

AUTUMN 2017

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MY COUNTRYSIDE

NEW FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE

A FINE VINTAGE

Behind the scenes at Berry Bros and Rudd

THE LOBBY

Parliament's key issues for our post-Brexit countryside

BEST OF BRITISH

The people helping our traditional cattle breeds survive

An old habit

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John Robinson, Head Coach for the England Commonwealth Games shooting team, with the new Hand Finished B15 Beauchamp.

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THE BEST THERE IS

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'Combining in Somerset' by Guy Kirkham is one of the runners-up in our photography competition. See page 18 for the winning entry

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WELCOME



Welcome to the autumn edition of *My Countryside*. We've got some brilliant articles for you to enjoy when you aren't out in the field, be it on a horse or with a gun.

Perhaps most important in terms of looking ahead at the politics of rural Britain is The Lobby (page 20) in which James Somerville-Meikle looks at what this Parliament holds for the countryside. What will our new agricultural policies look like once we've left Europe? Will farming still benefit from the seasonal workers that travel to the UK every summer? Will our trade agreements be hamstrung, or will the opening up of trade mean that the UK's standards of welfare and safety are undermined by cheaper products from further afield?

In a celebration of our British breeds (page 26), we've searched out four cattle farmers that specialise in traditional breeds and interviewed them to give an insight into each.

From the domestic to the wild, Tom Godber-Ford Moore celebrates the opening of the game season with two exceptional recipes that make use of foraged ingredients (page 54), while Goedhuis has found the perfect wines to pair with the dishes and gives a short insight into buying wine 'en primeur' (page 58). Continuing the oenological theme, Camilla Swift visits Berry Brothers' new premises and the astonishing cellars, filled not only with rare vintages, but also a remarkable history (page 14).

Did you enter our inaugural photography competition in the last issue? See the stunning winning photograph (page 18).

With so much to enjoy, I wish you all a fantastic season ahead, and happy reading. 🍷

Kate

Kate Gatacre, Editor



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AND AUTUMN WINTER
COLLECTIONS



THE FIGHT CONTINUES

As the dust settles following the election, the Countryside Alliance is working hard to protect the rural way of life

WORDS TIM BONNER



A lot has happened since the last edition of *My Countryside*. We have had an extraordinary election result that almost no one predicted, a result that has sown uncertainty in the Government and left some in the Conservative Party looking for a scapegoat.

YouGov tell us the Tory party's lead fell from 24 points when the election was called to just seven points the day before the vote. Predictably those with an ideological axe to grind sought to take advantage of the party's soul searching by offering up the manifesto commitment to a free vote on the future of the Hunting Act as an explanation for the poor electoral performance.

All the usual suspects took to the airwaves, to social media and to print to blame foxhunting, but we at the Countryside Alliance were ready for them. One week before polling day we had commissioned research into issues affecting voting intentions, and could definitively announce that only 0.39% of the electorate were voting on the basis of the Hunting Act. We made sure key people had this information in good time. They say a lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is still putting on its shoes; this time it was the lie limping to catch up with the truth.

Hunting had nothing to do with the election result, but the election result does have short-term implications for hunting. The Hunting Act is temporarily off the Westminster agenda as Theresa May attempts to govern via a 'confidence and supply' arrangement with the Democratic

Unionist Party. But this does not mean the Alliance's political team will be taking it easy. As well as working to make sure hunting remains blameless for the Tory's electoral struggle, there is much to take our attention.

In this quarter's edition of *The Lobby*, our own James Somerville-Meikle outlines and analyses the impact this parliament could have on the countryside as it returns from summer recess to consider three key bills that will shape post-Brexit agriculture. The Alliance will be working on each bill every step of the way to secure the best outcome for our members.

By the time you read this we will be well into the grouse season, starting on partridge and wildfowl and thinking about the pheasants to come. The now annual media battle that surrounds the start of the shooting season on the Glorious 12th may

be distant memory to you, but not to us at Alliance HQ. We were in the national papers, on TV and on the airwaves promoting shooting and asking why the BBC continues to allow Chris Packham a

"Hunting had nothing to do with the election result, but the election result does have short-term implications for hunting"

platform from which to attack the hunting and shooting communities, and the latter issue especially has not gone away. Everyone is entitled to their opinion, but no one is entitled to use a publicly funded broadcaster to try to force that opinion on our members.

On all these issues, the fight continues. We're delighted to have you with us. [❤️](#)

Tim Bonner, Chief Executive



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NEWS REVIEW



Mr Kit O'Grady (left) receiving his Beretta gun

BERETTA SERPENTINA 490 WINNER

THE BEAUTIFUL BERETTA Serpentina 490, made to celebrate the company's 490th birthday and donated to raise funds for the Countryside Alliance Campaign for Shooting, was won by Mr Kit O'Grady, who shoots in Northamptonshire.

Picking up his gun on June 3 at the Beretta Gallery in London, Mr O'Grady said: "This gun is quite stunning. A fine piece of craftsmanship and worthy of the world's oldest gunmaker. It combines tradition, technology and beauty and I am honoured to own it."

I will cherish the gun."

The draw raised more than £66,000 for the Campaign. Tim Bonner, Chief Executive of the Countryside Alliance, commented: "I'm thrilled for Mr O'Grady, who will not only cherish this masterpiece of gunmaking but will also use it for his shooting. We're also incredibly grateful to Beretta and GMK, Beretta's UK distributor, for the chance to raise the money which will be spent on defending and championing gameshooting in the UK."



HUNTING NEEDS YOUR VOTE



National Trust

ALL MEMBERS OF the National Trust are being urged to show their support for trail-hunting ahead of a vote at the National Trust AGM which takes place in Swindon on October 21.

A members' resolution has been proposed to ban all trail-hunting on National Trust (NT) land. This will affect more than 60 hunts that currently hunt across some of the Trust's 250,000 hectares of countryside.

Under the current arrangements, a licensing system is in operation where hunts apply to participate in legal trail-hunting activities. If the motion carries at the AGM, a number of hunts may no longer be viable due to a lack of access to country.

"Our countryside has never been under more pressure than today," said the Alliance's president and long-standing member of the NT, Baroness Mallalieu QC. "The National Trust was founded to preserve our heritage for all of us to enjoy."

Full details about how to vote will be included in the documentation sent out from the NT to their members at the beginning of September, however, the principal ways will be either in person at the AGM or by postal vote.

For further details about what else you can do to support our campaign to oppose the motion to ban trail-hunting, please visit our website countryside-alliance.org

RURAL BROADBAND

BRITISH TELECOM'S ANNOUNCEMENT at the end of June that it plans to offer high-speed broadband to 1.4 million rural homes by 2020 is welcomed, however there are problems with its offer. The Government's slow roll-out process would take longer, but BT's offer will leave customers having to foot the bill, estimated to be between £450m and £600m. It also leaves 60,000 remote homes without high-speed broadband and effectively delivers a service monopolised by BT, as independent suppliers will not be able to offer their own rural broadband service.

The UK is 31st in the global broadband rankings, according to a recent study, with an average broadband download speed of 16.51Mbps. One in five rural homes are still unable to receive speeds higher than 5Mbps. The Countryside Alliance has pledged to continue to lobby both Government and providers for improvements in connectivity in rural areas both for improved internet speeds and for a mobile network that delivers to all so that these communities are not hindered by location and can be on a level playing field with those living in urban areas.

DUKE OF BEAUFORT



REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

IT IS WITH great sadness that we learned of the death of His Grace, the Duke of Beaufort at the age of 89.

Polly Portwin, Head of Hunting at the Countryside Alliance, paid tribute to the late Duke, saying: "The countryside has lost a true friend in the passing of His Grace, the Duke of Beaufort. He was a passionate supporter of equine and country sports whose enthusiasm will be missed. Our condolences to all his family and friends."

NEWCOMERS' WEEK COMPETITION

THE COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE is launching a new competition to coincide with the annual hunting Newcomers' Week, held October 21-28. The aim of the week is to introduce as many new faces to the hunting field as possible, with prizes being awarded for articles sent in by newcomers describing their first impressions of a hunt.

The competition will be split into six different regions, with the winner in each region being awarded a bottle of Pol Roger champagne (with an alternative being offered to those under 18 years of age) and a personalised hunting stock donated by The Old Hunting Habit. A bottle of Pol Roger will also be given to the huntsman of the pack they visited. Hunts are encouraged to host specific newcomers' meets or organise activities such as a tour of the kennels to give everybody the chance to get involved with their local pack. For more information visit countryside-alliance.org.



THE NEW COMPLAINTS framework, published by the BBC in July could significantly limit Ofcom's role in assessing complaints. The publication of the framework shows that anyone wishing to make a complaint will have to submit this to the BBC three times before Ofcom can become involved. Furthermore, editorial complaints can only be submitted to Ofcom when related to news or public policy, and Ofcom can only enforce the limited requirements of the Broadcasting Code, rather than the higher standards

required in the new BBC Charter, essentially leaving the BBC to self-regulate.

The Countryside Alliance has written to the BBC as part of a consultation on the new complaints framework, suggesting that those making a complaint should have the option of contacting Ofcom after the initial complaint if the BBC's response is unsatisfactory. To read Tim Bonner's letter to the BBC, visit bit.ly/CountrysideAllianceBBCComplaintsLetter



LAST CHANCE TO RESPOND TO WELSH CONSULTATION

A WELSH GOVERNMENT consultation "Taking Forward Wales" will be closing on September 13. The consultation, which is the fifth of this sort in eight years, should not be confused with a similar one held in 2016 named "Taking Wales Forward". "Taking Forward Wales" is a proposal to extend the Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act to all rivers and inland waters. The effect, should the CROW Act be extended, would be to open up all inland water in Wales to the public. A "right to paddle" is one of the proposals in the consultation, which would also see all footpaths being made accessible for horse riding and cycling. Landowners, riparian owners and angling clubs do not oppose

improved access to inland water, but are alarmed at the 'one-size fits all' approach of the consultation, and the lack of acknowledgement of their rights and the need for management. This also applies to the opening up of footpaths, as while the Countryside Alliance acknowledges the need for improved access, opening up all footpaths to horse riders and cyclists would not be appropriate.

The Countryside Alliance has produced a response letter (countryside-alliance.org/openaccess) and would encourage everyone to sign this before the consultation closes.

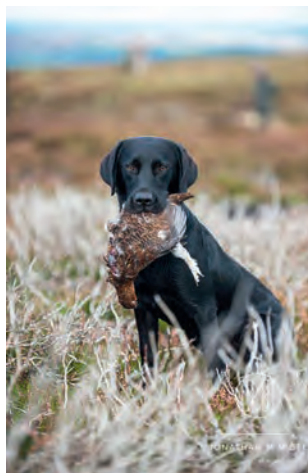
To read the consultation in full, visit: bit.ly/CountrysideAllianceWelshConsultation

Here's what we've been talking about on twitter recently...

 Why don't you join the conversation?



◀ Here's our best moments from the #gloriouswelth @anotherdishlondon @thegunroomlondon



JONATHAN M. MCGEE



▲ Countryside Alliance unites with @BASCnews to condemn @ChrisGPackham's high street campaign @CAUpdates

▲ Let the season commence... Happy #GloriousTwelfth everyone - for countryside, conservation and community @JonathanMMcGee



◀ Great to meet Heythrop Hounds who gave me a waggy welcome on our stand this morning at #countryfilelive @CACampaigns

▲ Well done and thank you to all those cycling for the Countryside Alliance Foundation today @RideLondon with @OllieArabia and @hunting_ca



Countryside Alliance

1 Spring Mews, Tinworth St, London, SE11 5AN
www.countryside-alliance.org
mycountryside@countryside-alliance.org
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Archant Dialogue,
Prospect House, Rouen Road,
Norwich, NR1 1RE
Tel: 01603 664242
Fax: 01603 627823
www.archantdialogue.co.uk
mail@archantdialogue.co.uk



Archant Dialogue is part of Archant Community Media
Consultant Editor Kate Gatacre
Content Editor Sue Dando
Art Editor Abigail Cole
Designer Sian Osborne
Managing Content Editor Cathy Wood
Account Manager Laura Stringer
Studio Manager Nicky Wright
Art Director Richard Berry
Head of Client Services Jason Elkins
Content & Brand Director Ryan Battles
Agency Director Zoë Francis-Cox
For all advertising enquiries please contact:
Head of Advertising Isobel Robson
Commercial Sales Manager Vicky Moore
Advertising Sales Executive
Sian John
Tel: 01603 772864
National Brand Manager
Gary Stone
Tel: 01603 772463
Production Manager
Kay Brown
Tel: 01603 772522

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GET IN TOUCH

Tell us what you think about the stories covered in this issue of my countryside



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Write to: My Countryside Magazine, 1 Spring Mews, Tinworth Street, London, SE11 5AN

Send in stories, letters and photos that encapsulate everything that matters to you about our countryside and rural life. Each issue we will be looking to print the best, so look out for your contribution in the next issue of My Countryside.



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New Guerini

£4,750

Ellipse curve gold, 20 Gauge, 30" Barrels, Multi choke, Narrow game rib, Solid top & side ribs for a traditional look, Rounded action adorned with floral scroll with gold accenting, Barrel selector, Auto safe, 15" Pistol grip stock with highly figured wood, Wooden butt plate giving a easy gun mount, Very lively feel.



New Rizzini

£4,250

Round body EL, 20 Gauge, 30" Barrels, Multi choke, Narrow game rib, Gamescene engraving adorning the sides of the action with it flowing into a tight scroll on the underbelly, Barrel selector, Auto safe, 15" Rounded semi pistol grip stock with beautiful marbled figuring, Extremely lively feel.



Used Beretta

£3,250

687 EELL, 20 Gauge, 29 1/2" Barrels, Multi choke, Narrow game rib, Gamescene engraved sideplates depicting woodcock & pheasants, Barrel selector, Auto safe, 14 3/4" Pistol grip stock with well figured honey wood with dark streaks running throughout, Immaculate condition.



New Famars

£11,995

Excalibur round action, 20 Gauge, 30" Barrels, Fixed choke 3/8 & 3/4, Narrow game rib, Action adorned with elegant scroll and detailed pheasant on the bottom plate, 15" Rounded semi pistol grip stock with honey wood and dark veined figuring, Effortless feel.



Used Browning

£7,250

D5G Game, 12 Gauge, 27 1/2" Barrels, Fixed choke 1/4 & 3/4, Narrow game rib, Three piece forend, Stunning deep scroll engraving covering the action and intricate parts, Barrel selector, 14 5/8" Roach belly stock with dark wood, Very responsive handling, Rare to find in such immaculate condition.



New Blaser

£8,595

F3 Custom, 12 Gauge, 32" Barrels, Multi choke, Flat tapered rib, Very intricately engraved action depicting tightly wound scroll, Barrel selector, Adjustable trigger, Palm swell giving full control, Beautiful wood, Full balancing system available.



New Perazzi Pair

£28,000

MX20 SC3 Factory pair, 20 Gauge, 32" Barrels, Fixed choke 5/8 & 7/8, Narrow game ribs, Numbered 1 & 2 in gold, New style No. 101 deep scroll engraved action with detailed pheasant gamescene on the bottom plates, Barrel selectors, Auto safe, 15 3/8" Matched Purdey style grip stocks with deep figuring throughout, Double case, Very well balanced for all forms of driven quarry.



New Browning Pair

£23,100

B15 B Grade running number pair, 12 Gauge, 30" Barrels, Multi choke, Narrow game ribs, Deep gamescene engraved sideplates, Barrel selectors, Auto safe, Teardrops, 14 3/4" Pistol grip stocks with stunning honey coloured wood, Both guns complete in a luxurious case.



New Perazzi Pair

£61,100

MX20 SCO Sideplate factory pair, 20 Gauge, 30" Barrels, Numbered 1 & 2 in gold, Sideplates with a deep scroll engraving carried out by hand, Barrel selectors, Auto safe, 15" Purdey style grip stocks with well matched wood, Precision balance with breathtaking looks, Complete in double presentation case.



Used Beretta Pair

£90,000

SO10 Factory pair, 12 Gauge, 30" Barrels, Fixed choke improved cylinder & 1/4, Flat tapered ribs, Numbered 1 & 2 in gold, Deep scroll engraved pinless sidelocks, Barrel selectors, Auto safe, 14 1/2" Pistol grip stocks with superbly matched wood, Breathtakingly well balanced, Complete in double case, Fantastic condition.



Used Browning Pair

£19,400

B25 B2G Game, 28 Gauge, 29 1/2" Barrels, Fixed choke, Narrow game ribs, Numbered 1 & 2 in gold, Hand engraved gamescene actions, Barrel selectors, 14 1/2" Matched rounded semi pistol grip stocks with deep figuring throughout, Breathtaking responsive feel and balance, Complete in double case, Immaculate condition.



New Beretta Pair

£27,600

DT11 EELL Running number pair, 12 Gauge, 30" Barrels, Multi choke, Flat tapered ribs, Sideplates finished with a deep scroll with dark accenting, Detachable & adjustable trigger, Palm swell, Pistol grip stocks with dark veining figuring throughout, Very stable feel, One of only a few pairs available in the country.







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VINTAGE



MODERN



WORDS CAMILLA SWIFT

Take a look behind the scenes at Berry Bros & Rudd's new flagship store in the heart of St. James

Previous page: 3
St. James's Street
shop; 63 Pall Mall
Fine Wine Reserve

This page: 3
St. James's Street
shop front;
Weighing Scales

Walk into the wine merchants Berry Brothers & Rudd at No.3 St James's Street and you feel as if you've stepped back in time. The walls are wood panelled and lined with portraits; there are wooden barrels in the corner, and the floor is uneven at best. In fact, if you told me I was on-board a 16th-century galleon, I would have believed you. Berry Bros have been operating out of this very same building since 1698; originally as a tea and coffee merchants opened by the widow Bourne. After bringing in George Berry, a wine merchant from Exeter in the mid 1700s she expanded into selling alcohol and the rest, as they say, is history. The origins of the company are still clear to see though; the sign that hangs outside No.3 St James' has an image of a coffee mill on it, and the original giant scales on which customers used to weigh their coffee (as well as weighing themselves) are still proudly on display.

This year Berry Bros decided to expand their London base beyond the space they've inhabited for over 300 years and have opened a new shop, just around the corner at 63 Pall Mall. This new offering has a very different atmosphere from the company's original residence - but that's no bad thing. Yes, plenty of Berry Brothers' customers still bulk buy or are members of the Berry Bros' Cellar Plan, whereby wine collectors invest a certain amount per month in their personal wine cellar, aided by the expert team at Berry Bros. (Their Cellar Plan is, according to chief executive Dan Jago, the best savings scheme in the world, and his Chief Financial Officer now collects wine instead of having a pension.) But there are still plenty of people who would like to pop into a shop and maybe just buy one or two bottles that take their fancy. The new shop also gives Berry Bros the space to showcase more of what they have on offer; they now have around 20,000 bottles of wine in London, and over 10 million at their state-of-the-art



warehouse down in Hampshire. 63 Pall Mall is now home to what Jago believes is "probably one of the best collections of fine wine available by the bottle anywhere in London".

MAKING WINE ACCESSIBLE

Perhaps most importantly - at least for Geordie Willis, creative director at Berry Bros and an eighth generation Berry family member - the new shop is far more welcoming than the one in St James's Street - which he described as 'terrifying'. He aims to democratise wine and make it more accessible, something which both the new shop and the wine school that the company run in their cellars (where, incidentally, the future Napoleon III sheltered while in exile from France) can help to do. Walking into the old shop, says Willis, is "a bit like walking straight into a gentleman's tailors"; in the new shop, he was delighted to see a man browsing for wine wearing shorts and flipflops. "I don't think anyone has ever worn shorts in No. 3 St James," he says.

It might seem slightly strange that today, when it's so easy to pop into your local supermarket or wine shop and buy a few bottles, the services that Berry Bros offer are still so popular. But what Berry Bros do, more than anything else, is give their customers a personal experience that very few wine merchants can rival. "Lots of people sell wine, lots of people import spirits", says Jago. "That's not unique to us. But where we do it and how we do it, and the facilities we have here to make that connection with customers is unique to us and separates us from everyone else." And it would appear that people are still willing to pay for that experience. What that 'experience' might be is unique to each customer. It could be dinner with the world's best Burgundy growers, or lunch with the chairman; there's a personal touch that Berry Bros add to the wine-buying experience, and it's one





Above: The Napoleon Cellar; 63 Pall Mall front of shop

that people value. “In a world where everything is available at a few clicks of an iPhone, customers still really value high quality interaction with people who look after them and are able to give them access to the fine wines they want to buy,” he says. And of course, Berry Bros’ long history and the familiar name add a level of trustworthiness that many other businesses would rightfully be jealous of.

HIDDEN ASSETS

Their property empire is another thing that most other companies would envy. Stretching round from No.3 St James’s to 63 Pall Mall, many of the buildings at ground level and above are rented out. But the cellars below their original home on St James’s form a vital part of the Berry experience. Some of the space is still used for storing the house reserve. But three of the cellars - named Pickering, Napoleon and Sussex - are used to host wine tastings, meals

“WE’RE A MODERN BUSINESS BUT WE’RE VERY INTERESTED IN PROTECTING HISTORY”

and private events, as well as the wine school. “It’s a rabbit warren,” says Geordie Willis, whose role covers “anything visual... which is linked to the experience the customers get. That can come from architecture and interiors, through to social media and publishing and design.” His main focus since the Sussex Cellars were completed in 2015 has been on using the space that Berry Bros are fortunate enough to have to look after Berry’s customers and visitors in the best possible way - and to draw a line around certain areas (including the cellars) and, as he puts it, “keep them sacrosanct”. You can see this clearly in everything from the floor of the Pickering Cellar, which still has the old brickwork along which barrels used to be rolled, and a preserved underground well which predates Henry VIII’s time.

Fieldsports are also something that run very close to the Berry Bros business. Jago admits to being ‘astonished’ by how often he is served Berry Bros wine on shoots, and the company often works alongside the Countryside Alliance at events such as the annual London Wine Auction dinner. “I think we share similar values with the shooting and fishing communities,” Jago explains. “We’re a modern business but we’re very interested in protecting history and heritage, and I think that is something that would be very understandable to people who enjoy country sports.” It all just goes to show that while the 21st century might appear to be all about the here and now and having the newest goods on offer, there is still a market for top-quality, honest companies that customers know they can trust. 🍷



THE SPORTING SALE

Wednesday 25 October 2017
Edinburgh

We are now consigning for our forthcoming 2018 Sporting Sales. Items of interest include jewellery, silver, pictures, books, works of art, ceramics, prints and items relating to the traditional field sports of hunting, shooting, fishing, racing and other outdoor country pursuits.

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The ZEISS logo is a blue square with the word "ZEISS" in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.**PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION WINNER**

We are delighted to share with you the winning entry in our inaugural photography competition. This stunning photograph was taken in Frensham, Surrey by Emily Garthwaite who wins a pair of Terra ED 8 x 42 compact binoculars worth £409.99 from leading sports optics company ZEISS (www.zeiss.co.uk/sportsoptics).

Chosen from well over 300 entries, Emily's photograph epitomises all that is great about our countryside and beautifully summed up the 'Great Outdoors' theme of the competition. ♥

Visit www.countryside-alliance.org to view the worthy runners-up, and for news of our next exciting photography competition.



The Countryside Alliance political team considers some of the key issues and battlegrounds of this Parliament

WORDS JAMES SOMERVILLE-MEIKLE

AN IMPORTANT PARLIAMENT

Parliament is back from summer recess. The garden parties with warm prosecco and gossip about the General Election results seem like a long time ago. The business of legislating gets under way once again, and there is a lot of work to do.

Despite losing her majority, the Prime Minister, Theresa May, managed to get the Queen's Speech past MPs in June with support from the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). Much has been said about what was not included in the speech, with many describing the Government's legislative agenda for the next two years as limited at best. The Queen has certainly delivered longer speeches in Parliament and the number of bills outlined was relatively small. However, look at what those bills

contain and you realise that this will be one of the busiest parliaments in recent history.

An Agriculture Bill will provide the framework for a new agricultural policy. A Trade Bill will lay the foundations for the UK to operate its own trade policy outside the European Union (EU) and an Immigration Bill will determine the principles behind an immigration policy independent of EU law. The three most important elements of post-Brexit life for most farmers – support payments, trade and access to labour – are likely to be determined by these bills as well as the ongoing negotiations over the terms of our exit.

The government has already published its Repeal Bill, which will transpose EU law into UK law to ease the process of leaving the EU, and fairly soon the government will need

to provide the substance for the other bills. This is a large task in itself but the even bigger challenge will be steering these bills through Parliament.

Bills rarely go through Parliament without amendments. Government proposals can look very different by the time they have been through the parliamentary machine at Westminster. The Hunting Act started life as a bill to license rather than ban hunting, but backbench Labour MPs were frustrated that this did not go far enough and turned it into an outright ban through a series of amendments. The Labour government at the time had a majority of 166. This government has a working majority of 13 when support from the DUP is included. Not since the governments of Wilson and Callaghan, when MPs were brought into the division



FOR THE COUNTRYSIDE

lobbies on stretchers to vote, has the Commons been on such a knife edge, where every vote counts.

There will be much discussion about policy but ultimately many decisions will come down to politics and what the government is able to get through Parliament. Backbench MPs from all parties have significant influence and will be in a strong position to secure amendments to bills for good or ill. Now, more than ever, it will be important to work with politicians from across all parties to ensure this Parliament delivers for rural communities.

REPEAL BILL

There is broad agreement on the need to maintain EU law in the short term after we leave the EU to ease the transition process. This will be

done through the European Union (Withdrawal) Bill, otherwise known as the Repeal Bill, which will convert EU law into UK law, including most existing environmental protections.

For some laws this process will be straightforward, a simple switch of authority from the EU to the UK.

“It is right that environmental protections are upheld after leaving the EU”

However, other laws will require change before they can be adopted as domestic legislation. For example, a law that requires an agency to report twice a year to the EU on environmental matters, such as air quality, will need amending so that it reports to a body

in the UK. Defra will have a significant role to play in this as over 1,000 laws which apply to the environment, farming and rural affairs come from the EU and EU law affects 80 per cent of Defra’s work.

The Repeal Bill is likely to give Defra ministers significant powers to change EU laws in order to make them enforceable outside of the EU. It is right that environmental protections are upheld after leaving the EU but ministers should resist the urge, and possible pressure from backbench MPs and outside groups, to make major changes at this stage. Environmental laws inherited from the EU should be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and appropriate for the UK but the Repeal Bill is not the time to do this as these issues will need full consideration on their own.

AGRICULTURE BILL

Agricultural policy will be debated in Westminster for the first time in over 40 years as the Agriculture Bill will establish the framework for a new policy to replace the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). This will be one of the biggest, and certainly one of the most important, bills which Defra has ever had to handle. It will be a test for their civil servants who are more accustomed to implementing laws from the EU rather than creating law. It will also be a test for Defra ministers who will have to ensure that a new policy emerges which is practical and effective in the face of competing lobbying from all directions both inside and outside Parliament.

There is general agreement between the farming lobby and environmental groups on the need for a new policy to replace CAP, and that support payments should be provided largely in recognition of the public goods provided by farmers. However, this coalition will be tested when the details of the bill are debated in Parliament. Questions about how public goods are to be measured,

who should receive support, and how much support should be provided, will all need to be considered. There will be differences of opinion, as well as some unlikely alliances. A key contribution from the Countryside Alliance has been to highlight the importance of upland farming to rural landscapes and communities, and the need to recognise that support payments are vital for this type of farming to continue.

At present, policy is determined in Brussels and Defra has responsibility for administering CAP in England with the devolved administrations having responsibility for Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. Under a new policy, Defra will be responsible for creating a UK framework and establishing levels of devolution to allow for national variation. The devolved administrations will demand the maximum amount of devolution, and the SNP is already calling for full devolution of the new policy, but devolution will need to be balanced against the need to maintain the integrity of the UK single market. Significant

levels of variation could lead to unfair competition if farmers in England were paid more or less than other parts of the UK. This will require difficult conversations between Westminster and Holyrood, Stormont, and Cardiff.

TRADE BILL

Trade is vital to the success of the food and farming industry. The Trade Bill will establish the framework necessary for the UK to operate an independent trade policy outside of the EU, which will include the ability to set tariffs. There are opportunities in establishing our own trade policy, particularly opening up new markets for British food, but there are also risks.

Our trade policy must not allow UK high standards of safety and animal welfare, developed over many years, to be undermined by permitting food produced to lower standards to be imported tariff free. The issue of chlorinated chicken has already been raised during initial trade discussions with the US, and agriculture is



likely to be a sensitive subject in any new trade deals. The success of our trade policy for agriculture will depend on the extent to which ministers recognise the importance of farming, not just in food production, but for rural landscapes and communities, which is something the Countryside Alliance is working hard to promote.

The Commons International Trade Committee is chaired by Angus MacNeil MP from the SNP whose constituency of Na h-Eileanan an Iar (Western Isles) is home to many sheep farmers who are aware of what is at stake with any new trade deals with big lamb exporting countries such as New Zealand and Australia. Neil Parish MP, a former dairy farmer and chairman of the influential Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee, has indicated that his committee will be looking into the importance of trade policy for farming, so this is not an issue which the government will be able to ignore.

IMMIGRATION BILL

The government has stated that freedom of movement will end when we leave the EU. The Immigration Bill will need to create a fair and sustainable immigration system which must cater for the needs of farmers and rural businesses who employ people from the EU.

The vast majority of the 80,000 seasonal workers employed on farms across the country every year come from the EU, along with many permanent employees. Workers from the EU are also relied upon in related sectors such as game farming, forestry, and food processing.

A debate in Parliament before the summer recess highlighted the difficulties experienced by farmers and rural businesses in recruiting workers from the EU since the referendum result. A fall in the value in the pound combined with uncertainty about the UK's future relationship with the EU has reduced the appeal of working in the UK for many people. Farmers and rural businesses will be looking to the Immigration Bill to provide certainty.

The Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, has commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee to consider the economic role of immigration from the EU, but this is not due to report until spring 2019, just before our departure date from the EU. In the short term, the Countryside Alliance has called on the government to reintroduce a Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme which granted temporary visas until it ended in 2013. Defra ministers are refusing to give any commitments about a future scheme but, given that the Labour Party has a manifesto pledge to reintroduce it, and many backbench Conservative MPs are in favour, the government may be forced to act.

Throughout Brexit and beyond, the Countryside Alliance will continue to engage with the political process to ensure that the interests of rural communities are promoted. 🌱

*James Somerville-Meikle
Political Relations Manager*

“The Trade Bill will establish the framework necessary for the UK to operate an independent trade policy outside of the EU”

2017 **Countryside Alliance Awards**



Nominations for the annual awards are now open

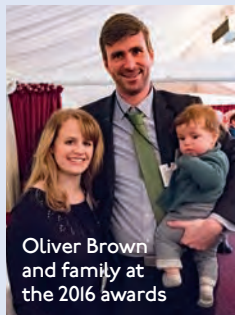
Do you know a business worthy of winning one of our coveted Rural Oscars? Public nominations for the 2017 Countryside Alliance Awards are now open. The 13th annual awards will once again give farmers, butchers, village shops and small businesses a platform from which to tell their stories, and they will need the support of their customers to help propel them to the top prize. A new addition this year is the Best British Pub Award, so if you know of a local that supports regional produce and is central to its community, let us know. Visit countryside-alliance.org/caawards to nominate your favourites.



Dairy to dream



Rosemary Brown, of Bluebells Farm, near Derby, talks about her family's 2016 Countryside Alliance Tourism Enterprise award



Oliver Brown and family at the 2016 awards

WHAT'S THE HISTORY OF BLUEBELLS?

My husband Geoffrey and I moved to the family farm in 1989. In 2007, my son Oliver had just finished his degree in agricultural science and I was practice manager at one of the largest farm and equine units in the Midlands. We both wanted to work from home, but at that time, as now, poor milk prices meant the farm would be unable to support us both, so after a two-year research period we decided to diversify into ice cream production because we wanted to add value to our milk. Our geographical location helped us to decide the way forward with ice cream.

WHAT MAKES YOUR ICE CREAM STAND OUT FROM THE CROWD?

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wonderfully smooth and creamy with some amazing flavours. We have 25 in the range.

HOW HAS THE FARM CHANGED?

When we opened Bluebell Dairy in 2008, we started with four team members. Today we have 65! In 2009 we introduced a few animal paddocks – the Bluebells Farm visitor areas are now much larger with a wide range of animals, including donkeys, ponies, pigs and rabbits, and activities. And in 2015, we opened our beautiful new rural classroom and tea rooms. This completely changed the dynamics of our business, and we began to grow rapidly.

HOW DID IT FEEL WHEN YOU WON THE COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE AWARD?

It was incredible – a real sense of pride and achievement. It was so good to gain recognition for our hard work and passion for getting people to enjoy the countryside. ❤️



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WORDS KATE GATACRE



Clifford with his Gloucester

GLoucesters

An ancient breed, the Gloucester was originally tri-purpose, being used as oxen as well as for dairy and beef. A striking-looking animal, it has a dark mahogany body and a black head and legs, a white stripe passing from the small of the back, over the tail and udder and covering its underline and mid-length horns that are white and tipped with black, sweeping upwards. In 1972, just one herd remained, despite the fact that this had once been an incredibly popular breed. Today, single Gloucester cheese is protected, while Double Gloucester isn't – the former was the cheese usually consumed on the farm, while the latter was exported all over the world in the 18th century, including to the US. Clifford Freeman, who farms in Gloucestershire, near Redmarley, says the breed is exceptionally

quiet: "They are very docile and easy to deal with. The breed calves easily and has a very steady level of lactation, meaning they will have a long period of milking after calving. My father bought his first Gloucesters in 1971 and he had a cow that milked for two years despite not calving. The beef is fantastic – beautifully marbled and with a lot of flavour. Today they are more of a dual-purpose breed than a dairy one, as they haven't been improved by cross-breeding with Holsteins, unlike many others, so just don't produce the volume." Clifford's cattle are grass fed, but he says, "They don't stay out all winter, more because they poach the ground than because they can't deal with the cold. Having said that, the breed was originally farmed on river meadows, so aren't hardy to tougher conditions."



John with his Longhorn

LONGHORNS

With their eponymous long horns, which can curve straight out from the head or turn towards the mouth, the Longhorn is instantly recognisable. The horns must contain no black, and the hooves should not be black either. The colour is normally a brindled red, with a white line down the centre of the back, while a white patch on each thigh is particularly desirable.

Pat and John Stanley, of Blackbrook Longhorns, based near Coalville in Leicestershire breed Longhorns primarily for pedigree, “Though we do butcher the ‘failures’, the ones that aren’t good enough for breeding. They make unbelievably good eating. With young bulls, you can either feed them concentrate and eat them at 15 months, or, as grass-fed steers or heifers, they’re ready between 22 and 30 months. It’s very marbled meat, and cooks beautifully.” The Blackbrook Longhorns won “Best Meat in Britain”, a *Country Life* award, in 2012.

“They’re very docile, very easy to deal with,” John says, “And they calve easily. We keep many of the males as bulls.” The Longhorn is now widely exported, and there are some 10,000 females. As to hardiness, John says the only reason to bring them in is to avoid poaching the fields, “They’re more than happy outdoors all year round otherwise.”



NORTHERN DAIRY SHORTHORN

A range of colours exist from red, white, red and white or roan, with small upswept horns. Cows usually weigh around 550kg, with bulls at around 750kg. Charles Castle, a vet in Northamptonshire, says that, while most are friendly, “You do get the occasional stropky one. We handle ours in a race, we don’t need to use a crush.”

While the Northern Dairy Shorthorn is in the same group as the other shorthorn breeds, it is genetically distinct, having been isolated from other shorthorns in the 1700s. Charles explains: “The Northern Dairy Shorthorn was a cow of the Dales, bred for upland areas. They need very little in the way of concentrate and are perfect for pure grass production.” Smaller, hairier and tougher, these cattle were effectively a closed herd until the early 1940s. Despite their name, they are a dual-purpose breed, with a light bone structure and an ability to live purely on grass. “We usually slaughter at 30 months, and the meat is well marbled and has excellent flavour. The average milk production, produced on a grass-based diet, would be between 4,000 and 6,000 litres per lactation, but a good level of butterfat at 4%. A huge advantage of the breed is that they calve very easily. That’s why I chose the breed – as a vet I knew I would have to have cows that didn’t need much help, as I’d be looking after other people’s herds!” Of 110 calvings, Charles has only had to do anything in four. The cows are also long-lived and fertile: “I had one cow who lived to 19, producing 14 calves in that time. The calves may be small when they are born but they grow quickly.”

“The Northern Dairy Shorthorn was a cow of the Dales, bred for upland areas”



Charles and his Shorthorn



Helen with her Hereford

PHOTOS: GLENN DEARING

HEREFORDS

The Hereford has a dark red body with a white face, crest, dewlap and underline, though white markings can often be seen below the knees and hocks as well. Medium-length horns are always downward curving. The modern Hereford is one of the most widespread breeds in the world thanks to its adaptability and its ability to graze on poor soil, in any conditions, and yet still produce good beef. There are herds of Modern Herefords from the Russian Steppes to the American Prairies, but these are not to be confused with the Original Population Herefords which Helen Macleod breeds. These Original Population Herefords must have no imported blood and will be able to trace their descent entirely from the British Hereford Herd Book which was closed in 1886.

Helen has a small herd, near Malvern, which she grazes on wildflower meadows that have 20 species per square metre in parts:

“They were bred to be thrifty, stocky and sturdy and have a high output from a low input. I don’t feed mine anything but grass and, in the winter, hay. The traditional Hereford is definitely tough enough to be outside all year, but we are on heavy clay and it would damage the meadows too much during winter so they are in and feeding on hay from November to early April, depending on the conditions.”

“They were bred to be thrifty, stocky and sturdy and have a high output from a low input. I don’t feed mine on anything but grass and, in the winter, hay”

Helen manages her herd entirely on her own, which is testimony to their good natures. “They are very quiet, very docile. They calve easily, and Hereford bulls were often put to dairy cows to ensure an easy calving and a good carcass on the calf.”

The Original Population Herefords breed very true, according to Helen, “While those that have bloodlines that may have come from Herefords that were exported to North America, for example, many have been bred to prioritise height or frame size over easy fleshing, calving and ease of management.

“The worldwide breed has seen a huge rate of change, as they had to adapt to very different

conditions from the Welsh Marches from where the breed originated, but the Traditionals offer the breeder genetics of guaranteed provenance”

Helen sells boxes of her beef, and says that the meat is well marbled

and flavoursome: “We slaughter at between 24 and 30 months, and then hang the meat for between 21 and 28 days. They’re a thrifty animal, producing well meated high value 300kg carcasses, which many butchers prefer to the bigger breeds as they are more manageable. They’re long-lived, too. Bulls and cows will work to a great age and on reaching the end of their breeding lives will produce a good weight of carcass.”



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Countryside and sporting art dealer Sally Mitchell explains how a trip to Sotheby's sent her on her highly successful career path

WORDS SUE DANDO

Work of

Sally Mitchell has certainly packed a lot into her 72 years. A former millinery model, she became a female art dealer in a 1960s male-dominated world, has an acclaimed fine art gallery, become a horse museum owner, and has ridden dressage to Prix St Georges level. Not bad coming from someone who admits that she was a “complete disaster at school. All I ever wanted to do was ride my ponies,” she laughs. “I was dyslexic and very short sighted and my father paid for me to go to a highly academic public school where they had lots of entrances to Oxford and Cambridge and I was the very first girl there ever to fail all their O Levels! I was more interested in ponies; school took my time away from them so I resented it.

“I left school wanting to be a horse dealer because I liked the idea of trading, but I got sent to be a millinery model in a showroom at the back of Bond Street in London. I didn’t stay there long as I missed the countryside – I used to rush home at the weekend to hunt with the Oakley.”

A trip to Sotheby’s with a boyfriend became a light bulb moment for Sally.

“He was an antiques dealer and we were on a buying trip. There on the wall at Sotheby’s were some early sporting pictures – probably Stubbs, Herring and Marshall. I fell in love with them immediately and it all sort of clicked for me. That’s when I knew what I wanted to do.



art



“At the time I was 18 or 19 and there weren’t many women dealers around. Was I brave? Hmm, brave or stupid, I don’t know which, but I studied and learnt and began dealing in old paintings and advertising in the back of *Horse & Hound* magazine. One day an artist rang me up and asked me to take some of his dog pictures which I thought were great. He was John Trickett, who has turned out to be one of my leading artists. We’ve been working together for over 40 years and gradually, as the years went on, I discovered other artists.”

She admits that her personal taste is sometimes at odds with what she sells. “I like the early sporting artists, the slightly naive ones like Seymour and Wootten but they’re very much out of fashion now. The market is a lot quieter on that style now. For the gallery I’m very commercial and we have very different styles of artist from Malcolm Coward who is our horse painter, to Fred Haycock, a nice hunting artist, to Mick Cawston who is no longer alive but has a big following.”

She also likes to keep an eye out for up and



PHOTOS: ROB WHITROW



Sally with her son John, who is also involved in the family business

coming artists. Her 'other half', who happens to be the aforementioned Malcolm Coward, sometimes teaches students who come to their house to paint their horses "which is great fun. Debbie Dunbar, who paints horses and dogs is very good."

Although an accomplished horsewoman, Sally is no longer able to ride herself as she has severe osteoporosis in her spine. Not that this affliction seems to have slowed her down. With her son John firmly ensconced in the family business, Sally recently opened a Museum of the Horse next door to her Nottinghamshire gallery.

"I'm now also terribly involved with it - it's eight rooms full of pieces. I've been collecting things for many years, although I never know what I'm looking for until I see it and I often don't realise the thing existed until I find it. Recently someone gave me a terrier bag, which I'd never seen before. It's a big leather bag that the terrier man wore while hunting many years ago. The leather straps went over his shoulder and around his middle and there was a collar on the inside of the bag where you'd keep the terrier inside. You'd ride around with the terrier in the bag. I also have a pretty horrible anti-cribbing device which you'd hang in the horse's mouth and it held the mouth open to stop it from cribbing. There's all sorts of things like that, things you don't know exist until you come across them. I find it fascinating. I suppose I'm not very good at not being busy." 🍷



COUNTRYSIDE ALLIANCE CHRISTMAS CARDS

Each year the Countryside Alliance produces four Christmas card designs to raise money for the organisation and each year Sally and her artists generously allow their work to feature. Order your cards online at: countryside-alliance.org.



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AN OLD

HABIT

Why not try a new perspective on hunting and give side saddle a try?

WORDS CATHY WOOD

As the hunting season kicks off, saddles are polished and stirrup cups filled, there is a group of passionate – and fearless – ladies who choose to tackle the largest of hedges and the toughest of country from a side saddle. Clad in vintage habits, resplendent in silk hats and veils, they proudly uphold the traditions of this old-fashioned pastime.

Chloe Edgar started riding side saddle five years ago with her sister as they were keen hunters and wanted to tick riding side saddle at a Boxing Day meet off their bucket lists. “We enjoyed it so much that we decided to carry on with it and join the crazy but fun side saddle family,” she laughs. Fellow rider and former hunt master Laura Cardwell has only ridden side saddle since last May, but was instantly hooked: “I had bought a horse, Casanova, for my partner Matt to learn on and he has proved to be the most amazing horse – I can fieldmaster on him and Matt has learnt to ride on him. I was told he was the right shape for side saddle and so we put one on him and on I got!”

Riding side saddle is about more than just the tradition for these ladies and Laura explains what drew her to try it: “The elegance of the side saddle has always appealed to me – and the beautiful habits. I think it is such a fantastic tradition that should be kept alive. Also I am an adrenalin junkie and therefore set the challenge of going hunting last season ‘on the wonk’ after only four months of learning in the summer. I absolutely loved it from the getting ready to the hunting. There’s a great camaraderie between us side saddle girls and we are all great friends which makes it so much fun.” So far she has done a flat race in March for the injured jockey’s fund at the Bicester Point-to-Point, is about to tackle the Vale of White Horse’s gate competition alongside Chloe in September and the pair have also qualified for the Diana’s of the Chase in Quorn country in December.

Hannah Welsh has done one full season hunting side saddle and will be kicking on and following hounds on more days of riding side saddle this season. “Following hounds hunting sideways is such an amazing feeling, it’s like you’re taken back

“There’s a great camaraderie between us side saddle girls and we are all great friends”



50 years to the good old days ... I swear the goose bumps get bigger when you hear those hounds as you ride side saddle.

"It's such a different day hunting side saddle, every hunting day is special to me but hunting side saddle is just something else. The reaction from all involved with hunting when we turn up side saddle is incredible; from the foot followers, to the host of the meet, to the hunt servants, to the general public and fellow subscribers, all welcome us with a big smile and huge encouragement."

SIDE SADDLE BEGINNINGS

From royalty to the society set, equestrian ladies have ridden side saddle for hundreds of years. Allowing ladies to elegantly mount and ride a horse whilst wearing billowing skirts and keeping ankles covered, side saddle was considered the only way for ladies to ride.

For anyone who can ride astride, beginning riding side saddle is not as daunting as you may think. Gemma Mullin is quite new to the style and she says: "Initially it feels completely different as your sense of balance feels different. You use your muscles in a different way and need greater core strength. However, the principles of riding side saddle are the same as riding astride. It is about working in partnership and harmony with your horse."

A good place to start is the Side Saddle Association, which is split into different regions, all offering help, support and encouragement to those interested in trying out this style of riding. There are instructors who can help you get started and point you in the right direction for equipment - alternatively if you spot a lady riding side saddle on the hunting field, they will be more than happy to help you.

Shirley Oultram, a veteran of 55 years on the hunting field, 30 of which she has ridden side saddle, says the sport is remarkably accessible. "Any horse, as long as it doesn't rear, can carry a



Below: L-R Hannah Welsh, Shirley Oultram, Laura Cardwell, Chloe Edgar, Gemma Mullin





side saddle. You can go anywhere and do anything you want side saddle. If you just want to hack about the country lanes; if you've got a hip problem; if you've got a disability, it can help - it gets you back out in the fresh air on your horse having fun."

The specialist equipment can be costly, but Shirley points out that you can start at riding schools that offer side saddle lessons, then you can hire saddles and habits, before you fully commit yourself and your horse to the riding style. All hunts will welcome you side saddle and Shirley says: "You can hunt in a tweed habit, shirt and tie, so you don't need anything too fancy. Just make sure you've asked the hunt secretary to go and you'll be more than welcome. You can even collect a special button, which was introduced by Emma Brown from Leicestershire, who has done a tremendous amount for side saddle hunting. She gives hunting buttons to ladies who hunt regularly side saddle and it's a lovely achievement." But beware, once you've ridden side saddle, you are likely to be hooked - and no doubt you'll soon be collecting vintage habits, polishing equipment for shows and tackling hedges side saddle like a pro! ❤️

Find out more at sidesaddleassociation.co.uk

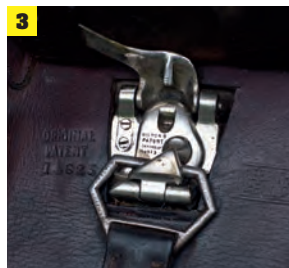
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SADDLE IN DETAIL



The three most common side saddles are made by Champion & Wilton, Mayhew and Owen and many are well maintained and repaired originals:

PIC 1 On the off side the balance girth (diagonal from the seat to the girth) helps to keep the side saddle positioned correctly. Side saddles position the rider further back on the horse than a traditional saddle

PIC 2 Owen saddles have a rounded skirt and a more complex stirrup fitting

PIC 3 Champion & Wilton saddles have a wide skirt that covers the stirrup fitting and ensures it does not detach

PIC 4 The combination of the fixed head pommel (top) and the leaping head pommel (underneath) helps the rider to maintain their position in the saddle



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One of Britain's leading racecourses is entering a new era. Newbury Racecourse, which held its first race in 1905, is making changes behind the scenes while also enhancing the visitor experience. Recent site developments include a new hotel, The Lodge, new Eastern Entrance, and new Owners and Trainers facility due to open in October 2017, which will seat 200 people.

And after 60 years the iconic Hennessy Gold Cup now welcomes a new sponsor - Ladbrokes. The historic handicap chase over 3¼ miles is to be renamed the Ladbrokes Trophy and will be the central attraction of the two-day Ladbrokes Winter Carnival. This meeting takes place on Friday, December 1 and Saturday December 2 2017 and will continue to be the most high-profile event of the winter jump season at Newbury.

Previously, the Hennessy Gold Cup produced winners such as Cheltenham Gold Cup runner Native River and Smad Place, Grand National winner Many Clouds, and racing legend Denman. The popular winter meeting has also made winners of Coneygree and Thistlecrack. The new sponsorship from Ladbrokes brings with it a larger prize pot for this year's contenders. Throughout the Ladbrokes Winter Carnival, a total of £700,000 in prize money is on offer, with the Ladbrokes Trophy alone worth £250,000 to the winner, an increase

of £50,000 since 2016. This increase is likely to encourage even greater competition among those who want to gain legendary status as the first name to claim the Ladbrokes Trophy.

The annual winter meeting is also a major social occasion for celebrities. Recent stars spotted include actors Martin Clunes, Eddie Redmayne, Carey Mulligan, James Norton and Stanley Tucci, comedians Jennifer Saunders and Rob Brydon, and musicians Tinie Tempah and Melanie Chisholm. Victoria Pendleton, a former British Olympic track cyclist who transitioned to being a jockey in 2015, has also graced Newbury Racecourse.

Alongside the top-quality racing promised this season, there will also be a host of exciting off-track activities including live music, street performers and a shopping village. Living up to its award as Racecourse Caterer of the Year 2016, Newbury Racecourse offers visitors a selection of eateries, from bakeries to bars, fish & chips to champagne, coffee to pies, plus three panoramic restaurants, including The Hennessy which has fantastic views of the winning post.

Considering the meeting's reputation as one of the best-loved events on the racing calendar, the first ever Ladbrokes Winter Carnival is set to be big. Whether you visit for the racing or socialising, it's guaranteed you'll enjoy yourself in the presence of legends - old and new. ❤️



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PUTTING THE BOOT IN

Tough testing for the latest walking boots

WORDS SAM THOMPSON

“Good boots and a good bed, if you’re not in one, you’re in the other.” The words of an old hill farmer to me on the subject of footwear are as true today as ever. I spend the thick end of 300 days a year wearing hill boots, and tend to get through a pair every year or two. The Lowa Hunter GTX boots arrived at the office of an estate I contract to, and went into immediate service for early season stag stalking. Similar in build and style, if slightly heavier, than the boots I’m used to, they took a few days to get broken in and comfortable. Designed mainly for winter use, the Hunters feature an additional layer of Primaloft insulation, which while making them a little hot for early season work will make them ideal for hind stalking and game shooting in the winter months.

The first guest of the season arrived on a sunny Monday, and after a quick trip to the range to check zero on his rifle,

we set off to spy the hill, with a good wind blowing from the south. At this time of year the stags sit in large groups, and it didn’t take too long to find a herd of about 20 hiding on a bracken covered plateau about half way up the hill. We stopped just shy of the summit to soak up some of the glorious west coast sunshine.

Crossing the top of a scree slope allowed us to contour round the hill, and before too long we were looking down on 22 stags between three and 10 years old. After a few minutes with the telescope I had found one of the poorer beasts in the herd that would be an ideal cull stag. At seven years old and carrying an eight point head he was far from the best stag in the group and certainly wouldn’t be improving in quality going forward. The combination sealed his fate.

With the stags at about 600 metres below us and looking down the slope, I picked a small burn for cover and we quickly made the ground between us. I was worried that, at that time of the day, the animals might get up to graze, so time was of the

essence. After a steady crouched walk down most of the burn, a few metres of crawling brought us up on the side of a knoll and into a perfect shooting position.

With the guest’s rifle set up on the bipod and a round chambered, it was merely a waiting game until our stag stood to present a shot, and sure enough, after a few minutes he did just that. A single shot from the .270 hit him square in the shoulder, and after a short death charge he tumbled over in the heather.

Throughout this season the Lowas have performed flawlessly, providing excellent support for the hill and being comfortable day after day. An ideal winter boot, I’m looking forward to giving them a thorough workout over the hind season. ❤️

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I spend the thick end of 300 days a year wearing hill boots and get through a pair every year or two



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The gamekeeper's diary

Social media is just one of the new challenges faced by the young keepers of today

WORDS CURTIS MOSSOP

Getting your foot on the ladder is never an easy feat when it comes to securing your first job as a gamekeeper; it is a highly contested industry, viewed by some as 'dead man's shoes'. For decades, the only route in was earning your stripes and working your fingers to the bone for a local keeper hoping he took a shine to you. Like it or not, times have changed and quite drastically, too. The college-based route, be it via a full-time course or an apprenticeship-based one is now the most popular route and for good reason.

A keeper of 30 or 40 years ago might be somewhat scornful of the modern day student, having access to high quality thermal imaging equipment, trail cameras and the other technical developments in use today. However, one thing I doubt the keepers of yesteryear would be envious of is social media.

Social media can be a cruel mistress. Such a powerful tool when used correctly, but equally a potential career ender when used flippantly. The shooting community cannot afford to be as insular as we have been guilty of being in the past. We need to celebrate the benefits reaped from the hard work of gamekeepers as a way of future-proofing our beloved pastime for future generations. The work of CA, BASC and the NGO has been instrumental in paving the way for gamekeepers and estates to start opening up and promoting their work using social media as a platform.

For the past 22 years, Newton Rigg College have been offering gamekeeping courses to an ever-increasing demographic of students who travel from all corners of Britain. We are extremely fortunate to have some top-class teaching resources: a driven partridge shoot, grouse moor, deer management forest, game rearing facilities, dog kennels and gun room are part of the college. This variety enables our students to experience all aspects of gamekeeping and choose their career path more carefully.

To ensure we are not delivering style over substance, we work very hard on the core employability skills needed to become a gamekeeper. Honesty, punctuality, independence and determination (to name

but a few) are all attributes we look to develop in a student. Giving them serious responsibilities, such as the management of our driven partridge shoot, including the running of all shoot days, is a sink or swim exercise, but our students rise to the occasion and it really helps to develop them as individuals.

Students are required to undertake a minimum 300 hours of work experience over the duration of their course and it is the highlight of their studies. To prepare them for this, we specifically cover CV writing, interview body language, communication styles and even how to put a tie on properly. With the use of external visitors, we conduct formal interviews for a fictional job role to give them a real experience of the process. The students are often shocked to find we have viewed their social media accounts prior to the interview and present any interesting finds to them, often leaving their mouths agape.

It has been a particularly buoyant year for job opportunities and I am pleased to say my students have done exceptionally well in finding full-time gamekeeping jobs. I am filled with immense pride watching them all graduate wearing their new estate tweeds; it is the reason I began teaching and the same reason why I will continue to do so.

The students do however leave me with one final message ringing in their ears, "Loving the job you do is a fantastic feeling and not one shared by everyone. You have a terrific opportunity but you are not just responsible for your own future, you are now responsible for the future of gamekeeping".

Curtis Mossop is senior lecturer and course manager for gamekeeping and wildlife management at Newton Rigg College in Cumbria



Continuing our series looking at the landscape, sport and properties in various regions of the UK, we focus on the northern English counties of Northumberland and Cumbria

WORDS CATHY WOOD

Northumberland spreads down and inland along the east coast of England from the Scottish Borders to just north of Newcastle, encompassing over 5,000km² of forests, hills and national parks. Cumbria occupies the top left hand corner of England, taking in 6,768km² of coast, lakes, hills and fells. Between them they have two World Heritage sites – Hadrian’s Wall and the Lake District National Park and, what’s more, offer unrivalled opportunities for country pursuits.

Rupert Wailes-Fairbairn, Divisional Director of Lycetts Rural in Newcastle, comes from a farming family and still farms in Northumberland where he has lived all his life. He believes that Northumberland has everything one could wish for – hunting, shooting, fishing and landscapes from deserted beaches and fertile rural farms to unspoilt valleys and remote hills. He goes further: “We are fortunate to have a varied topography and are spoilt for choice with a number of grouse moors, high bird pheasant and partridge shoots. When it comes to hunting you’ve got the lot actually; from the low ground to the hill.”

“Northumberland’s hills offer breathtaking scenery with hunts such as the College Valley and Border taking advantage of some challenging terrain to the north and west of the county. In

Cumbria, around the Lake District, there are six legendary Fell packs to choose from... the Blencathra need no introduction. In both counties a real effort is made to find a balance between shooting and hunting, where many family-owned estates are great role models. They are such an important part of the fabric of the countryside and community where shooting and hunting sit very happily side by side.”

Field sports are part of the life blood of the rural economy in the region as a whole. Hunting supports a variety of businesses in the area, with yards like Kimmerston Riding Centre dependent on hunting for their income as they supply horses for all the hunts in the region. Rupert comments further: “As for fishing, there are two big rivers in Northumberland; the famous Tweed at the top of the county while the Tyne in the south is the most productive salmon river in England. In Cumbria, both the Eden and Derwent attract fishermen from far and wide.”

The region does have challenges though as Rupert points out: “For those settling in to the area, broadband can be problematic and that can be a real nuisance, certainly for smaller businesses,” he says. However, the dramatic landscapes and varied sporting opportunities make Northumberland and Cumbria a real draw for those seeking a rural life. ♡

Sunrise over
Coniston Water,
Lake District,
Cumbria

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Hedgelaying is an ancient skill, practised for centuries in the British Isles with a very specific purpose: to contain livestock. We think of this as a uniquely British thing; although there are still a few laid hedges in Germany and the Netherlands, the art has been lost in France. The work should be carried out between October and March, when the sap stops flowing in trees and shrubs and they become dormant, but before birds start nesting, though shoots will of course be waiting for the end of the season. We all know that a well maintained hedgerow, with a multitude of species, can provide shelter and food for our gamebirds, but also for farmland birds, insects and mammals.

The basic method of laying a hedge is as follows: first, remove lower side branches from each stem, thus allowing light to reach the base of the hedge, which will encourage new growth. These upright stems are known as pleachers. The next step is to cut into the pleacher at an angle, just above ground level. The cut needs to be deep enough to allow the pleacher to be 'laid'. The pleachers are then bent, but

they should never be horizontal as a measure of upward slant is required to allow the sap to rise through the plant. A series of vertical stakes are driven into the ground to add strength. These are placed at intervals of around 50cm and usually hazel or ash are used. Thin hazel rods are used to bind the stakes together, using a weaving technique.

"A well maintained hedgerow, with a multitude of species, can provide shelter and food for our gamebirds"

There are dozens of different styles of hedgelaying still employed today in the UK, each using a unique method – so the Midland or 'Bullock' style means that the stake sides face the road or ploughed land, while the brush is on the animal side to prevent them eating the new growth. The hedge slopes towards the animals and strong bindings are employed just below the top of the hedge so that bullocks don't twist them off with their horns.

Yorkshire hedges, by contrast, are

traditionally very thin, especially where crop rotation was with an arable bias, though they are laid uphill as in most areas. Sawn stakes and rails are used, as the trees suitable to harvest stakes and binders do not grow well on the wind-blown uplands.

A Devon hedge is traditionally laid on a bank, and pleachers are known as 'steepers' and are more horizontal when laid than in most areas, and are pegged down with crooked hazel sticks. The bank acts as the main barrier against livestock.

The Welsh Border or Brecon style hedges employ hazel stakes driven in at an angle at the centre of the hedge, and dead wood is woven into the hedge to prevent animals from eating the new growth.

As long as the hedge is laid to suit the field's use and is well maintained – so, for example, a Bullock style for a pasture that will hold cattle, or a Brecon or Welsh Border style for a field that will hold sheep – a well laid hedge should last for up to 50 years, making it not only a sensible financial investment, but also a sound ecological one. ♡

HEDGEFUNDS FOR HABITAT

Now is the time to consider long-term maintenance such as laid hedges, which offer one of the best habitats for wildlife

WORDS KATE GATACRE

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EAT THE SEASONS

Early autumn provides a bountiful supply of ingredients

Autumn

WORDS KATE GATACRE



1. FENNEL

One of the best late-season vegetables around, the aniseed overtone of fennel is an exceptionally good partner for pork or fish. The fronds are worth using too, as a substitute for dill or finely chopped in a salad. Fennel is delicious raw, very finely sliced, but if you do cook it, make sure it is truly tender. A simple and delicious dish is to boil the fennel until tender, cover with dried breadcrumbs, parmesan and a dash of olive oil and bake until golden brown.

TOP TIP: If you do grow your own, it's worth cutting to a quarter of an inch above the soil, as they often grow back, albeit smaller.

2. DAMSONS

Damsons seem to be particular to England, and there are plenty of semi-wild examples growing in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, where they were commonly planted or self-sown in hedgerows. A strong flavour, the purple indigo skin lends its colour to the green flesh. Damson cheese, made in the same way as membrillo, has recently made a comeback – our forefathers would store pans of the 'cheese', and serve them with almonds stuck in and covered in port.

TOP TIP: Damson jam is fantastic, but to save the hassle of pulling out all the stones, why not make damson jelly?



3. BLACKBERRIES

The quality of blackberries is hugely dependent on the weather – too wet and they are plump but rather tasteless, too dry and they shrivel up. The perfect season, however, will produce a long series of fruit, which changes through the season. Dorothy Hartley describes (and illustrates) it perfectly in her book *Food in England*. The first, large juicy fruit is best eaten raw, or used in puddings, while the second, smaller fruit is best used in jam.

TOP TIP: When making any form of fruit liqueurs, such as blackberry whisky or vodka, steep the fruit in the booze for a couple of months, then remove the fruit before adding sugar.

4. SQUASH

This is not an Americanism – pumpkins are a cultivar of squash. A great one to grow if you have space, and best of all if you have a good compost heap, where they can spread as far as they really want to and you'll rarely need to worry about watering. Make sure you grow the tastiest – those huge orange things that are used for carving Halloween faces do not rank among the best. Blue Hubbard has fantastic flavour and stores exceptionally well. Peel only those with the thicker skin, the rest are perfectly good simply chopped.

TOP TIP: If you are picking these to store, leave at least two inches of stalk on the top to prevent rotting. 🍂





GAME ON

My Countryside's Game Chef takes to the hills of Exmoor to shoot seasonal pigeon, grouse and partridge for a light autumn supper

WORDS TOM GODBER-FORD MOORE

Given the recent trend of Indian summers in the UK, now is a great time to seize the opportunity and do something a little less traditional and lighter with the early season birds, before the weather changes and we all start craving 'stodge'.

If you are lucky enough to be out on the moor for some early season grouse bagging, be sure to have a quick glance to the undergrowth between coveys. Late August marks the wild bilberry/whortleberry/blaeberry season, depending on what part of the Isles you come from. If you have success with the sport but not with the moorland foraging, wild blackberries would make a fine alternative. Hazelnuts will make a good alternative to the seasonal cobnuts, though I would advise trying to source some heather honey – the poetic harmony aside, its musky floral notes work wonders with grouse.

"I would advise trying to source some heather honey"

When we were photographing this issue, it was of course July, and so rather too early for the new season grouse – besides which, being based on Exmoor means that while I'm surrounded by heather, the king of the gamebirds is not one I can shoot on my doorstep. It being harvest time means that one thing there is an abundance of is the humble pigeon. The recipe for grouse would also work with pigeon, a much underrated bird in culinary terms. They're very easy to prepare for the table, too, as you do not need to bother plucking – simply pull out the crown, discarding the skin and you've got an oven ready piece of game.





CRISPY PARTRIDGE SALTIMBOCCA WITH A CHICORY, PEAR AND QUINCE SALAD

Perfect for a light supper in September sunshine, this twist on an Italian classic is lifted when served with the bitter-sweet and crunchy salad.

Serves 2

For the partridge

- 4 partridge breasts
- 4 slices of Parma ham
- 2 sage leaves
- 100g plain flour
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 200g fresh breadcrumbs
- 100g butter, clarified
- Juice of half a lemon
- Salt and pepper

For the salad

- 1 pear, cored and thinly sliced
- 1/2 a chicory bulb, thinly sliced
- 10 walnuts
- 2 tbsp quince paste (membrillo)
- 1/2 clove of garlic
- Juice of half a lemon
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 1 handful of flat leaf parsley

Method

- 1** Lightly bash the partridge breasts with a rolling pin to flatten to about 1/2cm even thickness.
- 2** On a work surface, lay down 2 slices of Parma ham next to each other, slightly overlapping.

- 3** Lay one breast on top of the ham at one end, place one sage leaf on top, season with pepper and a little salt. Lay another breast on top of this and roll up in the ham. Repeat with the other two breasts.
- 4** Dip the partridge parcels in the flour, and dust off a little. Then dip the parcels into the egg and then the breadcrumbs, ensuring they are evenly coated all round.
- 5** For the salad dressing, place the garlic in a pestle and mortar with a good pinch of salt and pepper and grind to a paste. Add the walnuts and quince paste and crush until you have a paste. Using the pestle, whisk in the olive oil slowly to form an emulsion, and add the lemon juice.
- 6** On a medium heat, fry the partridge parcels in the clarified butter for about 4 minutes each side until golden brown and crisp on each side. They are cooked when the juices run clear when skewered at the thickest point.
- 7** Allow to rest while you assemble the salad - mix the chicory, pear and parsley well with the dressing.
- 8** Place all on a plate, giving the partridge a final squeeze of lemon and small sprinkling of salt.



PHOTOS: GLENN DEARING



WARM GROUSE SALAD WITH WHORTLEBERRIES, COBNUTS AND HEATHER HONEY

Serves 2 as a starter

- 2 breasts of grouse
- 1 sprig of thyme
- 1 tbsp heather honey
- 1 tbsp cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 2 handfuls watercress
- 2 handfuls of whortleberries or wild blackberries
- 1 handful of shelled cobnuts
- Salt and pepper

Method

- 1 Place the heather honey, cider vinegar and 1 handful of whortleberries/blackberries into a pan, bring to the boil and allow to cool, add a pinch of salt and pepper and the olive oil.
- 2 Roughly chop the sprig of thyme and rub onto the breasts with some olive oil.
- 3 Roughly chop and toast the cobnuts until golden brown, keep warm.
- 4 Season the grouse and fry in a medium/hot pan for 2 minutes each side, remove from the pan and set aside in a warm place for 2 minutes to rest, then thinly slice.
- 5 Place a handful of watercress on each plate, lay the grouse on top and scatter over the cobnuts and remaining whortleberries/blackberries.
- 6 Lightly whisk the dressing with a fork and spoon over the salad. ♡



PERFECT PAIRINGS

Perfect wine pairings for this issue's game recipes from Goedhuis and Co

WORDS PHILIPPA WRIGHT

Food and wine pairing really shouldn't be that difficult. With a modicum of practicality many harmonious marriages can be made, and a little knowledge (or guidance from your wine merchant) can lead to positively marvellous matches.

Hugh Johnson's approach for game birds is "the best red you can afford," and that is certainly good advice. There can be no doubting the delights of great red Burgundy with the more delicate or younger birds, although the ethereal pleasures of Barolo should also be considered. More powerful, longer-hung birds, particularly grouse, will benefit from a more robust partnership, a red Bordeaux or Rhône, or a Rioja Gran Reserva.

Young grouse – one of the most delicious things you'll ever eat – should be washed down with quantities of Savigny-lès-Beaune Aux Grands Liards Simon Bize 2011 (£26.10) or Barolo Giacomo Fenocchio 2012 (£31.33/bt). If you like better hung birds, then you need something more full-bodied to match the pungent flavours. Gigondas

La Tour Sarrazine Le Clos des Cazaux 2012 (£15.00) a glorious garrigue-scented Grenache from the Southern Rhone would be ideal, as would Ch Trotteville 1er Grand Cru Classé St Emilion 2008 (£75.67), a mature Right Bank Claret layered with notes of leather and spice.

Partridge is the mildest of all game birds and needs a lighter wine than pheasant or grouse, so our Goedhuis & Co Bourgogne Pinot Noir 2015 (£13.75) would be perfect, as would Chambolle Musigny Domaine Anne-Francoise Gros 2014 (£52.67). A wonderful alternative from New Zealand, whose Pinots are hugely respected, is Akitu A1 Central Otago Pinot Noir 2014 (£25.67) which bagged the trophy for Best New Zealand Pinot Noir at the IWC awards. 🍷

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of buying two cases and taking delivery of one for drinking while selling the other for reinvestment in a new vintage served a generation of wine lovers well. It is also often the only opportunity to obtain limited-production wines, and to select your preferred bottling format.

Nowadays, buying en primeur for profit

should be considered a long-term strategy. In our opinion, buying en primeur is all about pleasure: the delight of discovering the great châteaux and domaines; the satisfaction of snapping up a wine in its infancy; the gratification of watching a cellar grow over time; and the ultimate enjoyment of drinking perfectly stored fully mature Bordeaux or Burgundy.





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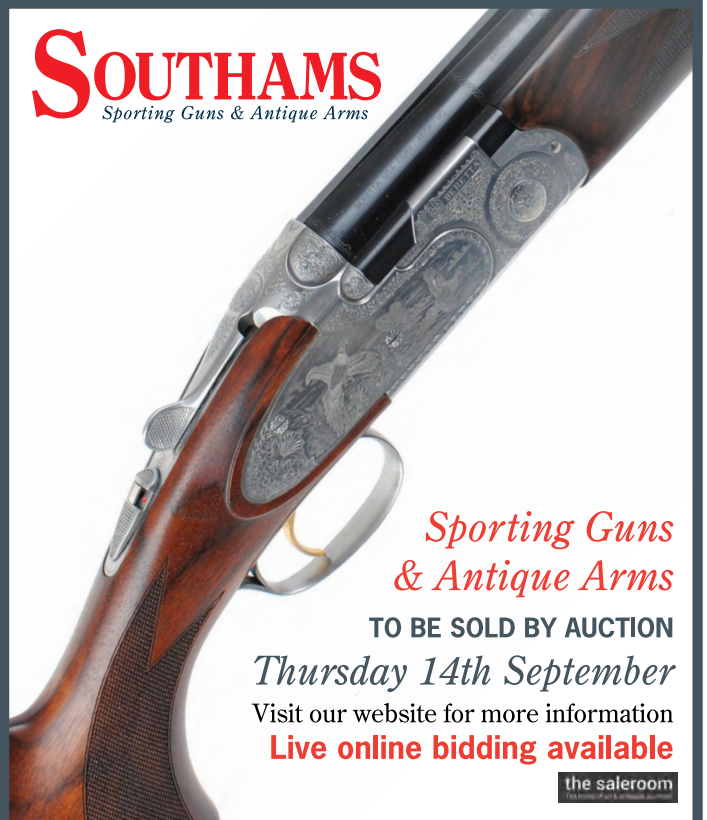
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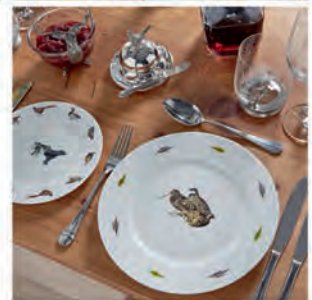


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Where to be and be
seen this autumn

BEST IN SHOW

September

- 3 Ribeye Clay Shoot**, Miserden Gloucestershire, in aid of the CA's Campaign for Shooting
- 9 Malton Harvest Food Festival**, Malton, Yorkshire. A celebration of Yorkshire's finest produce and cooking
- 9-10 Sandringham Game and Country Fair**, Sandringham Estate, Norfolk
- 10 Frampton Country Fair**, Frampton Court Estate, Frampton on Severn. Celebrating all that is great about the British countryside
- 10 Hampshire Country Sports Day**, Tichborne Park, Alresford. Events in the main arena include a gun dog demo, falconry display, working ferret and dog demo, and hound parade
- 13-17 Blenheim Palace International Horse Trials**, Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxon
- 16-17 Midland Game Fair**, Weston Park, Shropshire
- 22-24 Casting for Recovery Retreat** Forbes of Kingennie resort, Broughty Ferry, Angus
- 24 Badminton Ride**, Badminton Park, Gloucestershire. Jump around Badminton Park in aid of Badminton Church and the Beaufort Hunt

30-1 October

South Yorkshire Shooting Show and Game Fair, Doncaster Exhibition Center, Doncaster Racecourse. Designed to combine the best in shooting and hunting equipment with country fair shows and lots of activities for the whole family

October

- 12 Sherborne Abbey Charity Concert**, Sherborne, Dorset, in aid of Casting for Recovery
- 13 Castaway event** at Sportfish Game Fishing Centre, Theale, Reading
- 21-28 Hunting Newcomers' Week**. Aiming to introduce as many new faces as possible to hunting with the added incentive this year of a competition that encourages those who have enjoyed their day out to write about their encounter
- 20-22 Casting For Recovery Retreat** Arundell Arms Hotel, Devon
- 23-24 Wiltshire Game and Country Fair**, Bowood House, Calne
- 23-7 The Society of Equestrian Artists' Annual Horse in Art Exhibition**, Sally Mitchell's Art Gallery at the Museum of the Horse, Tuxford, Nottinghamshire

- 29 Aintree Countryside Race Day**, Aintree Racecourse, Liverpool. Bringing the countryside to Aintree for a day full of fun and excitement for all the family

November

- 17 Cheltenham Countryside Day**, Cheltenham Racecourse. This fun day raises the curtain on the three-day meeting

December

- 1-2 Ladbrokes Winter Carnival**, Newbury Racecourse, Newbury. Two superb days of jump racing, culminating in the centrepiece of the meeting, the Ladbrokes Trophy (formerly Hennessey Gold Cup). Alongside top racing there will be live music, street performers and a fantastic shopping village





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Fitting all-terrain tyres with an equally balanced level of capability on both the tarmac and muddy country tracks instantly gives you access to an enhanced driving experience. This new generation of tyre, which has been over 100 years in the making, is available from General Tire, a brand of Continental. The Grabber AT3 is their technically advanced version of the original Grabber AT and this new breed of all-terrain tyre cuts no corners when it comes to quality assurance.

For a tyre to be considered "all-terrain" it must offer durability in a variety of conditions - when driving through mud, sand, gravel or snow. This increased need for grip means this style of tyre is designed with deep, wide grooves that effectively sink into unstable surfaces, increasing the vehicle's traction. Ice- or snow-specific tyres use protruding studs for grip, and must be changed, making all-terrain tyres far more practical.

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A set of Grabber AT3 tyres noticeably improve your mileage by 7%, they also



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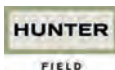
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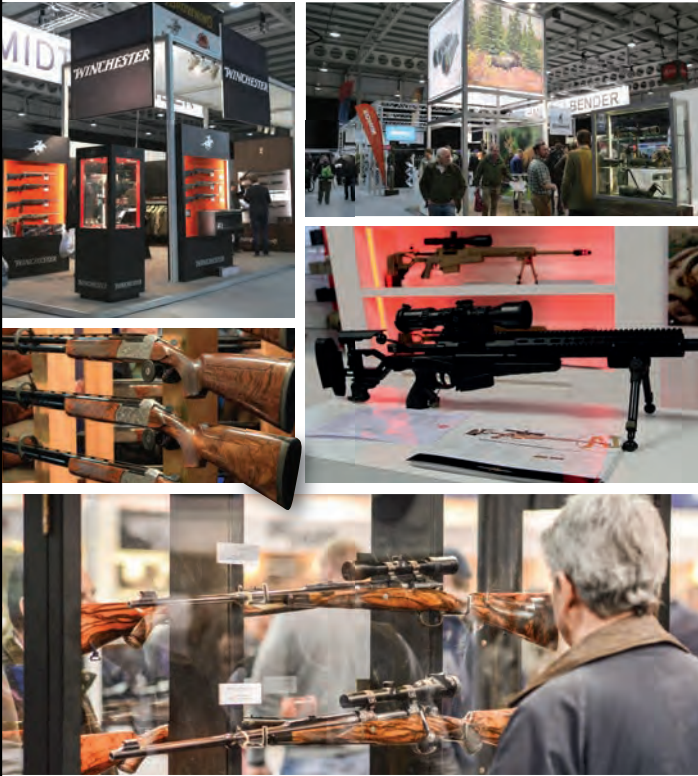
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A HUNTING LIFE

A new book recounts a huntsman's recollections from the last 30 years

WORDS ADRIAN DANGAR



By the time I took on the mastership of my first pack of foxhounds in 1987, the concept of the working master had been well established by the previous generation of amateur huntsmen. Money and land were no longer the essential prerequisites of the position; time, enthusiasm and ability had become – and remain – important attributes. At the Spooners & West Dartmoor I looked after the hounds myself, collected and skinned all the fallen stock and ran the country full time. Dartmoor was the perfect environment to assimilate the craft of hunting hounds away from the spotlight, and I have never been closer to a pack than those lovely hounds that shared my life for three wonderful years.

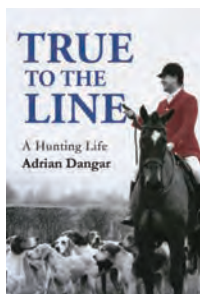
A move to the Sinnington was a step up the hunting ladder and a realisation of how crucial the work of professional hunt staff is to the smooth running of a hunt. I was fortunate to have the help and support of some remarkable men and women, without whom we could never have produced the many long hunts we enjoyed during my eight seasons in North Yorkshire. There were several points of five and six miles and two of eight, plus some gruelling runs amongst the wilder moorland and hills of up to 20 miles as hounds ran. This was also prime shooting country, but the shoot owners, managers and gamekeepers were extraordinarily helpful, and many enjoyed and appreciated a good hunt.

The Quorn in Leicestershire presented new and

greater challenges, the most exciting being to provide sport for a discerning and hard riding field that occasionally numbered more than 200 riders. The farmers, especially those in the Monday and Friday countries, were unbelievably generous and many relished the sight of a large field tackling their hedges. My time at the Quorn coincided with some difficult and divisive decisions over which days of the week to hunt against a backdrop of diminishing country, but it was an absolute privilege to have hunted hounds in such a celebrated landscape. A six mile point across the famous estates of Baggrave, Lowesby and Quenby was amongst my best hunts.

Years later I returned to the Sinnington for a second innings and recognised the same strong bedrock of support for hunting from 20 years earlier. As a hunting correspondent for *Country Life*, *Horse & Hound*, and *The Field*, I was able to observe and document hunting's transition from a sport under threat of extinction to the thriving enterprise it is today. During a day with the Beaufort that coincided with the announcement of the Hunting Act I witnessed despair and uncertainty, but also strong leadership, resilience and a determination to find a way through the maze ahead. Hunts collectively and gradually negotiated that complex path to arrive at where we are today. We all hope for a repeal of the Act to lighten the oppressive burden carried by those at the sharp end of our sport, but we also now know that the music of the hounds will never die. 🇬🇧

MARK EGERTON



▲ *True to the Line* is published in September price £20 + £3.50 p&p. Available from quillerpublishing.com and adriandangar.com



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