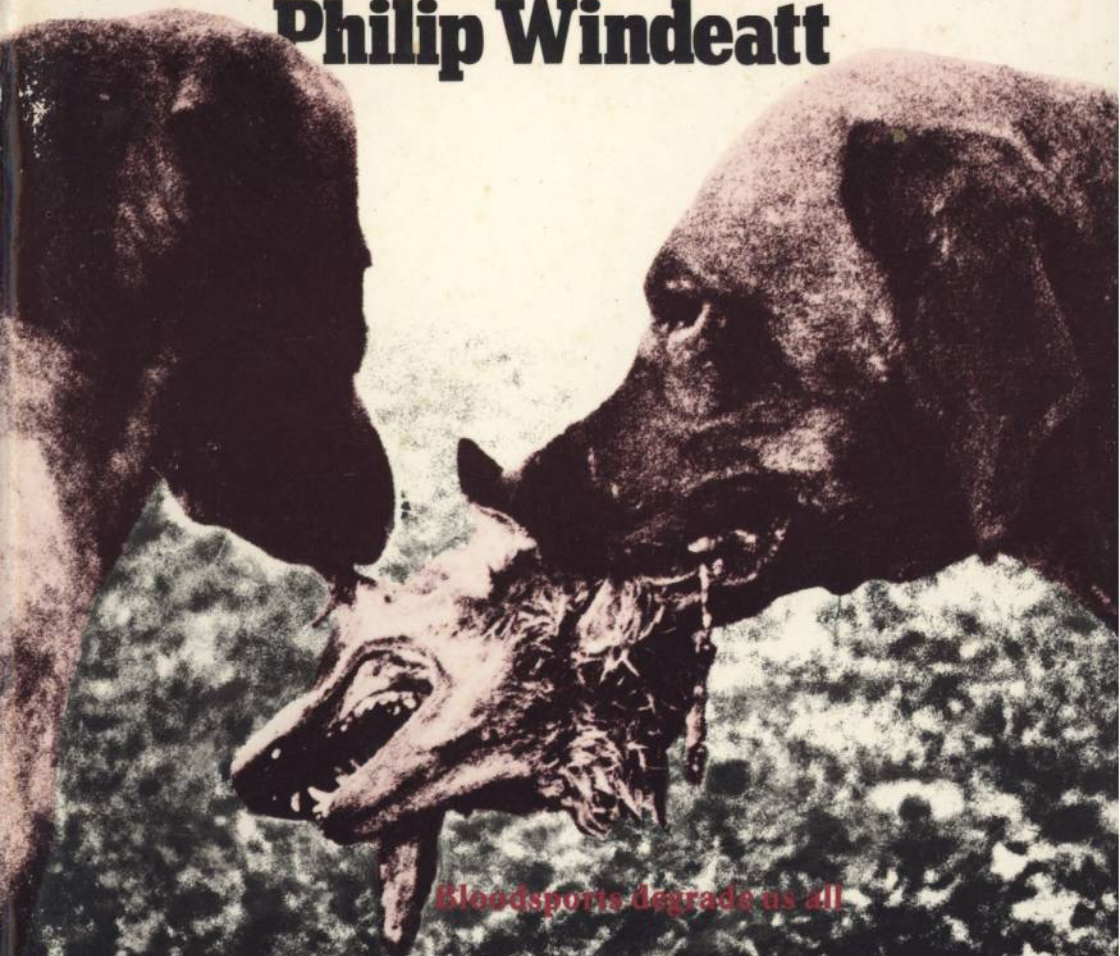
The Hunt and the Anti-Hunt

Philip Windeatt



Bloodsports degrade us all

Pluto Press

Bloodsports degrade us all.

Tony Benn

The person who kills animals for fun is announcing that, could he get away with it, he'd kill *you* for fun. Your right to live rests on your being a conscious, sentient individual whose life may be of no consequence to anyone else but is invaluable to you because it's the only one you've got. Exactly the same is true of each individual deer, hare, rabbit, fox, fish, pheasant and butterfly. Humans should enjoy their own lives, not taking others'.

Brigid Brophy

I have always been opposed to hunting, really for one reason only. I think that its central purpose is the causing of pain, suffering and death to other creatures for their own sake. That seems to me unforgiveable on any criterion and that no doubt is why the nastiest people are always to be found at the front of the hunt.

Paul Foot

People who behave like savages are beneath contempt. Bloodsports are an obscenity which must be outlawed by the next Labour Government.

Peter Hain

To seek for pleasure by inflicting pain and death on animals, whom we are pleased to think of as lower creation, should be totally rejected by anyone who loathes pain in humanity.

Lord Donald Soper

I am firmly of the view that all blood sports should be outlawed and anyone practising this barbarity should be severely dealt with under the law. How anyone can inflict unnecessary pain on innocent and defenceless animals is beyond my understanding and those who practise this act of depravity should receive the condemnation of civilised people.

Arthur Scargill

The barbaric image of the 'hunt' is one which comes immediately to mind when the killing of wildlife for so-called sport is discussed. Nothing will ever convince me that this ruthless and vicious practice is sport – it is unjustified murder. The human race as well as the helpless animals would be much better off if this outrageous slaughter ceased forever.

Dennis Skinner

In my view there is nothing more disgusting than human beings killing animals for pleasure. It is degrading to human society and surely in particular degrades those involved. All those who believe in civilized behaviour should call for an end to bloodsports.

Eric Heffer

Philip Windeatt

The Hunt and the Anti-Hunt

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Contents

Foreword / 7

Introduction / 11

The History of Foxhunting: A State of Mind / 13
The rise of the hunt / 13
Hunting in the twentieth century / 20
The Hunt Saboteurs Association / 27

Hunting: What It Is / 31
Foxhunting / 31
Fox cubhunting / 33
Hare hunting / 37
Hare coursing / 39
Stag and deer hunting / 42
Otter/coypu/mink hunting / 44

The Great Debate: For and Against / 48

Organisations and Campaigns / 55
Anti-hunt / 55
Pro-hunt / 56
The campaign to abolish hare coursing / 59
Bodies that have banned foxhunting / 60

A Guide to Further Reading / 61
Anti-hunt / 61
Pro-hunt / 62

The Animals Film / 64

This handbook is dedicated to
May, Lynne, John, Mike and the
radical anti-bloodsports movement

Special thanks to
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for access to their archives

Foreword

The two years I spent researching film footage for Victor Schonfeld's 'The Animals Film' was a strange and revelatory experience. Sitting in front of a small screen in a film cutting room, the history of animal exploitation flickered before my eyes. From the first steps in the 1930s when farm animals were crowded indoors for reasons other than winter to the capture of thousands of Indian primates for European laboratories. I already knew vaguely of this – who doesn't – but I wasn't prepared for the horrible and bizarre further reaches of our western civilisation: 'bunny bops' where thousands of rabbits would be rounded up and beaten to death with baseball bats – bloodsport of the plains and prairies of Australia and America. Showground tricks where rider and horse would jump off platforms hundreds of feet in the air to land in small water tanks; vicious games of water polo, on horse back; dog and cock fighting; bear baiting; fox hunting and hare coursing, to name but many. In a century of tremendous advances in our understanding of our environment, ecology and animal behaviour, there still exists this dark, medieval strand in our culture: the barbarians are within.

It is not difficult to understand why animals are treated so indifferently in a society where the powerful minority holds the majority in similar contempt. What is hard is to break the circle of unthinking cruelty; this can only be done as people begin to question the accepted values of our way of life. We now know conclusively that we can live well without eating animals; we also know that millions of others would have the chance of food if we did so; the majority of animals used in research are for the testing of cosmetic and household goods, most of which are already available in almost identical form. Thus the main beneficiary of these tests is the company profit margin.

Vivisection and factory farming are highly desirable business practices: they are profitable methods of using resources and the victims cannot protest or organise. What's more, it is invisible to the possibly squeamish consumer – you and I. We buy our dozen 'Farm Fresh' eggs, reassured by the happy hen clucking all over the carton. In our hearts of hearts we must know that somewhere, not far away is an anonymous concrete warehouse. It contains hundreds of birds, incarcerated for their short life times, probably mutilated, behind a rarely opened door upon which is painted in unobtrusive lettering

'Registered office: Orchard Farm Ltd, Happy Chooks Ltd, Home Fresh Ltd, Laid Today Ltd,' and so on. It is up to us to stop it – and that means stopping ourselves.

Animal liberation is a concept that is still widely greeted with laughter and accusation of triviality. A century ago the suffragettes were similarly treated. But as feminists know, there can be no liberation without women's liberation. And there can be no human liberation without animal liberation. Justice does not end with our species and millions are beginning to understand this. Activities ostensibly as far apart as circus, zoos, seal culling and bloodsports are slowly becoming unacceptable to ever growing numbers of people, in a variety of ways. The World About Us generation who've grown up with wild animals in living colour in their natural habitat are not attracted to these same creatures behind bars or performing tricks. Similarly TV has revealed to horrified millions the truth behind such benign little words as 'cull'.

Until recently most people were content to believe that the traditional animal welfare societies were able to control the use of animals by society. Some, like the RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) have been in existence for many years. But none could have forseen the massive growth and variety of animal exploitation that has occured. Most were formed as polite charities and quickly became the hobby of the middle class; and were also easy victim of a peculiarly English animal disease: sentimentality. Both factors were crippling and thus, from an early date their effectiveness in the arena of political struggle was minimal. For the hobbyists it became fund raising teas on the lawns of suburbia. Vegetarians looked to more spiritual answers, and direct action, except in specific campaigns, took some years to gain momentum.

The rising consciousness of millions of people is caused by the realisation that as they look around them, governments and multi-national companies are busily destroying our future: profits and the next election are very short term goals after all, unlike the lifetime of our children and their children. Now millions are marching against nuclear weapons and thousands more also reject our treatment of animals (who are used to test those weapons). The rejection is often channeled through the new action groups like the hunt saboteurs and the Animal Liberation Front both of which take their protest to the source.

Bloodsports are also being seen in wider political perspective. The feudal traditions of the 7 per cent that allows them to pursue and kill for sport also means that the countryside is denied us too. We have little legal right of access to the streams, rivers, lakes and wildernesses of these islands. Even the land that isn't privately owned is frequently under restriction from military or ancient law. Meanwhile, this landscape steadily disappears under concrete; is changed for ever by new farming methods; and the waterways are continually polluted by industry and urban effluent.

This book is dedicated to the outlawing of bloodsports and to the ideal of

animal liberation. Without full understanding of these concepts and our part in them, we can never hope to be free. A civilised society cannot allow killing of living creatures either for profit, curiosity or for fun. Mahatma Gandhi was once asked what he thought of western civilisation. He replied that he thought it would be a good idea. It still is.

Introduction

This year, Britain's hunters will kill up to 30,000 foxes, for the fun of it. Dressed in red coats, with a pack of dogs, they will meet on horseback outside country pubs as often as five times a week, to pursue a wild animal that they conveniently call 'vermin'. If the fox succeeds in outwitting the hunt and seeking refuge in an earth, or the roots of a tree, it will then be flushed out by spade-wielding servants with terriers. Bullbaiting, badger baiting, dog fighting and cock fighting have all, rightly, been outlawed, but hunting with hounds, although despised by millions, remains. Countless attempts in parliament have failed even to limit the hunting of fox, hare and deer. Centred around the British Field Sports Society, the hunters in parliament have fought off every anti-bloodsports bill. The spread of railways, roads, barbed wire and the opposition of shooters and anglers have also failed seriously to hinder hunting with hounds.

But the hunters are under pressure. Although themselves free users of intimidation and violence, they have proved less successful in handling those who oppose them directly in the field – the hunt saboteurs. Hunting is now under close public scrutiny. The hunt has even tried to clean up its act. Animals are no longer killed, but 'accounted for', and blooding (the daubing of fox's blood on children's faces) is now very rare. But still they hunt. Stopping bloodsports will be more than a blow against a barbarous relic. It belongs within a larger campaign to reclaim the countryside for our use and pleasure. It is part of a movement opposed to landowners who refuse ramblers access, industrialists who pollute the rivers and streams, factory farmers who turn out second rate food from so-called 'food' animals. This book will tell you what hunting with hounds consists of in Britain today; where it comes from; and the ways in which people have tried to prevent and prohibit it.

The History of Foxhunting: A State of Mind

The chase, The sport of kings,
Image of war without its guilt.

William Somerville (1675-1742)

Not for lust of killing, not for the place of pride,
Not for the hate of the hunted
We English saddle and ride,
But because in the gift of our fathers the blood in our veins that flow,
Must answer for ever and ever the challenge of 'Yonder he goes!'

William Henry Ogilvie (1869–1964)

The rise of the hunt

Although the fox is the main quarry of hunters in Britain today, this is a relatively new development. It was only in the eighteenth century that hunters moved from the hare and deer, finding the fox a quicker, more adventurous victim. As the Fifth Duke of Beaufort succinctly put it in 1762: 'A fox was found, which gallantly faced the open; a capital run was the result, which so delighted the young sportsmen that the Badminton hounds were forthwith steadied from deer and encouraged to fox.'

Hunting with hounds goes further back than the pedigree of the Duke of Beaufort. From the earliest days, people observed how wolves hunted in packs and attempted to tame such packs for their own use. The ancient civilisations improved the technique and the Egyptians were probably the first to breed hounds for nose (i.e. for their scenting ability). But they kept them for catching meat, rather than making sport.

Alexander the Great commanded Aristotle to write a *Treatise on the Chase* and Xenophon, prolific chronicler of the Persian Wars, was a keen hunter who recorded his experience for posterity. He believed there were virtues in hunting: 'Hunting makes the body healthy, improves the sight and hearing and keeps men from growing old. It affords the best training for war.'

Since then, hunting with hounds has been closely linked to military training (war without the guilt) so that even today Sandhurst Military College has its own pack of foxhounds, funded by the taxpayer, and as recently as 1977 J. N. P. Watson, in his *Book of Foxhunting*, could echo Xenophon without embarrassment: 'War and the chase, with their varied and mutual skills and demands upon the human character, have always been closely linked.'

Caesar noticed that the Gauls 'coursed for sport rather than what they got' and, indeed, it was in ancient France that organised hunting emerged. Charlemagne considered stag hunting a fine way for his soldiers to train. Just as there was ceremony in war, so he added it to hunting. Styles of dress and etiquette were formulated and the hunting-horn emerged. William the Conqueror (most offended at the free-and-easy, anything-goes style of hunting that he found in this country) transferred these traditions to Britain. William also tightened up the hunting laws, with indifferent brutality levelling villages and churches to build the New Forest and punishing poachers by death, imprisonment or mutilation (usually their eyes were put out). The 'King's Game' was sacrosanct and hunting was restricted to the prosperous sections of society. William, with his selected nobles, knights and clergy, chased game until it dropped from exhaustion, then killed it. Often they would hunt boar on foot, with spears.

It is the fourteenth century we have to thank for the rise of hunting literature. Edward II produced his *Treatise on the Craft of Hunting*, in which he gave his preference of beasts of the chase as buck deer, doe, fox, then the marten and roe-deer. Interestingly, Edward described the fox as 'the thief in the wood'. Yet the fashionable French culture of the time had little time for the fox, remaining faithful to deer hunting. The standard pastime of the country gentleman was to hunt bucks and hares in the summer, with wild cats, martens and foxes as equal second favourites.

In sixteenth and seventeenth century England the 'noble stag' was still in vogue. Weapons were now more complex and a variant on straight deer hunting with hounds was originated, in which deer were hunted around enclosed parks for the sportsmen and women to shoot at with crossbows, from hides and vantage points. Battue-style, as it is called, was favoured by Elizabeth I, who enjoyed shooting driven deer (the crossbow occasionally passed to her by a servant dressed as a nymph, whilst an orchestra played in the woods) or coursing them with greyhounds in her parks. For her after-dinner amusement, she once watched 16 bucks pulled down by greyhounds and slaughtered and, in 1587, John Selwyn, the keeper of her park at Oteland, performed the feat of leaping on the back of a hunted buck and guiding it with his hunting sword to the feet of the Queen, where he killed it. Elizabeth often carried out the ceremonial incision of the animal's throat herself and, at 67, was still out hunting on horseback every other day.

With hunting contained within the confines of a park, old Norman 'par force' hunting was discontinued. Hounds were big and clumsy and were judged, not by speed, but by 'music'. The Tudors matched their hounds for sound and, having let loose a buck in the park (sometimes after laming it with a crossbow to slow it down) would set their hounds on the trail. At which, the hunters would ride to a knoll and listen to the sound of the hounds as they followed the trail.

A great fan of this type of hunting was Charles IX of France who died at the age of 24 from pneumonia, attributed to overmuch blowing of the hunting-horn. Even the most virulent supporters of bloodsports believe that hunting went through one of its most degenerate phases in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Louis XIV, for example, invented a ritual called 'la Curée' (the Kill) in which a fanfare of hunting-horns accompanied the lead dog sinking its teeth into the skull of a cornered stag, while the rest of the pack was let loose to tear out its entrails. Louis XIV hunted 'par force', but enclosed large areas of woodland to prevent the game from escaping. Broad rides were cut through the trees, in order that the hunters might follow the hunt with a minimum of inconvenience, and Louis once illuminated a whole forest at Chantilly to enable him to hunt at midnight.

James I, who ascended the throne of Britain in 1603, abhorred the coarse, Tudor slaughter. The Scottish hunt that he knew as a boy consisted of ambushing a deer-filled valley with 100 couples of strong Irish greyhounds. Within 'two hours four score fat deer are slain'. James attempted to resurrect the violent but more stylish, Norman hunt, but by now it was beginning to wane. Game was becoming more scarce (it was shortly before his accession that the last boar in Britain was hunted and killed by Sir Richard Grobham in Wiltshire) and, with the growing importance of the squirearchy, more landowners began keeping hounds for which the main quarry was the hare, closely followed by the fox. By 1687, the Charlton Hunt near Chichester, Sussex, was infamous for its foxhunts.

In Europe, hunting grew more and more bizarre. For the greater part of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the whims of various kings of France or princes of the German Palatinate states, resulted in increasingly extraordinary masked or fancy-dress hunts, with the animals driven into artificial lakes to be shot at by half-drunken hunters. In 1764, the Elector of the Palatinate had a vast procession of deer driven along a valley where, in the course of a single hour, 104 stags were slaughtered. The Elector of Bavaria used to enjoy standing on an ornamental barge to shoot the stags as they were driven in front of him down into the river. Often, hunted animals were dressed up before being killed and even until the 1960s in England 'carted' deer hunting involved putting ribbons on the head of the stag to be hunted.

It was during the seventeenth century in Britain that the gradual transition to foxhunting occurred. In the early eighteenth century, the most important

aristocrats spent their winters on the move, pursuing foxes from staging points scattered throughout their respective empires. Lord Berkeley's hunt stretched from Bristol to Kensington Gardens, London, Sir Richard Puleston's from Flintshire to Leicestershire and Lord Darlington's from Raby Castle, Durham, to Doncaster. The Dukes of Grafton hunted in Surrey, Norfolk and Northamptonshire. In the 1740s, the Second Duke of Grafton had a bill pushed through parliament for the building of London Bridge, when his patience with the Croydon ferry ran out, and in 1748 the Duke of Sefton, a keen hunting man, introduced the bill that brought about the construction of Westminster Bridge, in order to shorten the journey to his Surrey meets.

Country gentlemen hunted anything that jumped up in front of them, with foxes and hares being most abundant. Hunting hare was perceived to be the more skilful sport of the two. In the fourteenth century, hares were believed to be cunning enough to alter sex at will, while the fox was seen as physically and morally inferior: a creature of low cunning and a 'stinking hot scent' in contrast to the hare's cleverness, subtlety and sweetness. To hunt the fox meant 'little more than riding and running'. It was crude sport. Deer, in short supply, were reserved for the very rich. In 1793, however, even the Prince of Wales was forced to transfer from hunting deer in Hampshire to hunting foxes.

Early foxhunting was a casual affair. Hunters, having set out at dawn, would follow their quarry's overnight trail to the kennel where it slept off its meal, then slowly pursue the glutted victim, very often all day. What, in fact, they were doing was walking the fox to its death. Having hunted it to ground, they would dig it out and kill it.

Although in the middle of the eighteenth century the greater part of Britain was still free from hunting, it was becoming a religion among country squires and the formation of foxhunt packs was on the increase. Serious interest was taken in the breeding of hounds, with speed becoming as important as sound. With the industrial revolution, foxhunting as we know it today grew rapidly. Many hunters see 1820–90 as the 'Golden Age' of foxhunting. Whereas in 1824 there were only 24 subscription packs, by 1854 there were 100. Railways and macadam roads enabled greater mobility and an access to the hunting world for those involved in urban business. Foxhunting was not, however, an inexpensive pursuit, costing from £2000-£4000 a year (depending on the status of the hunt) for seven meets a fortnight. At this time, women began to appear on the hunting field, although Colonel Cook in *Observations on Hunting* wrote that: 'Ladies are more in their element in the drawing-room or in Kensington Gardens than in the kennel or in the field.'

In 1799, that keen hunter the Duke of Cumberland attempted a variation. Two cheetahs having been sent from India to Windsor, he was eager to try out their hunting prowess. A large enclosure was built in Windsor Park, surrounded by strong netting 15 feet high, and a stag from Windsor forest was

driven inside it. One of the cheetahs was then brought in, accompanied by two Indian attendants, and unhooded. The stag lowered its horns, but the cheetah, completely disoriented, jumped the enclosure, bolted through a crowd of spectators and killed a fallow deer. Cheetah hunting was not attempted again.

The bizarre sporting and social habits of the nineteenth century hunting Masters are notorious. Jack Mytton (an MP rarely seen in the House of Commons, who was frequently drunk and gambled heavily) had his own pack of foxhounds in the Shropshire area, where he usually hunted five times a week, often with a monkey up with him in the saddle. He was also partial to fights with dogs (around whose nose he would clamp his teeth), hunting rats while on skates, and shooting ducks in his nightshirt.

Jack Chaworth Musters (1777-1849) was, according to Raymond Carr in his book *English Foxhunting*, an 'appallingly rude' hunter who once told a lame person who overrode hounds that he was as deformed in mind as in body. His temper was matched by that of Thomas Assheton-Smith, a man who had made a fortune supplying slate from Wales to the new industrial estates and was known to have kicked a sheep dog, and threatened to fight the shepherd, because he had allowed the dog to be present at a kill. When his horse Antwerp skinned his hips in a train, he made his groom paint the cuts the same colour as the horse. Assheton-Smith proudly claimed to have killed 2000 foxes in his hunting career and believed that a fox killed in any way other than hunting was an offence against nature.

The Seventh Duke of Beaufort did not allow rheumatic gout to stop him hunting and would often turn up at the kill in a bath chair. His political principles, according to G.F. Underhill in *The Master of Hounds*, were those of 'extreme Toryism'. He actively opposed the Reform Bill as MP for West Gloucestershire.

Lord Althorp, as Master of the Pytchley (1808-1817), would gallop overnight from London to Northamptonshire to hunt. The spread of the railways, however, helped MPs to get to their favourite pastime more readily. A rich MFH (Master of Fox Hounds) could hire a private train and draw up on the track at a point near the meet, where his stud groom would have horses waiting. Sir Robert Foster, MP for the City of London, used to arrive at Paddington in the Lord Mayor's coach, on his way to hunt with the Beaufort in the West Country.

With foxhunting in the ascendancy, foxes began to decline. Since this could prove fatal to a subscription pack that offered good regular sport, efforts were made to redress the balance. In 1794, hounds were taken out of Leicestershire 'to enable a stock of old foxes to get up again'. Sir Richard Puleston, who hunted in Shropshire and Cheshire in the early years of the nineteenth century, was always short of foxes. Foxes were therefore 'imported' into the area, by 'bagmen'. By the 1820s, the trade in 'bag foxes' was an organised affair, centred

on Leadenhall Street in London. Some hunts had standing orders for foxes and the dealers got their supplies from the continent (mainly Holland and France) from where they arrived in rabbit cargoes from Ostend or on Rotterdam cattle boats. Some foxes came from parts of England where hunting was not so popular. Jack Mytton, for example, imported into his own hunting country the 'greyhound foxes' of mid-Wales. Patriotic hunters complained about the foreign 'mongrel-bred vermin', their 'degeneracy ruining the blood of the stout British Fox' (about 1000 a year were coming in from France) but the practice carried on until the twentieth century. Jim Bailey, Huntsman of the Essex (1879-1922) kept foxes hidden on his own property.

On 2 February 1978, the *Daily Mirror* reported that lorry driver Steve Curtis witnessed a fox being released from the back of a Land Rover, at a meet of the Royal Artillery fox hunt on Salisbury Plain. Lt Peter Heaton-Ellis, Master of the hunt, stated at the time that 'to my knowledge this is completely untrue. I know of no one in the hunt who would stoop to such a thing.' Mr Curtis was watching the hunt from a long way off, with high-powered binoculars. Poorer hunts have often taken foxes alive, keeping them in their kennels for use on another day. All these practices are contrary to the rules set out by the Master of Foxhounds Association.

Manufacturers and the aspiring urban bourgeoisie were often drawn to the hunting field as a way of rising up the social ladder and 'meeting the right people'. The invasion, however, was not unopposed. Surtees, the hunting writer, continually parodied 'tradesmen' who hunted and made anti-semitic remarks about Jewish hunting people. A well known huntsman and horse breeder in the inter-war years, Captain Marshall, referred to the billiards player Inman as 'a little Jewy man', to Argentinians as 'dagoes' and to Italians as 'Eye-ties'. Carr believes this to have been the legacy of elitists like Surtees and Nimrod (another hunting writer). In a move to distance themselves from the nouveaux riches, 'upper bracket' hunters attempted sartorial one-upmanship. By 1850, the tight-fitting scarlet coat (red being then the colour of the Tories) adorned with five buttons, was 'correct'. Lowly foot followers were tolerated only so long as they were not a nuisance. Outbreaks of fighting were commonplace between hunters and agricultural labourers, who hated the arrogance of the riders.

As the British empire expanded, bloodsports were exported far and wide, especially wherever the army was stationed. In the East, elephants, leopards, wild goats, lions, tigers and buffaloes were shot by the thousands, but British officers in India mostly preferred pigsticking, established in the first decade of the nineteenth century. This sport was carried out at dawn and involved the riders pursuing a boar to spear it between the shoulder blades. Commander-In-Chief Field Marshal Lord Birdwood, a cavalryman, wrote: 'Pigsticking, apart from being the finest sport in the world, is also most valuable for military

training and the development of military character and skill'.

Most British foxhunters felt that the Indian climate made their dogs lose the will to hunt, especially their greyhounds, which they used for coursing jackals. Nearer to home, when the Eleventh Hussars were stationed in Ireland in 1885, they took over the local hunt completely and would hunt regularly twice a week. Colonel Anstruther Thomson subordinated his career to foxhunting. Belonging to the Ninth Lancers, when the regiment was moved to India he transferred to the Thirteenth Light Dragoons rather than abandon hunting. When quartered at Ipswich, he formed a pack of staghounds, with his commanding officer as whipper-in, and did the same when stationed in Ireland.

The Duke of Wellington believed that foxhunters made the best cavalry officers. Lord Cardigan (of the Charge of the Light Brigade) was killed in the hunting field. Lord Baden-Powell (whose Boy Scout movement extols the virtues of kindness to animals) believed in hunting as a training for cavalry officers. To him, however, the very best school in which to learn the science of scouting was pigsticking: a sport he described as 'manly and tip top'.

> 'If there be anyone who is temperamentally opposed to the sport [foxhunting] and would injure it if he could, he is hardly worth considering. His whole outlook would probably be anti-social and un-English.' Lord Willoughby de Broke, MFH, 1925

Opposition to those who hunt wild animals for sport is not a recent development. Sir Thomas More, in his seminal work *Utopia*, advocated a more humane outlook to animals, and many Puritans opposed the 'frivolity' of hunting (although Cromwell himself was a strong supporter of bloodsports). Subsequently, intellectuals began to express concern about the plight of both wild and domestic animals. In 1747, Eton College abandoned the Ram Hunt (in which the boys used to cudgel a ram to death) and Hogarth produced a set of prints 'On Cruelty', which featured various abuses to urban animals. Dr Johnson opposed vivisection and Shelley's revolutionary beliefs included vegetarianism and animal' liberation.

At this time, animals felt to have committed a crime were liable to be put on trial in a law court. The concept of animals being responsible in law appears to have developed from the medieval ecclesiastical courts, who took their brief from the book of Exodus: 'If an ox gore a man or woman that they die, then the ox shall be surely stoned.' Many thousand were tried and put to death as a result of this edict. The animals accused of an offence were given the same rights as an accused person and would appear in the dock and be defended by counsel. The last such recorded trial was in 1771 at Chichester in Sussex, when a dog was tried and convicted for killing a child.

In 1824, the RSPCA was formed by those (including some MPs) concerned

with the welfare of animals. Their main concern was with domestic animals and some of their wealthier patrons were hunters, a tradition that still exists within the RSPCA today. But in 1871 they did attempt to prosecute two whippers-in of the Middleton Hunt for killing their horses by riding them 50 miles over heavy country. The prosecution failed (many believing that this was due to the magistrates being pro-hunt) but the general strategy continued: using laws that existed for the protection of domestic animals in order to safeguard the wild. It was a strategy that was to fail.

Victorian morality affected the image of hunting, with hunters having to play down their gambling and drinking. Assheton-Smith, a famous MFH, was a teetotaller and church-goer. Pro-hunt writers such as Whyte Melville and Anthony Trollope helped with the public relations exercise, demonstrating that foxhunting had manly, patriotic virtues. Trollope argued that God had given the fox to man to hunt, because of its strong scent, and, 'for a minimum of suffering [foxhunting] provides a maximum of recreation'.

Opposition to bloodsports was not restricted to intellectuals. Since 1788, hunters had been checked by the law, knowing that they contravened it if they damaged fences or crops, and that they had no legal right to hunt over property belonging to farmers. Not all farmers were tolerant of the hunt, especially the smaller farmers. The Harrow Vale farmers chased hunters with pitchforks, shut them up in small fields and locked their hounds in barns. In 1843, in the elite Quorn Hunt country, a farmer surrounded his land with sharpened stakes that would have impaled any rider who fell. The Pytchley were met, in the 1830s, by a hostile farmer who locked and spiked his gates and made his hedges impossible to jump.

But the hunt hit back. The Hampshire Hunt chased an irate farmer, who was trying to stop it from crossing his land, to a drain where the farmer was forced to hide for his safety. Assheton-Smith whipped a 'clod hopper' who threw a stone at one of his hounds. In the 1860s, an Essex farmer peppered the hunt with buckshot and a farmer in the Quorn country armed his labourers with staves in an attempt to keep the hunt off his crops. But the opposition remained fragmented. The Master of the hunt was a powerful figure in rural society and farmers who were opposed to the hunt preferred to keep such a sentiment to themselves.

Hunting in the twentieth century

The most important century of bloodsports is the present one. It is in this century that an organised, co-ordinated campaign has emerged to oppose the hunting of wild animals with hounds. Yet, at the same time, both Labour and Conservative governments have failed to legislate in any way against blood-

sports. The pro-hunt British Field Sports Society has sabotaged every private member's bill opposed to hunting, and even a Labour-government-backed bill to outlaw the coursing of hares was stopped in 1976 by the Lords. Frustrated, the anti-bloodsports movement has turned to direct action. In the early 1960s, the Hunt Saboteurs Association was formed.

The financial sustenance of foxhunting has come from those who can afford it; its ideological sustenance from traditionalists, headed by the royal family. Above all other forms of hunting, the hunting of foxes is an integral part of the culture of the ruling elite: a symbol of past, more settled times (however unsettled these may have been for ordinary, working-class people). Not only has it survived the attempts in parliament to abolish it, but has stayed intact through two world wars and increasing press and media exposure, especially from the popular press. The *Daily Mirror*, in particular, has always focused a critical light on the hunting fellowship's activities. Otter hunting has, indeed, been suspended in England and Wales and hare coursing and deer hunting have declined. But foxhunting and beagling (see Chapter 2) continue to flourish.

The anti-bloodsports movement got off to a successful start in the 1890s, when the Fabian socialist and vegetarian, Henry Salt, founded the Humanitarian League. After deliberation, he decided to focus its efforts on one specific target: the Royal Buckhounds, a 700-year-old 'carted' deer hunt, one of about 20 packs which existed at the time. Carted deer hunting consisted of releasing a tame, de-horned deer from a crate, about three-quarters of a mile from the meet, then pursuing it. At the end of the chase, the deer was re-crated and taken home for another day. That, at least, was the theory, but the frightened quarry would often run into houses, railway lines, barbed wire, or even the sea. In 1793, a stag pursued by the Royal Bucks, with George III in the saddle, swam the Thames at Marlow after a chase of four-and-a-half hours, to drop dead on the other side. In those days, to help train the hounds, stags would have a leg dislocated by a hunt servant. Giles Jacobs in *The Complete Sportsman* (1718) advised cutting the foot off a deer to slow it down, and encouraging hounds to leap at a deer's cut throat. The campaign to discredit the Royal Buckhounds was waged, with Salt's encouragement, by the Rev. J. Stratton, Chaplain to Lucas Hospital Wokingham, who, in his youth, had hunted the fox.

The carted deerhunters had begun to clean up their sport. The deer was no longer deliberately maimed and the hunt had discontinued its custom of decking the quarry with ribbons at Easter. The Reverend, however, began his campaign in the best reformist fashion, with a letter-writing campaign to the papers, followed by a pamphlet called *Cruel Sport – Some Facts Concerning the Queen's Buck Hounds* (1891). (Queen Victoria, incidentally, did not hunt with the buckhounds and was opposed to stag hunting.) In spite of much public disgust when a stag called Guy Fawkes disembowelled himself on a fence, a bill,

to end both the hunting of carted deer and rabbit coursing, failed in 1894. Stratton, however, persevered, walking as much as 20 miles at a time to gather his evidence and facing many situations comparable to those encountered by present-day hunt saboteurs. He received abusive letters, and once his house was fired at (after which he purchased a revolver).

His one-man campaign gained momentum. In 1894, the Sporting League was formed, by the hunters, for the defence of blood sports. In 1900, under the Cruelty to Wild Animals in Captivity Bill, carted deerhunting was again discussed in parliament, but the Lords ensured that the abolition of carted deerhunting was not included in the final Act. Then, with the accession of Edward VII, royal economies were required and Edward, unconcerned with deerhunting, abolished the Royal Buckhounds, saving £6,000 for the Crown. Was this a victory for Stratton, Salt and the Humanitarian League? They claimed that it was, although it was decades before carted deerhunting fizzled out altogether. Stratton and the League now turned their attention to the Eton school beagles. Dogfights, duck hunts and badger baits were no longer the leisure pursuits of the pupils at Eton, but hunting reports in the Eton *Chronicle*, at the turn of the century, told how dogs 'thoroughly deserved blood' and succeeded in 'breaking up a quarry'. The League's attack on such a bastion of privilege attracted much publicity. Salt and George Greenwood MP published a hoax book called *Beagler Boy* apparently defending beagling. It was received with much acclaim, both in and out of Eton College, by those oblivious to the satire. In a section spoofing the elitist nature of the school, Salt described Herbert Spencer's opposition to beagling as worthless: because 'he was neither an Etonian nor a sportsman surely that is reason to disqualify Spencer's opinion'.

Another coup was achieved by the League in 1914 when it brought out a volume of essays called *Killing for Sport* with a foreword by George Bernard Shaw and featuring an essay by Edward Carpenter. In the introduction. Shaw states that he can understand people hunting and killing for profit, but never for passing the time and being a 'good fellow', which was 'to behave like an idiot or a silly imitative sheep'.

The Humanitarian League continued until about 1919. In 1924, the League for the Prohibition of Cruel Sports was formed by vegetarians Henry Amos and Ernest Bell, both of whom were frustrated by the RSPCA's lack of action on bloodsports. The Society seemed to be in a state of stasis on hunting. Officially opposed to it, in spirit it could see no alternative for the 'controlling of pests'. The League took offices in Westminster and launched a monthly journal, *Cruel Sports*. In the January edition of 1927, Amos states that 'little has been done either by religion or education to stem the tide of cruelty involved in hunting'. Henry Salt was fully behind the new organization, as were Carpenter and Shaw. The inaugural meeting of the League was held at Church House,

Westminster, and was invaded by hunt supporters and, according to The *Daily Sketch* of 25 November 1925, 'speakers were noisily interrupted throughout the meeting' by 'elegant hunting rowdies'. The *Sketch* went on to declare: 'There can be little doubt that public opinion in this country is rapidly hardening against certain practices which the League aims at suppressing.' The *Sketch* also criticised the hunting of carted deer and rabbit coursing and highlighted the fact that foxhunting had been prohibited in Denmark.

The League had its work cut out. Apart from conventional bloodsports (there were over 18 otter packs alone) there also existed rabbit coursing; badger clubs that baited and dug out badgers; and shooting, especially of pigeons.

The first world war put a temporary halt to the hunting. Most hounds were killed off, leaving skeleton packs, and all of the horses were sent away to the front. It did not, however, kill bloodsports for good. In 1927, 8,000 people attended the opening meet of the Quorn foxhunt at Kirby Gate, including the Prince of Wales, the Maharajah and Maharani of Baroda, Prince Karim, Countess of Brecknock, Lady Furness and a half dozen other members of the peerage. Undaunted, the League continued to wage war, whilst the hunting world remained confident about the inviolability of its sport.

Hunting reports in provincial newspapers, *The Times*, The *Daily Telegraph*, waxed eloquent. In the *Shooting Times* of 1925, Richard Clapham wrote; 'You must either press your deer with a fast pack and try to kill him or else be content to go out and have a run, whip it off and come home without blood. Some people like this bloodless business of galloping about, but for our part, we don't.' In 1927, the Ullswater foxhunt appeared to agree, pursuing a fox for 30 miles and then, when darkness came, using lanterns to continue until they killed it. In August of the same year, stags were pursued by the Devon and Somerset staghounds into the sea at Glenthorpe and Porlock, where they too were killed.

The abolition of stag hunting was the main aim of Amos, Bell and the League, along with the abolition of coursing and of the most obvious excesses of hunting, such as blooding and digging out, and the staghunters became very nervous at having their activities monitored and exposed. A Minehead journalist, Ernest Hemingway, who had written articles exposing staghunting, was assaulted by a Devon and Somerset hunter, Ernest Rawle, who was bound over for six months and fined £5 by Dunster magistrates in 1927. Fortunately for Hemingway, Rawle had been dragged off him by friends.

The Home Secretary of 1927, Sir William Joynson-Hicks, remained unmoved by Labour MPs who demanded the abolition of stag hunting: 'I really think the Honourable Member exaggerates his own feelings and attributes them to the country at large.' But the *Daily Mirror*, always eager for a compromise, launched a campaign to give the stag a 'fair chance' with the ten staghound packs that remained.

Foxhunting still received remarkably little opposition, especially from the RSPCA, which had many hunting apologists in its midst. The League, although believing that the fox should be controlled, felt that this should be the concern of the individual farmer, and in this they received support from Miss A. K. Galbraith, ex-secretary of the Poultry Keepers' Protection Society, who said, in January 1927: 'After twelve years investigating cases through the whole of England I am convinced that foxhunting is a serious hindrance to agriculturalists and poultry keeping.' In the following year, Lord Dalmery, Master of the Whaddon Chase Foxhounds, refused to mix socially with local farmers whom he believed to be shooting foxes and thereby threatening his sport. The *Shooting Times*, in the same year, reported that the Master of Mr Portiman's Foxhounds, faced with a fox who was going to ground in a hole, lassooed it around the neck with his whip, then dragged it back out to throw it to the hounds.

Otter hunting was still popular and, in 1927, there existed 21 packs, an increase of two on the previous year. Over 660 otters were hunted that season alone, of which 397 were killed, the heaviest being a female of 23 lbs. It was not the easiest of times to campaign against bloodsports.

Unperturbed, the League launched a series of public meetings, one of which, in 1928, was held in the midst of stag hunting country in the West of England, attracting a crowd of over 500, mainly pro-hunt, who created uproar for nearly three hours, singing 'John Peel' and blowing their horns. At about the same time, a freelance journalist was thrown into the sea by hunters, after attending a Polo Ball. The D&S hunters apologised publicly and settled out of court. In 1930, a League public meeting was broken up by hunters in Oxford. They threw rotten eggs, flour and a dead hare. Police gave protection to League branch chairman, Dr Bradley, to help him get safely away. The League went on to hold banner demonstrations at hunt meets. In 1931, League members demonstrated at the Bucks Otter Hounds with banners that read 'Stand up for the Helpless' and 'Abolish the Shameful Sport of Otterhunting'. When they repeated the exercise at an Eastern Counties Otterhunt meet, at North Railway Station Colchester, League leaflets were snatched by the hunt and burned. The hunting press at that time was reporting on otter hunts that lasted from four to six hours. A brave League picket was organised in 1931 at the opening meet of the Devon and Somerset staghounds at Cloutsham. The landowner, Sir Francis Acland, warned the pickets that he did not want them on his land, so, fearing police action, the 30 protesters lined up on a public footpath. Angered by the impudence of the demonstrators, the hunt cracked their whips and jostled the anti-hunters. Carrying 'Staghunting is not Cricket' and 'Play the Game' banners the League members were quizzed as to whether they were vegetarians, the majority responding with a loud 'yes'. Such agitation began to pay off. In 1931, the Sussex Staghounds disbanded and other hunts were

becoming publicity shy. Three photographers from separate news agencies were physically stopped from taking photographs by the Eynsford Otter Hunt.

Anti-hunting bills in parliament continued, however, to be thwarted. In 1924, Isaac Foot MP had managed to steer a bill abolishing bloodsports that involved released captive animals through to its second reading, but the most significant parliamentary campaign of the time was centred around the Lovatt-Frasers Bill, supported by a petition of 85,000 people opposed to staghunting. The *Daily Herald, Star, Daily Chronicle, Sunday Chronicle* and *Manchester Guardian* supported the bill, while intellectuals such as Bertrand Russell, Robert Blatchford, C. P. Scott and the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom contributed to the National Appeal Against Staghunting. The hunt's defence was intriguing. Sir Dennis F. Boles, Master of the Quantocks Staghounds, said in 1930 that 'we carry on hunting for love of the stag'.

The parliamentary anti-bloodsports campaign sent shivers through many a hunter's coat. The *Daily Mirror*, in September 1930, reported that little support had been gained amongst the hunting fellowship for a pro-staghunting committee and that, in an informal vote that was taken at a private meeting of subscribers to a famous Leicestershire hunt, three-quarters of those present supported the resolution that 'hunting a stag is not sport'. They may have been responding to a report in the *Manchester Guardian*, featuring a letter sent out by the D&S Staghounds Committee endeavouring to form a Society for the Furtherance of Fieldsports. Nevertheless, the Lovatt-Frasers Bill failed to crack the pro-hunt bloc in parliament.

The RSPCA's response to hunting, up to this time and for a long time after, was still to attempt to prosecute hunters who killed wild animals in people's homes, farm buildings, gardens, etc. on the grounds that such killing contravened laws that protected domestic animals. All the cases, however, floundered. Frustrated by the Society's lack of muscle, Henry Amos raised the matter at the Annual General Meeting of the RSPCA in 1932. The President, Lord Malmesbury, called such militants 'cranks and faddists'. Nevertheless, a referendum was held within the Society, resulting in a two-to-one vote for the abolition of staghunting. The RSPCA Executive Committee remained, however, pro-hunt. Even some of the League members, including Ernest Bell, condemned Amos's attack on the RSPCA. Bell split from Amos and the League in 1932 and, with other ex-League members, formed the National Society for the Abolition of Cruel Sports. It has remained, until today, a respectable, conservative body; more of an educational trust than a society fighting bloodsports.

Amos and the League ploughed on, turning their attention to hare coursing. In 1936, they managed to organise a petition of 3400 signatories in the Liverpool area, opposing the Waterloo Cup (the yearly premier event of the coursing world, held in Altcar, just outside Liverpool, on the property of Lord

Sefton). In the same year, the *Daily Express*, in an early public opinion poll, asked 5,000 people: 'Are you in favour of bloodsports like foxhunting?'; 55 per cent were against, 40 per cent in favour, 5 per cent undecided. The hunting fellowship was forced to realise that public sympathies, especially in urban areas, were not necessarily in tune with theirs. So, in 1930, the British Field Sports Society was formed to defend bloodsports both in and out of parliament. Although the attendance of one of its executive members, Jardine, at a cock fighting gala in Calais in March 1937 did the cause little good, a bill of 1938 to prohibit carted deer hunting and rabbit coursing, fell. Only 27 MPs, out of a necessary quorum of 40, attended the House of Commons for the debate.

The second world war saved the hunting fellowship from further attacks. The League shut up shop for the duration. Although Lord Leconfield carried on hunting, with only his whipper-in and huntsman, hunting also ground to a halt, with skeleton packs of hounds being kept for breeding purposes alone. Lord Leconfield, incidentally, coming across a village football match being played in 1940, stood up in his stirrups and shouted: 'Haven't you people got anything better to do in wartime than play football?', then turned around and carried on hunting.

Raymond Carr, in *English Foxhunting*, states that 'foxhunters were concerned for the first time that their sport was to be legislated out of existence immediately after the second world war'. The liberal, reforming, political air of the time seemed not to be to the hunting fellowship's advantage. Hunts pumped £100 at a time into the British Field Sports Society and, at the Master of Foxhounds Association AGM in 1949, one Master likened the campaign against the abolitionists to the recent war, 'with the British nation which waited until the Germans were at Dunkirk before they began to gather their own forces'. A large majority of private members' bills were concerned with the prohibition of hunting. The pressure was immense. In February 1949, a private member's bill was introduced to ban the hunting of any deer, otter or badger, and the coursing of rabbits and hares. It was defeated, but was immediately followed by another, to ban foxhunting; withdrawn when the Labour government promised to appoint a committee to enquire into cruelty to wild animals.

The hunt was worried. Rallied by the British Field Sports Society and backed by the National Farmers Union, fox hunters, otter hunters and beaglers blew horns of protest at demonstrations in Westerham and Edenbridge in Kent. Proclaiming that freedom of choice should be left to the individual, mounted foxhunters also sounded horns in Piccadilly and Regent Street. The BFSS organised a massive pro-hunt petition. Earl Winterton said that the opponents of bloodsports were 'Bloomsbury Boys' whose loathing of the sport was due to its demands upon courage, endurance and physical fitness: 'Their patron saint is Oscar Wilde.' The Labour government was in a dilemma. Although the

opposition was coming from its own MPs, it had no wish to lose the rural vote and was troubled by threats from pro-hunt farmers that anti-hunt legislation would have an adverse effect on food production.

The committee duly reported in 1951 but this Scott Henderson Report is seen by many anti-bloodsports campaigners as far from independent. One of the council members was Ms Frances Pitt, who, for more than 20 years, was a Master of Foxhounds. Other council members included Major Pugh, a vet to the West Kent Foxhounds, and W. J. Brown, contributor to *The Field* magazine. No animal welfare organisations or leading animal welfare activist was represented on the committee. It is estimated that eight of the members had hunting connections. Apart from calling for the ban of the gin trap, it hardly criticised hunting practices at all. It saw otter hunting as the best form of control and felt that it could not make recommendations about carted deer hunting, since it was already in decline. It had confidence in the Master of Foxhounds Association as a force for controlling malpractices. Since statements made by hunting interests were never published, there was no way to check their assertions.

Yet the anti-bloodsports movement was not to get so near to achieving legislation for years. Carted deer hunting declined, finishing in the early 1960s, mainly due to a militant one-woman campaign by Gwen Barter, well known for her harassment (to the point of occupying hunt vehicles) of the Norwich Staghounds. In 1956, the Devon and Somerset sent a hind plummeting over a quarry near Brampton to her death. The royal family continued its patronage, with Princess Margaret seen out hunting in 1951. But the relative calm was soon to be shattered. In 1963, the Hunt Saboteurs Association was formed.

The Hunt Saboteurs Association (HSA)

> Horse-whipping a hunt saboteur is rather like beating a wife – they're both private matters.
> Tim Asplin, Joint Master of the Essex Union Foxhunt, 1976.

The Hunt Saboteurs Association was formed by a Devon journalist, John Prestidge, who built up a group in the Brixham area. It went out for the first time on 10 January 1964 against the South Devon Foxhunt.

The anti-bloodsports campaign is no different from other political movements; there are activists within it who have chosen direct, extra-parliamentary action. Isolated incidents of hunt sabotage go back centuries, from peasants who deliberately misdirected the hunt to second world war airmen (irritated that others were hunting while they were risking their lives) who laid aniseed trails to mislead hounds.

Over the last 18 years, however, hunt sabotage tactics have become much more sophisticated, as saboteurs have learned more about hunting and refined their tactics accordingly. The hunting fellowship is threatened by a formidable opposition, directly under its nose.

The response has been violent. The first organised attack on members of the Hunt Saboteurs Association occurred on 2 May 1964, when members of the Culmstock Otterhunt surrounded a carload of sabs, whipped the car, then dragged Leo Lewis out from it and broke his jaw. The sabs' response was immediate. They called a national 'hit' for two weeks later. Six months after, on 29 September, Axminster Magistrates imposed paltry fines on four of the hunters for assaulting Lewis. The next day, seven of the sabs, including Lewis and John Prestridge (secretary of HSA), were bound over to the sum of £50 to keep the peace for a year. The court had devised an effective way of hindering direct action.

Violence has continued to be inflicted on sabs, with the forces of law-and-order playing an ambiguous role. No friend to those who take direct action (even the non-violent form of action favoured by hunt saboteurs) they have occasionally saved saboteurs from the full fury of the hunt's anger. Nevertheless, what appeared in the sixties to be 'a harmless bunch of cranks', laughed at by both the hunt and country police, has become a conscious movement. The law, tiring of the sabs' activities, has contrived seriously to hinder them. In 1977 at the Altcar Coursing Ground near Liverpool, a peaceful mass trespass by 250 sabs against the Waterloo Cup led to 39 arrests for 'threatening behaviour' (against coursing supporters who, at the time of the arrests, were some 500 yards away, behind the demonstration). Sabs Valerie Waters and Trevor Scott, called as *witnesses* to court cases involving hunt aggression against sabs, have both been imprisoned for refusing to be bound over, when the prosecution evoked an act of 1361: the Justices of the Peace Act. (This statute gives a judge the right to bind a person over even if they were neither the aggressor nor the victim of an incident.) Valerie Waters has had her car sprayed with red paint. She has been threatened. She has had a dead fox wiped on her face. She has spent a month on heavy duties at the infamous Risley Remand Centre.

In June 1976, a national hunt sabotage was arranged against the Border Counties Otter Hunt, in mid-Wales. There, the hundred-or-so saboteurs were ambushed by two packs of hunt supporters with otter poles. Dave Wetton, secretary of the Hunt Saboteurs, described the scene. 'They just started beating us all round the head and shoulder and kicking us when we were down. One bloke had his cheekbone and jaw smashed and had to have it poked back into place in hospital. Another chap had a broken nose and his teeth knocked out. It was incredibly violent.' No arrests were made.

In December 1979 in Sussex, sabs Keith Bird, Vince Smith and Mervyn Dallas were attacked by three followers of the East Sussex and Romney Marsh

Foxhunt. Keith received a split lip, Mervyn a black eye and cut hand, Vince a bad bruising. Two hunt supporters, Kevin Barton and Michael Bullen, were found guilty of causing 'actual bodily harm', then given an absolute discharge. Both were bound over to keep the peace for a year, to the sum of £50. The magistrates then turned their attention to the sabs. Once again, the 1361 Statute was used. Keith and Mervyn refused to be bound over and were sentenced to six months' imprisonment. After one night's imprisonment, they reluctantly agreed to be bound over.

Also in December 1979, 80 hare coursers at Swaffham, Norfolk, waded into 33 hunt saboteurs who had distracted the greyhounds by waving flags, blowing horns and whistles and letting off noisy fireworks. The sabs were on a public right of way, and were accompanied by three police officers, but one needed treatment in hospital for gashes in the head (after being kicked while lying in a ditch) and another, Michael Smith of Norwich, had his nose broken. The BBC East camera crew were also harassed by the coursers. The police later said that the reason they arrested no one was because arrests could have led to further injuries.

The situation is becoming perfectly clear. The police and the law courts, to the hunt's delight, are attempting to stifle non-violent, anti-hunt activity. Since the HSA's tactics are not in themselves illegal, a battery of charges has been called up – 'threatening behaviour', 'disturbing the peace', 'causing a crowd to gather', 'possession of an offensive weapon' (a spray can) and the use of the 1361 Act – to frustrate, hinder and dissipate potential sab activity.

The laws that exist are, in fact, protecting hunting with hounds, in spite of the fact that the public does not, in the main, have sympathy with bloodsports. Apart from a couple of sympathetic television documentaries, the media are not interested in portraying sabs as serious campaigners. Writers in *Horse and Hound* present anti-bloodsports campaigners either as 'misguided and sentimental' or as fuelled by class hatred. The hunt claims that antis spray hounds with poisonous sprays, that they injure horses, that they even lay snares. But the tactics used by the HSA are discussed, ferociously, both at local and national level. They are formulated in such a way that they will do no harm to animals, the environment, or humans. Anybody transgressing those conditions would be immediately expelled.

Hopes for an immediate peaceful end to bloodsports were given a sharp setback by two major events in the 1970s, both of which *could* have been the start of the end of bloodsports. In 1976, after a Labour-government-backed bill to abolish hare coursing had successfully passed all its stages in the Commons, it was sabotaged by a House of Lords Select Committee, which, like the Scott Henderson Committee, felt that the coursing of hares was not cruel enough to warrant legislation. (Even the Scott Henderson Committee had been impressed by the view that, since officials are not in a position to intervene once a hare has

been seized by hounds, cruelty is a significant factor in hare coursing.) Lord Denham, defending hare coursing in the House of Lords, said that abolition would make the law not an ass, but a 'gibbering lunatic'. The Earl of Kimberley felt that it should be left to the individual conscience and Viscount Massereene and Ferrard stated that it would be totally 'illogical' to ban hare coursing on the grounds of cruelty. This, the tenth bill to stop hare coursing since 1966, came the closest yet to clearing the Lords.

The second major 'event' was, and is, the Labour Party's commitment to animal welfare. In July 1978 the party produced a policy document, *Living Without Cruelty: Labour's Charter for Animal Protection.* It condemns all bloodsports and calls for their banishment by law. The abolition of stag hunting and hare coursing was included in the 1979 Election Manifesto and the League, who had done much opinion-poll work to convince the party leaders that this would be a popular reform, donated £80,000 to Labour's election fighting fund – only to see a Tory government returned, with strong hunting sympathies.

As a result of these developments it is inevitable that the activities of the Hunt Saboteurs will increase. In view of the hostility and outright violence that has greeted them it is necessary to look at the tactics that saboteurs use against hunting. Do they deserve such rigid police attention? Is the hunt right to beat sabs up? Are they a danger? Should the police support the status quo and, therefore, oppose the antis? What are these activities that elicit such rage from hunters and traditionalists alike? The issue is wider than that of bloodsports. The right to peaceful, direct action is being generally eroded. A government bill to reduce the size of picket lines, or abolish secondary picketing; the Criminal Trespass Law to restrict occupation protests – all these are part of the same erosion of freedom that restricts the sabs. As a contribution to this debate, it is worth examining in some detail the official tactics of the Hunt Saboteurs Association and judging whether sabs, in fact, deserve their physical and legal battering.

Hunting:
What it is

Foxhunting

Number of packs in England, Scotland and Wales: 208.
Number of packs in Ireland: 34.
Official season: Foxcub hunting, 4 August (or after the corn has been cut) to 31 October; foxhunting proper, 1 November to 1 May.
Starting times: Cubhunting, 4.00 a.m. in late July to 10.00 a.m. in October; foxhunting, 11.00 a.m.

Locations, times and dates of meets (for all forms of hunting) are found in the weekly publications *Horse and Hound* and *Shooting Times* and in some rural and provincial newspapers (or telephone the hunts' kennels). The biographies of all UK hunts can be found in *Baily's Hunting Directory*, which is regularly updated. You will find Baily's in the reference section of your local public library.

The hunt . . .

The 'meet' takes place at a pub, a village green, a crossroads, or some other accessible point, usually at 11 a.m. Special hunts, such as a Boxing Day or New Year's Day hunt, will often meet in an urban setting, (e.g. Surrey Union Foxhunt annual Boxing Day hunt meet at the Civic Hall in Guildford city centre).

After the meet, the hunt moves off to the first 'covert' to be 'drawn', which may be some distance from the meet, across fields, etc. The Huntsman and hounds lead, followed by the Master and the field. The hounds are fed into a covert (where the earths may have been blocked) and encouraged by the Huntsman, using his voice and/or horn, to explore and sniff out their fox. Hounds usually draw upwind, as the fox will normally run downwind. The 'whippers-in' (or 'whips') will position themselves on the edge of the covert in order to signal to the Huntsman either when a fox has been seen to leave, or the point at which hounds have departed.

The field will be drawn up along the side of the covert from which the hunt

does not wish the fox to escape; for example, towards a main road. The members of the field will keep a look out, as will the foot followers. When the fox is sighted, the viewer may cry 'gone away', or give a 'holloa' and indicate, with arm extended, the direction in which the fox has gone. Once the hounds are on the scent and out of the covert, the Huntsman uses his horn to signal to the Master and the field gallops on after. Having found the scent, some hounds will 'speak' (i.e. yelp in a manner peculiar to hounds). Other hounds hunt silently.

If the pack loses the scent, or 'checks', then the Huntsman will 'cast' them in a wide arc, hoping that they will pick it up again. Often the scent of two foxes will cross. It is up to the Huntsman to decide which scent belongs to the hunted fox. The hunt will either pursue the fox, overtire it, 'run it to ground' and kill it, or else it will lose its scent. If the fox enters another hunt's country, it will usually 'be given best' and be left for another day. The hunt may cover up to ten miles, taking several hours, in pursuit of one fox.

Hunters prefer to kill above ground, but even this is no quick death. The hunting fellowship claims that the fox is killed by a nip on the back of the neck that severs the spinal cord. The animal may die that way, but is likely to suffer multiple injuries before the 'nip' is given. The Huntsman, if he is on the scene, will encourage the hounds with cries of 'tear 'im' and 'eat 'im'. The horn will be blown for a kill.

If the fox goes to ground and the hunt decides to dig it out, the terrier men are called in. First, they make sure that all but one of the escape routes from the earth are blocked. Through the one left open, a terrier will be introduced to locate the fox and keep it holed up. The terrier handler listens for the confrontation, often with his ear to the ground. When the position has been ascertained, the earth will be dug and the terrier removed. Then the digging continues until the fox has been reached and its head and shoulders exposed. With a blow from either a spade, or a crop, or a humane killer (a captive-bolt pistol) fired at point blank range, the fox will then be killed. After the trophies have been removed (the head or 'mask', the tail or 'brush' and the feet or 'pads') the remains are thrown to the hounds for them to worry or eat. Sometimes the fox is bolted out into a rabbit net. Since the whole procedure can take a long time, the hunt does not usually wait for the outcome. Sometimes the earth will be stopped with the fox inside it. Later in the day, the terrier handlers will return to dig it out.

Often, if the fox goes to ground too quickly, the hunt will bolt it again after giving it 'law', a fair chance to run before hounds are laid on. Bolting is common amongst fell packs.

Hunting takes place in all weathers, unless there is a risk to the horses such as very hard ground. It will end for the day as dusk falls.

Hours before a hunt is due to take place, before any hunters or supporters have assembled, members of the HSA will lay a false trail by rolling urinated fox bedding into a ball, tying it onto a string, then dragging it around the hunting area. Rags dosed in linseed oil, turpentine, paraffin, or human urine can be used instead. Blocked earths will be sought and unblocked. Following the rules of the Country Code, gates will be secured; then sprayed with harmless, but strong smelling substances. Woods and gaps will also be sprayed.

At the meet itself, a banner demonstration will be held. Or else an 'undercover' approach is taken, with sabs, appropriately dressed, mingling and chatting with the hunt supporters and riders, to find out where the hunt is intending to go. Other sabs will be dowsing, with 'Antimate' spray, all roads that lead to the meet. When the hunt moves off, carloads of sabs will attempt to keep ahead of it, spraying 'Antimate' in the woods before the hunt arrives there. At this point, saboteurs will also start mimicking the Huntsman, calling the names of hounds to distract them; while others will have pretended to see a fox and shouted: 'Holloa!' – a sort of loud-pitched 'wooo' yell. The hunt and/or hounds will come over. To avoid confrontation, the sabs will either 'disappear', or misdirect the hunt. By use of the hunting-horn, some sabs have attracted hounds away from the Huntsman, splitting the pack and drawing the hounds off the scent. A split pack will often take hours to re-assemble.

If a hunted animal is spotted crossing a field, antis will spray in the middle of the field. There is more likelihood of hounds checking, or splitting, in the middle than at the edges, where hedgerows and a lack of wind prevent dissipation of the scent. If the hunt draws a covert sided by a road, railway, river, or some other obstacle, it will enter the hounds from that side. Sabs will take their positions at the far side, but taking care not to block the fox's escape routes. If the fox breaks cover, sabs will intercede between the fox and the hounds. Sprays, horns and whistles will be used. Often supporters will come to argue with the antis, which creates an effective delay. Sabs are encouraged to ignore hunt supporters, to avoid confrontation and to follow the hounds, not the field (i.e. mounted followers).

Foxhunts can end up in several ways. A hunt servant might enter a terrier into a foxhole, then dig the fox out. Or else the fox may be bolted. Although it is now rare, there is also a possibility that children's faces may be blooded. Photographic evidence of these events would, of course, be invaluable.

Fox cubhunting

The details of packs, seasons and starting times are given in the introduction to Foxhunting (see above).

The objects of cubhunting are:
To train young foxhounds in pack work such as following older hounds; obeying the horn and the call of the Huntsman; familiarising themselves with fox-scent and acquiring a taste for blood.
To disperse fox-cubs over a wider area, especially from coverts that cannot be visited in the main season, due to their position near roads, railways and other hazardous places. The intention is to create better sport, firstly by making sure that most coverts have a fox and secondly by persuading cubs that safety lies not in going to ground, but in fleeing across country.
To reduce fox numbers.

The hunt . . .

Cubhunting takes place from late July to early October in the early morning, before the heat has dried up the scent. As with foxhunting, the Huntsman, hounds and whippers-in are present, but followers are normally reduced by needing an invitation from the Master to attend. The field will wear ordinary riding gear. Hounds will go straight from kennels to the covert.
Late July, August and September. On arrival, followers will be positioned around the perimeter, in order to keep both cubs and hounds in the wood. This exercise is called 'holding up'. If a cub is seen attempting to leave, mounted followers will frighten it back by slapping their saddles with their crops. The idea is to keep both cubs and hounds in the confines of the wood, so that young hounds will learn to hunt in thick covert, where they have to use their nose, and to listen and to follow the cries of the 'old' hounds. It is not unusual for cubs to be dug out and given to young hounds to worry, to give them a taste of blood.
October. Runs in the open will be encouraged, so that young hounds can learn to hunt on the right line, to see the fox and to know what it looks like. Earths may well be blocked to this end. It is also the time for cub dispersal. At this season, the cubs will be between four and seven months old, although cubs have been known to be born in every month of the year. By the time that foxhunting starts, they will almost be fully grown and will know that the sound of the hunting horn is the signal to leave their covert and run.

. . . and the anti-hunt

With fox-cubhunting, the Huntsman will already be having a difficult time with his new, inexperienced hounds. It is at this period that Hunt Saboteurs intensify their efforts. If, at this point, the relationship between Huntsman and hounds is destroyed, then the hunt will be in for a poor season. A very strong drag laid in the coverts will make it hard for the Huntsman to teach the young

hounds to hunt the right scent. The hunt will have many riders and foot supporters in the field, ready to drive a cub back into the covert for the kill. There will also be much digging out of fox-cubs. Cubbing receives less publicity than regular foxhunting since its function is not, necessarily, to provide 'sport' for subscribers.

Simple trespass is not, and never has been, an offence under English criminal law. The sign which reads 'Trespassers will be prosecuted' is known to lawyers as the 'wooden lie' because trespass itself can lead only to civil proceedings, not criminal prosecution. Nevertheless, if a landowner, a police officer, or an official representative of the owner orders you off the land, you must leave by the shortest route. You should be given reasonable time. The landowner, on the other hand, can use *reasonable* force to remove you. Nobody at all can order you off a designated footpath.

Foxhunt officials, servants, supporters and social occasions

The Huntsman Hunts the hounds and is responsible for their welfare and the cleanliness of their kennels. He is usually employed full-time, although sometimes the Master will hunt the hounds; in which case, the professional in charge is known as the Kennel Huntsman and will usually act as first whipper-in.

The whipper-in The Huntsman's assistant, of which some hunts will have more than one. He or she will either be employed by the hunt, or be an amateur. The whip's job is to help the Huntsman, while hunting hounds, by keeping the pack together, collecting stray and straggling hounds, helping to sight the fox and keeping followers away from the hounds.

Terrier man Will 'dig out' or 'bolt' the fox, using terrier dogs. Will follow the hunt on foot, or in a Land Rover. No uniform, but usually wears a flat cap and carries a spade.

Earth-stopper These people go out in the early morning, or late at night, to block the earths while the foxes are hunting, etc. They use earth, humus, sticks, branches, plastic bags filled with stones, rabbit nets, wire mesh or oil drums. They may be paid by the hunt. Some do it for enjoyment.

Fence-menders A group of people employed by some hunts to make good all fences ruined by the riders. Will follow the hunt in a Land Rover.

The mounted field These are the hunt followers who have either paid subs or a 'cap' (money was paid on the day), the amount of which varies from hunt to hunt. Kept under strict control by the Master, or a person known as the Field Master (who may be the Joint Master or an elected member of the hunt committee), they rarely see either hounds 'working' or a kill. Ninety per cent of the field is there for social reasons. While hounds are drawing the covert, the field is kept will back. It is not until the hounds are well on the scent that they

are permitted to follow. If the Huntsman has problems picking up a scent, it is the field, wanting a ride, who will criticise him.

The foot follower The hunting equivalent of a football fan. Older followers usually know exactly where the hunt is and where it is going. Many now travel in cars.

Hunt supporters club Membership is made up of car and foot followers. They will organise fund-raising events, such as terrier shows or cheese-and-wine parties, for the support of the hunt. They often publish their own newsletter and help with the hunt's point-to-points.

Fixture list All meets are decided on well in advance, so a card is well worth obtaining. Sometimes they are found on the noticeboards of rural pubs and village halls.

Point-to-point A one-day steeple chase organised by the hunt, and run in conjunction with the Jockey Club. Entries come from both inside and outside the hunt. It usually occurs in early summer. Most hunts have a permanent course, which they sometimes share with another hunt. These events raise a lot of money for the hunt.

Hunt ball End-of-season social occasion, where local dignitaries appear. Hunt officials wear special-occasion dress.

Hound parades Organised at local country shows or equestrian events, these are public relations exercises.

Pony clubs Registered with the British Horse Society. Nearly every hunt has one and special meets are arranged for the children to go out hunting throughout the season. There are, however, some pony clubs that are not associated with hunts.

Foxhunting terms

Cap A donation made on the day of the meet towards the upkeep of the hounds, the repair of fences, the British Field Sports Society and so on.

Riot Of hounds: to chase after animals (cats, deer, birds etc.) other than the one being hunted.

Hunt's country Each hunt has its own defined territory, regulated by the Master of Fox Hounds Association.

Drawing The act of encouraging the hounds through the wood to search for the quarry.

Covert Pronounced 'cover': generally used to describe a wood, but also a copse, thicket or hedge where a fox may lie for shelter. Kale fields are especially favoured.

Check Of hounds: to stop and sniff about for the scent.

Break up To eat the fox.

Hunting pink 'Pink' or red coats are worn by both hunt officials and those

people who have received from the Master the coveted 'hunt button'. Women do not normally wear red coats.

Given best Of a fox: to be let go, possibly for another day.

Bowled, or rolled over; accounted for; brought to book; punished; dealt with Killed.

Charlie or Charles James; Todd or (in Wales and Scotland) **Mr Todd** A fox.

Babbler A hound that gives tongue (a throaty yelp) when not on the scent of a fox.

Billet Foxes' droppings.

Blowing away A series of quick notes on the Huntsman's horn when hounds, on the line of a fox, leave a covert.

Blowing out A note on the Huntsman's horn when the hounds are brought out of an empty covert.

Chop To kill a fox before it has time to run from covert, for example, when it is ill or resting.

Foil Any odour which tends to obliterate that of the hunted fox. If a fox doubles back on its tracks, it is said to be 'running its foil'.

Tally-ho Means that the fox has been viewed coming out of covert.

Hare Hunting

In England and Wales, the brown hare is hunted. The blue or mountain hare occurs in hill country and a variety of this hare is hunted in Ireland.

There are three types of pack that hunt the hare by scent.

Harriers

Number of packs in England, Scotland and Wales: 26.
Number of packs in Ireland: 25.
Season: October to March.
Usual start: 11.30 a.m.

Hunting takes place from horseback. The structure is basically the same as a foxhunt and is carried out at a faster pace than beagling (see below). Harriers take their name from the hounds that they use.

Beagles

Number of packs in England, Scotland and Wales: 81.
Number of packs in Ireland: 30.
Season: October to March.
Usual start: 1.00 p.m.

The hunt takes place on foot. Hounds are smaller than either foxhounds or harriers.

Bassets
Number of packs in England and Wales (there are none in Scotland): 11.
Season: October to March.
Usual start: 11.30 a.m. - 2.00 p.m.
They may look ungainly, but bassets can (and do) catch hares.

To describe hare hunting, it is best to describe a typical beagle hunt and note variations in the case of harriers or bassets.

Hare hunt officials

The Master (or Joint Master), Huntsman and whipper-in fulfil the same roles as in foxhunting. The uniform is similar, although green jackets are the most favoured for hunt staff, with blue, black, fawn or red also worn. Riding hats (or peaked caps) and jodhpurs are worn, but, on beagle and basset hunts, plimsolls and hockey boots take the place of riding boots.

The hunt . . .

Hares do not go to ground as such, but if they take shelter (for example in the roots of a tree) they may be flushed out, given 'law' and re-hunted. The Association of Masters of Harriers and Beagles, however, states that if a hare 'goes to ground' it must either be left, or 'if it is considered advisable to kill it, it must be got out and immediately destroyed before being given to hounds'. A great many beagle packs are attached to public schools, colleges and armed forces and young beaglers often become Masters of Fox Hounds, hence the description of hare hunting as 'poor man's foxhunting'.

After the Huntsman has cast the hounds (i.e. set them off) and they are on the scent of a hare, he will encourage them with voice and horn. Hares react like foxes, 'jinking' (making a sharp, right-angled leap to one side), 'clapping' (flattening the body to the ground), doubling their tracks and confusing their scent by going through fields of cattle. Hares are faster than hounds, but hounds are bred for stamina rather than speed and can usually out-run their quarry. Runs of five miles are commonplace and happen at such a speed that kills occur, more often than not, out of view of the hunt.

. . . and the anti-hunt

The Hunt Saboteurs Association distracts beagle/basset packs by getting the hounds to 'look up', 'back up', or 'pull up' (depending on local variations) by

imitating the Huntsman's voice and calling out individual hound names. The horn will be used, as will whistles. Beagles and bassets respond better to shouting than do foxhounds and all the time hounds are looking up they are, of course, not hunting. Since hares run in circles, a large enough group of sabs can attempt to encircle the Huntsmen and pack, and intervene, spraying the ground, calling up hounds, or bodily running in front of the pack.

Hare coursing

Number of clubs in England and Wales: 27 (registered with the National Coursing Club or NCC). All the hounds are greyhounds.
Private clubs operating outside the NCC are John Jones in Romney Marsh, Kent; Epping and Ongar in Essex; and Lympsham in Somerset.
Ireland: Here, coursing is governed by the Irish Coursing Club and the rules are different. The main difference is that hares are gathered before the meet and released from a tunnel made for the purpose, into the coursing field, as and when they are needed. (Park coursing.)
Season: 15 September to 10 March.
Usual start: Any time from 9.00 a.m.

Hare coursing, as distinct from other forms of sports with hounds, is not a pack event. Only two dogs are involved in a 'course' and the area involved is usually enclosed. The hounds hunt by sight. The most popular are greyhounds, but whippets (National Whippet Coursing Club: four clubs affiliated); Salukis (Saluki Coursing Club: a branch of the Saluki Breeding Club); deerhounds (DCC); borzois, Afghans and lurchers (a cross between a greyhound and, for example, a collie) are also used for coursing. The average time spent on coursing in a year is 120 days for greyhounds, 25 days for whippets, Salukis and deerhounds.

Hare coursing officials

Slipper This is the person who 'slips' (releases) the two hounds on to the selected hare. The slipper uses a special attachment, provided with twin collars, which enables him to release the dogs simultaneously. It is he who will judge whether the hare is fit (i.e. strong) enough to be coursed and whether its feet are clogged with clay, or 'balled up'. If he finds a hare lacking, he will simply wait for the next. He is registered and trained by the NCC.
Judge Mounted on a horse for better visibility, the judge awards points to the greyhounds according to their skill.
Beaters A gang of people, using coloured flags on poles, who form three

sides of a box to drive wild hares towards the coursing field. At large meets, such as the Waterloo Cup held at Altcar near Liverpool, walkie-talkies are used. Since hares cannot be driven in a direction they do not usually take, beaters take advice from the local gamekeeper as to the normal feed paths.

Layout of the coursing area

The field used for the chase itself is usually grass, or unploughed, and is ideally surrounded by a hedge or by a ditch and ridge. Because hounds hunt by sight, when the hare escapes through the hedge they should lose it; but this is not always the case. Both have been known to disappear over the horizon. The coursing club may get permission to build a 'sough' (an artificial shelter dug into a bank or hedgerow) into which the hare can escape. This may be necessary in open country, such as the Fens, for example, where shelter is not guaranteed.

Spectators, bookmakers and owners stand outside the coursing field. The only people allowed inside are the judge and the slipper (on larger courses, maybe also the dogs' owners and up to four pickers-up). Should the hare be caught, the pickers-up are there to ensure that it is killed. Silence and stillness must be maintained by the onlookers and, under NCC rules, the hare must not be headed back into the field.

A typical day's static coursing

The programme for each club is sent out about a month before the season starts, so that owners may enter their dogs. Entry fees vary, but the average is £4 for an ordinary club meet and up to £50 for the Waterloo Cup. The entry money goes towards the prize money. The competition is a knock-out type, ending in a two-dog final. For this, the hare will be beaten into the field and allowed to run for 80 to 100 yards; at which, the two dogs (one wearing a red collar, the other a white) will be released by the slipper, who is positioned in the shelter of a wall, hedge or specially constructed shed. The object of the exercise is not to kill, but to test the hounds and award points accordingly. As the hare runs, it will turn sharply to evade the jaws of the hounds, and, because greyhounds are faster than hares, they will overshoot and have to double back. Some dogs have a small turning circle. Others make up by being faster on the straight. As the hounds twist and turn after the hare, points are awarded thus:

½-3 points for the lead dog at the first turn.
1 point for the dog that turns the hare beyond 90°.
½ point for the dog that turns the hare less than 90°.
½-1 point for the kill. (Although the kill is not the object, points are awarded for it in special circumstances.)

The judge will indicate the winner by raising the appropriately coloured (red or white) handkerchief. Other coloured handkerchiefs used include blue to indicate a 'bye' (a dog having been withdrawn), so that the raising of a blue and a red means that the white dog has been withdrawn. A yellow handkerchief indicates a tie, which means that the dogs will have to run again later. The judge's actions are duplicated by a flag steward, from whom the spectators receive the message. When all the hares have been beaten into the field, if there are courses still to be run, a new area is chosen. If insufficient hares are found to be able to complete the card, the prize money is divided between the heat winners (unless the match takes place over several days).

Walk-up coursing

If it is felt that more hares will be found by this method, or if the surrounding fields are not suitable for beating, then a morning's 'static' coursing may be followed by an afternoon of 'walk-up' coursing. Walk-up coursing is sometimes the rule, rather than the exception. Then it is known as 'lurching' and is practised by 'unofficial' coursing clubs. The lay out is different. A line of beaters, with the slipper and dogs in the centre, will walk over fields and put hares up in front of them. When a suitable hare is moving, the line halts. The dogs are loosed. Points are awarded in the same way as they are in static coursing. Only the judge is allowed in front of the line. If not enough beaters are present to form a good line, then spectators and owners join in. The pickers-up have to stay behind the slipper, so that if a hare is caught, they have to run forward to kill it. When a greyhound catches a hare, it grabs any part of the animal (not the quick bite at the back of the neck so beloved of foxhunters). Once it has hold, it will not drop the hare, and may even run away with it. Or both hounds may grasp the hare and the much disputed, but well documented, tug-of-war will ensue. Hares scream.

. . . The anti-hunt

Sabs arrive an hour or so before the coursing begins, and beat the fields outward from the coursing field as far as possible in all directions. Sabs walk slowly in a straight line, keeping ten yards apart, waving their arms and making a good deal of noise. Sometimes, if there is a lack of numbers, 'dummy beaters' are made, by attaching fertiliser bags (or similar objects) to strings held by the sabs.

The HSA is now well known for its mass trespass demonstrations. By staying on the field as long as possible, they certainly ruin the coursing. Sabs sometimes beat against the official beaters, to minimise the number of hares they can flush on to the coursing field. Smoke screens have been successfully used. These

obscure the view of the slipper. Coursers, having stopped for lunch, will often resort to rough, or walk-up coursing in the afternoon, especially if sabs have successfully ruined their morning. The coursers split into groups and go across country looking for hares. Sabs take positions 50 to 60 yards in front of each group, make a lot of noise and clear hares out of the vicinity. Rough coursing is not official, so can be encountered at any time, even outside the coursing season. Arrests have been made of coursers caught hunting on a Sunday.

Stag and deer hunting

Number of packs in England: 4.
Number of packs in Ireland: 2.
There are no packs in either Scotland or Wales.
Season: For red stag, Sika stag, fallow buck: 1 August – 30 April;
for red hind, Sika hind, fallow doe, red doe: 1 November – 28 February;
for roe buck there is no legal close season except the Forestry Commission season: 1 April – 30 September.
Usual start: 11.00 a.m.

Three packs hunt the red deer: the Devon and Somerset, the Quantocks and the Tiverton. One pack (the New Forest Buckhounds) hunts the fallow deer. The procedure for all is roughly the same. The hound used is a larger type of foxhound.

Officials and hunt servants

The *Master, Huntsman* and *whipper-in* perform the same functions as in foxhunting. Deer do not go to ground, so earth stoppers are not employed, but fence menders and a person with a shotgun are always in attendance. The mounted field is the same size as in foxhunting.

The harbourer

This person's job is to select a 'warrantable' stag (one of five years old or over). The day before the hunt, he will go round the area of the meet, checking on suitable stags both by talking to people and looking for signs and measuring the 'slot' made by animals' hooves. Before dawn on the morning of the hunt, he will re-visit the area to make sure that the stag has settled. Once a stag has chosen a suitable 'couch' or harbour, he will stay there, unless disturbed, for the rest of the day. At the meet, the harbourer will inform the Master where the quarry is, how big it is and in what condition. Naturally, it will have been selected in order

to give a good hunt. When the first stag is either killed early or manages to escape, an unharboured stag is sometimes hunted. Hinds are never harboured, as the undergrowth is less dense in winter and they tend to herd together. The Buckhounds do not employ a harbourer.

The hunt

The meet will be at a pub or, more usually, at a crossroads or some other land mark on the open land. Sometimes it may be simply in a clearing in a forest. The pack is taken to a point near the animal's resting place and held up in nearby farm buildings or in the hunt vehicle. Meanwhile, four or five couples of 'steady' hounds called 'tufters' (that can be relied on to keep to the scent and not 'riot') will, with the aid of the Huntsman, flush the deer from its harbour. (In the New Forest, the pack is held up while the 'tufters' and Huntsman seek out a suitable buck.) When hunting hinds, half the pack cuts a hind from her companions and then, when she is running, the rest of the pack is laid on.

The whipper-in will station him- or herself at the likeliest point from which the stag will break cover. When the deer has been separated, and is running on a direct line into the open, the Huntsman returns for the rest of the pack, while the whipper-in holds the tufters. Then the whole pack is laid on and the hunt proper begins. The initial stage may take time.

The hunted deer will try to escape by driving other deer from their resting place, and lying down there itself, but the Huntsman will direct hounds onto the selected deer and keep it running. Galloping across the moor or through woodland, the deer will leap fences and streams in its effort to get away and has been known to head for farm buildings, towns, or even the sea, to escape. The deer may find refuge in thick gorse, which the hounds do not favour. But the hounds' superior stamina will tell and the exhausted animal will eventually have to turn and face them. This is called 'standing at bay', or, from hounds' point of view, 'bringing to bay'. The hunt claims that hounds keep the deer 'at bay' merely by snapping and barking, until the despatcher comes with a gun to shoot the deer from point blank range, but there have been claims of hounds bringing deer to the ground by hanging from their hindquarters. After the gun, the deer's throat is slit to bleed the meat, which is then given to the farmers whose land has been crossed. The heart is given to the rider whom the Master thinks has ridden the best. The liver and feet are given to spectators. The innards are thrown to the hounds.

. . . and the anti-hunt

Between midnight and seven in the morning on the day of the hunt, saboteurs flush the woods in the hunting area. If the harboured deer has been scared off

and the rest of the deer are wary, it will take the hunt some time to find another one ready for hunting. Radiating from the centre of the wood, the sabs use noise to scare the deer and attempts are made throughout the day to call the hounds and 'holloa' to hold up the hunt. But, as there are usually hundreds of supporters, this is not always possible.

Otter/coypu/mink hunting

> 'Help me kill a few otters this season and I think we will shake the pessimists by showing just how many there are about. We have been keeping a low profile for too many years now, and there is nothing like a pack of hounds that is catching otters to show sport every day we go out.' Mr Charles Corner, Master of the Eastern Counties Otterhounds, in a message to hunt supporters, 1975

Otterhunting was suspended by the Home Secretary in England and Wales in 1978 because of the animal's scarcity.

The joint effects of the decline in the otter population in the 1960s and the rising costs of maintaining otter packs meant that many hunts had to sell hounds and stop hunting. These hunts became clubs, still with subscribers, but inviting others to hunt their rivers. Before the otter became a protected animal in 1978, the situation in England and Wales was this:

Number of packs in England, Scotland and Wales: 17 (nine being clubs).
Number of packs in Ireland: 3.
Most hunts who were previously active have turned their attention to mink and/or coypu, except in Scotland where otter hunting is legal.
Number of packs suspended in England and Wales: 6.
Number of otterhunt clubs in England and Wales: 5.
Otterhunts in Scotland: 2 (one of which comes from England to hunt).
Otterhunts in Ireland: 3.
Mink and coypu hunts in England and Wales: 7.
Season: 1 April to 31 October.
Usual start: 10.30 a.m.

In 1980, the British Field Sports Society and Master of Fox Hounds Association officially recognised the new packs and more could now form. The terrain and methods used in the hunting of mink and coypu remain the same as for otters. A typical otter hunt will therefore be described.

Pure-bred otterhounds are shaggy and the size of Alsatians. Only two packs (the Dumfriesshire in Scotland and the Kendal and District) consist entirely of otterhounds. Other packs have a mixture of otterhounds and foxhounds, or all

foxhounds, or labrador-foxhound crosses. The foxhounds may be cast-offs from a foxhunting pack.

Officials and hunt servants

Huntsman, Master, whipper-in etc. are all the same as in foxhunting, except that neither fence menders nor earth stoppers are used. A terrier man is in attendance and will walk along with the hunt. The official uniform is quite different from that worn in other forms of hunting. Otter hunters wear a jacket; a skirt for a woman or breeches tucked into long socks for a man; a cap or a bowler-type hat for a man or a school-type hat for a woman; and boots, plimsolls or hockey boots as footwear. Many carry otter poles: staves of five to six feet long on which kills are tallied with notches. These poles were once used as 'stickles' (an underwater barricade stretching across the river, or a gate formed by hunt followers sticking their otter poles into the river bed) but the hunts claim that this is no longer the case and that they are now merely used as glorified walking sticks or for prodding around in the roots of riverside trees and banks in order to disturb the hunted animal. It is possible that 'stickles' are now used for hunting mink and coypu.

The hunt

The meet takes place at a pub, a member's house or a bridge over the river to be hunted. Otter hunting takes place on foot along the river bank. The Huntsman will take the hounds in front of the followers and they will search the bank and reeds for a scent. Otters usually travel the banks going upstream and swim the current of the river going downstream. It is usual, therefore, to see the hunt casting upstream for a scent, although they will cast in the opposite direction, for a couple of miles, to make sure.

Otters are great travellers and may cover up to five miles in a night. The overnight scent of an otter is referred to as a 'drag'. Its faeces (known as 'spraints' or 'scats', which are odourless, black and oily) are used in conjunction with its scent to mark its territory.

As the hounds search for the drag, the Huntsman will keep an eye out for spraints and for tracks ('seals') made by the otter on the bank. When hounds find the scent, they will give voice in the same manner as foxhounds. If they lose the scent, the Huntsman will cast them in the same way as in foxhunting. The Huntsman may spot the otter in the water by sighting a 'chain' of air bubbles rising to the surface as the otter dives. Otters cannot stay under water for longer than two or three minutes. Additionally, to preserve the water-proof condition of their coats, they do not stay in the water for more than half an hour at a time. Therefore, as hounds give chase, the otter must sooner or later take evasive

action. It will often take refuge in the roots of trees on the bank. Here, the otter poles are used, to poke the bank and between the roots to force the otter into the open, where it will try for deep water and the faster current mid-stream, which will carry it away from the hounds. The hunters will try to force it back upstream.

If there are reeds or lily pads in the water, the otter will rest under these, enabling it to breathe while remaining hidden. Again, however, the 'chain' will give it away. The hounds are excellent swimmers (pure otterhounds have webbed feet) and have greater stamina than the otter. Unless the quarry gains access to a holt or drain, or unless the Huntsman calls the hounds off, the animal will be killed. Often otters are flushed out of holts by a terrier. Sometimes, if all the exits from a pool or stream are blocked, the only means of escape may be over land, especially as otters are as proficient on land as in water. But the hunt will continue to pursue it.

Humane killers are difficult to use on otters, so they are usually killed by the hounds. The otter's coat is tough and the kill may be protracted. Otters breed all the year round and it is possible that a pregnant female or an otter with whelps may be hunted and killed. Bitches look after the young alone and suckle them for two months after birth. They have to be taught to fend for themselves and to swim, so are dependent on the mother for some time. Between feeds, the mother goes off to feed herself. This is when she is most vulnerable. The hunts claim that they will call the hounds off a bitch that they know to be pregnant. Since mothers with young stay close to the holt where their whelps are, it is *possible* that they can be recognised, but pregnant otters are difficult to spot when half submerged in water, so may be hunted for some time before the hounds are whipped off. A pregnancy may also be hidden by the thickness of an otter's coat.

After the kill, trophies are taken. Otter paws and pelvic bones are often mounted on brooches, to be worn on the cap, lapel or tie. Otter heads are mounted.

. . . and the anti-hunt

An otter hunt is unique in that it is possible to tell in advance exactly where the hunt will go from the meet, the only variables being the direction (upstream or downstream) and the side of the river to be taken. The latter is usually obvious. As for the former, the hunt will usually head upstream, in order that the scent of the otter in the water will flow downstream towards them.

Saboteurs spray bridges, possible holts and banks (especially where hounds leave and enter the river) with 'Antimate'. Often a banner demonstration is held at the meet for the benefit of the local press. The disturbance factor in this type of hunting is important to remember. An otter will often not return to a

disturbed river for up to four months, so that cubs are abandoned and die. If the Huntsman sounds his horn repeatedly, a quarry has been sighted. If the hounds are 'speaking', they are in pursuit of an otter, mink or coypu. Sabs attempt to distract the hounds, to get their heads up, using whistles, horns etc. This gives the quarry valuable time to escape.

Many otter hunts, when faced with opposition in the field, will try to outmanoeuvre. They will re-box their hounds and take them by van to another part of the river. The hunt will be looking for a scent on top of the water. Sabs never 'tail' a hunt, because it only adds to the disturbance factor. Do not be fooled by the argument that they are not killing otters. They are certainly killing minks and coypus and putting such river wildlife as moorhens and swans at risk.

The Great Debate: For and Against

'I accept hunting with hounds as a legitimate recreation and certainly not one that should be proscribed by law.'
Rt. Hon. John Biffen MP, Cabinet minister and Secretary of State for Trade, 10 March 1981

'. . . and foxhunting, above all, is organised torture . . .'
Mr Robert Churchward, ex-MFH South Shropshire Fox Hunt, now anti-hunt

When Douglas Leslie, writer with the *Shooting Times*, is asked why he goes hunting, he answers: 'Because I enjoy it.' Mr Leslie believes that the hunting spirit is bred in us, 'especially the Britisher', but not all members of the hunting fellowship are as open and frank as Biffen or Leslie. A battery of more devious arguments is used to justify bloodsports in the twentieth century. To be effective in the field, and to counter and win the ideological battle, a good anti-bloodsports campaigner or saboteur should be aware of the hunting fellowship's arguments and posturings. Hunters no longer 'just enjoy' their sport, but are carrying out a 'service of pest control and conservation'. It is a shallow argument, but in a society whose culture cares little for animals, wild or domestic, it needs to be rigorously opposed, in an eloquent, intelligent manner.

The Labour Party discussion document *Living Without Cruelty* states that 'foxhunting has only one real purpose and that is amusement of the participants'. Historically, this does indeed account for the existence of hunting with hounds. Queen Elizabeth did not go hare coursing and stag hunting for reasons of conservation. She did it because she enjoyed it and because it was both acceptable and fashionable in the society in which she lived. Acceptable, that is, to the small minority who ruled it.

In a pamphlet called *This Is Foxhunting*, the British Field Sports Society argues: 'Everybody knows that a large number [of foxes] have to be killed.' The argument goes that hunting with hounds constitutes conservation, in that it is realistic pest control. (This line, obviously, ignores the hunting of otters, now banned in England and Wales because of their recent, rapid decline.) With foxhunting, however, hunters claim to be involved in an ecological process, beneficial, not only to people, but even to the fox itself.

The fox has a rotten public image as the villain of the countryside and, for obvious reasons, the hunts are quite willing to perpetuate it. In a BFSS booklet written for children, *Would You Like to Go Hunting?*, the author states, in reference to the fox, 'He is a very handsome fellow, but villains so often are. A villain he is, make no mistake about that.' He is such a sly, underhand animal that he 'shows no signs of fear or panic' when the hunt is onto his scent. It is easy to reject this anthropomorphic nonsense and to realise that it is nothing but a charade to justify bloodsport. With over 95 per cent of chickens now incarcerated in factory farms, foxes can hardly be a serious nuisance to poultry, unless they have taken to carrying wire cutters and jemmies. A 1974 National Opinion Poll asked three thousand farmers about foxes and farming. There were 892 replies and the results were revealing. Seventy per cent do not consider the number of foxes on and around their farms to be harmful, and almost half (49 per cent) of the 70 per cent think that the fox is valuable in controlling rabbits, rats and mice. Farmers who thought foxes harmful were asked how they established that the harm was the work of a fox, not a dog or some other predator. Although 59 per cent said 'by eye-witness account', 27 per cent said it was an assumption. Most farms suffering fox damage put it at no higher than £25 in a year. This, according to the poll, applies to all regions. Only a tiny fraction of the farmers saw foxhunting with hounds as a method of control. The Ministry of Agriculture does not regard the fox as a pest on a national level. The individual farmer, under the Agriculture Act 1947, is empowered to deal with any rogue fox that he or she feels is doing damage to the farm.

Foxes are also accused of attacking and taking sheep. Yet when we take a look at this claim, the facts are somewhat different. In 1978, John Barrington, a Scottish hill shepherd, won the *Sunday Times* Allsop Essay Competition for a piece called 'My Friend the Fox'. Barrington (who tends 750 blackface ewes on 2000 acres in the Scottish Highlands) states that 'Mr Todd is merely a useful scapegoat,' and says that the case against the fox will not stand under close scrutiny. He backs up the claim that foxes clear up the countryside, removing lambs that die on the hills. The fox's main diet is voles and, as one vole can eat 50 lbs of grass, and a fox will eat about 9000 voles in a year, the positive role of this animal in the uplands becomes obvious. Foxes do kill lambs, but Barrington states: 'They do so very rarely and then only as a result of human interference.' Domestic dogs do far more damage, killing some 5000 sheep per year. Another sheep farmer, Brian Hamilton, with ten other farmers, carried out post mortems on 200 lambs over 20 years. In every case, the lamb had died before mauling. Seventy per cent were from ewes with insufficient milk and had died within 48 hours of birth. The remaining 30 per cent were unaccounted for, but many will have succumbed to disease and general weakness. Hamilton backs up Barrington's claim that foxes are found near sheep, waiting to pick up

afterbirths, deaths etc. and this fits in with the animal's opportunist nature. Shoddy farm management is easy to blame on the fox. Even a BFSS pamphlet, *Control or Carnage?* by Lt Col A. Milner Brown TD, MA, states: 'A fox's diet consists mainly of rats and mice, frogs, beetles and rabbits.'

If, for the sake of argument, we assume fox control to be necessary, then hunting with hounds is not a very adequate way to achieve it. The BFSS estimates that there are 900,000 foxes in the UK, of which a total of 30,000 are killed each year by various means. Of this 30,000, 9000 are estimated to be killed by hounds. In other words, foxhunts account for one in three fox deaths, and each pack of hounds accounts for one fox each time it goes out. A more expensive, less efficient means of killing foxes would be hard to imagine. Fox numbers are controlled by the availability of food supply, *not* by the predations of a small bunch of human beings with hounds. If the BFSS figure of 900,000 is correct, and the 30,000 kill figure is constant from year to year, then the hunters are saying that 900,000 foxes are intolerable, but 870,000 are just right. It is interesting that fox numbers creep back up to the 'unacceptable' figure every year, making another 30,000 destructions necessary (and keeping the hunters in business and sport).

The foxhunting type of pest control is well illustrated in fox-cubhunting. When a hunt kills a family of cubs, one is always left to escape, for sport in the upcoming season. The survivor will probably be the strongest, more agile of the cubs. Effective pest control would not leave the strongest of a species to live. In *The Field* (29 October 1980) an article entitled 'The Purpose of Cubhunting' implied that the main purpose was to 'add polish to the organisation of the Hunt itself' – in other words, to train both hounds and staff for the enjoyment of foxhunting proper.

A few years ago, artificial fox lairs were found on the Duke of Beaufort's hunting estate. Both Joint Masters admitted their existence and to 'keeping foxes alive to hunt'.

The conservation benefit of bloodsports has little substance in relation to the other forms of hunting with hounds. Otters, for example, are in decline. (Otter hunting was justified on the grounds that otters are pests, because they eat salmon and roll in watercress beds. Hares are in decline and major hare coursing events, like the Waterloo Cup, have been postponed and/or curtailed because of the shortage of hares. The Ministry of Agriculture does not name the hare as a pest on a national level. In fact, hare coursers declare that the aim of coursing is not to kill hares anyway. *The Truth About Coursing*, a National Coursing Club pamphlet by H. Edwards Clarke, says: 'Is the purpose of coursing to kill the hare? Not at all. This is probably the most widespread of the many misconceptions surrounding coursing.'

Staghunters also claim that they are involved in a valuable service to ecology. But when deer are culled in the artificial, walled-in parks of London, the

operation is carried out by markspeople with rifles. The hunting fellowship has claimed that this would be too dangerous on the moors of the West Country, with visitors about, but stalking (shooting deer with a rifle) is the most common bloodsport involving deer in Scotland. If we lived in a society where a more constructive relationship with wild animals existed, we could transport over-plentiful animals to underpopulated areas, or lay contraceptive-laced food for the deer to eat. The Labour Party policy document *Living Without Cruelty* came out against all forms of bloodsports and recommended that they all be banned. Stag hunting, it said, 'is possibly the most grotesque of all bloodsports' in which 'the stag has no chance.'

In an attempt to appeal to the totally economistic, members of the hunting fellowship and press have pointed out that hundreds of people would be made redundant by the abolition of bloodsports: not only hunt servants and staff, but those involved in related industies like saddlery and bootmaking. John Bladon, a pheasant breeder, stated in the *Hull Daily Mail* (8 July 1978) that the people who make wellington boots and anoraks' would be threatened with redundancy. Yet, since the object of the anti-hunt movement has not been the abolition of *hunting*, but the abolition of killing wild animals for fun, draghunting would be an acceptable alternative. The advantages of draghunting are numerous. The length of the hunt (short, medium or long) can be arranged in advance. Horses can be regularly rested at a series of 'checks' and fences chosen for their suitability. Damage to crops; the crossing of railways, airfields and motorways: all these can be avoided. And there is no kill. Draghunting would satisfy those who hunt just for the ride, or find hunting a picturesque spectacle. Although it should be added that many activists fear, and not without reason, that hunts in remote areas, away from public scrutiny, might well revert to their old ways and pick up the scent of an animal.

If we reject bloodsports as a form of pest control and decide that they are not carrying out a worthwhile service, why do they still continue? It is no coincidence that hunting is supported and practised, in the main, by the wealthiest, most powerful members of this society. Working-class bloodsports were quickly outlawed by Victorian moralists. Richard 'Humanity Dick' Martin MP (1754-1834) was one of the first MPs to bring the issue of animal welfare to the House of Commons. He would chase cabbies down London streets for striking their horses and fought hard to abolish bullbaiting, which he thought depraved the morals of the people. Yet, while punishing his estate workers if they were cruel to a farm animal, he himself was a keen shot.

Animal welfare became a part of mainstream, middle-class ideology. The RSPCA has always had hunters as members and activists, and its current president is an anti-abortionist, Conservative MP. Bloodsports, to many, do not count as cruelty to animals (as stoning a cat in a city street would) but is rather 'a way of life', 'traditional', a part of this society's culture and pageantry.

Middle-class people who support hunting find it reassuring and part of the status quo, harkening back to times that they feel were more settled. Vera Sheppard, in her book *My Head Against the Wall*, explains her fight throughout the 1960s to get the RSPCA to oppose bloodsports, and the Society's attempts to silence her. It is only in the last few years that the RSPCA has come out against *all* bloodsports (although its patrons, the royal family, continue to support them). Prince Charles and Princess Anne foxhunt; Prince Andrew and the Duke of Edinburgh are keen shots. The Queen herself is a deerstalker and, until a few years ago, was a subscriber to the Eastern Counties Otterhounds. At a conference of hunters and anglers in 1980, the Duke of Edinburgh said: 'As for countryside sports being cruel – they are certainly not intended to be cruel.' His Royal Highness supports the principle of humane slaughter and thinks that it should be applied to 'countryside sports'. The BFSS claims that the kill by hounds (the nip on the back of the quarry's neck) is humane. What is more likely is that the quarry is brought down by the lead hound, then disembowelled by the pack. Others, that go to ground, have to face terriers until they are dug out and shot – a practice that even the president of the BFSS, the Duke of Beaufort, in his book *Foxhunting* has called cruel.

Compare the hunting press's pseudo-scientific terminology of 'cropping', 'harvesting', 'game conservancy', 'control' etc. with the tone of the Duke of Beaufort's book, in which he says: 'You do not happen to be a fox, so you do not have to live in a hole, and you are not obliged to subsist on nasty things like rats, mice, beetles and raw frogs' legs, which would be horrible.' He calls the fox an 'opponent' and an 'eternal optimist'. When answering the claim that hunters breed foxes, he says: 'Yes alright, but the beef or lamb that possibly you are devouring at the moment was also preserved for our edification and enjoyment.' Beaufort goes on to claim to have seen a fox, that was being hunted, stop to 'pounce on a hen or duck, killing it and then carry it off'. This, from the greatest living authority on foxhunting.

Hunting in past centuries made no pretence to be helping the balance of nature. It was practised because its participants enjoyed it and they, at least, had some defence, in that they had no concept of animals possessing sentiency. Today, something like 97 per cent of a hunting field never even sees the kill. Nevertheless, these people actively support a social and cultural event that results in overt suffering to a wild animal for trivial reasons. Maureen Duffy, in her essay 'Beasts for Pleasure', sees hunting as satisfying sexual needs. She points out the sexual imagery in hunting and shows the hunt as a sexual pursuit, as a masturbation fantasy. The hare has been called 'cunny' in the past, whilst both the fox and the otter dwell in holes, with their prized tails obviously phallic. But there are less 'hidden' reasons, of a social and financial nature, why people go foxhunting. Foxhunts are not isolated social occasions. They occur within a framework of point-to-point races, hunt balls, debutantes social

occasions, Henley, Oxbridge parties . . . They are part of a larger cultural scenario, revealed and nurtured by the hunting press. In the letters pages of the bloodsports magazines, left-wing figures are ridiculed, while nostalgia for past decades prevails. Debates will rage over this or that aspect of hunt servants' uniforms. The royal family is adulated, as are 'brave war heroes'.

It does no one (who wants to rise in this society) harm to be part of the hunting set. Look, for example, at the Vestey family. Lord Vestey has a 4000 acre estate in Gloucestershire. With his brother Mark, he runs two polo teams, each costing £90,000 a year to support. His companies include Oxo and Dewhurst and are worth over £100 million. A keen hunting man (Master of the Puckeridge and Thurlow Foxhounds.) he has a son, Timothy, who is Master of the Eton Beagles. When hunt sabs disrupted an Eton College hunt in January 1979, Vestey withdrew the sponsorship by one of his firms of a postgraduate at Sussex University, from where the sabs had come. (The postgraduate was not a saboteur.) To save embarrassment to the hunting fellowship, a more liberal, wealthy hunter, Alec Reed of Reed International, stepped in and paid the grant.

Why is there such great violence in the hunting fellowship's reaction to anti-bloodsport campaigners and hunt saboteurs? Because a way of life, a culture, is under full attack in its own back yard. Its powerful friends have ensured that bloodsports have never become illegal. Once the main sporting activity of parliamentarians (hence the 'three line whip') the influence is still there. At present led by Marcus Kimball MP and Jasper More MP, the BFSS is well organised in both Houses of Parliament. In 1976, when a government-backed bill to abolish the poorest and least popular bloodsport, hare coursing, had passed all its stages in the Commons, a Lords Select Committee sabotaged it.

Since 1979 pro-hunt sympathies have abounded in the government. In June 1980, Hector Monro, the Minister for Sport, was guest of honour at the BFSS Jubilee Dinner in the Lord Mayor's Mansion House. (It is worth noting that one of the few remaining otter hunts in Britain is near Dumfries, in Mr Munro's constituency. The Master of the Hunt is Captain John Bell-Irving, an active local Tory who helped Mr Munro to parliament.) Nine of the present Cabinet have definite pro-hunt loyalties and Margaret Thatcher, although she does not hunt herself, has 'no objections to others doing so'. Humphrey Atkins is a member of the BFSS, and a past Secretary of State for *education* and science, Mark Carlisle, supports the continuation of hunting, unless the species is threatened. Nine other of the Prime Minister's leading ministers have expressed pro-hunting sympathies, as have two of Thatcher's four law officers. No private member's bill has any real hope of outlawing, or even restricting, bloodsports. What is needed is a government-initiated bill. The present government has no intention of introducing one.

Only a massive campaign involving thousands of ordinary people, using

every channel of influence, can force the government to act against hunting. The campaign has already started. Nor is it just a movement to prevent wild animals from suffering, but a cultural fight to forge a society in which the existence of wild animals is no longer seen as a source of amusement and morbid entertainment.

Organisations

Anti-hunt

Hunt Saboteurs Association
PO Box 19
London SE22.
Nationwide network of local and regional groups. Essential to join if you are going to take anti-bloodsports seriously. Publish *Howl* quarterly magazine.
Membership £2 per year.

League Against Cruel Sports
83-87 Union Street
London SE1 1SG
Telephone: 01-407 0979.
Like the RSPCA, the League, throughout the 1960s, became more and more respectable, with titled people on the executive. A radical purge in the mid- to late-seventies removed the 'old guard' and full-timers. Supports the Labour Party (since its adoption of an anti-bloodsports policy) wholeheartedly, financially and morally. The League has helped Labour Councillors to ban the hunt from their council-owned land; opposition has come only from Conservatives. Now over a dozen councils have such bans and the number rises. Recently formed 'Co-operators Against Bloodsports' which succeeded in getting hunting banned on Co-operative Society land. Publish *Cruel Sports* quarterly.
Membership £3 per year.

National Society for the
Abolition of Cruel Sports
33 Forest Rise, Jarvis Brook
Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 2EP.
More of an educational trust than a society. No active membership, but publish regular newsletter and supply MPs with information on bloodsports. Low profile, somewhat overshadowed by the sabs and the League. Extremely pacific, to the extent of being suspicious of the hunt saboteurs' tactics.

Animal rights

Animal Aid
111 High Street
Tonbridge, Kent
Telephone: Tonbridge 364546.
Radical campaigning anti-vivisection organisation involved with parliamentary and extra-parliamentary activities. Local and regional groups. Publish *Outrage* magazine quarterly: £4.00 subscription per annum (£2.00 OAP's, students).

Animal Rights Network
PO Box 5234
Westport, Connecticut 06880
USA.
Publishes *Agenda*, quarterly magazine of the burgeoning USA animal liberation movement. Send a dollar bill for the latest edition.

British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection (BUAV)
143 Charing Cross Road
London WC2
Telephone: 01-734 2691.
Longest established anti-vivisection organization in UK, recovering its radical Victorian roots. Local and regional groups. Publish *Liberator* newspaper bi-monthly: £4.00 subscription per annum.

Compassion in World Farming
20 Lavant Street
Petersfield, Hampshire
Telephone: Petersfield 4208.
Leading anti-factory farming organization. Local and regional groups. Publish *Ag* magazine quarterly: £3.00 subscription per annum (£1.50 OAP's, students).

Northern Animal Liberation League (NALL)
7 Buckley Street
Stalybridge, Cheshire.
Young, new and progressive direct-action organization campaigning against vivisection, hunting and factory farming. Have now established regional Leagues in all parts of Britain. Aim is to lead mass campaign against exploitation by first exposing it. Publish *NALL News*.

Socialist Countryside Group
Socialist Environment and Resources Assoc (SERA)
9 Poland Street
London W1
Telephone: 01-439 3749.
'. . . a socialist strategy towards rural and conservation problems'

Pro-hunt

British Field Sports Society
59 Kennington Road
London SE1 7PZ
Telephone: 01-928 4742
Publish *BFSS News*
Membership £5 per year.
Trade membership from £10 to £20.
Objects of the Society:
1) To ensure the retention of field sports as an integral part of the activities of modern society.
2) To show how field sports enrich and conserve the wildlife of our country.
3) To keep a watch in parliament on everything likely to affect field sports; to promote legislation when necessary and to oppose legislation likely to be harmful to the interests of field sports.
4) To assist every branch of field sports and the interests of all field sports enthusiasts and to promote field sports through literature, films, the press, television and radio.

5) To provide information, advice and assistance to members.

Association of Masters of Harriers and Beagles
Little Rissington Manor
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire
Telephone: 0451-20255

Coursing Supporters Club
W. A. Mackenzie
Wakelins Farm, Fressingfield
Diss, Norfolk

Master of Basset Hounds Association
Yew Tree Cottage
Hasleton, Gloucestershire
Telephone: 04516-500

Master of Deer Hounds Association
Honeymead, Simonsbath
Minehead, Somerset
Telephone: 064-383248

Master of Foxhounds Association
Parsloes Cottage
Bagendon, Cirencester
Gloucestershire
Telephone: 028-583378

Master of Otterhounds Association
Upper House Farm
Hascombe, Godalming, Surrey
Telephone: 048-632225

National Coursing Club
32 Brixton Road, London SW9
Telephone: 01-735 8541

National Whippet Coursing Club
Lane House, Lockerridge
Marlborough, Wiltshire
Telephone: 067-286666

Working Terriers Club
Trevone, 61 Track Road
Batley, West Yorkshire
Telephone: 0924-479398

Secretaries of Foxhounds Association
Buddleia House
Wigginton, Banbury, Oxfordshire
Telephone: 0608-737230

Field and Country Sports Society of Ireland
Cooleven, Greystones,
County Wicklow

Central Committee of Fell Packs
Ellergreen, Burnside
Kendal, Cumbria
Telephone: 0539-22185

Fell and Moorland Working Terrier Club
6 Ascot Road, Shotley Bridge,
County Durham
Telephone: 0207-507785

Trade membership of the British Field Sports Society

Hundreds of self-employed people and small businesses, hotels, pubs, tackle makers, agricultural suppliers, bootmakers, country estate agents etc. make up the trade members of the BFSS (complete list available from the HSA). Every business person who makes money out of the continuance of bloodsports seems to be a member. Well known companies include *Vaux Breweries*, Sunderland; *Wadworth and Co. Ltd Brewery*, Devizes, Wiltshire; *Carnation Foods Co. Ltd*, London N2; *Moss Bros Ltd; Spillers Agricultural Ltd; Samuel Smith Old Brewery (Tadcaster) Ltd*; and *William Grant* (Scotch whisky distillers).

Well known figures who are prominent BFSS members include the Duke of Beaufort; Lord Margadale; William Benyon MP; Humphrey Atkins MP; Sir Bernard Waley-Cohen (former Lord Mayor of London); Lord Denham; Lord Somerleyton; Lord Burton; Jimmy Hill (BBC commentator); John McCririck (ITV sports commentator); Charles Morrison MP; Cranley Onslow MP; John Farr MP; John Cope MP; Peter Mills MP; and John Ryman MP.

The campaign to abolish hare coursing

1966–67	Live Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill introduced by Eric Heffer MP in January 1967
1967–68	Live Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill introduced by Eric Heffer MP in November 1967
1968–69	Live Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill introduced by Robert Sheldon MP in November 1968
1969–70	Deer Hunting and Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill introduced by Arnold Shaw MP in November 1969
1969–70	Hare Coursing Bill adopted by the Government in May 1970
1970–71	Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill introduced by Kevin McNamara MP in December 1970
1971–72	Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill introduced by William Price MP in December 1971
1971–72	Hare Coursing (Abolition) (No. 2) Bill introduced by the Baroness Bacon in March 1972
1972–73	Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill introduced by David Stoddart MP in May 1973
1973–4	Hare Coursing (Abolition) Bill introduced by Lt Col Marcus Lipton MP in November 1973
1973–74	Hare Coursing Bill introduced by Kevin McNamara MP in May 1974
1974–75	Hare Coursing Bill introduced by the Government in May 1975
1975–6	Hare Coursing Bill introduced by the Government in November 1975. This Bill received a majority of 117 in the Commons. The House of Lords threw it out in 1976.

Bodies that have banned foxhunting

Avon County Council
Berkshire County Council
Brighton Borough Council
Co-operative Wholesale Society
Derbyshire County Council
Doncaster District Council
East Sussex County Council
Enfield Borough Council
Humberside County Council
Kettering Borough Council
Lothian Regional Council
Mid Glamorgan County Council
Northampton County Council
Nottinghamshire County Council
Peak Park Planning Board
Renfrew Regional Council
South Glamorgan County Council
West Yorkshire County Council

A Guide to Further Reading

Anti-hunt

There is, unfortunately, a shortage of anti-bloodsports works, but:

E. S. Turner, *All Heaven in a Rage*, Michael Joseph 1964.

Stanley and Roslind Godlovitch and John Harris (eds), *Animals, Men and Morals*, Gollancz 1971.
Includes Maureen Duffy's essay 'Beasts for Pleasure'.

Shevawn Lynam, *Humanity Dick*, Hamish Hamilton 1975.
Biography of one of the first 'animal welfare' MPs.

Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation*, Jonathan Cape 1976.
Liberal, philosophical view of animals and society.

Howard Hill, *Freedom to Roam*; The Struggle for Access to Britain's Moors and Mountains, Ashbourne: Moorland Publishing 1980.
The history of the mass trespass movement in the countryside between the wars – a movement that should be an inspiration to all.

Trouble with the Law: The Release Bust Book, Pluto Press 1979.
Hunt sabotage is *not* illegal, but most police officers are unaware of this.

David Macdonald, *Vulpina: The Story of a Fox*, Collins.
An excellent story for children, by an author whose knowledge of foxes and the countryside is greater than any Master of Hounds'.

Vera Sheppard, *My Head Against the Wall: A Decade in the Fight Against Bloodsports*, Bradford-on-Avon: Moonraker Press 1980.
The story of a one-woman campaign.

An official history of the Hunt Saboteurs Association by Michael Marten and Phil Windeatt appeared in *The Beast*, no. 3. Copies of this magazine are still available from 2 Blenheim Crescent, London W11.

Living Without Cruelty
Labour's charter for animal protection – available from the Labour Party, 150 Walworth Rd, London SE17, at 45p.

Robert Churchward, *A Master of Hounds Speaks*, National Society for the Abolition of Cruel Sports.
Reprint of a series of remarkable articles that first appeared in *The People* newspaper, in which the

former Joint Master of the South Shropshire foxhunt condemns hunting unreservedly.

Undercurrents
Alternative technology, utopianism and animal liberation, now incorporating *The Beast* – available from 27 Clerkenwell Close, London EC1, (telephone 01-253 7303), monthly at 60p.

Pro-hunt

An extraordinary number of books have been published on hunting with hounds; works written earlier in the century give you a fairer picture of hunting and hunters' views. Nowadays, they are slightly more nervous of public opinion. Nevertheless:

Raymond Carr, *English Fox Hunting: – A History*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1976.
Exmoor foxhunter and academic, Carr writes a very pro-hunt book in an irreverent, offbeat manner.

J. N. P. Watson, *The Book of Foxhunting*, Batsford 1977.
Watson's book is as essential as Carr's. As is:

Henry Hugh Arthur Fitzroy Somerset, Duke of Beaufort, *Foxhunting*, David and Charles 1980.

Michael Brander, *Hunting and Shooting*, Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1971.

Michael Seth-Smith (ed.), *Steeplechasing and Foxhunting*, New English Library, 1977.
Uncritical of pigsticking.

Wilson Stephens, Enfield: *The Guinness Guide to Field Sports*, Guinness Superlatives 1978.
Very expensively produced work from a family well known for its hunting activities (especially hare courser Jonathan Guinness).

Victorian and Edwardian Field Sports from old photographs introduced by J. N. P. Watson, Batsford 1978.
Dedicated to the BFSS, has hundreds of photographs of all forms of hunting in the 'good old days'.

G. F. Underhill, *The Master of Hounds*, Grant Richards 1903.

Charles van der Byl, *My Fifty Years of Sport*, Stockwell 1937.
Starts with: 'All field sports unfortunately are cruel; we cannot get away from that fact.'

Country Life magazine
Kings Reach Tower
Stamford Street
London SE1.

Country magazine
10 Sheet Street,
Windsor, Berkshire.

The Field
8 Stratton Street
London W1

Horse and Hound
Kings Reach Tower

Stamford Street
London SE1

Shooting Times
10 Sheet Street
Windsor, Berkshire.

Sporting Gun
Bretton Court, Bretton
Peterborough

The Animals Film

Director: Victor Schonfeld and Myriam Alaux
Written by Victor Schonfeld
Narration: Julie Christie
Music: Robert Wyatt (soundtrack album now available on Rough Trade Records RT 40).

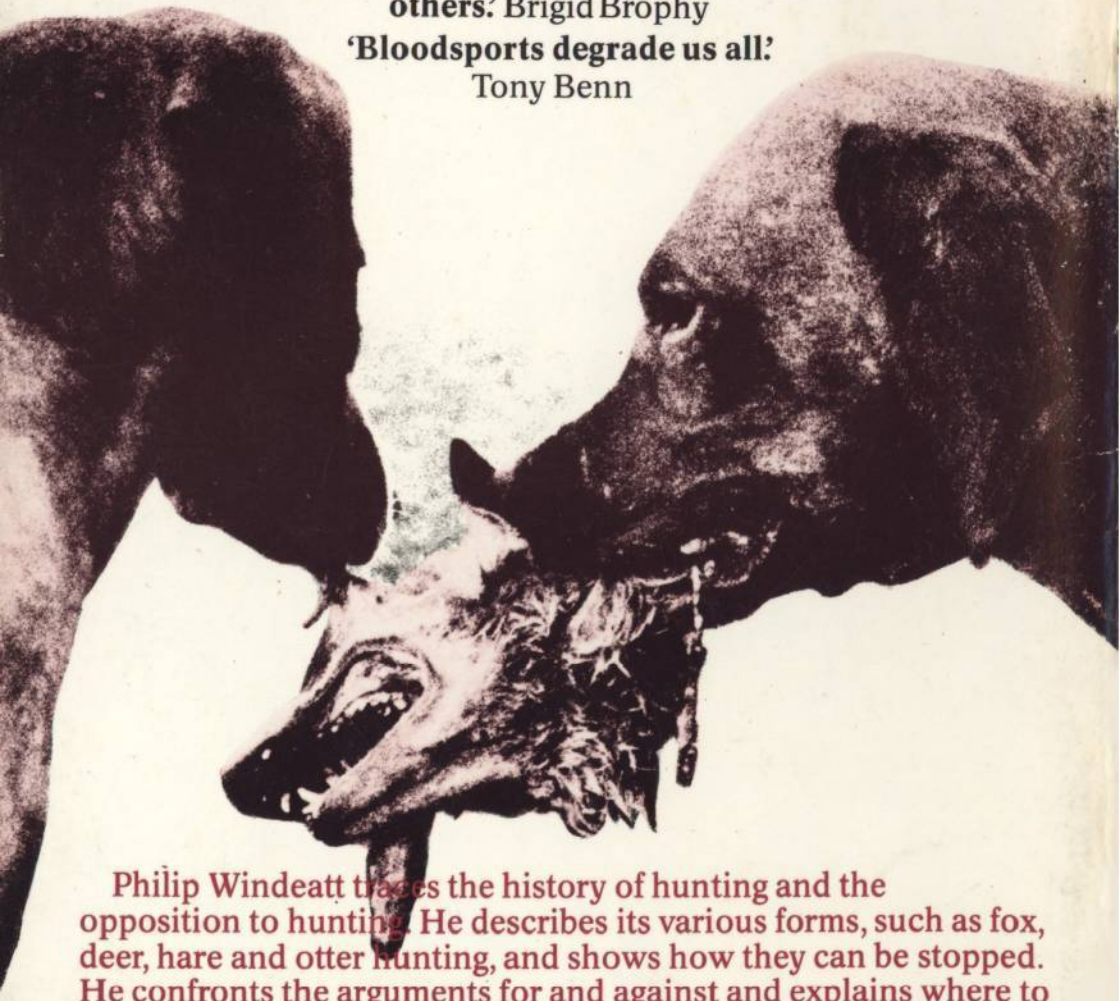
This definitive feature-length documentary shows how modern society exploits animals, and exposes the role of big business and governments in meat production and vivisection. For details of screenings and all enquiries contact Slick Pics International Inc., 331 Goswell Road, London EC1, Telephone: 01-278 6783.

Hunting with hounds is a barbarous activity which should be outlawed. But so long as it remains legal there will be hunt saboteurs active in the field, saving our wild life and exposing the hunting mentality.

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Philip Windeatt has been an active campaigner for many years and has written widely on the subject.

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