



Hunting Report, Fall/Winter 2010

Hunting has been very good thus far, despite the strange weather patterns we've been experiencing. The countryside is beautiful just now. Aldie was a blank for us this time. It was about the worst scenting any of the packs have ever experienced. In the three couple, which we won last year, we went blank—no game viewed. Only three ribbons were awarded as pack after pack had nothing or short runs to losses. In our five couple, we did find a rabbit, but deer ran through the pack and two hounds went off. We recovered, only to run into a big buck in the next bit of cover. Hounds did not riot, but their concentration was blown and we were almost out of time. The next pack had riots on two deer and no rabbits. Again only three ribbons. The rabbits were out there and many were viewed. I saw packs unable to do anything with them even when put on fresh viewed rabbits. High winds and bone dry conditions were the norm. There were occasional breaks in the wind and then the packs were able to work. The Hill and Hollow, a new pack, did a super job. In the two hour stake on Sunday, our Sousa and Salsa worked well for their first time in the stake class. Next year they should place well. Frustrating hunting, but a fine time regardless with a great bunch of people. Phyllis Allen and Gene Bolt did a great job whipping in, and Gillian and Paul Wiedorn helping along with them made the trip and the weekend easy and fun.

Saturday October 30 at Church Farm School was a great training session. We hunted the fields on the west side of Church Farm Lane, and they were alive with rabbits—and burdock! Hounds were in cry almost immediately as they drove our first rabbit down the hedgerow behind the barn to the stream and grass meadow, back up to the corner again to ground, then another out to the hedgerow across the grass and into the corn field cover. It was a case of one after another for the next hour, when we gave the last one best and returned to kennels. Hounds were literally covered with burrs. After 2 hours they were cleaned and looked like hounds again. We then walked out the rest of the pack and fed hounds before cleaning up runs and ourselves and going home.

On Hallowe'en Sunday, we had a fine day at **George Jefferis's** farm, a new meet location south of Downingtown. Hounds got up and ran five rabbits to marks to ground, with two good long runs down to the back side of the property in and out of the woods below the West Bradford Foxhounds kennels. Deer got up at the start on our first rabbit and when we were drawing around the west side, but hounds did not break either time. Staff coverage was excellent, and Holly Gross, a new member who has begun whipping in, did a super job. Everyone had a great time, and the tailgate afterwards was a groaning board of goodies.



Hounds working their second rabbit at Jefferis's, October 31.



Hounds marking to ground at Church Farm School, November 21.

The training hunt at Harold Hallman's on Saturday November 6th was great. Hounds got up and ran five rabbits to marks in the L shaped cover, the lower field and the long hedgerow at the top of the rise near Theurkauf's. What a difference a day makes. At Sunday's November 7 meet at Bill and Karen Flagg's **Warren Point**, hounds worked thoroughly in the big woods and pond cover blank, except for a herd of deer. They got a rabbit out for a long burst to ground from the hilltop hedgerow with a good view of the run for the field, then it was a blank the rest of the afternoon through lots of promising cover all around the upper fields. The tailgate afterwards was great.

Sunday November 21st was a fine day at **Church Farm School**. The first draw from the lane east along the stream developed into an exciting hunt on four different rabbits, one of which blew out to the hill mound as the drove the second to ground in the dam wall. The third ran under the bridge as hounds got up the fourth, which they ran around the stream and reed patch and out to cross the field right and to ground in the cover at the base of the hill. We then drew the running trail hedgerow, running one to ground half way to the lane, then crossed and drew the hedgerow down towards the pond, where they drove one out into the overgrown field and to ground near the stream. Deer were sighted, so we drew back to the field corner and up a hedgerow strip toward the school. That and the right field patch were blank, but on drawing back toward the stream hounds found again and drove the rabbit into the stream briar patch. They worked it halfway to the farm lane along the stream, then drove it out for a run to ground on the stream bank in heavy briars at the back edge between the two fields. The final draw back along the stream cover forced a rabbit out which crossed the field to the running track cover strip. Hounds ran it inside and along the path to the end of the cover and to ground near Church Farm Lane to end this delightful afternoon. It was great to have Laura Booth out again today after her tough bout with mono. Hound standouts of the day were Mischief and her daughters Salsa and Sousa. The whole pack worked very cohesively, including young entry and second season hounds that worked very well. The tailgate afterwards was bounteous. Cleanup of

hounds at kennels afterward was extensive due to piles of burdock and pineapple burrs, but hounds were forgiving and glad to be free of the mess. New whipper in Holly Gross and her husband Dick joined the grooming crew and did yeoman service. Kennels are looking super due to the extensive renovations being done by Gene Bolt.

Wednesday 24 November we had a nice morning at Jefferis's. Our first rabbit gave us a big circling run from the tree rows into the left woods covert to the bottom and back around to the top, then down again and was viewed crossing into the woods covert. They marked it in near the north edge and we drew back to the top. Soon another was viewed out at the east end of the tree plantings, which hounds worked through the back hedgerow and right handed over to the woods edge to the south and marked to ground in a dense brush pile to end the morning. Saturday we walked the pack at White Acres, fed and got back to our Thanksgiving weekend family visitors!

Sunday November 28 was a good hunting day at the **Hallmans' farm**, with a lot of guests out to share the fun. Our first draw started with a bang. Hounds flushed out a speedy bunny that looped the first stretch of hedgerow and tree line. They worked it up to the tangle at the break, drove it out for a wild run in view of the field and back to the base of the line near the road where they marked it in a big earth in briers. We moved on to draw the wide brier strip in the center of the left hand field. Hounds spoke and marked a short runner to ground halfway to Thayer's, then a deer got up and raced diagonally across the strip and out the top. Happily no hounds broke, and staff were all in the right place. We drew back to the upper hedgerow, with no find, then crossed and drew the west arm of the hilltop cover strip, and then the south arm. Hounds forced out a rabbit that ran through to the far side, then raced along the edge outside to the corner to ground. Hounds ran after it to a loss, then worked it to a mark. We then worked the cover around the center field above Thayer's paddocks. They found across the path at the far end and ran a rabbit into the woods and overgrown field beyond. We saw three different rabbits as they chased them through the heavy brier cover, marking one in. I collected the pack and drew back to the woods line along the paddocks, where Iris spoke on a short runner to ground at the corner. They drew the cover down toward the barn blank, then worked back through the Hallman's center strip. I then lifted the pack to work the heavy tangle along the side of the field along Street Road. Iris and Mischief spoke briefly on the far side, but nothing doing. We drew the edge back to the meet to end the day, and went to the Geers' Little Field Farm for a welcome tea.



The field at the meet at Hallman's, November 28.



Hounds putting their first rabbit to ground at Hallman's.

Wednesday the 1st December we hunted Church Farm with a training 3 couple—very cold and little scent made it hard to run rabbits in the open, but hounds got up game and worked well the whole time. Saturday the 4th we trained at Marsh Creek. Very little scent and cold and windy. Hounds worked hard to get a couple of rabbits going for short runs.

On the 5th December at **Wesley Sessa's**, it was bitter cold with high winds. Hounds found two rabbits for short runs in the hillside field hedgerows at Bentley's across the road, then we drew back to Wesley's to work the big briary and swampy field below his house. Hounds worked two rabbits below the banks toward James's to ground, then on the far side they got up another in the corner that they ran in cry toward Dorman Road along the stream until it got through the page fence. Sousa and Salsa tried to dig under to no avail to end the day. Wesley's tea and goodies and the warm fire were great.

On Wednesday the 8th at Marsh Creek Upoar did a very nice job getting the rabbit out of a tree pile near the race circle, with Sousa and Sabine driving it around and back to ground. Another was run to ground on the way in, and Sousa and Sabine were literally down the large earth trying to get it out. Saturday the 11th we hunted Church Farm with a 3 couple east of Church Farm Lane, and had good sport on four rabbits, two along the running trail before crossing over to the creek. Hounds put one to ground in the hole filled patch near the bridge, then got another running along the base of the hill mound. They drove it out over the top and down the other side toward the barn where they marked it in the pile of logs at the corner. Drawing back along the base of the hillock, they got up another big rabbit that they drove over the top right hand and worked in cry into the heavy hillside weedy briar tangle to a possible mark in one of the holes there. We worked back through the cover toward the lane to end a good working morning. Hounds were literally plastered with burdock and other assorted burrs, and were very patient with the tough cleanup they went through back at kennels.

Sunday December 12th we hunted at **Cheslen Preserve** from Cannery Road. It was a wet one on and off, with a solid wind chill cooling the 50^o temperature. Game was scarce, and hounds drew cover after cover blank until we drew down to the big oval cover above the railroad tracks. They worked through with an occasional yip from Sousa and Iris, as a deer was viewed out at the bottom right. Finally they opened solidly on the way down the middle to the bottom in briers above the tracks and drove our only rabbit of the day out and into the cover on the other side. It quickly doubled back as hounds ran it back across and up the bank. They worked it to ground in the briers towards the potter's field. They worked back up the other side of the oval cover to the top to end this soggy day. The tea at the Booth's was a lifesaver, with Maria's hot soup, Gillian's hot mince pies, and Lisa's sandwiches and other goodies, and a warming fire.

Saturday Dec 18 was a banner hunting day. We met at Jefferis's at 8:30 with a 3 couple and ran 7 different rabbits. Hounds found quickly and drove the first out of the tree plantings down to the bottom woods below the kennels to ground, then had another out of the woods up

to the right tree lines near the drive. They ran that out left to the plantings again, crossed the track and ran it in a loop to the bottom again. We had two more running inside, one to ground for sure. They put another to ground in the woods strip, and pushed the sixth out into the center and to ground in one of the brush piles. Drawing back, they got up the seventh which they worked out along the plow on the far side to the small covert patch, across the field toward Beacon Hill Road and to ground in the tree line hedgerow tangle. Sousa and Mischief were standouts, and Magpie held them on the line at a couple of the checks. Young Uproar did well. A nice morning. We got back to kennels quickly to clean up, then Marsha, Gene Bolt and I went to the Cheshire Hunt's meet at the Wintersteens', a fund raiser for injured jockey Jake Chalfin. There were 197 riders from many hunts and many car followers. Russell Jones thanked everyone for their support, which will go a long way to help with Chalfin's medical expenses. The Cheshire pack gave us an exciting afternoon, with two foxes hunted very well to ground in great cry. We got many great views of hounds and the foxes, and Marsha got some super photos of the hunt at various stages that we sent on disc to Russell.

Sunday Dec 19 at **the Moores' "Marshlands"** was a tough workout for hounds and staff. Game was scarce. Hounds got up two rabbits in the left hand woods strips among the tangled tree fall, one at the end of the first field to ground quickly and the other gave them a short 15 minutes in and out of brush and log piles and to ground on the slope on the upper side. We covered the upper tree line and the right hand woods thoroughly to no avail, though a beautiful big buck ran out the far side that hounds ignored. The usually productive "Fox Hill" covert was blank except for some cry in dense briar patches. The Heths' grand tailgate in the warming room back at the meet was most welcome.

Wednesday December 23 at Marsh Creek was a 3 couple workout with two rabbits found in hedgerow tree fall and briar tangles around the old track. They worked inside very well to get them going, but the deep stuff was good protection and the rabbits got to ground fairly quickly.



Huic to him! Boxing Day at Allerton Farm, December 26.



Our pups Victor and Vesper hunting in the snow.

On **Boxing Day**, Sunday December 26, we met at 10 am at **Allerton Farm Gate** with a Nor'easter predicted to hit later in the day. The wind was biting already. Hounds found and ran one circling rabbit to ground in the woods covert at the meet, and the field got a great view of a beautiful big fox that broke out in front of them. We drew Parnham's woods edge tangles blank over to the power line cut and worked into the big briar strips on the hillside with an occasional bit of speaking on short to ground rabbits and night lines. A herd of deer moved out as we drew, and another fox came out the bottom strip above the farm lane. Working back up the hill through the strips and over to the hedgerow and patches above Bedwell's, several times hounds spoke briefly and were feathering in several thick spots, but Br'er Rabbit was sitting tight and we finished with a draw through the woods covert at the meet and tucked them into the hay-filled trailer to end the day. The first snow flakes were just beginning to fall. My lips were so numb I could barely blow "home." The hunt breakfast at Josie Parnham's was wonderful. A lot of effort goes into putting together that grand spread, and she and her family are very kind indeed to put it on for us each year.

I tried to reach Dave Duvall Monday morning December 27 to check on kennels after our first winter storm and go over to get the snow out. No luck, so I drove over....and found Dave finishing the last kennel run! He had gone out early to clear out the snow before hounds packed it down. The place looked super. I medicated the old hounds while he finished and fed the pack. You can't find people like Dave these days. He loves our hounds and over the past 23 years has become a very good friend indeed.

Wednesday December 29 we had a training hunt at Church Farm to end 2010. Hounds literally dug out rabbits in the snowy hedgerows, one for a back and forth run inside the line to ground, and another finally blew out across the walking trail for 30 yards and back to ground after hounds worked it for almost the length of the hedgerow from the lane to the road at the other end of the right field to end the morning. Let us pray that this winter will be a milder one than last year.

Everyone is welcome to join us on bye days. Call Jim Scharnberg or Gillian Wiedorn Tuesday and Friday for times and locations. Our 62nd season is going very well indeed so far, with new meets added this fall, and new ones we will be exploring on bye day hunts the second half of the season. Please let us know if you have any friends' properties in mind.

We owe our sport to our wonderful landowners.