

Cotswold Hunt News Item

August 2002

Sam Butler speaks at the Frogmill Inn - 15th August

The Cotswold Hunt organised an open meeting at the Frogmill Inn in Andoversford for the purpose of updating everyone on the campaign which is leading to the London March on 22nd September. Sam Butler kindly agreed to speak and provide the gratefully received update on the current situation. Pictured opposite is Sam Butler, with Ann Chaffers (the Cotswold Hunt action coordinator) on the left and The Hon. Mrs Rosie Vestey (who chaired the meeting) on the right. The format of the evening provided scope for a lot of information to be given in a straightforward and comprehensive manner, followed by a question & answer forum. The meeting was well attended and comprised not only Cotswold Hunt members and supporters, but also representatives of adjacent Hunts. This added to the value which Sam Butler brought to the meeting.



Rosie Vestey gave the opening address and reminded us of the objectives leading up to the London March on 22nd September. She gave an overview of the structure of the Summer of Discontent (SoD) action teams and stressed that all teams could use additional help. Rosie went on the report how well the Village Hound Visits had gone and asked for a good turn-out at the final visit in Bisley on 25th August at 12.30pm. Also, to stress the importance of high numbers on the London March. The Cotswold Hunt has made available 2000 travel places. To ensure that these places are filled a series of Village Coordinators have been appointed who will arrange for leaflet drops and associated local activities. A list of Village Coordinators (available on this website - see London March) was distributed. Lastly, a series of beacons are to be lit across the Country on 16th September. The main Cotswold Beacon will be at Charlton Abbotts, although there will be others including one at Foxcote. All are welcome.

Sam Butler then spoke and congratulated the meeting for the high level of proactive work, effort and planning. He confirmed that following the

London March there would then be a political battle, which made it vital that people were kept on-side whilst making it clear that we mean business. The trick is to ensure that the Government realise that we are a worse problem than the backbenchers. Sam made it clear that the Countryside Alliance would not be making a 'sacrificial lamb' of any other field sport in an attempt to 'do a deal'. The open consultation process will take place on 9th, 10th & 11th September and submissions made. This will be televised on the Parliamentary Channel. There has been considerable activity on the Countryside Alliance's behalf with an event every other day during the 120 day SoD period. Together with Banners, Posters and Correx Boards it has all amounted to a Massive Campaign. It is vital that support is kept on-side and ground must not be lost by a drop in the National Opinion Polls. Numbers on the London March are vital and must exceed the previous 285,000 marchers. Parliament re-sits on 15th October and the Queen's Speech is expected in October/November. The Countryside Alliance has spent £1.1m on the London March and hope to re-coupe the entire figure from planned revenue. Most advertising has been directed toward local press, although there have been some national press advertising. Articles in local press are particularly important, including replying to anti MPs and individuals.. As large a volume of posters and leaflets should be achieved, but not vandalising acts such as painting bridges and roads. Getting all sectors of field sports to join the London March, including fishermen and shooters, is important.