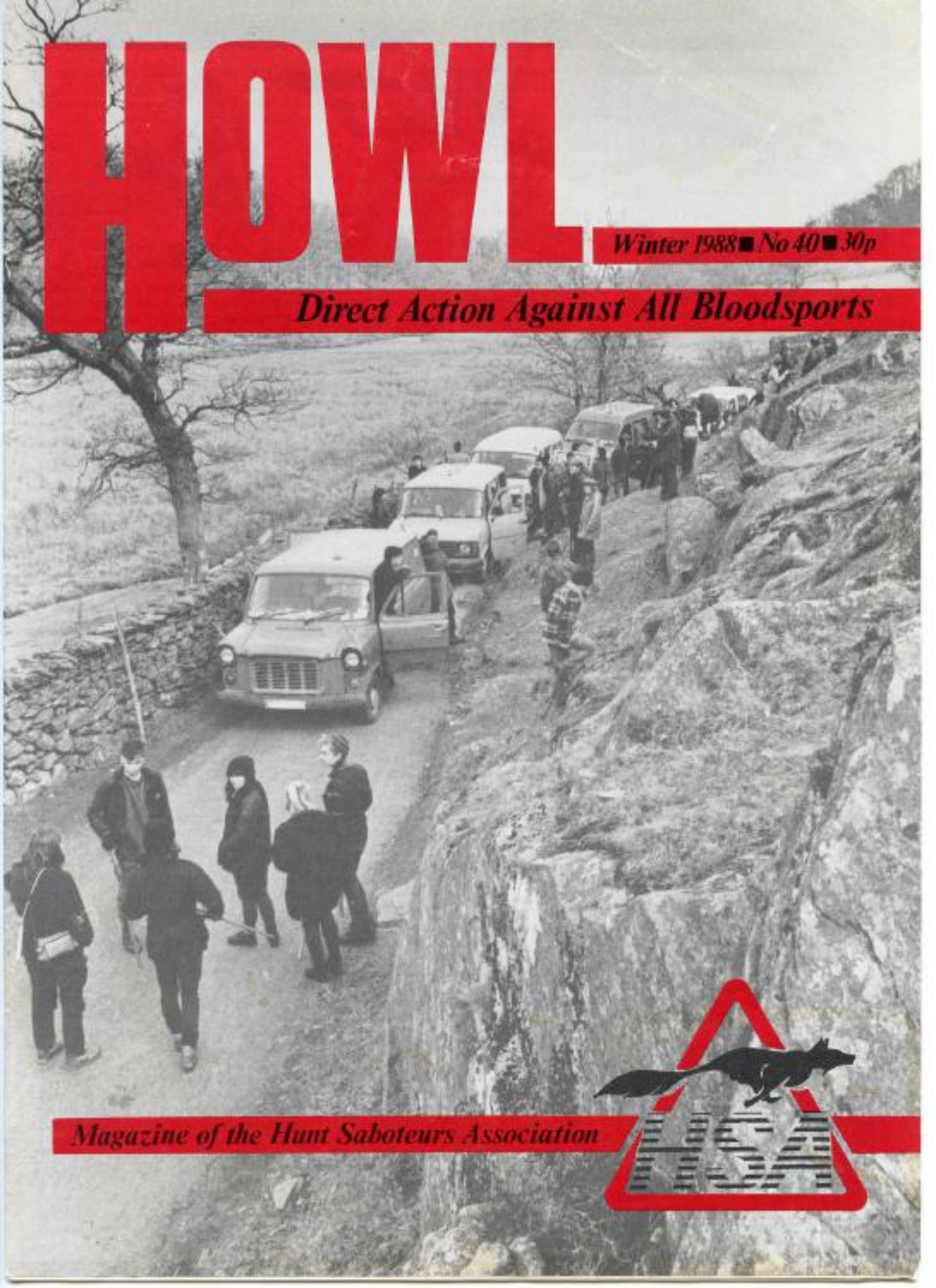
HOWL

Winter 1988 ■ No 40 ■ 30p

Direct Action Against All Bloodsports



Magazine of the Hunt Saboteurs Association



HOWL 40 EDITORIAL

As Usual with a HOWL covering the summer months, you'll find quite a diversity of topics here. Group News as we know it has been abandoned in favour of separate reports on angling, mink hunting, rabbiting and, of course, the Circus shows — normal service will resume with HOWL 41 provided you keep us flooded with hit reports and group news updates.

We also carry a major article by HSA's legal officer, John Beggs, urging all saboteurs to mount a legal offensive against lawful poisoning and hunt violence this season. We have waited many years for a competent and enthusiastic legal officer to co-ordinate a programme of this sort, now we have one, so please consider his advice seriously and act upon it.

The postal workers' dispute has meant that some articles and photos have not reached us in time for inclusion. There is therefore no tactics article.

Photographers.

To help photographers with their expenses, HSA will pay (starting this issue) £5 to anyone whose photographs are printed in HOWL. If more than one of your pictures is used, you'll get a bonus of £1.00 for each of them. So, it's £5 for one photograph printed, £6 for two, £7 for three, and so on. All you have to do is put a tick on the back of each print you submit, along with your name and address and whether you want the picture credited in HOWL. Photos not used immediately will be kept on file for future use and will only be paid for if and when they are published in HOWL.

Copydate for HOWL 41 is November 12th.

Opinions expressed in Howl do not necessarily reflect the views of the editors or of the HSA.

HOWL is edited, designed and produced by Steve Poole & Janette Sorr.

Fox Cubs



PO BOX 87
EXETER
EX4 3TX

Fox Cubs is a branch of the Hunt Saboteurs Association for children aged 7 - 14 who would like to join but are too young to go out sabbing.



Using Dried Blood

Dear HOWL,

Whilst respecting certain aspects of David Lane's ethical viewpoint on the use for NON-Use of dried blood for laying false trails, I must say that I nevertheless find the tenor of his objection perplexing, especially as I once saw dried blood used with great effect some years ago, to help the Belvoir pack.

Taking into account the many millions of pounds turned over by the meat industry, the amount of dried blood used by saboteurs is likely to be so infinitesimally small a portion of the whole, as to escape the grasp of the normal imagination and be considered in mathematical terms only.

After all, one pound's worth of blood will not produce one hundred pence worth of profit for the meat trade, after expenses of production and distribution have been subtracted, yet by this same surreal and pragmatic indulgence, a considerable number of foxes might be saved, a number of novice subs inspired by success, and a number of pompous huntsmen humbled.

Animal abuse does not begin and end with the meat and medical industries. It is interwoven with the whole of commerce. Car and bus tyres employ animal products in their manufacture. Certain steels are tempered with whale oil. Banks which are fundamental to every form of economic activity, must inevitably finance animal abuse to some degree. Is it therefore to be expected that everyone supporting animal rights should refuse to travel by bus, to use money, or eat without a knife?

Whether we like it or not, circumstances compel us to compromise at some point if we want to remain in society and win hearts. The question is at which point?

By all means be a rational wingy on wages, but don't let the desire to obtain behavioural purity become a crippling impediment in the fight against animal cruelty. I have always thought of hunt subs as practical activists, rather than the quasi-religious who can practise their own forms of prayer and abstinence in private.

John Heaton
Sheffield

Dear HOWL,

On reading HOWL 39 I was horrified to learn that HSA is now advocating the use of dried blood in order to combat the hunt. As a vegan for ethical reasons I would not wish to contribute one penny to blood HSA funds if I thought that any of it was to be spent on by-products of the abbatoir. I appreciate that not all hunt subs are vegetarian, but that is no reason for HSA to promote the use of such products as dried blood thus helping these obscene industries to further profit. Cruel as hunting is, by sheer numbers alone it is relatively small compared to the obscenities involved in the meat and dairy industries.

The following quotation from Mark Boyle's will hopefully provide food for thought. "True, cowhide is only a by-product of hamburger, but if cows were killed for their skins, would their flesh be any more morally edible so long as you did not wear leather?"

"And what about the veal floating inside every glass of milk... There can be no quest of milk where there is no cutlet of veal. If your lips are white with milk, it is because someone else's are red with blood."

Sandra Bowell
Edinburgh

The HSA has not exactly 'advocated' the use of dried blood. What the Tactics Officer said was that he has found it the only effective medium for trail laying. Assuming he is right, and that false trails are worthwhile, saboteurs will have to balance an ethical equation which is anything but straight forward. We cannot help them in this but we can assure you that no money sent to the HSA is spent on dried blood.
Ed



Public Image

Dear HOWL,

I feel I should raise a few points that will no doubt offend some. As we should all be aware by now, Hunt Saboteurs are on the front line in the fight against bloodsports. Shouldn't we then all be making an effort to look and act like responsible human beings such that the general public may be prepared to listen and to hopefully give their money to us?

I refer to the 'punk' types and others that don't obviously make the effort to look responsible when standing on street stalls and the like. I do fully accept that we should all be able to express ourselves however we please... but the general public don't see it that way. What they do see is a stall displaying anti bloodsports posters with (for example) a couple of pink haired 'punks' and a rag-wearing punk type stood behind it. They also see the town's punks sat around swigging cider in the town centre (every town has them), and probably come to the conclusion that any money put into the collection boxes goes on buying booze. I'm afraid this isn't fiction. I've heard so many people say just that, and it's time we took it seriously.

The public often prefer to ignore anything the average rag-wearing punk says because they see them as anarchists, yobs, drug addicts and alcoholics, all anti-social whereas your average hunt member (excluding former types) is quite the opposite.

One man Press Officer did the required on TV on Boxing Day but she appeared with dyed hair and more attention was paid to the punkish appearance than the issue at hand.

The state of some activists could also be improved on sales (I as all looked like we'd made the effort and not just fallen out of bed and put on the first thing that came to hand out of the jumble bag. We would look more organised, they would respect us more and maybe listen to us. (They being hunt staff, riders, supporters, the public we come across and the powers that be!).

A further point they pick up on, as I do, is the

origin of the hair dye; the stuff more often than not having been tested on animals. Come on, for the sake of the animals we're risking life and liberty for, lets all make the effort. Believe me, it's important.

Thug.

Our shockingly disheveled Press Officer was hauled before HSA's Executive Director and summarily flogged and confined on December 27th. She now resembles Sue Lawley.

Smug.

Proof of the pudding?

Dear HOWL,

Yesterday evening on TV I saw hunt saboteurs for the first time and was appalled and horrified at their appearance. It is not surprising that on many occasions the police are against them. They looked like pikis and football hooligans; one even had an awful Mohicans haircut. I do think they should look neat and tidy, no punks or long hair. I feel sure the public would get more sympathy for their efforts if they made the effort to look neater and tidier.

Yours faithfully,

(Mrs) W K Welch
Redleigh Saboteur

Stop the Slagging!

Dear HOWL,

After reading many HOWL letters pages I have decided to have a moan — about the moaning and groaning that appears in every issue.

I'm as different to anybody else. I like a bit of gossip and have the occasional bitch about someone, but I feel the letters page of a society mag which is dedicated to saving precious lives is not the place for it. We all talk about love and peace, so how come so much squabbling finds its way into print? It's not just here, it turns up everywhere, going as far as the National societies slagging each other. If this much time and thought (and postage costs!) went straight into the struggle for what we all want — freedom and peace for all living creatures — then I'm sure we'd all get a lot further and a lot quicker.

I'm not saying that arguments about unions, personality clashes etc., are not valid, I just think that we could make better use of the space given to us. How about some constructive ideas on this page, like brief reports from sab groups on successful fund-raising, what's going on in their local press, public relations etc. The sort of stuff we can all learn from.

Finally, seeing as I've bought the stamp, I'd like to say how helpful and informative I have found not only HOWL, but the contacts bulletins, hotline talks etc. and thanks to all the people who put in so many hours hard work ensuring that all subs are kept up to date and well briefed, prepared for what we all have to face in the killing fields.

Deb
Petersfield HSA

Waterloo Cup

Dear HOWL,

I was outraged to read (HOWL 38) the statements of LACS officials, Lindsay Rogers and Richard Course, condemning anti-coursing activities.

Unhappily, this follows a general trend of officials of national animal protection societies putting down direct action. This type of condemnation is tremendously harmful to the movement because, without doubt it has some effect in discouraging people from taking part in direct action — and without a large amount of such action, animal liberation will never be achieved.

If you are a member of a national society (LACS, Animal Aid, CIWF etc) and hear or read of their officials condemning direct action, you should try to do what you can to bring about the removal of that person from office. This could possibly take the form of a resolution to be put to their AGM. I'm all in favour of healthy debate within the movement about the pros and cons of different types of campaigning, in fact I'd like to see more of it. But it makes my blood boil when I hear of (usually salaried) officials sitting in comfortable offices condemning unpaid people who are prepared to risk imprisonment or serious injury to prevent animals from suffering. I don't think I'd machine gun Richard Course in preference to a group of hare coursers but it would be a pretty close decision (happily he has now resigned his job at LACS but we must be ever vigilant against similar traitors).

Very best wishes,

Ronnie Lee V02882
HM Prison Long Lartin
South Littleton
Evesham
WR11 5TZ

Politics and Bloodsports

Dear HOWL,

With regard to Miss S de-Cocorne's letter about the Labour Party and bloodsports, let me say that whilst the discovery of a 'caring conservative' is welcome, the lady has it very wrong with most of the points mentioned. Labour would abolish those so-called sports for all the RIGHT reasons and down the years have always been on our side of the fence.

The vast majority of these sadistic people are Maggie's rich friends who can count on the best support and protection from the most divisive government of this century.

Get it right, madam. We'll NEVER get sympathy from Tories.

I C Neal
Felixstowe

Ex-Master Tells All

Dear HOWL,

Although I have not been an HSA member in the past, I enclose a cheque for £5 and hope this will be enough to include me as a supporting member. I regret that I am middle aged with damaged knees so cannot be an active member in the hunting field, my heart has always been with you.

I used to be a member of the LACS, but decided not to continue to support them when I realised that they are opposed to sabbing. My spouse proved justified this year when I found myself in conversation with an ex-Master of Foxhounds. He is a very elderly gentleman and he told me that hunt saboteurs are a great nuisance to the hunts. I believe he still hunts in Yorkshire.

He also told me that he has seen with his own eyes money (£12.50 each) being paid to saboteurs. At the time I did not know he was an ex-MFH and I told him that I did not know from where the money would come as I didn't think the HSA had any. I also told him, to his astonishment, that LACS disapproved of sabbing. He departed saying he was going to join LACS.

As far as I am concerned, I don't mind if you do pay sab mercenaries, just keep on sabbing, especially cubhunts which I abominate.

My son is an enthusiastic saboteur which gives me great satisfaction as we are descended from the man who wrote the song 'D'ye Ken John Peel?'.

Best Wishes.

M Mattinson
London N2

Whilst it would be unthinkable to expect any great display of intelligence from an ex-Master of Hounds, we can only marvel at the durability of the famous 'all subs are paid rumour. It seems a shame to dispel it, but look at it this way. If 30 groups each fielded 25 saboteurs each Saturday, all on a flat rate of £12.50 (inc. VAT), the HSA would be pumping out £15,000 per month in wages. And if that sounds a bit expensive for an organisation without even paid office staff, spare a thought for the poor old BFSS who know very well that we have not 30 but 300 local groups, many of which go out midweek as well as weekends. Rich? We could buy up 75% of rural Britain with that sort of money and declare it a sanctuary. Ed.

Mike Nunn

Dear HOWL,

I would like to thank the many HOWL readers who have contributed to the Mike Nunn Appeal Fund following the publication of my previous letter. I would also like to respond to one correspondent, Simon Russell.

By 'the AIDS Campaign', I presume he means the Biohazard Campaign which is currently in progress in Leicester, Sunderland and Southampton. The Biohazard report, produced by the NAVS after two years research certainly is important. It proves that the AIDS virus was created in a vivisection laboratory and gives the animal rights movement in this country its first real chance to close down vivisection laboratories.

The full Biohazard Report cost £2.50, not £6, Simon. A summary of the report is available free of charge from NAVS; all the facts are as they should be, free for anyone who cares to ask for them.

Simon claims that the majority in the South East are in favour of the anarchist Federation. The majority of whom? Without leaders, the South East Animal Liberation League could not have achieved a thing. The World Day for Laboratory Animals in Brighton this year would not have been the resounding success it was. The Federation recently organised an anti-fur week in the South East. It was an unqualified shambles.

In my view, if those with misled interests in animal abuse got together to come up with an idea to nullify the efforts of the A/R movement, they would have decided to eliminate the anarchists and other no-hopers and plant into their small minds the idea of starting the Federation!

Melvyn Dallas
St Leonards on Sea
E. Sussex

Dear HOWL,

I would like to point out that I have nothing against Mike Nunn and would be the first to agree that the work Mike has done in the past has been of great value to the animal rights movement as a whole and to the South East in particular.

But I do take exception to being asked again to look out for a defence fund which has behind it an action which raised a great deal of publicity for the BUAV, and I suspect a great deal of money. Surely the BUAV should pay the £6000 for

something which they gained benefit from, not the poorest of animal rights people, hunt saboteurs. Failing this (and I expect they have been asked), perhaps Mike's employers, NAVS, would dig into their million or so and pay to get Mike out of his troubles. Mike has always worked hard for national groups and it's about time they gave him the support he needs now that he's in trouble.

Simon Russell
Tunbridge Wells Animal Rights

Save our Sanctuary!

Dear HOWL,

We are a new sanctuary in the heart of Welsh sheep farming country which, as you can imagine, brings its own problems! One of the local landowners, who unfortunately owns the access road to the sanctuary, has decided we have no right to exist. None of the sanctuary's visitors can park on the road and the farmer is trying to deny helpers right of access as well.

We desperately need money (about £1000) to build a new road, frankly to by-pass this man who is typical of his type and actually patrols 'his' road with a shotgun. Please send money urgently to save our sanctuary, which is run on animal rights lines and takes in any animal born whatever source. This is an SOS.

Money, please, to Llandrindod Wells Animal Sanctuary, "Golgotha", Gwastad, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 6RN.

LWAS

Readers might like to know that this sanctuary is co-ordinated by a past Ghost of HSA (Ed).

Diet, Direct Action & The LACS

Dear HOWL,

As a new member of the HSA I have just received my first copy of your magazine. I was shocked at the attitude of the League Against Cruel Sports as described in R Slade's letter (don't they understand that we must join together to eradicate all blood-sports? It is only natural that protesters are going to take direct action and try to intervene. We can't just stand by and watch animals being savaged. We need a carefully thought-out campaign that takes up so much of their time that they can't hunt.

In reply to The Ghost of Paint Pots Drop, may I remind you that it is pointless trying to stop one animal dying whilst eating another. It is unrealistic to assume that the MD of MacDonalds would want to help us. Anyone with the sense to realise that foxhunting is wrong would logically understand that all animal exploitation is wrong. Animal Rights and vegetarianism go hand in hand. If you forget vegetarianism then you can recruit anybody interested in a bit of class war and that is not what we want. We need people who respect both human and animal life. When a person no longer respects life of any sort then we cannot trust them with any respect. Hunters are arrogant people who needlessly destroy life because it is legal. If it were legal, they would not hesitate to take our lives, and if that seems unlikely imagine how long foxhunting has continued against all odds.

D S Eddy
Bedfordshire

MORE HUNT VANDALISM AT BADGER SETTS



One saboteur sits in the sett as various hunters stand around helplessly. Brass of Derwent, March 26th. (Photo: Iain Brown.

AN RSPCA Inspector has urged hunt saboteurs to be vigilant in the coming season against hunt interference at badger setts.

The inspector made his comments to members of Tyneside HSA after accompanying them to the scene of a dig-out by the Brass of Derwent FH a few days earlier on March 26th.

When a fox had taken refuge in a sett, saboteurs occupied the entrance but were threatened with arrest unless they moved by a policeman, PC Morrison. Morrison, as many HOWL readers will recall, is a self-confessed hunt follower of some forty years standing. Although they told him it was a badger sett, he said he was no expert on the subject but that the hunt's terrier men were and they had assured him it was a fox earth. Morrison therefore told the hunt to carry on with their dig.

Saboteurs left the scene to keep with the hounds but were told by the RSPCA inspector when they took him to the sett four days later, that it may have been more useful to stay. Prosecutions under the 1911 Protection of Animals Act would require photographs of the dig and of the terriers both before and after entry to the sett. He confirmed that it was a badger sett but said he thought it was probably disused.

Tyneside HSA say they will put this advice into practice this season and they urge hunt saboteurs to be aware of all sector exit locations in their hunt's country. Photographs showing signs of badger residence should be kept for use in cases of future legal action.

The East Sussex and Romney Marsh FH were taken to task by the Eastbourne Gazette at about the same time, for stopping badger setts at Folkington with tightly packed earth.

Active setts are stopped contrary to recommendations issued by the Badger Protection Association that only loose straw should be used.

As local resident, Colin Viller explained, "packing soil is putting the health of badgers at risk, firstly by cutting off the ventilation, and secondly by smoking them". The setts in question were found to about 20 badgers with young at the time of the interference.

VIOLENT BY DAY, VIOLENT BY NIGHT

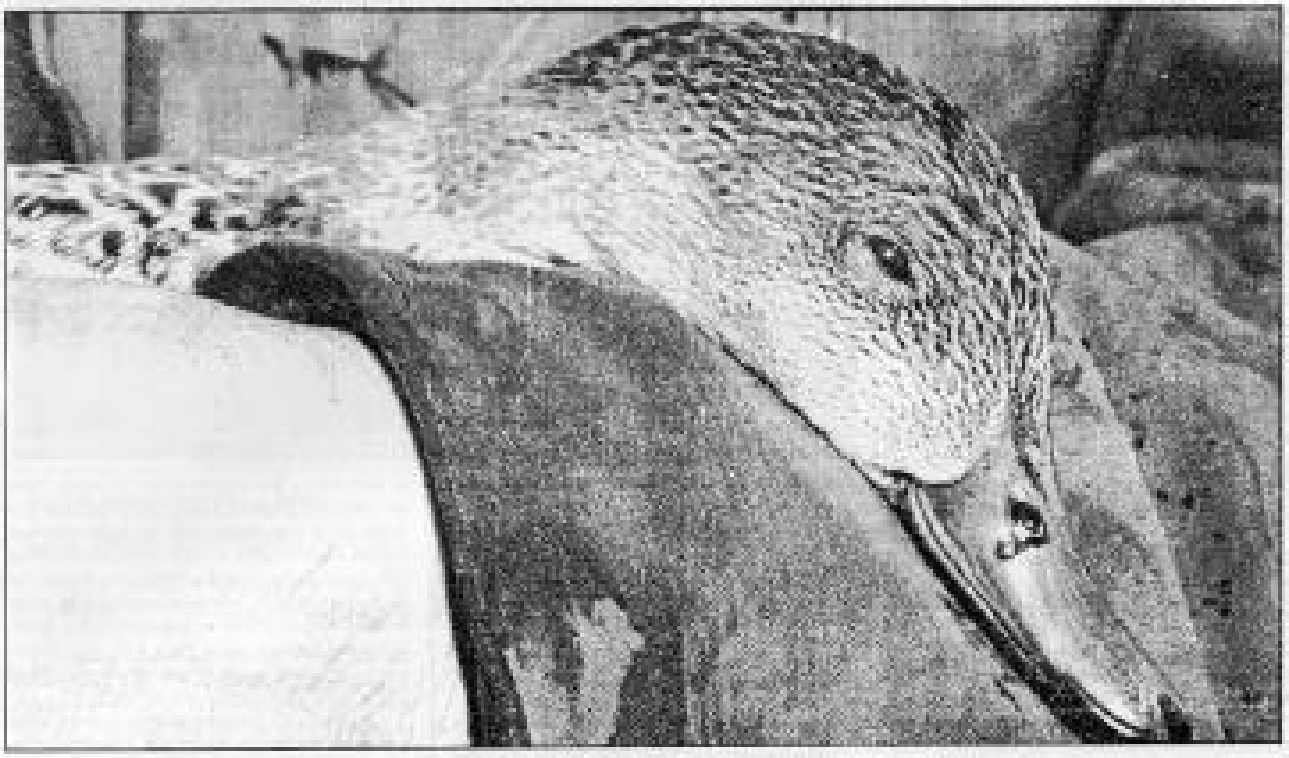
THIS year's Tweeton Hunt Ball ended in chaos as hunt members attacked a member of the band they had hired, then tried to blame him for assault.

The trouble began when a group of young hooray Henries, apparently unable to hold their champagne, began pouring drink over the band's equipment and hurled their glasses at the stage. When two of them held an impromptu sword fight with a couple of lighting stands, band member Michael McClay stepped in to stop them. One of the combatants, a 20-year old Investment Banker (whatever that is) immediately challenged McClay to a duel in his back garden. His name was George Peregrine D'el Cassowary (we bet you wish). Despite the potential amusement value of fighting a duel with such an absurd person, the musician declined his gentlemanly invitation. He was set upon anyway so he tried to leave and thumped D'el Cassowary to calm him down.

As the band retreated to their car, soaked hunt guests leapt from their seats yelling "lets get the bastheadds!" and crashed the windscreen, kicked in the body panels, tore off the exhaust, aerial and wipers and let down the tyres.

Hunt saboteurs who have experienced similar yobbish behaviour in the past from such people will not be surprised to learn that it was McClay who got prosecuted for assault (he was acquitted) or that no hunt hooligans were arrested.

GUNS TURNED ON SABS IN AUSSIE DUCK WAR



Two Animal Liberation volunteers were hit by shotgun pellets during confrontations with duck hunters in the Australian wetlands on March 19th.

200 saboteurs took to the marshes near Kerang, Victoria, in a flotilla of kayaks to obstruct the opening weekend of the duck shooting season. In past years, hunters have slaughtered hundreds of protected birds as well as their legal quarry in an annual orgy of violence against anything with feathers. This year, as the kayaks moved in to retrieve injured and dying birds from the water, some hunters abandoned flying targets altogether and blasted away at the saboteurs instead.

Animal Liberation lawyer, Sean Sallah was treated for three minor wounds to his arms and temple after a hail of pellets hit his kayak. Another man, Paul Williams was hit in the face but fortunately his skin was not punctured. John Foster, a leading representative of the shooting lobby, who had earlier pleaded with hunters to stay calm and not attack the 'greenies', was unrepentant. "You don't stand on a train line without expecting to get run down", he said.

Animal Liberation's co-ordinator and best known public face, Laurie Levy, received a near miss as he raced with a duck hunter to grab a wounded duck which had just fallen from the sky. "I was beating him to it and when I got to the duck I looked up and saw the shotgun pointing at me. I was scared", said Levy. "Then as he pulled the trigger he moved the gun to his left and the pellets hit the water about eight feet from me."

Saboteurs grabbed the man and radioed for police assistance but the police would not venture into the marshes. "They didn't want to get their face wet", according to Levy.

Shooters had moved into position at 6.45 am and began firing half an hour before the legal opening of the season, presumably hoping to out-pace saboteurs. But rescuers acted quickly, scoring unharmed ducks out of the danger area and retrieving about 40 injured birds, including 10 black swans, for treatment in their mobile veterinary hospital.

As more and more casualties were taken by Animal Liberation, hunters began a desperate race to beat saboteurs to their quarry. The legal limit on bags had recently been reduced from 20 to 10 birds per day and fear that even this was getting beyond them provoked many shooters into wrestling boats with saboteurs over the fallen ducks.

Victoria State Conservation Department which oversees shooting and is supposed to ensure that protected species are not murdered with declared itself satisfied with the first day's hunting and announced that it was "pleased with the small kill of protected birds". Certainly it was well down on last year's appalling figures, thanks less to the restraint of hunters than to the intervention of saboteurs, but it was still nothing to be proud of. The Department did not dispute Animal Liberation's estimate of 100 fatalities at Kerang and Lake Boort alone but confirmed that another 78, mainly coot, had been killed elsewhere. 46 shooters were reported for legal infringements but almost all were for jumping the gun on opening time.

Animal Liberation believe that their presence may have saved at least 300 protected birds in New South Wales over the weekend. Vice President, Tony Charles-Ross, said there had been no Conservation Dept officers in evidence at wetlands in the Albany region at all, a claim that was confirmed by the Department. They were said a representative, under-funded and short staffed. "It's totally out of control", said Tony. "We've been patrolling the area doing their jobs."

Jenny Hulme, AL's Capital Territory spokesperson, said some hunters her group had encountered had been unable to tell her which species they were shooting at. Others did not know the species that were dead at their feet. Over 300 protected birds were found dead by AL activists, including a black swan, coots, shovellers and pink eared ducks.

In Victoria, Laurie Levy's group displayed 200 retrieved dead birds, some legally shot, others not, on the steps of the Premier's office in Melbourne. AL hopes to force the government to ban next year's duck shoot by publicising the unbelievable carnage that it causes. One particularly dense shooter and taxidermist gave unwitting support to the campaign by marching past the assembled ranks of newspaper and television reporters on the pavement and trying to snatch some of the dead ducks for his portable blood-stained cooler. "I got a licence", he bellowed at Levy, "You have't and those birds belong to the State. I hope the media know you can be fined $5000 for possessing game without a licence!"

Other responses were more favourable. Mr Jones, the Federal Minister for Science, saw the display and told the press that shooting should be banned immediately. "There may be something

lacking in me, but I've never understood why people get excitement out of killing anything. It'd be different if the ducks were armed and could shoot back", he added.

Between fifty and a hundred thousand hunters were estimated to be out on the Victoria marshes over the opening weekend so it is perhaps unsurprising that the injured included one of them. A 22 year old man was in a critical condition in hospital on the evening of the first day, after being hit in the chest with his best mate's double barrel shotgun as he plucked the feathers of his tally at the side of the road.

Animal Liberation may be contacted at GPO Box 11968, Melbourne, Australia 3001, and at Room 17, Floor 5, 37 Swanston St, Melbourne, Australia 3000.

DIRECT ACTION SAVES WOLVES

THE Canadian Government's wolf-killing programme was successfully disrupted by saboteurs this year and then undone altogether by the Supreme Court of British Columbia. It has been hailed as a milestone victory by animal liberationists in both Canada and the United States because the court's ruling has rendered wolf culling completely illegal without a thorough overhauling of the Wildlife Act.

Co-ordinated by Friends Of The Wolf, saboteurs were taken into wolf country by Cessna and helicopter to prevent any outbreaks of shooting whilst a team of lawyers raced against time to file a petition against the government.

Saboteurs' aircraft flew low over the snow-covered winter landscape, watching for any evidence of government activity and spotted two piles of meat on a frozen lake during the second day. Guessing this to be bait and locating a pack of eight wolves in the vicinity, three activists skydived down to remove it.

Although the government had announced the start of its wolf kill, no shooters' camps were located and there was little sign that any wolves were yet under threat. The presence of saboteurs and the publicity they had generated, together with some unexpected warm weather with no fresh snow to aid tracking, was presumed to be the reason. Reconnaissance flying continued for a week and jobs were kept on all local helicopter pilots to check that they were not flying for the government each day.

Meanwhile, on behalf of Friends Of The Wolf, Paul George, Director of the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, filed a petition to the Supreme Court challenging Section 20 of the Wildlife Act, under which culling takes place. The government did not help its case much by submitting falsified documents to the court hearing in an effort to justify its programme and thus incurring the wrath of the bench. Justice Carol Huddart ordered an immediate moratorium on the shoot while the case continued, then found in favour of the wolves.

The government was left with no choice but to cancel its programme. However, significant though this victory is, it seems likely that the Canadian government will re-draft its Wildlife Act before the next shooting season in February 1989. Assuming that new year's shoot will therefore go ahead, Friends Of The Wolf are already preparing to combat it. You can contact them offering whatever help and encouragement you are able at: **(POB 16, Davis, California, USA).**

3 MILLION ANGLERS STAY IN BED

ANGLERS are a peculiar bunch. No sooner had the Campaign for the Abolition of Angling (CAA) announced its June 18th day of action, than the 'sporting' press began feverishly typing up its collective intention to ignore all acts completely. Never had we seen so much attention devoted to an organisation whose very existence was supposed to be unworthy of comment.

Angling Times editor, Neil Pope, spent an entire leader column explaining his magazine's "conscious decision not to publish the planned action of this tiny organisation because we don't think their activities are worth highlighting."

Norfolk and Suffolk Anglers Association urged its members to "stay cool" if they met with saboteurs on June 18th. In fact, they went one better and stayed in bed. Norwich hunt saboteurs and CAA members scoured the banks of the Yare for anglers from 5am to 10am, but encountered only four. It had been the same two days earlier on the first morning of the new season. After all the bluster of the Angling lobby about three million anglers all set for a down tools to the riverbanks, this was something of an anti-climax. On Anti-Angling Day, 3 of the 4 Norwich anglers packed up and went home at first sight of the opposition. The fourth stuck it out until saboteurs disturbed the water around his float, then followed his companions to an early breakfast. Many anglers did come down to the river later in the morning but the water had been extensively pre-fed and catches were not exactly outstanding.

Some of the best sabotage that day was undertaken by groups using boats. West Kent Animal Rights took two rowing boats into the Medway at Tonbridge, announced their intentions by loud-hailer, then ploughed backwards and forwards, disturbing the water. On dry land, other subs threw handfuls of light gravel around anglers' floats. Bristol and Bath saboteurs used similar tactics along the river Avon at Bathampton and, like Norwich group, were surprised (and pleased)



Saboteurs disrupt angling on the river Nidd

to find only a few anglers where normally there are plenty. Obviously, the publicity the CAA had achieved in the media prior to the event had caused many anglers to think twice before going out. Those men who still considered a day on the river surrounded by saboteurs preferable to a day at home talking to their wives and children, those a tougher tantrum when Bath subs rowed into view. They fired stones from catapults and lobbed rocks at the boat, hitting one saboteur.

Altogether, 26 groups took part in anti-angling action up and down the country on June 18th. The day of action attracted more media coverage than the anti-angling movement had ever generated before, and letter columns in the provincial press buzzed with the issue for a long time afterwards. CAA national secretary, Richard Farhall, called it "an enormous success" and he expresses his thanks to all those HSA members who worked with the CAA to make it so.



Many saboteurs occupy the classic high ground and call to the fish-catchers
Photo: Colin Brown



The burned out remains of the Tunbridge Wells landrover

Photo: Simon Russell

SUSPECTED ARSON ON SAB LANDROVER

A PARKED landrover belonging to Tunbridge Wells Animal Rights was found ablaze by police at 1.15am on June 10th.

Firefighters were called to put it out but the police failed to notify the vehicle's owner and he did not find out until the following evening. Police then told him that it had been an electrical fire, an explanation which seemed unlikely given that the petrol can the group keeps in the back was found after the blaze in the front. The vehicle had been parked overnight on a quiet stretch of road.

A group member sent a prompt complaint to the Chief Superintendent and received an assurance from the CID that the burnt out vehicle would be properly inspected. When the police returned to the scene however, the landrover had been taken away, surprise, surprise! by persons unknown. Announcing that they were now treating the case as one of theft, the CID spent the next month looking for it. Tunbridge Wells group were eventually contacted and told that the landrover had been located and was now at a council garage under the care of police from Chatham, Kent. All inquiries from the group as to how their vehicle was found have been brushed aside by police who say they are unable to comment.

The insurance company is now dealing with the case, but the group are unlikely to receive back as much as they have spent on maintaining the vehicle. They are out of pocket and out of transport.

FUR FARM RAIDED



TEN foxes waiting to be slaughtered for their pelts were rescued by Animal Liberation Front activists near Halifax on June 29th.

The foxes were taken from rows of small cages at Grange Fox Farm, Ovenden Wood in the early hours of the morning and are now all being cared for in safe new homes. Activists originally visited the farm during the night of June 27th but were spotted and fired at by a farm worker with a shot gun, forcing them to leave.

An ALF press statement confirms that this raid was part of an ongoing campaign of direct action against the fur trade and as such, an expression of solidarity with those activists recently imprisoned for anti-fur trade activity.

NATIONAL TRUST TO VOTE ON HUNTING

A MOTION to ban all hunting with hounds on property in the care of the National Trust will be debated at the Trust's AGM on October 23rd.

The Masters of Foxhounds Association has circulated all its members and all hunt chairmen with a desperate plea for hunting National Trust members to attend the meeting and defeat the motion. According to the MFHA's Ronnie Wallace, the Trust's ruling Council is expected to vote for the continuance of hunting, but it is well known that a large number of National Trust members are civilised people and opposed to such archaic barbarism.

We urge all HSA members who are also members of the National Trust to make sure they are there to support this motion. They should phone the Trust for ticket details.

SHOOTERS' LICENCE REDUCED

SOUTH of England hunt saboteurs scored a partial victory in June with a "well-organised" (Shooting Times) campaign against Sussex wildfowlers.

The battle to stop the renewal of shooting rights at Pagham Harbour near Chichester began over a year ago, and has won widespread support from a sympathetic general public who do not wish to see bloodsports continue in a safety reserve.

The Pagham & West Sussex Wildfowling & Conservation (sic) Association applied to the County Council for a renewal of their licence on June 8th. At the same time, councillors were presented with a petition from 5,300 local people calling for it to be turned down. According to the shooters' spokesperson, Philip Hawes, the objections were "unrepresentative" however, despite the fact that Hawes himself represents only 80 people.

The Council's Coast & Countryside Committee deliberated for over an hour before deciding to grant a three-year licence but rejected the shooters' attempts to have it increased to five as it has been in the past. Additionally, sanctuary areas are to be extended and wading birds removed from the quarry list.

Mr Hawes described the reduction of the licence as "a blow," because it would make it "difficult to maintain our commitment to conservation". This peculiar utterance does much to illustrate the hypocrisy terms with which shooters tend to regard the whole issue of conservation. The management of species and habitat as a qualification for "good sport" is rendered unnecessary if "good sport" is unavailable. It is exactly for reasons like this that parliament cannot responsibly leave conservation in the hands of self-interest bodies like the BASC and BFSS.

Animals rights groups see the decision as the first step towards a total ban. Mr Hawes was be assured that if a 5,300 signature petition is unsupportable, it will be considerably larger by the time his licence next comes up for renewal in 1991.



A clear and present kill? This is fascinating, don't let them tell you different! Jersey Lilies digest recipe. Possible Filming.

Photo: Paul Gammon

GLORIOUS TWELFTH, INDEED!

THIS YEAR'S grouse shoot campaign has been HSA's biggest and most successful to date. With three major sabotage operations mounted on the 'Goriest 12th'; further disruptions taking place over subsequent weeks; some shoots cancelling at the mere threat of sabotage, and our biggest share of media coverage ever for a single campaign; summer 1988 will be remembered as a significant milestone in the history of the HSA. The sabotage of game shooting has finally come of age.

On the following pages, various HSA members report from the sabotage moors and Ralph Cook exposes the myths grouseshooters have created about conservation.

The accompanying quotations from well-known personalities were all sent in messages of support to the HSA at the start of the campaign.



GUNNERSIDE

SPECULATION as to where the HSA would strike on the 12th had been building in the media and in shooting circles throughout the preceding week. As saboteurs began final preparations on August 11th, the Yorkshire Evening Post suddenly claimed that Bolton Abbey, the Duke of Devonshire's moor, was to be targeted. And they were right. With literally hours to go, we had to change our plans for the day and two months of hard research work went out of the window.

As the Twelfth dawned, we hit Gunnerside Moor in the Yorkshire Dales. Within minutes all access roads had been blocked, leaving Earl Peel with some hard nuts to break to his guests over breakfast. With access roads blockaded and with a local police contingent who appeared at a complete loss as to what to do next, the moor was ours.

Earl Peel is the head of the Northern Grouse Research Project. Gunnerside frequently features in the sporting press as an example of good moorland management. His face said it all.

A party of foreign guests paying thousands of pounds each for the privilege of standing on Gunnerside's hallowed heather for the day and with an anticipated bag of hundreds of grouse on the Twelfth. All the invited away in about as much time as it took to drive a transit van up the drive.

An hour or so into the morning vigil we met a local Yorkshireman out walking his dog on the moor. He could barely conceal his delight at finding us there. "There's nothing left up there now". he said in a response from the Independent. "They even shot a Peregrine last week". On Earl Peel's moor, it seems, grouse predators are ruthlessly exterminated.

Close at hand, a task force of police arrived from York and Harrogate. A state of emergency was declared under the Special Powers act. A relic of the miners' strike, this gives the police powers to block roads amongst other things. Peel's shooting party left the lodge in convoy and we found ourselves powerless to do anything other than watch as police roadblocks appeared behind the convoy. Earl Peel just happens to be the great grandson of Sir Robert Peel – former Prime Minister and founder of the police as we know them today.

From this point on, saboteur vehicles (and a few dodgy looking tourists) were herded carefully together and escorted from the area. From what we can glean from the press, the Gunnerside party was forced to travel some distance under police escort before walking shooting on a different moor. One van managed to get within thirty yards of the shooters as they left a nearby hotel after an impromptu lunch break but were practically rammed off the road by the police.

Complaints are ongoing. Although they finally managed to shoot on the Twelfth, we did keep them off Gunnerside, one of the prime grouse moors, all day, and all they could manage was a paltry walk up about a few miles away. See you next year, Bob.



Saboteurs make the cold and windy trek up onto the Gunnerside heather. Photo: Edward Hirst

'I like my birds in the sky, not in a pie' Spike Milligan

STANHOPE

SABOTEURS from Tyneside, Carlisle, Sunderland and West Cumbria drove to Stanhope Moor after a 4am rendezvous but, on finding it too misty for shooting, split into two groups. One car was despatched to watch the Hedley Hall Hotel where many of the shooters were staying, whilst other saboteurs kept an eye on the main access road to the moor.

After several hours the car re-joined the main group and the saboteurs split forces again, one section driving to Stanhope to get petrol, the other going to Blanchland to watch another

shooters' hotel, the Lord Crewe Arms. Once they realised that their shoot was to be sabbed, the shooters didn't know what to do. They watched the saboteurs watched them. Eventually, they moved off to Edmundbyers, met up with a bus-load of beaters, waited again and then drove towards Muggleswick. Carlisle and Tyneside groups followed them whilst Sunderland HSA kept tabs on the party of beaters.

At this point, the police moved in and stopped the first two groups of sabs, checked one van for its roadworthiness and delivered a five-minute lecture to everybody in the other two on keeping to footpaths etc. etc. This gave the shooters a chance to get away and they took it. After a search, they were relocated on a track near Muggleswick. Saboteurs broke into two groups, one staying with the shooters' vehicles, the other driving around to the far side of the hill and stopping beside a coach-rut. A park warden came up and told them they'd have to pay for driving rights if they wanted to stay there, so they left. Meanwhile, the beaters were still parked up at Edmundbyers.

Eventually, gunshots were heard at the top end of the Stanhope Common valley. Saboteurs had to hike across country to reach the scene because police had by now blocked off the access road to the common. But while this group made for the butts and occupied them, another van-load of sabs found a way across the top of the valley, spotted the beat-line and took up positions above it. All shooting was now at a stand-still.

The occupation of the butts continued until the police arrived and ordered the sabs to leave the land, marching them along a road beside Stanhope butts. There followed an epic piece of cat-n-ce operation between the police and the landowner as the police ordered a van to collect the saboteurs, the landowner sent it another way, and the police had to call it back again. By the time this operation was accomplished, it was 4.30pm and the shooters had all packed up and left.

One and a half hours were then spent combing the moors for two saboteurs who had got lost whilst trying to get back to their van, and a considerable effort was put into searching for the Sunderland van – last seen in the company of a bus-load of beaters and not heard from since! Cumbrian saboteurs spent the following day in Carlisle, picketing Boss gunshop.

'Good luck, and take care mates! All the best, Tony.' Tony Benn MP

MISTY LAW

AUGUST 12th on Misty Law, Renfrewshire, was one of constant drenching rain, flooded burns and poor visibility. The reason Scottish sabs had targeted this particular shoot was simple:

Firstly, we had received detailed information as to where and when the shooters were due to meet. Secondly, due to our lack of experience at this kind of sabotage, we wanted to pick a relatively small shoot that we could stop altogether. Also, the shooters would be expecting nothing.

Thirty sabs arrived early where the shooters were due to meet. A small group moved up onto the moor while the remainder awaited the arrival of the guns. The sabs only had to wait about half an hour when a number of landrovers pulled into the carpark, saw the number of sabs, and promptly sped off again.

The next few hours were spent searching other moors nearby to check that the shooters hadn't simply switched areas, but all the moors were empty. We can only assume that the shoot was rained off because of the conditions, but our presence was the last straw which resulted in the shoot being cancelled.

HAYFIELD

AT THE end of August, a small group of saboteurs from Leeds proved that, as with foxhunting, we do not need vast numbers of activists to wreck a shoot.

Two saboteurs went onto the moors above Hayfield, Glossop, in the Peak District early in the morning. Eight of them went straight to the butts and occupied them whilst the other two kept watch for the arrival of shooters. After a while, the sabs were spotted by members of the shooting party, who were followed onto the moor by the shooters themselves. There appeared to be about five guns. The whole party stood and watched the sabs for some time, apparently unsure of what to do next, then left.

Three hours later, saboteurs were alerted by the sound of gun-fire a little way off. They ran towards it but found only a small group of shooters standing in the heather and firing off a few rounds at nothing in particular, presumably to see what the sabs would do. The stalemate continued until 4pm when all the guns left the moor. Another victory for the HSA.



Beaters not hunting, Gosforth Lodge.
Photo: Edward Hine.

'I think that people who hunt for fun are psychologically unstable, have strong psychopathic features and deserve the contempt of anyone who thinks.' Dr. Vernon Coleman



Saboteurs also put in the Gamekeeper butts and scan the horizon for any sign of movement from the shooting party.
Photo: Edward Hine.

'There is nothing glorious about rearing animals for the purpose of shooting them in the name of pleasure. All creatures are ours to mind – they embellish and balance the earth. Man's greed and betrayal is his great shame' Carla Lane, scriptwriter of Bread.

CHEQUE BOOK CONSERVATION

Ralph Cook investigates the politics of grouse moor management and finds the arguments of shooters and 'conservationists' as barren as the wastelands they have created.



The HSA received a great deal of sympathic news coverage for its actions on the Inglocious Twelfth. The pro-bloodsporting lobby failed to get its act together and was unable to effectively undermine our public profile. Once again, however, the serious media concentrated several column inches to the shooting fraternity's claim, backed up by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) and the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC), that grouse shooting is vital for the preservation of the upland environment and its wildlife.

This is simply not true.

Grouse, being highly territorial birds, cannot be artificially reared for shooting as are pheasants. Their principle requirement in life is heather: young heather shoots provide most of their food and old stands of heather provide cover for nesting and protection from the harsh weather conditions. Territorial animals defend an area which provides all their needs so the aim of the grouse moor owner is to create as great a diversity of heather growth in the smallest area possible to achieve the maximum density of grouse per acre. This is accomplished by gamekeepers who annually burn patches of old heather in 10-15 year cycles to make way for new growth.

In addition to heather burning, gamekeepers also carry out an unremitting campaign of extermination against the predators of grouse to ensure the highest possible number of birds available for shooting in the autumn. Foxes, stoats, weasels, wildcats (protected by law), members of the crow family including hooded crows, carrion crows, ravens etc are routinely slaughtered with the gun, traps (including the illegal gin trap) and poison (also in most cases illegally used).

Despite claims to the contrary all grouse predators, including the raptors (diurnal birds of prey: eagles, hawks and falcons) and to a lesser extent owls, reduce the numbers of grouse available to be shot and, knowing this, some gamekeepers are prepared to break the law and kill any bird of prey they find on their beat.

The RSPB receives reports of about 40 such cases (certainly only the tip of the iceberg) each year.

Currently some 700,000 acres of moorland in Britain is managed in this way for the exclusive benefit of grouse shooters. Other wildlife, including woodland wisdom, meadow pipits, hare, fox, barriers, merlins etc, not surprisingly find these managed moors attractive and colonise them. But in the case of birds of prey this may be a fatal mistake. It is widely accepted for instance that the failure of the fox harrier to increase in numbers and expand its range is because of illegal killing by gamekeepers. The "attractive" habitat offered by the managed grouse moor may be luring successive generations of young, rare and legally protected birds of prey on to ground where they are unwelcome and face an early death at great cost to the species as a whole.

Rapid Erosion

On a larger scale the burning of heather kills non-fire resistant plant species and exposes the peat-bed surface to the elements until regrowth takes place. This leads to rapid erosion and the formation of the gullies typical of the managed grouse moors. These hasten the run off of water, sometimes aided by deliberate drainage, from the moors which leads to the destruction of areas of sphagnum moss and further depletion of the diversity of wildlife on the moors. As a consequence of rapid drainage and erosion the risk of silting up the lower reaches of rivers and estuaries is increased.

The suggestion made by the defenders of grouse shooting that the activity is an enormous material for conservation is nonsense. The claim that, if grouse shooting were to cease, landowners would be forced to turn their land over to sheep grazing or forestry and the inhabitants of the grouse moors would face extinction is spurious. Both plants and animals found on grouse moors occur more naturally elsewhere in the British Isles. And by comparison with such habitats the grouse moor is a barren environment.

One of the most important areas for such wildlife is that vast tract of fantastic unspoilt moor in Scotland known as the Flows. Despite this area's international importance for wildlife, the government — until recently including notable grouse shooters as Sir William Whitelaw — and supported by people like Lord Peel, the Duke of Devonshire and a host of other grouse moor owners and shooters, has allowed the wholesale destruction of thousands of acres of this wilderness for the purposes of forestry and personal profit.

How does this accord with the grouse shooters claims that their handling of the moorland environment is good for conservation?

Highly Profitable

Grouse shooting is a highly profitable exercise for the grouse moor owner. A sheep farmer may make just £4.00 per year while the profit from planting with conifers takes years to materialise. In a good year, however, a landowner may make, after taking into account his/her overheads about £20.00 per grouse and can charge as much as £1,000 per gun or £60 for a brace of grouse.

In short the management of grouse moors is nothing short of cheque-book conservation and as always when money is the motive in land management, wildlife, the environment and the non-landowning public are the losers.

So what would happen if grouse shooting were to cease? Thanks to reductions in EEC sheep

subsidies likely to be reduced still further) increasingly the only options available to landowners are either to abandon the moors to nature or plant trees.

Grouse moors (which were once covered with natural forest before being denuded of their tree cover by the demands of sheep farming, ship building and industry which used wood as fuel) are suitable for the planting of better quality hardwood and coniferous trees than are being planted in the poorer soils of the Flows. They also support a great variety of wildlife and could therefore contribute to conservation whilst replacing much of the forest cover Britain has lost. Producing timber to reduce Britain's reliance on imported wood (especially from the ravaged natural forests of the Third World) would also provide considerable local employment and an attractive scenery with tourist potential thus generally improving the economy of northern England and Scotland.

This would also reduce the pressure on natural landscapes like the Flow Country and ensure its continued survival for the benefit of wildlife and the environment in general.

All this is fully appreciated by the RSPB and other bodies charged with the conservation of our wildlife. So why their defence of grouse shooting?

RSPB Neutral?

The RSPB claims that it is neutral over the bloodsports issue and that it is bound to continue this policy by the terms of its Royal Charter. Yet with over 360,000 members it has no need of this Charter (or, arguably, it had at the turn of the century). When questioned about this, Ian Prestt, the RSPB's Director General, offered the rather flimsy excuse that it would be difficult to change the RSPB's Charter because, "Many people have been supporting the Society for over 90 years in the belief that we will adhere to it."



A Marsden breakfast, and now that general slightly heavier tables on the Twelfth this year.



Guard for business. Landowners may charge up to £1000 a gun or £60 for a brace of grouse.

No doubt it will be some years before the organisation is prepared to put this view to the test in a referendum of its membership. Certainly many RSPB members are concerned about the policy since it is widely recognised that shooting for sport does little to help birds.

Each year thousands of wildfowl die of lead poisoning as a result of ingesting spent lead shot which they mistake for grit which is needed to help them digest food. Withdrawing it permitted on several RSPB reserves and occurs on land adjoining many others. Withdrawing also disturbs feeding birds which can have dire consequences for them during hard weather when their food requirements are highest and feeding time is shortest.

Gamekeepers as stated earlier are chief among the enemies of our most threatened and rarest of birds and among the worst offenders are grouse moor gamekeepers.

Certain aspects of the RSPB's work does, however, suggest that it is not as impartial as it suggests. The RSPB is for instance the largest owner of grouse shooting rights in Wales and the proud owner of the access and management rights to 12,000 acres of the Geltsdale grouse moors. It manages the moors for grouse shooting. It allows public access to part of this land but restricts access to the rest on the grounds that it is in the interests of breeding birds that the grouse moor is not disturbed. But birds do not breed all year!

Praise For Shooters

The RSPB has worked with the BFSS in the production of a booklet on the control of predators of game and sends speakers to courses for gamekeepers organised by the Game Conservancy. It has always been quick to give praise to even the most tokenistic of conservation measures undertaken by any bloodsport group. For instance it applauded the issuing of a press release by the BASC condemning the shooting of a gull by a children (taken out during the filming of "The Fishing Party". Furthermore it talks in its glossy quarterly magazine 'Birds' of "responsible fieldcraftsmen", and the "sporting value of woodland" etc. Such comments are hardly demonstrative of a desire to remain impartial in the shooting debate.

Among its power and past leadership the RSPB has a smattering of wildfowlers and gamekeepers, not that this is ever actually stated in plain English. For instance, in 1983 the RSPB Treasurer, William Wilkinson, left the RSPB to take up the far more lucrative position of Chairman to the NCC. Commenting on this, 'Birds' stated that "Intimate knowledge of fieldsports will be useful": why?

The fact is of course that the RSPB is a huge organisation with access to vast resources and a limited measure of political influence (far less in fact than BASC with only a quarter of its wealth and membership). None of its leaders would wish to jeopardise by taking too strong a stand against the activities of those who control land or useful political power. In other words it kowtows to the very people who pose the greatest threat to our wildlife whilst hiding shamefully behind an outdated Royal Charter exchanged out of practical necessity in the early years of this century, for Royal patronage and interest at the expense of its integrity to this day.

One wonders what favours it is expecting from our opponents as a reward for speaking out against the HSA in defence of grouse shooting on its moral public day.

NOTICEBOARD

GREENSCENE is a new magazine for young vegetarians (under 18s) including interviews, articles, pen pals, cartoons, letters, competitions, fun pages and much more. It's published by the Vegetarian Society every six weeks and will cost you 75p per issue. The society has also set up two new youth clubs — the Green Gang for under 12s and Club V for 12-18 year olds. Members get leaflets, stickers, badge and a say in Greenscene for just £3 per year. Contact: Veg Soc, Parkdale, Dunham Rd, Altrincham, Cheshire.

SOUTH MIDLANDS VEGETARIAN CONVERSION will take place at Stratford Upon Avon Youth Hostel over the weekend of October 26th — 30th. Workshops on campaigning for veg issues plus talks from various speakers, including Mark Gold and Juliet Gellatly. Details and booking to be from 37 Bramford Close, Dudley, Worcs DY2 0TAF.

MACDONALDS are being another World Day of Action organised by Greenpeace (London) on October 16th. Local groups are asked to picket their local branch of the fast food chain over the weekend of the 16th. Info / Leaflets available, plus details from London Greenpeace, 5 Caledonian Rd, London N1 (They're also organising an Anti MacDonalds Paper at London's Coloring Hall Road Live Squatter on October 24th. Hows — Spot Hotline to share it was it.

SOUTHPORT CAMPAIGN FOR ANIMAL RIGHTS has recently been set up and meets on the second and fourth Sundays of each month at 8pm in the Hesketh Arms, Lincoln St, Southport. All interested people welcome. Contact Bill, Southport 68779 after 7.30.

THE MARINE PROTECTION GROUP aims to promote a respect of Seals and Fishing Industry other products as a means to end the barbaric Faroese Pilot Whale slaughter. A major high profile campaign is in preparation. Details from 47 Avon Rd, Bournemouth, BH8 8NE.

OPERATION FUR FACTORY is a new organisation set up to compile a list of all fur factories in Britain, to be used as a weapon in A.R. groups campaigns. They need your help. Please send them any information you can supply on your area, including size of farm, location, type and number of animals, age of farm, photos if possible. Contact: PO Box 67, Rochdale, Lancs OL16 1AA.

BENEFIT TAPE for Dartmoor Badger Protection Campaign, produced by a Belgian A.R. group (CCC). 46 powerful and balancing Classical, Political Analysis, Instrumental and others (only £2.50 post paid. All proceeds will be used to fight for full legal protection for badgers with, stopping badger setts and digging in Avon Royal Animals from Nets, Newspaperhead (B. 3440 West Belgium.

ANIMAL NEW AGE FESTIVAL takes place on November 7th and 8th at Friar Sunlight Church of Christ and Seven events included. Details from Animal Aware Rights, 33 Highfield South, Rise Park, Hull HU5 4AA.

OXFORD SABS KEEP FOUR SHIRES ON THE RUN

A noteworthy victory was notched up by Oxford HSA early in the summer when their constant pressure led the Four Shires Minkhunt to abandon Saturday hunting. Here's how they did it.

THE FOUR SHIRES had always been an elusive pack. Three long summers of hard work had previously yielded no reward for saboteurs who were anxious to find them and as another minkhunting season opened, expectations of success were not high. Fortunately, however, a useful telephone number fell into the hands of the Oxford group this year and on April 30th they were able to secure three hunt meets by using it.

The first was the first one they and we, full of the joys of spring, the group bundled into their Renault 5 and sped off for Cuddington near Aylesbury. Since there were only four of them they decided to spend the day watching the hunt, learning how it worked, assessing its strengths and weaknesses and so on. Enthusiasm got the better of them once or twice as itchy fingers demanded that the river bank be scoured and a horn was raised and lowered to stop hounds in pursuit. But the sabs spent an uncomfortable thirty minutes watching helplessly as the hunt tried to evict a mink from a willow tree. Half an hour turned out to be the limit of the huntsman's patience for he suddenly gave up and shot the animal. The tiny carcass was carried into the next field without ceremony and hurled to the hounds.

The following Monday was the Four Shires' official opening meet, and the second Oxford HSA had a firm date for. Five of the group travelled the 80 miles to Buckington and, once again, made a decision merely to observe. In fact during a good deal of chatting and bob-watching they gathered a fair bit of useful information about the hunt. By the end, the sabs felt they had a very clear picture of what they were up against and what they would need to do to successfully sabotage it. At this stage, the hunt seemed fairly friendly and told the group that there would be no trouble as long as they didn't try anything disruptive!

Bearing this in mind, the group went away and organised a joint-hit on the Four Shires at Long Crendon, Bucks on May 7th. A good turn-out of seventy saboteurs from many different groups kept the hunt on the run all day. There were no kills this time when a mink ran up a tree there was no question of saboteurs being forced to watch a humiliating and senseless death. Crowding around the tree, the sabs made it quite impossible for the hunt to take any action at all.

This had been a good day for the HSA, the problem was how to follow it up. Oxford group had now exhausted their three meets and could hardly expect to be given any more over the telephone. The following Saturday an attempt was therefore made to stake out the hunt's kennels. A high-powered motorbike was positioned just outside the gates with two vans at one end of the village and a car at the other. A central phone number was found up for co-ordination and should the stake out fail completely, then each vehicle had been allocated their own stretch of road to watch.

Such a well-planned venture deserved to be a success and it was. The hound van left the kennels and headed for the east. When the driver realised he was being followed, he made a detour to a police station and persuaded the police to come out and intervene. The saboteur's van and motorbike were soon stopped and questioned by the local constabulary and the mini-cavalcade sped off quickly, thinking they'd given sabs the slip.

By last they had already lost the saboteurs far enough for some pretty shrewd guesses as to be made about their likely destination. It seemed that the hunt would, once again, be hunting on the river Thame. With the police heading back for cocoa and biscuits at the police station, the sabs relaxed on and began searching the river in sections. Sure enough, the hunt was located, as position relayed through to the central telephone contact, and the information passed on to the other vehicles.

As saboteurs converged on the hunt, officials made a hurried tactical withdrawal and took hounds off to a new stretch of river about four miles upstream from Cuddington Mill. One group of sabs spotted the retreat as the hound van drove under a bridge across the A40, alerted everyone else, and within minutes the Four Shires was swamped with hunt saboteurs.

The huntsman and his cronies were once again in the act of dislodging a reluctant mink from a tree and were not pleased to be interrupted for a second time by hordes of antis. Hunters threw a few punches and pinched the film out of a saboteur's camera but the trouble was quickly contained and the mink left in peace. There was never any question of the hunt making a kill after that, although they made a spirited attempt to do so and carried on for the rest of the day.

Seven police cars arrived on the scene but sabotage was not significantly impaired and no arrests were made — not even of the frustrated hunt followers who took their irritation out on saboteurs' cars. After this, the Four Shires decided to disguise the countryside with their presence no longer on Saturdays the principal hunting day of the week. Oxford HSA will be waiting to see what they do next season and hopes that, with a bit of dedication and a determined effort to follow the pack on midweek fixtures too, they can finish the Four Shires off altogether.

KENT AND SUSSEX FEEL THE STRAIN

THE Kent and Sussex Minkhounds have been the brunt of HSA activity this year. Saboteurs from several South Eastern groups including Tunbridge Wells, Brighton, Hastings, Bideford, Basingstoke and Northdown, put in a lot of hard work trying to track them down on Saturdays and the Tunbridge Wells group in particular devoted a great deal of time to initial research.

Members of this group watched kennels on weekdays as well as at weekends to get an idea of the hunt's routine. In this way it was discovered that the hunt were only attending meets on Saturdays and a concentrated effort was made to sell them each week. Success was mixed. As with the Bicester, the police made it their business to hamper the saboteurs' efforts and sometimes prevented sabs from following or locating the hunt at all. But despite such interference, saboteurs were often able to catch up with the hapless hunters, and whenever this happened the principal tactic of the Kent and Sussex was to run away. Whole days were sometimes spent chasing a hunt that seemed always on the move, unable ever to stop long enough to cast hounds.

Needless to say, there were never any kills whilst the hunt operated in such a way and hunt stalwarts did not always respond to the saboteurs with kindness and courtesy. On May 23rd, annoyed at having been followed to a meet at Etchingham, a whipper-in jumped back into his car and reversed at speed down a narrow lane, knocking one saboteur into a ditch as he did so. He was not seen again for the rest of the day. On another day, two saboteurs who had arrived ahead of the main group were spotted by a couple of hunters and attacked with whips.

By and large, the sabs interpreted violent behaviour of this sort as confirmation that their actions were putting the hunt under a great deal of strain. A good day's sabotage could be measured by the ferocity of the abuse and threatening phone calls some group members began to receive on Saturday evenings.

June 25th represented a fairly typical day's sabbing from the Kent and Sussex. Tracked to the meet at Staffhurst Wood, the hunt called the police, then boxed up and drove to Edenbridge. At Edenbridge the hunt had arranged for supporters' vehicles to intercept and block-in the pursuing saboteurs, but Brighton HSA evaded them. Obviously now ready to give up, the hunt moved on again, this time to Penshurst Place where a Country Fair was taking place. Safely inside its gates, and watched by saboteurs, the hunt staff unloaded hounds and walked them up and down for exercise. Then, under another police escort, they left and drove straight back to the kennels. Saboteurs duly followed and waited outside the gate while six police cars came and went and a completely unnecessary police helicopter clattered overhead. At last the master seemed to have had enough and he left for home at about 4pm. Another job well done!



D.W. McGuinness, huntsman with the Kent & Sussex MH, welcomes sabs to another meet.
Photo: Simon Russell.

POLICE PROTECT THE WEALDEN



A police blockade prevents vans from following the Wealden NH. The whole group was arrested for 'action likely'. Photo: Kevin Ash.

TWO attempts to sabotage the Wealden Staghounds this summer were prevented by the police who seemed to see it as their job to ensure that hunting went off without a hitch.

On May 21st, three sab vehicles carrying saboteurs from Petersfield, Basingstoke, Southampton and Portsmouth waited outside the Wealden's kennelled fare. Three huntsmen came into view, wandering down the drive with a beagle pack (presumably taking them for a walk), stopped when they saw the vans, then went scurrying back to the kennels.

The police arrived within the hour in two cars, a patrol van, and an Escort with an aluminium in attendance. They blocked in the Basingstoke van then blocked the road as well whilst the hunt swept out of the drive and disappeared into the countryside.

Again, on June 4th, police turned out to prevent a van full of Saboteurs from Portsmouth from following the hunt as they left the kennels. The van was held up and searched for some pretext by which the group could be detained further. The police decided that a box of road spikes should just about do the job, removed the tires from the van and arrested everybody in the vehicle. The charge, of course, was 'action likely' and the entire group was held at Crawley police station for ten hours before being released.

CUBHUNTING IN THE FOREST

AS USUAL, the New Forest FH have had to endure an intensive campaign of sabotage throughout their early attempts at cubhunting. It has been a lively start to the season, even by New Forest standards, with saboteurs attending every meet, police making several arrests and aggressive hunt bosses operating with apparent impunity.

On what should have been the first fixture of the season (July 30th), twenty subs were enough to persuade the hunt to go puppy walking instead; and even this was disrupted with hunting horns. Cubbing did not get underway until August 2nd when eight subs found the pack running out of control around Moorend Nature Hounds split and charged chaotically about whilst the whipper-in got lost for a few hours.

Police turned out in force four days later when 60 subs from the Forest and Bournemouth, Southampton, Portsmouth, Basingstoke, Petersfield, Chichester and Oxford successfully disrupted all attempts at hunting. Despite not drawing a scent all day however, the hunt had no difficulty in arranging a dig-out before they went home. Subs arrived just too late to prevent it.

There were no kills on August 9th when seven saboteurs used horns again and again to hook up the pack at Mayles Court. Four days later, still fearing a repetition, the hunt switched its planned meet at the last minute. Unfortunately for them, they found a regional bit with some eighty saboteurs that day as it was not long before the hound van was spotted and followed to its new location.

When a fox ran to ground in Tinneys Plantation, twenty-five saboteurs entered the wood and occupied the earth entrances. Police converged on the scene in force with two large vans and two officers ordered the subs to leave or be physically removed. Saboteurs said they would agree to this only if the dig-out was called off. A Sgt Young (831) then gave his word that this would be done and the pair moved, leaving one helmet as an observer. Sgt Young then lined up his men along the perimeter of the wood and told the terrier man to get on with the dig. When subs tried to re-enter the wood, they were pushed back by the police and attacked by hunt followers. It is believed the fox eventually ran to freedom from an unblocked earth entrance.

Another group of saboteurs left the scene when the hounds did not, with the police still busy at the dig-out, were able to split the pack as it was recast. Police and hunt followers soon regrouped and made further attempts at eviction. A police sergeant, pushing one saboteur to the ground, was heard to tell him heatedly: "Do what you like to him; I can't see anything". They were happy to oblige and when the saboteur tried to defend himself, he was immediately arrested.

Altogether there have been seven arrests of saboteurs in the Forest this season. Two have resulted in charges under Section 5 of the Public Order Act (alarm, distress, harrassment) and one, for obstruction, has already been to court. The case was overturned but the saboteur still bound over.

Subsequent weeks have found the hunt growing ever more dangerous as a kill as sabotage was stepped up. At the beginning of September, joint master, David Plumptre, persuaded police not only to evict about thirty saboteurs who had been outing his hounds, but to actually ban them from the Forest (an extremely large area) on pain of arrest. Two saboteurs were even told to leave Lyndhurst.

The New Forest HSA group is determined to stick with the pack throughout the season.



A saboteur seeks an New Forest hunt followers aside to safe shelter. Fourth from left and mostly obscured is joint master David Plumptre.



All is the law of duty? Police confront all Lowry's Plantation in the New Forest to safeguard a hunt dig out from interference by saboteurs.

Photo: New Forest HSA

SOUTH TARGETS COUNTRY FAIRS

HUNT supporters were unusually subdued at this year's South of England Show at Ardingly on June 11th. They did not follow the accepted practice of attacking protesters during the hound parade.

Seven HSA members ran into the arena as the Southdown and Eridge FH cantered out before a non-plussed public. Scattered cheers from the VIP stand turned to groans as the seven unfurled banners with an unequivocal message: Blood-suckers go home!

Police eventually asked the demonstrators to leave the arena, which they did having successfully made their point. One local news-hound sum up afterwards and suggested that subs should be included on the programmes of events next year. They have, after all, been regular attendees since 1965.

Basingstoke HSA started the summer off with a visit to the Guildford County Show where they great friends, the Surrey Union, were putting in an appearance. A heavy police presence prevented a banner demo inside the arena, but an effective one was held just outside.

On July 9th, Basingstoke group joined with subs from Reading and Petersfield for a day out at the Duke of Wellington's country fair at Stratfield Saye. Making straight for the BFSS tent, the 25 subs stood outside with banners and handed leaflets to the public for a couple of hours. This was well-received and a bunch of French students came over to help once it had been explained to them what the subs were there for. Even the police were helpful, telling them that they had a perfect right to be there, to stand their ground, but to be careful because hunting types "can get quite nasty when they've had too much to drink". The men in the BFSS tent looked distraught.



Saboteurs take on John Peel's pack, the Blencathra and try to outscent a hound.

Photo: Ian Brown

COTTESMORE CORNERED

NOTTINGHAM and Leeds saboteurs disrupted oubleasing by the Cottesmore FH three times in one week.

On September 3rd, 5th and 6th, fifteen subs successfully split up hounds and prevented any kills to the widest fury of hunt servants. A whipper-in broke a swing mirror and a hunt light on the Leeds group's van and police were called to remove subs from Monkery Wood near Stamford. Police are making enquiries about the damaged van and subs have been asked to help them identify the culprit.

FESTIVALS IN THE SUN



Well, the only festivals the HSA managed to get its' feet into this year have been the Leamington Festival of Peace and Understanding and the Amnesty International Festival of Youth. As these were both on the same weekend in June, we were quite stretched to put on good stalls at both, so much thanks to all who helped out — Mark and Sally at Leamington, Tamsyn, David, Val and Scully Nol at Milton Keynes. Leamington was by far the more comfortable occasion — beds and showers for all, and civilisation nearby. At Milton Keynes Bowl, we were locked in overnight and told not to stray out of our tents else the security guards might forcefully eject us as gatecrashers! There were hardly any other stalls except food, and not much of that edible bar the beans, chips and black coffee. Still, lots of people were very interested in the stalls and we sold a healthy amount of merchandise at both events. It was good to see Michelle Strickett and The Damned for nothing too! Finally, many thanks to Nobby Anderson of Concert Publishing in London — he gave us the stall at Amnesty for nothing when every other trader had to pay £700 for the weekend!

Attempts were made to contact the organisers of the Cambridge Folk Festival and WOMAD on numerous occasions, but both parties were clearly unaware of how to answer a telephone — probably as far out in the wilds that they've only just got electricity. File that one we were too late and that another hunt saboteur group had already booked a stall (presumably the local group, good old glam-rock ENO) and they weren't having any stalls at their Meadowbank Festival apart from their own, but this years prize for complete and utter snubbings goes to the promoters of Reading Rock Festival who uttered the lovely phrase (of the HSA) "I don't really think you're the kind of thing we want to promote anyway! Charming people.

Mike

BADGERING THE BADGER

In 1973 the badger was given full protection under the law from acts of wanton cruelty. It is the first and, to date the only, wild (non-captive), animal to be accorded legal protection specifically against cruelty.



In that year I was a boy of just thirteen years old living in a small country town in Eastern England. At school in 1973 I had met and befriended a boy of the same age called Mark who was the son of a gamekeeper of a local shooting and agricultural estate. For several years the two of us spent a considerable part of our spare time (and time when we should have been in school), walking the estate armed with air rifles, snares and traps in the company of Mark's labrador (which we used when hunting rats in stubble fields shortly after the harvest).

I learnt quite a lot of traditional gamekeeping handcraft and developed a great fascination for wildlife. Today these interests have taken me on a path quite different from that you would expect of a bloodsporting country lad. In those days, however, the somewhat unrepentant character of my home town gave me no reason to question my activities and the pursuit of wild animals was innocently carried out with the object of killing pests, preserving crops and gamebirds, filling the pot and simple, "harmless" pleasure.

While the Badger Protection Bill was being pushed through Parliament and the issue of badger digging/baiting was being hotly debated in the media, gamekeepers, farmers and badger diggers (some ourselves, regarding the word, went on an orgy of badger persecution, whilst it was still legal, all over the country. The badger sett around the town in which I lived, although not as large or highly populated as those in many parts of the west of England and Wales, suffered considerable interference.

One day in June Mark told me that his father and a few friends had to "dod" with a vixen badger which had, apparently, dug its way into a pheasant release pen and brought havoc among the poults (young pheasants), kept in it. I asked if I could attend and permission was given. Since it was not illegal to dig badgers and was considered by many as one of the routine tasks of a gamekeeper society was not as important to a badger digger as it is today.

The dig was due to start at around 9am, everyone arrived on time, there were four diggers, two had a pair of terriers, one pair were Jack Russells, the others were a border and a black dog described as a Corbilton Patterdale. Mark's father also had his small Fell terrier. All the terriers had been serious against fox and had occasionally been employed against badgers.

The terriers were tethered to small iron stakes pushed into the soil and the men set about preparing for the dig. The sett had six entrances and overhanging brambles and undergrowth were cleared from these to permit access. Mark's father alleged that to his certain knowledge only one badger occupied the sett. Only two of the entrances showed signs of regular recent usage. These were left open. Earth from the spoil heaps piled outside each of the four other entrances was used to block these.

After some strategical chat by the men, to which Mark and I were not a party, one of the Patterdales, named appropriately "Brock", was released from its collar and without hesitation shot down one of the open holes. Mark's father requested silence with a finger to his mouth and everybody' ears were strained for any subterranean sound. The sett was small and hearing the badger should have been easy but "Brock" reappeared within minutes with a rather doubtful expression on his face. His owner pronounced that if his dog said no joy then "badger ain't home". The man with the Russells asked if he could try one of his terriers and the selected one, also — confusingly — named "Brock", which on being loosed bolt both entrances before disappearing down the one chosen by the Patterdale.

This dog remained underground for some time before coming out of the other hole for a few seconds and disappearing again. Almost immediately it began to bay not far from the surface. I remember the look of elation on the owner's face and the smile directed at the Patterdale by its owner. Mark's father put his head down the hole and said "Brock's found".

Nothing was done for a while, the Russells baying became less and less distinct and it was clear that the badger was retreating.



After a while, perhaps fifteen minutes, the men, without any visible signal picked up shovels, picks and a drain rod and began digging, not at the entrances but from the middle of the area covered by the sett entrances. I was told that they was called "crowning" and that the idea was to dig down to a tunnel to see if this was where the terrier was. While the men dug, Mark and I cleared the earth away from the hole which gradually materialised.

Soon only one man was digging, standing waist high in the trench, he suddenly announced that he had made contact with the tunnel. With more careful handling of his spade he broke through and cleanly scuffle, though still muffled was the sound of "Brock's" baying.

A drain rod was pushed into the tunnel and, after Mark's father had replaced the men in the hole, digging commenced along the line shown by the rod. It was clear from the changing volume and position of the baying that the badger was still moving, perhaps retreating before the terrier and there were no sounds of battle being joined. The Fell terrier was put into the tunnel and it went out of sight. Digging recommenced a few moments later. By now, some four hours after we had gathered at the sett the trench was some ten to twelve feet long and the tunnel was dropping deeper. The men, covered in dirt and sweating profusely in the heat despite the shade afforded by the trees, took turns at digging, each moving and drinking tea from a flask or eating sandwiches. There was little talking.

Suddenly there was silence - no baying could be heard. The men paused in their digging and the head of the Fell terrier, covered with dirt and bits of tree root, appeared at the end of the trench. Mark's father urged it to go back but the puzzled expression on its face caused him to relent and draw it out.

After an hour with no sounds coming from the open entrance of the trench, "Brock's" owner heard scrabbling at one of the blocked entrances and cleared the earth from it. A somewhat disheveled terrier sporting a bloody nose and a wound or two to add to its already battle scarred features, shook itself free of the soil and looked up at its owner with a bemused expression on its face.

All the other terriers were tried to no avail. Somehow the badger had effected a disappearing trick underground and the dogs could make nothing of it. At about 4pm the decision was reluctantly made to abandon the dig. The trench was filled in, the surrounding area cleared up and, somewhat deflated, we all returned home.

During the walk back to my friend's landrover many theories to explain the badger's escape were proposed, debated and discounted. On the drive back to town the men talked about their previous encounters with badgers and foxes, of the impending implementation of the new laws on badger digging (the first I had heard of it), and of "Arabs" in general. These latter were, I was told, a peculiar breed of "mixey old lurkers" and "do-gooders" who knew nothing of the life of the countryside and who needed a "good kick up the arse" to straighten them out.

I did not realise, indeed, how could I, that six years later I would join the "arse" ranks and despite a good few kickings from men like these and worse, I still have not "straightened out".

Postscript: One week later the same men tried the sett again, again the badger was found by a terrier and then mysteriously disappeared. While a big fence against the sett was being planned for mid-July the badger was seen by Mark's father resting a "dawn nap" on the same pheasant release pen. It was dispatched with a shotgun at ten yards. The old badger was skinned by Mark's father and then given to me. Months later I was given the skull for my interest in wild animals had developed into the study of them. The skull was clearly that of a very old animal with worn and missing teeth. I disposed of these and many other relics of what I now know was a vicious part on becoming a hunt saboteur in 1979.

"Black Fox"

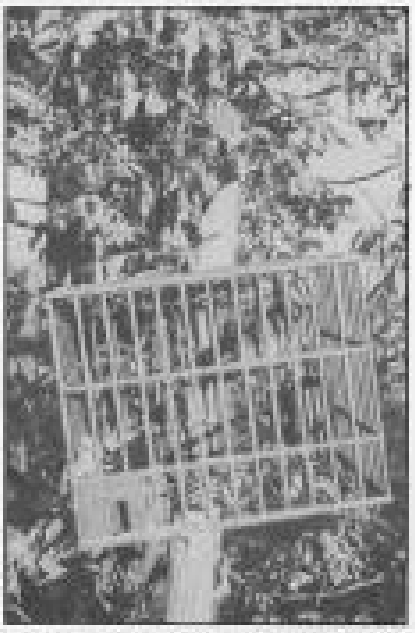
FREEDOM AT FRIULI

LAST NOVEMBER, hunt saboteurs from all over Italy staged non-violent action against the trapping of wild songbirds (a popular passtime with some of the country's more Cro-Magnon inhabitants). These pictures, all taken during an action at Friuli in the Udine, Northern Italy, graphically illustrate how hundreds of birds were freed and released.

Basically, the trappers build elaborate false copses (Roccolos), in which are strung large nets. Caged songbirds act as decoys to attract others into the trap. The birds will then be taken to market and sold.



Part of the Roccolo at Friuli. The circular enclosure is made of net mess linked together with vast sheets of netting.



A Blackbird or decoy bird, trapped in a cage and installed high up in the Roccolo. Its song will lure other birds into the enclosure where they become tangled in the tiny mesh of the nets.



A caged decoy bird is passed down from its perch 'tree' and checked for injuries. The decoys often have their eyelids sewn together to ensure they make plenty of noise.



A songbird, freed from netting by a saboteur, is cradled carefully and checked for injuries before being released.



Michelle Evans, a Green Party member of the Italian Parliament, joins with saboteurs in cutting the nets and freeing hundreds of tiny birds. What were British MPs doing while the IWA fought the wildlife on the pretext issues this year?



Saboteurs with a real sense of purpose. Those neighbors hung them a dead!

Hunters happen (do not take kindly to being sabotaged — or photographed!



HUNTSMANSBALLS

"I have seen a Ford Transit full of police plus three motorcycles sent to control the grand total of three anti-field sports demonstrators but the police involved seemed rather to enjoy their day out. Although it would be stretching the story a little too far to say that one or two officers are now fully paid up members of the hunt, nevertheless they showed a great interest in the proceedings... Good relations with the police are obviously important. If the hunt is fortunate enough to haunt a local 'hobby', every effort should be made to include him in any social events, and the knowledge that the hunsmen's bottle is always on can encourage the police to take an interest in what is happening during the hunting season."
Jeremy Hobson, 'Beagling', 1987.

"Grouse are in absolutely no danger from people who shoot grouse."
Prince Philip, Guardian 23/7/88

"The hunt is doing a legitimate job and all this is very upsetting."
Major Phil Davidson, master, Blencathra FH, after his pack was sabotaged. Evening News and Star, 11/4/88

"The only independent survey into the hunting fans population throughout the country was carried out by the Game Conservancy."
Peter Lister, BFSS PR Officer, Radio Newcastle 23/8/88

"There's no such thing as coincidence."
Person at Tyneside HSA stall, Newcastle, August 88

"You live in the city, what do you know about farming? A fox can kill a lamb before it's even been born."
Person at Tyneside HSA stall.

"They spoke with every different accent you could name. They were the smallest, most evil heap of rubbish imaginable, a real rent a mob dragged in from all corners of the country."
John Batten, pub landlord, describing hunt saboteurs, Evening Mail 16/4/88

"They were terribly filthy people and very well organised... they were never short of money. I was told by someone that they were getting paid £18 per day."
Dorothy Thompson, farmer, describing hunt saboteurs, Evening Mail 16/4/88

"The final influence on how a hound performs in the field is the way he is handled. It takes much time to breed and make a pack of hounds, but today, silly stuff can spoil them in a fortnight."
Alistair Jackson, Joint-master, Cottistock FH, The Field July 88.

"Saboteurs may find that the disruption of angling is rather a different matter from attempts to disturb hunting. If they intend to make serious nuisances of themselves on northern and midland waters, then the paid hands among them (when the majority might like to consider an application for danger money — or swimming lessons). The point is that, if their actions become intolerable, eventually, anglers will say enough is enough."
'Marker', West Sussex Gazette 7/7/88

"The professed anxiety about the infliction of cruelty upon an animal disappears when you find that those who profess it are indifferent to the continuance of angling. It seems very hard to be indifferent to the sustained agony of a fish being played, perhaps for a long period, on a hook, and yet be acutely alive to the sudden death of a fox at the jaws of hounds. Either it is a pretty obvious piece of humbug, or a pretty obvious piece of worn-blooded sentimental delusion."
Enoch Powell explaining why anti-blood-sports arguments do not add up. Send him an HSA membership form somebody... The Field, July 1988.

"Anarchy seems to be the aim: disruption of British life, using foxhunting as just one means of upsetting the status quo in outlined rural areas... At first most known evil, saboteurs are sometimes cast as students out for an alternative' ragging in the countryside. Yet, mysteriously, funds are often provided — up to £35 to £80 a day — from unknown sources to pay the expenses of those sent a-crowd-raise. That no one has actually been killed by saboteur attacks says much for the extraordinary tolerance and restraint of British country people."
Michael Clayton, 'The Chase' – A Modern Guide to Foxhunting, 1987

"They (country dwellers) think they're more civilised than us", says Dean, "but we've been on hunts in Cheshire and the Lake District, me and Eddie, where we've seen foxes thrown alive to 15 or 20 hounds while women and children are standing around doing their telly bit bit..." The only time city men are worried is when the opponents of bloodsports are on the scene. "They tell you straight to give the extra a battering. Only when the bizzies (police) arrive, they say they don't know who you are, like."
City-dwelling bloodsporter, The Independent 18/9/88

A NEW LEGAL STRATEGY FOR THE HSA

HSA's Legal Officer, John Beggs, outlines the task before him as we enter another foxhunting season and argues for a more serious approach to the law from all hunt saboteurs.

IT CANNOT have escaped the notice of most hunt saboteurs that the level of hunt violence is inexorably rising, in that the police are increasingly interpreting recent legislation to inhibit, and in some cases stop altogether, hunt sabotage. And yet, despite the depressing catalogue of serious injuries sustained by hunt subs, and the many instances when the police have clearly exceeded their lawful powers, the response of the HSA has been ad-hoc, ill-equipped and fragmented.

Of course, one or two individuals have successfully sued the police for assault or false imprisonment and very occasionally a hunt thug is brought to justice in the criminal courts, but generally most unlawful or oppressive activity by the police goes unchecked, hunt thugs re-offend with impunity, and all too often hunt subs turn up for their criminal trials ill-prepared and poorly (sometimes appallingly) represented by their lawyers.

The combined effect of these failures is significant. Firstly, the image is conveyed to the public that the hunt subs are the criminals and transgressors, whilst meanwhile the violence of the hunt goes unnoticed. Inevitably this helps lawful, but thoroughly undeserved, political dividends for the BFSS. They are able to point to the growing numbers of hunt subs appearing before the courts, and simultaneously maintain the myth that hunt supporters are nothing but law-abiding sportsmen. Secondly, of course, the morale of the hunt sab movement inevitably takes a battering as hind-overs get bagged upon hind-overs and bandages cover the injuries sustained each week in the field.

It is now after 25 years of unrelenting activity, that the HSA went on the offensive. And got serious. It is high time that we adopted a more sophisticated and well-defined legal strategy which seeks to reverse the defeats suffered at the hands of an increasingly interventionist police force and a disturbingly violent hunting fraternity. Indeed, it is not a question of whether we need a new legal strategy, but rather a question of whether we will adopt such a strategy in time to prevent the combined effects of police harassment and hunt violence from all but extinguishing the HSA as an organisation.

Ingredients For Success

I believe there are three main ingredients to a well-co-ordinated and effective strategy which all must be implemented simultaneously to ensure the survival and indeed continued success of the HSA.

Firstly, we must ensure that all instances of hunt violence and lawlessness are reported to the police (and indeed the press), and that hunt subs fully co-operate with the police in any such investigations. It is vital that we leave the police with absolutely no excuses for not dealing with breaches of the law committed by hunt supporters. Of course, some constabularies are better than others in this respect, and unfortunately a minority of constabularies appear almost indifferent to criminal acts perpetrated by the hunt.

Nevertheless, we must be determined that all police forces are made to recognise that the law applies in reach to the hunt as it naturally does to hunt saboteurs, and hence we must no longer tolerate the situation where police officers stand by whilst hunt subs are assaulted and their property damaged. If the police refuse to act in such situations, or appear to drag their feet — as is more often the case — then we must be prepared to bring pressure to bear upon the senior officers concerned by any effective means whatsoever, whether that be through subs and the media to embarrass the police, or direct questions in Parliament to Home Office ministers.

However, there is also no doubt that on many occasions the police genuinely cannot prosecute because hunt subs have failed to provide witness statements or other material evidence. To prevent such eventualities, all hunt sab groups must become far more adept at collating and marshalling their evidence and presenting it in a courteous but determined manner to the police. Cameras and well-kept notebooks are particularly useful in this connection.

Of course, to achieve a fairer police response will take time in some areas and subs should seriously consider attempting to meet senior police officers to hammer out differences and to establish a closer understanding of respective roles. Once the police fully realise we mean business and that we wish to invoke the law to protect our undoubted right to sabotage hunts, then I am confident that in time we can expect to see more frequent and successful prosecution of hunt supporters, with all the political and tactical ramifications which that will entail.



We should never accept violent behaviour from hunters as an 'occupational hazard', but must demand that the police take action against it. Sussex Police whipper-in, B Anderton, swings his crop at saboteurs.
Photo: Paul Gammon

The second limb of the strategy involves those occasions when hunt subs find themselves charged with criminal offence. It is essential that on all such occasions the subs concerned have access to competent and committed solicitors who will defend their cases to the hilt. It should be remembered that the overwhelming majority of charges brought against hunt subs are for minor public order offences, particularly for 'actions likely to cause a breach of the peace' (not technically a criminal offence) and for conduct under S.5 Public Order Act 1986 causing harassment, distress and alarm.

Sound Defence

As such, there is virtually always a sound defence to be employed when one remembers that the 'victims' of such crimes are persons engaged in the pursuit of a hunted animal. It is vital that hunt subs make it their business to become better acquainted with those areas of the law most likely to affect them, and in the event of arrests all sab groups should have well-laid contingency plans, including immediate access to a reliable solicitor. Following release from custody it is essential that all subs seek legal advice at the earliest opportunity so that the preparation for a forthcoming trial commences right away. Where appropriate, defence campaigns and funds should be established to ensure maximum publicity and

political gain from a trial, which should be looked upon (in most cases) as an opportunity to vindicate the actions of hunt saboteurs in the field.

Too often, hunt subs seem content to accept defeat in the courts as inevitable, and whilst it is true that in summary proceedings, guilty verdicts are common, that does not excuse a complacent or defeatist attitude. It is important that in all trials of hunt subs, the prosecution are given a very hard time in their attempts to prove the case. We must not allow the police and the courts to criminalise hunt sabotage, a distinctly real possibility unless subs are prepared to put every effort into defending criminal charges. If you are prepared to run at anybody found to have a dangerous day sabotaging a hunt, then you must surely be prepared to put as much effort into defending criminal proceedings, and in assisting your lawyers who are, after all, only as good as the instructions you give them.

Finally, turning to the third limb of the strategy, it is time that hunt subs gave much more serious consideration to the prospect of using the civil courts to curb the violent behaviour of hunt supporters and the oppressive behaviour of the police. Civil proceedings (in the County or the High Court depending on the damages sought) are available to any citizen who claims he or she has been wronged in any way by another person. Hence, every time a hunt supporter assaults a sab, or damages property belonging to a sab, then provided that there is some evidence of who was responsible, there is no good reason for not suing the hunt/person or persons concerned.

Legal Aid

Legal Aid is available for such actions and can generally be obtained, despite sometimes having to wait several months to receive the Legal Aid certificate. Furthermore, civil actions have several very appealing features. Firstly, the standard of proof required is not that of the criminal trial — beyond all reasonable doubt — but rather that of the 'balance of probabilities', a significantly lower standard and one which, for example causes the police to settle many complaints against their officers which would not sustain separate criminal proceedings.

Secondly, and very importantly in the hunt sabbing context, courts in civil proceedings can award 'exemplary' damages, in addition to compensatory damages, where it is felt that the defendant deserves to be punished. Finally, whilst civil proceedings are pending there is the prospect of seeking non-molestation injunctions against defendants who choose to pursue the behaviour complained of.

Again, the political ramifications of suing hunt supporters for assault up and down the country are obvious and it is a scenario we must strive to achieve. If we begin to sue the hunt and/or its supporters every time the circumstances merit such an action, then the veil of respectability which cloaks the true face of hunting will slowly be removed.

Already the strategy described above is gaining support within the hunt sab movement, and is bearing fruit. Three one-day legal seminars have been held to date in Birmingham, Manchester and Bristol where solicitors and barristers have been on hand to discuss problems in detail with those subs who have attended. Further such seminars are planned, including one for the London region. Additionally, all HSA contacts will soon be receiving a comprehensive legal briefing for dissemination amongst active subs, some of which will be published in future HOWLs.

Furthermore, that briefing will be accompanied by a list of HSA recommended solicitors, and it is hoped that this network of competent and committed solicitors can be developed over the next few seasons. Civil proceedings have already been commenced against a supporter of the New Forest FH and are being considered against a supporter of the Sir Watkin William Wynn's FH.

The Potential

All that is needed is for hunt subs to grasp the potential of a co-ordinated legal strategy and to begin to put it into action. Let us ensure that every hunt sab trial this coming season is defended to the hilt, that every effort is made to assist in the prosecution of hunt supporters, and that every incident of hunt violence is followed up swiftly by civil proceedings against those responsible.

There can be no doubt that if the HSA can begin to develop the spirit of this strategy, then the hunt will find itself reeling towards the end of the season, and likely on the defensive. And the HSA shall be back where it deserves to be — on the offensive.

John Beggs
HSA Legal Officer.



Hahn encouraging a few sabs are moved on by the long arm of the law. Linton's Plantation, August 13th

LEGAL NEWS UPDATE

Compiled by John Beggs and Steve Poole

HUNTSMEN IN COURT

ON AUGUST 10th, two members of the Beaufort Hunt were committed for trial at Bristol Crown Court charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm on Andrew Ellender. Additionally, prior to this, Paul Connolly, huntsman with Sir Watkin William Wynne's FH, was committed for trial at Wrexham Crown Court charged with ABH on hunt saboteur Nigel Lohan (as reported in HOWL 7R), and with possession of an offensive weapon.

It will be interesting to note the court's treatment of these defendants in the event of their conviction or guilty pleas. Nigel's solicitor, Kevin Tomlinson for Nottingham, is in the process of commencing civil proceedings against Connolly.

Following an incident at a meet of the Old Surrey & Burstow FH on March 25th when a saboteur from Hastings HSA had his arm broken by a heavy blow from a hunt supporter's stick, a man has been committed for trial at Lewes Crown Court. Michael Ashwood, a gamekeeper from South Chailey, has been charged with ABH.

HUNT FOLLOWERS GUILTY

A HUNT follower who attacked a car belonging to Tonbridge hunt saboteurs was convicted of criminal damage by Sevenoaks magistrates on June 7th and ordered to pay £108 to the group.

Colin Jenner from Edenbridge, Kent, was attending a joint meet of the Old Surrey & Burstow with West Kent FH near Westerham on March 10th, when he made a sudden and frenzied attack on the Tonbridge van, ripping off a wing mirror and hurling it through the window. The prosecution was the result of a concerted effort by saboteurs to get the police to take the matter seriously.

On June 3rd, Kenneth magistrates found John Pepper, a hunt supporter from Rochdale, £50 and ordered him to pay £44.90 in compensation to saboteurs. Pepper had thrown a stone through the rear window of their van as they drove past him.

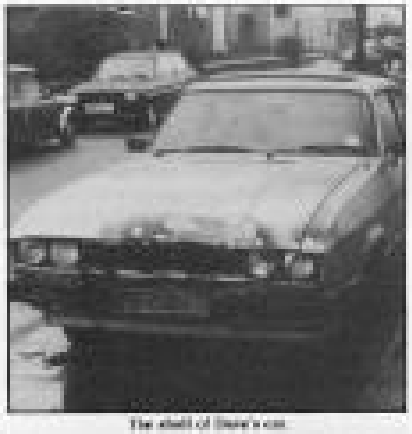
Pepper was also found guilty of recklessly driving his motorbike, driving without insurance, and failing to stop and report an accident. This brought him a further £175 in fines. Police had to mount a road block to stop him and narrowly escaped injury themselves when he accelerated past them. One policeman had to jump out of the way.

GROUSE SHOOT

FOLLOWING the success of the HSA action on the Glorious Twelfth, work is underway to lodge a serious complaint against the Chief Superintendent of Richmond Police Station after the completely over-the-top policing on that day, when a 'state of emergency' was declared, according to the Independent (1st Aug 12th).

POLICE DRAG HEELS IN ARSON CASE

NORTHUMBRIAN police have still to take any useful action against the thugs responsible for the arson attack on Dave Shepherdson's car and the breaking of his windows last HOWL 39 and may now face internal disciplinary charges for negligence.



The shell of Dave's car.

Dave's windows were smashed for a third time on May 11th but although he reported it and once again explained to the police the full history of the harassment case (and where they might usefully begin their inquiries), he received nothing more than two phone calls from a detective arranging, and then cancelling, a meeting with him.

Depressed by the news that the Crown Prosecution Service had decided to drop all charges against 3 Tyneside supporters for an assault upon him last season, and fearful that the attacks upon his property would now continue unchecked, Dave wrote in desperation to his MP, Nic Brown, requesting that he use his influence to spur the police into action.

Mr Brown wrote a concerned letter to Chief Inspector Durham on Dave's behalf and a miraculous change in police attitudes ensued.

On July 10th, Dave and Liz were visited by two detectives who apologised profusely for the way their colleagues had so far conducted their enquiries, promised to interview the three hunt followers, and said they would provide protection at Dave's flat should the vandalism continue. Dave had been recommending that these three followers be interviewed for some four months now, and was not unduly surprised when Det Sgt Oliver returned the following evening to say he had questioned them all but that they all claimed to have been watching TV on the date in question, and that it was now rather difficult to prove otherwise.

According to Sgt Oliver, there may be some mild rolling of heads at Clifford St police station because of the failure of other officers to interview the suspects sooner.

Following the HOWL 39 report, Dave and Liz were sent a number of donations to help with the replacement of their windows. "We're extremely grateful for these generous gifts", said Dave, "and we'd like to thank all HSA members, but particularly these people, for their kind support". They estimate the total damage to have cost them about £1,500.

As if the above were not bad enough, Dave Shepherdson was treated to a further taste of British 'injustice' when he was hauled before magistrates at Ryedale and convicted of a minor parking offence in August.

After dropping off a group of saboteurs at a road junction, he was accosted by a PC Right who instructed him to produce his vehicle's documents at a police station. Right then told him to stay where he was and went off for a chat with his colleague, Sgt Fell. When Right returned, he booked Dave for "Dangerous Parking" although Dave had only parked at the insistence of PC Right. The road carried double white lines which prohibit parking but not stopping so that passengers can alight.

In court, Right and Fell gave markedly different accounts of the supposed position of Dave's vehicle, and the position of their own car, and were not even initially in agreement as to whether the road had double or single white lines.

Dave conducted his own defence but was prohibited from asking Sgt Fell whether he supported hunting (it was believed that Fell walked puppies for the Bloxwitha FH) and both policemen refused to check their statements against entries in their notebooks; for which they received the backing of the court. Dave's five witnesses were all ignored by the bench and he was found guilty, fined £25 and ordered to pay costs of £70. Sgt Fell is now an Inspector.



NEW FOREST FH

AS SHOWN by the early rabbiting reports from saboteurs out with the pack, followers of the New Forest FH are continuing their tradition of violent and unlawful behaviour. On August 27th, a number of saboteurs were assaulted, one with a spade, and one had his camera damaged in full view of the police. Things got worse when on Saturday 20th, Daniel Poutrie had his head split open requiring 13 stitches following an attack by a club-wielding hunt supporter. A man is now helping police with their enquiries into the serious incident, and Daniel has already instituted civil proceedings.

To add insult to injury, literally, a female hunt sab was arrested and charged with obstructing a police officer, PC Diver, following her attempt to stop a dog-fox. Whether it is a police officer's duty to facilitate the digging out of foxes is, of course, an interesting question. The sab concerned will be pleading not guilty to the charge.

POLICE TO ACT AGAINST GOSCHEN?

FOLLOWING reports in HOWL 39 of the uncontrolled behaviour of Mr. Goschen's FH on Surrey roads, we received a letter from Pam Shipp of Rowledge near Farnham, telling us of other instances of not involving the pack.

Pam's garden in Boundary Road was invaded by marauding hounds for a total of twenty minutes on January 31st. Horses, many of which wanted jumps and out of control, were cantered up and down on the wet tarmac road for over an hour whilst residents scrambled to get pets and livestock under cover.

When questioned, several hunt riders refused to tell Pam which hunt they belonged to and when one eventually admitted it was the Goschen she would not divulge the address of the kennels. Hunt officials were nowhere to be seen and no attempt was made to call the hounds off or apologise for the invasion.

Pam and other residents complained, both to the hunt and to the police. PI R. Porter, a Goschen joint master, sent back a barely legible page of scribble expressing "deep apologies", but the police were more helpful.

Supt R. J. Carroll of Loughrigg police station was clearly unhappy with the chaos and bad feeling the hunt had created and all the unwanted work it had meant for his officers. He wrote: "Despite the difficulty in pursuing prosecutions for any criminal offences, I intend to monitor the situation very carefully and see if any future problems can be brought within known criminal legislation". That was on March 15th. Please keep him posted.

POLICEMAN-BALLS

"I have heard a rumour that some of the protesters are being paid a daily rate to disrupt hunting."

Police spokesperson, Keswick Reminder 8/4/88

"I know who you lot are; you're thieves and criminals. You're paid £19 a time to come out and do this."

Durham PC to Tyneside sab, grouse shoots 12/8/88

CLUB DRAW RESULTS

In July's draw, first prize of £67 was won by Elizabeth Holmes, second prize of £44 by Ruth Vicars and third prize of £22 by S. Reddy. Payment for the club draw can be made either by cheque for £24, giving a whole year's membership, or by using the Club Draw standing order form.

THE CAMERA — A VITAL TOOL FOR HUNT SABOTEURS

MORE hunt saboteurs are now carrying cameras into the hunting field than ever before. But knowing the best equipment to use isn't always easy. Here, Simon Wild offers some practical advice on films and cameras.





In these two prints taken at the Smithfield Show in 1980, I have made a large enlargement from XP1 film. Good detail can be seen of a police man assaulting a hunt supporter and notebook after the supporter had attacked the sab when he tried to enter the parade ring. This was taken with a 50mm lens from a considerable distance and illustrates the detail available from a fine grain 400 ASA film. This would be important in cases of assault where evidence was needed and you were standing some way off.

It is my belief that a camera should be seen as a vital tool for hunt saboteurs. If everyone has a decent camera then it can prevent assaults and ensure conviction if they do take place. Photos are important for publicity and essential for arousing interest when running a street stall. And of course HORSE can always do with more photos.

I often see people on hunts with the most unsuitable cameras. Some have a tiny lens or are of small negative format. For anyone who wants a good camera for under £25, then the best one by far is the Zenith LOMO. This camera has a high specification for the price, and most importantly has a quite fast F. 2.8 lens. All other cameras in anything near this price range have a much smaller lens size, and therefore are only suitable in good lighting conditions. The camera's sliding lens shield and metal body also make this the ideal cheap compact for sabbing purposes.

With film a 400 ASA speed should always be used in order to maintain a reasonably fast shutter speed. Colour prints can be used in HORSE but black and white does reproduce better. The best films are: Colour — Fuji Super HR 400 ASA; Black and White — Ilford XP1 (requires colour processing) and T-MAX 400 ASA (ask your processor to make sure this is developed in T-Max developer for best quality). All these films are new technology and give finer grain than other old style films. In black and white T-Max gives the best contrast but XP1 does have slightly finer grain.

BARELY LEGAL

THE LAST six months have seen "Shooting News" in a terrible turmoil. They don't appear to be able to decide whether the "Cook Report" was showing the misguided idiots who gave badger digging a bad name or the victimisation of law abiding terrier workers by nasty ITV, RSPCA, lunatic fringe/police axis.

One of their regular writers said he didn't believe badger diggers existed, though the paper he writes for had raised funds to help the defence of badger diggers who were later convicted of interference with setts.

How did they raise the money? A competition for "Most Battle Scarred Terrier" at sporting dog shows! Some people have no shame.

A.G. Fox (alias Brian Peachey), Shooting News legal expert factually an ex police constable) is prepared to stick his neck out for diggers in court and on paper, or so it would seem. In his view apparently all diggers brought before the bench were after fox and not badger, and anyone trying to prosecute a digger is a city dwelling anti. Anti what? Anti fox digging presumably, as most people are anti badger digging. Mr Fox is not sure though. He had the cheek to criticise "Fair Game" (a book about field sports and the law) for attacking terrier work, when all the book does is to spell the law out in plain terms.

Some Shooting News writers are not into subtlety in these matters. "I fail to see why field sports publications, and more particularly organisations, did not and do not actively campaign for the reinstatement of the badger as legal quarry," says A Harrison. What a nice chap! An article in the Field (compiled by one Wilson Stephens called "Badgers: The Myth of Martyrdom", appears to lend credence to this view. The BFSS (British Field Sports Society) and other supposedly respectable organisations, all have their logos printed on the front cover of the "Shooting News" along with the ridiculous "Fell & Moorland Working Terrier Club". It surprises me that law abiding field sports organisations would stick so low. Maybe I have got the wrong impression from their glossy PR mags.

Still, at least the lowlife are aware of our presence, rarely a Shooting News goes by without a mention of Badger Groups, and badgers of course.

If you were ever thinking of buying this nasty little rag, don't bother. Besides being full of terrible articles, its badly written, badly printed and not worth 75p.

S.E.



LP REVIEW



"It's sort of an Indie Pop compilation," said the voice down the phone; "give it a good review...". A couple of days later, the latest offering from Manchester-based Artists For Animals hit the doormat — a couple of plays and I'm ready to do just that.

'SACRIFICED ON AN ALTAR OF RIGHT AND LIES' contains a selection of tracks specially penned and recorded for this release. From the haunting Rainforest and When the Last Ship Sails through the Pogues-ique Boy's Hunt Saboteurs to the upbeat I Believe and A Sporting Life, the album charts an enjoyable trip through the spectrum of Indie music.

As someone who doesn't usually find the time to listen to records, let alone buy them, I quickly got to like it. Worth buying for the cause alone, yet accessible enough for anybody to enjoy.

Money from this album goes to local Animal Rights Groups. The L.P. is available from all good record shops, or by mail order from:

AFA, P.O. Box 18, South PDO, MANCHESTER M14 5NB at £5.80 (inc p&p).

Chris Bishop

"FOR THE LOVE OF HORSE & HOUND"

A look at the treatment of hunt animals



Two Rowland hounds gaze at their future. Few live longer than eight years; some are put down before they are three.

Hunters generally profess a great love of both horses and hounds (and of foxes too!), and are quick to lay allegations of cruelty to these animals by hunt saboteurs. Seasoned sabs take little notice of such accusations, recognising them for what they are, desperate attempts to deflect criticism from themselves and to put the saboteurs on the defensive.

Unfortunately each hunting season brings a smattering of press cuttings in which the master of this or that hunt alleges that hunt saboteurs have blinded, kicked or whipped a hound or thrown stones at hunt horses. Inevitably some members of the general public will believe such stories simply because they have appeared in the paper. Yet even if these stories were true, the cruelty and suffering involved would pale into insignificance beside the wholesale mistreatment experienced by hunt animals at the hands of their masters.

According to the Gibbons Resources survey, commissioned by the Standing Conference on Countryside Sports (now the Campaign for Country Sports) which was published in 1983 and detailed the "importance" of bloodsports to the British economy, the 16,000 horse-riding hunt subscribers in the U.K. owned some 28,000 horses and used them for hunting.

We all recognise the degree of danger to which race and show jumping horses are put in the course of their competitive work (dramatically portrayed in the daily newspapers after every Grand National event) but for horses used in hunting the danger is even greater. Hunt horses are expected to cross country pock-marked with the hidden dangers of rabbit holes and to jump hedges and ditches with unseen and often dangerous obstacles waiting to meet them.

Each year hundreds of horses are badly injured and many have to be put down as a result of their injuries. A large number of hunt staff and supporters are also injured during a season and while that is the risk they take it is the tax payer (most of whom are opposed to blood sports), who end up paying for their visit to the hospital.

Distress

Horses, like most working horses when their usefulness is at an end, are destined to be sold at market and to spend their last hours with others of their kind in a corral within sight, smell and hearing of a slaughterhouse. Those of our readers familiar with the fates of animals reared for meat will recognise that this is certainly not a fate free of distress or suffering as the meat industry would have us believe. It is no different for horses. Certainly many horse owners, and presumably some hunters, would never consider sending their much loved animals to such a fate but most do not consider the horse's welfare once it has been sold.

Between them Baker's 440+ hunts own around 25–30 thousand hounds (beagles, bassets, harriers, mink hounds, fox hounds and staghounds). Few of these animals will live to see middle age, most are killed between the ages of five and eight years. To replace those put down by the hunt, killed in accidents or the victims of disease, around 8,000 young put the figure as high as 16,000), puppies are bred each year. As many as a third of these will fail to meet the standard demanded of them by their owners and will be put down before they attain their third birthday.

In his book, "Foxhunting" published in 1960, the late 10th. Duke of Beaufort wrote:

"Lord Henry Bentinck hunted the Rufford and Burton (hunt) countries for thirty years . . . He also said that the secret of his success was to breed a great many hounds, and then to put down a great many. If you can afford to follow his example so much the better for the future of your pack."

Politically, the fates of hounds is a sensitive subject for the hunting world; after all during the summer months as country shows up and down the country children are introduced to these friendly and lovable animals as a way justifying the idea of killing animals for sport. This would not work if the children knew more about the life of a hunting hound. The aforementioned Duke described those hounds which would have to be "put down":

"Now we come to decisions that must be firm and may sound ruthless . . . if one hound outruns all the rest, then he must go . . . A skirter . . . (a hound which cuts corners rather than following the actual line taken by the quarry) will have to be called, as must one that runs mute . . . This stringent rule also applies to a babbler . . ." (a hound which gives tongue on anything but the right scent)

J. C. Hobson in his recently published book "Beagling" adds to this list:

". . . those older hounds which proved a disappointment during the last season's hunting will have been moved on or destroyed (after all, no one will thank you for passing on a hound which will not hunt)."

It is not really known how aged or "useless" hounds are killed: in the not too distant past they were often simply hung by their necks, strangled or bludgeoned to death. Hopefully, the civilising influence of modern times has eradicated such practices from most hunt kennels and either the



Hounds from the Scotchmen & Bridge corner the road as a train speeds past close by them. Hunting in the South East is fraught with hazards.

needle or a bullet has replaced the noose and club. It is widely rumoured that culled hounds are fed to their former kennel mates and on their occasional inspections of kennels sabs have found the bodies of recently killed hounds in the feed bins.

One thing is certain, however, hunters are prone to lying about the fates of hounds. Those that persistently "run" on non-quarry species will not be drafted to other packs as may happen with a hound which is simply too fast for its home pack, they will be killed. When cases of culling achieve headline coverage in the newspapers as did the repeated killing of deer a few years ago by the New Forest Beagles, sabs have tried to draw attention to the expected fates of the hounds but on every occasion the hunts have simply stated, without offering any proof, that the hounds in question have been drafted. But be hunt saboteurs certainly do as the following, again from Hobson's "Beagling", illustrates:

"Although it might require some sweet talking on the part of the master if he is called upon to explain to a puppy walker (a hunt supporter who looks after and trains at home a hound during the first year of its life following weaning) **why his hound has been drafted (always drafted, never destroyed!)."**

Clearly if hunters are prepared to lie to their own supporters about the more sordid aspects of hunting they will obviously not be above doing so when they are forced to face the public on the issue.

Young hounds – the "new entry" – are trained to hunt in the autumn months of their second year on their return to kennels following several months of the homes of the puppy walkers (mink hounds are the exception to this rule, their training period, such as it is, being conducted in early spring). Stability is not in most hunts a feature of this training but it does play a part in some hunts or in the training of one or two obedient puppies.

The hunt staffs' whips are more than mere ornaments, the degree of respect hounds show hound even the merest flick of the tip of a whip to point at this. Many hunt saboteurs marvel at the control they can have over a pack of hounds when in the possession of even the thinnest of home-made whips, but realise that this is only possible because of the fear of the whip lash instilled in the minds of most hounds during their early training.

In an interview reported in the "Horse & Hound Magazine" in September 1981, Daphne Moore, a well known hunting personality, asked Sir Peter Farquhar, a former master of the Dorset based Portman Foxhunt, whether he would "as a last resort" whip hounds himself. Sir Peter replied "Quite definitely". It is rare to find open admissions of this nature although another can be found in Mr. Michael Clayton's (Editor of Horse & Hound") book, "The Chase":

"One sign of even slightly belligerent interest in sheep by a single hound is immediately punished by a sharp telling off at the hunt or a whipping."



Saboteurs rescue a beagle which has dropped from exhaustion. It can expect a lot less sympathy when the roadsters catch up with it.

Again, whilst on the subject of hounds and sheep, the Duke of Beaufort reported a strange and brutal practice designed to dissuade hounds from sheep killing in the following words:

"Once hounds get a taste for sheep killing it is well-nigh impossible to eliminate it, though I have heard people say that they have effected a cure by tying down their young hounds and driving a flock of sheep over them."

Hunting with hounds, despite the hunt supporters cries to the contrary, is largely uncontrollable. Once the hounds discover the scent of their quarry, they will, as long as the line can be followed, go almost anywhere. This places the hounds (and incidentally, members of the public) at risk.

Each year hounds are killed or injured in road accidents whilst crossing anything from narrow country lanes to fast motorways. Railway lines, or, rather the trains that use them, kill a considerable number of hounds; the electrified contact rails in the home counties take their annual toll too. Large numbers of hounds fall to their deaths over natural cliff ledges, into quarries or down mine shafts.

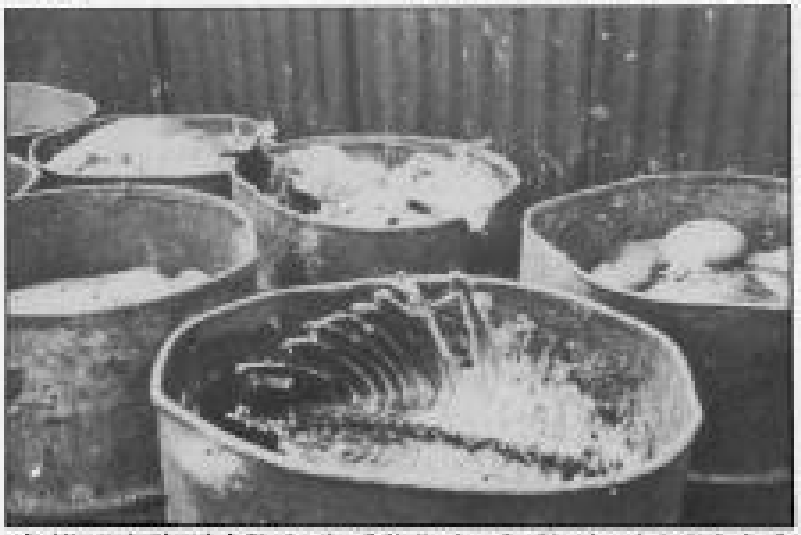
Hounds may also be killed or injured by farm machinery or barbed wire, and hard ground, sharp stones, broken glass etc. are an ever present hazard in the countryside.

Much as been written in recent issues of Hoot about the injuries suffered by the hunt terriers during the process of "digging out" or "bolting" a fox which has gone to earth. But to quickly recap, terriers are frequently badly injured in the course of their underground encounters with foxes. The eyes, noses and ears etc. of hunt terriers have been severely mauled and many terriers are crippled or killed during such engagements. In addition to the threat posed by a frightened fox fighting for its life there is the constant danger of a tunnel collapse cutting off the air supply or of the terrier simply becoming lost in an underground maze.

Increasingly hunters are attempting to discredit hunt saboteurs in the media and in the courtroom by alleging cruelty to animals through the use of sprays or whips, our normal defence against such ridiculous charges besides any factual evidence we present is that our aim is to prevent cruelty to animals and that we see hounds and horses as much the victims of the hunt as their quarry species. In order to hammer home this point it might be worth detailing the ways in which hunting affects hounds, horses and terriers since many people are more concerned about domestic animals than so called vermin.

Incidently it is the misuse of hunt animals which prompts the HSA (now advocating, as some anti-bloodsports groups do, the replacement of hunting live animals with drag hunting.

Ralph Cook



Feed time in a hunt kennels. Is this where the culled bodies of once 'loved' hounds are destined to be eaten?

I HEAR THE PRESSGANG

HOWL Peers Into The Murky World Of The Unprincipled Journo

THE HSA HAS been the subject of some particularly malicious gutter-journalism over the summer — and not all of it from the tabloids. All the libel writing saw the light of day during a single month, August, though it related to three separate incidents and involved the Independent, the Guardian, the Telegraph and the Daily Mail.

By far the worst appeared in the Telegraph on August 8th. An unsigned article on page three concerning a petrol bomb explosion at a site belonging to the Kent & Sussex Hounds contained a number of completely false and unconfirmed statements. The first of these ran: "It is believed the attack at 2.30am yesterday was made by an anti-bloodsports group called the Hunt Saboteurs Association". The second alleged that "thousands" of mink "are set free each year by group members who raid farms ..." and the third was an unconnected quotation from the joint master, Michael Emery alleging: "The people who work for the hunt saboteurs are all unemployed and get paid £15 by the association to go out on a job."

HSA's legal office is taking action over this quite remarkable piece of writing. Surprisingly, it is only two years since we had to call in the Press Council to add weight to a complaint against the same paper when it printed allegations that we were promoting violence against anglers. Telegraph editor, Max Hastings, was then persuaded to print a retraction (though it took him about six months to do it) and he sent the HSA a letter saying "It is certainly not the policy of the newspaper to leave inadvertent mistakes uncorrected". We can presumably take it that our present complaint will receive his prompt attention.

Michael Emery repeated his spurious views about payments to saboteurs in the Yorkshire Gazette on August 10th and in the Yorkshire Express on August 12th. In the Gazette's front page expose, reporter Julian Fisher gave Mr Emery plenty of space to blame hunt saboteurs for the fire but gave neither national HSA nor the local group any space at all to deny the charges. That Mr Emery was using the Express's presumed ignorance to make misleading remarks about hunt saboteurs is evident in his citing a belief that hunt saboteurs watched his house as evidence that they set fire to his yard. If saboteurs were watching his house, as Mr Emery knows very well, it was so they could follow him when he went hunting and for no other reason.

Invented Campaign

Four days before the Telegraph story was printed, David Gardner, a Crime Correspondent for the Daily Mail, produced from nowhere an exciting story about fire bombs at hotels serving grouse. If you don't remember it, it was no wonder. Even fire bombs never existed outside of the mercurial mind of David Gardner. According to him, "A campaign of violence is planned for the start of the grouse shooting season on August 12th". West End hotels and restaurants were "understood" to be listed as for attack from "animal liberation extremists". Understood by whom? Gardner keeps coy about such a minor detail but tells his readers that detectives "fear" a firebombing campaign. At no point is a shred of evidence offered in support of the assertion, but in the penultimate paragraph, Gardner ties his story together by stating that the HSA has planned a "national day of action against the shoot". Daily Mail readers could be forgiven for assuming that it was therefore the HSA that was "understood" to be planning a bombing spree.

On August 22nd, the Independent and the Guardian both carried small news items about the stable fire that caused £30,000 worth of damage at the Old Surrey and Burstow. According to the Independent, "Hunt saboteurs are suspected of having started the ..." whilst to the Guardian, hunt saboteurs were "believed" responsible." The Independent did at least include a statement by joint master Simon Kenny to indicate who it was that was doing the 'suspecting' and from which readers might draw their own conclusions. The paper printed a letter from our legal officer six days later refuting any suggestion that the HSA could be involved.

The Guardian however, whose story was extremely brief, gave their readers no clues at all as to who it was that 'believed' hunt saboteurs responsible and did not approach HSA for a comment. It thus appeared that the belief was a common one which did not need qualification. A good journalist, if unable to corroborate such a belief, would not even have substituted 'animal rights protesters' for 'hunt saboteurs'. A good journalist would have quoted police belief that it was a case of arson and left it at that.

The HSA has made it perfectly clear time and time again that it does not engage in unlawful activity. A simple call to the HSA's press office would collect this information to any journalist. But unfortunately, there are extremists and lunatics in newspaper offices up and down the country who appear to consider it a part of their job to discredit any organisation that their proprietors consider subversive. Others are plain lazy: many (fortunately) still do their job properly.

But Press Barons and reporters alike should take note that the HSA considers this sort of gutter journalism grossly defamatory and will take legal action if necessary against any future example of it. HSA members are asked to send copies of any libellous or defamatory stories they see in any paper directly to the association, where we will deal with them accordingly. **SP**

COMMITTEE

HSA COMMITTEE 1988/89

THE new committee is made up of the 12 people listed here. Most of the posts have been allocated, but there may be some alterations over the year. If so, they will be noted on this page.

Aubrey Thomas (Tactics); Anji Majendie (Public Relations); Ralph Cook (Secretary to the Association, inc. membership and research); Anne Llewellyn (Fox Cubs); Chris Bishop (Contacts & Promotions); Simon Taylor/Sharon Allen Thomas; John Hale (Treasurer); Barbara Dickenson (Secretary to the Committee); Maria Lester; Dave Lidner (Student Liaison); Mike Hall (sales, goods, fundraising).

AGM REPORT

This year's AGM was held in London on July 2nd. Following an address by the outgoing Chair, the officers of the 1987/88 committee gave reports on their work over the year, then answered questions from the floor. The election results were announced followed by a break for lunch. The afternoon got underway with the draw of the winners in the annual raffle. £500 goes to Miss J Cole of London, £250 to AD Peters of Colwyn Bay, and £100 to R Harper of Reading. The following ten people each receive £10: A Westlake, G Small, P Horner, J Henley, Cathy, D Small, H Baker, T Fox, C Stanway and D Watton.

Constitutional changes were followed by forum discussions on tactics and research. Thomas Poole-Kerr drew the winning ticket in the Fox Cubs raffle. The winner is Mrs Green of Kent and she won a framed photograph by Gary Troodwell of a fox. The raffle raised £220 for Fox Cubs. The day was rounded off by the committee accepting guidelines from the floor, notably about future coverage of fringe bloodsports.

Thanks to Anne Llewellyn who arranged both the AGM and the disco and social evening which followed.

SALES GOODS

Details of current stock, in case you've ordered goods or are thinking of doing so — Tactics books are being reprinted but we're having trouble with the printers so this may take some time. Black vests have been re-ordered as we've just found a new supplier and should be back in stock by now. However, we've yet to find a new supplier for hunting horns and are presently re-designing the envelope stickers so its better not to order these until further notice. On the new lines front, mugs and key-rings should be with you shortly, whilst baseball caps, hooded sweatshirts and a new T Shirt are in the pipeline. Finally, if anyone out there could help with the graphic side of designing a new sales goods order form, please get in touch with the PO Box!

ATTENDING HSA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

If you want to see HSA Committee in action at a meeting all you need to do is write to the Chairperson via the PO Box. You will then be notified of the date and venue of the next meeting. You can also agenda items for discussion. Invitations will be made by the Chairperson and cannot be made by individual committee members without informing the Chair. There may be restrictions upon numbers who can attend meetings, depending upon the size of the venue. It should also be noted that delicate matters will be discussed 'in camera', and that therefore you may be excluded from the meeting at certain times.