

During these unusual times in 2020 Lockdown #2 The Beaufort Hunt Pony Club had the pleasure of speaking to a selection of members of Hunt while they were grounded. We got a rare insight into their hunting history and this is what we found out!! Some entertaining reading which we hope you will enjoy!



Matt Ramsden MFH

- ***How old were you when you started hunting?***
“I'm not sure exactly how old I was but it would have been quite early on. My Dad was a huntsman when I was growing up and I think he was only too keen to get me started!”
- ***What was/is your most memorable Pony or Horse?***
“My first proper pony was a little grey called Silver. She was a diamond - I could do everything wrong and she would help me out. Unfortunately my second pony, Scarlet, was even more memorable for the wrong reasons; she cat leapt. On more occasions than I care to remember she catapulted me, head first, into the mud whenever we tried to jump.”
- ***What is your most memorable moment hunting?***
“When I was about twelve my Dad took me hunting in the Lake District. Known as "The Fells" the hounds there have to hunt a very hilly, sometimes mountainous terrain. No one rides with them but you follow on foot, using the high ground to watch and enjoy. We were fortunate to witness an amazing hunt of well over seven miles. With the use of binoculars we were able to see the hounds and the fox most of the time. This taught me the importance of the intelligence of hounds, not to mention the wiles of a fox! Every hunting country is different and so is every pack of hounds. The key is to appreciate them all”.
- ***Did you hunt as a child and if so did you ever do anything wrong?***
“I hunted a lot as a child and did something wrong almost every day. That's how you learn. Normally tempers run high on the hunting field and so a minor misdemeanor always seems like a mortal sin. As long as the mistake isn't repeated then it's a lesson well learned”.
- ***Do you have a most memorable fall?***
“I try to forget most of my falls but one at the end of last season sticks out at the moment.....Going away from Cranhill on the Wednesday after 'Frantic Friday' I jumped the gate. It was phenomenally wet and boggy, and although my horse had cleared the gate fine, his front legs were irretrievable from the landing side and thus I went flying out of the front door. My entire right hand side, including my hat and face, were caked in mud. As a huntsman you can often get away with a fall without anyone knowing. This was not one of those times”.

- **What are your definite 'don't do's' / 'pet hates'?**
 "I have lots! But what I really don't like is any jewellery on the hunting field. Pearl earrings look great at a party, but less so out hunting. More importantly you can do serious damage if the earring was caught by a branch".
- **If you were to give advice to a child who was new to hunting or perhaps doesn't have hunting parents what would it be?**
 "Watch, listen and ask questions. If you don't have hunting parents then a 'hunting guardian' is advised. Mrs Bush would be an excellent place to start!"
- **If you didn't become a huntsman what do you think you would have done?**
 "I wanted to be an actor. I think the less said about that the better".
- **Do you have a favourite Hound this season?**
 "I try not to have favourites, but love them all"
- **What do you carry in the pocket of your hunting jacket?**
 "A knife and some keys. Charlie Dando carries the string!"
- **Have you ever got lost while hunting?**
 "I'm always lost".



Nick Hopkins – Kennel Huntsman

- **How old were you when you first went hunting?**
 - "I Always followed the hounds from as young as can remember, started hunting on a pony from around 10yrs".
- **Do you have a most memorable horse or pony?**
 - "Had some cracking horses, all been memorable"
- **Did you hunt as a child and did you ever do anything wrong?**
 - "Yes hunted as a child. In those days you were too frightened to do anything wrong"
- **What is your most memorable fall?**
 - "Had plenty of falls, the stupidest ones are the most memorable!"
- **What are your Pet hates?**
 - "People riding in amongst the hounds with horses that kick"
- **What is your advise to a child new to hunting or without hunting parents?**
 - "Enjoy it"
- **If you didn't become a Kennel Huntsman what did you want to do?**
 - "Any work with livestock".
- **Do you have a favourite hound this season?**
 - "I have 60 Couple of favourite hounds!"
- **What do you always carry in your pocket?**
 - "Penknife and a set of keys"
- **Have you ever been lost out hunting?**
 - "I may have mislaid them for 5 minutes but never been lost!!!!!"



Nigel Maidment – Hunt Secretary

- **How old were you when you first went hunting?**
 - o “I was 21 years old when I started hunting on a horse, hadn't really sat on a horse before. Went out with the VWH at Hankerton and fell off 17 times but decided it was the best way to hunt and I've never looked back!”
- **Do you have a most memorable horse or Pony?**
 - o “My favourite horse was Dill, when on 'point' he could see a fox before I could!”
- **Do you have a most memorable day hunting?**
 - o “Hunting on a Thursday at Compton Bassett. We ran from Mrs Henley's brussel sprouts and I stayed with hounds until the end of the run at the canal below Bremhill Wick Farm. Just Richenda Deutsch, Charles Wheeler and myself, the only ones with them”
- **Do you have a most memorable fall?**
 - o “Two spring to mind - with the VWH in March, I galloped into some rough grass only to find there was a roll of wire in it - broke my neck and spent a short time in Cheltenham Hospital, I was still able to be hunting by October. The second, was from a horse called O'Malley who would always dump you in October, and every October!”
- **What are your definite do's / pet hates?**
 - o “Always stay with the Field Master / going with Field Master when he/she is WRONG!”
- **If you were to give advice to a child who was new to hunting or perhaps doesn't have hunting parents what would it be?**
 - o “Just come out and enjoy yourself - have fun. Your DC will also remind you to remember to stay safe and remember your manners which are also important”
- **If you didn't become a farmer and Hunt Secretary what do you think you would have been?**
 - o “When at school I wanted to be an English Teacher”
- **Do you have a favourite hound?**
 - o Yes, the one in front!
- **What do you carry in your hunting jacket pocket?**
 - o “Some money, a piece of string, a knife and a phone (only for emergencies)”
- **Have you ever been lost out hunting?**
 - o “Once, in Marshfield Wood”



Nicky Bush - A Hunting Mother!

- ***How old were your children when they started hunting?***
 - “We had shetlands for the children when they were toddlers as it was easier to walk the dogs and we could get further if they were on the shetlands - so the children started hunting when they were about 2yrs old. My husband and I were obviously on foot towing them around and it was all about being in the fresh air, eating sweets and being with friends. My friend Nancy has children the same age and used to bring her children and ponies too and we would toddle around the countryside together”.
- ***What is the most important thing your children have in their pockets?***
 - “Although I am not the biggest fan of electronics I have to admit our must have now is a mobile phone! I can even track the children if I need to on ‘find my iphone’ – it’s moved on a bit from when I used to have a £1 in my pocket in case I needed to use the phone box when I was a child!”
- ***Have you or your children ever done anything wrong while hunting?***
 - “Yes! Making mistakes is part of the course! You always learn new things while hunting regardless of how old you are and I think it is just important to apologise as soon as you can for any mistakes you make and try not to repeat them. Follow the fieldmaster and listen to advice and take it on board!
- ***Have you got a most memorable hunting moment with your children?***
 - “Having hunted with the children for so many years we are incredibly lucky to have lots of amazing moments. My daughter jumping her first hedge on her 12’2 pony was a special one. She used to tuck in behind James Smith for confidence and he forgot she was there and jumped a hedge and she followed! The Huntsman asked my son to go up front with hounds one morning early this season and he was so chuffed, such a huge honour and it was lovely to see his smile when he eventually came back to me!
- ***Have you got any advice for children new to hunting/without hunting parents?***
 - “Lots of people under-estimate how important it is to go Autumn hunting - even the seasoned hunters need it to settle. People often comment on how good our ponies are but it hasn’t happened by accident, they have learned the ropes from time behind hounds, and practised at hunting courses. My daughter this season moved onto a new horse, so she hunted before school as much as she could to settle him. She took him back to basics, kept him out of the way of other people, did gates to get him used to queuing and not rushing off with others etc. It makes for a far more enjoyable season if you put the groundwork in.”
 - “Try and find some familiar faces on the hunting field, a grown up to follow, and a friend to stick with but maybe don’t try too soon to keep up with some of the seasoned hunting children who have been hunting since they could walk – that age old saying you need to ‘learn to walk before you can run’! It is important to get to know people. Manners really are key and it’s what people remember. You can’t say enough thank yous! Also do your homework – ask who the fieldmaster is, say good morning and introduce yourself to the secretary and pay your cap to save Mr Maidment coming to find you as he is a busy man”
 - And smile!
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Jack G – Hunting Pony Club Member

- ***How old were you when you first went hunting?***
 - 11years old - my parents don't hunt and I was completely new to it but I was determined to go and absolutely loved it and still do!
- ***Do you ever get nervous when you're hunting?***
 - I only get nervous when I need to go behind the bushes for a pee and that the hunt might go off!!
- ***Do you have a most memorable Horse or Pony out hunting?***
 - The one and only 'Olivia', she was the first horse I hunted and I still hunt her now – she was born to hunt!
- ***Do you have a favourite Hound?***
 - My friends walked a Hound puppy called 'Bedtime' who needed to be hand reared and went everywhere with them to Pony Club Rallies, Tetrathlon etc so we got to spend lots of time with Bedtime as a puppy and now it is great to try and spot her out hunting.
- ***Have you ever been told off out hunting?***
 - I once went ahead of the Fieldmaster and got shouted at!
- ***What do you carry in your pocket when hunting?***
 - Sweets; Pen knife; baler twine; phone and parent's details on a card.
- ***Have you got any advise for other children new to hunting who do not have hunting parents?***
 - Choose friends with really nice parents who hunt!!! James Smith and Nicky Bush have adopted me!
- ***Do you have a most memorable moment out hunting?***
 - Jumping the huge Shipton Moyne hedge on Olivia was definitely a moment to remember.
- ***What do you want to be when you're older?***
 - A Chef