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OFFICIAL HANDBOOK



MEMBERS of the Hunt are respectfully
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TICKHAM FOXHOUNDS

Advice to Subscribers

We appeal most earnestly to all those following Hounds to do all they can to avoid unnecessary damage to fences, crops and livestock, and more especially as regards the latter by seeing that gates are closed.

May we be permitted to impress on the followers of the Hunt not only the damage that can be avoided but the good impression the Hunt can give the Farmer if he sees his interests are being studied. Oft times the final result of damage to crops and stock cannot be fairly arrived at until several months have elapsed.

We venture to give instances:—

- (a) A Farmer may have parted for some particular reason two lots of sheep in meadows adjoining each other, the Hunt come through and leave the gate open, the sheep get together again, and he has all his work of separation to do over again and possibly their progeny is endangered. The same applies to all other classes of livestock.
- (b) A Farmer has just put in a field of winter corn, or has a nice piece of young seeds, a thoughtless follower rides across it, if the land is dry it is acknowledged that very little harm is done, but if it is wet and rain continues the seed rots in every hoof imprint and it is very difficult to assess what damage eventually may accrue.

NOTE—Always “have a care” before riding across any arable field that shows signs of vegetation, it is better to be laughed at for being too careful than to cause annoyance to the Farmer.

- (c) Landlords and Farmers just now cannot afford for their own convenience, and certainly not for the Hunt, to provide gates and jumping places; often we have seen two hurdles, placed across an old gateway, smashed to pieces. Just stop for a moment and think what annoyance and damage you may have incurred, far better to limit your enjoyment, pull one up and ride through.

The three instances we have referred to above are magnified seven-fold by the non-hunting Farmer.

We must also ask followers to refrain from riding over greens and fairways of golf courses.

Our endeavour is to keep the Hunt on a footing that will maintain its traditions as a sporting and social asset in Kent.

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HISTORY

The country at present hunted by the Tickham Foxhounds is roughly a parallelogram bounded on the North by the Thames estuary, on the South extends South of the Egerton ridge following the course of the river Beult to its junction with the Medway, on the East by the ridge of Blean, between Faversham and Canterbury, and on the West by the River Medway. At present the part of the country South of the Folkestone road is lent to the Ashford Valley Foxhounds. This area contains a great variety of country : there is a gradual rise from sea-level on the North to over 600 feet towards the South, where the ridge of the North Downs overlooks the Weald of Kent. The marsh land of the North is separated from the remainder of the country by the Chatham and Dover Railway and the Roman road from Dover to London, now perhaps better known as the "Margate" road. On either side of this road lies an area of intensive farming, the rich soil of which grows the Hops and Cherries for which Kent is famous. The increase of fruit orchards is making this part more



THE ACTING MASTER

MR. J. BURLEY

1946 - 47 till 1949 - 50

Photo "East Kent Gazette"

and more enclosed, and high farming does not help towards good scent. The centre of the country consists of a series of hills and valleys, running roughly North and South; the slopes are heavily wooded, while the valleys are generally grass. It offers good sport, as there is unlimited cover for foxes, no main roads or railways and little building. It is very dry country and scent is "Catchy"; never so good as in wet weather and strangely enough generally best in the Spring of the year, with the wind in the East and a hint of snow. Fences are mostly timber: strong oak stiles are a feature: stake and bound fences and post and rails. Wire and "Spile" fences are increasing, but jumping places and hunting gates are put in where possible.

A short legged, strong backed horse is wanted for the up and down hill work. He must be a good timber jumper, and clever and temperate enough to jump at a slow pace in and out of covert. A good shoulder for down hill work and powerful hocks for the steep banks are essential. For choice under 16 hands, the big horse is only a nuisance in rides and orchards. Given these qualifications the more blood the better, but nothing is more out of place in this country than a well-bred weed.

The Hunt is of great age and tradition. The country has probably been hunted since the Norman days, when the forest of Blean stretched from Canterbury to the Medway. It is certain that various packs hunted it in the early part of the eighteenth century. The first Master of whom actual records are available is Thomas Gibbs Hilton, born 1750 and died 1826, who hunted to the year of his death. Of him it was written—"This good tempered, kind-hearted, hospitable, entertaining gentleman, though





CAPTAIN E. S. DAWES, M.F.H.,
1940 - 46

seventy-four years of age, mounts and dismounts with all the agility of youth, was never known out of spirits, or had a headache, for which blessing he thanks the health-enlivening chase." He was known as "Glory" Hilton, from the name of a favourite hound. When hounds broke up their fox, Glory would fight for possession of the mask, which he would carry home to kennel if allowed. "Glory" Hilton lived near Selling village and kennelled his hounds there; his house and kennels have disappeared, though the site of them is still known.

From about 1780 Sir Edward Knatchbull kept a pack of foxhounds at Provender, where they were known as the Provender Hunt. There are many legends of the goings-on at Provender, illustrating the manners of the times. At the Hunt dinner, which started at 4.0 p.m., each guest went down to the cellar and carried up as many bottles of port as he required; one member always carried one bottle under his chin in addition to those he carried in his arms; a "Collar-boy" was on duty to loosen the collar or cravat of those who succumbed. The killing of a fox, except by fair means, was a crime; one man, living near Norton, was afraid to leave his house for a twelvemonth as he had killed a fox and knew Sir Edward Knatchbull would have him seized by a press-gang and sent to sea. Sir Edward retained Dick Friend, brother to his huntsman, to ride behind his currie when he drove to London, a distance of 45 miles, armed with pistols against the highwaymen who infested the Old Kent Road.



Lord Sondes next had hounds at Lees Court. A tale exists that Lord Sondes caused hounds to be brought in to his death-bed, where they "bayed" him; after which they were destroyed by his order.



MRS. L. H. FINN (Past) MR. J. BURLEY (Present) AT LORENDEN
Photo "East Kent Gazette"

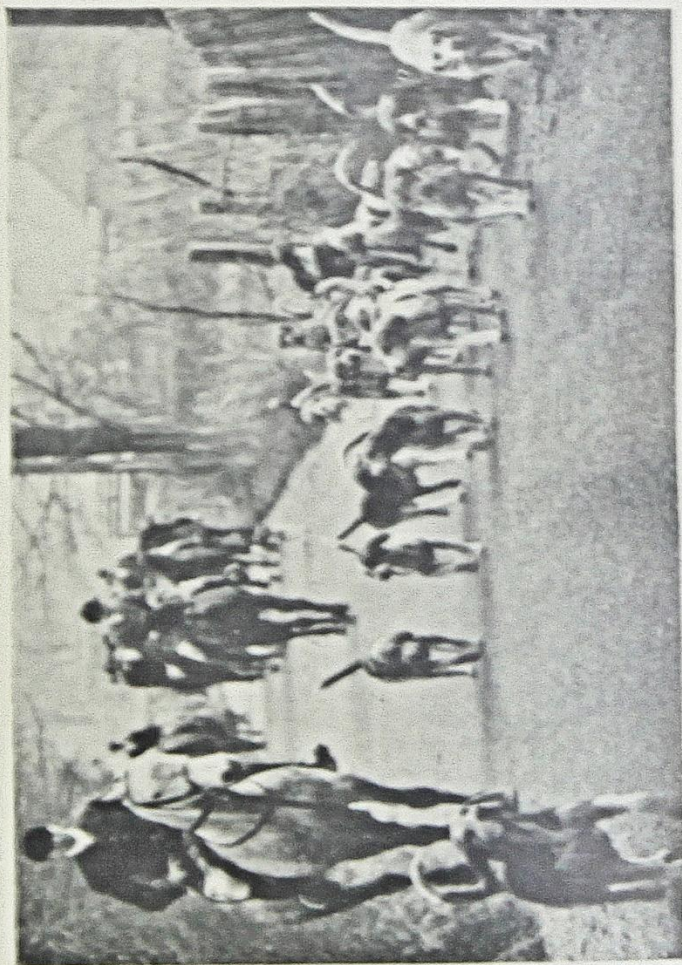
Mr. Stephen Rumbold Lushington of Norton Court next formed a pack. The nucleus of this pack were Meath hounds, branded "M" on the near shoulder. These were fetched from Ireland by Mr. Giles Morgan, of Macnade Manor, subsequently huntsman to Mr. W. Rigden. Morgan brought them on foot to London, blowing his horn on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral to collect stragglers which had fallen to the temptation of butcher's and provision shops and stalls.

Mr. Price Lade, of Nash Court, followed and remained Master for several years.

In 1831 the Hounds were taken over by the first of a family whose name will remain famous, not only in North Kent, but among all really interested in Hounds, Mr. William Rigden. From this date for nearly a century the Tickham Hunt is associated with the Rigden family. Mr. William Rigden built kennels at a tiny hamlet called Tickham, from which the hunt received its name. The kennels, or part of them, and the huntsman's cottage, still stand



and are an example of the meagre accommodation considered necessary a hundred years ago. Mr. Rigden started with a small committee, which gradually dwindled until he was left alone. He continued until 1844, with Mr. Giles Morgan hunting hounds, when he was obliged to give up for want of support and sold his pack to Mr. Richard Marriott, who hunted in Essex. Mr. S. R. Lushington of Norton Court again came forward, and, with Mr. W. Rigden as Joint Master, formed a new pack; Temple and Tom Tipton, 1849, were huntsmen. Tom Tipton, who remained with Mr. Rigden until 1861, when he went to the South Berks, was an exceptional woodland huntsman and a man of

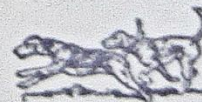


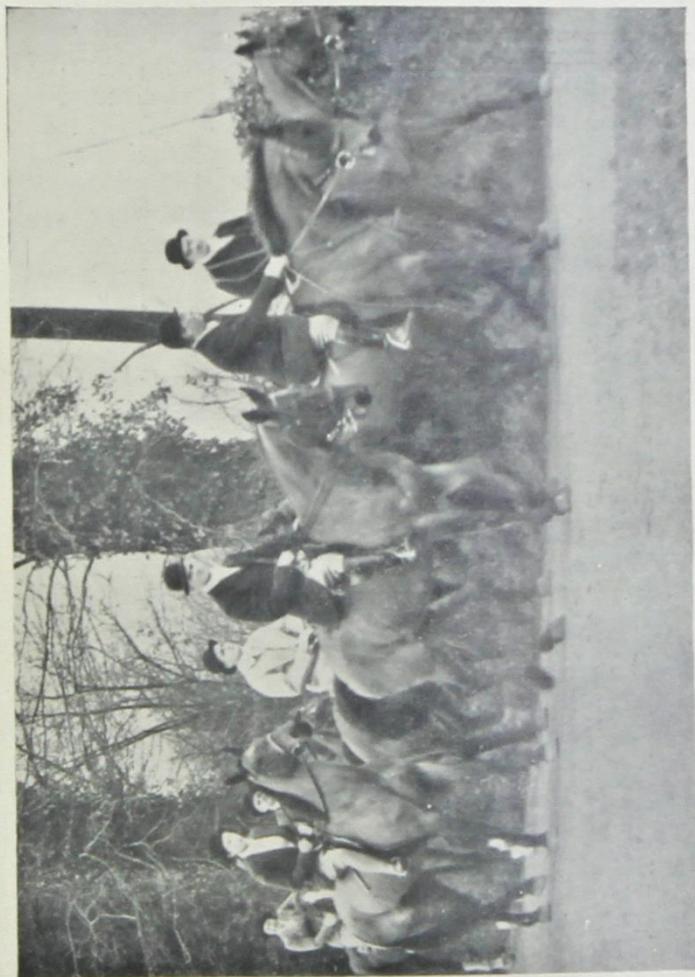
TOM KIRKBY, HUNTSMAN 1944-50

Photo "East Kent Gazette"

great character. It is said that he would gallop through standing undergrowth as in the open, and got away with his fox quicker than any man in England. At one time the Committee were frightened that Tom was killing too many foxes and depleting the stock too far. Anyone who knows the difficulty of accounting for a fox in this country will realise that no higher compliment could be paid to a huntsman. Tom, when called before a meeting of the Committee, replied: "Sirs, I have always understood that the duties of a huntsman are to find a fox as early as possible, to get away with him as quickly as possible and to handle him as soon as possible. That's what I mean to do as long as I hunt hounds; if I don't suit you I go somewhere else." In 1852 Mr. Lushington retired and for some years Mr. Rigden carried on alone. Mr. Phil Barling, of Nouds, hunted hounds for Mr. Rigden from 1861 to 1869. In 1865 there was another crisis, when owing to lack of support and scarcity of foxes Mr. Rigden advertised his hounds for sale. Fortunately a committee was formed in time and Mr. Rigden was persuaded to continue with Mr. W. Hall of Syndale as Joint Master. In grateful recognition of the good sport he had shown and as a mark of his popularity Mr. Rigden was entertained at a public dinner in Faversham and presented with a piece of plate inscribed "In recognition of his services as a thorough sportsman." W. Fisher succeeded Mr. Barling as huntsman for one season, followed by J. Machin from the Quorn.

During cubbing in 1871, after a meet at Wrinstead Court, his horse put his foot in a grip at the side of the road at Sandway, near Lenham, fell and Mr. Rigden broke his neck. So ended by a tragedy a Mastership of forty years. Mr. Hall carried on for three years, with Tom Hill from the Cotswold as huntsman, Machin having gone to the Pytchley. In 1874 Mr. Hall





MOVING OFF 1949 MEET Photo "East Kent Gazette"

presented hounds to Mr. W. E. Rigden, a son of Mr. W. Rigden, and so began the second long mastership in the family.

Mr. Rigden began with Tom Drayton, from the Warwickshire, as huntsman, but from 1876 until his death in 1904 he carried the horn himself. A brilliant horseman, a great woodland huntsman and an exceptional judge and lover of hounds. He determined to make a pack second to none and anyone who saw his hounds during the later years of his mastership must agree that he succeeded. He began by buying largely at the sales of Mr. Musters, the Hon. Marke Rolle and Mr. Arkwright, with a young draft from the Duke of Grafton's kennel. By using stallion hounds from the kennels of the Fitzwilliam, the Duke of Grafton, Mr. Fenwick and Lord Guilford, he built a pack up to the standard on which he had set his heart. Mr. Rigden decided that his hounds must be suitably housed and in 1877 he moved them from Tickham to kennels he built at Wren's Hill, near Faversham. At the time these kennels must have been as good as any in England: now, over 70 years later, they withstand criticism, an example of thoroughness and careful planning.

In 1895 the country marked his great popularity by commissioning Mr. Heywood Hardy to paint Mr. Rigden's portrait. A copy of the engraving from the picture is included in this book; it shews Mr. Rigden blowing hounds out of cover in a typical Tickham landscape; the horse is a favourite, "Battledore," and the hounds shewn are all portraits. The presentation, to mark the 21st anniversary of his accession to the mastership, was made in Faversham, after a dinner with Lord Harris presiding.



For thirty years Mr. Rigden continued in command with unbroken success until September, 1904,

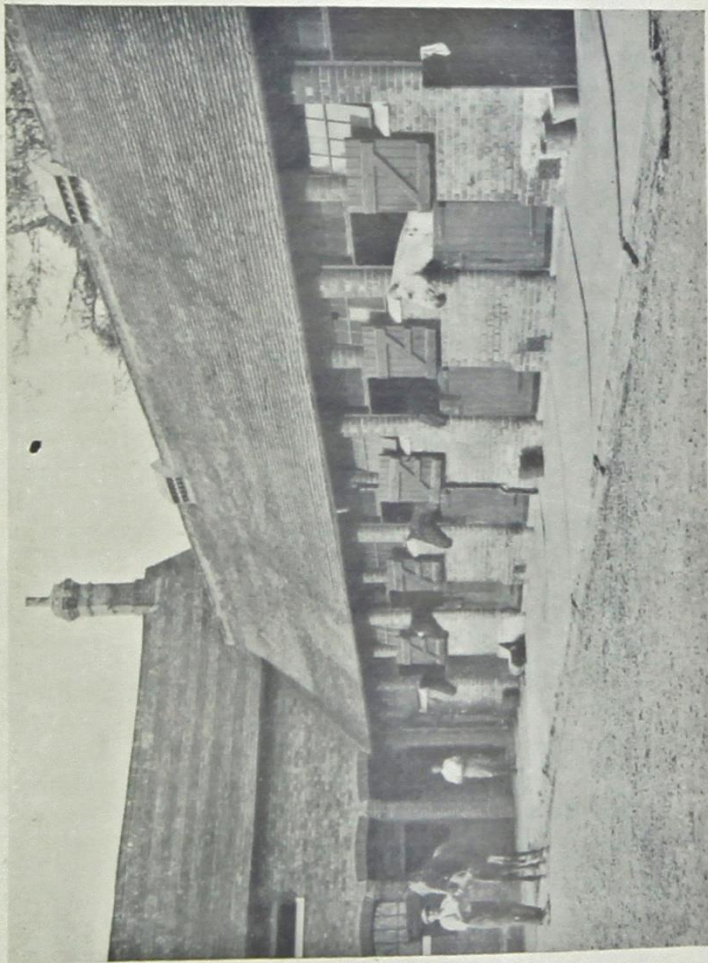


Right—A. L. MERCER, M.F.H., 1922 - 37.
Left—J. R. TYLDEN.

when a second tragedy occurred. Mr. Rigden, looking far younger than his sixty-one years and apparently in the best of health, was out rattling cubs in covert, within a week he died of blood poisoning. With his death Kent lost one of her best sportsmen, a man loved by the whole country. To the Tickham Hunt his death was a calamity. A committee nominally existed but had not met for twenty years, a Farmer's Committee dealt only with claims and damages. Mrs. Rigden pluckily determined to keep the pack going and offered to lend to the Hunt the hounds, hunt horses and kennels. Lord Sondes assembled a Committee, of which Lord Harris became permanent Chairman owing to Lord Sondes' resignation through ill-health. Mr. George Evans, late Master of the Cambridgeshire, a friend of the Rigden family, consented to hunt hounds with Mrs. Rigden as Joint Master. Mr. John Rigden, a brother of the late Master, became Honorary Secretary and managed affairs until Mr. Evans took over. The Joint Mastership continued for four years, when Mr. Evans left for the H.H. During these years he showed good sport and his name is still remembered in this country as a great huntsman. At the end of this Joint Mastership, Mr. John Rigden bought hounds and presented them (at the time anonymously) to the Committee.

Mr. G. B. Winch and Colonel A. H. Carter succeeded as Joint Masters, with the latter hunting hounds, for two seasons. Mr. W. C. Dawes carried on alone for the season 1910-1911, with George Alcock from the Blackmore Vale as huntsman, and with Lord Harris as Joint Master until 1914, when Lord Harris resigned.

Mr. Charles Rigden, a nephew of Mr. W. E. Rigden, joined Mr. Dawes for one season, with E. Carroll as huntsman, and carried on alone until 1921. During the War Captain Rigden could only hunt when



STABLES AT WRENS HILL, NORTON

Photo Lionel Joy

his military duties permitted, but in 1919 Carroll left and he carried the horn himself for two seasons. With his departure ends the family connection with the Tickham, which covers nearly a century with a few short breaks.

Captain E. S. Dawes (deceased), son of Mr. W. C. Dawes, hunted hounds for one season, when he left for the Mid-Kent Stag Hounds.



In 1922 Mr. A. L. Mercer, of Norton Court, became Master, with Fred White for two years and then Harry Lockey from the Bicester as huntsman. Although unable to ride as a result of an accident while hunting hounds, Mr. Mercer's knowledge of the country and his instinctive knowledge of the run of the fox enabled him to see much of a hunt from his dog-cart. A good judge of hounds and a real hound lover, his kennel management was excellent. Under his régime the Tickham Hounds regained the excellence which the War years had rather marred. During the last 12 years of Mr. Mercer's Mastership Mr. Ferguson Wood of Chekes Court acted as Hon. Secretary and Field-Master: a great record. Ill-health, unfortunately, compelled Mr. Mercer to resign and in the year 1937 Mr. J. R. Major took on the Mastership. He engaged Fred Dimmock from the Duhallow as huntsman and Tom Kirkby from the Morpeth as whipper-in.

Mr. J. R. Major filled the Mastership during 1937-38 and 1938-39. Mrs. L. H. Finn, daughter of Mr. P. B. Neame, was Master for 1939-40 and jointly with Captain E. S. Dawes for 1940-41 until 1945-46, when they resigned. The Committee then took over the Hunt and has carried on since then with Mr. J. Burley as Acting Master, Tom Kirkby Huntsman.

The late Mr. A. L. Mercer, who at the time of his death owned the Kennels, left to the Committee the

option of purchasing the property, of which they availed themselves, under the Chairmanship of Major H. S. Hatfeild, who continues as the present Chairman, with Mr. F. Ivo Neame as Honorary Secretary.

Since Mr. W. E. Rigden's death in 1904, a Committee has existed, which made a guarantee to the Master and are the owners of Hounds since Mr. John Rigden presented them in 1908. Until his death in 1932, Lord Harris was permanent Chairman of this Committee. Though better known as a cricketer, no Hunt could wish for a better guide and friend. A keen horseman and a great lover of a hunt, his help and his advice were always available. His coverts at Belmont always held foxes. He continued to ride, generally a green youngster of his own breeding, to an advanced age; he was out in a car to watch hounds a few days before his death. Colonel Carter, a former Master, was Chairman for a few years, and on his death Mr. L. H. Finn, of Lorenden, near Faversham, succeeded. The Committee consists, besides the Chairman, the Master and the Hon. Secretary, of three Members representing the Covert-owners, three representing the Subscribers and four Members nominated by the Farmers' Committee. A Farmers' Committee of twelve deal with all poultry claims, damage, wire, etc. Their Chairman is Mr. J. A. Bensted, a nephew of the late Mr. Henry Bensted, the "Father" of the Hunt, whose memory of the Tickham went back over seventy years. His father, Mr. T. Bensted, was "Father" of the Hunt before him, and still rode to hounds when considerably over eighty years of age.

There is a flourishing Pony Club, which was set on foot by Mrs. T. R. Major, Miss Mary Finn (now Mrs. C. A. W. Dawes), which was carried on by Mrs. Davy, and now by Miss Mona Finn and a Committee. The interest in which is stimulated by Summer Camps and Cup competitions.

Besides the names already mentioned there are several which recur in the records of the Hunt as staunch supporters. Among the many may be mentioned the Tyldens of Milstead, the Pembertons of Wrinstead and Torry Hill, the Wheelers of Otterden, the Duppas of Hollingbourne, Mr. John Arkoll of Maidstone, the De Launes of Sharsted, all large covert owners; the Neames of Faversham, especially Mr. P. B. Neame, for many years Chairman of the Farmers' Committee, Tom Kingsnorth of Perry Court, their first Chairman.



Last but not least, the many names of farmers in the country, as sporting a lot as any in England: to them all thanks are due as they have been the backbone of the Hunt, especially in bad times: them we wish all prosperity. On their continued kindness and support depends the future of the Hunt.

No history of a Hunt would be complete without a record of exceptional hunts. Many, as is to be expected in a woodland country, are more marked for the length of duration than the length of point. One hunt stands out as really exceptional:—On the 9th February, 1887, at about 11.30 a.m., hounds found in a shave below Bax Farm, Tonge, near the Swale on the North of the country. The fox headed due South over the railway and the London road, jumped the garden wall of Hempstead House, by Rodmersham Church to Golden Wood and along the coverts at Highsted Bottom. Leaving Milsted on his right, he ran Mincing Wood from North to South to Lade Wood and into



a cow shed on Timble Hill where he rolled in the hay. He was seen and pushed on through Sweet's Wood, where there was a check of about ten minutes. The Master, Mr. W. E. Rigden, hit off his line again near the gate of Wrinstead Court, up the Park through Cook's Coverts and Stede Hill Plantations, down the hill, leaving Harrietsham Church on his right, through the Rectory garden and on to the corner of King's Wood. Then down Ulcombe Hill to below East Sutton Park just short of the Headcorn-Sutton road. After an unsuccessful cast, Master gave up about 4.30 p.m., as horses and hounds were tired out. He ran the first sixteen miles practically dead straight with the wind behind him; a slight right-handed bend from Ulcombe making a total point of not less than twenty miles.



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Adjacent Hunts' Lightweight. — 1, Mr. R. J. Martin's (E. Kent) SHARPE'S EXPRESS, 7lb. ex. (Owner); 2, Mr. P. Leney's (Mid-Kent Stag.) GENERAL WOLFE (Mr. J. Day); 3, Mr. E. J. Master's (Romney Marsh) TREMOLO (Mr. T. D. Rootes). 12 ran; $\frac{1}{2}$ 1; dist. Tote: 4s. 9d.

Nomination. — 1, Mr. T. Southern's (E. Kent) FRIENDLY BOY (Mr. Yearsley); 2, Mr. J. H. Day's (Ashford Valley) KING'S MASK (Owner); 3, Mrs. J. F. B. May's (W. Kent) COLOUR ROYAL (Mr. H. S. May). 6 ran; neck; dist. Tote: 3s. 6d.

Adjacent Hunts' Heavyweight. — 1, Mr. H. S. May's (W. Kent) CHASUBLE, 10lb. ex. (Owner); 2, Mr. G. W. Farmer's (Tickham) ANOTHER DANDY (Mr. R. J. Martin); 3, Mr. C. Nesfield's (Ashford Valley) IRISH VALENTINE (Owner). 5 ran; $\frac{1}{2}$ 1; dist. Tote: 3s.

Adjacent Hunts' Ladies'. — 1, Mr. R. L. Day's (Mid-Kent Stag.) GLENINAGH, 10lb. ex. (Mrs. Lamont); 2, Mrs. H. B. Levett's (Ashford Valley) HUMORIST II. (Mrs. Newble); 3, Mr. N. H. Funnell's (Tickham) PETER VIII., 14lb. ex. (Miss B. Mitcheson). 7 ran; 81; dist. Tote: 12s. 6d.

Members' and Farmers' (run concurrently).—
Members': 1, Mr. F. A. Crowhurst's TULLYBRACK (Mr. R. Crowhurst); 2, Mr. R. Ledger's LADY COTTAGE (Comdr. J. Herapath); 3, Mr. R. J. Hope's SAMMY (Owner). 3 ran; dist. same. *Farmers':* 1, Mr. R. Ledger's LUCKY FOUR, 7lb. ex. (Mr. E. Ledger); 2, Mr. O. G. Horne's LYNWOOD II. (Mr. G. Boon). 3 ran; dist.; same. Tote: 3s. 9d. (paid on Lucky Four).

Twenty-six

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Miss Mona Finn	Mr. G. W. W. Wheler
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Mr. F. Ivo Neame, Hon. Secretary
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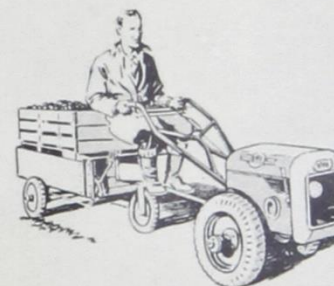
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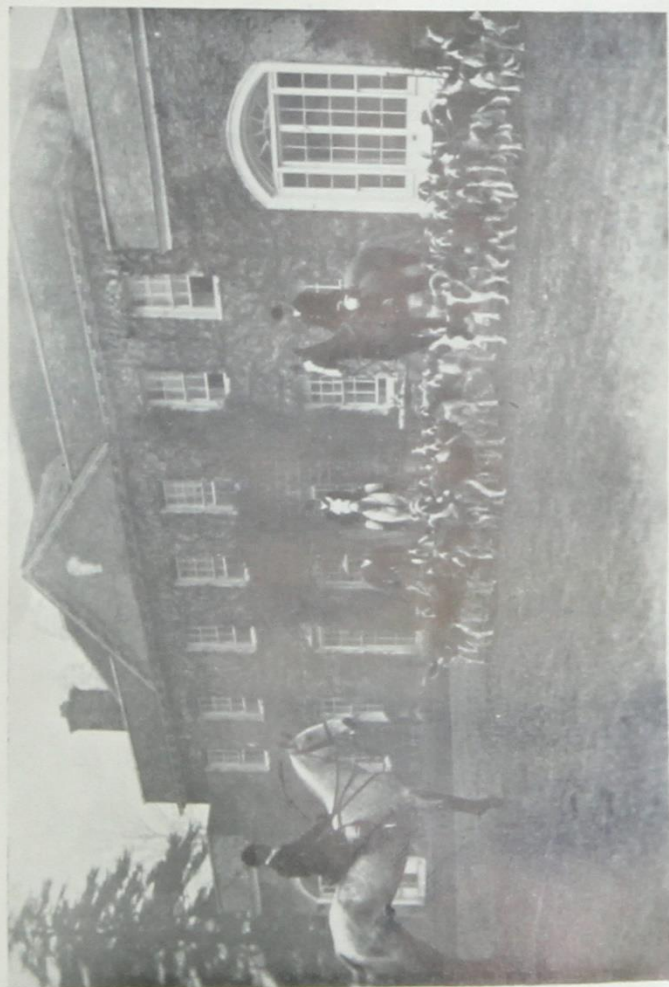
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CARE OF CROPS.—Damage to farmland, whether arable or grass, may be caused either by breaking plants above ground or by damaging their roots.

If the plants are broken they will, provided their roots are sound, generally shoot again. The degree of damage from this cause is therefore dependent on the time taken for the new shoot to make up the delay in growth.

Root damage is more serious and may be caused, not only by the plants being lifted out bodily by a horse's hooves, but also by the roots being rotted by water collecting in the hoofmarks.

The faster the horse is travelling and the heavier the going, the greater the damage.

Grassland may be ridden without risk of damage except when the going is very heavy or when the land is laid up in the spring for hay.

Arable land on which crops are growing should never be ridden.

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Hunting is carried on by a combination of subscriptions and goodwill.

The former is an affair of the pocket and "it is clearly the duty of every man to subscribe to a pack of 'ounds, even if he has to borrow the money," and "no one should be allowed to whoop and holloa, or set up his jaw, wot hasn't paid his subscription."

The latter on the other hand is an affair of the heart and, in spite of many beliefs to the contrary, cannot be bought by the deepest pocket.

Goodwill is a delicate plant but, given an atmosphere of mutual understanding and regard among all those connected with the sport of foxhunting—whatever their status or occupation—it will flourish exceedingly.

It is the plain duty of those who hunt to maintain this atmosphere by every means in their power.

Whether you ride to hunt or hunt to ride, sufficient knowledge of both hunting and farming is required to avoid—at the very least—being a nuisance to the Hunt and an unwelcome guest of the owners and occupiers of the land over which you are privileged to amuse yourself.

The number of "incidents" which occur during a season's hunting show that the standard of knowledge required is higher than is commonly supposed.

Forty

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YOUR DUTY TOWARDS THE HOUNDS

1. Never get between the huntsman and his hounds, whether the latter are running or not. Never run any risk at all of getting between the hounds and their fox. Never get in front of the Field Master when hounds are not running or, when they are, if he is "there."
2. Assume that every horse kicks hounds until you know it does not. Next to doing damage to crops, to kick a hound is the most heinous offence in the hunting field. Never take even a known non-kicker near the pack after they have killed.
3. Do not try to ride alongside the Huntsman on the road unless he asks you to. Hounds expect one horse to be in their midst, and learn to keep out of its way ; they may get under the feet of a second.
4. When a fox is holloaed away from a covert, always give hounds plenty of time to settle before you start to gallop. A hunt is made or marred at this stage, and the pack must be given time to tune in their noses to the scent of the moment before they feel the threat of galloping horses behind them.
5. The moment hounds check, **STAND STILL**. Never follow the huntsman about either when he is drawing or when he is casting.
6. Never speak to a whipper-in or the huntsman after hounds move off from the Meet unless you have some vital piece of information to impart which simply will not wait.
7. Never cut the tail hounds off from the main body of the pack, or flip at them with your whip. These tail hounds are the very ones that have been drawing the thickest parts of the covert—that is why they are tail hounds. They are the best and keenest in the pack.