

Brief Encounter

When I was very small, somewhere in the 1950's, I remember that my aunt Letty once took me to a place where the local hunt was gathering. I remember that the Saboteurs were there too. My aunt explained that not everyone agreed with what the hunt did. At the time, I don't think I found out what the hunt did and why others were trying to stop it. It was all very confusing. My aunt, according to my mother, was a 'county lady' and read the racing pages every day. I still don't know what a 'county lady' is'. My uncle had been a lawyer, but had converted to chicken farming and they had a small farm just outside Hastings. It was a very organic chicken farm with the hens running riot and nesting in hedges to lay their eggs which they then abandoned. As children collecting the eggs, we looked all over and picked up eggs that had possibly been laid months before. My uncle was troubled by the hunt, which he said, rampaged across his land without permission, causing damage and braking down fences, without offering recompense. He was also bothered by the foxes. One night, a fox had got into a barn and killed all the chickens by biting off their legs. But a fox is wired by his nature and acts on instinct in a situation he would never encounter in the wild. As for the huntsmen, how can you understand that aberration? I am as confused now as I was all those years ago.