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Hounds off our wildlife

MAGAZINE OF THE HUNT SABOTEURS ASSOCIATION
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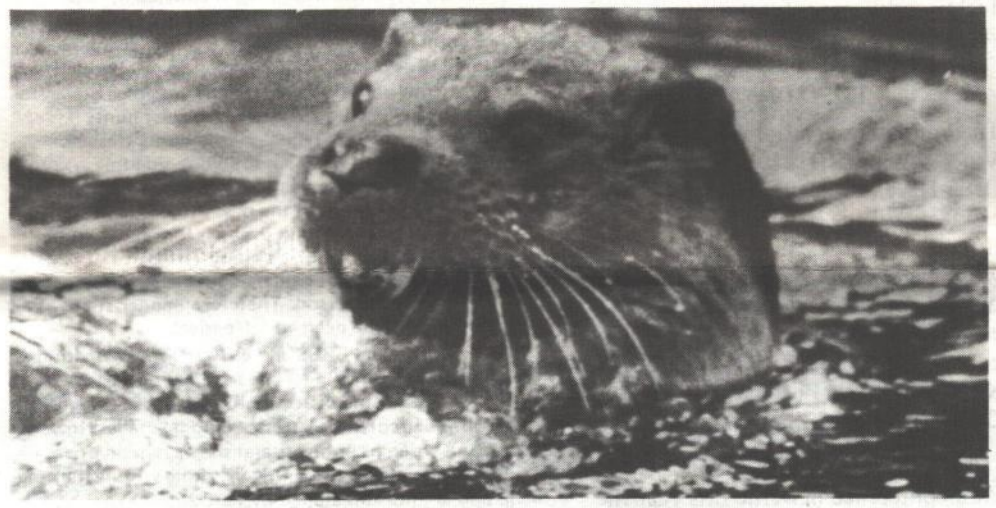
AIMS: To save the lives of hunted animals by legal, non-violent direct means and bring to the attention of People and Parliament the barbaric cruelties involved in the hunting of animals until such time as these practices are banned by law.

SPECIAL JUBILEE ISSUE: See page 2 for exciting Royal news!

"DADDY, WHAT WERE OTTERS?"

"After a promising start, otters were hard to find in June and July and it was therefore a particularly pleasant surprise to find in Ribblesdale again after several blank visits in recent seasons. The meet was at Sawley on July 23, and a large field saw hounds work out a nice drag and find their otter near Gisburn Bridge. Hounds roared away behind him when he bolted and pushed him up and down the pool for some time until he sought refuge in a narrow drain. It proved far from easy to locate him. When he finally bolted, hounds were soon hard at his rudder and drove him round the pool until he landed, ran up the bank and was caught—a good dog otter of 21lbs."

This was a typical Kendal & District Otterhunt report in Horse & Hound (6.8.66) in the days when otters abounded and 'killing' rather than 'conserving' was the order of the day.



DECLINE

Between 1900 and 1950 otter hunts killed between them an average of 200 otters a year.

By 1967 a marked decrease in otter numbers was being noted by the otter-hunts and this downward trend has been growing throughout the ensuing decade so that the hunts only managed to "account for" 30 otters in the years 1972-74, 5 in 1975 and 5 in 1976.

The decline is based upon a number of factors—the loss of quiet, pollution-free inland waters with rich natural cover, the increased disturbance from recreation, habitat destruction through drainage, severe weather in the early '60s and (need we say it) disturbance by hunting.

REPORT

These were the conclusions of the report of the Joint Otter Group, a working group set up this year by the Nature Conservancy Council and the Society for the Promotion of Nature Conservation. The report, obtainable from **NCC at 19-20, Belgrave Sq., London SW1**, based on a 9 month study, says that where once the otter was much in evidence it is now rare or absent—there may be as few as 300 otters in English rivers and the number is declining.

The report recommends the establishment of special otter 'havens' in which river authorities would take special conservation measures. The Group would also like to see a 'voluntary' ban on hunting.

The Government-backed NCC was the only co-sponsor to have written in June to Peter Shore, Sec. of State of the Environment, requesting actual emergency 'legal protection' for the otter. The SPNC, the other co-sponsor, has yet to repeat this request. We wonder if this delay has anything to do with the fact that in April the SPNC adopted HRH Prince Charles, that well-known wildlife benefactor, as its first Patron! In fact the NCC's request for legal protection has been backed up by all the scientists who have studied otter populations in this country—Chanin, Erlinge, Green, MacDonald, Mason, Weir and West.

PERTURBING

The Report contains a couple of perturbing suggestions though. Para. 7.4 suggests that "it would be worth investigating the possibility of using a couple of otterhounds with an experienced handler to draw but not hunt ceratin areas. This would help to confirm the findings of observers." One hound is too many as far as we're concerned.

Para. 12.3 states that "it would be preferable for hunting to cease, but minimum hunts should continue their policy of not killing otters and of restricting their activities to rivers greater than 10m in width and 0.5m in depth." As Philip Wayre of the Otter Trust points out (Animal Welfare July/Aug '77)—it is highly unlikely that a bitch otter will successfully raise her cubs if she is hunted shortly before or after giving birth—it is also virtually certain that, if her holt is disturbed at this time, she will eat her own cubs.

These are certainly 2 paras that should never have been included. Their inclusion would appear to be nothing more than a sop to the bloodsportsmen.

'CARCASE'

The minutes of the Otter Conference, held by the Joint Otter Group on 22nd June to discuss the Report surely show the depths to which the bloodsportsmen will sink. Those present who were against protection of the otter were led by Marcus 'Carcase' Kimball, Tory MP for Gainsborough and Chairman of the so-called BFSS, who admitted (in confidence) that he still uses gin traps, even though they are illegal.

He stated "Let me warn you that if any attempt is made to add the Otter to the list of protected animals, my friends and I in Parliament will argue every clause in the Bill over and over again and add every other animal and extraneous reforms so that the proposal will eventually be talked out".

This is what British democracy is all about!

ROTTERS

But meanwhile what are the otterhunters themselves doing to 'help' the otter?

A new code of practice was issued by the Masters of Otterhounds Assoc. at the beginning of the 1977 season. This covered 3 basic points designed, one would suppose, to reduce the number of accidental kills:

1 *No otters shall be killed except at the request of the riparian owners when damage by otters has been proved.*

continued over

MEDIEVAL LAWS TO SUPPORT MEDIEVAL SPORT

A law dating back to 1361 has been invoked to incarcerate a leading Midlands hunt saboteur for a month. Valerie Waters, aged 45 of Little Aston, Birmingham, had committed no crime. She had been charged with no offence. She went into the witness-box in court to give evidence against four hunt louts who had vandalised her car, and ended up being sentenced to a month's imprisonment herself. The hunt yobs didn't even have to pay their own fines—the Atherstone Hunt took care of those; and their entire legal fees were paid for by the BFSS and the MFHA.

It was November, 1976, that Val Waters' car was attacked by a howling mob of Atherstone heavies, enraged at the effectiveness of the West Midlands HSA team in curtailing their day's carnage. Three times her car was boxed in and ambushed by Atherstone savages, all high as kites with blood on their brains. Sump oil was poured over all the windows. Red paint and de-icer was sprayed over the roof, bonnet and number plates. The aerial was broken off. During the last incident she was kicked and cut when she tried to stop a man stuffing paper and mud up her exhaust pipe. Finally she was hit in the face with a fox's brush. "It was the behaviour of a lynch-mob", said her lawyer. "They were shouting 'Kill them. Kill them'."

The attackers were identified when an anonymous witness picked them out during a running of an HSA cine film taken of the incident from inside Val's car. (There underlining the vital importance of the intelligence aspects of HSA work.) When the case came to Court, six months later, all seemed to go smoothly. The four defendants pleaded guilty, in an endeavour to reduce their costs, and the only dispute centred around the extent of damage to Val's car. She was called into the witness box, and just as she was about to step down again, the defence solicitor entered his bizarre and vindictive plea to the magistrates to have her bound over as well! He quoted the Justices of the Peace Act of 1361 which appears to empower magistrates to bind over not just defendants but witnesses and applicants too. He gave the bench a ludicrous spiel about members of the HSA and of the "Anti-Blood Sport Protestors Association" (?) disrupting hunts by methods "which in some cases were actually unlawful". He pointed out that when hunt supporters "retaliated it did not become the protestors to go running to the police just because they had been given a dose of their own medicine". At no point did this Uriah Heep elaborate on what HSA's "unlawful" methods were, and why Val had not been charged accordingly.

Impressed with the hunt solicitor's sycophancy, the magistrate agreed to bind over Val. Quite correctly, Val refused. Appeals were lodged at a higher court in July, but to no avail and the prosecution witnesses claimed and were awarded £200 costs. However, in a moment of true 'humanitarianism' they apparently suggested that they would be content with only half this amount (ie their true expenses were probably more in the region of £50) and that the other £100 should be given to the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals. (The PDSA have been warned of the circumstances surrounding this 'dirty' money).

Without having been charged with any crime, regardless of any quaint democratic notions such as *habeas corpus,* Val Waters was carted off to jail, to spend a month cleaning floors in humiliating incarceration. To add insult to injury, for the first five days of her internment without charge, Val was treated as a convicted criminal prisoner, instead of being accorded civil status. Finally the Home Office intervened, and as "compensation" for this additional humiliation, she was released three days early.

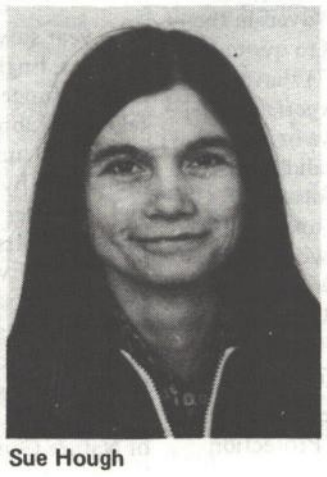
As well as highlighting a hideous and bizarre aspect of British 'Justice', the case has provided HSA with reams of national Publicity, and the courage, honour and dedication of Val Waters has brought praise even from such an unlikely source as the Old Surrey & Burstow Hunt.

Loriner in 'Horse & Hound' waxed lyrical—

> "One can only say that there is something very sad in the fact that Mrs Waters prefers to be behind bars, in a dank little cell, than to being out in the countryside enjoying what for so many is the best part of hunting, early morning cubhunting; listening to the hounds, seeing a cub stealthily cross a ride, the sound of the horn and the voice of the huntsman, gentle mists, crimson berries in the hedgerows, the gently turning colours, the company of real enthusiasts. What a lot to miss."



Val Waters



Sue Hough

HARES JAIL HOUGH

Val wasn't the only HSA member to brave prison for her beliefs this year, for Sue Hough (ex Committee member) refused to recognise the binding-over charge placed upon her at Ormskirk for her part in the Altcar run-on (see back page) and chose the alternative—a week in Holloway Prison, London—which unlike Val she found to be "exceedingly interesting".

WHO'S KIDDING?

Here's a poser for you. How do you solve the world's food shortage problem and at the same time help to improve the precarious survival situation of Britain's wild herds of goat. Give up?

Shooting Times columnist, Henry Tegner, has the answer—his suggestion (23.3.77) is to use the goats "for feeding the Asiatic population now in Britain, plus (the goats') elevation to a properly recognised status as a 'beast of the chase'." Simple isn't the word for it!

In the same article he enthuses about wild goat stalking on Loch Lomond's *Crap na Gower,* which he suggests means "island of goats", but our Gaelic dictionary indicates that 'na Gower' means 'a load of old'.



Dear Editor,

I think you will be interested to know that I have recently snatched two Council woodlands from the clutches of the Enfield Chace Hunt.

By chance I happened to know that one wood was under special management for conservation purposes, so I was surprised to find the Hunt there. I complained to the Countryside Office of Herts County Council, who put me in touch with the Land Agents Office. They confirmed that the Hunt had not had permission to be there, and have assured me that appropriate bye-laws are to be posted up at two of the Hunts favourite woods by the Autumn and wardens on the land will be instructed to banish any huntsmen found there.

The point is however that no one was aware of these bye-laws—neither the police, the public generally, nor the Hunt. It might be a good idea therefore if other sabs check on bye-laws of Council property where hunting is known to take place. They should enquire at their local Countryside Office or Land Agents Office (best to pose as a 'Conservationist' than a Saboteur). If bye-laws are being flouted the Council will be obliged to exhibit and enforce them as best they can in future. There just might be a few more sanctuaries for Reynard up and down the Country.

Yours sincerely,
Val Farrow
Letchworth, Herts

KILL '77

Three days in May this year were devoted to the glorification of killing for pleasure in yet another 'sporting' event designed to show the great British public the fun things our country, and not so country, cousins, get up to.

'Chase '77', held at the Royal Showground, Stoneleigh, Warks., was described by an enthusiastic handout as presenting the "spectacle and excitement of country sports" and included the inevitable foxhound, falconry, fishing and shooting displays with a 'cuddly bunny' farmyard especially for children.

Local HSA groups were represented at the show (outside the gates!) and handed out leaflets to intending visitors and explained to those willing to listen why they should not patronise the show and were in turn rewarded by the sight of people turning away. In fact one couple wrote to us to say that they had taken their children to an open day at a nearby sewage works instead!

The attendance figures of the show were below those expected which might have had something to do with the lack of roadsigns in the area and the fact that the show was locally and largely advertised as 'Murder '77' and 'Kill '77'.

Contrastingly, no demonstration was evident (or required) at the Game Fair in July. A local paper gave a front page banner headline to advertise the fact that a *banner* demo was to be held at the event, which indeed it was, but due to a lack of necessary numbers it was called off at the last moment. However we have subsequently found out that Scotland Yard was alerted to the fact that activists had their eye on the Fair and, getting sticky under the collar, they had the area patrolled by police cars during the hours of darkness—all to no avail!

WHISPERING GRASS

Dick Course, a progressive executive council member of the League Against Cruel Sports appeared in court in London on 9th September accused of receiving confidential documents stolen in a raid on the offices of the so-called British Field Sports Society in March in which £6,000 worth of damage was done.

In a statement to the police he said that the documents were dumped on his doorstep late one night following a phone call from an unknown woman who warned him that the LACS had a spy in the camp who was passing information back to the BFSS. The documents bore this out.

His statement said that he and Ray Rowley, ex-chairman of the LACS, looked over the documents in a pub. Eventually he intended taking them to the police but before he could do so the police raided his home acting, he alleges, on a tip-off which he believed came from Ray Rowley or his supporters, as it would strengthen their position in the League at a time of great internal strife.

Dick was commited for trial at Newington Causeway Crown Court on a date to be fixed. He was granted £100 bail.

3 days after Dick's raid five committee members of the HSA received simultaneous raids by police armed with search warrants (licences for legalised burglary). Despite resorting to such tricks as taking up floorboards and taking off the bath panelling at two houses they found nothing.

The reasons for these later raids?
A tip off.

THE ART OF CONSERVATION

All those of you who enjoy Anglia TV's "Survival" series might be interested in Producer Colin Willock's ideas on grouse conservation (à la 12-bore) as recorded in his regular Shooting Times column (19.9.74). "A single cock grouse rose . . . I hit it hard, watched it fly away strongly, shedding feathers, tower and drop into a deep corrie 400 yards away across a valley. Though our gallant labrador searched gravely, he never managed to find it. One down and nothing in the bag." . . . "We ended the morning with four grouse and a greyhen in the bag, a perfectly satisfactory situation from a gastronomic point of view and a more than satisfactory one from the standpoint of pure and glorious enjoyment."

His views on whaling aren't much more encouraging . . . (S.T. 21.7.77) "I confess that I could find it very hard to fire a harpoon at one although I suppose I would feel very different if it was my living."

SCRAP THE ACT!

Many sabs are no doubt wondering if the newly passed Criminal Trespass Law will have any effect on our activities against the 'pink-coated hordes'. So recently one of our 'roving reporters' went along to the national HQ of the Campaign Against the Criminal Law (CACTL) to find out the facts.

The Criminal Trespass Law is Part 2 of the Criminal Law Bill and it is Part 2 that is mainly relevant to activists. The complete Bill became law in the week before the Summer recess and the actual clauses will not be enforced until early December and it's difficult to predict how the authorities will interpret the law or who will be the first to be affected.

Getting stuck into the law; the main concern of Part 2 is the protection of property (which as we all know is more important to the state than life) and trespass on land under the Act involves that near a permanent structure (eg farm house or farm building). So if you're running onto land to spray coverts or fields keep well away from buildings or it could be interpreted that you were trespassing with intent to threaten persons or occupy premises (resulting, if convicted, in 6 months imprisonment and/or £1000 fine). Stopping access to an owner is also illegal now under this clause. As usual keep to or near public footpaths and roads as much as possible. However landowners could use the law against hunts if he/she 'feels threatened' by the hunts' trespass over their land—so it's not all one-sided.

Another clause deals with trespass with an offensive weapon. In the past the law has deemed combs, paper clips and shoes as 'offensive' so be careful what you carry about. 'Offensive' is interpreted as that which could cause injury or incapacitate a person. Therefore banner sticks at a demo could be deemed 'offensive'.

The annual BFSS and NCC office occupations obviously come under the auspices of Part 2 and if anyone in the offices 'felt threatened', when sabs secured entry, arrests could be made. However banner demos at meets and shows remain under the umbrella of present laws, along with leafletting and are not threatened by Part 2.

Marcus Kimball's anti-sab amendments were thrown out; his nasty little effort was to extend the law to all land rather than that surrounding permanent structures and buildings.

There are other less important ways the law could be used against sabs and your local branch of CACTL can fill you in on these but they need your help in informing the public what this law is trying to do—inhibit and stamp out direct action (a fundamental British right that has had a successful past from the CND 'sit-downs' to the Kinder Scouts restoration of public access on private land). This law **could** be repealed and HSA members can help set the wheels in motion by a variety of actions: Write to your MP expressing concern about the law and its implications (CACTL would welcome a copy of the reply).

Affiliate your HSA branch, students union, etc to CACTL (£5 per year) and join in and help your local CACTL branch activities.

Approach your favourite local councillor and ask him to pressure the council into boycotting the law.

Send a donation, no matter how small to CACTL, 35 Wellington Street, London WC2 (the address on the enclosed leaflet is incorrect) or use the enclosed bankers order. The CACTL pamphlet on the Bill (30p including postage) is recommended for a detailed study of the Law and its implications.

On November 26/27 there will be a national conference on the law why not go along?

This bill has quietly become law because its original movers used a 'squatter smokescreen', playing on people's fear that an army of hippies will squat in your home while you're out shopping! Yet this Bill is trying to sap some of the very lifeblood of the HSA. Hunt violence has not stopped us nor will some act but it's important to support CACTL as there has also been further talk about a law restricting the right to hold demonstrations and public meetings! This law indirectly helps the hunt and as usual puts property before life which is totally alien to ALL HSA members. Make it your responsibility to know all the laws of trespass thoroughly—be assured that the hunting fraternity will be doing the same!

CACTL are very confident that eventually this law will be repealed and end on the scrap heap where it belongs—help them see it there.

"Daddy, what were otters?"

2 *Hunting shall be conducted on a basis agreed with the governing bodies of the recognised naturalists' organisations.*
3 *No hunting shall take place in rivers that do not afford the otter every opportunity to escape.*

Sounds fine doesn't it? But read on, remembering that it is supposed to have been general MOHA policy during the drastic decline in the otter population since 1967 to call hounds off if there is any danger of an otter being killed.

The following is some advice given by Capt. John Bell-Irving (Master Dumfriesshire Otterhounds) in 1974 to Michael Farrow (master of his own 'pirate' pack at the time), "*. . . The MOHA, sometimes in conjunction with BFSS, makes recommendations in order to keep in step with changing times and pressures from different organisations (mainly anti or suspicious). Publicity is, in most cases, not a good idea. . . . Killing of otters, especially of bitches, is not recommended these days—except where otters are plentiful! Avoid killing even a huge dog otter near a public place, village, picnic area and so on. (Crowd of trippers hanging over a bridge etc).*"

Capt. John Bell-Irving is not only Master of the DOH, he's also President of the MOHA! What value their 'code of practice' now?

DOUBLE TALK

We're not the only ones to see through the otterhunters' double talk. Fieldsportsman Max Macdonald Hastings (S.T. 17.2.77), in a letter explaining why he won't join the BFSS makes it clear that many sportsmen are deeply uneasy about the Society's continuing support for the sport. Regular S.T. contributor Jack Snipe, a "dyed-in-the-wool otterhunting enthusiast" (to quote his own words), argues (S.T. 7.7.77) that the majority of fishermen, in his experience, are either pro-otter in these days or neutral, therefore control is no longer valid, nor likely to be in the foreseeable future. Referring to the voluntary ban on otterhunting he actually asks "would it not be much more rational, however sadly, to face up to the 1970s and give it up altogether"!

PARLIAMENT—THE LORDS

Peter Hardy's very much watered down version of Lord Arron's Badger Protection Bill, full of loopholes which allow the continued persecution of badgers on the slightest whim, was a shining example of how much pressure the bloodsports fraternity are prepared to force MP's to bow to their demands if these Bills are ever to become law. The same must not be allowed to apply to the otter though.

On April 28th, before the release of the Otter Report, Lord Cranbrook's Otter-hunting Regulation Bill was given its second reading in the Lords by 29 votes to 24. The Bill is designed to ensure that the present 'restricted' pattern of otterhunting, à la MOHA guidelines, continues and that there will be no deliberate attempts made to kill otters, unless they are proving a pest.

As we've already seen it is 'unofficial' MOHA policy not to kill otters where there's a chance of any member of the public witnessing it. So the only likely witnesses to any 'accidental' kills are going to be the hunters themselves—scarcely the sort of honest citizens whom one would expect to report the transgression of such a law to the police! In other words Lord Cranbrook's Bill would be totally unenforceable and must definitely never reach the Statute Books.

Lord Cranbrook, who apparently only became involved with otterhunters in the Autumn of 1975, is certainly no friend to wild animals. He was one of the opposing members of the Lords Select Committee which, in 1976, effectively blocked the passage of the Hare Coursing Abolition Bill. The Bill had already passed its third reading in the Commons with a majority of 101. Lord Cranbrook is also said to have bought a milk float in which to drive silently round his estate shooting hares!

SURVEYS

Two year surveys have already been set up in Wales, England and Scotland. The English Survey, funded by the NCC, is being undertaken by Libby Lenton and Dr. Paul Chanin of Exeter University. The Scottish one is jointly run by the Vincent Wildlife Trust and the Otter Trust and is being undertaken by Dr and Mrs Jim Green of Keele University. Evidence of otters will be measured at sample points along freshwaters and estuaries and will result from sightings of spraint (droppings) and padding. Any HSA members seeing otters dead or alive should report to the nearest NCC office or Nature Conservation Trust.

POSITIVE ACTION

The Fauna Preservation Soc. and the Vincent Wildlife Trust launched their Otter Haven Project in August. The aim is to safeguard the key habitats of otters in Britain. Two full-time staff will be liaising with landowners, water authorities, etc in order to initiate and co-ordinate the establishment of otter havens throughout the country. Full details available from **Angela King and Angela Potter, Yew Tree Cottage, Chaffcombe, Nr. Chard, Somerset.**

THE FUTURE

At a conference in Berne this year the common otter was placed in Appendix 1 of the Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora which means that it is now internationally recognised as being in need of complete protection.

Although there appears to be no hope of any legislation (ie Early Day Motions or Private Members Bills) getting through before the end of the present Parliamentary session, in early November, it is nonetheless expected that the Government, via the Sec. of State, will add the otter to Schedule 1 of the Conservation of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants Act 1975 within the next few months. They can do this without having to seek the consent of the Commons so Kimball will have little chance of stopping them.

Once on Schedule 1 it will be an offence to take, injure, kill or sell any otter. This will apply to the whole of the UK unless the Act's provisions for 'area' protection are used (a loophole to be guarded against). It should then only be a matter of time before otterhunting itself is banned by law, all depending of course on what filibustering little tricks Kimball and his gang of villains pull out of the bag.

TAIL PIECE

We can't leave without quoting Stafford Babbage MOH ECOH 1969-73 who writes in the current issue of 'Heu Gaze!', the journal of the Dartmoor OH ". . . a first class otterhunt takes some beating and as with beagling, foxhunting and staghunting they are an essential part of life to keep the adrenalin on the move and serve as the most humane form of control and preservation for the beasts of the Chase and a healthy antidote to the pressures on our present day living."

CLERICAL ERRORS

According to the Rev. Eric Wheeler, vicar of Steeple Bumpstead in Essex, a keen foxhunter and supporter of the Puckeridge & Thurlow FH, "Christianity has nothing to do with wild animals" . . . "When they try and compare hunting and Christian teaching they are talking about two different worlds." From this one may assume that to chase, terrify and kill God's creatures is OK; indeed the Rev. rode to hounds for 50 years and described one of the best jobs he ever had as the time when he was "one of the bishop's sidekicks in a certain Cathedral, and was able to stable his hunter in the cloisters and hang his game in the cool of the crypt" (Shooting Times July '75).

Another clerical gentleman who also sees nothing wrong with persecuting his fellow creatures is the Rev. Robin Ray, a curate in the West Country who practices his art as the Joint Master of the Courteney Tracy Otterhounds. He has also been observed supporting the efforts of the New Forest Beagles and freely admits to indulging in all bloodsports with great enjoyment his one regret being that he can't ride a horse and so get more pleasure out of fox- and stag-hunting.

Activists in the HSA believing that the hypocritical attitude of these people and the fence-sitting posture of the Church in general should be exposed to public gaze decided to voice their feelings in the most appropriate way–by having banner demonstrations outside their respective Churches.

Probably most of you will be only too aware, from the hysterical scribblings in the National, local and hunting press of the demonstration against Eric Wheeler (who has been reported on TV as wearing his hunting gear under his cassock) but heard only a whisper about Robin Ray. Hardly surprising, after all only 2 reporters turned up in Wiltshire but a positive gang of them came to see Eric "bearded in his den" and to no doubt record bolts of lightning rending the sky!

Last September ('76) Robin Ray was met by 65 HSA members and 2 policemen when he came to preach to a congregation of 4 at the tiny church in Boscombe, nr Salisbury. The banners proclaimed the curate as a hypocrite, expressing the demonstrators' feelings that it was not Christian to terrify otters on Saturday and preach love and compassion on Sunday.

After singing a verse of "All things bright and beautiful, All creatures great and small, All things wise and wonderful, Your vicar kills them all" and "blowing away" on hunting horns the antis remained in silent anticipation having been promised a few words from Robin at the end of the service. However nothing was further from his mind as he emerged from the Church and, turning to the crowd, raised his hand for the sign of the cross. This did nothing but anger the people present who regarded the action as impertinent. He was booed and greeted with shouts of "we don't want your blessing" upon which he turned and jumped in a waiting landrover, which roared off hitting a demonstrator, dressed as St. Francis carrying



Rev. Robin Ray out with the New Forest Beagles

a cross bearing a crucified otter, in the process.

Six months later, on Sunday 20th March, a similar demonstration was held in Essex. This time however, because of advance publicity the police and press were out in force–in fact they almost outnumbered the sabs!

75 demonstrators were assembled on this occasion and a group of these decided to enter the church and sing the HSA version of "All things etc" before the service began (what Spike Mays, in the East Anglian Daily Times, described as "deliberately violating and polluting Divine Service"(!)) and when asked to leave by Mr Wheeler his congregation burst into a chorus of "Out, out, you dirty louts". Although instructing the police, who had been called to escort the group from the church, to "Nick the lot of them" Eric later said "If there had been any arrests this place would have been smashed to smithereens" (presumably by the "unwashed and ill-educated", Spike Mays again).

After this "outrage" all exits to the church grounds were guarded by the men in blue–no doubt to stop us sending the terriers in–and when Mr Wheeler eventually emerged to a fanfare of hunting horns he was whisked away in a faithful parishioner's car.

The entire demonstration was good humoured, the police were jovial and unconcerned, no arrests were made, no aged villager was trampled underfoot (in fact 3 old boys watched the proceedings from an advantage point outside the pub whilst supping their ale!) and yet the public outcry lasted well into April.

Why? Because a handful of people had the temerity to enter a church and voice their opinion in the place that they felt it mattered most? Or because most of the outburst was engendered by pro-hunt people who felt that to point to us and call us "unchristian" was to show by indirect comparison that they were 'God-fearing people' and on the side of right and justice? After all they don't hunt on Sundays do they!

We leave the last word to St. Francis of Assisi who held extremely "unchristian" views on animals. . . . "Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them, but to stop there is not enough. We have a higher mission, to be of service to them whenever they require it."

MAKING THINGS 'OTTER FOR HUNTERS

C. A. HOPKINSON Esq., Chairman of the Border Counties Otterhunt, is getting worried. Apparently there's this *beastly* load of antis (led by HSA local representative Malcolm Douglass) calling themselves the Mid-Wales Wildlife Conservation Group who are actually trying to *stop* otterhunting!

They've arranged several fund-raising events, such as a jumble sale and one of those pop concerts (with top names such as Tony Smith (Hawkwind), Tony Crerar, Stuart Brown and John Copsey, plus Chris Maddocks and Julian Roache–all performing for free!). Oh yes and they've also got one of those petition thingies going. It's perfectly horrid–I mean, what harm have us otterhunters ever done them?!

Seriously though, the Group have been doing fantastic work. As well as the above-mentioned events, they've been influencing schools, councils and landowners against otterhunting, including banning the hunt from river banks bordering 20 farms in one day forcing them to change their venue; conducting otter surveys; helping naturalists and have formulated two comprehensive otter reports.

Meanwhile down in Courtenay Tracy OH country, Poole and Brighton sabs have got the hunt banned from the River Stour after making so much trouble for the hunt and local constabulary that landowners decided it was time the CTOH stopped visiting the area!

The NE Group also report excellent non-hunting days for the Northern Counties OH who have spent many a merry day sitting on the banks of northern rivers with their heads in their hands.

Unfortunately things have not gone so well in the North-west where sabs have met with violent reaction from the Kendal & District OH. Because the KDOH don't advertise sabs have had to resort to following the hound van which has, on at least three occasions, resulted in attacks upon their persons.

In one confrontation an elderly sab was physically assaulted. Returning the blow he was later held and charged with "causing actual bodily harm"–the assailant was allowed to go home! We now hear that the attacker is to be summonsed. On another occasion a sab was whipped as he sat in his car after being blocked in and the last known assault resulted in what could have been a serious accident when a heavies car overtook that of a sab in a narrow lane and forced it to stop. The sabmobile, unable to break in time, hit the back of the offending van whereupon the hunt thug leapt out, hurling drunken abuse; but at the mention of 'police' drove off. However we have been told that the man is known to the police and that he will be 'brought to book'.

FORUM

FORUM is designed specifically for individual members to express an opinion about subjects that interest them and the views expressed therein do not necessarily reflect those held by the Association.

WHOSE WELFARE?

–Tombstone

As the National press has recently devoted a lot of column space to bitter attacks upon the Hunt Saboteurs Assoc. from other Animal Welfare movements perhaps the time has come to consider our relationship with these other organisations.

Let me say straightaway that I was at the League Against Cruel Sports AGM, that there was a lot of shouting, and yes, the meeting did become a bit rowdy. But why? I will consider only the obvious points and will leave the intimate details of the in-fighting to someone else.

The glaring question is surely how is it that the League, with twice as much money as the BFSS, manage to generate far less publicity? Where is the League counter attack to Chase 77? Where is the counter to the numerous appearances that the BFSS make at County Shows and Fairs? Have the League got a publicity caravan like the BFSS? Why don't the League use their excellent films in the same way as the BFSS ie by showing them in village halls throughout the country? Most crucial of all, how is it that the BFSS have *three* weekly propaganda outlets (Shooting Times, Horse & Hound and The Field) and the League have none? The answer may be that too much money is pumped into the so-called sanctuaries; such money is wasted. On the only occasion when I personally had a chance to see a League Sanctuary work, the late Chairman, Raymond Rowley, who was present at the time, far from warding the hunt off, hid in the barn and allowed the riders to rampage over the land.

You can be sure that staghunters take not the least notice of League Sanctuaries, a conclusion that is obvious considering the frequency with which their Foxhunting friends trespass on private gardens. Incidentally as a portent of future events, on the occasion mentioned, when saboteurs arrived in force to try and keep the staghunters at bay the 'valiant' chairman rushed out of his barn and abused them (yes, the saboteurs, *not* the staghunters) calling them "scum", "long-haired yobboes" and "hooligans"; nevertheless the stag escaped.

Was it not curious that at the AGM long established League members not only cursed and swore at the saboteurs but also threatened and shook their fists at them. Such aggression from League members is unknown in the hunting field, I doubt whether any of the folk who were so keen to abuse the activists would even say 'boo' to a hunting man; that is provided, of course, that they could summon up the courage to even attend the meet! Bravery within the cosy confines of the Cafe Royal is one thing but on the rain-swept wastes of the Altcar coursing fields is a totally different matter.

To explain the bitter hatred for HSA people it is necessary to get right down to basics. On the one hand there are the saboteurs who are mostly, but not entirely, below 35 years old. Some are students, most are not; some are very active, others less so; all are unpaid (for the record it costs about £200 a year in petrol expenses alone to be an active saboteur); but all are united in their common determination to END BLOODSPORTS IN THEIR LIFETIME. On the other hand there are, what might be called, Animal Welfare people. People who join Animal Welfare because it is socially the 'in' thing to do; members of the coffee-party circle who raise a bit of money, discuss how terrible bloodsports are and publish a few glossy magazines and Christmas cards. Such people seldom, if ever, attend a hunt and these are the people whom the hunters commonly label 'ignorant townies' (wouldn't know a fox if they saw one). They hate the HSA primarily because they see them as a threat to their own position.

I was abused at the League AGM by an elderly woman who boasted that she had "been in Animal Welfare for 35 years"–I would be ashamed to make such a claim! Unlike her I do not see Animal Welfare as a career, to me it is a short, sharp fight to end the barbarity of bloodsports and associated cruelties, so that we can get on with the pleasures of life.

To finish off let me say that the HSA has acted with incredible maturity and sense of purpose throughout the whole controversy. A great deal of mud has been slung at the Assoc; the former Chairman of the League has made increasingly hysterical claims in the press–including accusing us of pulling down concreted-in sanctuary signs–and yet we have made not one single contact with the Press in order to sling mud back. There are sides to any argument and there is plenty that we could say but we are in business to help animals not to help ourselves.

It is our fervent hope that bloodsports will be defeated, defeated by a broad alliance with the HSA as the wing that is active in the field; and the LACS and NSACS as the more passive propaganda and parliament-orientated wing. If the present hierarchy of the latter organisations cannot see the total concept they should make way for people whose concern is more for the welfare of the animals and less for their own social standing.

The HSA can just about cope with the BFSS but the war is surely lost if we have to fight our own kind as well!!

CEE BLOWS FROTH OFF MACKESON

Another legal victory for HSA was chalked up in June when Caroline Wetton fended off a dangerous driving rap, brought about largely at the instigation of Sir Rupert Mackeson, a hare-coursing fanatic and local big noise. Sir Rupert (38) alleged that Cee had driven recklessly at him, his man-friend, and his mummy. No charges were brought against any of Sir Rupert's butch-fag bully-boys, despite several incidents of punching and pushing antis.

CALLOUS COMMENT

12 hounds belonging to the Aldershot Beagles died last season when they plunged into a 100ft chalk quarry whilst pursuing a hare. Shooting Times, commenting on the deaths, described the incident as "nothing short of a disaster". Not, one would assume, because of the tragic loss of life but because of the Aldershot's position as "a major influence in the hound-breeding world".

country life

From September to March the habits of 'horsi commentata' resemble those of 'weekendus cottaga' (see HOWL 8). In the Summer months, however, reluctant to leave the world of horses and hunting, it can be spotted at horse shows, agricultural shows and '3-day events' perched far above the madding crowd testily squawking "one, one, one" into a mike.

Those who have sacrificed their sanity listening to the nasal monotone of 'tat' still cannot tell the subtle speech differences between the sub-species. "Fawrfawlts", "sheese fawlen orf" and "harvismith" are some of the usual utterances though their meaning is unclear to all but the most ardent students of the dialect.

When foxhound packs are being paraded and 'huntus saboteurus' are espied in the ring 'tat' ejaculates despairingly "oew no, not antehs ahgain" and breaks down into almost incoherent mutterings of "join BFSS" and "fighting fund". Unfortunately these heart-rendering splutterings often attract the common 'heavi' that preys upon and attacks 'saboteurus'.

Although it pokes its obtrusive beak everywhere 'tat' is not a common creature. In fact sub-species 'dorian dorian' and 'raymond' are the only documented couple so far known to collectors and no-one has made attempts to encourage them to mate.

Protection isn't necessary. They are noisy, may bite and don't make good pets. They aren't even useful, attractive or intelligent. If they die out few will miss them.

SPECIAL JUBILEE ISSUE: See page 4 for latest Royal scandals!

SPECIAL JUBILEE ISSUE: See page 1 for all the low-down on the Royals!

Star Chamber revisited

As reported in the last issue of HOWL 39 people were arrested at February's Waterloo Cup meeting out of which 36 were summonsed under the Justices of the Peace Act 1361 "to show cause why they should not be ordered to enter into a recognisance to be of good behaviour" (ie bound over) and 39 were charged under Section 5 of the Public Order Act 1936 with "using threatening, abusive and insulting words or behaviour, whereby a breach of the peace was likely to be occasioned". One sab was also charged under Section 1(1) of the Prevention of Crime Act 1953 for having an offensive weapon (fireworks) and two were summonsed under Section 121 of the Highways Act for obstruction.

The cases were heard in May in 4 group trials, each lasting 3 days, involving 4 sets of magistrates and costing the HSA over £1,400 in legal fees and the defendants a great deal of financial outlay and hardship.

From beginning to end the court proceedings were a farce. Legal Aid was refused by Ormskirk magistrates court to all except 3 defendants even though everyone was eligible. Two defendants arrived to find that they had no case to answer because their arresting officers could not be identified yet the court refused out-of-pocket expenses for their round-trip of a joint 1,000 miles. Not only is this disgraceful behaviour but the police, and presumably the court, had known of the circumstances in advance and had not made any attempt to inform the two before setting out on their wasted journeys. One policewoman lied in the box about the circumstances surrounding one of her arrests—but how do you prove it when the only witness is the defendant. Questions by defence councils were deemed irrelevant and judicial haggling took place in court.

However during the trials several lighthearted moments were witnessed which helped to lift the proceedings out of the banal into the ridiculous.

The Police Prosecutor (who wore the same suit, dandruff and weary expression as last year) tried to make what he thought to be an original funny by talking of "splitting hairs" which was greeted by groans from the assembled. And on another occasion twice tried to arise from his seat to cross examine a witness but was twice prevented by coins and keys spewing from his trouser pocket and had to wait until the offending recepticle was empty before rising to his feet.

An arresting officer was made to repeat the phrase "hare coursers wear red knickers" (statement of accused when charged) when the cross examining defendant said that he hadn't quite heard. The same defendant closed his summing-up by explaining to the 'captivated' magistrates that he was wearing carpet slippers in court because he couldn't find any vegan shoes.

Another arresting officer who couldn't identify his arrestee in court was saved from an embarrassing situation when an arm was raised and waved from the dock and a little voice said, "It's me"; and a policewoman, when asked several times to identify the position of hare-coursers on a map, swore blind that her memory served her right until it was pointed out that she had the map upside-down—a mistake that she also made at the appeal.

Although many policemen admitted that there was no abusive language or behaviour and that they didn't observe any violent reaction on the part of the coursers the courts decided differently and out of the 39 arrested 32 were bound over to keep the peace for one year in the sum of £25, 2 were bound over for £50 because they'd been bound over the previous year; 31 were found guilty of 'action likely' each being fined £5-10 with £20 costs and two found guilty of obstructing the highway.

However the saga does not end there for upon advice from their solicitors the charged demonstrators decided to appeal and application for legal aid was yet again made—this time to Preston Crown Court to Judge William Harrison Openshaw. However all applications were turned down and also a request for 4 test cases to be heard before all 39 went to appeal. Because the appeals would be heard by the same Judge (Openshaw) the London solicitor, acting for the majority of the sabs, advised that the appeals be dropped before further unnecessary costs were involved. Nevertheless the solicitor acting for 3 defendants from Manchester offered to act for nothing if they were willing to go ahead with their appeals and as their cases were identical to the majority of the 39 everyone was extremely interested in the outcome.

Their appeal was heard at Preston Crown Court on the 3rd August but as Openshaw was on his holidays the cases were heard by His Honour Judge Dewhurst. The Prosecution offered identical evidence to that given at Ormskirk after which the Defence submitted that there was no case to answer (exactly what happened at Ormskirk) and, believe it or not, the Judge agreed (without even bothering to hear any evidence on the part of the defence!) result- the three were acquitted of 'action likely' although the binding over remained!

So here we have the strange situation of 3 sabs being found 'not guilty' of an offence identical to the remaining 28, who, because of their financial status were unable to go to appeal.

The facts get stranger and graver as the story goes on.

After the three were acquitted investigations were made into the background of Judge Openshaw and certain unpleasant facts have emerged.

1. Judge Openshaw is reported to be a member of the British Field Sports Society.
2. His son, C. P. Openshaw was, until recently, the Joint Master of the Kendal and district Otterhounds.
3. C. P. Openshaw, resides, or until recently resided, at the same address as the learned Judge.

It is a further fact that the Kendal & District have received the attentions of the HSA and that one of the Altcar 39 who applied for Legal Aid had been convicted of damaging a vehicle belonging to the KDOH.

Can a man who no doubt discusses bloodsports with his son and who probably indulges in bloodsports himself be in a position to give an unbiased ear to 31 people who are charged with disrupting a bloodsport event?

In the light of this evidence applications were made to Preston Crown Court to investigate the matter with a view to reopening the appeals. The Court took exactly half a day to do this, the reply being "His Honour Judge Dewhurst directs me (Chief Clerk) to say that the Court was in no way concerned with the merit or demerit of hare coursing or any other bloodsports and any reference to the personal activities of the judiciary appears irrelevant and offensive" . . . and . . . "no further investigation appears necessary" and appeals cannot be re-opened.

HUNTERS PLAYING WITH FIRE

'Vicious vandals' and the 'lunatic fringe', to quote Horse & Hound, have been blamed for damage to hunting establishments to the tune of tens of thousands of pounds.

So far this year kennels have been raided, hunt vehicles have been immobilised and tack destroyed. The Warwickshire FH point-to-point course at Mollington was wrecked (point-to-points are one source of financial support for hunts). The so-called British Field Sports Society HQ was broken into and files were stolen, John Peel, the idol of bloodsports fanatics was sorely disturbed.

The hunting clan have twitched non-stop since the attacks and with good cause. Hunts have been cancelled and expensive security has been organised at point-to-point courses. The BFSS break-in has apparently unearthed scandal second only to Watergate.

When one considers the facts can one really wonder why these activities have expanded along with the growth of such guerilla groups as the Band of Mercy, the Animal Liberation Front and, the most recently formed, Lunatic Fringe.

Firstly there is the intolerable failure of successive governments to comply with the will of the majority in banning such evils as hare-coursing, hunting, industrial vivisection, intensive farming etc.

Secondly there is the condescending attitude adopted by bloodsportsmen towards any peaceful banner picketting by antis. This attitude is amplified in this year's so-called BFSS Year Book, "At first the antics of its (HSA) supporters made good headlines; it was possible to be amused." This banality can scarcely be intended to frighten uncommitted animal killers into sending in their £5 BFSS subs before it's too late. It is surely designed to provoke any self-respecting anti into going out to help hunted animals in a way which won't 'amuse' their persecutors.

Thirdly there is the deliberate campaign of lies waged by the pro-hunt mandarins both in the self-styled BFSS and the hunting press with the obvious intention of provoking violent assaults upon antis. They intimate that we are in the habit of visiting local labour exchanges to try and employ out-of-work men to bolster up our campaign and Shooting Times hack Turnstone (reliably reported to be Editor Tony Jackson) talks of us paying Rentacrowd people more than £5 a day. He has also developed a nice little habit, when commenting about hunt violence against sabs, of saying that of course he "cannot condone" such violence "*but* . . .". He, just like other pro-hunt editors, prints letters from corresponcents such as D. W. Goodier of London SE13 (2.12.76) accusing antis of "sticking needles and bodkins into horses" without obviously bothering to check these malicious lies out for himself.

And fourthly there is the evidence that hunt officials themselves quite openly condone violence against antis by their illiterate hangers-on. Raymond (Sparkle) Brooks-Ward MFH and PRO for the BFSS, has admitted that he has every sympathy with hunt followers who get tough with sabs—he certainly makes no secret of the fact that he is on very good terms with a certain Mr Jervis, founder of the Enfield Chace's very own Hunt Protection Association; the Crawley & Horsham heavies have admitted to "being told" to leave antis alone if they're on the road ("but step off the road and you're dead"); George Clinch, who pleaded guilty to whipping veteran anti-hunt campaigner Fred Piddock last July, has actually been promoted from 2nd to 1st whipper-in by the Tickham Hunt; the Essex Union FH and Border Counties OH have conducted neat cover-up jobs to protect their supporters who violently assaulted sabs, and last, but by no means least, the self-styled BFSS itself, together with the Masters of Foxhounds Assoc, actually helped to pay the court costs of the four thugs who attacked Val Waters.

Just what do the hunt gang want? They would obviously like us to go away and have shown that they are prepared to consider any approach in making us do just that, from condescension, through getting the police to lean on us, to encouraging their neanderthal followers to attack us. When are they going to learn that none of their ideas is going to work because we'll always be around in one form or another for just as long as we're needed. The more pressure that is put upon people with strong beliefs who believe in remaining within the law then the more those people are going to be forced eventually to say "enough's enough".

If the BFSS force us into a corner then they're not going to like what comes out.

SAFETY IN VIOLENCE?

At the Waterloo Cup demonstration in 1977 130 sabs were present out of which 39 were arrested. This represents approximately 1 in 3 or 30% of protestors detained for running onto a field in an attempt to save hares. No violence was offered either to the coursers or police.

At a demonstration against nuclear power stations in Germany at which 12,000 people were present 317 policemen and demonstrators were injured (75 needing hospital treatment)—only 26 were arrested. This represents approximately 1 in 460 or .02% of demonstrators.

At a National Front demo in N. London where conflict (sometimes violent) arose with anti-fascist left-wingers 4,000 demonstrators were involved and 50 were arrested. This represents approximately 1 in 80 or 1% of demonstrators. Roughly the same proportion of police to demonstrators were present.

Draw your own conclusions!

GREENPEACE

March of this year again saw the annual slaughter of seal pups on the Labrador ice floes off the East coast of Canada and once again the Greenpeace Foundation opposed the hunt by direct action.

After their plans, last year, were thwarted by the Canadian Government passing 'special regulations' to the *Seal Preservation Act* their campaign details had to be kept secret.

Because these 'special regulations' prevented the campaigners landing within ½ mile of any seal their helicopters had to land them two miles from the scenes of slaughter which meant a tortuous trek over undulating and quickly shifting icefloes in extreme weather conditions. After this exhausting journey, which had to be made every day, twice a day during their week-long rescue mission, the activists laid their lives on the line by coming between the deadly *hac-a-piks*, used by the murderers, and their intended victims—the seal pups. By placing their bodies over those of the pups, hundreds of seals were saved in a dramatic but positive way. One Greenpeacer even had the guts to snatch a club from a sealer and throw it into the sea risking a severe maiming from the sealer's knife which still dripped blood from a skinned seal pup. Another attached himself by handcuffs to a winch line being used to haul pelts about a sealing boat and was dunked four times into the icy water until the cuffs snapped. He was lucky to escape with pneumonia.

Not only do the seals die at the hands of the clubbers, many are deprived of life by being crushed beneath the sealing boats as they gouge their way through the pack ice. These bodies are never recovered and their numbers are not included in the 'quota'.

This year could have seen the end of the Great Hunt. Mr Franz Weber of the Franz Weber Foundation of Switzerland offered the Canadian Government 2½ million dollars compensation if the hunt were to cease—it was turned down. As was the offer to build a fake-fur factory in Newfoundland that would employ 600 locals all year round instead of the 150 presently 'seasonally' employed by the hunt. But the Canadian Fisheries and Environment Minister M. Romeo Le Blanc keeps saying "Non" and refuses to meet any organisation or individual opposed to the hunt. "The seals eat the fish and therefore they're a threat to the Atlantic fishery". Finis!

Meanwhile back in London a large turnout of protestors rallied in Whitehall to march to the Canadian and Norwegian Embassies with 1,000s of petitions, headed by Spike Milligan. HSA was well represented and contributed the only large sheet banner proclaiming the disapproval of the marchers. Attempts were also made by the Committee to get one of our number onto the icefloes but we were told by Greenpeace London that there was no room in the helicopters and that although 600 World Press had been invited only 1 dozen actual demonstrators were being shipped to the floes; even a phone call to Greenpeace Canada got us no further.

How much better if 600 activists had been financed to land on the floes by air or water to combat club-wielding murderers who are backed by half-witted politicians and Governments.

Although the outcry over the Canadian seal hunt rang out loud and clear little is ever heard of the 'culling' that goes on in our own waters. The seals in the Wash and on the Farne Islands are just as needful of our support and attention as those thousands of miles away and yet hardly a murmur is raised when Norwegians come to *this* country to decimate *our* native seal populations.

This year's 'cull' in the Wash was again stopped by the Home Secretary, strangely enough after yet another sabotage effort by activists on sealing boats when two boats were fired—one being put out by the fire brigade—and a Fisheries Protection Vessel, designed to protect the 'cullers', was damaged.

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