

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [2002 Act Review](#)  
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I live in a [REDACTED].  
In front of my house (to the south) is the entrance to the former estate and fields lie beyond that. To the west, I have a section of garden that runs to the side of a long and very fast road, close to a blind bend.

To the other side of that road is another stretch of woodland.

At the back of my house (the north) is more garden, then more woodland and another private residential property. A neighbour of mine.

The larger part of my garden stretches to the east of my home. It is partially fenced in some places and in others, a mature beech hedge clearly separates the woodland that isn't mine, from the lawn area that is. In my garden I also have domestic outhouses, a poly-tunnel, a vegetable patch and a woodshed. It clearly isn't estate property.

At around midday on the 9th of March, 2016 (memorable because it was my 40th birthday) I was sitting in my living room when I noticed my Labrador becoming agitated. He ran, barking and growling between the rooms that face the narrow road at the front of my house. He jumped up at each window, in an effort to see through them at something I couldn't see.

This was unlike him, as cars and people often pass in front of the house and he was used to it. (I say "was" as he has been easily agitated by passers-by since.) Given that his behaviour was unusual, I began to feel quite anxious. I was home alone at the time.

My back door was open and I heard a hunting horn. It sounded like it was coming from a place close by.

I walked toward the rear of my house, into my back garden and was immediately struck by the sounds of hounds in cry. My heart sank and I looked across to the trees to find foxhounds running along the perimeter fencing to the north of my property.

I looked across to the side section of my garden, (not fenced- but clearly demarcated by a wall and hedge) and saw hounds entering my garden and running in the same direction as the others -at speed.

They were moving quickly and were some distance from the huntsman as they had broken from the woodland opposite the road that runs to the side of my home.  
Horses couldn't enter where the hounds had, but even so, the voice calls I heard sounded some distance away. The hounds were not in anyone's control and I couldn't see any red coats.

Following the hounds with my eyes, I saw they were surrounding my home at this point as the stragglers caught up and cast around at the eastern end of my garden looking for a scent.

I returned to the point I saw hounds enter and I shouted at men leaning up against a Landrover, parked on the road by my garden wall. I yelled at them to get their animals away from my property and was told that the animals didn't belong to them. They said they were watching. At this point I still hadn't seen anyone on horseback so I didn't know what to do. I was so angry and shaken I could barely speak.

I followed the sound of hooves on the road in front of the house and took off through my garden to get to the gate. There, I saw my cat run across the most easterly part of my garden (where I had seen hounds) towards my woodshed. He saw me and frantically tried to squeeze himself between my driveway gate and the post it hangs on, to get to me.

The gap was too small for him to fit properly (he's a large, elderly Tom cat) but he was so terrified, he didn't give himself time to climb the post, which is what he usually does. It was obviously painful for him and he was clearly in distress. It was a horrible thing to watch.

I scooped up my cat and ran indoors with him. My dog was growling at my front door as I closed my back door behind me. I stood there for a while, trying to calm my cat (and myself) down. He was shaking and blinking quickly, and I could feel his heart racing as I held him in my arms.

After a moment or so, the cat wriggled to be put on the ground, As I did so, he fled. I assumed he'd go and hidden under a bed somewhere.

Furious, I grabbed my camera from my window ledge and stood snapping riders and vehicles as they passed my front door, while their grinning support stood around on my driveway.

I wanted to know who they were and I feel less intimidated behind a camera. (People tend to behave when they're around).

The hunt riders had obviously had to take a wider detour to catch up with their hounds and they'd ridden in a circuit, back toward the front of my property and out towards the road to the west side of my cottage.

From there, they turned a right and rode up the hill and around the blind bend.

Upset, I texted my husband who suggested that I should call the police, not least because they had caused upset and alarm, but because their hounds were running across what locals know to be a notoriously dangerous road.

The police told me they knew about the hunt and that it was legal.

I argued that a hunt is legal as long as it is conducted properly- and that allowing their hounds to flush through my garden surely wasn't! (It would seem as though it is however,)

I also explained that hounds dashing across a fast road around a blind corner was a fatal accident waiting to happen, but I sensed I didn't have a lot of sympathy from the police officer I was speaking to. She said she'd look into it before I hung up, but her bored and irritated tone suggested she wouldn't.

It made no sense to me. In any other circumstances, a group of people behaving in such an intimidating way would have been arrested.

Anyone else behaving so recklessly with such little regard for private property and for the safety of others, would be held accountable. The "legality" of hunting seems to me, to be a license for these people to behave as they like.

I was angry at myself for not thinking about my camera earlier. I knew I didn't have proof of what I'd just witnessed, but I was relieved they'd gone, so, shaking with adrenaline still, I tried to get back to the rest of the housework before my birthday celebration in the evening.

Then at around 3pm it happened again.

The hunt were back, trying to flush a fox from where they had picked it up hours earlier, in the woodland over the road from my home again. I heard sharp horn blowing and hounds crying so I grabbed my camera again and headed to the road to see if I could film them. My camera was new to me then however and I didn't know how to switch it on to video mode. In retrospect it would have been easy to do if I hadn't been so flustered.

I shot pictures of hounds instead, in full chase, after they'd bolted across the road towards my garden perimeter hedge.

As hounds began to pile on though, I squeezed myself through a hole (no easy feat) and I stood in my garden snapping hounds as they raced through my garden for a second time that day. I shouted at them in the hope that they'd go away but they'd picked up a scent again and were unstoppable.

I still wasn't sure where my cat was at this point and I suddenly worried that when he'd fled, he'd hidden somewhere in the garden. I just had to hope that if he had, he was well hidden.

At this point, as I jogged to the estate entrance at the front of the house, I looked behind me to see foxhounds emerge from under the hedge at the eastern perimeter of my garden again. I shouted at the terrier man who had pulled up by the estate entrance, and I told him his hounds were in my garden. I angrily said that if my cat required veterinary treatment, I would sue.

He told me I was wrong and that there hadn't been hounds in my garden and that trespass wasn't illegal.

"Anyway" he said "we've got permission to hunt the whole of the estate!"

I explained that nobody had permission to enter my garden but the confused look on his face suggested he was struggling to understand.

"I have photographs" I said. "Of your hounds, in my garden!"

"No you don't" was the reply.

He laughed then, and told me that hounds wouldn't be interested in a cat.

My cat was no less terrified for that, and he seemed to be utterly missing the point. They had no right to invade my garden in the way that they had.

At this point, a friend arrived in her car. She'd come to give me a birthday gift and her jaw dropped when she saw the chaos. She turned into the entrance of the estate and pulled on her handbrake, got out and took out her mobile phone. She began to photograph the hunt as they milled around blocking the road, oblivious to the hazard they were creating.

My friend and I were commenting on the dangers as a car turned the corner and had to brake hard to avoid a hound that had doubled back into the road for the field adjacent to the road. A redcoat on horseback had to bolt in front of the car to retrieve it.

(see photographs)

We turned to go back inside again, feeling more than a little fraught, as the hunt made its way down the hill and as we headed in, we encountered two neighbours by my driveway who both told me they'd seen hounds in my garden while I'd been photographing them towards the side and the back of my house. They both told me that the hounds had run through their gardens also.

Throughout the day, the noise of the hounds in cry carried though the usually quiet woodland around my home. I never once heard a gun however. I didn't see one either.

I don't know how (at least) this particular hunt can expect anyone to believe they intended to shoot the fox, or indeed that they can prevent hounds from killing a fox when they can't keep pace with them or control them enough to prevent them from careering into roads and through private gardens.

The estate on which I live is owned by three landowners in the main part, while private residents own pockets of land which are scattered throughout. The one major landowner that gave his permission for the hunt on the estate that day, doesn't keep livestock there at the moment as he's involved in the organisation of a proposed festival in his fields so they will be unfit for use. The rest of his land in the area is used for growing potatoes. Any argument that the hunt was needed for pest control is a little redundant.

The other main land-owners it seems (after enquiries made by my neighbours) hadn't given their permission at all and we have been granted the go-ahead to make this known to them should they return. For all it seems to matter to them.

(Photos below)

Emma McGregor



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