

Re: Yesterday we received the great news that the Hunting Bill will be reintroduced to the Commons next week.

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From: Martin Willett (ignoredmailbox_at_ntlworld.com)

Date: 09/16/04

Date: Thu, 16 Sep 2004 09:12:25 +0100

Oz wrote:

> *Martin Willett <ignoredmailbox@ntlworld.com> writes*

>> *Oz wrote:*

>

>>>> *6) In general the anti-hunt people seem not to be country folk and*

>>>> *do not seem to understand nature at all well.*

>>>>

>>>> *That's right, people who don't live in the country are an inferior*

>>>> *species who shouldn't be allowed to vote.*

>>>>

>>> *I don't see how you got from what I said to there.*

>>

>> *I can't see any other direction that such a remark could be going, it*

>> *is glib and fatuous.*

>

> *Eh? It was a statement of fact. I have no idea how you got 'inferior'*

> *and 'vote' into it, probably from your own prejudices.*

You expect me to believe it was just meant to be a statement of fact with no implications at all? You didn't make any implications of that supposed fact clear so how can it be our fault if we thrash around and land upon an implication you didn't want to be seen to be suggesting?

>

>>> *Ah, so you are a class warrior perhaps.*

>>>

>>> *How terribly dated...*

>>

>> *So being class conscious is dated while being a land owner,*

>> *fashionable and trendy is always in fashion?*

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- >
- > *Eh? You really do have a brain full of prejudices, don't you?*
- > *I have no idea why you think fashionable and trendy should come into*
- > *owning, or renting, land. I farm the land because its my job, its*
- > *what I do, and it brings me a living.*
- >
- > *Being a class warrior is inciting divisions in society that should*
- not
- > *and in general do not exist. The few snobs I have come across have*
- > *been people from modest backgrounds now, for various reasons, into*
- > *lots of money; and the rabid communists seem to come from very*
- > *comfortable backgrounds but now fallen on harder times. Fairly*
- > *understandable on both counts, but not, IMHO, very laudable.*

My point was you were trying to put me down by saying my ideas were dated, which implies that only new and fresh ideas are good, which might be seen as a tad shallow, rather Hello! magazine than Horse and Hound or Country Life.

- >
- >> *That's a fine set of*
- >> *morals you have there. Who did you borrow them off, Dale Winton or*
- >> *Tara Palmer-Tomkinson?*
- >
- > *You are simple stating your morals. Its hardly my fault if you*
- aren't
- > *happy with them. Try a change.*

I don't change my morals or beliefs with the whims of fashion.

- >
- >>>>> *7) Given the many and unpleasant ways that foxes would die in*
- the
- >>>>> *wild I believe the hunt is more humane than nature, and by a*
- long
- >>>>> *way. The natural way for a fox to die is slowly, thirsty and*
- >>>>> *starving, of disease, injury or old age. Quite frankly this is a*
- >>>>> *very slow and unpleasant way to die.*
- >>>>
- >>>> *So chasing them and tearing them apart is a mercy?*
- >>>>
- >>>> *In truth, yes.*
- >>>> *Nature tends to go for rather inhumane methods,*
- >>>> *hunting is significantly more humane than nature.*
- >>>> *Of course you already know that.*

That was very nearly funny.

- >>
- >> *Perhaps you should recommend it to members of the voluntary*
- >> *euthanasia society?*

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- >
- > *Its a tad tricky doing much else with wild animals like foxes.*
- > *Livestock are put down humanely when the suffering becomes*
pointless,
- > *and the same happens with pets. I don't have a problem with*
voluntary
- > *euthanasia for much the same reasons. In practice it happens all the*
> time. You can't force a terminally ill person to take medication
> other than pain relief for example.

I can't imagine many people would actually choose being set upon by dogs rather than being shot. Suicide by hounds is not something I have ever come across, have you? In contrast there is the real phenomenon of "suicide by cops" where people deliberately provoke the police to shoot them dead.

- >
- >>>> *Can you tell me, off the top of your head, you needn't be too*
>>>> precise here, how many countries have introduced hunting with
dogs
- >>>> *as a humane approach to culling problem wildlife?*
- >>>
- >>> *It happens elsewhere. Of course in the wild (eg see african*
>>> savannah), predators incl hunting dogs do precisely this. Damned
>>> sight easier to catch the old/injured/infirm than the healthy.
- >>
- >> *So basically your answer is no, you can't think of any concrete*
>> examples, you just think there probably are some.
- >
- > *Hunting happens in the states and in france and germany.*
- > *Hardly surprising, its been done for millennia all over the world.*

But has it been introduced as the most rational and humane response to a vermin problem or has it been introduced as a bloodsport? I think we all know the answer.

- >
- >> *Of course natural predators seek out the easy kills, they are less*
>> likely to be injured chasing the sick, the crippled and the young,
>> but human hunters do not, they seek out the stag with the most
>> points on his antlers,
- >
- > *I'm not hugely familiar with deer hunting, but I don't think this is*
> right in general, certainly in the UK.
- >
- >> *as if shooting a bigger animal requires the possession of*
>> a bigger willy.
- >
- > *You really do have a lot of hangups, don't you?*
- > *It would probably be better if you didn't keep bringing them into a*
> logical argument.

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Better for what? I debate for fun not profit, I am not employed to win the debate for one "side" or the other, I just get stuck in and enjoy myself. There's no harm in it, the cruelty is very modest, there's no blood shed and all participants are volunteers. Most are even of sound mind.

It is a real phenomenon, men do seem to make out that the shooting of a larger prize specimen implies some greater quality in themselves. Larger stags should be easier to shoot because they are bigger and more likely to be stood on a ridge bellowing or looking out for rivals, so they should be the easiest deer to shoot. Also culling very often consists of shooting males and leaving females alone. Why reducing males within a polygynous species (most of whom are surplus to requirements in terms of breeding stock) would be of great benefit to the population numbers is never explained. If numbers need to be controlled then it should be the females that are shot as each female also removes one potential fawn per breeding season. You'd have a lot of explaining to do before you convinced me that stag hunting/shooting doesn't involve any Freudian undertones.

>
>>> *Indeed, to an extent. Farming has never been natural by most*
>>> *definitions of natural. From the moment a neolithic farmer sowed*
the
>>> *first seeds and pulled out the first weeds its not been 'natural'.*
>>> *That's a fair while ago mind.*
>>>
>>> *The vast (overwhelming in fact) majority of UK farms are family*
>>> *farms, remember there are far more farmers than farmworkers.*
>>
>> *Remember I'm smarter than you are.*
>
> *Really?*

That was just to get your attention.

>
>> *Don't try "the remember trick" on me. If something is a new piece*
of
>> *information I cannot be reminded of it and therefore skip the stage*
>> *of examining the evidence. If it is fresh evidence I have not*
already
>> *accepted the truth of it and you cannot simply "remind me" of my*
>> *previous acceptance of your "fact".*
>
> *I'm surprised you were not already aware of this, its been the case*
> *for over a decade. Given you seemed to claim plenty of knowledge of*
> *the countryside, and have pontificated enthusiastically on it, it*
> *didn't occur to me you were not aware of it.*

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I was making a general point there, it is a shoddy rhetorical trick (although often unconscious) to introduce new information into a debate disguised as a call to remember a point, as if already agreed. You edited the quoted reply to remove your call for me to remember.

I have not claimed plenty of knowledge of the countryside I have just allowed you receive that impression without exceeding the facts of the case. I never lie in debates but I do employ a little spin in the way I present my case and credentials.

>

>>> *If the farms*

>>> *stopped producing then an awful lot of people would starve to death*

>>> *of course. Then, I guess, farmers would be in a majority.*

>>

>> *Ah, but they wouldn't have any bloody Range Rovers bought with EC*

>> *subsidies, would they?*

>

> *Hmmm....*

> *Is that so?*

>

> *In my village there are about 20 rangerovers, absolutely none of them*

> *owned by farmers (I don't have one for example). That is, from*

> *discussions we have had over the years on uba, the usual situation.*

> *Given the rather small number of farmers (defined as earning 50% of*

> *their income from farming) and the number of sales of rangerovers*

let

> *alone similar deluxe 'utility vehicles' from other manufacturers,*

its

> *hardly surprising.*

Why was it Range Rovers and not EC subsidies that you argued about there? Do all the EC subsidies in your village go to the non-farmers and incomers?

>

>> *If modern society collapsed the land would be*

>> *farmed and there would be barons running the place and controlling*

>> *all the land, but I doubt very much they would have titles granted*

by

>> *Elizabeth Windsor or that the records of the UK land registry would*

>> *be of any great significance.*

>

> *Indeed so. Knowing how to farm would be a most valuable commodity,*

> *owning a fair number of guns would also help. I would suggest*

farmers

> *would be in quite a strong position, wouldn't you? No shortage of*

> *manual labour happy to work for food alone, or starve.*

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Yes, and no shortage of unskilled labour happy to work for whatever they could steal. Knowing how to farm might make you valuable enough to be spared, but then again, that isn't the Zimbabwe experience, is it?

'Don't criticize farmers, with your mouth full' is a good bumper sticker, but it doesn't do to push the concept too far.

>

>>>> *What is inconsistent about opposing the introduction of new species*

>>>> *and the removal of those which have already arrived? It seems fully*

>>>> *consistent to me, if people don't like the idea of eradicating*

>>>> *animals why wouldn't it make sense to avoid introducing one which*

>>>> *might later give rise to a call for eradication?*

>>>>

>>> *Rather a non-sequitur. Do you have a bee in your bonnet on this too?*

>>>

>> *Me? You started it. I don't care much either way, whether an animal*

>> *was here 1,000 years ago is one thing, whether it is a pest today*

is

>> *another. I'm quite happy to kill pests, you should see the shrivelled*

>> *up slugs that try to eat Cooking Fat's Go-Cat by crossing the*

>> *death-zone.*

>>

> *Hmm, you seem to enjoy this. How odd.*

>

>> *At least I don't dress up in fancy dress and blow a horn*

>> *so everybody for miles around can know I'm taking a little sadistic*

>> *pleasure from vermin control.*

>>

> *Hmmm. Mor of your hangups surfacing.*

> *Please don't assume that because you would feel a sadistic pleasure,*

> *that others do to.*

No, it is far more rational to assume that my experience is the opposite of what the rest of my species would feel. errrr... No. It isn't. My experiences as a particular man cannot be taken to be the case for all men but as a general starting point it makes sense. I have a spleen, men have a spleen, people have spleens. In the absence of evidence to the contrary looking into my motivations is a reasonable starting point for modelling the motivations of other people, I know I have far more in common with other people than I have differences. To acknowledge the similarities is not to deny the differences.

I can see some satisfaction in killing slugs and wasps. I don't think that is the best aspect of my character but I have no reason to

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believe that I am abnormal, I see the same expressions on the faces of other people when they swat flies as I have. When I see that expression on the faces of people who have run over a rabbit or seen their dog kill a rat I get very uneasy. If I think about people having those expressions on their faces when they machine-gun a crowd or ride to hounds that disgust crosses the threshold and I feel I must respond. I am against sadistic pleasure in killing but not because I think I'm too good to express it and they are too beastly to repress it. I am against men sexually exploiting teenagers not because I find the prospect of having sex with teenagers repulsive, quite the opposite. Last night I went to collect my daughter from an evening event and I found her friends very attractive. I understand the urge very clearly but I also understand why it must be suppressed, understanding how difficult suppressing that urge is what gave me the motivation to be waiting outside to walk her safely home in the first place. To be against hunting without acknowledging a streak of sadism within oneself is sanctimonious puritan priggishness of the worst kind and as absurd as pretending that as red-blooded males your attraction to females begins from a standing start on her sixteenth birthday.

>

>>>> *Hunts*

>>>> *regularly trespass on lands they have been forbidden from hunting*

>>>> *over*

>>>>

>>>> *In my experience (about 30 years) they never have.*

>>>> *Of course they would have *liked to*.*

>>>>

>>>> *and foxes are chased and killed on common land*

>>>>

>>>> *You mean common land as in commoners, or common land as in public*

>>>> *land?*

>>>>

>>>> *Either.*

>

> *1) If its land owned in common, then the council of those commons*

can

> *ban them from access and sue them for damages if they trespass.*

>

> *2) If its public land and the relevant has the power then they can*

be

> *banned from access and sued if they trespass.*

>

> *This is all very simple and can easily be done if the authority*

> *wishes. If the authority doesn't ban them, and/or they have*

> *permission then they can hunt over these lands. Nothing difficult*

> *here.*

>

>>>> *Very few actions have no impact on other people. Many people see*

>>>> *the hunt as bloodthirsty and obscene. You simply cannot ignore*

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>>>> *twenty people on horses and a pack of dogs.*
>>>
>>> *I can't ignore 30 footpathwalkers walking where there is no
footpath*
>>> *either. Or some lunatic cutting barbed wire fencing because he
>>> thought a footpath was blocked when in fact he thought he was a
mile*
>>> *away from where he was. Had I not found him, there would have been
>>> dead people on the road that day.*
>>
>> *Why are you treating me as the personification of everything that
>> annoys you?*
>
> *I was just pointing out that just because something annoys you you
> don't have to get into a lather and ban it.*

Good point:

<http://mwillett.org/Politics/tolerate.htm>

>
>> *I hate jumped up busy-bodies who think they have a right
>> to wander wherever they want too, most of them are the sort who
would*
>> *complain if you parked your car outside their house on a public
>> street.*
>>
>> *Any couples seen in matching cagoules should be culled and stuffed.*
>
> *I think that would generally be considered somewhat extreme.*

But I'm sure you know where I'm coming from on that one and you know I
wasn't being quite as literal as when I expressed my desire for the
hunting abolition bill to be passed.

>
>> *How about the slippery slope that
>>>> started when votes were extended to servants? Why, before you
knew*
>>>> *it not even a century later they were allowing women to vote too.*
>>>> *Good gracious. And then teenagers! Next week pets?*
>>>
>>> *You are the first person I've come across that wants votes for
pets,
>>> and why stop there. Give the pigeons a vote too.*
>>
>> *You are not by any chance American are you? You seem to be
suffering
>> from some kind of irony deficiency.*
>
> *You put together a sequence supporting your case.*

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- > *There are people who would support some or all of your comments.*
- > *I did a reductio ad absurdum.*
- >
- >> *My point was that the slippery slope argument is bogus. It always has*
- >> *been. People who are committed to a cause are usually too honest and*
- >> *keen to hide their true motivations. There are some loonies who want*
- >> *to ban shooting and fishing but they are not supported by any mass*
- >> *movement, they are a noisy minority with no power and no mass*
- >> *support. The fact that some of the hairiest hunt saboteurs are*
- >> *vegan*
- >> *shock troops does not mean that in six months time there will be a*
- >> *vote to ban eating meat and drowning worms on hooks. Even if such a*
- >> *bill were to find a sponsor it would be thrown out. The slippery*
- >> *slope argument is intellectually dishonest: fight today's battle,*
- >> *don't cloud the issue with what might (but almost certainly will*
- >> *not) follow.*
- >
- > *Much of this is a stated aim of many.*

"Many" by the standards of a pressure group, a vanishingly small number compared to the number of people who watch Emmerdale or Manchester United. Have some perspective. Many women would like to see all men put in custody to prevent rape. The numbers are small and there is no prospect of them gathering significantly more support. This slippery slope argument is simply a way for the minority who really care about hunting to cynically try to recruit supporters from the larger group who shoot and fish and live in the country.

- >
- > *My view on fohunting is primarily that it reduces cruelty to foxes.*
- > *I couldn't give a toss about people who see it as a class war issue,*
- > *and do not believe the majority get any particular pleasure from any*
- > *suffering the fox may or may not have.*
- >
- > *Remember, I said originally that I rather like foxes, and a*
- > *population*
- > *adequately controlled so it doesn't savage pets or livestock is*
- > *something I would wish to preserve. A hunt galloping over someone*
- > *elses's land is quite a sight that it would be a shame to loose for*
- > *similar reasons.*
- >
- > *Pretty straightforward logic I would say.*
- >

My take on this is that I think hunts are sadistic and an excuse for the gentry to make out they are being philanthropic. The days of noblesse oblige are dead and gone. Vermin should be destroyed by the council not the squire and the rector and his chums.

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I am fed up with my country tugging its forelock. Of my country's national anthem I can wholeheartedly sing one single word from the first verse: happy. The rest is thoroughly objectionable, even before you move on to the verses even Tories find too objectionable to sing.

The commons has expressed its view, yet again, by a huge majority. It's time to face up to the reality: you lost.

--

Martin Willett

<http://mwillett.org/>

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