Welcome to our Spring newsletter

As we come close to hearing "blowing for home" for the last time this season it is time to reflect on an extraordinary season's hunting.

Firstly, we are all very pleased to see Sean making good progress following his horrific fall in January and look forward to seeing him hunting hounds again at the beginning of the next and wish him well at the summer hound shows. Sean gave us a great start to the season with young hounds integrating well into the pack in those early dry days before the rains came! We then had some excellent winter sport with hounds running well in tough conditions for hounds, horses and riders alike.

We are all incredibly appreciative of our farmers who have welcomed us onto their land when conditions have at times been atrocious, and we have been fortunate to have lost relatively few days in comparison to other packs. We can't thank our farmers enough for their valuable support.

A combination of poor conditions underfoot and the increase in hunt jumps contributed to a record number of falls this season. I am embarrassed to see myself in equal second place in the league table but comforted by the fact Matthew Brooks occupies the same position! We all welcome the increase in hunt jumps...perhaps a little more practice is required before next season?

Following Sean's fall we witnessed the responsibility for hunting hounds and the horn being passed onto Will in his second season whipping in for the Suffolk Hunt. I haven't checked the records but Will must be one of the youngest huntsman on record to be given this opportunity. Sean and all at the kennels must be incredibly proud how both Will and the hounds performed and the manner in which he has given us all tremendous pleasure for the remainder of the season. It has been great to watch how Will's confidence has grown and how well hounds have responded to him. Will, thank you, and good luck on your adventures when you leave at the end of the season.

There are an incredible number involved in keeping our hunt going and the Joint Masters would like to thank all who have supported the Suffolk Hunt throughout the season: all those at the kennels, our terrier and eagle team, farmers, farriers, puppy walkers, cake makers, hunt ball organisers, all other fund raising organisers, our hunt secretaries, committee members, point to point team, fence makers (and menders!), foot followers, mounted riders, amateur whips, our Field Master and many more!

Finally, I would like to welcome Chris Minter who will be joining the Joint Master team next season. I have very much enjoyed my first season as a Joint Master and I am already looking forward to the next!

Euan Nicolson MFH
Chairman’s Report

With the hunting season soon coming to an end, we can reflect on many great days sport. As usual the farmers have been brilliantly supportive, having just had the wettest winter on record we have only had to cancel a handful of days - so a huge thank you must go to them for their continued support from all involved in the Suffolk Hunt.

Sean has missed most of 2014 after a nasty fall although he is now well on the road to a full recovery. Many thanks must go to Will, for stepping very professionally into some difficult boots to fill, taking over the hunting of the hounds so well and continuing the excellent season, and the general running of the kennels. Also thanks to all those who have helped out at the kennels and in the hunting field, it has all been much appreciated, thank you.

Looking ahead to next season, Chris Minter is joining the Mastership, please join me in giving him a very warm welcome.

Andrew Brown.

Kennels update

We would like to start by saying a HUGE thank you to everyone for all of their help after Sean had a nasty fall at the Saxham meet in January. We are glad to report that after some recovery time both horse and rider are on the mend and looking forward to the Summer!!! Many thanks to everyone for their get well wishes, and those who helped on the day and for all the help and support back at the kennels to keep everything ticking along for the remainder of the season. It really has been appreciated. Special thanks must go to Sally Palmby who has helped William walk the hounds out every weekday, and driven the hounds and horses to all the meets for us.

As many of you know, William is going travelling with his girlfriend across Thailand, Australia and New Zealand later this year, before doing a ski-season. Chris Mardles will be joining us as Whipper-in on 1st May, coming from The Kimblewick Hunt, as did William two years ago.

We are now looking forward to some more new arrivals during April, last years puppies are now walking out with the pack and getting ready for next season. The horses will have a well deserved holiday and we will be preparing for hound parades/shows over the coming summer months and hope to see you all at some events.

Andrew Brown.

Point to Point: "The sun shines on glorious Ampton!"

After the winter deluge and gloomy predictions for cancellations across the country, Spring arrived just in time for the Suffolk Hunt race meeting at Ampton.

The course was in excellent condition and provided good jumping ground for the horses and the facilities were set up perfectly for a bumper crowd.

This doesn't happen without a lot of effort and on behalf of all I would like to thank the Turner family in particular for their kind generosity in continuing to provide the racecourse and helping maintain the track.

I would like to thank Simon, Russell, Brian and Brad for yet again demonstrating their excellent race course management and maintenance skills, and additionally a big thank you to the very many volunteers who contributed on the day.

The point to point is our unique opportunity to thank our local farmers for welcoming us onto their land throughout the hunting season and to provide them, hunt supporters and wider audience with a great days racing. We were not let down with competitive races throughout the day, a good turnout of runners and riders, and some exciting close finishes.

Many year's ago I had my first East Anglian win at Ampton on Walkers Hill... a strong and bold front runner. Ampton was one of my favourite courses and fortunately we both loved the thrill of launching ourselves over the downhill fences. It is this type of feature and the picturesque setting that adds variety to our East Anglian racecourses and also provides a winning opportunity for those horses that require a greater test of stamina. We are very fortunate to have Ampton available to us and to have it in the Suffolk Hunt country is an extra bonus.

Euan Nicolson MFH.
Most of my life I have been bombing around always in search of a thrill or a challenge. As a youngster I spent many days out hunting with the Chiddingfold Leconfield and Cowdray Hunt. Nigel Peel hunted hounds then. I loved following my mother or brother across country and generally charging around getting muddy and always looking for something to jump. I also felt a great deal of satisfaction when returning home, cleaning my horse, tucking him up nice and warm with a hot bran mash. Then sitting down in front of the fire with a boiled egg!

I was an enthusiastic member of the Pony Club and was involved with most teams, most especially the ODE and Prince Philip Cup squad. Mounted games were a fantastic way to learn all about precision, control, balance, athleticism and how to handle winning and losing! There used to be hoards of kids queuing up to take part, and I think now a days youngsters are missing out on a huge amount at local shows, where gymkhanas are nowhere to be seen.

However, the team coaches used to tear their hair out whilst watching me show jumping. ‘it is not a race Alex’.. One Pony Club camp however our teacher, Captain Mc Inerney lined 6 of us upsides and let us rip over 4 schooling fences at Tweseldown. I remember the buzz of adrenaline, the speed and the sound. I was subsequently hooked and my very amateur career in NH and point to pointing began.

My first ride was in the Newmarket Town Plate, a 4 mile flat race which my Grandmother won in 1925. Eileen Joel was the first lady to win a race against men. My mother duly followed suit in 1955 and I rode a wonderful horse called Summons who won it for me in 1984. The following Easter I won our members race at Cowdray on a mare called Some Story who had also given my brother Euan his first winner.

I rode 65 winners in all. My finest moments were not in victory though. I was 5th in the Aintree Foxhunters on Golden Minstrel and 3rd in the Cheltenham equivalent on Placid Man. I also had a knack of cajoling ‘quirky’ horses to win, which always made me very happy, especially to see the look of joy on the owners faces. 30 years later, I am a very reluctant retiree from race riding. I say this as I keep popping back to ride in the odd race. Most recent was last March in a maiden race on Red Burn, the son of Highland Rose a mare I won 5 races on.

So now, I am recovering (still) physically and indeed mentally from completing the world’s longest toughest horse race, The Mongol Derby. A 1000km race across the Mongolian steppe, a brief re-construction of Ghengis Khans postal network. 30 International riders met in Ulanbaatar last August. We navigated ourselves completely unsupported with a GPS and some rather ropey looking maps with only 5kg of kit from station to station 25 in all. At each station we changed mounts, the Native semi wild horses of Mongolia, the toughest in the world.

The ‘stations’ were Urtuus or Gers owned by the local families and we were treated to mutton stew, airag and other ‘delights’!!? whilst they allowed groups of up to 12 of us to sleep on the floor with them. We generally rode 3 horses a day, 40 km each and an average of 14 hours a day, and pushing it all the time, through all kinds of scenery. Vast open steppe, marsh, mountains ,rivers and sandunes, no fence or barrier in sight. True wilderness, a horse heaven. 1000’s of horses, sheep,goats, yaks who are collectively the sign of a Mongolians wealth.

It took me 9 days to complete the challenge in 7th place. There were a host of 'obstacles and injuries' to overcome. The Mongol Derby is certainly not for the feint hearted.
The Tumbler’s Club

This season there have been nearly twice as many members of The Tumblers Club compared to the 2012 / 2013 season, with twenty four people in total muddying their hunt coats in various ways.

The frequency that people have fallen off has also been much higher, with a total of thirty seven falls over the season. The highest performer of the season has been Graeme Spittle, who tops the league table. Graeme has shown amazing resilience and always been happy to hop straight back on with a smile on his face. We look forward to Graeme hopefully coming out even more next season on his new horse, who he seems to be getting on very well with.

The ‘Tumbler’s Tumbler’ will be awarded at the last meet of the season, at Shimpling.

We’re not exactly sure of the reason why there have been so many falls, but fortunately, most of them have been harmless. Of course, Sean and Louise both did have hospital visits and fairly lengthy recovery periods, but we are all pleased they are both on the mend. Despite their nasty injuries they were both extremely quick and forthcoming with their payments!

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<tr>
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<td>Graeme Spittle</td>
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<td>Matthew Brooks</td>
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<td>Euan Nicolson</td>
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<td>Oliver Topham-Smith</td>
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<td>Sean Hutchinson-Smith</td>
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<td>Todd Hutchinson</td>
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<td>Nick Leonard (Quad Bike Special)</td>
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<td>Francis Topham-Smith</td>
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<td>Hayden Hutchinson</td>
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<td>Craig Pearson</td>
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<td>Sebastian Burnett-Wells</td>
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<td>Taylor Theobald</td>
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Farmer’s Corner – Dennis Driver

In 1954 I bought Somerton hall with my father Horace. It consisted of 250 acres of arable and 50 acres of grassland, it employed 8 people and housed 12 working horses. Crops consisted of Barley, beans and sugar beet, stock was cattle and pigs. Over the years employees have retired and in the late 70’s we got out of the 40 sows and off spring that we produced for Wall’s. Then again in early eighty’s we finished the 30 beef suckling herd and just ran beef on the grass and bull beef in the yards, by the mid nineties all cattle had gone and Melanie had started a livery yard. The farm now grows wheat, barley beans and oilseed rape. My son Carl Driver now contract farms the farm.

Thank you

Lillian Clarke and her grandchildren, Rachel and Matthew, would like to say thank you to all those who attended Mandy’s funeral and also for all the kind words, hugs, cards and letters received. Over £850 was donated to The World Horse Welfare in Mandy's memory which she would have been proud of I am sure. Please all still think of the jokes and laughter you had with her, and there are many from what you have told me. Lillian Clarke.


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**Dates for your diary:**
- Saturday 10th May - Cedildh Folk Dance, Lawshall Village Hall.
- Thursday 24th April Schools Fair Countryside day at Trinity Park.
- Sunday 11th May, South Suffolk Show – Hounds parading.
- Sunday 18th May, Supporters Terrier, Lurcher and Open Dog Show, The Kennels.
- Wed/Thurs 28th 29th May Suffolk County Show – Hounds parading.
- Sunday 8th June Euston Rural Pastimes – Hounds parading.
- Sunday 29th June Blaston Hound Show.
- Wed 16th July Peterborough Hound Show / Festival of Hunting.
- Sunday 13th July Elveden Dog Day (parade hounds on foot).
- Saturday 27th July: Open Afternoon at The Kennels.
- November: The Hunt Ball.

We are looking for teams for the Inter-Hunt competitions. If you are interested please contact Tina Hutchinson (07810030560).

**Bottle Draw:** The Bottle Draw winners this year have been: Jan Tomlinson, Graeme Spittle and Margaret Driver. There is one more draw at the last meet of the season.

**The Four Horseshoes** pub in Thornham Magna donated all proceeds from the tea held at the end of the day’s hunting to the Air Ambulance charity.

Amongst the winners of the **Supporters Sweepstake** on the Open Race at the Point to Point were: 1st Mr Lankester, £110, 2nd Mrs. Donaghy £70, 3rd Martha Patrick £40, 4th Lucy Pettitt £30, 5th Geoffrey Pieters £10 and 6th Mr. Laflin. Geoffrey Pieters donated his prize back to the supporters.

**The Eastern Countries Minkhounds** will begin hunting in early-May. There are various meets in Suffolk Hunt country, including Long Melford, Chelsworth, Easton, Shadwell and Cavendish. Please contact Ryan O’Connell.

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**THE 150 Club**

Why not become a member of the Suffolk Hunt 150 Club, it will cost you just £13.00 per year and you will have the chance of winning a gift of £150 in June and December. There will also be further gifts of 1 x £50, 2 x £25 and 2 x £15 (subject to there being 150 members). The more members there are the more chances you have of winning and the more money we can raise for the hunt.

Please send your cheques to: Lillian Clarke, Torwan House, Mill Road, Pakenham, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP31 2NE.

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We hope you have enjoyed our Hunt Newsletter. If you would like anything included in our Summer edition, please do not hesitate to get in touch with either Ryan O’Connell (07740344862 – ryan@evogreen.co.uk) or Tina Hutchinson (07810030560 – christinahutchinson@live.co.uk). Please submit your content by the 1st June.