



SKY LINES

Newsletter of the Skycastle French Hounds



December 2011

Gillian Wiedorn, Editor

Hunting Report, Fall/Winter 2011

We kicked off our 64th season with a super Oktoberfest party at the Farnhams' Friday 7 October, enjoyed by over 50 members. The Farnham's barn was the perfect spot. We had a good hunt at the farm Saturday morning—two rabbits, run well and marked to ground after about a half an hour on each one. **Opening Meet and Blessing of the Hounds at Marsh Creek Park** on Sunday October 9 in 85° heat was a solid bit of hound work with a good run to ground through right hand woods and another run down the center hedgerow to ground to end the day. The tea afterward at the Kalmbachs' was spectacular. **Warren Point** on the 16th was a hard day, with little game. The fields were deep due to the rains. We put one rabbit to ground on the top woods edge above the pond, and in the lower center covert accounted for one and quickly holed another to end the day. On the 23rd, we had a good day at **George Jefferis's** farm. 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. Everyone had a great time, and the tailgate afterwards was a groaning board of goodies.

Aldie was tough for us this time, with our 3 couple on Saturday the 29th at 7:30 am and the 5 couple at 4 pm that afternoon. The 3 couple was deer-riddled in heavy mixed sleet and snow, and the 5 couple was ok to start, then more multiple deer again. Several packs had hounds out after their hunts. At least ours all came back to horn. I've never seen so many deer in one day at Aldie. And of course the weather continued awful all day as well. Due to the heavy deer exposure, I felt we should not enter the stake, so we left on a beautiful sunny Sunday morning at 10 and had a nice trip home. The hounds raced for their kennel beds! We fed hot food again and tucked them in. Frustrating hunting, but a fine time regardless with a great bunch of people. Phyllis Allen, Ginny Beards and Gene Bolt did a great job whipping in, and Dick Gross, Gillian and Paul Wiedorn helping along with them made the trip and the weekend easy and fun. I arrived home to no power, and we finally go it back Tuesday. Marsha had done a great job with the pups, which were in fine shape, and little Winston went to a pet home—Marsha's cousin Tom Knight and his wife Amanda. They were ecstatic, and have a big secure yard. I made the usual proviso that he come back to us if he doesn't suit. He has captured their hearts and of the neighborhood.

Wednesday November 2 at Marsh Creek was a great training session. Hounds hunted the oval well, driving a rabbit to ground solidly. Vesper has come on very well. We then walked out the rest of the pack and fed hounds before cleaning up runs and ourselves and going home. Saturday we hunted at the farm, marking one rabbit to ground in the brush pile across the stream in the big hillside pasture, and gave the rest a stretch after some kennel work. At Sunday's November 6 meet at **Bedwell's**, hounds worked the upper hedgerow and the power line strip



Hounds running a cottontail, November 6.

area to start, and put two rabbits to ground in cover at the corner of Parnham's. Deer and fox were in the power line strips so we drew back toward the hill. Hounds drove a rabbit through the field patches into the hedge and treeline strip and ran it for a double to ground to end the day. The tailgate afterwards was great. Sunday the 13th at **Silberman's** was a good day, despite no good runs. Hounds held together when the first deer broke out of the back cover. We had a short running rabbit there. Heavy fox smell in the woods hollow. Drew up the hill in the woods toward Mohr's and ran a rabbit to ground in the cover pocket next to their house, then drew the stream and hill back to Eli's blank, and the hedgerow bordering his pasture the same. Drew up to the road, and in the tenant house covert Uwchlan (who was a standout all day) accounted for a bunny that popped out of the briar tangle as he was about to speak, right in front of me! I then blew 'Home' and we went in to a superb tea. Large field, with many guests, who had a grand time and may come out with us again. Really nice group of people. Holly was out again for the first time since her fracture. Saturday the 19th was a banner day at Church Farm School. Hounds worked well, especially Sabine and Uwchlan, on at least 5 rabbits, in and out of the running track hedgerow, for most of the hour. Back at kennels we had the usual burr fest cleanup. Marsha brought the puppies to kennels afterwards for a romp in the big paddock. Sunday the 20th at **Wesley Sessa's** hounds got one rabbit up for a quick run to ground in Bentley's hedgerows during a long draw through their hill fields, then we headed back to Wesley's

to work the swampy cover where usually there are many rabbits. Unfortunately the recent rains made it a briar filled water meadow. Hounds worked over the whole patch and except for short speaking on the banks, it was a blank, until they finally found a big rabbit in the tangle below the road. They ran it inside quickly up to the road where it crossed into a neighbor's yard and we had to stop hounds. We drew back along the briar covered bank to James's with no further action, and blew 'end of day.' Wesley's fine tea was a welcome end to this tough day.



Puppies at Kennels in November.



End of day at Sessa's

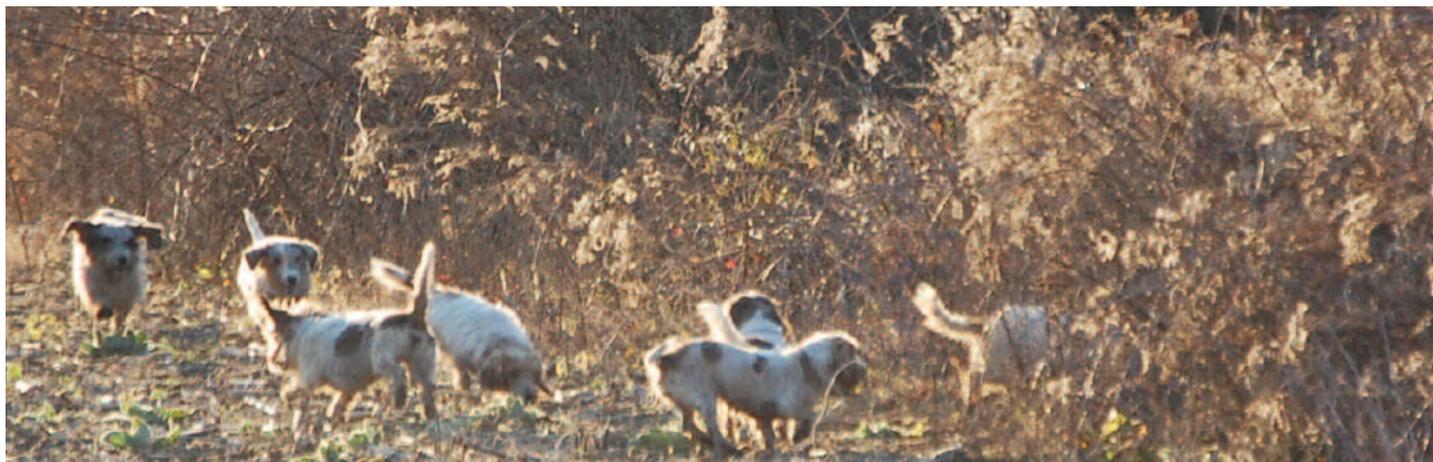
We seemed to be in a locked weather pattern. Wednesday Nov 23rd we had scattered showers, and walked hounds at kennels. Saturday the 26th was clear and a nice training morning at Marsh Creek—hounds dug two rabbits out for short runs around the oval and covered the whole area thoroughly. Sunday the 27th was very warm at **Hallman's** with little scent. The first cover hedgerows were blank, including the bottom woods line at Theurkauf's. Coming back up to the hedgerows on the field above Thayers, they pushed up two rabbits for short bursts to ground, then across the field bordering the paddock Uwchlan and Salsa got one going the length of the field and down toward the road. There they ran into a clutch of barn cats as the rabbit ran to ground. We lifted them and drew the upper field edge back and worked down to the barn to end the day. It was frustrating to see hounds work so hard for so little. Uwchlan was outstanding, as were Salsa and Souza. The tea afterwards at Julie and Tag Geers' Little Field Farm was super. That Wednesday the 30th was a repeat of the previous week, but we were able to get the pack out for a good long stretch to the upper fields and back before it started pouring rain.

What a great time hounds had on a training day December 3rd at Church Farm School! They worked the L shaped hedgerow down from the barn on the west side of the lane and crossed at the bottom. They found in the next field border hedge line and ran two big rabbits to ground up and back at either end, then crossed to the cover patch on the hill in the field. They found again almost immediately. It dodged around inside until Robin forced it out from the north side and the pack ran it to ground within 50 feet of the cover Uwchlan and Salsa took turns trying to get down the hole! We drew back down the field line and Quarry opened at the bottom on another. They forced it up and back, then to ground in a briar tangle. We then drew the streamside briars. Hounds got up a big rabbit that ran east toward the lane, and two more jumped out and crossed the field toward the running trail hedgerow as they worked the line. Hitting these multiple lines, they raced across the field and forced both to ground in the heavy briar tangles. After watching them draw both ways to be sure the rabbits hadn't gone on under the brush, I called hounds on to work east along the hedgerow, then crossed the field and took the pack halfway back to the north end and encouraged them in to the stream cover to see if they could pick up the trail of the rabbit that had run east. Sure enough, they did so, and Quarry, Uwchlan and Salsa began speaking as they worked the line. Hounds worked both sides of the stream, then settled and finally pushed the rabbit out on the left side within 30 yards of the lane. It ran the edge and was viewed by Gillian crossing the stream. Hounds ran it in cry across to an earth in the scrub trees. They scrambled all around it, but kept coming back to the hole to mark it in. I blew it to ground, then we collected our hard working crew to end this exciting morning. Sunday Dec 4th at the **Moore's 'Marshlands'** was a tough workout for hounds and staff. Game was scarce, except for deer in every field and piece of cover hounds worked. Hounds first ran into deer in the left hand woods strips among the tangled tree fall. We covered the upper tree line, then the long hedgerow line toward the turnpike thoroughly to the end, where hounds put a rabbit to ground. The usually productive "Fox Hill" covert was blank except for some cry in dense briar patches and a deer running out. Jim Moore told us that they have never had so many foxes as this year. The Heths' grand tailgate in the warming room back at the meet was most welcome. Thursday the 8th was a good hound walk after the torrential rains—again! Saturday December 10th at CFS, hounds quickly found in the field edge hedgerow below the barn and ran it to ground in the brush piles, then drew back toward the barn and started speaking strongly to the upper end. Nothing viewed as they worked the thick tangle, so we drew back down the line and crossed to the far hedge line. They got a rabbit going, which they pushed out to the left side and ran it toward the top. It dodged back in, and they again drove it out into the open and ran it to ground. We checked the open field cover then drew down toward the bottom stream cover line. They found again and ran it along toward the lane. It doubled and ran back to the corner, crossing the stream and the field, and ran halfway up the running track line and into the cover. Hounds crossed the stream and worked the line to the track tangle, marking inside. They worked up and back but couldn't find another, so we crossed the field and worked the stream cover to the lane to end the day. Salsa, Quarry and Uwchlan were great, and young Vicar did well. Mischief and Robin were their usual super selves. December 11th at **Wickersham's** started with hard going in the sodden fields, then when we drew up right along the hedgerow cover to the old house pile, a couple of woodchuck scuttled to ground, then disaster! A fox was flushed out of the hedgerow by the pack and they roared after it. And at the woods line on the other side of the road, they ran into a buck and two does. We got all but two hounds back quickly, then the last two as they were coming back from the far hill down Indian Hanna road to 842. No hounds were injured, and all of us—people and hounds—got plenty of exercise. Our field helped with car searches on Indian Hanna and Glenhall. Thank you ALL very much indeed. At the Booths', Lisa's and Gillian's tea afterwards was a much-needed restorative. Hot soup, mince pies and sausage rolls, sandwiches and swets, were super.

We then had a banner week at last: Thursday December 15th and Saturday the 17th were very good training hunts, and Sunday the 18th at **Church Farm** was a wow! Hounds put their first rabbit to ground in the cover line near the barn very quickly, then worked down the line and across the grass to the border hedgerow and the stream cover where they got two going. The left one got to ground in the stream briar tangle, and the right one did a loop toward the lane, then back to the corner and they ran it in cry for the hedge line across the field. They ran it left through the briars into the swampy field toward the pond, working it the length where it crossed the running track where we can't hunt. Drawing back, they soon got another running. They drove it east through the left corner and out for a run along the track hedgerow halfway to the lane, to ground. Drawing back, they drove another out toward the end of the field and through into the swamp field. They worked it



A dodgy rabbit on December 18th. Hounds worked the double and put it to ground 100 yards on.



up to the corner, where it doubled back again toward the first field. As they worked, a second rabbit broke right, but they stayed on the hunted one and drove it through the hedge tangle and out into the field along the track border line, when it crossed to the stream line. Hounds worked right, then left toward the lane, where they pushed it out again for a race across the field to the track cover and finally to ground in heavy tangle near the lane. We then crossed the lane for a final draw east along the field's left briar margin. Hounds found halfway down, and drove their rabbit in and out of the hedgerow to the end of the cover near the far road to ground. Drawing back, hounds got up another for a doubling run to ground to end this great day. During Christmas week we had a fine morning on Wednesday and walked hounds at kennels Christmas Eve. Sadly, our Boxing Day meet at **Allerton Farm** December 26th was deer-plagued. The big cover at the gate was blank except for a quick to ground bunny, then we drew across to the power line covers with the ominous sound of gunfire ahead of us. Hounds got on a rabbit in the center strip, then were inundated by two groups of deer. Staff held them up for the first lot, but the second right through the pack was the end. We collected all but one hound after crossing the road up to the top of the far hill. We went back to the farm and hunted our way back while two whips searched for Vesper. To add insult to injury, as hounds drew the cover next to the woods going in a final deer popped out for a dash across toward the meet. Hounds held steady and we packed up to return to the trailer. Josie Parnham's hunt breakfast was wonderful. I recovered Vesper, who was desperate to get into my car, later in the day at Josie's. Thursday we walked hounds at kennels, and ended the year with a training hunt at CFS on Saturday December 31. It was a bitterly cold and windy 17^{of}, but hounds got up and ran one rabbit the length of the right field inside the hedgrow to ground, and another that got quickly to ground on the way back to the lane. It was the same across the other side with one quickly to ground inside the hedgerow to end the morning. Quarry and Sabine and Sousa were super as hounds worked every inch of cover. The young entry, Vicar and Vesper, are coming on nicely.

Everyone is welcome to join us on bye days. Call Jim Schamberg or Gillian Wiedorn Tuesday and Friday for times and locations. Our 64th season is going very well indeed so far. We will be exploring new locations 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.