



The Late South Wilts Hunt Meeting

To the Editor of the Salisbury and Winchester Journal

Sir, - May I ask you to insert this letter in your next *Journal*? I must apologise for its length, but will not again intrude on your columns.

To be as concise as possible, I will begin with the last sentence of Mr Benett-Stanford's letter, "that it was open to Mr Wyndham to make objections at the meeting." I did there object to the division of the country, more especially at the present time when Lord Pembroke, who is admitted to be the only man who can hunt the whole of the country, was believed to have sailed for England, which he might reach by the end of April, or at the latest, in June next; that we ought to ascertain Lord Pembroke's wishes before we took any action, for to divide the country now would look as though we meant to cut the ground from under him on the eve of his return; that even if we decided to give part of the country to Colonel Everett, we should be unable to give effect to our decision if Lord Pembroke on his return wished to hunt his own coverts; and that Colonel Everett would have sufficient time to increase his establishment in July if his offer were then accepted. In this last opinion Mr Codrington, I believe, bore me out.

It was Lord Arundell, with a view to harmonise divers opinions, who suggested that Colonel Everett's offer might be conditionally accepted, with the understanding that he was to be refunded for any loss he might incur.

Mr Stanford then proposed his resolutions, which no one verbally opposed; but if to be "unanimous" implies that all present at a meeting be *of one mind*, I much doubt if there was one person in the room who believed the meeting to be unanimous.

Mr Stanford, in his letter, names certain owners of coverts on the west side of the country, several of whom reside in other, and some in distant counties, representing collectively a bare third of the hunt, who had agreed "*to their coverts being drawn as usual*," but this far from sanctioning, negatives on their part a distribution of the country without the consent of other owners of coverts. Why were not Mr Powell, of Hurdcott, a member of the Hunt Committee, Mr Penruddocke, of Compton, Mr Morrison, of Fonthill, Mr Biggs, of Stockton, to mention only resident owners of coverts in the centre of the hunt, informed of the proposed scheme before the meeting was held? Nor do I consider Mr Stanford justified in assigning, even for one season, certain of Lord Pembroke's coverts and one of mine to a neighbouring hunt without permission.

The "mystery" was not contained in Colonel Everett's letter, which was read to the meeting, but in a remark of Mr Stanford's, whom I understood to say during the meeting, "Everett only wants the Knoyle country." If this be the case, Colonel Everett might constantly hunt that side, perhaps a fifth part of the country it was proposed to give him, and leave the remaining four-fifths almost unentered by hounds. Many members of the hunt would be glad to know Colonel Everett's intention as regards this matter.

I can now only regret that due notice of the proposals to be made were not forwarded to all concerned in the hunt before the meeting was held, a course which I think most members present at the meeting supposed had been taken, in which case all sides of the question might have been previously discussed, and a satisfactory arrangement decided on.

I am, yours sincerely,

W. WYNDHAM

Dinton, April 4th, 1871.

P.S. – Since writing the above, I have seen Mr Grove, of Ferne, who has a communication to make to you respecting the late meeting, and who advised me to publish this letter. I have also agreed with him to promote Colonel Everett's mastership for the ensuing season, provided the Colonel undertakes to hunt fairly and impartially the country assigned to him.

To the Editor of the Salisbury and Winchester Journal

Dear Sir, - Will you be good enough to insert in your next issue the enclosed letter from Mr Portman to me relative to the South Wilts country?

I was unfortunately unable to be present myself at the late meeting of the subscribers and members of the South Wilts Hunt, having to be in the House of Commons the same day, or I should have then sent Mr Portman's letter to the press, being anxious that it should be known that he only offered to hunt part of the country conditionally, on the approval, and with the consent of the owners of the coverts, and of the members of the hunt; and also, until Lord Pembroke or some other gentleman would take the country as a whole.

I regret that Mr Wyndham, and some other owners of coverts, were not consulted previous to the meeting as to the division of the country to be proposed, as it has been the cause of misunderstanding between Mr Wyndham and Mr Benett-Stanford, but I am glad to find from my conversation I had on Monday last in Salisbury with Mr Wyndham and others, that this misunderstanding has now come to an end, and that lovers of fox hunting may look with confidence to all the owners of coverts in the South Wilts country giving their cordial support to Colonel Everett in his efforts to hunt the country.

I have the honour to be, sir, yours faithfully,

THOS. F. GROVE

Ferne, Salisbury, April 5th.

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