

## A History of the Burton Hunt 1672 -2004 Part II

In 1863, “The Burton” was one of the premiere hunts in England. Under the mastership of Lord Henry Bentinck (1842 – 1863) everything was done that was conducive to the sport. The country was hunted six days a week, sometimes with two packs out on the same day.



*“His hounds were scientifically bred, not for looks, but light, active and full of stamina. His pack was regarded by many as the best in England”*

*Lord Henry Bentinck’s Hounds  
By William Barraud*

Although much of the county was now under the plough, it was still possible for the hunt to meet near Gainsborough and gallop across country to Wragby and back to Lincoln in pursuit of the fox. But the nature of hunting was changing. Tenant farmers now formed the majority of hunt members and there was a greater need to consult through the formation of a hunt committee. Diplomacy, not a strongpoint of Lord Bentinck, was now required to deal with conflicts of interests between the hunting and shooting lobbies.

When Lord Henry retired as Master in 1863, the hounds were purchased for £3500 by Henry Chaplin of Blankney Hall who planned to take over as Master. Chaplin, who was a member of the Prince of Wales set at Oxford, was engaged to Lady Florence Paget. Unfortunately she eloped with the degenerate Lord Hastings just days before their wedding was due. In an effort to forget the affair, Chaplin embarked on a Grand Tour of Europe (he was accompanied in Paris by the Prince) and in his absence, he invited the Irish Peer, Lord Doneraile, to be acting Master. He paid Doneraile £3000 per year and the pick of the horses in Lord Bentinck’s stables, an offer he could not refuse. Unfortunately the appointment was a disaster. He mismanaged the hounds which had been so carefully prepared by Lord Bentinck and he proved unpopular with the members. Bad luck also played its part with an outbreak of foot and mouth disease and bad weather restricting hunting for a large part of the season.

When Chaplin returned as Master in 1865 he spared no money to restore the Hunt’s reputation. Although now elected as the MP for Lincoln, he hunted with the Burton twice a week, and if working late in the Commons, he would engage a special train from King’s Cross to take him to a spot in Lincolnshire to be met by his groom with a hack to take him to the meet.

Unfortunately the scale of his extravagances placed a burden even on his substantial finances and in 1870, Chaplin proposed that the traditional boundaries of the Hunt be divided into the Northern half, The Burton, and the southern, The Blankney. The Hunt Committee begged him to continue, but in 1870 Chaplin became Master of the new Blankney Hunt and Mr Foljambe was appointed Master of the old Burton country.

The division of the country marked the end of a great period for the Burton. For half a century the Masters had been the most famous and dedicated of a golden era.

Henry Chaplin, later created Viscount Chaplin of Blankney, was the last of the squires of Blankney Hall before the extravagant expenses of his hunting and racing stables forced him to sell his 25,000 acre Lincolnshire estate.

He continued to hunt and at the age of 80 and weighing 18 stone, he still rode to hounds!



*Henry Chaplin, 1913  
Aged 80*

The next 30 years to the turn of the century were difficult years for the Burton. The absence of a major sponsor placed financial burdens on the members who were only just able to find the £500 guarantee in subscriptions for the Master. Cheap imports of grain from North America reduced farm incomes by 50% and struggling farmers sought better compensation for damaged crops and a greater say in the administration of the hunt. Democracy is a wonderful thing but the lack of a titled patron to fight your corner may have also contributed to the difficulties! The loss of some of the best coverts on the boundaries of the Burton territory to hunts such as Lord Yarborough’s Brocklesby in the North, almost led to its demise.

It was a brave decision of the Hunt Committee to appoint a twenty-year-old Master in 1889, but over the next 23 years, Thomas Wilson reestablished the reputation of the Hunt through outstanding management, consideration for farmers and attention to hound breeding. His appointment was in contrast to the landed traditions of the day, for his wealth was founded on Trade, his fortune based upon the family-owned Westbrook Snuff Mill in Derbyshire. Under his stewardship the Hunt may have lacked the brilliance of past years, but was regarded as a more resilient, workmanlike farmers’ pack. Wilson endeavoured to look after farmers and gamekeepers who otherwise would shoot or poison foxes to preserve the valuable shooting rights on their land. In 1898 gamekeepers received an annual remuneration of £47.15s and poultry claims amounted to £111.9s.6d.

In 1906 at the invitation of Lord Monson, the Burton Hunt Steeplechase racing was re-established on Burton Cliff. The event proved extremely popular with the public and was accepted for racing under National Hunt Rules.

Point-to-Point racing continued on the course until 1967 when it was transferred to Carholme at the invitation of the Lincoln City Council. The remains of some of the hurdles can still be seen on the bridgeway to South Carlton.

The event was transferred to Market Rasen in 1991.



*Burton Cliff Point to Point Meet 1960*

Tom Wilson purchased Riseholme Hall in 1900 and moved his hounds from Reepham to newly built kennels at Riseholme. The hounds were well cared for – kennel lameness was cured by trips to the seaside at Gibraltar Point where hounds and horses were exercised on the sands. Wilson lived on his yacht which he moored in Wainfleet Creek. He retired as Master in 1912 and his hounds were purchased at auction by the Hunt and remain the property of the Hunt Committee to this day.

The First World War took its toll and the next 3 Masters, Sir Montague Cholmondley, his brother-in-law, Mr J St Vigor Fox and Captain Elwes of Elsham Hall were all killed in action. Captain Elwes' widow became the first and only lady master following the death of her husband, to be replaced in 1916 by William Barr Danby, a well known Lincoln solicitor.

Danby, who also founded the Lincoln golf club, had hunted with the Burton for 40 years so knew well the personalities involved both professionally and as a sportsman. It was no easy task to rebuild support for the Hunt decimated by the war. He was faced with many problems - financing the Hunt from a reduced number of subscriptions, the use of barbed wire for fencing, the activities of gamekeepers and the lack of foxes. A sound administrator, his tenure in office was unspectacular but vital for the continuity of the Hunt.

When Danby stood down at the age of 72 in 1926, the next Master was greeted almost as the Messiah. Sir Julien Cahn was indeed a great catch for the Burton, wealthy, flamboyant and blessed with rich friends and connections across the world. After the lean years following the Great War, members must have believed that the glory days of the Burton had returned. Indeed he did much to improve the image of the Hunt and was generous to the tenants that supported hunting.

In his first year he donated £500 towards the Wire Fund to replace barbed wire with wooden fencing and prizes were awarded for the best kept hedges. But he hunted as he pleased. His party would arrive in a fleet of Rolls Royces and stop for a leisurely lunch. While he remained popular with many tenant farmers, he was accused of being out of touch with the country and losing its support. Sadly the Hunt Committee was split in its support and in 1935, Sir Julien and several prominent members of the committee, resigned in protest. Fortunately the future of the Hunt was saved by the intervention of Major Charles Wilson of Riseholme (son of Tom Wilson) who, with the committee, administered the Hunt from 1935 and took it through the difficult war years to 1945.

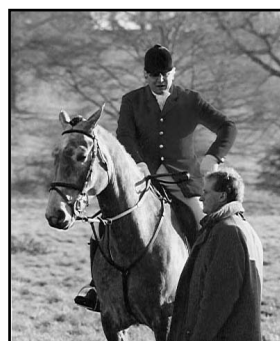
The Hunt survived the war although economies reduced the size of the pack and meetings were reduced to a token 1 day a week. It was the

Hunt Committee supported by the Lockwood and Fieldsend families that revived the fortunes of the hunt post war, and 3 generations of the Lockwoods have now ensured the survival and continuity of the Burton through many difficult times. Mr William Lockwood became joint



*Mr William Lockwood 1969*

Master in 1948, followed in 1961 by Mr Arthur Lockwood and John Lockwood in 1981. He is now the longest serving master since Lord Bentinck. The Hunt is well supported and continues to prosper despite the political climate.



*Mr John Lockwood*

*Burton Hall Dec 2003* infrastructure, history and a passionate following. In 1998 the government calculated that the turnover from hunting was £248m and the sport provided employment for 13,500 people. Hunting is an emotive subject and for many it is seen as a cruel and unnecessary sport - but it is our heritage and part of the life cycle of the countryside. Whatever the final decision, there is a price to pay. The loser may be the fox.

Further information on hunting may be found on the Master of Foxhounds website [www.mfha.co.uk](http://www.mfha.co.uk)  
Bibliography: The Burton Hunt by RB Fountain published 1996