

## Bottle Report November- December 2011

It is with a sense of panic and desperation that I am driven to pen. I make absolutely no apology for the length of this letter, for in this intervening time alone we have suffered as much indignation as some entire seasons previously! My copious notes, written on a sleeve, may have caused me to omit someone and I rely on you, gentle reader, to allow me to make amends. In that light I want to thank all those who watch over our dear colleague David Clore for allowing me, in this correspondence to address a huge oversight of three reports! Had I any distrust in my heart for David one would consider some deliberate act of deception, but I am certain it was just a lapse in memory – his or mine, I am not sure I can recall.

Indications are clear that if your obedient correspondent falls behind on his reporting some sort of curse or plague befalls our happy troop and will stay in place until I report what has come to be very significant arrears!

The Curse of course is that since our last letter twelve dethronements have occurred! This surpasses in number entire seasons in previous years! I must write quickly now because it appears our beloved Huntsman and our intrepid comrade David appear to be taking the brunt of this curse with these gentlemen accounting for six of the twelve! So I write with alacrity hoping to lift this plague of mud smeared breeches and thoroughly confused and embarrassed horses.

We start with our friend from the northern tribes **Joshua Winder**, who at the Kennels was separated from his favorite mare as one turned one way and the other another way at a jump. Your correspondent seeks more details from the readership as Josh is well mounted, highly experienced, and the fixture is notoriously trappy so there must be more mud to this story. It was also this day that we began to get wind that something supernatural might be starting when our beloved **Huntsman** was observed attempting a maneuver invented by the famous Cavalia troop by remaining mounted while the horse reclines then arises! Only the famed polo remount by Mr. Salatino could come close to what Greg was attempting!

At Arrowpoint the curse focused on the “young-uns” **Sommers Olinger**, our own staff member was without ceremony and rapidly deposited on Mother Earth as a result of one of her tricks – a hole! **Alyse Phipps** was riding a youngster who quarreled with her about the merits of going over one particular coop with the result that the horse remained with four feet on the ground and poor Alyse with substantially more on the ground than her feet. I write quickly, hoping to break this curse, for **Alyse** was struck again later at Quiet Shade when, starting off, the field made the turn into the woods where one starts with rails and logs and ends with a coop. Unfortunately as the last of the field came out of the woods our Alyse was not among the troop. Having committed this to paper I trust this will end the string!

Not even the day of Thanksgiving was spared! Our intrepid **Huntsman** was quietly casting the pack in the woods South of Glendalough when our field master heard what he thought was a horse saying, “D’oh!” in the manner of that Master Slacker Homer Simpson. Looking toward the sound we saw the horse but could barely make out the Huntsman’s scarlet amongst the maple leaves. Upon arising, his response contained more words than his horse’s initial exclamation.

While reporting the location of the pack with Second Field on this day **David** was asked by his bride to take the lead over a coop in an attempt to get back to Freedom Fields in time to observe the ritual Exploding Chicken in the Deep Fryer. Mindful of the previous week when he tried this same feat with a loose girth and found himself airborne over the coop with not much of the saddle still showing on the horse’s back (resulting, however, in ample time and opportunity to re-saddle while on the ground!), he, I am certain, approached this coop with care and diligence. But The Curse had other plans, and our dear David landed the maneuver in a place other than his

horse's back! Whereas **David** felt he may have had help in forgetting to tighten his girth in the first instance, the second was clearly The Curse! Upon further consideration, while at Bending River **David** landed in much the same fashion over one of Mike's trestle coops. At first we observed that David was struck by the elegant structural design and may have spent a bit too much time looking down at the coop rather than observing Rule Two (Keep Your Head UP!)... But I am now struck by the mysterious ways of The Curse!

Last week **your obedient correspondent** had promised to break the spell of The Curse by completing his correspondence but, due to sloth and possibly a little debauchery did not complete the task. At our joint meet with Thornton Hill Fort Valley Hounds I felt the lash of The Curse myself as your correspondent, inattentive due to the heavy guilt of his lapse in correspondence, followed a gentleman too closely over a coop leaving me with a complete stop at the coop with knees on the wood. As I looked down in disbelief my trusty horse took care of the problem with one mighty hop! We both made it to the other side, but I am sure it was The Curse that pushed me off the horse to the right. One witness chastised me for taking so long to fall. He timed it by counting "one bottle, two bottles, three bottles..."!

Why just today at Maple Lawn The Curse struck with such ferocity that our colleague **Nelson Lewis** was removed from his horse accelerating on the flat when his mount was struck with the sheer beauty of the day and saluted it thrice, each with a buck. Nelson sat numbers one and two, but the third one had the charm. Odd – I do recall similar events at that same field with other members riding somewhat heavier horses, however. Our beloved Beethoven threw in two "salutes" on the same ground years ago, but never provided the third which would have surely had the same result. But then our beloved **Huntsman** was struck again! Riding, I believe, the same mount that had stumbled in the woods previously, the horse decided to display instead the quick Terpsichore of tap dancing his way through barn cats and hounds! Unfortunately our Huntsman was never schooled in Equestrian Tap, so unaware that the next step was a giant leap to the side, he departed the horse. Upon arising, however, it was clear that he did remember almost his exact words from the time in the woods!

But alas, I fail myself. It was not twelve misfortunes, but the unlucky Thirteen! Our dear friend **Kevin McKenna** was fortunate in that he had a job in Africa lined up which he was not looking particularly keen to do. Fortunately while at The Hill, he intercepted a peevish kick meant for his mount, saving his steed but costing him some time in a cast all the while removing him from his obligations overseas. It seems a bit serious – your correspondent wonders if there might have been another way, but I look forward to Kevin's company at the Christmas party where I feel he is owed a toast to his recovery and good health.

And so Dear Reader, the epistle has been written and The Curse I pray has been lifted, for we are blessed of course that none of these events led to lasting injury. I make a special, Heartfelt plea in a bit of a more serious vein to remember the Staff's Christmas Cap when we next meet. Our staff is the keystone of our sport and the fellowship of our Hunt. Your correspondent also intends to provide our beloved Huntsman with a bottle as well, hoping to see it again on the Cropper's table! Until next time, I remain your Obedient Servant – **The Bottle Reporter**