

## 'Houndspeak'

Please note, any reference to any human being, either living or otherwise is purely intentional....

Welcome to Houndspeak.

I am going to be your "news hound" and will bring you interesting items and snippets of gossip from the kennels and the 'big house' over the season.

Firstly, let me introduce myself and the gang. I am Henry, (by far the best hound in the pack), and one of a litter of eight pups born in the autumn of 2007. My siblings are Homer, Hugo, Herman, Hazel, Hope and Helga. Sadly Heidi died earlier in the year. Our Mum is Conker (you will often see her out, and working hard). Dad is Coakham Homer. We don't see Dad much, but we were all reunited at the Festival of Hunting in July. He was so proud of us, and thought Mum had done a really good job.

We belong to the Cranwell Bloodhound pack and live at Temple Bruer. Our owners are Master Phil and Master Wendy. Master Frank is the kennel man who looks after and feeds us. Also fusses us if he thinks no one is watching! It's Master Phil, though, who has all the treats!

### Summer 2008

With the festival of hunting in mind, we were introduced to our puppy walkers at the beginning of summer. I think this was a vain attempt at the Masters trying to gain some control over us. It was a lot of fun and we did give them the run-around at times. I'm not sure whether it was for our benefit or for the beer afterwards, that they came night after night. We had to wear some collars and leads too, but we are really strong and could pull everyone quite easily. Puppy walkers were soon trained to go at our speed, especially "Puppy walkers" Chris and Julia, as we could make them run. They enjoyed this, but Master Frank frowned and told us all off! We were told to walk with dignity – whatever that is – and hold our heads and sterns up, but there were far too many interesting things to sniff at and roll in.....Master Frank didn't like this either, so much so he squirted us with a hose pipe when we got home, which I felt was a little uncalled for. Missy Julia was my "Puppy walker" and Mr Chris was usually being towed by my brother Hugo, mind you, you could have given him any hound as I'm sure he couldn't tell the difference. Master Frank thought it would be interesting to put us on couples one day, .....hmmm ..... game on....we had twice the power! I think he was trying to teach puppy walkers Chris and Julia not to run with us.....it didn't deter them.....just slowing down had become more entertaining!

We had several puppy walkers over the summer. Missy Leah and young Samuel, they sometimes trained my brother Homer, which was interesting as Homer was bigger than Samuel. Homer offered Samuel a Piggy back one day, but Master Frank frowned upon this too. I'm not sure who Master Frank finds the hardest work; us puppies or the puppy walkers! Mr John, Missy Leigh and Missy Nik also seemed to be on a keep fit routine and used us an excuse for their exercise too. One day Master Phil came with us on his horse, boy, was that dangerous! Those feet, so large! It must have been the hottest day of the year too. His horse was only walking but we all had to run to keep up. Master Wendy hinted this wasn't a good idea at all and went to look for some shade for us to recover in. We were so grateful. Master Frank was a little red in the face, so I think he appreciated the rest too. The next time Master Phil rode his bicycle with us. This was less dangerous for us, but he wasn't very steady and did wobble a little. He then suddenly rode off and left us, how rude was that, did he not like our company? Master Frank sent two of us off to find him. This was easy, as he hadn't gone far before he had fallen off, and was found lying in the grass. He seemed pleased to see us and grateful that we had rescued him, even gave us a treat. May be he will be a bit more careful next time, or perhaps stick to the horses.

After this so called "training" we were duly entered for the puppy show. And, naturally, as I was the best hound, I was bound to win.

As the day grew closer, I began to hurt and I would arrive home from walks with a bit of a limp so Master Frank decided to rest me for a while. Missy Julia was then allocated another pup to walk. This upset me a little, and I had to admit, I did give her the cold shoulder for a while. She tried to make amends, and always made a point of coming to say "Hello", but I was having none of it. I started to hurt a bit more, and on the morning of the show a huge lump appeared on my side. I was mortified. Master Frank said it was an abscess. I had no idea what it was, I just knew it hurt. Master Frank withdrew me from the show; I was as disappointed as was Missy Julia. The Masters had a meeting and decided I could go along for the ride, but to be honest, they needed me there to keep the others in check. A quick nip here and a snarl there soon put any wayward pups back in their places.

The girls did very well at the show with first, second and third places to their credit. They obviously had learned to keep their heads and sterns up and walk with dignity or rather they just flickered their eyelashes at the judges... No, I am not really bitter, but I will show them next year...Champion of Show and no less...

I did give my baby sister, Hazel, a bit of a pep talk, as she was quite nervous as she left to go in the ring with Mr Chris. I was so proud when she came back with a second place rosette. It was a huge class and it boosted her confidence enormously. With the show over for another year and Master Frank home clutching his spoils, we thought puppy walking was finished. But no, the “walkers” all came back again. I thought it must be for the beer and delicious cakes that Master Wendy bakes. I then spied these really tiny collars that Missy Leigh had bought at the show. When I say tiny, I mean “tiny”, one would barely go round my leg! We all debated who they were for. Ruby suggested they might be for her pups, but we all thought they were way too young. They were only about 13 weeks old, and we were several months old before we had to tolerate these leather nooses round our necks. We had another discussion and came to the conclusion that they had to start training early in order to exert any sort of control over them as they had so failed with us.

These pups have their own run as they are too small to live with us, but as soon as they join us, we'll teach them the way of the world and how it really is.

Ruby had four pups, born on April 11<sup>th</sup> 2008. They share the same birthday as Missy Julia, so she feels they are quite special. Their names are: Rolf, Rory, Ryan and Rita.

Rolf is the largest and gets to the food first. Rory was obviously named after Rory Underwood as his prowess with a potato stolen from the kitchen is unmatched. Ryan loves admiring the flowers in the garden, but hasn't yet realised they don't all have to be bitten off. His dead-heading technique needs a little more perfecting. Rita just loves to be cuddled. She sits down, flashes her long eyelashes, tilts her head to one side and she duly gets attention. Oh, boy, with this attitude, she will go far at the puppy show next year!

She can twist Missy Julia round her little paw. When Rita sits down, Missy Julia carries her so she doesn't have to walk. Rita was so thankful for this in August when Master Wendy led them over a really prickly stubble field. Somebody spilled the beans though, and Master Frank found out and gave Missy Julia one of his looks, but she ignored him and said if the need arose, she would do it again.

Summer came and went, and as the days drew shorter, puppy walking was less frequent and soon the older pup's off-lead training would begin.

We began to go out on a regular basis with the Masters and their horses. Now we had twelve huge feet to dodge, and that was hard. Master Phil kept shouting “all in”, to make us run to his side and keep us out of harm's way, but looking out for all those feet was a task in itself. To make matters worse, if we didn't stay close he would wave this long bit of string at us and sometimes crack it. That was scary. The Masters thought this was fun, and soon they had one each. But it really hurts when they catch you with it. It makes you want to lag behind and keep out of harm's way. Then Master Frank will shout at us, this makes us run away and sulk. Then he will shout “la, la, la, la, la, la” really loud to make us run back to him. It is all very confusing. One minute they tell us to stay by their sides and run along with the horses, next minute they tell us to run after a chap called Andy and catch him. Well, Andy obviously doesn't want to be caught, as every given opportunity, when their backs are turned, he runs off again, he even gets a lift sometimes with Hound Master John in the LandRover. But we dutifully oblige and run after him, but it does get rather tiresome. You would think that if they really wanted to keep him, they would tie him up or something. He is easy to hunt down, as he has this unmistakable aroma about him. We don't think he washes his clothes from week to week, or has enough to eat, as he is rather lean.

Then we hear that he deliberately doesn't wash his clothes for our benefit. Now, that is an insult to our finely tuned noses, our sense of smell has been refined over many centuries.

Our exercise each day would get longer and faster until they thought we were fit. Occasionally we would go out on a Sunday for a hack round the countryside. It seems that the Masters invite all their friends to come too on their own horses. Master Phil and Wendy do look after us on these days and keep us up front of all the guests. Just as well, as there is some comical antics going on back there. We were out jumping one day on a cross country course, and one of the riders fell off. Her horse galloped off and it ran like the wind, I didn't think horses could go that fast. Then another day, a big grey horse trotted past a huge stack of bales and made the bales fall over. He didn't stay trotting for long I'll tell you! His rider looked a bit pale when he finally pulled him up, but the earth did move for him and us too. We thought it was another earthquake!

One day I thought I would go on an adventure and explore the local area. I knew Missy Julia lived at Navenby, and I thought I would pay her a visit. I was just wandering along and investigating a few smells when this dear lady came up to me and offered me a ride in this big shiny car. Hmm, Ok, I thought. I have never been in one of those, and it did look fun so I accepted the offer. She put this rag thing round my neck which looked more like a bandana than a collar, apparently it was a bandage. This will do my street cred no good at all I thought, and what would Missy Julia think, I so did want to look my best. I jumped in the back of her car and wow, what a nice lady, she had brought my tea too. Only I was a bit confused, Master Phil and Master Frank always take the plastic bits off our sandwiches and pies, but these still had their wrappers on. I also had a difficult time tussling with a big carrier bag with “Tesco” written on it, trying to get my tea out. Anyway, never one to be defeated, I soldiered on, and won.

We arrived at the destination and the back was opened to let me out. Then.....Oh.....what a shock.....there staring at me was Master Phil and Master Wendy. This isn't where I wanted to go at all. Master Wendy's face was a picture. I'm not sure

whether she was laughing or crying. I nuzzled the plastic bag to show them I had eaten all my tea, so at least they would be pleased with me for that. Master Frank seemed annoyed and dragged me back to the kennel. Oh well, there'll be another time.

### **Autumn 2008**

Autumn arrived and we were being prepared for the opening meet. The day duly arrived and we were told to be on our best behaviour. It was so bitter and cold and windy that we weren't too keen. Then this chap Andy appeared again. He came over to fuss and play with us. I felt like telling him to run away quick if he really wanted to go, not to hang around, but seize the opportunity. He took my advice and jumped in Hound Master John's LandRover, and was driven away, I really thought he had escaped this time, but no, we were sent to get him back.....again! Hound Master John is really kind, for when we get tired he gives us a lift home. He also looks after the sausage rolls, and if you badger him enough you can usually get one. When that fails, we go and pester Master Phil. There are also bottles of this red stuff too which the riders seem to enjoy. I had a sniff, but wasn't keen. I think it must have an adverse effect on the riders, as, soon after devouring it, they suddenly become very giggly, brave and want to jump all the hedges. Their, mounts, not having had the benefit of this red stuff are not so brave. They inevitably part company eventually. You see, the horses do not see the point of dragging themselves though these prickly hedges when there is a perfectly serviceable gap right next to it. But then that's the power of this red stuff. It cannot possibly be the sausage rolls, as we eat those and still never have the desire to go over these hurdles.

Missy Julia was at the meet with this big camera thing round her neck. Looks sooo heavy. I show her my best side, as I know she's angling to take my picture. Maybe it will go on the website, I am the best, after all, and I should take pride of place, perhaps on the front page. Hound Master John gives Missy Julia a lift to the fences so she can photograph all the antics of the field. I heard today Hound Master John stopped a bit too quick and Missy Julia fell out the back! She managed to get the pics though, still laughing.

Our next meet was at Wood Enderby, and Master Frank looked after us here. Andy was no where to be seen, so he must have got away.....at last. Today was fun, at least this chestnut horse thought so. Everybody called him Nutty. That didn't seem very kind to me, but was quite apt! He just goes round in circles, doesn't seem to have a forward gear. Mr Chris just sits there and laughs, probably had more of that red stuff.

The following week we should have gone to Coleby airfield, but it was very snowy and quite bitter. The Masters decided to just go out for a hack from the kennels. Still no Andy, so he must be far away by now. Whilst on the hack I was just considering if I should divert and go visit Missy Julia, as she wasn't out today, ..then, ..crack, ..ouch! Missy Nik has now also got one of those string things and just hit me with it. Oh I wish Missy Julia was here, she wouldn't have let this happen.

### **Winter**

Blustery and cold weather greeted us at the meet at Brauncewell, but lots of horses. Hardy souls these followers and after the usual fuelling of the red stuff we were ready to go. Master Frank had brought a "rocking horse" to hunt with. Must be a chestnut thing, having no forward gears! I also spotted Andy and now seriously began to wonder what was going on, guess it's time for a little chat. Andy explained to us that it is all a game. This running away and hounds chasing, was all for the benefit of the thrill seeking followers who just loved to gallop. The pack was incensed.....game indeed! We'll give them game! We'll show them what real galloping is ! We take our work seriously, and practise for months to hone our skills. We hatched a plan; to run our fastest and force Andy to run quicker and quicker and quicker. The horses will not have a chance of keeping up, and the Masters will struggle to slow us. Game indeed...! We set off. Rumbings among the pack suggested we stayed close until over the road then go for it. Plan implemented and we were away. Poor Rocky, 30 mins in and he couldn't hold the pace, he hesitated to catch his breath and was nabbed by the crew of the Landrover and taken back to the kennels. He felt a bit embarrassed and slunk in, but just didn't feel up to it today.

Onwards we ran, flying across the fields as fast as we could with the voices of the Masters echoing in our ears. Another 30 mins later and my brother Homer lost all orientation and went in the wrong direction. He too was nabbed by the the Landrover crew and sent home. Masters and Whips were miles behind, our plan was working. We flew across the road on our own, a bit naughty but fortunately the car followers were looking out for us, and so we were safe. On we flew, undeterred. The horses were flying too, over the log, the road and over the drop. We could hear squeals and screams as they tried to stay on. Still on we flew. We could see Andy, and we raced to see who could get there first. Phew, gasp, that really was a fast run, even by our standards..... Master Phil was first to catch up with us, Field Master Frank had left the followers to come to help exert some control. Missy Leah's horse Cindy was really excited having got caught up in the thrill of the chase.

Must admit we were grateful for the break, but I think we had proved our point. Master Phil had to go and get a second horse to try to keep up with us.

More fuelling of the red stuff followed and off we went again. We didn't have quite so much energy on this run. Nicola on her lovely coloured horse and Rita with Misty, obviously having had too much of the red stuff, approached a fence and off they tumbled. Nicola's mount galloped after his stable mate and was duly caught and brought back for Nicola to have another go. Many more logs and hedges later and we found our Quarry.

Amazingly, everyone was still with us until the end, albeit a few tired horses and riders too. They were all smiling and happy. We had done our job for another day.

### **Late December**

We had to be quiet and on our best behaviour today. One minute's silence was held in memory of Master Phil's dear Mum; Mrs Win Broughton. She was one of our keenest supporters, and followed us whenever she was able. Always making sausage rolls for the field and for us too sometimes if we were lucky. We did keep quiet.

Eventually the horn blew and off we went. Just a steady hack at first, but we were eager to run. Having missed two meets due to bad weather we were keen to go. Eventually we were sent on our way, but it was so windy. The scent was blowing about all over the place and we really struggled. Stop, start, stop, start... The youngsters looked to the experienced hounds to take the lead, but even they were having difficulty. Then suddenly the scent was found and off we all went. This is more like it, the wind in our ears.....wow what fun.....straight into a copse. Hmm that's strange we thought "Quarry" Andy doesn't usually lead us through this sort of undergrowth. Ouch!.. Something just pricked me. Must have been a fir tree. We were struggling in here. Scent all over the place. Master Phil and Master Frank were shouting something, we couldn't hear as the wind was roaring, so we just kept searching.

Whoosh.....this hare shot out from under us. So that was what the scent was. Then another hare flew past. This isn't fair, they know we are not allowed to chase them and now they are deliberately teasing us. A hare ran out of the copse, and then ran back in again to see why we were not following. How cheeky was that? Master Phil and Master Frank had now caught up with us and were both quite exasperated and red in the face and cracking those white bits of string things. We were trying our best, but guessed we had got it all wrong. Duly all called to heel again, and put on the right track again. I think Andy was too far ahead of us or must have washed his clothes this week as we had so much difficulty following today.

We didn't have any real jumps today just a few stone walls to clamber over. Even this was too difficult for one horse who refused point blank to step over, then suddenly launched himself into oblivion onto the road when he thought he might be left behind. This horse only likes galloping, and a wall was just an obstacle too much for him.

We returned to the boxes quite tired, we had run so much today. Unfortunately, most of it being in the wrong direction!

### **Christmas**

It was Christmas Eve, and we could hear a lot of commotion going on over the wall. It appears that Master Frank was wrestling a 15ft tree inside the Big House. Seems his judgement was a little astray as Master Wendy would have been more than happy with an 8ft one. (Even this would have been 8ft bigger than Master Phil would have liked). But then Master Frank would never do things by halves. He would not be beaten, even if it meant destroying part of the house to get it inside, it would be done. Patio doors were left swinging by their hinges, panes of glass missing.....they'll never shut again! Paint scratched off the walls all down the hallway, chandelier smashed and swinging, dogs cowering in their baskets.....but still, Master Frank persevered, he was on a mission. Missy Julia and Mister Chris happened by, and when they stopped laughing, thought it would be kind to help. A lot of tugging, shouting, more tugging, a few more breakages and the tree was in situ. They all seemed very proud of themselves. What I cannot understand is why they want to chop a tree down and stick it inside a house anyway. It seems so bizarre. I wonder what they will take inside next. It appears that the Big House is like a Mary Poppin's carpet bag, with unlimited space inside.

### **January**

We struggled to get days out this month, what with the wind, rain and frozen ground. But I guess this is winter after all. When we finally did get a run, the meet was at home, but oh, it was so blowy and chilly. Keen to run, we were on our toes, but we had to wait for the usual fuelling of the red stuff by the followers. Homer and I sauntered over to the Masters' red truck. Primarily for shelter, you understand, but we had spied these scrumptious sausage rolls and mince pies in there too. We just sat quietly and put on our appealing look, but it was all to no avail. Missy Leigh saw us, grabbed us by the scruff of our necks and tried to drag us back to the others. What she didn't bargain for was how heavy we are now, couldn't move us if she tried!!!

With that, Master Phil saw us and with a blast on his horn, we were beckoned to his side. He looked threatening with that bit of white string again so we thought we better behave.

We didn't have Andy this week. Seems he had gone to some foreign land (that was even colder than here), strapped two pieces of plank to his feet and thrown himself down a mountain, how mad is that?

Instead we were greeted by Mr Brian and Missy Jackie. They are friends of the Masters, and had volunteered to lay the scent for us today. This is a new scent for us, so we had to sniff hard and really get to know them well. They set off, but a lot earlier than usual, I think they were walking.

Eventually, off we went, but oh!, we were struggling from the start. The wind had carried the scent away and we had to look to Master Phil for guidance as he knew the route. The followers' didn't care! They were in their element. This was home turf and jumps galore! Aably led by Master Frank and Deano, they popped over anything they could find. Some with more style than others, but best we don't dwell on that.

We ran and ran, but still we struggled as the scent was blown away. Then it was half time. A few of the followers were going home at this stage. The cold probably had got to them.

Hound Master John had his work cut out today too. Transporting runners, I mean walkers, here there and every where, looking out for us at road crossings, being ready at half time with more of the red stuff and sausage rolls. Even helping Master Phil change horses. Master Frank then came and took us away and put us back in the kennels. We couldn't understand why! I know we had struggled, but we weren't that bad, surely. Then all came apparent. It was the girls turn to run. They had Missy Leah and Master Wendy's scent to follow. Rumour had it that Missy Leah and Master Wendy had set off two days earlier in order that they would get round the route!! They too were walking, but I think it was more like a saunter and a gossip, with a picnic on the way too.

The girls would have their work cut out, or so we thought! They surprised us and were on the case immediately and running hard. They did get a little confused, but the fault lay with Master Wendy and Missy Leah really as they had deviated from the chosen course, got lost and had gone round in circles. Eventually, having completed the line, they then posed for photographs on a log, looking very smug and pleased with themselves, albeit a tad cold. Look out Andy, you have competition!

An unusual lovely sunny day today for our meet at Evedon, home of Master John and Missy Leah. More followers than usual. Some very smartly turned out too. Everyone should plait each week, as is custom and to show respect, but not all do. We set off on quite a long hack through the village. On reaching the open fields we were allowed to run. Andy was back today, and his scent was so strong it was easy to follow. We were full of running and mischief. We hadn't had much exercise during the week so were very eager. A bit too eager for the Masters! Nearing the end of the first line we had Andy in our sights, but the lead hounds suddenly veered left. Strange we thought, but we better follow. We young hounds are taken out with the more experienced hounds to be shown the ropes so to speak. So we just follow, and follow we did....whoops. Suddenly a lot of shouting, masters galloping everywhere, white string being flailed in all directions. Seems a hare had popped up in front of the lead hounds and they thought that was more interesting. We just followed, that is, all except Rosie. Dear Rosie, tagging merrily along side Master Phil's horse, runs up to quarry Andy and receives all the glory! In the mean time, we are causing havoc and running all over the place. The Masters' are struggling to round us up, as we have cut across fields that are sown and the horses have to go round the edges.

No jumping today, but some interesting rides along the river banks. Not all the horses were keen on the close proximity of all this water though. We had half time, but we got bored and the sight of a rabbit got the better of us and off we all went again. Straight through the hedge and across the fields. Shouting, horns blowing, galloping horses up the road. Again the horses could not cut across the fields and had to go round! Oh what fun this is, although I was getting quite tired now. The rabbit got away, they always do. We are not trained to chase them, and that isn't our job, but when they deliberately tease us we give them a run for their money, but we do upset the Masters' in doing so! Today was no exception, Master Phil was now wearing his really annoyed face. I think we went too far today. Oh dear! I was still in the middle of the field of a sown crop. Master Frank was at one end and Master Phil and Missy Nikki at the other. Which ever direction I went I feared I would be in trouble, so I loitered where I was. Then I saw Master John over the other side of the hedge and went in that direction, only I couldn't get through the hedge this time. Master John, he looked annoyed too now, came over and picked me up and put me in the Landrover. But no one told me off and I got a ride home too. Master Phil was so cross with the hounds today that he decided to call it a day and hacked back to the boxes. We were so so tired, we just lay and slept in the trailer whilst everybody enjoyed the fabulous tea that Missy Leah had made.

## **February**

February is turning out to be very cold and snowy. We arrived at Oasby in the sunshine, but this soon turned to gales and sleet. We all kept cowering behind the hedge thinking this really isn't going to be much fun. Suddenly the snow flakes just got bigger and before we knew it a layer of deep snow covered the ground. Following Andy was so easy, we just followed his footprints. Many of the horses were playing up, bucking and kicking. Sadly, just after the start, Missy Rita got kicked so badly on the leg that she had to turn round and head for home, not knowing whether she would be able to drive. She was quite cross as the culprit didn't even offer an apology! The going got very deep and heavy and we were tiring, a few horses lost shoes and had to give up. It was snowing so hard now we couldn't see our noses in front of our faces. Suddenly our pack was two hounds short. Oh dear! Where on earth had they gone? They couldn't see anything, and with so many confusing smells they were just running round in circles. They could hear the horn, but oh, with the snow and the wind, they had no idea where anyone was. Then we lost two more. This was getting worse, we were not hunting Andy anymore, we were hunting each other. Suddenly, a snowman on horseback arrived; it was Master Frank who had found two hounds. He didn't look very pleased; he didn't look very warm either!

The landrover was dispatched to find the missing hounds, and they duly did, but not before having to trudge over two fields deep in snow and mud.

The riders were covered in snow, they looked so funny. Andy seemed to be the only one who was warm. Master Phil decided to call it a day and take us home. It was certainly a day to remember but I think for all the wrong reasons.

There was a real buzz on the following Thursday as our picture was in Horse and Hound. Everybody ringing the Masters to let them know. They felt very proud, showing the rest of the world how hardy we are!

We are hoping it warms up a bit soon.

Yours Henry x