

ANIMAL VOICE - Jan-Feb 2008

Campaign newsletter of the Irish Council Against Blood Sports

Irish Council Against Blood Sports (ICABS), PO Box 88, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, Ireland
Websites: www.banbloodsports.com www.bebo.com/banbloodsports www.myspace.com/banbloodsports

01. Protest against hare coursing - February 6th

Please join us for a protest against hare coursing which will take place on Wednesday, February 6th, 2008 from 12 noon to 2 pm. The Irish Council Against Blood Sports is one of the groups from all around Ireland who will be represented at this peaceful demonstration outside the coursing finals venue - Powerstown Park, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

Show you care about the thousands of Irish Hares snatched from the countryside every year, crammed into boxes, kept captive in coursing fields for months and eventually forced to run for their lives in front of greyhounds. Watch our campaign video at www.youtube.com/icabs to see the fatal maulings suffered by these fragile creatures during coursing meetings.

"Ban Hare Coursing" Protest Details:

Outside Powerstown Park, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.

Wednesday, February 6th, 2008

12 noon to 2 pm

(Be there for the hares. Please bring placards if possible)

For driving directions, please visit maps.yahoo.net

02. ICABS presents arguments for foxhunt ban: Irish Times

In an opinion piece in the Irish Times on January 28th, the Irish Council Against Blood Sports presented the arguments in favour of a ban on foxhunting.

Should the Government ban fox-hunting? YES:

Philip Kiernan says Ireland's image as a decent and compassionate nation is tarnished by a cruel pursuit.

The tranquillity of the countryside is shattered as a fox squeals out in agony. The blood-curdling cry signals the end to another hunt outing as a panting fox with bulging eyes is knocked off its feet and eviscerated. The frenzied hounds are fervently urged on by a cacophony of hunting horns and hollering.

It's this merciless animal abuse that underlines the majority view in Ireland that fox-hunting is cruel and needs to be banned. It's the reason the Government must bring foxes to the fore in its update of our archaic animal welfare legislation.

The suffering is unrelenting in fox-hunting. As the chase gets under way and the hunters and hounds lock on to their target, the fox's desperate dash sends stress levels rocketing. The physiological effects, research has shown, include haemorrhage of the heart and lungs, congestion of the kidneys and a breakdown of muscle tissue, often followed by brain damage.

Far from displaying empathy, hunts boast about how they push foxes beyond the limits of endurance. One proclaimed that a fox was persecuted for three hours and 10 minutes while another described "pushing a fox for

50 minutes in terrible driving rain before catching it". There is more than a hint of satisfaction in the hunting reports that tell of the fox crushed under the wheels of a car or the vixen drowning in a slurry pit with hounds blocking her exit.

Foxes that manage to find refuge during a chase are only temporarily safe. The terrier work and digging-out occur when the depleted fox can do nothing but stumble down a hole in the earth. What happens next must be one of the worst imaginable acts of cruelty. A terrier is unleashed and viciously bites and claws the cowering creature into a corner. From above, hunters use shovels to uncover their severely wounded prize.

That an assault on Ireland's favourite mammal is carried out for entertainment makes fox-hunting especially despicable. Hunting apologists try to dilute the disgust with claims that they're eliminating a menace to farmers. However, the idea of the fox as an agricultural threat has long been dispelled. Both the Department of Agriculture and the National Parks and Wildlife Service concur, for example, that foxes play no significant role, if any, in lamb mortality. Eminent ecologists agree that this fascinating, social animal is the victim of smear tactics. And increasing numbers of farmers are coming to realise that it's the hunters, not the foxes, that are the real culprits.

One hunter admitted in the national media that hunts "gallop like cavalries over rain-sodden fields" and leave them "looking like venues of epic battles". Familiar devastation to farmers. Surveying their scattered livestock, broken boundaries and pockmarked pastures, they are pushing an equally pressing reason to ban fox-hunting. With bio-security a priority, and blinkered hunts apathetic about the spread of disease, landowners are demanding drag hunting as a compromise.

This humane alternative involves the pursuit of an artificially laid scent across land where the "hunters" have permission to be. Not only is it acceptable to farmers but it promises huge rewards for the Irish horse industry. A welcome outlet is created for the thousands who enjoy cross-country equestrianism but shun blood sports.

Suggestions that a ban would lead to job losses and the industry's collapse are completely unfounded. The outcome is much more likely to be the opposite. The benefits a ban brings were recently recounted by a Midlands horse dealer. "Although the introduction of the UK hunting ban was heralded by many as the end to the Irish hunter trade, its 'bad' effect went virtually unnoticed," he said. "We never had a better trade than when they brought in the ban." In a last-ditch attempt to gain a modicum of sympathy and delay the dawn of drag hunting, hunters lament that you can't teach old dogs new tricks, that a ban will necessitate the mass destruction of defunct hounds. It's a view unequivocally contradicted by a spokesperson for the UK's Council of Hunting Associations. Although disparaging "the chasing of old socks soaked in essence of fox" as "the uncomfortable in pursuit of the undignified", he concedes that drag hunting does indeed accommodate foxhounds, pointing out that "people who really know how to handle hounds are able to train them to do most things".

For the animals that suffer, for the majority who want an end to blood sports, for Ireland's image as a decent and compassionate nation, fox-hunting must finally be banned.

Arguing against a ban on foxhunting in Ireland was British MP, Kate Hoey, who is also chairwoman of pro-hunt group, Countryside Alliance.

Ms Hoey claimed that there "has never been any evidence to justify a ban in terms of animal welfare" but went on to quote an extract from the Burns report that hunting "seriously compromises the welfare of the fox". This, she commented "should be no surprise since the point of the activity is to kill them".

To read the debate and vote in the online poll, visit <http://www.ireland.com/head2head>

03. New ICABS Badges

Show your support for the campaign against blood sports. Purchase one of the new ICABS badges today and help raise funds for our campaign against animal cruelty in Ireland. Displaying our banbloodsports.com website address, these cool red 28mm badges cost just 1 Euro each (including postage and packaging to anywhere in the world).

To order, simply send payment to ICABS at the usual address - ICABS, PO Box 88, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, Ireland. You may also order by credit card (or paypal) - visit www.banbloodsports.com and click on the badge image on our homepage for more details.

04. Letters to the Editors

**Greens are not the 'callous' ones
by Aideen Yourell, Irish Council Against Blood Sports
Irish Independent - January 29 2008**

Mr John Condren from Co Laois (Letters, January 22), accuses the Green Party of being "ignorant and callous" because a deer is "at large in the Meath countryside" since a hunt on St Stephen's Day, "distressed at his separation from his herd and posing a threat to motorists and walkers...also risking injury to himself or others."

I couldn't agree more with Mr Condren that a vulnerable animal, normally resident on a farm with other deer, being abandoned in the countryside is cruel. But Mr Condren quite wrongly lays the blame on Minister John Gormley's restricted licence for the Ward Union deer hunt, whereby the hounds may not be set upon the stag, which may be released into the countryside to create a scent to be followed in the manner of a drag hunt.

The Ward Union, not being allowed to do their usual thing and chase the deer around the countryside for so-called "sport" and "kicks" have, thankfully, given up on their abusive activity because it's just no fun any more.

Mr Condren might be very interested to know that, long before the restricted licence, deer being left out after hunts was quite common.

For example, according to documents obtained by this organisation under the Freedom of Information Act, it was revealed that out of 38 deer hunted during 2006-07, 15 deer were still at large in July 2007.

Furthermore, it was reported that a deer had drowned in a quarry during the same season.

So, the gentleman is pointing the finger of blame in the wrong direction. It is, in fact, the Ward Union hunt that has for far too long been permitted to behave in an "ignorant and callous" manner towards deer.

Mr Gormley and the Greens are to be wholly commended for their compassionate stance on animal welfare issues.

**Stop bizarre deer hunting 'sport'
by Aideen Yourell, Irish Council Against Blood Sports
Sunday Independent, January 06, 2008**

Sir -- It seems that the cavalry of the Ward Union, headed up by Michael Bailey, weren't able to whoop it up on St Stephen's Day when they couldn't hound a deer around the countryside for "sport", after Environment Minister John Gormley issued a restricted licence, which stipulates that deer must not be hunted by hounds (Sunday Independent, December 30).

For over 100 years now, this hunt, twice-weekly from November to March, has been subjecting tame deer to a distressing ordeal, leaving them exhausted, often injured and at risk of dying of heart failure, despite claims from one of their supporters that she had never seen a hunted deer injured.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, incidents of cruelty have been documented, such as deer dying of aneurisms; a deer choked on capture; a deer drowned in a quarry; a deer sustaining fractured ribs and dying; a deer hanging by its front leg on barbed wire; and lameness in deer following hunts. These, we believe, are just the tip of the iceberg.

The Irish Council Against Blood Sports has always contended that this hunt should never have been licensed and this has now been borne out by Professors William Binchy and Clive Symmons of Trinity School of Law in a recently published legal opinion which concludes that the Ward Union hunt is "illegal" under the 1911 Protection of Animals Act, and that it shouldn't be licensed under the 1976 Wildlife Act.

The Ward Union should now call it a day on their bizarre, outdated and abusive deer hunt, and switch to drag hunting, which is cruelty-free.

For more letters on this issue, visit <http://www.independent.ie/opinion/letters/stop-bizarre-deer-hunting-sport-1258768.html>

05. Galway TD "only ever got one letter pro hunting"

Galway East TD, Noel Treacy, has revealed that when he held responsibility for the wildlife service, he received only a single letter in support of hunting.

The pro-blood sports former Minister of State made the revelation at a hunt meeting held this month in Ballinasloe's Carlton Shearwater Hotel.

Quoted in the Galway Independent of 23 January 2008, the Fianna Fail representative suggested that the biggest threat to hunting was complacency. "When I was in charge of the Wildlife Service," he announced, "I got constant letters from ICABS to ban hunting and in all my time there only ever got one letter pro hunting."

In December, ICABS revealed how Deputy Treacy was one of the few politicians who spoke in favour of the Ward Union deer hunt, despite majority opposition to the activity. The Galway SPCA criticised him for his stance on the issue and has urged locals to lodge complaints with his office.

Noel Treacy may believe that his receipt of just one pro-hunt letter indicates complacency on the part of the hunters but ICABS sees it as another indication of the low level of support for blood sports in Ireland. Successive opinion polls have shown that a majority want activities involving animal cruelty banned. Around two out of every three people, for example, want foxhunting and hare coursing made illegal.

ACTION ALERT

Remind Deputy Noel Treacy that a majority of Irish people, (including, presumably, a majority of the Galway electorate) want blood sports banned. Ask him to stop standing up for animal cruelty which results in wildlife enduring unimaginable suffering and the most horrific of deaths.

Noel Treacy, TD
Cross Street
Athenry, Co. Galway

Email: noel.treacy@oireachtas.ie
Tel: 091-844360
Fax: 091-844360

06. Coillte! Keep hunts out of our forests!

The Irish Council Against Blood Sports has renewed its appeal to Coillte to stop allowing hunters to chase and kill foxes on its property. The state-owned forestry company currently permits hunts to carry out their blood sport in a number of forests around the country.

ICABS has this month launched a campaign video exposing the disturbance caused by packs of hounds in Coillte woodland (see www.youtube.com/icabs).

In a letter to Coillte CEO, David Gunning, we stressed that facilitating hunting is totally unacceptable on land owned by the people of Ireland, most of whom want foxhunting banned (as confirmed by a 2007 Millward Brown opinion poll). We pointed out that hunters and packs of hounds running amok ruin the forest experience for everyone else - the tranquility of the forest is shattered for miles around and the hounds pose a danger to adults and children in the forest.

Also highlighted was the disturbance caused to the wildlife (including protected species such as badgers and squirrels) and the sickening fate of forest foxes chased and torn apart by the hounds. This animal cruelty which Coillte allows to take place must end.

Watch the ICABS Campaign Video: Coillte! Keep hunts out of our forests!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFkgDFdcEQo>

(Duration: 53 seconds)

U R G E N T A C T I O N A L E R T

Contact Coillte and demand an end to foxhunting on its property.

Sample Letter

(If you have time, please compose your own personal letter. Otherwise, send the short sample letter below. Be assertive, but polite, in all correspondence. Thank you.)

Mr. David Gunning
Chief Executive Officer
Coillte, The Irish Forestry Board
Newtownmountkennedy, Co Wicklow

Email: pr@coillte.ie
Tel: 01-201 1111
Fax: 01-201 1199

Dear Mr Gunning,

As an Irish citizen, and thereby a shareholder in Coillte, I am writing to demand an end to foxhunting on Coillte property.

I understand that Coillte currently issues permits to a number of foxhunts to carry out blood sport activities in forests. Considering the appalling cruelty of foxhunting and the fact that a majority of Irish people want it outlawed, the time has come for Coillte to do the decent thing and make all of its property off limits to foxhunting groups.

Thank you. I look forward to your positive reply.

Yours sincerely,

[Name/Location]

07. Hotel website asked to stop publicising foxhunting

Hotel reservations website, CentralR, has been asked by ICABS to stop publicising foxhunting on its website.

In an entry for a Carlton Shearwater Hotel, the website mentions foxhunting as one of the local "leisure pursuits" - http://www.centralr.com/Carlton_Shearwater_Hotel.html

ICABS has provided CentralR with photos showing the barbarity of foxhunting and informed them that 70 per cent of Irish people view foxhunting as cruel, with a majority wanting the activity banned.

"We believe that most of the visitors to your site would find the publicisation of foxhunting to be offensive," we stated. "We hope that you can consider excluding the reference to foxhunting from your site."

ACTION ALERTS

1. Please join us in asking CentralR to exclude the reference to cruel foxhunting from their site.

CentralR Headquarters:
2nd Floor Quantum House,
52 Temple Road, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.
Email: info@CentralR.com
Tel: +353 (0) 1 764 2500
Fax: +353 (0) 1 633 5445

2. Write to Carlton Shearwater and ask them to act to ensure that foxhunting is removed from the listing for their hotel

Dermot Birchall
General Manager
Carlton Shearwater Hotel
Marina Point, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
Email: dbirchall@carlton.ie
Tel: 0909 630400

08. Limerick landowners reminded of anti-hunt rights

In a letter to the editor published in the Limerick Leader this month, ICABS has reminded landowners about their rights in relation to trespassing hunts. Local farmers were told that if hunters and their hounds didn't receive permission to come on to land, "they have absolutely no right to be there." The full text of the letter appears below.

Hunts on the land - Limerick Leader

Further to the "Gardai probe shooting incident" report in Limerick Leader recently, may we have the opportunity to remind local landowners of their rights in relation to keeping hunts off their property?

Unless hunters hold sporting rights to hunt on your property (this is not usually the case but if so, it will be specified on the title deeds), neither they nor their dogs have a right to access your property.

Under the Control of Dogs Act, dogs must be kept "under effectual control" so if hunt hounds come on to land where they do not have permission to be, the recommended action to take is to immediately report the offence to the Gardai.

Photos and video footage should be presented as evidence where possible.

Sometimes hunts will say something like "we go where the dogs go" or "we didn't know we weren't allowed to enter your property" but this is not acceptable. If they didn't receive permission to enter the property, they and their dogs have absolutely no right to be there. (Letters to the Editor - 17 January 2008, Philip Kiernan, Irish Council Against Blood Sports)

Visit www.youtube.com/icabs to view our "Landowners and hunts" video
(Duration: 03:36 minutes)

ACTION ALERT 1

If you are a landowner, immediately make your land off limits to all hunts. If you have friends who are landowners, please tell them that they can make a difference by making their land a haven for wildlife. Please click on Farmers at www.banbloodsports.com to read our Troubled by the Hunt Leaflet and download a "No Hunting" sign to display around the boundaries of your property. Thank you.

ACTION ALERT 2

Urge the Minister for Agriculture to amend the Protection of Animals Act so that foxes, hares, mink and all wild creatures are protected from unnecessary cruelty.

Minister Mary Coughlan
Department of Agriculture
Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2.
Email: mary.coughlan@oireachtas.irlgov.ie
Tel: 01-607 2000 or LoCall 1890-200510. Fax: 01-661 1013.

Dear Minister Coughlan,

I am writing to implore you to act to ban foxhunting and all blood sports in Ireland.

Minister, foxhunting is cruel from beginning to end. The foxes suffer great stress and damage to internal organs during the gruelling cross-county chases. When they try to escape underground, terriers are sent after them to viciously attack them and drag them out into the open. The squealing, injured and terrified foxes are then mercilessly killed by a hunt terriermen. Other foxes will die a despicable death as they try to evade capture - they are violently knocked off their feet by the pack of hounds and eviscerated.

Minister, I appeal to your sense of compassion to urgently intervene to save the fox from this barbarism. No living creature deserves the fate of foxes in foxhunting. The fox is one of Ireland's favourite wild creatures and is beneficial to farming interests by keeping down the numbers of mice, rats and rabbits which form part of its natural diet.

I implore you to amend the Protection of Animals Act so that foxes, hares, mink and all wild creatures are protected from unnecessary cruelty.

Thank you. I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,
[Name/Location]

ACTION ALERT 3

Appeal to all Irish politicians. Please join us in telling the Irish Government that it is now time to replace foxhunting with the humane alternative - drag hunting.

Drag hunting sees the hounds chasing an artificial lure instead of a live animal. This form of "hunting" is already practised successfully by a few groups in Ireland. In a modern and civilised country like Ireland, there should be no place for foxhunting, particularly when a transition to drag hunting would be simple.

We desperately need your help to convince the government that it is time to ban foxhunting. Please write to all of your local politicians and ask them to express their opposition to this blood sport.

If possible, get your friends, family and workmates to contact them too. We need as much help with this campaign as possible.

Write to your TD at:

Dail Eireann, Leinster House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-618 3000 or 1890 337 889.

Write to your Senator at:

Seanad Eireann, Leinster House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2. Tel: 01-618 3000 or 1890 732 623.

For the names and contact details of politicians, please visit the Irish Government Website at <http://www.oireachtas.ie/members-hist>.

09. Ward Union petition reflects lack of support for hunt

A petition set up to "Save The Ward Union Stag Hunt" has received the support of just 231 people - that's less than 2 out every 1,000 people living in Meath.

The online petition asks readers to give their backing to the cruel hunt which, it claims, has "an enormous following in their hunting country of North Co. Dublin and Co. Meath".

The lack of support for the petition reflects the overwhelming feeling in County Meath that the Ward Union should be banned outright. In December, Minister John Gormley re-issued a licence to the hunt but attached several conditions to it, one of which brought to an end the chasing of deer with hounds. However, the hunt continues to be permitted to release a deer and force it to run across the countryside before hunt members forcefully re-capture it. ICABS has continually pointed out that since the deer are captive-bred, domesticated creatures they are entitled to protection under the Protection of Animals Act. This was verified in a recent Irish Law Times report by Professors Clive Symmons and William Binchy of Trinity School of Law.

Not only has the Ward Union petition been signed by just a handful of people but some individuals have signed it more than once in an effort to boost apparent support for the blood sport. ICABS can reveal that sixteen people have signed it twice and one person has signed three times! A further 26 signatures are listed as Anonymous.

The petition is a further indication that the Ward Union has very little support in the areas they operate. According to a poll carried out by the Meath Post last November, nearly two thirds of residents in the Royal County want the hunt stopped. This is in line with public opposition to Ireland's other blood sports - foxhunting and hare coursing.

ACTION ALERT

Please contact Environment Minister, John Gormley, and appeal to him to take the deer entirely out of carted deer hunting. Explain to him that instead of chasing the scent of an actual deer, the hunt should be told to use an artificially laid draghunt scent.

Sample Letter

(If you have time, please compose your own personal letter. Otherwise, send the short sample letter below. Be assertive, but polite, in all correspondence. Thank you.)

Minister John Gormley
Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
Custom House, Dublin 1.
Email: minister@environ.ie
Tel: 01 888 2403. Fax: 01 878 8640.

Dear Minister Gormley,

While I welcome the restrictions placed on the Ward Union and the fact that the deer will no longer be cruelly chased by a pack of hounds, I am concerned to learn that the deer will still be chased across the countryside by hunt members and will still be put into a situation where they are recaptured by hunters. There is great potential in both these situations for the deer to suffer, sustain injuries and even die. There is at least one documented case, for example, of a deer being choked to death while being recaptured.

I understand that the licence you have issued is for a one year period. I ask you to please make this the last year that the Ward Union deer are chased and to insist that the hunters practise drag hunting instead.

Thank you, Minister.

Yours sincerely,
[Name/Location]

10. Calling all Donegal supporters

If you are in County Donegal and would be interested in teaming up with like-minded individuals in the area to raise awareness about blood sports, please get in touch with us now. Simply email your name and contact details (phone number, email address) to info@banbloodsports.com and we will pass them on to others who respond.

Proposed peaceful activities include collecting petition signatures, letter writing, distributing leaflets, liaising with local wildlife rangers, political lobbying and raising awareness about the beauty of wildlife in Donegal and the need to fully protect it. Thank you.

11. Hunters run scared of Late Late Show

The Irish Council Against Blood Sports was informed by the Late Late Show on Thursday, 10th January, that a debate on hunting, scheduled for the next night's show, had been axed because hunting representatives have refused to take part. The reason for this eleventh hour back out by the hunters was, we understand, that they objected to a representative of the Farmers Against Foxhunting and Trespass Group being invited to take part in the debate.

The Irish Council Against Blood Sports spokesperson, Aileen Yourell, who was also scheduled to participate, expressed "absolute amazement" at the turn of events.

"By refusing to take part in the Late Late debate, the hunters have now shown that they have a lot to hide, both in terms of the cruelty they mete out to animals, and the annoyance they cause to farmers by routinely trespassing and creating havoc on farmlands," Aideen Yourell commented. "As well as running scared of the farmers' group, I believe that their decision to pull out is due to a fear of their heinous activities being exposed on prime time television, with video footage of the cruelty possibly being shown. These people are the epitome of the 'schoolyard bully' - well able to dole out cruelty but terrified of the exposure."

The Irish Council Against Blood Sports feels it is a great pity that the Late Late Show has axed this important discussion. We believe that they could have gone ahead without the hunters and made it clear that they refused to take part. We understand that the discussion will be rescheduled in the coming weeks.

ACTION ALERT

Contact the Late Late Show and urge them not to allow the hunters to stifle a free discussion on the issues surrounding hunting. Remind the Late Late Show that a majority of Irish people want blood sports banned and that a major television expose of the cruelty and other related issues is long overdue.

The Late Late Show
RTE 1, Donnybrook, Dublin 4
Email: latelate@rte.ie
Tel: 01 2083100

12. New website - Farmers Against Foxhunting and Trespass

Farmers Against Foxhunting and Trespass has launched a new website to provide advice and support to the landowners around Ireland who continue to be plagued by trespassing hunting groups. The site can be accessed at www.myspace.com/farmersagainstfoxhunting

The FAFT leaflet advising farmers why they should prohibit hunts from land is available to download from the site. The group is urging members of the public to print a copy of the leaflet and hand out copies to all their landowner friends and family members.

13. Campaign Quotes

"This is not the first time that the hunters have put pressure on the media to keep Farmers Against Foxhunting and Trespass off the air. They can't handle the truth. They can't hunt without farmers' lands, and we don't want them. They're afraid of having this hot topic raised in the media. By having this issue raised on the Late Late Show, they know that many more farmers will find a voice, after years of persecution, and give local hunts their walking papers." (Farmers Against Foxhunting and Trespass chairman, Philip Lynch, on the news that the Late Late Show hunting debate was not going ahead on January 11th)

"The grinch who stole Christmas for the [Ward Union] hunters is Environment Minister John Gormley, my new hero, who took a step in the right direction in relation to this heinous "sport" by issuing the hunt with a restricted licence. This meant that instead of pursuing a live animal, the hunt had to follow the scent of a deer, who was to be recaptured alive before the hounds were released." (The guilty in pursuit of the innocent, Andrea Smith, Sunday Independent, January 13 2008)

"Three hounds of one of the world's most famous hunting packs were shot dead in Crecora this Monday. Others were wounded by gunfire as the pack of the County Limerick Foxhounds entered a farmer's land in pursuit of a fox. The mounted hunt itself did not enter the property as it was known that the landowner was averse to giving permission to the hunt to traverse his fields." (Limerick Leader, 15 December 2007)

"A neighbour of the family involved in the incident in Crecora said that the hunt should have known better than go near this farm. 'He has a sign up lands preserved, people know to stay away and he has sheep. I don't know the full circumstances, but maybe he was justified. Maybe he wasn't. But it is his land.'" (Limerick Leader, 15 December 2007)

"[Ward Union] Joint hunt master Michael Bailey is not just a millionaire: he is a millionaire with extremely close links to Fianna Fail. Each year he is a regular in the Soldiers of Destiny tent at the Galway races. The party is unconcerned by corruption allegations made against him at the Mahon Tribunal, or his 25 million euro settlement last year to the Revenue Commissioners, paid along with his brother and business partner Tom. Indeed, the very next day Tom Bailey was pictured at the Leopardstown races with none other than An Taoiseach Bertie Ahern." (Daily Mail, December 29th, 2007)

"The last thing hunting needs is to give Gormley and his friends in ICABS the moral victory of converting the Ward Union to a drag hunt. I am not saying there is anything wrong with drag hunting. It is just a different sport and for those who by choice hunt live quarry, we must not bow to Gormley's and ICABS' wishes." (Brian Munn, spokesman for the Irish Masters of Foxhounds Association - from an online hunting discussion, January 8th, 2008)

"Recent figures from the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government show that over 24,000 dogs were abandoned in Ireland in 2006, and twice as many dogs were put to sleep as were re-homed. Ireland puts down dogs at a rate 10 times higher than in the UK, a country 10 times the size of Ireland. Additionally, two-thirds of all unwanted dogs are put to sleep, most of them perfectly healthy because no one was available or willing to adopt them." (Waterford Today, 2nd January 2008)

"The Taoiseach has asked me to pass on his best wishes to you." (From an email to ICABS from the office of An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern - 3rd January 2008)

"First of all, although we are clearly against blood sports, that does not include fishing. Minister Gormley is balanced in his approach and is trying to be fair. We are not just trying to killjoys and spoiling everybody's fun but if animals are being chased around woods by people and dogs for hours, then that is cruelty and we have to do something about it. We have never been shy about that. But we are not against all hunting, just against hurting animals." (Galway Green Party councillor Niall O Brolchain defends Minister Gormley during a pro-hunt meeting in Ballinasloe's Carlton Shearwater Hotel)

"I expect to pass through the world but once. Any good therefore that I can do, or any kindness I can show to any creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer it, for I shall not pass this way again." - Stephen Grellet (1773-1855)

14. 2008 Biodiversity Fund now inviting applications

The Heritage Council has published details of its Biodiversity Fund for 2008. The fund, established by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, provides grants to support the conservation and enhancement of Ireland's biodiversity. The Council says that priority will be given to projects that assist the management of sites which contain habitats of special conservation importance in Ireland, or which support threatened or vulnerable species.

Individuals, properly constituted non-profit organisations, local authorities, statutory institutions, academic institutions and private companies are all eligible to apply to the fund for grant assistance. Applications from local community groups are particularly welcome.

The closing dates for receipt of completed applications to the fund is 5pm on Friday 15 February 2008.

For more details and to download an application form, please visit
<http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/grants/index.html>

Tune in to the ICABS Channel

Footage of blood sport cruelty and the humane alternatives can be viewed on the ICABS Channel on Youtube - www.youtube.com/icabs or by clicking on "Videos" at www.banbloodsports.com

Become a supporter of ICABS

Please become a supporter of ICABS. Annual rates are just 15 Euro (Individual), 20 Euro (Family) and 8 Euro (Unwaged).

Download a subscription form at www.banbloodsports.com/subsform.htm and send a cheque (made payable to the Irish Council Against Blood Sports) to ICABS, PO Box 88, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, Ireland.

You can also become a supporter or make a donation by using your paypal account or credit card. Please visit www.banbloodsports.com and click on the "Donate" button for more information. Thank you. Your support will help us to continue campaigning against blood sport cruelty in Ireland.

Buy a Badge

Show your support for the campaign against blood sports. Purchase one of the new ICABS badges and help raise funds for our campaign against animal cruelty in Ireland. Displaying our banbloodsports.com website address, these cool red 28mm badges cost just 1 Euro each (including postage and packaging to anywhere in the world). To order, simply send payment to ICABS at the usual address - ICABS, PO Box 88, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, Ireland. You may also order by credit card (or paypal) - visit www.banbloodsports.com and click on the badge image on our homepage for more details. Thank you.

Animal Voice - Tell a friend!

Help us to highlight our campaigns to even more people. If you have friends who would like to receive "Animal Voice", please ask them to send an email to info@banbloodsports.com with "Animal Voice - Subscribe" in the subject line.