

BELVOIR BLOG

Hello Again, and thank you for your words of encouragement following our first issue.

Whilst on our rambles in the recent good weather, we took stock of our surroundings and – not for the first time – felt fortunate to be living in the countryside, now more than ever. Aside from the benefits of fresh air and exercise, we have the sights and sounds of nature - osmosis-like in their ability to be absorbed into our senses, those precious spring bulbs, the birdsong and the green shoots of new growth.

Of course this is nothing new to many of us who follow hounds; we get to see beautiful stretches of unspoilt land, hidden valleys, ancient woodland and a variety of wildlife. For this we should thank our farmers and landowners, without whose permission and support we would be unable to leave the footpaths and bridleways and to get off the beaten track in the way that we do. The relationship between the farmers and the hunt relies on trust and mutual respect and it takes time for each master to build a rapport for a successful working relationship with the farmers in their bit of country. On an average day's hunting one master may contact as many as 150 people to clear the country – from large farms down to a single pony paddock owner, and even a morning of Autumn hunting may involve as many as 30 phone calls.

Masters also have to deal with any fall out following a day's hunting, be that a broken fence, stock out or hounds running onto unfriendly land (surely not?). They will have to use their skills in diplomacy (and the odd bottle of whisky!) to pacify the landowner. Pity the master who, on a recovery mission, offered to drive a farmer to view some damage; the journey involved a rough track, a steep embankment, A LOT of mud and an 18 stone man in a Nissan Micra and turned into something of a white knuckle ride!

The ability to keep your dignity and a straight face whilst the rather large farm dog mistakes your leg for a bitch on heat, whilst pleading your case, is helpful! When visiting what was once known as the filthiest farm in the Vale, one master was pleased to be wearing his wellington boots when invited into the house for a cup of tea; he was only mildly surprised to find the front room was a carpet of slurry – no kidding!

Five Minutes With ...

Doone Chatfeild-Roberts was born in Long Clawson, before the family moved to Upper Broughton where she grew up hunting with the Quorn behind Michael Farrin. Nutmeg was a contrary little pony but once Doone moved on to her lovely bay mare Loopy, she really got going. Given her hunt button by James Teacher with the words “put them wherever you want them”, Doone would often visit the Belvoir with her father, Dr Tom Connors, the renowned Leicestershire dealer. With every stable being accountable, it was only Jill (her mother) and Doone who were allowed to keep their own horses – Derry and Nick had to hunt whatever was in the yard to sell! Gaidagh was no longer hunting by this time.

When Doone married John in the early nineties, they moved to Sheepwash and the Quorn’s loss was definitely the Belvoir’s gain with Doone and now Tom joining the mastership.



What is your drink of choice?

Elderflower Cordial – I keep Pev in business!

Which other pack of hounds would you like to have a day with?

The Exmoor Foxhounds

Hunting Tea?

Crumpets and Chocolate Cake!

Four people you would like to have dinner with?

Ronnie Wallace, Alan Titchmarsh, Mary Berry and Rory Bremner

What is your ideal holiday?

Summer on Exmoor with family and friends, horses and dogs

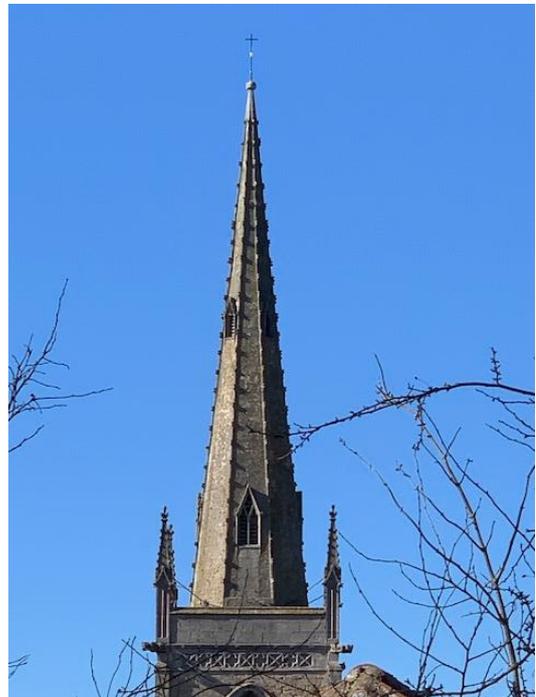
We hope to bring you more from Kennels next month.

Steeple Chasing

From Point



To Point



Can you name these Church Steeples?