

The SaddleMag

THE VALE OF AYLESBURY WITH GARTH AND SOUTH BERKS HUNT



DECEMBER 07
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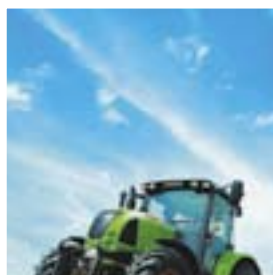


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Contents

December 2007

News	2
A Slow Start to the Season Guy Portwin explains how the foot-and-mouth outbreaks have affected hunting	3
A Day at the (Hound) Races Huntsman and hounds put their running shoes on –all in a good cause	5
I'm Going to Olympia! Hannah Blaby heads for the rarefied world of stardom	7
A Man of Many Talents Brian Panter, artist, brings his light out from under a bushel	9
The South Oxfordshire Hunt 1931-1932 Commander de la Poer's witty and engaging snapshot of bygone hunting life	10
20 Years in a Western Saddle Bill Martin reveals what he gets up to when he's not hunting with the VAGSBH	12
News from your Hunt Clubs A round-up of news and events from your local Hunt Clubs	14
Flying Round RAF Halton John Bell, Treasurer, explains why we need your money more than ever	16
A Place in Italy Christian Schwetz puts duty first and goes in search of pleasure	18
Pony Club Focus Focus on the Old Berkeley Hunt (North) Pony Club; news and reports	20
From Skydiving to Dentistry, Leap by Dizzying Leap Dorian Harwood gets the most out of life	22
All About Worms Adrian Farrington BVSc MRCVS explains why it's vital to worm your horse regularly	25
Cynthia Pitman The obituary of a remarkable hunting legend	27
Blenheim Stud Revisited Karoline Thorpe tells us what Shetlands get up to when let loose on artists	28
Got Nothing to Do? Want Something to Do? Dates and events in and around Herts, Bucks, Oxon and Berks	30
Caption Results and a Special Christmas Competition A bit more fun at the end for anyone at a loose end over the festive season...	32



*If you would prefer not to
receive this magazine in
future, please notify
Susie Bell, below.*

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The views expressed herein are those
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tors. If you would like us to publish your
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please contact Susie Bell (see left).

Cover painting by Brian Panter: Christmas
Eve 1968, returning to the hunt kennels.

Copies of most photographs in this
magazine may be purchased. Please
contact Susie Bell for details.

HUNT NEWS

The new Sponsor a Hound scheme is going fabulously well with over £1000 raised to date. Sponsors have already been able to pay for a vet's bill of nearly £400 for unlucky Wonder '04, who had to have surgery after serious stomach trouble, so all you generous sponsors out there with beautiful certificates on your mantelpieces can rest assured that your money is going in the right direction and making a difference where it really matters. Wonder has since made a good recovery and sends his grateful thanks to everyone who has sponsored a hound so far.

The man to talk to if you would like to become a sponsor is Ian Parkinson (07850 305565), so please contact him as there are plenty of hounds still looking for sponsors.



disappointed. Anyone who has been to the Cabaret in previous years will know what a treat it is; anyone who hasn't but buys a ticket this year will discover just how good February can get; anyone who doesn't buy a ticket may find February the cruellest month. Ian Parkinson (see left) has the details.

Michaela Ryde's gorgeous Weimerana is giving birth soon and pure-bred puppies will be available mid-January. See her advert on page 17 for contact details.

Peter Viney would like us to make it clear that his video diaries of Jim Randall (article, August 2007) are available on loan, free of charge, from Chesham Library.

The date for the annual Hunt Cabaret is Saturday 23rd February 2008 at Haddenham Village Hall. You might think that's a long way off but tickets will sell quickly so put it in your diary and don't be



Correspondence...

Sir,

There is a reference to 'Peter Janes, foot follower' (August '07). That is a description which might be construed as placing me a little above my station since I am basically a car follower.

In that capacity, I do quite frequently dismount but, alas, only for short distances. At my age my 'pins' are rather worn out, resulting in a tendency to induce – and sometimes to cause – falls from a low altitude. Note the word 'falls', which in my case is these days correct.

But I think it more appropriate when referring to involuntary tumbles by riders to remember that 'Ladies and Gentlemen do not fall – they are thrown!' This is really a suggestion that all ground-level members might cloak any donation with the suggestion that they are donating to the possibility that they themselves may have a fall at some future date. In that case, the word 'fall' is quite correct.

Peter Janes

On that note, The SaddleMag would like to wish **Majid Mohammadi** a speedy recovery after an operation on his shoulder in November. We hope to see him hunting again as soon as his wife lets him get on his horse. Luckily, it's not the same horse that threw him and gave him a bad shoulder in the first place!

The SaddleMag received a letter from **Geoff Allen**, a life member of the Garth & South Berks Supporter's Club, expressing his delight at Peter Viney's account of Jim Randall. Geoff started his hunting connections early in life, going to school with George

Bucknell, younger brother of Jack, future Joint Master of the Garth & South Berks, and he was friends with Jack and followed the GSB on foot and bike for many years after his father took him to his first meet at the end of World War II.

A policeman by trade, Geoff was sometime chairman of the Eton College Hunt Supporters' Club and combined whipping in to the RMA Sandhurst Beagles with running a pub near Wokingham after he retired from the police force. Before Geoff and his wife moved to Dorset, they followed the South Oxfordshire and Old Berkeley Hunts by car a few times. In his spare time, Geoff now shows his coloured cob, Jethro, in a London trolley and an original Stratford cart. He qualified for the National BDS championships in 2005 and won the private driving class at Dorset County Show this year. You might have seen his photograph in *Horse & Hound* in 20th September issue (page 94).

'We have to keep hunting going,' says Geoff, a sentiment echoed by us all.



A SLOW START TO THE SEASON

As you may know, we had a much delayed start to the hunting season. What were the reasons behind this?

When the original foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) outbreak struck on August 3rd, the Hunt took immediate action to ensure that we followed DEFRA guidelines and, more importantly, the wishes of the livestock farmers throughout our hunt country. So rides were curtailed and no early morning hound exercising took place. Hunting lines or drags were banned by law. More importantly, farmers were not permitted to move their livestock from farm to farm, to market and, for some time, not to abattoirs either.

With the lifting of all the restrictions outside the original infected area in early September, DEFRA removed the legal ban and, after consultations with livestock farmers, three early morning line hunts were held in arable or woodland areas. Then to the great dismay of all the farming community we learned that DEFRA had jumped the gun and there were further outbreaks in Surrey. We were banned by

law again throughout our area – though it should be stressed that we would not have gone out with the outbreak live in any case. Again livestock farms were largely locked down.

To add further worry to the farming community Bluetongue had just struck in East Anglia and was heading south and west. Whilst this disease can not be carried by horses or the hunt, and hunting would not be affected by law, movement restrictions meant that many local farmers could not send their animals to market or to abattoir or outside the Bluetongue protection zone, which includes all our hunt country.

DEFRA do seem to have tried harder this time and restrictions under FMD have been gradually reduced. However Hampshire, Berkshire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire all remained in the restricted zone until October 21st. The week before that hunting was allowed to resume, by law, on a strict biosecurity licence. We did go out in selected areas only where there was

no livestock and where adjoining farmers agreed to have us.

At the time of writing (late October) there is still a restricted zone around the original outbreaks. The VAHGSB will not go near to this zone. All movement restrictions under FMD regulations having been lifted in the rest of our hunt country, the Masters have resumed early morning line-hunting from October 23rd where welcomed by farmers and landowners, and have scheduled the opening meet for November 10th.

We should all appreciate the enormous strain all this has put on the livestock farming community and realise that Bluetongue is an ongoing worry for them, especially those with sheep. So, please, everyone be extra careful should you cross fields with stock in them, especially with gates. Without the farmers' goodwill we cannot exist. The VAHGSB will always take their advice before any others.

Guy Portwin, Deputy Hunt Chairman



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A DAY AT THE (HOUND) RACES

The Vale of Aylesbury with Garth and South Berks' first hound racing day at the Kimblewick kennels was a roaring success for hounds and spectators alike.



These hounds are last year's puppies and have only been entered into the main pack this season, so they were a little confused by the notion of racing over fences but, with huntsman Gerald and whip Josh giving vocal encouragement from the front, they soon got the idea and produced two exciting finishes. Bellman '07 won the first race sponsored by K.S. Waddington Horse Transport for owner Anthony Donovan and jockey Jess Waddington, while Hornet '07 won the second, sponsored by Nolan Best, for owner Ian Grieg and jockey Richard Mills. Richard

The weather wasn't the best on the day of the hound racing at the kennels (27th October) but it didn't seem to put many people off as well over 100 punters turned up to see the spectacle. Hound racing is a new venture at the VAGSBH kennels but hounds and hunt staff took to it like ducks to water, providing us with an afternoon of fun that gave everyone the unmissable chance to see Gerald and Josh leaping with an astonishing speed and elegance over a series of obstacles with hounds close behind them.

The races' main sponsor was Aston Mullins Stud, giving us seven races on the card with the first race starting at 1.30pm. Hounds were paraded near the start by their handlers before each race to give everyone a chance to place their bets at the Tote (run by Roger and Sarah Edmunds), and then they were released to run a course of 100 metres over four fences including a rather large tiger-trap. A miniature bottle of champagne was up for grabs for every winner, with jockeys competing for £10 per race.

The first two races were rather haphazard since they were races for the young dog hounds and young bitch hounds respectively.



is better known as a show horse producer but he obviously makes a gifted jockey, too.

Dominic '05 took the P.J. Sparks-sponsored dog hounds race for David and Dawn Waters and the bitch hounds race, sponsored by Ashworths of Henley, went to Dorset '05 for owner/rider Clive Gough. Dorset put in some stupendous leaps to get ahead of her rivals. Piper '02 made all to win the veteran hounds race for owner Sue Parkinson and jockey daughter Vicky, kindly sponsored by Mr & Mrs G Munn. The runners for the sixth race, made possible by Mr and Mrs R Edmunds, came in exactly in their number order, with Burglar '05 snatching victory for Sylvia and David Miller.

The seventh race, sponsored by Clive Gough, was a championship for the winners of the earlier races, with the well-backed Dominic '05 emerging victorious. The ownership and ride for each of these runners were resold at auction by able starter and auctioneer Nolan Best, so Dominic's delighted new owner was Paul Foxley and the jockey was Jess Waddington. Paul won a magnum of Lanson champagne for his efforts and Jess £25. Jess had a particularly good day as she had already piloted Bellman, the winner of Race 1, to victory. Perhaps she should consider a career in hound racing? Second was Hornet '07, owned by Jane Vowles, new to the mastership of the Hunt this season.

A vivid and informative commentary was provided by Guy Portwin throughout the day. He kept everyone up to date with runners,



winners and any gossip that happened to come his way. Judge and Senior Master Alan Hill, assisted by course vet Bob Baskerville, counted the runners past the post and, though there were a couple of non-finishers, there were no steward's enquiries or objections to mar the day for Course Secretary Sarah Biddle. Kate Robertson, kennels groom, kindly allowed a thriving bar and barbecue to be set up out of the wind in the stables, where Geoff Munn, Paul Winterbottom and Sue Parkinson worked

hard to keep everyone supplied with excellent food and drink. And finally, special mention should go to Joe Hill, who ran practically every race ahead of the hounds and jumped the fearsome tiger trap more times than anyone could count, as well as running race results back to the announcer between races so that people could collect their winnings from the Tote promptly.

This event turned out to be a major fundraiser for the Hunt, raising over £1,500, and it is definitely a fixture for the summer next year, so you may confidently expect to see it appearing in the hunt calendar of events of 2008 and beyond. If you didn't come this year, make sure you go next year!

If you missed sponsoring a hound in the races, you can always sponsor one for a whole year (see page 2 for details)

OPPOSITE PAGE, FAR LEFT: One, two, three... GO!

OPPOSITE PAGE, LEFT: Gerald shows a nice turn of speed over fences

ABOVE: Joe and friend get overtaken at the last fence

LEFT: Vale of Aylesbury Hunt Supporters' Club President Geoff Munn presents the championship prizes to jockey Jess Waddington



Authentic French Cuisine prepared for you at home, from £25 per head

The festive season is upon us, and for most of us that means more time than usual slaving over a hot stove. But why not give yourself a break and let award-winning chef Alain Madoui, formerly at the Half Moon, Cuxham, do all the slaving in your kitchen for you?

Originally from the Limoges area, Alain left France forty years ago and has worked extensively through the United Kingdom, France and as far afield as Australia. Alain has cooked at the very best restaurants in the world, including the renowned Mirabelle Restaurant, Carlton Towers and Fleurie in London, as well as in the kitchens at 10 Downing Street for Sir Edward Heath, and for President Pompidou.

His style is a mix of classic French and nouvelle cuisine, using only the freshest, best quality produce, with everything cooked freshly to order in your kitchen.

From only £25 per head for a three course menu, Alain can provide all the food (and wine if required), a full service of Limoges china, crystal glassware and superb cutlery. On the day, he will be joined by a member of his team who will assist in the preparation and serve your meal. When the feast is over, the kitchen will be fully cleaned and Alain and his assistant will leave. You, on the other hand, will have been able to sit back, relax and enjoy the company of your guests, without even worrying about who's doing the washing-up at midnight!

So if you are considering a party, why not let Alain take the pressure off, and bring a little bit of authentic France to your home?



'The food is excellent, relying on fresh produce carefully sourced both locally and from further afield (many ingredients are collected on weekly trips to France)'

GOOD PUB GUIDE 2006



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I'm going to Olympia!

The world-famous Shetland Pony Grand National is run every day of the Olympia Horse Show. The SaddleMag finds out how to become one of the elite jockeys.

The Shetland Pony Grand National is one of the top displays at the London International Horse Show at Olympia every Christmas. Many of you will have seen it on TV or been to Olympia and seen the show for yourselves but have you ever wondered how those fast and furious jockeys on those fast and furious Shetland ponies get there? It's not as simple as you might imagine...

This Christmas will see the 26th Shetland Pony Grand National take place at Olympia. The first race was organised in 1981 by Pat Renwick who ran them all until she retired three years ago and gave the job to Nigel Trott, who has himself been involved with the miniature Grand National for 15 years. Nigel now organises the display and qualifier races that take place during the year and lead to the grand finale week at Olympia.

Shetland pony racing is run in line with Jockey Club rules, which means that all riders have to wear an approved hat, back protector and long boots. One small difference is that whips are not allowed to be carried. You must be over nine and under fourteen years old and – importantly – you must be under 5'1" on the day of the first race at Olympia to be eligible to ride in it, even if you have qualified correctly that year, so don't go doing any excessive growing if you qualify! In addition, your pony must be a registered Shetland and you and he must have attended six independent events together in the year before you wish to take part in the races. This is to prove that you are a competent combination and that your pony has the manners and temperament to take part in a race safely and properly.

The ponies have to be good all-rounders as well as well-mannered, as these six events may include a Pony Club show, working hunter pony classes, and general showing and jumping classes. If you can get your card stamped at six shows, you are permitted to ride in a display race, which is one step towards a qualifier race. Display races, like qualifiers, are run around the country at many horsey events. There have already been display races at Badminton Horse Trials and the Royal Windsor Horse Show this year, and the first two qualifiers were held in June, one in Shropshire and one at Newbury Racecourse. Win a qualifier and you have earned your place at Olympia, a serious highlight of the year for many jockeys and their ponies. Races are three furlongs long and, according to the photographer who was present at Olympia last Christmas, these ponies go at two-thirds of the speed of a Thoroughbred racehorse around the track!



ABOVE: Hannah Blaby, left, racing on 'a lot mad' Sonny.

Only ten ponies and jockeys will qualify for Olympia but those that do get to spend the whole week at the show, with two races a day every day on the programme. Of the ten ponies that qualify, eight take part in each race so that two rest each time. Nigel Trott says that Olympia is the icing on the cake for the lucky jockeys: it's enormous fun, it teaches them a lot about life in the fast lane and it raises a lot of money for charity. Ponies and their jockeys come from all over the country to compete and the qualifiers are very hotly contested indeed. Some contestants even come from as far away as Shetland itself.

The Shetland Pony Grand National raises a huge amount of money every year for the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in London. Jockeys are required to raise sponsorship to enable them to run in the races and at the end of the 2006 racing season Nigel was able to hand over £17,000 to the hospital, the largest annual figure yet. He estimates that the Shetland pony racing has raised £350,000 in its 26 years and if you should ever visit Great Ormond Street, you will see the plaques on the walls commemorating the vital equipment that this long-running pony racing series has enabled the hospital to buy. It is a massive contribution to children's welfare by anyone's standards.

Hayley Head used to race Shetland ponies successfully when she was younger and qualified to ride at Olympia one year, which she says was fantastic fun. She loved the whole racing experience so much that now, aged 21, she trains her and her mother's five Shetlands for children like Hannah Blaby (see over the page) to race. Hayley trains ponies and riders at her mother's yard, Gillian's Riding School in Clay Hill,