



The SaddleMag

THE VALE OF AYLESBURY WITH GARTH AND SOUTH BERKS HUNT

AUGUST 07
FREE

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HUNT NEWS

Congratulations to huntsman Gerald Sumner and his wife Kerry on the birth of their second child, Rose, on 5th May this year. George, their first, will be two in October so they have their hands full now.

Joint Masters Valerie Barr and Cathy Fleming retired at the end of this season. Jane Vowles is taking over from Val and we wish her luck in her new job – there's no more sneaking home at 2 o'clock on a wet day for Jane!

Val Barr said, 'To be a Joint Master at a time when Hunting has been so debated and regulated has been both challenging and rewarding. The farmers, landowners and gamekeepers have been the most supportive any hunt could wish for – my thanks to everyone who has made hunting in the Central Hills so enjoyable.' Seconded by Cathy Fleming: 'I have made so many friends and had many wonderful days hunting and trailing. Enormous thanks to everyone who has been so supportive. I shall be coming out as often as work commitments allow and hope to see some of you on the campaign trail as well.'

The Garth & South Berks Hunt Supporters' Club cross country ride took place on 27th May in the wonderful rolling grounds of Marlston Farm and Brockhurst School, home of David and Cathy Fleming, plus some land belonging to neighbouring farmers. There are about sixty optional cross country fences over approximately ten miles. Secretary Amanda Stewart, who first organised this ride three years ago, took 120 pre-booked entries and an astounding 60 more on the day, despite sometimes torrential rain, giving her the highest turnout ever.

Colin Tett from the Vine & Craven Hunt supplied all the hot drinks and food, including excellent burgers, and the mobile tack shop did good business, too. Thanks are due to everyone who helped to make the day possible, including the Flemings, Chris Austin, Jo Paulin, Nicola Bain, Mariella Kingsbury, Andy O'Regan, Dee Johnson, Pete the Train (really), Chrissie Wardle, Steve Nash, Stuart Gray, Wally Hetherington, Helen Brookes and Bob Dearlove.

Look out for the ride next year – it's surely the area's best kept secret but that can't last for much longer!

Three other notable retirements at the end of this season are Carolyn Drake, secretary of the Garth & South Berks Hunt for an amazing 39 years, Nigel Loli, chairman of the Vale of Aylesbury Hunt Supporters' Club, and Graham Fryer, chairman of the Old Berkeley Hunt Club. Amanda Stewart is taking over from Carolyn, Ian Parkinson from Nigel and 'Pedro' McDonald from Graham.



Mrs Carolyn Drake, secretary of the Garth and South Berks Hunt has retired for the third, and, she says, last time. At the Puppy Show in June, Hunt Chairman Alan Jackson presented Mrs Drake with a fine crystal bowl and said a few words to mark the occasion:

Carolyn Drake was born Miss Mowbray to Sir George and Lady Mowbray at Warrens Wood. In 1968, 39 years ago, she became joint secretary to the Garth and South Berks Hunt. During that time she has also been a joint master with Nolan Best, Sean McCormick and Katie Benyon – so at least there was someone with a sensible head to keep the tearaways in check.



A well-deserved retirement: Carolyn Drake and Kebab have a combined age of 102

In those days Carolyn also ran the hunt Show and the cross country competition at Great Auclum, so she didn't have much spare time on her hands.

As master, she recorded every single day's hunting in her diaries. It is said that no one is permitted to read those diaries until after her death. Whether they reveal secrets about her or about everyone else is anyone's guess, but rumour has it that the embargo is in force because she has been so rude so often about the huntsman!

It is also said that not once in her entire life has Carolyn ever stayed behind a hunt official: she has always taken her own line, as anyone who has ever followed her, mounted or on foot, will know. However, despite her

HUNT NEWS

reluctance to follow everyone else in the hunting field, Carolyn was at the forefront helping the other hunt secretaries when Mike Murray was taken seriously ill last season, and her help was very much appreciated. We all hope to see Carolyn and Kebab hunting for many seasons to come.

The Tumblers' Club was started last season to 'fine' anyone who fell off their horse while hunting and contributing tumblers have raised £440 for the Chiltern Air Ambulance. The person who notched up the most falls (five) was Majid Mohammadi, fittingly since he's also the Hunt Treasurer and is always looking for ways to increase the Hunt's funds!

Other brave, high-value fallers were Chairman Alan Jackson and Pedro McDonald. Alan, Pedro and Malcolm Angell paid money up front so they could keep something on account for future falls – I wonder if any of them ended up in credit?

Other contributors included Annette Sumner, Nigel Loli, Jo Roadknight, John Perriss, Jon Quesnel, Roger Edmunds, Gaby and Joe Hill, Pam Davies and Clive Gough.

Peter Janes, foot follower, also gave a donation to the club which set us thinking: if you have a spare £10.00 note on you when you next see Heather Munn, it might be worth thinking about who you'd like to see hit the ground and putting in a request!

It was with great reluctance and sadness that Ian Parkinson was obliged to cancel this year's Terrier and Lurcher Show due to circumstances beyond his control – problems at the kennels meant he was forced to cancel at the last minute. People came from as far afield as Sheffield, London and Bedford – as well as a great many from the local area – only to be turned away at the gate. Ian regrets any inconvenience the late cancellation may have caused and promises that it will definitely run next year, one way or another! If you were one of the show's sponsors and you would like to discuss your sponsorship, please call Ian.

The Old Berkeley Hunt Cake by Valerie Barr

In May take about 50 couple hounds and put them in a large mixing bowl. Mix well until they get to know each other. Add the most supportive farmers, land owners and keepers any hunt could wish for, a dedicated and professional hunt staff, masters and area managers, a chairman, a deputy or two, a committee, trustees, a treasurer, secretaries and, of course, hunt clubs with most excellent chairmen and committee members – a vital ingredient.

Spice up the mixture in June with the Puppy Show, silver spoons and prizes, tea & speeches, the open day, a barbecue and some terrier racing.

Carefully add essence of hound exercise, bicycles, grass keep for hunt horses, holidays and summer events, and mix well.

In September transfer the mixture to a large saucepan and put on a low heat to simmer with Shire Lane Hunter Trials, Pony Club hound exercise, early morning trail hunting, quad bikes and terriers. Increase the heat towards the end of October and add the opening meet spices, fearful hunt jumps, the Tumblers' Club, plaiting, clipping, hunt coats, stirrup cups, hunt teas, photographs and whisky raffles.

Bless the mixture In November on St Hubert's day with a large jar of incense.

Add Christmas cheer in December with Christmas Eve and Boxing Day Meets, port and whisky.

In the New Year add a full bag of weather, point-to-points, the farmers' supper, the Hunt Revue, the Hunt magazine and clay shoots, taking care not to add any shot to the mixture. Turn up the heat until the cake is cooked at the end of March. Cool the cake and ice with friendships and rosettes from the Halton Ride.

At Easter take a chocolate break at Kimble, and present the cake to the famous cake stall.

In April wash the bowls, pans, spoons and cooker and prepare to begin once again.

Good Hunting!



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NEWS

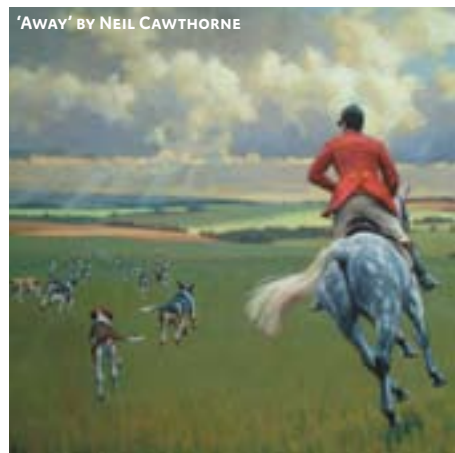
Local trainer, and Senior Master, Alan Hill's regular point-to-point jockey, James Tudor, just pipped Richard Burton to the post in the Volkswagen Touareg Men's Open series championship this season, with 37 wins to Burton's 34. Tudor also won the South Midlands area award, along with lady rider Maxine Filby. This is his best year so far.



JAMES TUDOR AT KINGSTON BLOUNT, MAY 2007

From Classic to Contemporary: the Society of Equestrian Artists' 28th Summer Exhibition is currently on tour and will form the Autumn Exhibition at Palace House in Newmarket. It features over 300 works across all media by international equestrian artists including many who have works in celebrated private, Royal and museum collections in the UK and abroad. It is open from Thursday 4 to Saturday 20 October 2007.

To attend the Private View please contact Nicole Langstaff by email at press@equestrianartists.co.uk or tel. 07930 440943.



'AWAY' BY NEIL CAWTHORNE

Many of you will have sponsored either Ben Sargeant or Michaela Pulman for the London Marathon this year – here are their reports.

Michaela Pulman said: 'No matter how long the Marathon took, even if I had to crawl through the finish, I was going to get that medal because I'm NEVER going to run it again. My knees were bugged through training and my physio said she had never known such a reluctant runner!

I went up to London the day before to collect my number and electronic shoe tag and then my husband, Mike, and I spent the night in London. The train taking us to the start at Greenwich grounded at a station three stops from our destination: it was so overcrowded it had tilted, got stuck on the platform and we had to walk to Greenwich, four miles away! There were people everywhere at the start and it was surreal; a nervous, excited buzz ran through the crowd in anticipation of the off. And then I was off, but I wasn't: the crowd was running so slowly that I wouldn't call it running. I remember reading not to get caught up in the rush and burn out too early but I can't do anything slowly so I spent the whole race dodging around people. I thought I might get bored but the crowds were ecstatic and incredibly encouraging.

I had also been warned about 'hitting the wall' (equivalent to a horse tying-up) but I had experienced this once in training and after that I improved my diet – pasta, pasta, pasta, banana, pasta and lots of non-alcoholic liquid. Fortunately I like pasta and so do my children but Mike doesn't – he will have to learn to cook!

There were only two moments it nearly got to me. At 22 miles I had a blonde moment and told myself there were only another 2.2 miles to go but at 23 miles I remembered it was 26.2 miles. And when I came into Horseguards Parade, it said 600m to go. I thought to myself, 'I can sprint that'. Of course, 600m is a bloody long sprint and after the first room I realised how stupid I was so I slowed down again and still managed to sprint the last room to the finish.

It was a fantastic feeling. Very emotional, exhilarating and draining. I was on such a high! I can't say it was exhausting because I didn't feel tired. Mike saw me cross the finish and couldn't believe how energised I looked, like I'd had a walk in the park. He said it would have been nice to have seen me physically challenged by the event!

It took me 4 hours 23 minutes and my knees never played up once. I think the enforced lack of speed may have played a role in that, but I do feel I could have done it faster, maybe in 4 hours. We had a lift back home by car with my parents and children and I put the horses to bed before going home for a shower and then out for a celebratory drink and meal. On the Monday I was on such a high and fighting fit but on Tuesday walking downstairs or downhill was agony on the thighs, though upwards was fine. I carried on and rode and by Thursday I was fine again. So never say never, because now I am having second thoughts!

A huge "thank you" to everyone who so kindly sponsored me to support Spinal Research. I raised close to £1,400.'

Ben Sargeant finished the marathon in 4 hours and 55 mins. He says, 'The first 18 miles weren't too bad but then it began to get harder and harder and the last two miles were horrible. The support along the way was brilliant and I would like to thank everyone who sponsored me. I raised about £1,500 for the Countryside Alliance. So, who's coming with me next year?'



MICHAELA PULMAN

BEN SARGEANT

MARATHON FOTO

THE PUPPY SHOW

The 2007 Puppy Show was held at the hunt kennels on Friday 15th June. Strictly by invitation only, the puppy show is seen by many as the highlight of the hunt's social calendar.

At precisely three o'clock, just as the first puppies came out for judging, heavy rain had everyone reaching for their umbrellas. Some even ran back to their cars for coats and boots. The rest, in true Glastonbury spirit, braved the rain in light summer clothes.

The rain let up eventually, gave us nearly an hour of warm sunshine and then, just as judging finished, another shower had everyone heading for tea slightly faster than was decent. As the Chairman said in his speech later on, 'They say the sun shines on the righteous, so I can only conclude that at least half of you are sinners!'

Huntsman Gerald Sumner has produced a good set of puppies in his first full year as huntsman – with, it should be said, the help of the many volunteers who do a bit of everything from helping at puppy show practices to hedge-cutting and mowing in preparation for the great day.

Kate Robertson, Sue Betts and Elaine Almack worked extremely hard to turn the stables barn into a welcoming place for tea and speeches. There were flowers on every table, and enough tea, coffee and cakes to keep everyone happy.

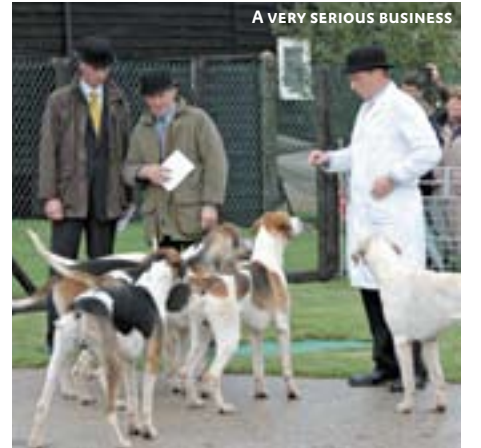
The judges this year were John Pritchard from the Warwickshire Hunt and Gary Joynes, professional huntsman of the Berkeley Hunt. Champion dog was Galway, walked by Mrs Helen Jackson, and champion bitch was Decimal, walked by Mrs Diana Wynn. The best entered working dog was Google '06, walked by Mrs Di Haynes and the best entered working bitch Salad '06, walked by Harriet Worthington.

Chairman Alan Jackson thanked all the puppy walkers for their hard work and presented the prizes to the winners. He also presented a crystal bowl to Mrs Carolyn Drake (see page 3) and a boxed set of very smart glasses to Elaine Almack, who recently left the hunt stables after eight years to work for the Bicester with Whaddon Chase Hunt.

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Jim Randall by Peter Viney

During 2006, I had the privilege of producing five video diaries charting the life and times of this remarkable ninety-one-year-old gentleman, a man who has led his life to the full as a soldier, teacher, rugby player and horseman.

Over the years Jim encouraged many people to ride, including myself. He rode out with me some forty years ago across country and introduced me to many of the superb bridleways we have in South Buckinghamshire.

Jim is in fact one of the last surviving troopers from the cavalry regiment, The Royal Scots Greys. He served initially with them in Palestine in 1940. Whilst on patrol with his regiment, he covered many miles on horseback in that country from Tiberius in the north to Jericho in the south.

Sadly for him the mounted 'policing role' he had enjoyed so much came

abruptly to an end upon the mechanisation of the Greys. Within a very short space of time, after desert warfare training in Egypt, he found himself stuffed in a tank. From then on he was very much on active service, initially as a Wireless Operator/Loader in the Western Desert. He saw action at the battles of Alam Halfa and El Alamein. He took part in the landings at Salerno in Italy which proved to be the worst period that the regiment faced during the War. Later, he was promoted to Tank Commander and witnessed the destruction of Europe as the Greys fought their way through France, Belgium, Holland and Germany.

Before the end of the war, Jim was promoted to sergeant and eventually, on returning home in 1945, he found a letter waiting for him from the War Office to say he had been mentioned in dispatches.

Before the war, Jim had trained as a

teacher at Culham College Oxford. It was at college that he was introduced to rugby. Whilst in the army he played the game in Palestine and the Western Desert. He later joined Chiltern Ruby Club and played for them in the 1st XV before and after war service.

Once back in 'Civvy Street', he returned to the classroom and within five years he was appointed Deputy Headmaster at Whitehill School, a position he held for over 30 years before retiring in the late 1970s.

Throughout his life Jim has never lost his interest in horses and, of course, those of us who rode out with him knew that one of his greatest passions was hunting.

ABOVE, L-R: Jim hunting in Woodmans; Jim on Beano, his favourite horse (picture courtesy of The Bucks Examiner); with the Greys in Palestine, 1940

THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT, 2006-2007

Alan Jackson *reflects on the past season's hunting.*

It seems only yesterday that I accepted John Gardiner's kind invitation to take over from him after fourteen seasons in the job so, to start, I should like to thank all the landowners, farmers, staff and gamekeepers for their hard work this season – and, of course, all the other people whose land we have crossed. We hunted some 109 days and we were visited by the Old Berks, the Royal Artillery and the Vine and Craven. We visited the Vale of the White Horse where Philip Hague, our former huntsman, is now in residence.

I've enjoyed my visits around the country, from Englefield House to Flamstead. Our Hunt country covers a large area and a lot of different terrain. It was a season I believe has gone remarkably well, but it would have not done so were it not for the immense support that we get from everyone involved. I have never been in such a situation where we have so few paid staff but so many people who give their support and time freely because hunting is part of their way of life.

Gerald Sumner and his team have coped admirably with everything thrown at them. Hounds have looked and performed extremely well – imagine how difficult it must be to get to know such a huge country with a new pack of hounds and all those new people! We have a lot to thank our Hunt staff for. A visit to the stables and kennels show just how much Kate Robertson and Gerald care for their horses and hounds.

Alan Hill's return to the mastership has had immense benefits, helping Gerald and being aided by a team of very professional and knowledgeable masters. This has led to a growth in subscriptions and we now have over thirty full subscribers, a big increase on last season.

Majid Mohammadi has worked extremely hard to transform our finances. My year as Chairman has shown what a team effort it is, with tremendous fundraising work in evidence. We also have a superb new website for which we owe many thanks to Cathy Fleming and Amanda Stewart, and a new look for the Hunt magazine, thanks to John and Susie Bell, not forgetting the Hunt committees, the chairmen of the point-to-points, Hunt dances, shoots, Jim Benner's book, Malcolm Angell's video and other fund raising activities – suffice to say that without their support the existence of this Hunt would be impossible. And our secretaries, Mike Murray, Amanda Stewart and Clive Gough, our area managers, the unsung heroes behind the scenes helping ensure that subs are collected and that the meet card gets out, the gate shutters – you are all due praise. We owe Nigel Loli and his helpers huge thanks for the day that Mike Murray had a heart attack out hunting. It's very good indeed to see Mike out and about

again and we have sent a cheque to the Air Ambulance as thanks for their part in the Mike's story.

We have seen several retirements this season (see News, page 2) and they will all be missed, but we welcome Jane Vowles, who is stepping into Val Barr's shoes as master, Pedro McDonald and Ian Parkinson as Chairmen of the OBH Club and Vale of Aylesbury Supporters' Clubs respectively, and Amanda Stewart who is taking over from Carolyn.

The very existence and growth of a Hunt like ours is exactly what this government and others thought they would kill with their law but we have managed to evolve through the enforced changes and we are stronger for it. Most important is the fact that we are still here as a Hunt. I want to see a continued unity of purpose, a team working together, a Hunt bound by tradition.

We have superb country. I believe David Fleming has organised at least twenty new fences so our subscribers can find challenges as good as anywhere, though you can, if you prefer, still enjoy riding in our wonderful country without jumping your socks off, so don't worry! However, we all have responsibilities to our hosts the landowners and farmers, so please don't leave gates open, don't get stock mixed up, don't block roads and do follow the Master's instructions. It's all basic commonsense.

Our finances are excellent, we have supportive trustees, a sound base that many hunts would envy and our list of subscribers is growing – we must be doing something right. I believe we are looking forward to a bright future. Communications are improving dramatically, though they can always be better. There are tremendous fundraising activities run by some incredible people, we have people like Carolyn Drake and Heather Munn who have hunted for fifty seasons and more and have seen so many changes, we have people who have helped enormously and to whom I am very grateful. Indeed, while I thought my business life was going to get easier, the Hunt and its vitality can be quite time-consuming and that is why I am so grateful that both Guy Portwin and Nolan Best, who have been helping me and Alan Hill with the management of the Hunt, have both become Deputy Chairmen.

Looking forward, I can only reiterate that we need that unity of purpose to continue to make this Hunt one of the most successful and enjoyable that there is. I hope to see you all in the autumn.

(Adapted from a speech given at the Vale of Aylesbury with Garth and South Berks Hunt AGM on 20th May 2007.)

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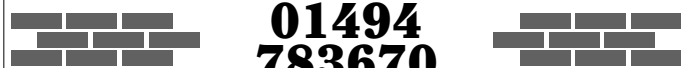


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