

History - Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt

Introduction

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History

2015 saw the centenary of the amalgamation of the Old Surrey with the Burstow Hunt, they were then further joined in 1999 by the West Kent Hunt. Whether you agree with hunting or not, it has been part of the cultural story of Felbridge for over a hundred years and as such merits historical consideration.

This document is not written as a technical paper on hunting but more as a social history, touching upon the people that have been associated with the three hunts that have amalgamated to form what is now the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent. For anyone wishing to have a more in-depth look at each hunt there are two very good books available, *A Portrait of Jorrock's Country* by John Robson that covers the Old Surrey & Burstow Hunt since 1935 and *Hunting in West Kent* by Peter Webb that covers its history from 1617 until its amalgamation with the Old Surrey & Burstow in 1999.

As for this document it is set out in four sections. The first section documents a general history and development of hunting, together with the terminology applied to today's hunting practises. This is followed by a section on the history and development of the Old Surrey, Burstow and West Kent covering the histories of each of the three hunts before their amalgamations to create first the Old Surrey & Burstow Hunt in 1915 and, since 1999, the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt. The third section covers the lives of a few of the people who have been associated with the amalgamated hunts, either for their exceptional stories or because they were local to Felbridge, and the final section concludes with a selection of stories, memories and anecdotes written about the hunt by local residents and participants over the years.

There were and still are many forms of hunting, but this document concentrates on the form of hunting associated with the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt, that of hunting on horseback with a pack of specially trained hounds, originally as a Fox Hunt but since 2005, as a Drag Hunt.

History and Development of Hunting

What is meant by the term 'hunting'? Hunting is the practice of killing or trapping any animal or pursuing it with the intent of doing so. Hunting wildlife or feral animals is most commonly done by humans for food, recreation or trade. In present-day use, lawful hunting is distinguished from poaching, which is the illegal killing, trapping or capture of the hunted

species. The species that are hunted are referred to as game or quarry and are usually mammals and birds. Hunting can also be a means of pest control.

Hunting has been part of our culture and society since man first acknowledged his capacity to kill for food, survival or sport. Initially, during the Mesolithic period, hunting was practised as a necessity – food (subsistence hunting) and the quarry was anything that could be processed and eaten. The Neolithic period saw the advent of a settled, farming community, raising live-stock for all the different products they could provide man, at this point in time hunting divided into three areas, supplemental food, pest control and sport. It is believed that dogs were probably trained to hunt alongside man as early as the Neolithic period and went on to be bred for specialised skills. The horse was also certainly used to aid man with hunting by 2,000 BC.

Whilst early man hunted primarily for supplemental food or pest control, as society became more evolved with layers of status so early hunting for sport appeared, generally in the higher levels where those with more status, control and wealth had more time on their hands to pursue hunting as a sport. Certainly hunting for sport was practised by leaders and rulers as far back as the Ancient Egyptians. Closer to home, in Britain, hunting for sport became associated with the ownership of land and from as early as the 12th century Acts of Inclosure [later Enclosure] began to be sporadically passed that enclosed the open fields and common land of the country. The result of enclosure meant that land that had previously been considered common became out of bounds to anyone but the owner to which the land had been granted. As such, from the beginning of the feudal times of the early Medieval period through to the 17th century, hunting for sport became the sole domain of kings and nobles, an outlet where they could show off their prowess as a hunter of a more selective range of animals including boar and deer, often kept in purpose pale'd parks. However, it should also be remembered that although this was hunting for sport the quarry inevitably ended up on the dining table.

Between 1604 and 1914 more and more land was enclosed in Britain and hunting ceased to be confined to kings and nobles and by the end of the 19th century had filtered down the ranks of society reaching the gentry. It should also be remembered that people of lower status were not excluded from hunting as their labour was required to help with the more menial jobs associated with hunting for which they may have received a share of the kill. There were also other people, again generally of the lower status but sometimes from higher up the social scale, that unofficially hunted, but the terminology attached to their form of hunting was poaching, for which they faced severe punishment if caught. Their quarry not only included the larger animals such as boar and deer but also smaller animals such as rabbit and hare and this form of hunting was generally not for sport but subsistence – food.

The origins of fox hunting lay in the 18th century with evidence appearing in letters dating to 1720 that make reference to hounds being trained to hunt foxes and 'not deer or sheep' on the Deene Estate of the 3rd Earl of Cardigan. By 1738 the Dukes of Grafton had turned to fox hunting with Charles Fitzroy, 2nd Duke of Grafton, a subscriber to the Charlton based hounds in Sussex. He also had his own pack of hounds kennelled at Croydon that were later

moved to Wakefield Lawn and Euston Park, Suffolk, before settling to become the Northamptonshire pack.

The reasons behind the change of preferred quarry is not known but it is believed that the fox was considered to be a more challenging and plentiful quarry, and more recently, a pest in need of control. Viewed as a sport, fox hunting has become a controversial topic being banned from the whole of Britain by November 2004, the law being enforced from February 2005, although certain modified forms of hunting foxes with hounds are still within the law and it is still legal to shoot foxes as vermin. Fox hunting is viewed by some as an important cultural rural heritage and a useful means of conservation and pest control and by others as a cruel and unnecessary sport. Whichever viewpoint you hold, the historical facts are that the Hunt has been part of the story of Felbridge for over a hundred years and is part of the area's rural culture and heritage.

During the evolution of fox-hunting a whole vocabulary has emerged and it is perhaps wise that some of the main words be listed to enable the reader to understand the terms associated with modern fox-hunting. The following is based on an abridged version of Hunting Terms, Language and Signals as found on the web site of the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt.

Autumn Hunting	The early part of hunting, usually from mid August until the Open Meet
Boxing Day Meet	One of the main days in the hunting calendar, 26th December
Couple	Two hounds. Couples are also two collars linked on a chain and can be seen hanging on the hunt staff's saddles
Cubbing/Cubhunting	Traditionally a time for educating young horses and hounds, now Autumn hunting
Drag Hunting	A form of hunting with hounds (usually foxhounds or beagles) where a scent has been laid or dragged over a course with a defined beginning and end
Field	The mounted followers
Field Master	The person in charge of leading and controlling the Field during the days hunting
Hound	All scent hunting dogs are referred to as hounds
Horn	The use of a horn by the huntsman is integral to hunting where hounds hunt their quarry by scent. It is employed as a signal from the huntsman to his hounds or followers to indicate what is required or to denote what is happening
Huntsman	The man who hunts the hounds. There is only one huntsman on the hunting field
Hunt Staff	The people responsible for working the hounds. i.e. Huntsman and Whippers-in, both professional and amateur
Hunting Pink	Scarlet jacket worn for hunting, named after Mr Pink, the 18th century London tailor who designed the jacket
Line	The scent left by the quarry
Master	These are the people responsible for the running of the hunt and particularly for liaison with the farmers and landowners.
Mixed pack	A pack consisting of dogs and bitches
Opening Meet	The start of formal hunting. Usually the last Saturday in October or first in November

Scent	The smell of the line
Season	Runs from 1st May until 30th April of the following year. Autumn Hunting will start once the harvest is under way, usually towards the end of August and will consist of short hunts in the early morning or early evening. Formal hunting starts with the Opening Meet and will go on usually to the middle of March
Secretary	Usually the Honorary Hunt Secretary who deals with day to day enquiries from subscribers and those wishing to hunt on a daily basis.
Speak or speaking	Hounds do not bark, they speak or are speaking when they are hunting a scent
Subscriber	Someone who pays an annual subscription to hunt with a pack of hounds
Walk	Hounds at walk, often known as Puppy Walking, is where whelps are sent to private homes, from the age of eight weeks until they get too big and boisterous for the walkers, at which point they return to kennels to learn how to fit into the pack
Whelp	A new-born hound is a whelp and remains so until it comes back from being walked
Whipper-in or Whip	The person who helps the huntsman control the hounds. He may be a professional or an amateur

History and Development of the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt

Old Surrey

Masters

The Old Surrey Fox was probably the first pack of fox hounds in Surrey, being established in 1750 by the Master, Samuel Gobsall [Godschell] of Albany, who had kennels at Bermondsey on the site of East Hall and the wharf of Messrs. James and John Dudin, lightermen. The fox hound is a quite large, tri-colour dog and has strong hunting instincts. The Dudin brothers used to enjoy seeing the huntsmen and whips turn out of a morning and frequently used to meet the hounds at Peckam Rye. James and John Dudin both rode with the Old Surrey Fox in the 1760's and 70's, hunting in Peckham Rye, Forest Hill and Sydenham, and one of them later succeeded Samuel Gobsall as Master.

However, the kennels, adjoining the Black Eagle Brewery, were demolished by Henry of the next generation of Dudin's, being replaced with stables. The Fox Hunting Atlas wrote that the kennels were:

'gradually pushed out by the relentless encroachment of brick and mortar. The Old Surrey Hunt has been driven farther and farther from the banks of the Thames, till now [1893] it can bring the sound of hound music no nearer London than the outskirts of Croydon and Bromley; and the citizen who would jaunt in scarlet to the Surrey hills can no longer mount his hunter in Broad-street, but must either take the same steam covert hack or else make a suburban residence his base'.

The exact date for the relocation of the kennels is not known but it is believed that by 1800 the kennels had moved to Marden Park, Godstone, either by Henry Dudin to make way for his new stables or, more likely, by Mr Snow who succeeded as Master in 1800.

Mr. Snow (first name not yet established) was a banker in the Strand who used the Hunt as a refuge from the cares of business. Apparently he was never happier than when 'galloping across country with his beloved pack'. Mr Snow was Master until 1808 when he was succeeded by Col. the Hon. George Nevill, the second son of Lord Abergavenny, a very keen rider who held the Mastership until 1812 when Mr Maberly of Shirley near Croydon, succeeded him. In those days they hunted in green coats and beaver top hats, only a few wore 'Pinks' (red jackets).

In 1812, when Mr Maberly took over as Master, he had a coach-building business in Oxford Street and already had his own kennels. An article about him in Baily's Magazine dated 1876 stated that:

"He was a great army contractor and general speculator, and, although said to be worth a million of money, failed at last. He took the hounds in 1812, and kept them entirely at his own expense for three seasons; then a subscription was made and given to him. He rode first-class horses, which he bought of Weston, a dealer, and always had three out, the second and third being ridden by his groom and little boy. He went tremendously when hounds ran, and fairly got through his three hunters in the course of the day, with one spur in and the other out. He was a great promoter of sport, an active steward at Epsom, and the Shirley Stakes were called after his place of residence. On giving up the Old Surrey he became Master of the Surrey Staghounds with Mr. Tattersall of Danley Hall. As a Master of Foxhounds he was violent and irritable, and in consequence was warned off by many of the farmers."

However, despite his faults Mr Maberly was said to be a 'good sportsman and passionately devoted to hunting; money being no object to him so far as that branch of sport was concerned'. Mr Maberly also hunted the hounds himself on occasion but according to Tom Hills who was taken on as Huntsman in 1816 (retiring in 1861), he could only hunt when the hounds went straight and if they did not he would get in 'a tangle' and at this point his language was not 'eminently ladylike'. Other contemporaries stated that Mr Maberly 'rode to hunt' instead of 'hunting to ride', which as a result the followers 'enjoyed themselves to their heart's content'.

In 1820 Mr Maberley was succeeded by Daniel Haigh of Tooting, who moved the kennels to Chelsham, near Streatham, described at the time as 'a very rural village, about three miles from Croydon', the property later became known as Kennel Farm in memory of the old kennels and stables. Daniel Haigh was a Yorkshireman and was a friend of Mr Maberly, both being enthusiastic hunters. Daniel Haigh is recorded as a man of infinite tact and savoir-faire and he continued to hunt regularly until the age of nearly eighty. He was described as being a lean, rather short man, 'a light-weight, who always rode with a thin, plain snaffle and made his men do the same' He was quoted as saying 'I believe in hands not in ironmongery'. A contemporary wrote, "He sat with ease in his saddle, being master of the situation, though his horses did not always carry their noses where they ought to have

been; still, even with his plain snaffle, he was never troubled by their vagaries. That fact proved him to be a good horseman. In his time big breakfasts were the habit at Godstone, Pratt's Bottom or the Swan at Wickham, where all used to meet on convivial terms; but Mr. Haigh did not like a man who smoked. He may have thought that it interfered with scent.' Daniel Haig retired in 1836 when the Mastership was taken over by Sir Edmund Antrobus of Cheam.

It was during the Mastership of Sir Edmund Antrobus that the kennels were moved to Garston Hall in Coulsdon where they remained until 1915. Sir Edmund was a popular Master being described as 'a good man in the saddle and a wise man on foot'. In 1840 Sir Edmund was joined by Col. Cator, both being considered first-rate men of hounds, and between 1843 and 1847 Sir Edmund was assisted in the Mastership by John Castendeick and William Mortimer, the latter succeeding Sir Edmund Antrobus when he resigned his position in 1847.

Between 1847 and 1859 the Hunt were managed by a committee of three, William Mortimer who, it is claimed, did more to promote the success of fox-hunting than any man in Surrey; Tom Hood, an ironmonger from Blackfriars, who was exceedingly fond of hunting and did not mind what it cost him; and Harry Nichols, who was a keen sportsman and was universally popular. They managed the hounds and horses that were lent by Sir Edmund Antrobus, who although retired as Master, still supported the Old Surrey. In 1859 Tom Hood stepped down leaving William Mortimer and Harry Nichols as Joint Masters. The same year, Sir Edmund Antrobus gifted the hounds and horses to the Hunt, which was greatly appreciated making him a tremendous benefactor of the Old Surrey.

In 1871 Harry Nichols stepped down leaving William Mortimer as sole Master until 1877 who then remained an enthusiastic member until his death in 1886. His obituary taken from The Surrey Fox Hounds reads:

'Hale and hearty to the last, Mr Mortimer died in his 77th year, universally regretted by all who knew him, sportingly or socially. A current biographer writes of him: "The name of Mortimer is entitled to respect in Surrey annals, for the late Master's father and four of his uncles at the same period largely contributed to its support.

Born at Lewisham Hill in 1809, Mr Mortimer was entered early, for the little fair-haired boy who, on a certain December day in 1819, rode his pony twenty miles to covert and hunted him all day, has hunted with the Old Surrey Fox Hounds exclusively ever since. A thorough lover of fox-hunting, with sound judgment, activity, and clearness of perception in the management of a hunting establishment, always at the covert-side to the minute, as light-hearted as a boy throughout the day, whether the sport was good or bad, and not easily beaten by his field, even during his later years, he reached a green (and scarlet) old age, with honour. It is not every-one who will take a provincial country on a precarious subscription, and try and manage an awkward field for the sake of pure sport alone, and Mr Mortimer had an arduous task to perform. But he never flinched, and the Old Surrey has never had a more popular Master."

Whilst hunting was the ruling passion of his life, Mr Mortimer was fond of shooting, travel, and adventure. He undertook a long sporting expedition in America, accompanied by the existing Tom Gilbert, of Banstead — who has hunted with the Old Surrey for over sixty years — and their efforts were very successful. Some big game was accounted for by them in genuine sporting fashion.

“Mr Mortimer was always wonderfully keen,” says the genial Tom [Hills], “and if he thought he was missing any good sport he was apt to become quite miserable. No day was too long for him in the saddle; he rode immense distances with his hounds, enjoying himself thoroughly all the time; he seemed to be insensible to fatigue, and when, at last he was obliged to dismount, it was not with a sigh of relief — he regretted the separation”.

What more need one say about an ideal sportsman? In effect, he had plenty of fun for his money in the open air with horse and hound: better than that no man can hope for, even if his supplies of nerve and cash are practically unlimited’.

In 1877 William Mortimer as Master was succeeded by Edmund Byron of Coulsdon Court who remained in the post for twenty-five years, although his term saw considerable changes. In 1896 there was a proposal to amalgamate the Old Surrey with the Burstow but this was rejected by the Old Surrey under Edmund Byron who was Master and Huntsman between 1896 and 1898. However, after a bad fall at a local Point-to-Point in 1898 he had to give up ‘carrying the horn’ but remained Master until 1902 when he resigned and was succeeded by Henry Willock Boileau. Henry Boileau was born in Nainital, India, in about 1862, the son of Lt. Col. George Wilson Boileau. Henry served with the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Norfolk Militia in 1883 before returning to India to take up employment with the Bengal Police, returning to England in 1902 and taking up the position of Master and Huntsman with the Old Surrey until 1909 when he resigned and became Master of the South Berkshire Hunt. Under the Mastership of Henry, the Old Surrey hounds moved to new kennels at Pound Hill, Bletchingley, when the Burstow hounds re-located to Felbridge in 1908.

After the resignation of Henry Boileau, W.A. Bell filled the position of Master for one season before Major Granville Charles Gresham Leveson-Gower succeeded as Master between 1910 and 1915. Major Granville Charles Gresham Leveson-Gower was the second son of George William Gresham Levson-Gower of Titsey, MP for Reigate, also an enthusiastic hunter and long serving secretary for the Old Surrey. Referred to as Charles, Major Leveson-Gower had been appointed Huntsman in 1909 and was holding that position and the Mastership in 1915 when the Old Surrey amalgamated with the Burstow (see below).

Huntsmen

Besides the Masters, there have been several Huntsmen of note connected with the Old Surrey with perhaps the longest serving family of Huntsmen being the Hills. The first Huntsman to be associated with the Old Surrey was Peckham Hills succeeded by George West in 1808 until 1811 and then Jack Cole in 1811 until 1812. In 1816 there was a return to the Hills family when Tom Hills (the nephew of Peckham Hills) who had been riding second horseman and assistant whip to Master William Maberly was promoted as Huntsman, a position he held (with the exception of three years between 1840 and 1843 when T Webb

was Huntsman) for forty-five years, being succeeded by his son Sam Hills in 1861. Sam Hills was Huntsman for thirty-two years when he was succeeded by Jim Cockayne who held the position until 1896 when he went to Puckeridge before returning as Huntsman in 1917 after the amalgamation of the Old Surrey and Burstow (see below).

Other Huntsmen included: Tom Attrill between 1898 and 1900, C Wesley, who had hunted with the West Kent (see below), between 1900 and 1902 when Master Henry Boileau also held the position of Huntsman until 1909, being succeeded by Major Granville Charles Gresham Leveson-Gower who held the Mastership and position of Huntsman in 1915 when the Old Surrey amalgamated with the Burstow (see below).

Hunt Country

In the early days of Samuel Gobsall it is known that the Old Surrey hunted on Peckham Rye, Forest Hill, Sydenham and the outskirts of Croydon and Bromley. A later description of the hunt country noted that it reached to Bromley, Beckenham and nearly to Sydenham on the north; Lingfield to the south; Brasted and Chelsfield to the east; and to Banstead, Carshalton and Mitcham to the west. Originally the hunt met four days a week which then reduced to three days a week and in 1896 was further reduced to twice a week. The reduction was largely due to the expansion of towns and villages and their encroachment into the rural landscape and foxes, in some districts, had become very scarce. A consequence of the reduction in 1896 was that the dog pack had to be put down. A description of the hunt country, written in 1906 states:

‘with respect to the Old Surrey country generally, we may say that it is a hill and vale country, with, alas! an abundance of flints. There are few fences on the hills. In the vale plenty of grass is found, and it is strongly fenced, principally stake and binders, ditches on one side or the other, and sometimes on both. The country is not now hunted north of Croydon. Wire is far too abundant in certain regions. During recent years, too, a great change has come over the country on account of numerous estates passing into new hands, and getting into the possession of tenants who, unfortunately, think more of shooting than of hunting. The result is that their coverts are usually drawn blank.

The best part of the Old Surrey country is now from Oxted to Edenbridge from north to south, and east from Redhill to the boundary of the country close to Sevenoaks. That consists of a large percentage of grass, fairly flat, and requires a clever hunter to negotiate safely’.

Having reached 1915 in the history of the Old Surrey it is time to turn our attention to the history of the Burstow before their amalgamation (see below).

Burstow

The Burstow was originally a farmer’s harrier pack that hunted hares and is known to have been in existence since 1840 although the exact date of establishment is not known and was probably considerably earlier. Indeed, in 1835 the London County Herald and Weekly Advertiser made reference to the ‘Reigate and Burstow Harrier Cup for horses, not

thoroughbreds', that was won by Mr Turner's Little John. The harrier is known for its stamina and is similar in appearance to that of a fox hound but smaller, and is bigger than a beagle.

Masters

The first known Master of the Burstow is Henry Kelsey who is recorded as holding the position for nearly forty years until 1879. The Old Surrey, Burstow and West Kent Hunt maintain that the Burstow Harriers were founded by Henry Kelsey at Burstow Park, hunted by Tom Hooker. In the first half of the 1800's there were three Henry Kelsey's and unfortunately it has proved impossible to determine which of the three the Master was. All three had associations with Burstow Park and all had farming connections, plus there is always the possibility that it could be more than one of them that held the Mastership during the forty years leading to 1879.

Under Henry Kelsey's Mastership in 1866, the decision was taken to switch from hare hunting to fox hunting and the Burstow, by arrangement with the Old Surrey, took over a part of their country lying south of the South Eastern Railway from Redhill to Edenbridge, considered by some to be the best Surrey country along the Sussex border. This was soon followed by acquiring the area of land in Sussex to the south of the River Medway down to Fletching from the Crawley and Horsham.

In 1879 Henry Kelsey was succeeded as Master by Henry Gerard Hoare (known as Gerard), a London banker who had been Huntsman with the Burstow since 1867. Gerard, who was born in 1827, built Stansted House, Tilburstow Hill Road, Godstone, as his family home. He was a member of C Hoare & Co. bank that had been founded by Richard Hoare in 1672, the sole survivor of the private deposit banks that were established in the 17th and 18th centuries. It was under Gerard Hoare's Mastership of nearly seventeen years that the Burstow really became established. Gerard Hoare held the Mastership until his death in 1896 when he was succeeded by Edward B Forbes. As a point of interest, the Barn Church at Kew, formerly known as St Philip's and St Barthomew's, was built in 1928 in memory to Henry Gerard Hoare and his wife Jane Frances, their eldest son Henry Gerard Philip Hoare; as well as to Gerard Croft Hoare who died of his wounds whilst serving in World War I, his mother Joyce Hoare; and Uvedale Lambert who became Master of the Burstow in 1900 (see below).

At the time of Gerard Hoare's death it was proposed that the Burstow amalgamate with the Old Surrey, a proposal that was turned down by the latter. The succeeding Master, Edward B Forbes of Clareville, Caterham, held the position for four years being succeeded by Uvedale Lambert of SouthPark, Bletchingly, in 1900.

Under the Mastership of Uvedale Lambert, the Burstow saw a period of stabilisation and consolidation. As well as being Master of the Burstow, Uvedale was also a Whipper-in with the Mid Surrey Farmer's Drag Hounds, one of the oldest Drag Hound hunts in Britain that was founded in 1900. The Drag has been fortunate in always having had the generous and full co-operation of the different packs of foxhounds within its country, in particular the Burstow (now the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent), the Southdown and Eridge,

the Crawley and Horsham and the Surrey Union. Uvedale also built new kennels at Pound Hill, Bletchingley, which were occupied by Burstow hounds until 1908 when they moved to Felbridge; the Pound Hill kennels being taken over by the Old Surrey hounds until the amalgamation of the Old Surrey and Burstow in 1915 (see below).

As a point of interest, four years into his Mastership, Uvedale Lambert married Cecilia Hoare, daughter of the late Master Gerard Hoare, resigning his position in 1905. Uvedale was succeeded by Frederick A White of East Grinstead, who held the position for two years when he was succeeded by his son-in-law Hubert F Sturdy in 1907.

In 1908, under Hubert F Sturdy, the Burstow moved to new kennels that he'd built at Hodgehorn Farm in Felbridge. The new kennels were capable of holding fifty couple of hounds and is home to the hounds to this day. Hubert F Sturdy held the position of Master until 1911 when he was succeeded by Cyril Selby-Lowndes.

Cyril Selby-Lowndes was a bit of a character with an uncertain temperament. In 1913, for example, he was fined £2 and costs at East Grinstead for 'obstructing a Police Constable while in the execution of his duties'. Having said that he took his hunting very seriously and believed there should be a strict code of etiquette, thus he devised a list The Ten Commandments of Foxhunting:

Article I. Everyman shall present himself at the place of meeting quietly, suitably clothed and in good time. He who rides his hunter steadily thereto is better than he who uses a hack. He who drives tandem for display or who use any manner of engine or machine, except as a necessity, is an abomination.

Article II. Every man shall first salute and speak words of comfort to the huntsman and whippers-in, knowing full well that they have hard work to perform. He shall then count the hounds and examine them with great joy, but in a quiet manner. He shall then likewise cheerfully salute his friends. He that shall say that the day will be a bad-scenting one, or in any manner endeavour to prophesy evil, is an abomination.

Article III. It is acceptable that those of experience shall, at all times, give explanation and encouragement by word and deed to all young persons, so that fox-hunting may continue in the land from generation to generation. He who thinks he knows, when he knows not, is an abomination.

Article IV. Every man shall remember that the ground he passes over is not his own property. Whosoever uses not due care and consideration is an abomination.

Article V. He who talks loudly or who leaps unnecessarily is an abomination. He who wears an apron or mackintosh on wet days or who uses any other device for making a mountebank [charlatan/fraudster/ scoundrel] of himself, or who in any way causes inconveniences to any hound or hunt is an abomination.

Article VI. If it be possible, let every true believer abstain from all meat and drink, save only such as is necessary to sustain life. Let the whole day be kept as a special fasting and

strengthening of the mind for the Chase. In the evening he shall partake of suitable meat and drink, and on the evening after a good day, he shall have special allowance.

Article VII. He who, of his own free will, goes home before the hounds do, or who is displeased with the day, or who is not fully uplifted, joyful and thankful for the day, is an abomination.

Article VIII. Whosoever kills or takes a fox by any other means save by hunting is an abomination; may his dwelling become desolate and his possessions a desert; may his mind be filled with bitterness and his body pain.

Article IX. Whosoever lives as a cheerful, good neighbour, striving to help and encourage his friends at all times, and who hunts on foot if he has not a horse, and by whose behaviour the Scarlet is never brought into dishonours; may he live long and be happy, and may his possessions be as the sand by the seashore for multitude.

Article X. And may all men, rich or poor, have equal rights and pleasures in the Chase if they devoutly agree to these articles.

It is believed that Cyril Selby-Lowndes was the last Master before the Burstow amalgamated with the Old Surrey in 1915. However, according to an article written by Jasper Copping with regards to soldiers in their 60's who served in World War I, perhaps the last Master was actually Henry Webber (see below). What can be stated with some certainty is that in 1915 the Burstow was without a Master and both the Burstow and the Old Surrey were facing financial difficulties and an uncertain future. As a result the Old Surrey approached the Burstow with the suggestion that they amalgamate (see below).

Huntsmen

The first known Huntsman with the Burstow was Tom Hooker, an amateur huntsman and tenant farmer of Smallfield Place. Tom Hooker is recorded as 'holding the horn' between 1849 and 1866 when he was succeeded by Gerard Hoare (see above). Gerard Hoare then became Master after Henry Kelsey's (see above) retirement in 1879, holding both the position of Master and Huntsman until his death in 1896.

Professional Huntsman Harry Molyneux succeeded Gerard Hoare as Huntsman, having been Whipper-in for some considerable time for Mr Garth at the South Oxfordshire prior to his move to the Burstow in 1896. It is unclear how long Harry Molyneux held the position of Huntsman but he was succeeded by Cyril Selby-Lowndes until 1911 when he succeeded Hubert F Sturdy as Master and was in turn succeeded as Huntsman by Frank Clark. Cyril Selby-Lowndes held the position of Master and Huntsman from 1912 until at least 1914 and possibly 1915 when the Old Surrey and Burstow amalgamated (see below).

Amalgamation of the Old Surrey & Burstow

In 1915, the amalgamation of the Old Surrey and the Burstow finally took place, nineteen years after the Old Surrey had turned down the request by the Burstow. However, the amalgamation came with some conditions:

- 1) That the amalgamated hunt should be called the Old Surrey & Burstow Foxhounds.
- 2) That Mr Charles Leveson-Gower and Mr Hubert F Sturdy should be joint Masters.
- 3) That during the time that Mr Charles Leveson-Gower may be unable to attend to the matters of the Hunt, on account of his military duties, Mr J A Scrimgeour should be appointed Deputy Master.
- 4) That the pack should be hunted four days a week, and should be kennelled at Felbridge.
- 5) That Mr Cecil Leveson-Gower should hunt hounds on alternate days with Dick Burden, who has been appointed as professional huntsman by the Burstow Committee.
- 6) That Dick Burden is to have the entire charge of the Kennels and act under the direction of the Joint Masters.
- 7) That the amalgamated Hunt should be managed by a Committee of 16, eight from each of the existing Hunts.
- 8) That Mr J A Scrimgeour and Mr Frank C Morrison be appointed joint Hon. Secretaries.

Masters

Unfortunately it was not the best time to amalgamate, during the throws of World War I. Charles Leveson-Gower was fulfilling his duties as Major which left Hubert Sturdy to continue the hunt. Hunting dropped to twice and then once a week, the number of hounds was reduced and Hubert carried the deficits on his own. As a result, Hubert Sturdy resigned his Mastership in 1918, offering the kennels to the Hunt for £4,000. At this point Charles Leveson-Gower became the sole Master until 1920 when he was joined by Major Guy Temple MontacuteLarnach-Nevill, 4th Marquess of Abergavenny, until 1923 when they were succeeded by Douglas Benson of Kingswood Court, Tadworth, and Brigadier General Arthur David Musgrave of Hurst-an-Clays, E Grinstead until 1933.

In 1929, Arthur Musgrave stepped down leaving Douglas Benson as Master until 1931 and it was under the Mastership of Douglas Burt that the Old Surrey & Burstow Hunt branch of the Pony Club was established in 1930, one of the first branches of the Pony Club. In 1931, Douglas Benson was joined by George Mowlem Burt (later Sir George Burt) of Blindly Heath, as Joint Masters until 1933 when Douglas Benson stepped down leaving George Burt as Master until 1938. George was chairman of contractors John Mowlem and Company (founded by his grandfather in 1902) and a fencer, competing in both the individual and épée events at the 1920 Olympics. His construction firm was responsible for the building of the BBC Headquarters, as well as the rebuilding of Buckingham Palace after World War II. George was knighted in 1942.

In 1938 Douglas Benson succeeded George Burt as Huntsman until 1939 when Col. Humphrey I Robinson of Redlands, Crockham Hill, and Theodore A Scaramanga succeeded as Joint Masters. However, Theodore Scaramanga resigned in September 1939 leaving

Humphrey Robinson as Master until 1945 when a Committee was created to run the Hunt until 1947.

In 1947 Col. Ralph Clarke (later Sir Ralph Clarke KBE) of Borde Hill, and Major Alan J Leveson-Gower, youngest son of Major Granville Charles Gresham Leveson-Gower of the Old Surrey (see above), held the Joint Mastership until the latter stepped down in 1950 when Sir Ralph Clarke was joined by Uvedale Lambert of South Park, Bletchingley, and George Perring as Joint Masters until 1953. In 1953 George Perring stepped down and was succeeded by the first female Master, Miss Anne Holland. This trio of Masters lasted until 1958 when Anne Holland was replaced by Sir Derek Greenaway Bt. of Four Elms, Edenbridge, until 1966.

In 1966 Sir Derek Greenaway stepped down and Col. Sir Ralph Clarke and Uvedale Lambert were joined by the second of what has been to date, eight female Masters, Diana Barnato-Walker MBE (see below). This trio of Masters served until 1969.

As we reach more current history it is perhaps prudent for privacy that the Masters just be listed by name:

1969-70: Col. Sir Ralph Clarke KBE, Uvedale Lambert, Major Guy Courage DSO and Diana Barnato-Walker MBE

1970-72: Uvedale Lambert, Major Guy Courage DSO and Diana Barnato-Walker MBE

1972-74: Uvedale Lambert, Diana Barnato-Walker MBE, Pamela Munn and Jimmy Edwards DFC

1974-77: Diana Barnato-Walker MBE, Pamela Munn, John Robson MC and Col. Peter Webber VRD

1977-79: Diana Barnato-Walker MBE, John Robson MC, Col. Peter Webber VRD and Ray Dinnis

1979-81: John Robson MC, Col. Peter Webber VRD, Ray Dinnis and Jimmy Edwards DFC

1981-82: John Robson MC, Col. Peter Webber VRD, Ray Dinnis and Sophia Lambert (daughter of Uvedale)

1982-83: John Robson MC, Col. Peter Webber VRD, Sophia Lambert and Simon Kenny

1983-86: John Robson MC, Sophia Lambert and Simon Kenny

1986-87: Sophia Lambert, Simon Kenny and Ann Carlton

1987-88: Sophia Lambert, Simon Kenny, Ann Carlton and Wendy Trevithick-Wood

1988-89: Simon Kenny, Ann Carlton, Wendy Trevithick-Wood and Adrian Henry FRCS

1989-90: Ann Carlton, Wendy Trevithick-Wood, Adrian Henry FRCS and Charlie Burchell

1990-91: Ann Carlton, Wendy Trevithick-Wood and Adrian Henry FRCS

1991-92: Wendy Trevithick-Wood and Brian Perring

1992-94: Wendy Trevithick-Wood, Brian Perring and Sylvia Barker

1994-97: Brian Perring, Sylvia Barker, Andrew Coveney and Dena Scott

1997-99: Brian Perring, Sylvia Barker, Andrew Coveney, Dena Scott and Simon Lacey

During the thirty years between the Joint Masterships of Col. Sir Ralph Clarke KBE, Uvedale Lambert, Major Guy Courage DSO and Diana Barnato-Walker MBE in 1969 and that of Brian Perring, Sylvia Barker, Andrew Coveney, Dena Scott and Simon Lacey in 1999, the hunting world had seen great change. Private estates have been broken up and developed that has resulted in an increase in the number of landowners to be consulted for permission to hunt over their land. Not only this, the land itself has become fragmented. Electric railway lines and major new roads cross-cross the landscape altering the nature of what had previously been open hunting ground making it perilous to fox, hound and rider.

Added to the change in the landscape was the fact that the British population had grown from just over 11,000 in the 1960's to just under 26,000 in 1999, which in turn had increased the sprawl of urban development into the rural countryside, thus reducing the amount of available land for hunting. With an ever-increasing urban population in rural areas, traditionally practiced cultural activities and heritage have been questioned, in particular the ethics of fox-hunting resulting in a clash of ideologies. It was against this background that in 1999 the Old Surrey & Burstow Hunt amalgamated with the West Kent to form the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt (see below).

Huntsmen

The first recorded Huntsmen of the newly amalgamated Old Surrey & Burstow Hunt were Cecil Octavious Gresham (known as Cecil) Leveson-Gower and Dick Burden. Cecil was a brother of Major Granville Charles Gresham Leveson-Gower of Titsey who was Master of the Old Surrey between 1910 and 1915 (see above). As a point of interest, contributions about hunting made by Cecil can be found in the book *Cross Country with Hounds* by F A Stewart, published in 1936. Dick Burden was a professional Huntsman originating from the Burstow and the pair were obliged to hunt the hounds on alternate days in accordance with the conditions of the amalgamation. At the time the Pack hunted four days a week, two under Cecil Leveson-Gower and two under Dick Burden. However, the effects of World War I would soon reduce hunting to just two days a week. In 1917 Cecil Leveson-Gower and Dick Burden were joined by professional Huntsman James Cockayne until 1920 when James was sole Huntsman until 1923.

James Cockayne had risen through the ranks of hunting and moved to the Old Surrey & Burstow after being 1st Whip for the Essex. A more in-depth look at the life and times of James Cockayne can be found in the book *High Days and Bye Days: Stray Chapters from the life of a Huntsman, 1860-1929* by R Greaves, published in 1933. In 1920 James Cockayne

left the Old Surrey & Burstow which saw the return of professional Huntsman Dick Burden until 1923 when he was succeeded by William Welbourne (see below).

William Welbourne was Huntsman until 1926, then came a succession of Huntsmen including Dick Thatcher (son of the Fernie Huntsman Arthur Thatcher) between 1926 and 1928, Will Freeman between 1928 and 1930 before moving to the Eridge and Gordon Knight in 1930 who was sadly killed during cub-hunting and was succeeded by Jack Hewitt for the remainder of the season until 1936.

Between 1936 and 1939 the Old Surrey & Burstow reverted to having two Huntsmen, Douglas Benson who was Master between 1923 and 1933 and again in 1938 and 1939 (see above) and Lt. Col. Ralph S Clarke of Borde Hill who hunted the Sussex side of the border and who held the position of Master on several occasions during the second half of the 20th century (see above). Between 1939 and 1947 Alfred Petts was Huntsman for the Old Surrey & Burstow joined by Lt. Col. Ralph S Clarke in 1946 until 1969, again on the Sussex side of the border.

In 1947 Alfred Petts was succeeded as Huntsman by Jack Champion who held the position for thirty-eight years until his retirement in 1985, the longest serving Huntsman associated with the Old Surrey & Burstow (see below). On the retirement of Jack Champion he was succeeded by David Evans who rode as Huntsman between 1985 and 1992 being succeeded by Mark Bycroft who had been Whipper-in at the Old Surrey & Burstow from 1988 and was the Huntsman in 1999 at the time of the amalgamation of the Old Surrey & Burstow and the West Kent (see below).

Hunt Country

The amalgamation of the Old Surrey with the Burstow in 1915 saw the bringing together of two hunt territories and a varied geography. The area now encompassed to the north part of the North Downs in Surrey to the east from Squerries Court, Westerham, down through Four Elms, Blackham and Withyham in Kent, to the south Ashdown Forest and across to Borde Hill to the west and up to Paddock Hurst in Sussex and Outwood and South Park, Bletchingley, back again in Surrey.

The terrain encountered included chalk to the north and clay to the south, as well as the open heath land of Ashdown Forest, and as a point of interest, the Old Surrey & Burstow is the only hunt permitted to hunt on Ashdown Forest.

The intervening years between 1915 and the amalgamation with the West Kent in 1999 saw a huge change in this landscape as private estates were split up and sold off for development. The Felbridge Park estate began to be sold off for development from 1911 [for further information see Handout, 1911 Sale of the Felbridge Estate, SJC 01/11] and by the 1940's much of Felbridge had ceased to be the open farm land it had once been with the construction of ribbon development along the roads travelling through the area. From the 1960's the effects of the ribbon development and the pressure placed upon open ground in the near vicinity of the Hunt Kennels has increased with small housing estates being built within the grounds of several large Felbridge properties, thus decreasing the

rural nature of the area as a whole. The total population of Felbridge grew from 293 in 1913 to 2,039 by 2001 on just the Surrey side of Felbridge alone. With these new developments came more and more people from urban areas with little or no concept of rural practises and traditions, which had led to a conflict of interests over the years.

West Kent

There have been two or three packs of hounds associated with the West Kent area from at least the 17th century. However, the oldest established hunt in West Kent is considered to have been founded by John Warde of Squerries Court, Westerham, which is believed to date back to at least 1776. John Warde was born at Squerries Court in 1753 holding sway in the Westerham area until 1797 when he went on to hunt first with the Pytchely, then the New Forest and finally the Craven, being Master of hound for fifty years, earning him the title of Father of Foxhunters. Running along side the Warde hunt were the hounds of Sir John Dixon Dyke of Lullingstone, Kent, and Horham, Sussex. His pack hunted during the closing years of the 18th century taken over first by his eldest son Sir Thomas, and then by Sir Thomas' brother Sir Percival Hart Dyke, who continued to hunt until 1834 when he gave up the pack of foxhounds. Some of these hounds were bought by Mr Waring of Well Hill, Chelsfield near Sevenoaks, who was already in possession of a pack of harriers called the Chelsfield. With two breeds of hounds, Mr Waring hunted both hare and fox, but only seemed to last until 1836 when Mr Forrest (either father Thomas or son Richard) established new kennels with a fresh pack of fox hounds at Greenhithe, near Dartford.

The first use of the name the West Kent was in 1830 although there is some debate as to whether John Warde in 1776, Mr Waring in 1834 or Mr Forrest in 1836 should be credited with the establishment of the West Kent as it was known until 1999.

The Greenhithe hounds were disbanded in 1844 with the establishment of another kennels by Thomas (known as Tom) Colyer/Collier at Milton, near Gravesend. Thomas Colyer resided at Womwell Hall, Gravesend, and was a very large landowner, having property and land as far away as Farningham and Crayford and a number of other places, principally Southfleet. Tom Colyer did a great deal in establishing a good pack of hounds with purchases made from William Selby-Lowndes of the Whadon Chase and the Quorn hounds of Sir Richard Sutton of NorwoodPark. Tom Colyer held the Mastership of the Greenhithe hounds until he mysteriously disappeared in mid season in 1856 being succeeded by the Hon. Ralph Pelham Nevill, of Birling Manor, second son of William 4th Earl of Abergavenny. Tom Colyers disappearance may have had something to do with the 1856 case of Colyer v [Edward] Finch where Thomas Colyer came a legal cropper over mortgages on two properties in Southfleet, Kent, 'Hooks Place' and 'Weavers'.

At the end of the season, the Colyer pack was put up for auction, part being bought by William Armstrong, part by Lt. Col. Hon John Wingfield-Stratford (see below) and the remainder by Mr Tailby. William Armstrong had new kennels built where he resided at North End Farm, Betsham, Southfleet, and supplemented his hounds with purchases made from Mr Farquharson's pack. Victoria History of Kent records that William Armstrong and Mr Stratford hunted as Joint Masters for a season before the latter retired followed by William Armstrong in 1858, being succeeded as Mater by, Lt. Col. Hon. John Wingfield-

Stratford of Addington Place, Maidstone. It is not yet known whether Mr Stratford and Lt. Col. Hon. John Wingfield-Stratford are related.

On the retirement of William Armstrong, Lt. Col. Hon. John Wingfield-Stratford purchased fifteen couple of his hounds, together with some Vine hounds from Arthur Whieldon, which he kennelled at Wrotham Heath, near his residence of Addington Park. John Wingfield-Stratford held the Mastership until 1862 when he was succeeded by Hon. Ralph Pelham Nevill who had stepped in to hold the hunt together after the departure mid season of Tom Colyer in 1856 (see above). Ralph Nevill is credited for the stabilisation and consolidation of the West Kent and for being a popular and capable Master.

Ralph Nevill held the Mastership until 1891 when he was succeeded by Col. Charles Edward Warde, the great nephew of John Warde (see above). Charles Warde was elected to the House of Commons at his first attempt in 1892, standing for the Medway and held that seat until the constituency was abolished in 1918, after which he did not stand for Parliament again. In 1908 he was appointed a deputy lieutenant of Kent and was made a baronet in 1919, of Barham Court, Teston, Kent. Charles Warde resigned his Mastership in the year that he became an MP and was succeeded by Mr R Stewart-Saville who held the position for only one season being succeeded by Lord George Montecute Nevill, the third son of William 1st Marquess of Abergavenny, nephew of Ralph Nevill (see above) and brother of Major Guy Temple Montacute Larnach-Nevill of the Old Surrey & Burstow (see above). George Nevill had come from the Eridge where he had been Master between 1880 and 1887, and he remained at the West Kent until 1900 when he was succeeded as Master by Wilfred Baker-White who came from the East Kent.

During the Mastership of Wilfred Baker-White, the kennels of the West Kent were situated at Otford, and probably re-located there under the Mastership of Ralph Nevill when Richard Russell of Otford Castle was Hunt Secretary. Wilfred Baker-White remained Master of the West Kent until 1904 when he was succeeded by Major William Gore Lambarde of Bradbourne Hall, Sevenoaks. At this point there is a gap in the records and the next mentioned Master of the West Kent was Col. Auriol Stephen Gaselee OBE.

In 1957 Col. Auriol Stephen Gaselee OBE of the Royal Engineers became Master and he was followed by Richard Thorpe in 1967 and Tim Lyle in 1980. It was under Tim Lyle that the hounds were re-located to his home at Walters Green, Penshurst, from Home Farm, Southborough, where they had moved to in 1934 from Otford. Thus Walters Green became the base for hounds, horses and staff until the amalgamation with the Old Surrey and Burstow in 1999 (see below). At the time of the amalgamation, the appropriately named, Leslie Gallop held the position of Master with the West Kent.

Huntsmen

The first recorded Huntsman is Richard Hills, son of Tom Hills of the Old Surrey (see above), who acted as Huntsman to both Sir Thomas and Sir Richard Dyke up until at least 1834 when the Dyke hounds were disbanded. The next Huntsman recorded is his brother Tom Hills who took up the position of Huntsman between 1844 and 1852 when he moved to the Hambledon. Sam Hills joined his brother at the West Kent in 1851/2 and succeeded as

Huntsman until 1858 when he moved to the Old Surrey to succeed his father Tom as Huntsman (see above).

The next Huntsman of note was George Bollon who worked with Ralph Nevill for more than twelve years to help stabilise and consolidate the West Kent. He was the steadfast Huntsman during the succession of Masters between 1891 and 1896. Then came a succession of Huntsmen with George being succeeded by Eli Skinner from the Worcestershire, then by C Wesley before moving to the Old Surrey (see above) when George Bollon returned as Huntsman until 1900 when Tom Danch from the Essex took his place. A description of George Bollon can be found in the book, *In Scarlet and Silk* by Fox Russell who writes:

The Hon. Ralph Nevill, who presided over the destinies of this pack for so many years, has now resigned, to the great regret of all, but Bollen still remains to hunt them. A fine horseman, with nerves of iron, he is a thorough master of his craft. I shall not readily forget his performance one day, some ten years back, when hounds had just streamed across the metals of the South-Eastern Railway. Bollen trotted up to some high and new post-and-rails, jumped them, on to the line, and crossing it, faced and overcame in like manner another obstacle of the same sort, the other side; and not one of us would follow him!

Other West Kent Huntsmen include Fred Gosden who was considered a veteran when he moved to Hursley Hambleton as Huntsman during World War II. Then there was Kennel-Huntsman Harry Lenthall who went on to join the Axe Vale Harriers in 1962 and was succeeded by Stan Luckhurst who held the position of Whipper-in and Huntsman until 1967 and then as Huntsman until 1999 when the West Kent amalgamated with the Old Surrey & Burstow (see below).

Hunt Country

The accepted theory is that John Warde established the first hunt, and the hunt country was centred on the Westerham area, with hunting twice a week. In 1896 the West Kent gave up an area of their hunt country that they considered unmanageable, to the Hundred of Hoo Hunt. By the late 19th century the West Kent hunted on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, and a contemporary description can be found in *In Scarlet and Silk*:

The West Kent Foxhounds hunt over a very varied country, good, bad, and indifferent [and] may be met from Farningham and Penshurst — the latter is by far the better country. It must be confessed that the Surrey packs, and also the West Kent, have a bad country as a whole. Many is the day I have spent with them, toiling over flint stones and clay fallows, climbing hills like the side of a house, and threading almost interminable woodlands, in return for the very minimum of sport. Fruit-growing and wire also seriously militate [hinder or discourage] against hunting here. But as I said before, the West Kent get their compensation when they meet in the Penshurst country.

By the early 20th century, the West Kent hunted an area that comprised of about seventeen miles square with the Old Surrey hunt country to the west, the Burstow and Eridge to the

south, and Tickham to the east. The hunt country was described in Victoria Histories – Kent as:

The Country is chiefly pasture with a fair proportion of woodland, but very little plough, and there is not much wire. Some forty-five couples of hounds constitute the pack which is kennelled at Otford, near Sevenoaks.

However, as the 20th century progressed, as for the Old Surrey and the Burstow, the sprawl of urban development encroached upon the West Kent hunt country. As a result it was agreed in 1999 that the Old Surrey & Burstow would amalgamate with the West Kent to form the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt.

Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt

On 1st May 1999, the Old Surrey & Burstow amalgamated with the West Kent to form the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt. Seen with optimism by a former Old Surrey & Burstow Master, John Robson wrote:

The Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent got off to a splendid start, with a large area of country to cover. Both Hunts have weathered two World Wars, foot and mouth disease and BSE, the advent of Motorways, ground rail electric railways, the Channel tunnel, hurricanes, mobile phones and the Old Surrey & Burstow two fires at the kennels. When Jack Champion started hunting hounds [1947], there were only four people to inform between South Park [Bletchingley] and Four Elms [Edenbridge], now there are seventy for each hunting day. This alone illustrates the huge changes which have taken place and the dedication and sheer stamina of those who strive for their hounds and their hunting today.

However, hunting in general has seen very turbulent times since the amalgamation of the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent in 1999. The early 2000's saw a huge rise in the number of protestors against fox hunting including a small band of active anti-hunt extremists proclaiming to support animal welfare, the actions of whom have been keenly felt on numerous occasions by members of the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt. In 2001 the whole of the British countryside was shut down for nine months due to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease and a Hunting Bill was put forward in Parliament to ban hunting with dogs.

Between 2001 and 2003 there was a plethora of headlines about the actions (often fanatical and violent) of the anti-hunt saboteurs on members of the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt, their staff, supporters and followers, and even their hounds. However, the Boxing Day Meet, then held at the Leicester Arms, Penshurst, having moved from the Wheatsheaf public house in Kemsing near Sevenoaks in 1999, was well attended with more than 500 supporters as opposed to twenty protestors. In 2004 the Hunting Act was passed banning the hunting of wild mammals (notably foxes, deer, hares and mink) with dogs in England and Wales; the Act does not cover the use of dogs in the process of flushing out an unidentified wild mammal, nor does it affect drag hunting, where hounds are trained to follow an artificial scent, but it had a huge impact on the hunting community.

At the time the Old Surrey, Burstow and West Kent had between 500 and 600 members, 110 hounds and 17 horses and foremost in the minds of the hunt staff was what would happen to the animals. In the worst case scenario the hounds would have had to have been shot and the horses, as surplus to requirements, would have been got rid of. Another, perhaps unconsidered effect of the ban, was that the kennels had traditionally picked up a large proportion of fallen stock animals from farmer's fields to dispose of the carcasses on a daily basis, without them the farmers would have to make alternative arrangements for the disposal of the carcasses, the most economic way being burning.

Hunt Country

Today the hunt country of the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent is an amalgamation of the Surrey and Sussex lands of the Old Surrey & Burstow (see above) and the Kent lands of the West Kent. The hunting country runs from the M23 in Surrey in the west through the North Downs to the Isle of Grain in Kent in the east down to Ashdown Forest in East Sussex to the south, across to Borde Hill in West Sussex and back across the county boundary to the North Downs, an area of approximately forty-two miles east-west and thirty miles north-south. The hunt country offers a range of terrain with marsh-land around St Mary Hoo, chalk on the North Downs, clay in the Wealden areas of Kent and Sussex and open heath-land on Ashdown Forest. Unfortunately, although it is a very large hunting country it is now criss-crossed with many major roads and railway lines and much of the former countryside has been urbanised with the encroachment of development making much of the area inaccessible to hunting.

Over the years, the remaining land available to hunt by the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent, has been improved with the addition of many jumps to enable the hunt to move quickly around the countryside to keep up with the hounds. From an article in Horse and Hound in 2006, Mark Bycroft, Huntsman of the Old Surrey Burstow & West Kent, commented:

Places like Chiddingstone and Penshurst are made for hunting, with hedges and post-and-rails and all on grass. We've spent a lot of time and effort putting in hunt jumps — over the past three years we've put in about 400 — and we can jump 30 or 40 in one day. We're in the entertainment business now, and because we share the country with the Mid Surrey Draghounds and two bloodhound packs, we're all working together to keep it as open as possible. We're also trying to ensure that every corner of every field is fenced, so there are no gates to open.

With the decrease of farming, that once shaped the landscape, the countryside now has to be managed to maintain a positive biodiversity to the benefit of flora and fauna, as well as the enjoyment of the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt.

Hunt Personalities

This section includes the lives of just a few of the past members of the Old Surrey, Burstow and West Kent hunts, either for their exceptional stories or because they were local to Felbridge.

Diana Barnato-Walker MBE

Diana Barnato-Walker was born Diana Barnato on the 15th January 1918, the daughter of the celebrated racing driver Woolf Barnato (chairman of Bentley Motors) who inherited millions accumulated by his father, Barney Barnato. Barney had risen from being a trader and juggler in the Mile End Road, east London, to founding a diamond-mining company in South Africa that later became part of the De Beers group.

Diana's parents split-up in 1922, although they maintained an amicable relationship, so Diana was brought up by her mother along with her sister Virginia. The girls lived in a large house on Primrose Hill and were cared for by numerous nannies and governesses but made frequent visits to their father at Ardunrun, Tandridge Lane, Lingfield, Surrey. Diana was educated at Queen's College, Harley Street, until 1936 when she came out as a débutante and 'did the season'. However, becoming disenchanted with the social rounds, Diana decided to learn to fly in 1936 and invested all her allowance in lessons with the Brooklands Flying Club, soloing in a Tiger Moth after just six hours training.

When World War II broke out Diana worked as a Voluntary Air Detachment (VAD) nurse and with the Red Cross, but was soon drawn to the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA), and was one of some 154 women pilots known as Atagirls who flew during the war, ferrying all kinds of aircraft from factories and aircraft parks to service units all over the British Isles, in all kinds of conditions and without radio. Aircraft she flew included the single-engined Spitfire, Hurricane, Defiant, Mustang, Avenger, Wildcat, Vengeance, Firefly, Barracuda and Tempest, and twins such as the Oxford, Anson, Wellington, Warwick, Mosquito, Hudson and Mitchell.

In 1942, just three weeks after she first met the Battle of Britain fighter pilot Sqn. Ldr. Humphrey Gilbert, they were engaged, but sadly he died in a flying accident just days later. Two years later, on 6th May 1944, Diana married another pilot, W. Cdr. Derek Ronald Walker and was docked three months' pay when she made an unauthorised honeymoon flight to Brussels in a Spitfire, her new husband flying alongside in another. A month later Diana became the first woman to deliver RAF aircraft to Europe after D-Day, in contradiction with the order of ACM Leigh-Mallory who expressly forbade ATA women pilots to perform such deliveries.

Sadly, shortly after the end of the war, Diana lost her husband Derek Walker when he was killed in a flying accident. However, despite losing several friends, a fiancé and a husband through aviation accidents, Diana continued flying and gained a commercial pilot's licence. She also became a pilot for the Women's Junior Air Corps (WJAC), giving cadets training and air-experience flights at weekends and amassing many flying hours in the Corps' Fairchild Argus and Auster aircraft. In 1963 she was awarded the Jean Lennox Bird Trophy, presented annually to a British woman pilot, for her work with the WJAC. On 26th August 1963 Diana fulfilled her desire to fly in an English Electric Lightning, attaining 1,262mph, and becoming the first British woman to break the sound barrier.

In later life, Diana took up sheep farming in Horne, Surrey, was awarded the MBE in 1965 and was made a Freeman of London in 1995. She continued to fly for many years with the WJAC (now renamed the Girls' Venture Corps) and became Commodore of the ATA

Association. Apart from flying Diana also had a passion for riding and subscribed to the Old Surrey & Burstow, becoming Master for thirteen seasons between 1966 and 1970.

Jack Champion MBE

Jack Champion was born on 19th June 1913 at the Cottesmore kennels at Oakham, Rutland, and came from a family with unbroken service for at least four generations in the hunting world. His great-grandfather, Jack Champion, was huntsman to Lord Darlington (later the Duke of Cleveland) in the mid 19th century; his grandfather, Bridger Champion was huntsman of the Zetland Hounds for thirty-six seasons, and his father, Bob Champion, hunted with the Cottesmore, Warwickshire, Ledbury and Eridge, and was one of four brothers all of whom were huntsmen. Jack had two brothers, Nimrod and Bob, who also became successful huntsmen. Nimrod was huntsman at the Ledbury for thirty-five seasons, whilst Bob was at the Cleveland for seventeen seasons and the West Kent for two.

Jack began his career as 2nd Whipper-in to his father at the Ledbury at the age of fourteen. He then moved to the Shires as Whipper-in at the Fernie where he acquired the 'dashing riding style' he was later to be known for as a huntsman. He also occasionally deputised as huntsman at the Fernie before moving as Whipper-in at the Warwickshire and in 1937 he became huntsman at the Eglinton. Jack's hunting service was then interrupted by World War II when he served with the Household Cavalry, taking part in the D-Day landings and the final campaign. After the war, in 1947, he was appointed huntsman at the Old Surrey and Burstow. At the time the countryside was still open and foxhunters returning from the war soon swelled the mounted fields, enjoying the vale country around Lingfield and Edenbridge. It has been reported that in these early years a hunting correspondent would sit outside the bathroom door at the end of a hunt taking notes from Jack as he relaxed in his bath with a whisky at the Hunt kennels, recounting the day's sport for the East Grinstead Courier.

Jack Champion earned a great reputation as one of the most entertaining of huntsmen who inspired several generations of devoted followers of the Old Surrey & Burstow. His enthusiasm for the Chase was considered contagious, enabling him to make the best of a country increasingly cramped by new roads and motorways, and expanding towns and villages. He brought great pleasure to many who, through riding to hounds with the Old Surrey & Burstow, discovered how varied and beautiful the country was within a short drive of south London. Jack was able to make the best of his threatened environment because he was an exceptionally good horseman who could turn his horse on a sixpence and leap off a busy road and had great hound control. He preferred hunting the bitch pack on the pastures of Surrey and Kent, and used the slower, more persistent dog-hound pack in the woodlands of Sussex.

Jack's wife Robin was a great organiser at the Felbridge kennels and both their sons, Bridger and Billy, became good horsemen who rode point-to-point winners and whipped-in to their father, although neither went on to become huntsmen. The Champion family connections continued with the Old Surrey & Burstow, with one of Jack's two sons-in-law, John Garner, serving as Hunt Chairman, whilst one of his grand-daughters, Victoria Bycroft, became the wife of the current Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent huntsman, Mark Bycroft.

Outside of the hunting world Jack rode the chaser Aldaniti in a sponsored ride for the cancer trust run by his nephew Bob Champion, who won the Grand National on the horse in 1981, and on Jack's retirement in 1985, when he was still hunting hounds with gusto aged over seventy, he was believed to be the only professional huntsman in Britain to receive the British Empire Medal, for 'services to the community'. Jack died on 13th February 2003 aged eighty-nine having served for thirty-eight seasons as huntsman of the Old Surrey and Burstow.

Jimmy Edwards

Jimmy Edwards was born James Keith O'Neill Edwards on 23rd March 1920 in Barnes, Middlesex, the son of mathematics professor RWK Edwards. Jimmy was educated at St. Paul's Cathedral Choir School and King's College School, Wimbledon, and he graduated with an MA from St. John's College, Cambridge.

During World War II Jimmy served as a Flight Lieutenant in the Royal Air Force, winning the DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross). Jimmy Edwards is best known as a comedy actor and writer and for his huge handlebar moustache that he grew to conceal scars sustained during a crash landing of the Dakota he was flying due to enemy action in World War II. He made his stage debut at the Windmill Theatre in London after World War II and also acted on radio from 1947.

Jimmy Edwards rode with the Old Surrey & Burstow Hunt becoming joint Master between 1972 and 1974, and again between 1979 and 1981. In 1966, prior to becoming Master, Jimmy Edwards had been cast in a television series as John Jorrocks, a down-to-earth cockney who suddenly gives up his job as a grocer to go and become the Squire in the village of Handley Cross. The series was based on the character from Jorrocks's Jaunts and Jollities created by Robert Smith Surtees in 1838. The Old Surrey & Burstow was known as Jorrocks's Hunt, due mainly to Surtees who described his great fictional character, John Jorrocks, as starting his hunting career in the Surrey Hills, south of Croydon. Surtees had hunted in his youth with the Surrey packs, when he was studying law in London, and many of the characters in Jorrocks's Jaunts and Jollities are believed to be caricatures the city sportsmen he knew. Much of the filming for the television series was done on Jimmy Edward's farm at Fletching with several local hunting farmers as extras, as well as Jack Champion (see above) who appeared with his hounds.

William James Hunt

William James Hunt was born in 1878 in Devon and married Mary Waterman in 1900 in Bridgewater, Somerset. By 1910 William had moved to The Kennels, Kennel Lane, Felbridge, and was working as a Stud Groom. As a Stud Groom, William would have been second in command to the Stud Manager and would have taken care of and looked after the horses at the kennels on a daily basis to ensure that they remained healthy, happy and in good condition for hunting.

William and Mary had two children, Ivy May who was born in 1901 and William Henry (known as Willie) who was born in 1902, both born in Somerset. The children both attended

Felbridge School but on 13th August, a hot and sunny day in the summer of 1910, Ivy and Willie went out to play and on not returning home, a search was made, only to discover that they had both drowned whilst playing in the pond, known locally as Wooky Hole, located to the east of Hodgehorn Farm, Kennel Lane. It was speculated that one of them got into difficulty in the pond and the other tried to save them and both had sadly drowned. They were buried on 17th August 1910 in the churchyard of St John's, Felbridge [for further information see Handout, Biographies from the Churchyard of St John the Divine, Felbridge, SJC 07/02iv]. Although William and Mary lost both their children they remained at the Burstow kennels after the sad incident until the early 1920's.

George Thomas W Maddison

George Maddison was born on 30th October 1888 in Grantham, Lincolnshire. By 1911 he was working as a groom at hunting stables, living at 5, East Street, Grantham. In 1910 George married Losher Smith (known as Lucy). In 1924 George first subscribed to the Old Surrey & Burstow when the couple moved to Star Cottage, OldTown, Lingfield. In 1932 they moved to Hazeldine, West Park Road, Newchapel, where George became a horse-master, setting up the Maddison yard as a nursery for young horses and riders, many of whom went on the hunt with the Old Surrey & Burstow.

In 1941 George moved to Dennis Villas on West Park Road and went on to become a celebrated Hunter Judge.

Henry Webber

Henry Webber was born in 1849 in Tonbridge, Kent, the son of William Webber MD. Henry was educated at Tonbridge School and Pembroke College Oxford, graduating in 1870. Two years later, he joined the Stock Exchange and remained a member for forty-two years. In 1874 Henry married Emily Morris, the eldest daughter of Norman Morris, a senior partner in Norman Morris and Co, the firm for which Henry worked. Settling in Horley, Surrey, where Henry became an active member of local society, and the couple had four sons and five daughters. Henry was one of the original members of Surrey County Council and the first chairman of the Horley Parish Council. He was also involved in the administration of a local hospital, became chairman of directors of the Horley Gas Company and served as a County Magistrate, church warden and president of the local Boys Scouts Association.

Henry was also a keen sportsman, a member of the MCC, the first captain of Gatwick Golf Club, an accomplished shot and subscribed to the Old Surrey & Burstow. Family legend has it that Henry was Master of the Old Surrey and Burstow (see above) although the hunt does not record him in their list of past Masters.

After the outbreak of World War I Henry tried to join his sons and serve his country. However, being more than twenty years over the age limit he was repeatedly turned down. He first volunteered to serve 'in any capacity' but when rebuffed he recruited a company of 'rough riders' (fellow-horsemen like himself) and offered the unit to the army. Again he was turned down, but he persevered and was eventually given a commission as Lieutenant with the 7th South Lancashire Regiment on 26th July 1915 and

after a brief period of training at Park Royal, northwest London, was sent to France as a battalion transport officer.

Henry's role involved helping in the build-up for the Somme offensive that started on 1st July 1916. On 21st July 1916 the 7th Lincs. moved up to relieve a battalion on the front line near Mametz Wood. On that night Henry took supplies as usual with the battalion transport. Leaving his men to unload the horses, he went over to where the commanding officer was talking to a group of officers who, at that moment, came under attack with a shell landing nearby. Henry was among twelve men and three horses that had been hit. Henry, suffering a head wound, along with the others, was taken to a dressing station but never regained consciousness and died that night, just over a month after his 67th birthday.

Henry was buried in the Dartmoor Cemetery, Becordel-Becourt, Somme, France, and his death made him Britain's oldest known combatant victim of World War I. Henry had been motivated to enlist by a desire to serve with his sons, who were all fought in World War I; however, due to a sad twist of fate, all the sons survived the war and returned home, whilst Henry was sadly not so lucky.

William Marshal Welbourne

William Marsahll Welbourne was born on 18th November 1889 in Glatton, Huntingdon, and the son of farmer Walter Frank Wel[l]bourne. By 1911 he was working as 2nd Horseman and was boarding at Brent Pelham, Hertfordshire. During World War I William served with the Royal Naval Air Service, recorded as a Whipper-in on his enlistment in 1916, before transferring to the Royal Flying Corps on 1st August 1917.

By 1920 William had moved to The Kennels, Felbridge, as 1st Whipper-in to Dick Burden succeeding him as Huntsman at the Old Surrey & Burstow on Burden's retirement in 1923. A year later, on 30th July 1924, William married Alma Muriel Baber at All Saint's Church, Crawley Down, and moved on from the Old Surrey & Burstow in 1926 when he was succeeded as Huntsman by Dick Thatcher.

Sarah Whitmore

Sarah Whitmore was born on 9th August 1931. She started hunting during World War II having learned her equestrian skills at Porlocks, the leading equestrian centre in Britain at the time run by Tony Collins. Sarah was the first lady amateur Whipper-in to Jack Champion at the Old Surrey & Burstow and rode Manikin, a horse loaned by Jack Champion, that was to go on to serve as Reserve horse to the British Three Day Event team in the Olympics in Tokyo in 1964.

Sarah later rode her own horse Junker and represented Britain in both the team and individual Dressage events of the Olympics in Montreal in 1976. Riding her own horse Dutchman, other successes include: the World Championships in Lausanne in 1982, Goodwood Grand Prix and European Championships in 1983. Sarah later had her own yard at Edenbridge.

Hunt Stories and Memories

A Very Great Day

Bye-day. Hazeldean X roads, 10.45 a.m. Dogs 16 couples. Best day I ever had. Wind S.W. working round to S.E. during the day. Scent – did not seem very good at first, but afterwards was very holding. Guy Cubitt tells me these good hunts often seem to start without a good scent. Brought hounds on to meet from [Felbridge] Kennels and took them back there. Rode – Candidate. Found in Birches [now the Birches Industrial Estate off Imberhorne Lane, East Grinstead], Imberhorne Manor, at 11.20. Ran out E. and had a short check for no reason at once; hounds turned N. by Ascotts [off Crawley Down Road, Felbridge] to Sixty Acres, where they hung for some time, then to the west of Hedgecourt Pond to Bakers Wood and Mill Wood (West Park) where they ran round and round for a bit. I tried to put them onto a fox who crossed the road N. for the vale, but luckily failed. Turned E. and ran to the London – East Grinstead road, just S. of Newchapel Green – Headed here, and turned back to Bakers Wood. He then turned S. to Furnace Wood, and out to Gibbshaven, then the length of Cuttingly Wood from E. to W. and out S. close to Haven Farm [Crawley Down]. These woods are just suburbs of bungalows, chicken runs etc. They hunted wonderfully through them, up and down. Coroner was particularly good on the roads. Over the railway in Burleigh Wood and on S. by Rainbow Shaw to Fen Place. At Haven Farm Dasher was knocked down by a car but escaped quite uninjured. An eye-witness said it was doing about 40 m.p.h. and its bumper was bent quite crooked. They crossed the road at Fen Place and ran on to Rookery Wood – left-handed over the earths into Holstein Wood and over the road to Minepit Wood on Gravetye. [They ended up at Cherry Orchard off the Wych Cross road via Kingscote, Mill Place, Stone Farm, Leylands Farm, Plaw Hatch, Lavender Platt, Kidbrooke and Hind Leap Warren].

There had been a small field out, and most of them had been left in the big woods round Cuttingly. Point – seven miles. At least 16 miles as hounds ran without taking into account circles in woods etc. Started with 16 couple and had 13 couple at the end. It was a dullish day and the ground pretty wet. A very triumphant ride back to the Kennels. Dined with Guy Cubitt at Cowfold, a most pleasant ending to a very great day.

Abridged page of the Diary of Sir Ralph Clarke, 14th January 1937

The Hawthorns

The Hunt regularly exercised the hounds up and down Crawley Down Road, and on one occasion they all got into our garden at the Hawthorns.

Di Giles, 2015

Living in Imberhorne Lane

Living at The Birches off Imberhorne Lane we regularly had the Hunt come across the fields and through the yard. They hunted all over The Birches. They would go up and down Imberhorne Lane to the Blounts' estate at Imberhorne and Tilkhurst. Hunted all round the area. The hunt had loads of followers who followed on foot, bicycle, motorbike or car. They would know the route in advance of the hunting and would go where they would get the best view.

Living in Imberhorne Lane you could hear the hounds from the kennels up Woodcock Hill and it was nothing for a hound to come home 2 or 3 days later.

There was a Meet every Boxing Day at the Olde Felbridge Hotel where waitresses in mob caps and aprons carried around trays of stirrup cup. The news people were always there to film the event. Used to be over 30 horses at a Felbridge Boxing Day Meet.

Tony Jones, 2015

Following by bicycles

During the 1950's and after, several of us followed the hounds on bicycles. In all that time we never saw or ever heard of a kill. We would meet at The Felbridge [Hotel] and follow best we could. The advantage of a bike as opposed to a car was that we could turn round quickly and go almost anywhere.

Bill Haylor, 2013

Boxing Day Hunt Memories

As a child, growing up in Imberhorne Lane in the 1960's and early 70's, a family tradition on Boxing Day was to stroll down to the vicinity of the Olde Felbridge Hotel to watch the Hunt gather. Participating in this ritual over many years my memories have now merged together and are held in my mind as a general overview.

There was always a great number of people waiting and watching the Hunt. As for the Hunt itself, they amassed in the car park in front of the hotel, a great number of horses and riders. Trays of glasses were walked around between the horses and the riders would bend down and take an offered glass and drink what my parents called the Stirrup Cup.

Red was a predominant colour as were white legs and black boots and the hounds, all milling around impatiently. One lady always turned out in a beautiful long, navy blue velvet skirt and jacket, with a black veiled top hat (I think it was a top hat but could have been a bowler) with trailing ribbons (possibly a bow and tails) from the back of the hat and black leather gloves. She always looked very elegant, as if out of a different era, and she always rode a brown/chestnut horse. Her horse, to me as a child, seemed to be one of the largest horses in the gathering, but what impressed me the most was that she always rode side-saddle.

Stephonie J Clarke, 2014

The Hunt at Hedgecourt

I remember standing on one side of the lake at Hedgecourt watching the Hunt in full chase on the other side when I turned round to find the fox standing looking at me!

Jean Roberts, 2015

Sir Winston Churchill

The Old Surrey and Burstow Hunt met at Chartwell Farm in 1948, shortly before Winston's 74th birthday. Winston had given up riding many years before, but could not refuse a challenge. Fired by the example of his daughter Mary Soames and her husband Christopher he decided to take part in the hunt. He hired a horse from Sam Marsh's livery stables at Scamperdale, (now Holdfast House), just north of Edenbridge and joined the Soames family for a couple of hours. Much to everyone's relief he did not repeat this exploit.

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Texts of all Handouts referred to in this document can be found on FHG website: www.felbridge.org.uk

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