs being mostly male, incredibly fit and very tough. Thus we lose a lot of people who don't feel they could help us practically. We will have to combat this image and realise that most people have a lot to offer sabbing if we channel it correctly.

I feel too that we should see more women represented at committee level as women make up a very large portion of active sabs.

If elected, I would be willing to take up any position on the HSA committee.

IAN JENNINGS

I am a 22 year old vegan and I work for a wholefood co-operative. I have been an active hunt saboteur for four years. Since the beginning of February this year, I have been the overall co-ordinator for the Student Campaign for Animal Rights while I am also the Huddersfield HSA contact.

I would like to be elected to the HSA committee because, over the past year, I have become extremely concerned that the Association is not selling itself to hunt saboteurs which has been partly reflected in the reduction in membership renewals and in the very poor attendance at Tactics Meetings. I therefore feel that the HSA is not being the effective advisory body it could be and it has got to make itself more accessible to the membership by its committee adopting a higher and more approachable profile amongst the membership. I feel that this is acheived not by the committee sitting back and waiting for the membership to come to them, but more by committee personal going out to the members with tactics and information talks to individual groups and members and even actively participating in sabs with them in order to effect a first-hand and two-way exchange of information.

To this end I would like to see an increased regionalisation of the HSA with, if possible, each committee member performing the above task in the region where they live. I do not propose that the committee should dictatorally impose itself upon the membership, but that the above should only be undertaken after due consultation with the members involved.

I also feel that student groups are immensely important to sabbing and should be informed and encouraged as much as possible. I see my experience as a committee member of Huddersfield Polytechnic Students Against Bloodsports Society, working with a students union, plus the work I have done for SCAR as being appropriate to my taking the post of Student Liason Officer.

Finally, I see the committee as still having a southern orientation in terms of this year's officers. Some of those standing for re-election intend to move from the north to the south which could make this more apparant. It is therefore imperative that people like myself form the north are elected to the committee to redress the balance and ensure that this part of the country is properly represented.

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NEIL McIVOR

I am 20 years old and unemployed, although I hope to go to Wolverhampton Polytechnic this October. I am vegan. I started sabbing 2 years ago with Sheffield HSA then moved to Keele university and continued with the HSA group there. I am now resident in Shrewsbury in the heart of Shropshire.

I feel that HSA committee's job is to help and support local groups rather than being the vanguard of the HSA. This is best acheived by collating information on hunts, new tactics etc. received from the local groups and passing them on to other groups who would benefit from them. This is best achieved through HOWL and various other mail-outs. Whilst not condemning criminal damage and defensive violence, I think it is in the interests of the HSA to retain its policy of non-violence, leaving such retributive strikes to groups such as the ALF.

I think that the HSA ought to encourage student groups to have more contact with each other as they can achieve vast support for the HSA and hostility to field sports societies in their various colleges.

ALAN PEASE

I am unemployed, 20 years old and vegan.

Since joining the committee last year I have been doing contact liason work. Sending monthly contact mailouts to local HSA groups and helping to get new groups off the ground. If re-elected I would like to continue with this work.

At the moment the committee is out of touch with the local groups, there has been a breakdown of communication between the committee and the local groups. This is mainly due to the organisation of the HSA itself. There must be changes if the HSA is to grow and finally bring an end to all bloodsports.

An office should be set up staffed by volunteers (as the committee was mandated to by the 1985 AGM) doing the day to day work of the HSA, under the guidlines of the committee. The committee should be elected regionally, consisting of one member from each region. Then the committee would be truly reprsentative of the sabs.

To enable the HSA to change and grow it needs to increase its resources, to do this it needs a voluntary fundraiser.

When these changes have taken place a strong HSA will be able to effectively help the local groups, giving finances, advice and information and representing them on a national level. It will be then that the HSA will bring enough pressure to bear on the hunters, shooters and fishermen to wipe them out for ever.

RICHARD TEED

Age 21, vegan, student. Member of HSA and BUAV.

I have been an active sab for 4 years, starting with the West London Group until I moved up to Yorkshire where I've been active in starting a group at Bradford University. I want to serve on the committee as next year I'll not be able to go sabbing very often, perhaps not at all because of work committments. I'd like to switch my energies to something else and I'll have plenty of time available for committee work.

The HSA should continue the way it is but emphasis should be put on increasing the membership. As an activist organisation we shoud continue to sabotage all bloodsports and make no compromises in fear of (so-called) public opinion. We should continue to support all forms of direct action except that which involves premeditated physical violence. We should be keeping up, and stepping up the pressure and as we prepare for the backlash from the new police powers, the hunters should be preparing for the backlash from us.

HSA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 1986

This year's AGM will be held at Cornwall House, Exeter University, Devon on Saturday July 5th. The meeting will begin at 10am; limited overnight accomodation will be available. Cornwall House is easy to find and will be signposted. All HSA members are urged to attend. Reasonably priced vegan food will be provided and there will be creche facilities.

A full agenda has still to be announced at time of going to press, so any amendments you wish to propose to the constitution, or guidelines/recommendations to the new committee for debate or discussion should be submitted to PO Box 19 in writing as soon as possible. These will be circulated on paper duringthe morning session and will be dealt with in the afternoon.

The traditional horn-blowing competition and evening entertainment will be arranged.

HOWL

Many HSA members have noted that HOWL needs a facelift and we are working on trying to improve it. In terms of content, it can only be as good as the copy we receive from you. We welcome letters, articles, photos, cartoons, newscuttings etc but please allow us to edit them to fit if necessary. If you don't want your work cut then please indicate. As a rough guide, letters should be kept to 200 words, news items to 300 and longer articles (full page) to 1000. Try to include a photo or cartoon if possible and write a returning address on it if you want it back.

In the near future we'll be sending a readership survey out with HOWL to try to find out exactly what you want from the magazine.

All articles in HOWL are written by the editors unless otherwise stated.

This HOWL was done by Alan Pease and Steve Poole with help from Janette. Copy date for HOWL 34 is August 1st.

HSA OFFICE WORKER WANTED

As instructed by last year's AGM, the committee have been looking at ways of getting a central administrative office off the ground. Since we are presently without premises, we feel that the only practical way forward is to first find the most suitable person to voluntarily staff the office, and then look for premises close to his/her area. Applications are therefore invited from HSA members who feel they fit the bill. Although the successful candidate will be well versed in secretarial and administrative practice, he or she will also have a sound knowledge of bloodsports and the HSA. Full details are available on request, and we must stress that this job will be unpaid.



FIRST FIND YOUR MINKHUNT

Every summer, a rag-bag of frustrated otter hunters take to the riverbanks of Britain, trampling the fragile ecology in search of a new quarry; the feral mink. The HSA, with over 4000 activists, faces a mere handful of killers but is often frustrated in its efforts by the secrecy under which minkhunting operates. Here, Research Officer Ralph Cook, looks at ways in which this problem might be overcome.



In 1978, the otter became a protected species and, as we all know, many otterhunts turned to hunting mink. With a few new hunts starting from scratch, there were some 21 minkhunts (the exact figure is uncertain) operating in Britain by the summer of 1985 achieving a total annual tally of just under 800 mink between them.

Of these, at least one, the Pynes minkhunt has closed down due to lack of real support; only one, the Devon and Cornwall minkhunt, has ever advertised its meets (a practice which ceased in the face of regular attendance by hunt saboteurs) and all shun any form of publicity. Reports from around the country suggest that minkhunting, far from becoming a growing summer 'sport' for the grounded foxhunter or bored beagler, is a dying pastime. Many minkhunts are virtually inactive, lacking in real support, virtually bankrupt, ineffective in killing mink or providing 'sport' and all are paranoid about hunt saboteurs.

Threatened Breeding Grounds

Whatever their shortcomings and however ridiculous minkhunts might appear to us, they should not be ignored. They pose a threat not only to their intended quarry but also to the breeding wildlife inhabiting the riverside and also to what is a narrow and fragile habitat - the riverbank itself -disturbance to which during the summer months and of the type caused by minkhunts can be disasterous for many plant, bird and animal communities.

In the last few years, for all the obvious reasons, too few saboteurs have given up their time to hunt down minkhunts; unforgiveable in view of the fact that there is little else for HSA members to do during the summer months. Last summer, one group, the Vale of Glamorgan HSA maintained constant pressure on the S.E. Wales minkhunt forcing it to cancel many of its meets.

However, many saboteurs interested in sabbing minkhunts are thwarted from this objective because the hunters have not done the decent thing and advertised their meets!

Advert-shy

Whilst it is obvious that minkhunts are smaller than foxhunts and often operate over larger areas than any other hunt, which makes them more difficult to find when their meets are not advertised, the principle for finding a minkhunt is the same as that used in locating of any other advert-shy hunt, of which, as HSA activity increases, there are an increasing number. The lack of advertised meets cannot any longer be an excuse for a lack of effort on the part of hunt saboteurs. Animals are being killed out there and it is our duty to prevent this.

Using the Telephone

Essentially, the finding of a minkhunt involves considerable planning. The first stage is to phone the kennels or the house of a supporter asking for the next meet. Many minkhunts refuse to give out such details over the phone to anyone, even to genuine journalists. At best, they will only give out a meet after hearing a very good story. The chances are that telephoning the kennels will not achieve the desired result, although occassionally it has worked in the past.

The next step is to watch the kennels or the home of a regular, known supporter and follow whatever vehicle leaves the premises in the hope that it will lead you to the meet. This is the method used to such great effect by the Vale of Glamorgan HSA who watched the home of their minkhunt's master, Brian Press, for many hours each Saturday morning and followed him and the hound van on to the meet when he dared to go out.

Photographs

Like the phone method, this method will soon be rumbled so it is important to gain as much knowledge as possible about the hunt each time you find its meets. Take photographs of cars and record their registration numbers and remember that a lawn meet is the home of a hunt supporter whose house might be worth watching in the future.

The importance of gaining intelligence about the hunt cannot be over-estimated. The more names and addresses that are obtained, the more sites there are to watch on hunting days. The more car descriptions and registration numbers that are known, the more successful is the outcome of the next meet location method likely to be. Failing the above, it may become necessary to place cars along the main roads in the hunt's country, preferably not too far from known supporters' homes, and follow any car which has been seen at a previous meet. It is possible that your chosen 'lead' is simply off on a shopping spree, but it is also possible that with cautious tailing it will lead you to the meet.

Touring the Country

The last resort, expensive and time-consuming though it is, is to tour the hunt's country, paying special attention to known meets but also looking in places where roads run close to rivers and to public houses and supporters' homes near to rivers. A good idea is to telephone a public house which has previously hosted a meet. With any luck you'll be answered by someone who 'simply couldn't care less' and who will give you details of the next meet.

Summer moron-hunting can be an expensive, frustrating and time-consuming sport for the hunt saboteur. Nonetheless, it is better than acknowledging that hunt is out 'somewhere killing animals' and doing nothing about it. So let's see more activity this summer, and remember - make the most of any opportunity to get information, and make sure you get that information (as described above) to central HSA as quickly as possible.

RALPH COOK



GROUP NEWS

Group News is compiled from the reports of those groups who are organised enough to send them in. They are the best indicator to both the committee and other groups of how the HSA's strength is distributed. If your area seems under-represented - ask your local contact to make sure your group's reports are regularly sent in.

SCOTLAND

EDINBURGH group has concentrated its efforts as usual on the Linlithgow and Stirlingshire FH who are now feeling the pinch more than ever. Although the winter freeze thawed out during March, the L&S did not emerge from the kennels to finish their season. Money is short and support has reached an all time low with several followers abandoning ship and crawling off to watch the L&R instead. Even the whipper in is making a run for it, jacking in his job and heading south for a hunt in Berkshire. He didn't get on with evil-tempered huntsman Graham Roberts and has given the L&S a life expectancy of five more inglorious years. Generous to a tee . . . .

Lack of action at the L&S led Edinburgh sabs to travel west to the L&R during March to assist CLYDESIDE HSA. Woodblocks fixed with handles and banged together were found to produce good imitation whipcracks and were especially successful used at close range with horn and voice to get hounds out of coverts.

NORTH

The HOLCOMBE HUNT ACTION GROUP report that the Holcombe's huntsman has virtually stopped using his horne due to sab interference and now relies upon his voice. There's no shortage of hares in this country and the hunt are fond of casting downwind and chopping their quarry. On March 15th, after police mad a surprising departure at the meet the hunt called out the two louts pictured on this page. These two gents attacked a van with pickaxe and shovel but ran off home when they found themselves surrounded by indignant sabs.

LEEDS HSA has had about 40 people out each week against the York & Ainsty (North) FH, Badsworth FH, Catterick Beagles and Claro Beagles. All these hunts have returned to their kennels empty handed whenever sabs have been with them. The Badsworth have in fact been under continuous pressure from SHEFFIELD group despite attempts to deter sabs by the use of violence. Support for this pack is falling off, its follower trickling away in search of less troubled country. The group had such a demoralising effect on the York & Ainsty one week that 7 of the paltry 13 riders who'd venture out went straight home after the meet, leaving a disgruntled hunt committee to contend with a close escort of sabs.



These two thugs were called out by the Holcombe Harriers to attack a sab minibus.



Sabs from the West Midlands brighten the day for this Warwickshire Beagles supporter.

MIDLANDS

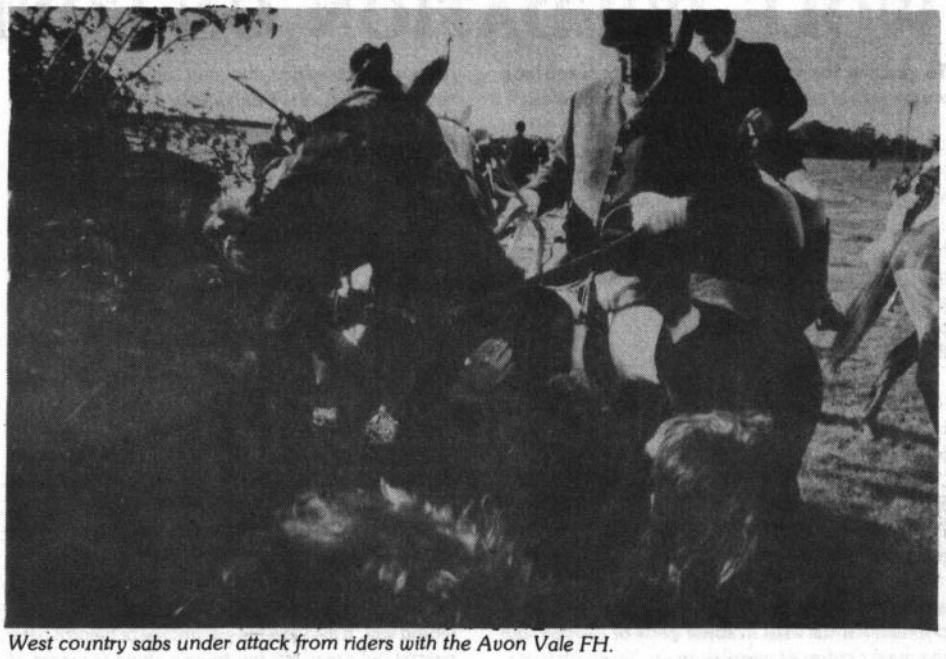
The new LEICESTER UNIVERSITY group devoted its first season to getting to grips with the Fernie FH after deciding to leave the larger shire packs until the group is fully trained and confident. They began by doing joint-hits with LEICESTER POLY group and now reckon that whilst two van-loads of sabs are good for security, larger invasions have only prompted a violent response from the hunt and over-policing. Early efforts were not all successful -sometimes the group picked the wrong coverts to pre-beat - but whilst at first they saw their success largely in terms of their disruptive effect, they are now developing an ability to control the pack and look forward to increased success next November.

WORCESTER group have been out with WEST MIDLANDS HSA and sabs from LEOMINSTER, WARWICK UNIVERSITY, and BROMSGROVE against the Croome & West Warwickshire FH, the Worcestershire FH and the Warwickshire Beagles. The group are so well-loved by the beagle pack that they even feature in 'Loppylugs' hunting column in the local paper, where they are referred to as 'the uninvited persons.' CAMBRIDGE group have hit the Puckeridge & Thurlow several times to good effect.

WALES

BANGOR HSA kept up their reputation for being an all-weather group, turning out in good numbers to prevent an attempt by the South Shropshire FH to hunt on foot in heavy snow and frozen ground in February. Police arrived like a party of tourists and stood around taking souvenir snapshots of the sabs for the station album. An outing to sab the Staffordshire Moorland Beagles was abandoned when the hounds failed to turn

up. On February 1st, the group organised a joint hit on the traditional joint-meet of three packs, the potentially violent Flint & Denbigh FH, the Royal Rock Beagles, and the Snowdonia foot pack, Eryri FH at Plas-yn-Cefn in lwyd. Losing the Eryri early on (not hard!), they settled for the Flint & Denbigh. Skillful hornblowing split the pack again and again on its first draw and nearly two hours were wasted as the hunt searched for errant hounds and remonstrated with the police. This process was repeated throughout the day to the great annoyance of the huntsman, until he decided to give the day up as a dead loss in late afternoon. The big freeze kept most packs in the VALE OF GLAMORGAN HSA's country holed up in their kennels after Xmas, but two sabs were undertaken agains the Curre FH and the Monmouthshire FH. Four members of the group waiting patiently outside the kennels of the SE Wales Minkhounds on May 10th were blocked in by a hunt vehicle and then arrested under the Offensive Weapons Act for having an anti-mate spray in the boot of the car.



West country sabs under attack from riders with the Avon Vale FH.

SOUTH EAST

After the limp attempts by police to stop the violent attentions of supporters of the East Sussex & Romney Marsh FH, sabs from FOLKESTONE, HASTINGS, TONBRIDGE and BRIGHTON blockaded the kennels. In the afternoon they moved on to find the Brighton & Storrington Foot Beagles drinking in a pub and contemplating the snow. Despite the chilly weather, the hunt failed to offer a warming toddy to sabs and were consequently pelted with snowballs for being so unsociable. Against such dastardly tactics the hunt cancelled the meet and legged it home.

The Surrey Union FH enjoyed only 2 sab-free Saturdays between December and April thanks to the Surrey Hunt Action Group. SHAG is well co-ordinated and makes good use of CBs complete with code cards to prevent interference. The hunt's final fixture was attended by 120 sabs, and it is reportedly now considering the abandonment of Saturday meets altogether.

The SOUTH EAST ANTI HUNTING ALLIANCE successfully swamped the Southdown & Eridge FH on January 18th with over 90 sabs surrounding the huntsman and hounds in corners of fields everytime he tried to draw. The hunt responded by running five miles to unprepared ground where they had an unproductive day.

The Surrey & North Sussex Beagles



Surrey and North Susex Beagles halted in their tracks by sabs from North Downs group.

Towards the end of the season, attention was switched to the Old Surrey & Burstow FH after hunt psychos, the brothers Chilcott, sent a sab home with a broken jaw. Sabs returned twice and used small group techniques to great effect, preventing a single kill.

received NORTH DOWNS HSA twice in the new year despite inept attempts at secrecy and even sending daily patrols out from the kennels to check for waiting sabmobiles. On the second occassion, the hunt boxed up and drove from field to field looking for a break until they lost their keys and had to stop.

BRIGHTON & WORTHING group have been out with sabs from HORSHAM and HASTINGS HSA and have had a good season. The are sorry to see the back of East Sussex huntsman Trevor Adams as he leaves the pack in search of another hunt who might need his useless hunting inabilities. Trevor is better known for his enthusiastic approach to maiming hunt saboteurs and he will of course have no trouble finding new employment. Brighton group's message to any sabs who can't help them with minkhunts this summer is 'spend the time getting fit!'

SOUTH WEST

COTSWOLD HSA started January in pouring rain with the Cotswold Vale Farmers FH, who first mistook them for terriermen but realised their mistake when they tried to bolt a fox and the sabs kept getting in the way. Two more good sabs on this pack resulted in the familiar pattern of the hunt producing eight psychopaths who attacked the van and injured the driver. Cotswold group has also been out with sabs from Bristol, Worcester, Bath and Swindon against a variety of West Country packs. SWINDON HSA found themselves in trouble at the end of a joint hit at the VWH on March 8th. A redcoat and several foot followers blocked in the group's landrover and smashed the windscreen, bent the doorframe down and tried to pull the sabs out. Police at Cirencester laughed when the incident was reported to them and 'advised' the sabs to forget all about it. Its been the most successful season to date for EXETER group. They have seen a growth in both their numbers and the frequency of their actions. A more dynamic approach to sabotage has resulted in an increase in arrests, but this has not deterred the group. The Devon foxhunting season is longer than that of anywhere else in the country, stretching from mid-August till early May, so many of the group are understandably looking forward to the summer. Plans are being set in motion for the forthcoming minkhunting and fishing season.

WOLF PREDATION ON FOXES

To shatter the myth that Foxhunters replace wolves as a natural prey species on foxes.

Supporters of 'field sports' use many and varied arguements in their defence. The defence of Foxhunting is prone to deteriorate into romantic images of rural Britain, and accounts of blood crazed foxes slaughtering livestock. The fox hunters may even claim that they are balancing out nature. Man has forces the wolf to extinction, the natual enemy of the British fox, now to redress the balance the fox hunters claim that the hunt replaces the wolf as a predator on foxes.

Let us, for the duration of this article put aside the many arguments for and against fox control and try to examine the relationship between wolves and foxes.

The Red Fox inhabits Eurasia, from Ireland to the Bering Straits and Japan, the fox is present in North America too. This fox (vulpes vulpes) is the fox we are to concern ourselves with.

The Wolf (Canis lupus) also inhabited Eurasia and the cooler parts of North America. Scattered populations still exist in some parts of Europe, but the main centres of population are North America, Canada and the Soviet Union. The last wolf in Britain died in 1743, it was shot in the Scottish Highlands.

So since 1743 the fox has had no natural predator to control its population. Hunting the fox with hounds as we know it today became fashionable towards the end of the Eighteenth century. However, Foxhunting didn't occur on a large scale until the Regency days. The claim that the Fox hunt replaces the wolf as the foxes 'natural predator' is an transparent as the claim that hunting is efficiant and humane.

The cause of the wolves extinction is two pronged. Firstly, our islands are too crowded to support a wolf population. There is not enough habitat to support them. Secondly, man has slaughtered wolves in such a wanton and callous that the animals could not sustain their numbers under the pressure. But if Britain was to support a healthy wolf population, just how would the fox population react?

To the wolf the fox constitutes a non-prey species. Both animals are carnivors and are related. However, wolves weigh form 25 to 50 kilos and stand from 70 to 80 centimetres at the shoulder, as opposed to the smaller fox who weighs form 6 to 10 kilos. From this one can easily forecast the result of a wolf-fox confrontation, the wolf would win. It also has the advantage of being a pack animal, whereas the fox travels alone for most of the year, and never hunts in packs. But foxes are not preyed upon heavily by wolves. A wolf may attack and kill a fox in a dispute about food, but the fox is not a dumb animal. It is hardly likely to charge in amongst a pack of feeding wolves. It's more likely that a wolf may steal a kill form a fox, or loose a temper with a persistant scavenger.



Both wolves and foxes bury surplus food for later consumption. Wolves and foxes take advantage of each others caches at times. L. David Mech in his book 'The Wolf' details instances where foxes followed wolves to caches of food. Mech also reports seeing a sleeping fox about 30 metres from wolves feeding on a carcass, once again the wolves showed no animosity. Mech observed wolves killing foxes on more than one occassion, but it is worth noting that disputes over food had a part to play in at least one of the encounters.

Being a large predator, wolves generally prey on large herbivores. In western Canada the Elk is the primary prey of wolve, in the Artic Tundra the Caribou, on the Isle Royale the moose, and in the United States and the rest of Canada the White Txiled Deer is the wolfs number one prey species. In studies done to investigate just what a wolf eats, the most prominent prey was different types of deer. In Finland the wolf is the most important predator of reindeer.

Domestic animals are also susceptable to wolves. These animals are unable to defend themselves adequately, after being selectively bred under constant protection from man. They therefore fall easy prey to the wolf.

Foxes have evolved to take advantage of smaller prey such as rabbits, moles, mice, birds, hares and various beetles and fruit. There is no competition between wolves and foxes for this type of food. Wolves do not reduce the food supply for foxes. On the contrary, wolves increase the available food for foxes in the form of carion from their own kills.

Wolves and Foxes benefit each other when it comes to raising young as well. They are both likely to exploit each others dens, wolves may remodel a fox den, and foxes may use a vacated wolf den.

In summing up, it can be seen that the wolf has never governed the population of foxes, they benefit each other and co-exist quite happily. In the age of the motor car, fox casualties on the road are far greater than fox deaths attributed to wolves ever were.

The last word must go to L. David Mech who states, 'Probably the fox benefits more from its relations with the wolf than does the wolf. This is because the wolf provides a great deal of food for the fox in the form of abandoned kills, and in this way actually helps to promote a higher fox population'.

Group News from page 13

EAST

NORFOLK HSA are one more group now finding their job much simpler with CB radios. They generally keep a small group of sabs on foot with the hunt all day, relaying information to the circling vans by radio. They've disrupted the Waveney, the West Norfolk and the Dunstan Harriers with good results and taken part in two joint hits on the West Norfolk FH. During the first of these, the huntsman was delayed for 30 minutes while he argued with sabs and there were no kills. Sabs obtained the supposedly secret location of this pack's final meet at Gressenhall and were greeted on their arrival by long faces and a very irritated huntsman. Foxes were not even chased, let alone killed.

SOUTH

A new group based in SALISBURY has had a promising first season with repeated visits to the Wilton FH and side swipes at the Portman, New Forest FH and Beagles, and the RA. Good relations with the local press have been established and Wiltshire police have responded well to sab complaints about hung violence. Sabs from OXFORD have been going out to midweek fixtures as well as Saturday and are not averse to catching buses to get there if necessary. They are often out in ones and twos against the Vale of Aylesbury FH and the Bicester and Warden Hill FH. Although solo sabbing means they get a few more knocks from cowardly hunt thugs, they were more fortunate after a sab on the Garth and South Berks FH, when two elderly followers gave them a lift back to the railway station. This hunt cheerfully admits to being a completely useless agent of pest control with the season's tally standing at only 30 foxes at the end of March.



A follower of the Hampshire FH displaying his enormous intellect to a group of sabs.

EXPLODING FROM THE CENTRE – REGIONALISATION & THE HSA

With the recent formation of the Southern Anti Bloodsports Society (SABS) as an amalgamation of several South Coast HSA groups, the debate about regionalising the HSA has once again been shoved to the fore.

One body of opinion holds that it is a necessary and beneficial development, another that it will be the downfall of HSA; whilst some people with long memories only recall the failure of the Federation system in the late 1970s and regard the issue now with some scepticism.

There have been proposals in the past for re-constituting HSA committee on regional lines with area delegates. There have even been proposals for setting up 'satelite' committees in the regions, all reporting back to a central body at regular intervals. The difficulty in administering these schemes, however helpful they might actually be, has probably been their undoing. Successive committees have fuddled their brains on devising new and ever more complex methods of organisation and in the end given up and gone for a well earned holiday.

The Quest for Funds

SABS has by-passed this process by organising itself on regional lines quite autonomously and without consultation with the rest of the HSA. Their Press Officer, Tony Faramus, sees the key issue as one of group funding. Since the budget of national HSA does not run to handing out large sums of money to local groups, and the Southern groups in common with just about everybody else found themselves unable to afford regular transport and other equipment, they decided that the only certain way of raising it was to charge separate subscriptions.

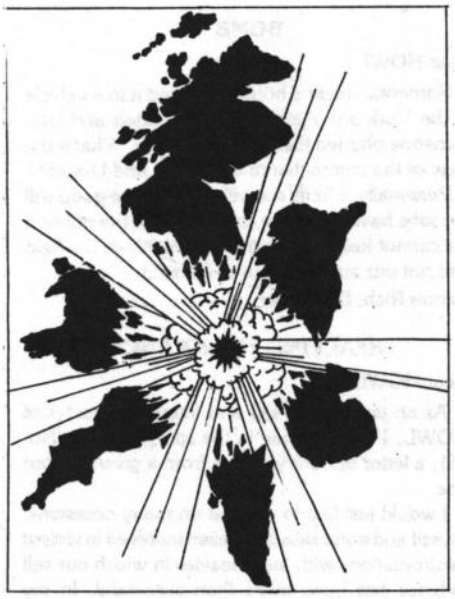
This provoked a pretty hostile response in some quarters. If HSA members are offered a local version of HSA, it was argued, with a cheaper subscription and the promise that the money would be used to buy CBs and minibuses for the group, then they might drop their membership of HSA in favour of SABS. Neither Tony or John Walters, a SABS member from Portsmouth feel that this has happened. John reckons that most paid up HSA members in the SABS area are inactive and wealthy enough (and willing enough) to be members of both.

Decline in Other Areas

If HSA were to lose members' subscriptions from the relatively affluent South (where about about one eighth of the entire membership live), the pressure would would be keenly felt by such areas as the North East. HSA targets less active areas like this for development and assistance, but depends upon money from the South to put its schemes into action.

Moreover, a damaged budget could prevent HSA from providing those services that are presently enjoyed by all groups, including a valuably unifying contacts system, landrover loan, tactics seminars, sales goods and propaganda material. The success of the HSA's BBC Open Door programme could not have been achieved by a regional body any more than advertisements in national newspapers could be afforded.

SABS members are adament that regionalisation along their lines does not threaten HSA. Most say they will remain in both groups and express their continuing support for HSA.



The Scottish Alternative

North of the Border, the four active Scottish groups got together three years ago to form Scottish HSA. It differs from SABS in that it does not charge a subscription. Funds for transport and equipment are raised in the normal way by the groups themselves. Two or three delegates are sent from each group to a regional council which sees itself purely as a working party for shared strategy and co-operation. A separate subscription was decided against for the reason that they felt it would cost the HSA valuable members.

They point to HOWL as one national resource that must be retained by the movement. But disillusionment with HOWL drove many HSA groups in the South all the more determinedly to form SABS. Tony Faramus says that HOWL failed to cover the area properly in its reports and Southern sabs felt isolated and neglected. Past editors of HOWL would probably lay the blame with the groups concerned for not sending the information in. Tony says this was simply not the case. At any rate, it is an object lesson to HOWL editors of just how easy it is to lose the support of its readers.

Conflicts of Loyalty

One critic of the SABS method of regionalisation is Exeter sab, Ralph Cook. Apart from the obvious arguements outlined already, he forsees a conflict of loyalty amongst potentially good HSA committee members. In an action-orientated movement with too few capable administrators in its ranks, it is something we can ill-afford.

If regionalism works, he expects the petty bickering that goes on in most groups and in the national HSA to move into the middle ground. Tony Faramus doesn't agree. SABS has no committee (although it does have a secretary and press officer) 'because we don't want the arguements', he says. Some believe this policy may change with maturity. Ralph suggests that when local offshoots start developing their own policies and beliefs, possibly at odds with one another, the movement as a whole will lose direction and promote confusion in the media and elsewhere. If, on the other hand, they all agree, then they will become rival, largely duplicating groups wasting money and effort in the same way as factions within the anti-vivisection movement.

Time and Energy

Tony doesn't see the mushrooming of similar groups to SABS as very likely, however. He emphasises that it has involved a great deal of time and energy to get it off the ground - something which he doubts is so readily available in other areas. Of course, this is precisely where anti-regionalists point to SABS as an example of selfish individualism being developed at the expense of the common good.

Some regionalists argue that they feel out of touch with the national committee. Perhaps it is up to them to 'sponsor' a candidate for election. Last year's committee did look at ways of reorganising the elections so that the committee would be made up of representatives from each region. But, it came up with no satisfactory formula to overcome the possibility of two or more good candidates having to fight over one regional seat whilst no willing candidates might be standing in another.

Continuing Debate

Whatever the rights and wrongs of it, the debate over regionalism will neither start nor end with SABS. The wish to break down large centralist structures and evolve decision making to more representative smaller groups is a common and persistant train of thought in most organisations. The arrival of Hunt Action Groups on the skyline, with their potential for mobilising large local populations who might otherwise have remained untouched by HSA, is certainly an expression of this.

In all probability, regionalism, in some form or another, will come to the HSA in time. SABS, Scottish HSA, and the present committee are in agreement that this must be done without harming the national identity of the movement. It may well fall to the HSA committee to propose and carry through a workable regional policy in the not too distant future. For, once the burden of administrative work has been taken from the shoulders of the committee and given to office volunteers to sort out, a redefinition of both the role and the make-up of the committee will be timely.

In practice, it will depend upon the wishes of ordinary grassroots members getting an airing. Hopefully, this article has opened up the ground for debate. Whether HOWL returns to the subject depends largely upon your response.





Write to HOWL C/O PO Box 19, London SE22 9LR. This page could be an excellent forum for debate – please use it. Its your opportunity to comment upon the articles you read in HOWL. Keep letters to a maximum of 250 words or be prepared to let us edit them.

Dear HOWL

Yesterday I went on my first hunt sab, and I think I'm right in saying I've never experienced anything like that before. Bristol, Bath and Gloucester groups gathered at a Beaufort Hunt meet near Bristol. Immediately we found the huntsmen and hounds and got to work. I couldn't believe it when I saw a girl of no more than SEVEN riding with the Hunt.

The police were present and held one group in their van for nearly two hours, it showed just how biased the police are, they were quite happy to let the hunt get on with their murderous pasttime and stop our peaceful demonstration.

One incident nearly made me loose control of myself, we caught up with the hunt to find the dogs digging at a fox earth and huntsmen standing around waiting for them to get to the fox and rip it up. We lay across the earth so the hounds couldn't dig and after a while the hunt moved off. During the day we saved two foxes and often split the hunt up into total confusion.

I urge anyone who condemns foxhunting to go along to a sab. Taking part actively is so different from watching pictures on TV.

M. Birchall, Weston-Super-Mare, Avon.

HUNTING AT ODDS WITH FARMING

Dear HOWL

As a former shepherd and farmer on the Isle of Wight, I am writing to confirm that the majority of small and medium-sized farmers there, and probably throughout the country, thoroughly support the sabs aim to see bloodsports banned.

The Isle of Wight Foxhunt ignored banning instructions from three farmers in my area on more than one occasion.

When hounds invaded a field of my 60 in-lamb ewes, and rounded them up in a manner likely to cause abortion, the Hunt responded to my family's complaint by sending the Master and his wife to visit me. I believe this was so the matter could be hushed up and did not have to be discussed by the Hunt Committee.

They did not apologise, nor offer any cash as damages, but admitted the Master had SENT the hounds into that field instead of through others lying fallow on all sides. His act was one of gross incompetence showing hunters have no knowledge or respect for the 'Great Outdoors', which they claim hunting is preserving.

The island hunting fraternity comprises many business people who keep a horse as a hobby for snob-value and have little or no riding skill. Widespread use of Pelham and other severe bits testifies to this, and shows how cruelly they treat their horses.

Finally, to anyone claiming foxes take lambs, I have only one reply. If the rabbit population is left to find its own level, and shepherds are prepared to work longer hours at lambing – THEY DON'T!

And remember – HUNT SUPPORTERS are what you need when you run out of LAVATORY PAPER!

Lousie Evans, Limpley Stoke, Nr. Bath.

BOMB

Dear HOWL

Someone made a bomb and fixed it to a vehicle in the York and Ainsty (North) kennels and later someone phoned them up to tell them. What is the view of the committee to this action and U-turn?

Personally, I think we will waste all the good will the sabs have gained in the past from the public if we cannot keep to helping the wildlife in the field and not our emotions out of the field.

Dennis Rich, Doncaster

REACTING TO VIOLENCE

Dear HOWL

As an active hunt sab and interested reader of HOWL, I recently saw in the spring edition (No. 32), a letter of hunt violence from a given Oxford Joe.

I would just like to say that on many occasions, myself and other sabs have been involved in violent confrontations with hunt heavies in which our self defence has been more than successful. In my experience, a good sab should stand his ground and retaliate when he is physically harmed or prevented from going where he wants to go (which is nearly always the case when hounds are in cry).

I strongly condemn the way this empty headed Oxfod wanker openly accuses HSA members of being selfish, hypocritical and ego tripping. Anyone who is opposed to hunting should be welcomed regardless of culture, ego or diet.

If Oxford Joe was being attacked, would he have other sabs hold up signs saying 'Please do not hit me – this is a peaceful demo'? Or would he welcome physical aid?

Despite our difference of opinion, we are all fighting the same battle; we know we are winning and the opposition know we are winning – so let's keep on sabbing and not have anyone accusing fellow sabs of being selfish.

You sab your way, Joe, and I'll sab mine; but shut your mouth and don't tell anyone who has been whipped, kicked, punched, half-drowned, trampled on or had their cars damaged that they should not retaliate likewise.

For fox sake sort yourself out.

Exeter sab.

Dear Editors

I must take issue with Oxford Joe when he states, without giving any reason, that 'one quality of a sab should be the ability to be non-violent in all situations.'

Whilst I have a great deal of respect for Joe, and admire his ability and courage to face a hunt alone – a type of sabotage of which I have painful memories – I can't accept the above statement at all.

In my view, the qualities necessary in any hunt saboteur are a degree of courage, a desire for self-preservation, a lot of commonsense and a good understanding of how hunting works, and the tactics necessary to prevent it working.

I don't condone premeditated unprovoked violence against hunters although it doesn't require much provocation for me to justify its use. After all, hunters are engaged in unprovoked, premeditated violence against our fellow creatures. It is important to remember that if a sab refuses to use self defence or attack as a tactic, then he or she may on occasions witness the death of an animal whose life he or she could have saved.

If self-defence is removed from our list of tactics then heavies will find us easy game and saboteurs will become spineless, cowering creatures, unable to take immediate decisions or stick their necks out. If sabs refuse to use limited violence against hunters, how are they to prevent a fox being dug out and killed?

It is often said that HSA stands against violence and that it is violence in fact that we are really fighting. I disagree. We are fighting (literally) against the enslavement of our fellow inhabitants (human and non-human) and we will never throw off their chains as long as we leave violence as the sole prerogative of our enemies.

It sounds calous, but what we're fighting is murder, not some future catastrophe like nuclear war or death by pollution whose operants can afford to sit in the middle of the road singing and offering passive resistance to their enemies. If we offered passive resistance in the true meaning of the word, our protests would stop at the hunt meet.

Come on, lets get rid of the hypocrisy. If Joe's a pacifist; fine, but leave the rest of us to stop the killing in our own way.

Ralph Cook.

WINNING THE MENTAL BATTLE

Dear Editors

I entirely agree with the sentiments expressed by 'Duggs' in his excellent article, 'The Mental Battle' (HOWL 32).

Sabs confronted by heavies will reduce the risk of violence if they appear to eminate confidence; which in turn produces a useful psychological weapon. The most effective way of gaining confidence is through the knowledge that you could handle yourself effectively if attacked.

Because potential assailants tend to be bigger than sabs, I believe sabs should take up a martial arts skill which relies on speed rather than strength. It should encompass not only elements of self-defence but also of fighting techniques so that you are able to inflict adequate damage.

Using such methods is obviously a last resort but the point is that the knowledge that you could hurt a ten ton macho slob is guaranteed to increase your confidence.

Once gained, you can use your confidence in a number of ways such as; adopting a martial arts fighting stance (gives the impression that you know something they don't), walking defiantly towards them (you've taken the initiative) or the hard stare treatment (the dangerous psychopath look).

A word of warning though. Don't turn up at your local karate club saying that you want to learn how to beat up heavies. Such an attitude is considered ethically unsound and is frowned upon. Additionally, as the Hastings group has found to its cost, some karate instructors follow fox-hunts!

Bilbo Baggins, Kent.