

Monday, 8th May 2000

(10.30 am).

THE CHAIRMAN: Good morning and welcome to everyone to the seminar on, "The effects of hunting with dogs on the social and cultural life of the countryside". I think this is the fourth seminar, although it is beginning to get slightly cloudy where we have got to. But I think we now have developed a process reasonably well. We are very grateful to have the draft report from Paul Milbourne, Andrew Norton and Rebekah Widdowfield. Thank you very much for that.

Our agenda note suggested that the opening speakers should take about 20 minutes. We will then have an opportunity for questions on a point of fact or clarification. I will then invite other members of the seminar to make points that they wish to make and, hopefully, out of that we identify a number of topics for further discussion.

In terms of overall timetable, it is my ambition that we will finish at about 3 o'clock today. We will go through without a break until lunchtime and then we will go through after lunch for another hour and a half without a break; and then see if we can wrap it up at that point, rather than coming back again after tea. I am sure that will be much welcome, but of course it depends how we get on. If it turns out there are a lot of other issues which we cannot fit in to that timetable, then we will keep going.

Paul could I ask you to introduce your report, please.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Is the microphone on?

First of all, can I just introduce the research team. As you are probably aware from reading the report -- those people who have read the report -- there are three people who have written the report: Myself, Rebekah and Andrew Norton on my left. I think the point needs to be addressed that this is a report produced by Cardiff University and the reason that John Leaman, Associate Director from MORI, is here today is to deal with any questions of a technical matter concerning the field work, because, as people probably know who have read the report, the field work for this research was conducted by MORI.

In terms of what I want to do within this presentation, first of all I want to introduce the research, then set out the key objectives, talk very briefly about the methodologies we have used to investigate this subject and then finish by running through very quickly the key areas of findings associated with this research, and just touch on some further areas of research that we highlight that might be needed within the report.

So in terms of introducing the research, as Lord Burns has pointed out, what we have been -- I should also point out that the overheads for the talk perhaps should have been given out as a hand-out. Have we got those in the audience? You should be able to see them.

In terms of some introductory comments, basically this research has investigated the social and

cultural role of hunting with dogs in areas of the English and Welsh countryside and this is where we need to stress this point: Where hunting takes place. So we have looked at the social and cultural contribution of hunting in areas where hunting takes place.

Secondly, we have considered the role of hunting from the perspectives of general residents and groups of residents within rural areas, not just those who participate in hunting and related activities.

Now clearly within our survey work, within our interviews, we have picked on quite a few people who are engaged in hunting, but the focus has been on the ways in which rural residents understand and interact with hunting.

There have been five objectives associated with this project: Objectives that we were asked or that were set out by the Committee. First of all, we were asked to review relevant literature relating to social and cultural issues and hunting in rural areas.

Secondly, we were asked to provide information from a number of areas where hunting takes place, which assesses what involvement or contact, if any, individuals in these areas have with hunting, or hunt related activities, and also what impact hunting or these activities have on their lives.

Third, we were asked to look at attitudes towards hunting and related activities in these areas and also to consider the main reasons underlying different viewpoints on hunting and also to look at the likely impact of a ban on hunting with dogs.

Fourthly, we were asked to provide a summary of our findings and then, finally, we were asked to indicate whether as a research team we felt there were further areas of research that were required. So moving quickly on to the methodology. Now in order to try and reflect the different geographies of the English and the Welsh countryside and different types of hunting practices, the project focused on four case study areas which were linked to the hunts that are on the overhead here. In selecting these areas we tried to include remote and accessible areas, upland and lowland parts, different types of hunting and different scales, different sizes of hunting and if you look through that list you will see we have aspects of each. In each of these study areas we conducted four main phases of research: First of all, and probably most important, the face-to-face questionnaire survey of just under a quarter of all resident households, and this gave us approximately 150 households in each area and gave us a total of just over 600 households altogether. I think the total is 617 households within the sample.

Secondly, we conducted some face-to-face more in depth interviews with a small number of respondents from the survey. We talked to 12 in each area and these people were selected as indicative of different social groups and different types of attitudes towards hunting. So phase 2 gave us a total of 48 interviews across the four study areas.

Thirdly, we conducted some short telephone

interviews with parish and community council chairs in order to gather some background information on the rural life within these areas and any connections with hunting.

Then, finally, we did some analysis of information on hunting and hunt related activities relating to the four hunts which were collected from a recently completed national survey.

So that was how we went about undertaking the project.

What I want to do now -- and I stress I have to do this very briefly, so I am going to skim over lots of issues that for some people around the table might be important -- I want to run through the eight areas of findings that we highlighted within the summary of the report, but, before I outline these findings, what I want to do is just make two general points about the study, and I think these points are important. Firstly, that key findings from the study should be seen as indicative of different types of hunting areas, rather than as representative of all hunting areas or all rural areas more generally. I think that point needs to be stressed, that we tried to select these study areas for them being indicative of what a situation is, but we are not claiming that they are representative of hunting areas or rural areas more generally.

Secondly, I think the point needs to be made, and this is an obvious point but I think it needs to be made nevertheless, that the research has been conducted

at a time when the continued existence of hunting with dogs in rural areas is being threatened by proposed legislative changes, and in this sort of climate it is likely that some of the opinions we are picking up on hunting with dogs may be being influenced by wider sets of issues and agendas.

I just make that point in very neutral type of way but, nevertheless, we want to emphasise these eight points, these eight areas of findings.

Firstly, in terms of knowledge of hunting. I think the first point we can make is that awareness of hunting within these areas was extremely widespread. I think we picked up around about nine out of ten of all residents were aware of hunting taking place within areas and about two-thirds of residents who were aware of hunting were able to name the target hunt associated with each study area.

What we also found though was that for most residents detailed knowledge of hunting was lacking; that most people were basing their understandings of hunting on secondary sources of information. Of those people who recognised hunting, less than half were able to name the Master or Masters of the target hunt that formed the focus of the study areas.

Moving on to the second area, and that is participation in hunting and hunt related activities.

In terms of hunting we found that an average of 21 per cent of all respondents in these study areas had participated in hunting over the last 12 months, 16 per cent had participated in hunting with target hunts,

although those figures need to be treated separately, not accumulate because they were collected in that sort of way. So 21 per cent had been hunting over the last 12 months, 16 per cent with the target hunts. A third of participants had actually ridden with the hunt; the remainder had either followed by foot, vehicle, or attended a meet.

Turning to hunt related activities, what we found was that local hunts appeared to be providing a social function within these areas. 31 per cent of all respondents had attended a local hunt organised social event over the last 12 months. However, what we also found was that there were high proportions of residents attending social events organised by other groups, so a higher proportion attended events organised by the local church and, likewise, high proportions attended events organised by, not in, but by the local hunt. Compared with a 31 per cent of respondents who took part in hunting organised events, 52 per cent had attended a church or pub organised social event and, indeed, when we talked to residents in more depth, when we talked to parish and community council chairs, they stressed to us that the local hunt represented one of many organisers of social activities within these study areas.

Thirdly, in terms of the characteristics of rural life: As with other surveys, other research in rural areas, rural life has described to us in generally positive terms, most people feeling part of close-knit communities, although we did pick up

particular local issues, local problems, mainly concerned with isolation experienced by less mobile groups.

I think it is worth pointing out that hunting on the whole was not mentioned to us as a major issue or problem within these study areas; in fact only one of our 48 follow-on interviewees actually mentioned hunting as a significant local issue.

Fourthly, in terms of attitudes towards hunting, and here we get at what the press were reporting about on Friday in terms of key findings from the project, that overall we found that 52 per cent of residents within our survey expressed a support for hunting, and this figure is much higher than those provided by recent opinion polls -- it appears to be much higher than other research that is ongoing within the rural areas that I am involved in.

So 52 per cent supporting hunting in terms of the context, recent opinion polls pointing to about 8 per cent nationally in support of hunting, and some work I am involved in funded by MAFF with some other colleagues is pointing to 29 per cent of residents within our survey in different rural areas supporting hunting. So the figure we are picking up from the survey is much higher than other rural research and is much higher than findings from national opinion polls. When we look at the reasons behind stated support for hunting, there were four main grounds, and for most people these are probably obvious. First of all, pest control; secondly, its traditional role



within rural areas; thirdly, it was claimed to be a provider of local employment and, fourthly, it was seen to have a social or recreational function within these areas.

Those opposed to hunting based their feelings on three main factors: First of all, an animal welfare set of issues, that to do with cruelty; secondly, a belief that hunting was unnecessary; thirdly, an understanding that there were better or more effective ways of controlling pests within the countryside.

Moving on to consider attitudes towards a ban on hunting, key area 5; again, another area that I read about on Friday within the press as a key finding from the research. What we found was that support for a ban on hunting was expressed by 22 per cent of respondents that we talked to and, again, this is a level which is considerably below that reported on by recent opinion polls. In fact a majority of residents within the survey, 59 per cent, expressed opposition to a ban on hunting. The main reasons stated for opposing a ban, or supporting a ban, on hunting were the same as those used to justify attitudes towards hunting more generally, except in one respect: And that was that around about a fifth of hunt supporters we spoke to commented that their opposition to a ban was based on some kind of mistrust or dislike of Central Government interference with local hunt activities, and, even amongst those residents who did not support hunting, we were picking up this type of feeling amongst a minority of them, that they did not particularly like hunting

taking place within these areas, but they felt that the practices should not be banned.

In terms of the impact, or the perceived impact -- because that is what we are talking about within this research; understandings, perceptions of issues -- of a ban, only a third of residents in the survey considered that a ban would have a negative impact on their day-to-day life, but around about a half thought that it would impact detrimentally for others within their parish or community.

Key area 6 of our 8: Expressions of feelings about hunting, and we thought that this was an important area to pursue within the research. What we found was that three-quarters, around about three-quarters of respondents had discussed their feelings about hunting with dogs with other people, but when we look at who those other people are, the vast majority of people, as you might expect, talked about these issues with family members, close friends, neighbours and so on. In fact relatively few people had expressed their opinions on hunting within the public arena, although we did pick up that 12 per cent of residents in the survey had attended a nationally organised meeting or demonstration over recent years. Now, given all the recent discussions about hunting, about a ban on hunting, it is hardly surprising that it was hunt supporters and hunt participants who tended to express their opinions more in public than those hunt opponents and non-participants. What the research and the survey did

point to was that for around about a fifth of those people who either were against hunting or have mixed feelings, around about a fifth of the people claim that they tended not to discuss their opinions with others, whether in private or in public, and for some this type of reticence was explained by the fact that they lived within strong hunting areas; there was a strong culture of support for hunting within these areas.

Others considered that hunting simply did not represent a significant issue for them or for their community.

I think that is an important point, that for some people who hold mixed opinions or anti-hunting viewpoints within these areas, we were picking up -- I stress some; probably we are talking about one fifth -- that for some of these people there was a certain reticence attached to these expressions and viewpoints on this issue.

The penultimate area that we want to highlight is hunting's contribution to local life, and I think there are two main points that can be emphasised here. Firstly, in terms of the day-to-day lives of the residents within the survey, hunting represented a relatively insignificant part of these lives. Only one quarter overall considered hunting to be important to their every day lives, but when we asked the question in terms of its importance or its significance to their local area, we see a very different finding emerging; that 64 per cent of respondents considered hunting represented an important

part of the day-to-day life of their parish or community.

For a small number, the hunt represented, very much represented, the hub of the local community, whereas for others it provided community functions for particular groups within the local population, and most notably, obviously, hunt participants, but also farmers, and for others still, the role of hunting within the community needed to be seen in a much wider context and placed alongside a range of other organisations and groups that provided community functions within their area.

Finally, in terms of the findings, we want to emphasise this idea of local specificity, we want to emphasise differences within as well as differences between our study areas. I think we can do this in two main ways: First of all, by making the point that within these study areas support for or attitudes towards participation in hunting was, or varied I should say, between different social groups; it varied in terms of gender; it varied in terms of age; it varied in terms of length of residence; it varied in terms of occupation, social class and clearly contact with hunting and hunt related activities. So that is the first point, that within these study areas we were picking up differences in terms of attitudes towards participation in hunting, and we go into those differences in a bit more detail within the summary and within the main body of the report.

We also found and want to emphasise important

differences between the four study areas. Firstly, I think we can say that the Devon and Somerset study area, the one focused on the Exmoor hunt, was very different to the other three, in that it recorded extremely high levels of participation in hunting, high levels or strong support for hunting, and considerable opposition to any ban on hunting with dogs and I think in this area we feel that hunting appears to play an important role, important social and cultural role, for most residents within our survey.

In contrast in Leicestershire, where many people have moved in from nearby urban centres, from Nottingham, Leicester, Loughborough, farming was less strong. Dominant attitudes towards hunting seemed to be at odds with the historical roots of hunting in that area. The scale of hunting in that area would seem to suggest, and within this study area we found that over half of residents, over half of residents, were not in support of hunting, and that local hunts provided only a limited social and cultural role.

Now in the other two areas in Cumbria and Powys, what we found is that levels of support, levels of participation in hunting tended to fall between those two extremes, Devon and Somerset on the one hand, Leicestershire on the other, that hunting played a much more mixed social and cultural role within these areas, but what also emerged from the survey and the follow-on interviews was that hunting was understood, hunting was discussed in very different ways within Cumbria and Powys to the way it was discussed, hunting was

discussed in the other two areas.

Picking up on some of the work, some of the discussions within the literature review about whether hunting needs to be viewed more as a form of ritual than a form of pest control, what we found within Cumbria and Powys was that for a number of local residents, including hunt participants, hunting was discussed less in terms of a sport, social activity, a ritual, and much more in terms of simply controlling pests, and in the Powys area, particularly foxes.

So those were the eight main areas of findings from this research and the eight areas of findings that we highlight within the summary of the report that many on the front table have in front of them, probably fewer elsewhere.

I just want to finish by making three points in terms of where future areas of research may lie, because we were asked to do this.

I do not think the Committee envisages research being done prior to reporting, although given the timescale we were asked to do it on I would not rule that out of the equation. First of all, given that we only had nine weeks to do this research, given that we were very much restricted to a limited number of study areas, we feel that it would be useful either within or outside of this inquiry to look at these issues within a wider range of rural areas, to use basically the same or similar methodologies, but to look at different types, a wider range and different types of rural areas and we think it is important that

rural areas need to be included which are more distant, both geographically and culturally, from the centre, the centres of hunting.

Secondly, we think, again, this relates to the limited timescale we had available to do this work, that there could be a lot of useful information able to be gathered from conducting some more qualitative research, for example, participant observation was not possible within this study, given that we only had four or five weeks to do the field work, and as well as participant observation, maybe some more of the in depth interview work that we were able to do some of within the context of our study.

Thirdly, we think it is probably useful to do some further work with hunts with those people who participate, those people who subscribe and support to different hunts, to see if those issues that I was touching on before, differences between say the Cumbria and the Powys study areas and the other two, are more general and more widespread than we were able to talk about within the context of our research. So although we do not want to sort of undermine what we found -- we think we have produced a wide range of information, both quantitative and qualitative in nature, from this research -- we, nevertheless, think that the methodologies could be extended to pick up on these other areas of research and I will finish there.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much for that very clear presentation. I would now like to give members of the seminar an opportunity to raise

questions of fact or of interpretation. I should stress that this is not the point at which I expect people to make their substantial comments on the interpretation of the research as a whole. It is more an issue of whether there are aspects of it which are not clear or questions about how the samples were chosen and the technical aspects of the research.

MR SWANN: It is not very often, Lord Burns, that my remarks are introduced by peals of thunder and I am sure this is a relatively minor point.

Good morning. I wanted to ask, please, to what you attribute the very high percentage of farmers in the samples chosen, 45 per cent in Exmoor and 29 per cent overall, as compared to rural England which is about 4 per cent. This appears to have a bearing because things such as pest control and economics obviously are perhaps of greater concern to farmers and you could perhaps explain why there seems to be such a high percentage.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: The answer to the question why is because they appeared within the sample. I stress within the report these are relatively high levels of farmers within the samples and we were as surprised as you were to uncover such high proportions of farmers. Anybody who reads the rural studies literature, I think would be surprised to find that there are areas in the English and Welsh countryside that contain such a high proportion, so there was no deliberate decision taken to select areas which contained high proportions of farmers. It just so happens that in two of the areas we



have selected, one in particular actually the Devon and Somerset we have a high proportion and I admit that when we breakdown attitudes towards and participation in hunting, there is a very high level of support amongst farmers and high level of participation, as we might expect, which is why I stressed at the start of the talk and also within it, halfway through the talk, that these study areas should be seen as indicative of different types of rural area, different hunting types and not representative of rural England.

One point that we do make within the report is that the figures that we have taken for granted about proportions of the rural population engaged in farming do not include self-employed. I think we do make that point within the report, that the PIU report, for example, one of the figures that would support the 4 per cent figure does not include self-employed farmers, so we do need to increase that a little bit. Also the definitions of rural areas used within that type of research, the PIU report, I am not quite sure about, but they are probably based on a wider definition of rural areas than we have used, and clearly previous to these looked at rural areas defined on the Local Authority basis which clearly include sizeable towns.

MR SWANN: Could I just quickly pick up on that point, please? We found this in one of the previous seminars, it was that on drag hunting that we found that many of the sample areas looked at had

specific characteristics which made them almost unique in a way. It was very difficult from my point of view to draw general conclusions. Do you feel this farmer percentage played a part in producing the statistics for that Exmoor group of data? Do you think this is one factor made that area so different in many of the characteristics in your report, that very high percentage of farmers, do you think that is a significant factor in that?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think it plays a part. How significant that part is is difficult to say, but when you breakdown attitudes towards hunting participation, participation in hunting across the four areas, it is clearly farmers that play a prominent role within these areas. So I think if you are looking to pinpoint particular factors, then I would say the proportion of farmers within that area is important, yes.

MR SWANN: Thank you.

MR ROLLS: I would like to ask how were these areas actually chosen? I understand the general criteria that were used, but how were these four actual areas chosen, and would you consider that the Devon and Somerset group were so qualitatively different from the others that it skewed it considerably differently?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Responding to the second question first, no, you could turn that round and say including Leicestershire with the very low support, relatively low support for hunting, would also skew the sample. The Devon and Somerset, the area does not skew the sample, one of four study areas selected.

THE CHAIRMAN: And the first question?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: The answer to the first question is that we wanted to select areas of the English and Welsh countryside that were characterised by different sets of attributes, so starting from basics we wanted to have one -- clearly we wanted one area in Wales, because this was a study in Wales, so that was Wales particularly. We wanted an area within the north-west of England; we wanted somewhere further south-east, and we wanted somewhere in the south-west, to give us a broad geographical distribution. Then we began to look at different types of hunting and we were asked to look at different types of hunting, so we decided to include one beagle hunt, which happened to be the Cumbrian one and we will come on to how we sort of narrowed it down. We wanted different sizes of hunts, so, as you see from the report, which you have clearly read, we have small sized hunts; we have a medium sized hunt and we have a large hunt as well. Basically then we were looking within those particular regions in terms of England north-west, East Midlands, south and south-west and then within Wales, we were looking for hunts that would satisfy those different criteria. So in Cumbria we have a small hunt, mainly upland, largely remote area, foot hunt, foot hunt, beagle hunt. In the East Midlands we have a more accessible rural area, lowland, large hunt, fox hunt. In Wales, the reason why we went a little bit further west than we were anticipating was because the boundaries of these hunts were fairly large and tended

to be crossing the border and we thought that it was important to get it wholly within Wales, and, again, in this case we went for a fox hunt, one or two fox hunts, and one beagle hunt, fairly small hunt, mainly upland, mainly remote, and so on, and the Exmoor hunt was satisfying those sort of criteria: Medium sized hunt, fox hunt, mainly upland, less remote than Cumbria and Powys.

MR ROLLS: So in the South-west, when you were choosing amongst the types of hunt that you required, how many other hunts did you choose between when you made the choice of that particular group of people, parishes and so on?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: There were more than one. I could not tell you an exact figure, but we had various hunts that we were considering in particular areas, and we came down for those reasons I have talked to you about on particular ones. In many ways the final selection of the particular hunt could have been one hunt, another hunt, another sort of two or three hunts, but basically, having gone through the Bailey's Hunting Directory and picking up on different types of hunts within these areas, we came down on these particular hunts.

DR REBEKAH WIDDOWFIELD: Just adding really to what Paul is saying, and again it is stressed both within the report and in the presentation is, yes, we probably could have picked some different hunts, but that is why we do stress that these are indicative, not representative, of the four rural areas or different

types of hunts and I think in terms of whether the Exmoor hunt skews the data, in the report we do not just present the overall figure; in each case we produce a different figure for each of the different areas. I think it is quite clear with that what we are saying about each of the different areas rather than trying to make a generalisation.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Can I add to that in terms of whether Devon and Somerset skews the sample, I do not think it does. If you take Devon and Somerset out, and I think you might well have done this, when you look at some of the other findings, some of the key findings from particular questions in the other three areas that the issues that we are talking about generally across the four areas are there within Cumbria and Powys. Leicestershire, I admit, is different.

MR ROLLS: I think my colleague Dr Ryder would like to make a comment on this particular point.

DR RYDER: I have a couple of questions actually. You say -- in fact you stress -- that the areas studied were all linked to hunts; they are all characterised by strong hunting cultures, all supportive of hunting, all close-knit communities and all contained hunt kennels, and I do not really understand -- well, you have stressed again that they are not representative of hunting areas in general and not representative of the countryside in general, even though the title of your paper suggests that it is the countryside you are looking at. I do not understand why you were so selective in going for pro-hunting areas.

That is my first question.

The second question really is within your selected areas, how did you select the households for interview? How many households approached failed or refused to co-operate? Was it 23 per cent? It seems to be. Were these the households who were anti-hunting? I raise that because you do go on to say that it is those who are most opposed to hunting who are least likely to discuss their activities and they kept their feelings to themselves because they were living in areas of strong hunting culture. Several commented they were afraid to speak out; they said they had a fear of expressing their anti-hunting feelings and I wonder whether this might have affected your findings.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Thank you for those very interesting questions. I think you probably misquoted me in terms of your first question. What I stressed was that these areas we were asked to look at by the Committee of Inquiry, areas of the English and Welsh countryside where hunting took place. What I did not stress within the talk was that these areas were selected because they had high proportions of people taking pro-hunting stances; these areas had strong hunting cultures. Those issues emerged from the research, so I admit that these areas were selected because hunting took place within them.

Now you can interpret that in various ways, and the way I have interpreted it, the way I have sort of talked about it, has been in terms of we cannot generalise about hunting areas more generally or rural

areas more generally. My response to that is we have researched the social and cultural effects of hunting with dogs in areas where hunting took place, which is what we were asked to do by the Committee, so I think your question is a perfectly valid question but you are probably asking it to the wrong person and I am sure there are other persons around the table who may want to respond to that, whether today or on other occasions.

In terms of your second question was it about the sampling?

DR RYDER: Within the areas how did you select the households and how many dropped out and why?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: The number of people who dropped out, the proportion is not -- I think 77 per cent I think, 23 is what you talked about, 23 per cent of people who were contacted for one reason or another did not want to take part. Now clearly it is difficult -- no, I will rephrase that. Clearly it is impossible to say whether those non-respondents were pro or anti-hunting, were actively hunting or not participating in hunting, so that is a difficult one to respond to. Clearly, you can infer things from those findings that you were talking about before that: Those people who have had, were either anti-hunting or expressed mixed feelings on hunting, had not participated in hunting. Some, and I express "some" because we were talking about 21 per cent of that group, expressed a reticence to talk about these sort of issues, tended to keep their viewpoints to

themselves. I think that is an important finding, that in these types of rural areas there are proportions of the population who, for various reasons, choose not to talk about issues that might result in tensions, disputes, conflicts with others. I think that goes with a whole set of issues that we could point to within rural areas.

DR RYDER: Can I just sort of follow up on that one. Actually I think you said a further 50 per cent refused to co-operate with the second phase?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Yes.

DR RYDER: So you are actually dealing with a highly selective group in the second phase; is that right?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: No, we asked people, because people are doing this free of charge, because people are giving us their time and we are not paying them any money and a lot of people are very busy of those people we talked to in the survey. The final question was would they be prepared to be involved in the next stage of the interviews? Of those people 51 per cent expressed a willingness to take part. What we then did, myself and John from MORI, was to produce what is called the quota sample. What we agreed with the Committee during the early stages of this project was that we would try and pick up the views of a cross-section of people within these areas, so we went for half men, half women, a range of age groups, people who have moved into areas recently; more established residents; people who had hunted or taken part in hunt



related activities; those who had not, and, finally, a range of respondents according to different attitudes towards hunting.

So what we have done there -- and if you look in the report you will see that we do have a good mix; in fact almost a representative mix, although that was not the intention; a good mix of groups within the sample. So we have not -- simply, we have not gone from the survey and said, "Right, well we will talk to everybody who is anti-hunting and then we will put that into the report". There is clearly a well thought through rationale for us selecting different groups.

DR RYDER: Yes, I am sorry, I did not want to make that implication. I was just saying that we have already found that the ones who were anti-hunting were more frightened to express themselves and one or two did express fear.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Not frightened, reticent.

DR RYDER: You quote fear on a couple of occasions.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: One of the examples we used to explain reticence was fear of intimidation.

DR RYDER: That is in one of the statements you have in the report.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Two comments supplied in the report.

DR RYDER: You had a 50 per cent drop out of the second phase. I am merely expressing hypothetically that could be the reason why they did.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: It could, yes, but the survey

was the mechanism that was used to ask that question on the expressions of viewpoints on hunting. What we did then was to go forward with that. In fact in the follow-on interviews what we did, I think we had something like a third of people who were pro-hunting in terms of their attitudes, a third that were anti-hunting and a third that either expressed no opinion or said they had some experience on the issue. So we did get at that group of people, but we are not claiming that the follow-on interviews were representative. What we tried to do was just to get a good mix of the different groups within those areas.

PROFESSOR HOGGART: Paul, could you just clarify I think at one point you said 77 per cent did not respond; you meant 77 per cent did respond.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: The 23 did not.

PROFESSOR HOGGART: I think I would have to say in that context the 77 response rate is very high and you should not really be inferring about the 23 per cent who did not reply. It is much more likely, particularly given the manner in which the issue is in the public realm, that these were people who did not have a view or were simply too busy and I base that on other research in this target area.

I think the thing perhaps in terms of the farmer composition that might be worth just asking you to clarify or to restate, because it is in the document, is how the boundaries of the areas are drawn up. As I understand it, these are the areas that the hunt covered rather than members of the hunt came from

or anything like that. It is just the area over which it travelled, in which case you would expect a higher percentage of farmers than the national average, for almost any area of a hunt. You are not going to go through suburban housing estates where we might get different attitudes if you did, let us put it that way.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think that was more a comment really.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I just press on this question about what is rural, because there are a large number of definitions. There are areas which are classified as rural but clearly include towns or villages of quite substantial size. What we are talking about here is what one might think of as remote rural, if I have it right, in the sense of we are talking about areas where the density of population is quite low. They do not include areas which are towns or village of any size, and therefore one is down, in the spectrum of the rural area, to quite low densities of the population in these areas.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Yes. I mean, the research team did discuss this issue at the outset of the project and, for example, in the Devon and Somerset study area, the north of that area contains Minehead, Porlock and places like that, and we took the decision, and we state this in the report, to exclude those types of settlements, towns, from the work, mainly for the reason that Keith talked about, that the normal state of affairs is that hunts do not pass through these

types of areas and there were, clearly, areas adjoining these towns that we would want to bring into, we would have wanted to bring into the study, but because the selection criteria was based on parishes and communities and we could not go into and subdivide those parishes and communities in terms of getting the census figures in order to produce the sample, we took the decision that we would focus on those parishes and communities that did not include towns such as Minehead and in the Leicestershire case Melton Mowbray.

MR WHITE-SPUNNER: About intimidation.

Presumably people were told when you were talking to them that their names would not be published, so I am not quite sure on the intimidation point.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: The intimidation was not in terms of our survey, it was a wider point about either the person responding to the survey or the follow-on interview stating that they felt intimidated in terms of speaking their mind on particular issues, or in other cases that they knew of people who had expressed anti-hunting viewpoints, or even had tried to -- in one case tried to present a more balanced discussion, a balanced sort of discussion about hunting within their village or within the local area and had experienced intimidation. So we are not talking about people, well, generally people shutting the door on our research because they felt intimidated by the questions that were being asked.

What we tried to do from -- we made a decision relatively early on within this project that

we would do something a little bit different to how we usually conduct surveys, and what I would normally do anyway would be to write to people who had been selected in the sample and say, "This research is going on, a member of the research team would be calling on you over the next few days or few weeks". But we took the decision, knowing a little bit about rural areas and the close-knit nature of rural areas, and also concerning the sensitive nature, political nature of this project, that we would cold-call respondents and just, I think picking up on Keith's point, cold-calling could possibly result in one or two people not wanting to take part than probably if we were to write to people and tell them about the project.

What we did not want to happen was for this project to be publicised in various ways, within various networks, within the study areas.

MR HART: Lord Burns, thank you. Can I ask one question to the contractors and follow up the answer with two points I picked up on in the last five minutes. Dr Milbourne, you state in the report that quite a lot of people support, or quite a lot more people support church or pub events -- I think around the 50, 55 per cent mark -- than actually support hunt events, which is around 30 per cent, 31 per cent. Have you taken into account in that calculation that in an average hunting country there are probably at least 30 churches and probably 60 pubs, so increasing the sort of social opportunity to take part in various events organised by those sort of individual local bodies?

Also a supplementary: Have you taken into account that in establishing your figure how many people actually take part in events, social events run by hunting, to how many people actually the day's hunting itself is a social event? So you have say in some countries three to four days a week where people, go out to the meet, meet their friends, to them that is a social event as well as perhaps a skittles night once a month, or whatever it might be.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Two points in relation to my response: One, if you look at the survey which is attached as an appendix to the report you will see the question we asked was events -- I think Rebekah can check this for me -- events within your parish or community, so not local area. We actually defined it as parish and, yes, there is likely to be more than one pub within the parish, possibly only one church, but, having said that, we were talking about hunting areas here where there was more than one hunt taking place. In Cumbria, for example, we had, as we stated in the report, there was another hunt operating within the same area. In Devon and Somerset we have the Devon and Somerset Staghounds operating. So I take your point, but I think I can also respond to that by saying that you can also look at hunting in that context as well.

In terms of the issue about people constructing hunting itself as a social activity, I think we did pick up on evidence that people were doing that. What we did not define in terms of the question

we asked, we did not define what a hunt organised social event represented. We just asked people to say whether they attended a hunt organised social event activity over the previous 12 months. We left that definition up to the respondents. So, again, I think if I could respond in those ways to those questions.

MR HART: Can I come back, Lord Burns, with the other points I have just picked up on. There has been some talk about whether the subject areas were representative. It has been suggested that perhaps that they have been giving a false result. From the Alliance's point of view, we would welcome the opportunity of expanding a similar sort of research to every part of the UK because I think you would find the results would pretty well reflect the areas you have already been to, so we are open to that.

THE CHAIRMAN: You are proposing to pay for this?

MR HART: I am worried what I am going to do after the end of May actually!

The other point you raised, Lord Burns, about what is rural, we have through the Alliance attempted to define for the purposes of opinion research "rural". The opinion poll company that we used basically described it as, "anything which is not urban". The reason they did so was to say that actually the true definition of a rural person is something that pollsters have had some difficulty actually establishing. Apart from anything else, the people commissioning polls generally do not go into that fine

detail because the cost implication of getting a representative survey through rural people, who are truly rural, whatever that might be, is so prohibitive, so this particular company has never actually gone down that road.

Finally, I am suspicious where we are going on this subject of intimidation and I just want to try and define it because if, for example, you went into a pub in Manchester with a Liverpool scarf, would that be intimidation or would the response be intimidation? I am not quite certain where we are going on this point.

MR ROLLS: Could I perhaps then help the Alliance on that point. The fact that few people expressed public opinions about hunting may in many ways be a way of avoiding conflict in rural areas. It might have been interesting to have asked what the impact on people's lives that express opinions against dogs would have been as part of the survey, those who are in favour of and against hunting, and that would have established this issue I think. Would that not have been interesting?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Could you repeat the latter part of that question?

MR ROLLS: It might have been interesting to have asked what the impact on people's lives that expressed opinions against hunting with dogs, what the effect would be of their expressing those opinions.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: It might have been interesting, yes. We clearly cannot answer that within the research. What we have done is separated out those



people who were opposed to hunting from those supportive of hunting and looked at the sort of issues that we are talking about, so that we can say that 21 per cent of those people, who either were against hunting or had mixed feelings on the issue, claim not to have talked to anybody else about hunting issues, but, yes, that probably would have been an interesting question to ask, but it is a little late in the day to be including it in the questions.

MR ROLLS: It would have been interesting?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Yes.

MR ROLLS: And illuminating?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: There are a whole series of questions we would love to have included in this research, but because we had a relatively short period of time in which to undertake the study we had to exclude some questions that we would probably want to have included.

DR REBEKAH WIDDOWFIELD: I just wanted to add as well, as we said before, the unwillingness to express feelings or people not expressing their feelings. Reticence because of fear was only one of several responses. There were other reasons like people just did not consider it an important issue. So it only really was one of a number of possible responses to that question.

DR GARRY MARVIN: I was just going to add to the point -- it is not a criticism of the report -- this thing about I appreciate that you are allowing people to define social events themselves, but, added to Simon

Hart's point, the hunting itself constitutes a social event. One of the things that I found in my research doing participant observation is you get a greater range of social events happening that people do not necessarily regard as fixed formal social events, so there is an enormous amount of inter-community activity going on: Dinners, meetings, all sorts of things happening which constitute a connection between people, but that you can really only discover -- I think possibly people do not highlight that as an event. If you ask about hunting arranged events they will think of formal events rather than other things.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think I share that opinion, and what we found when we looked at these issues through the in depth interviews was that for some people when you ask them what social events or what type of community function the hunt was providing, initially there was the answer, "Well, none really", and then maybe the interviewer asked a follow-on question and it then came out, and, yes, they were talking about the things we wanted to hear, but for some people they did not construct those things as social events in a formal sort of sense, so, yes, the definition issue works both ways, yes.

PROFESSOR MICHAEL WINTER: Can I just go back to John's point and suggest that possibly some of the verbatim answers to questions 18, 20 and 23 --

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Can you just tell me what those questions were?

PROFESSOR MICHAEL WINTER: These were where

you were asking for follow-up answers. Question 17 was: "Are you in favour or opposed?" And 18: "Why do you say that?" Ditto: "To what extent would you support or oppose a ban?" Question 20 follows up in the same way and then 23, following up on: "How important in your day-to-day life and in the life of the parish and community?" Given the timescale, you probably have not had time to deal with those verbatim responses as fully as you like. I would suspect if the response John was alluding to was coming out, you would get it even if you had not actually asked an explicit question. Is that fair?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think that is fair and one always has to tread a fine line on these occasions, but clearly if this was an academic, more academic based piece of research, with an extra few weeks, we would have had more time to scrutinise the open-ended responses, the follow-on interview responses and also those open-ended questions, and what we have ended up doing has been to base a lot of the qualitative material we have presented around key issues that we have, that have emerged through a categorisation of responses, because what the MORI research team were able to do for us was, as well as provide us with the verbatim responses, to categorise responses, so we were able to say a certain proportion of respondents mentioned pest control as a reason for supporting hunting.

So what we have not really been able to do to the degree that we would have wanted to do has been to

scrutinise the open-ended responses to such a degree that you are talking about, and there are possibilities for revisiting that information over the next few weeks.

MR WHITE-SPUNNER: One of the things which strikes me particularly about the report is the way it emphasises the inclusive nature of hunting as a social activity in rural communities by age, gender, social class and length of residence, and I think 64 per cent of people, the respondents, said that hunting was important for the local community, even though a lot of people do not actually hunt themselves, and I think you quote 31 per cent attending hunt social events although only 15 per cent were subscribers, and only a third said hunting did little or nothing in the community, which is actually very strong. Can you think of any other social events or social structures within the rural communities that actually have the same degree of inclusivity. It is quite an interesting piece, all those different sectors of rural society.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Can you think of any other research that has looked at those issues, because I cannot?

MR WHITE-SPUNNER: No, but if you actually think of in a sense in the rural community -- I mean, I have not actually looked at the research, to find something --

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: The point is I do not know if you would be pushed because the research has not been conducted to the extent it has here. I think you are

making a valid sort of reading of some of those figures, whether the inclusive nature of hunting is the phrase that encapsulates what you are talking about I am not quite sure about. What we also need to be aware of is that hunting was there as a category in the same way as the pub and the church in various categories, but when we bring together all those sort of more disparate social activities, if you were to place those in a category, I think we can place other slightly above the hunting category. So I think the point that needs to be made is that, yes, hunting is performing some kind of social and community function within these areas, but there are other providers of those functions also. We have particularly focused on the hunting side of things in these areas, and that might be one reason why these are being emphasised, but I think you do make a good point in terms of more people mentioning the positive contribution that hunting makes than there are participants in hunting or subscribers to hunting, and, yes, I mean, you could say that is a surprising finding; if only 21 per cent are actually participating in hunting, if only 16 per cent are actually participating with the target hunt, then it maybe is surprising that higher proportions, much higher proportions, are saying that hunting contributes something to local life, although I think it needs to be stressed when you look at some of the reasons behind those attitudes, the function that hunting has provided, when you look at the follow-on interviews, the transcripts there, hunting is for those people who

are saying hunting provides a wider community function. For quite a lot of those people they are talking about specific groups within these rural communities, particularly linked to farming. I mean, those are issues that we do not have too many figures on because they are issues emerging from the follow-on interviews rather than from the survey.

So I think I share some of the points, some of the opinions you are making there, but I would probably emphasise that it is a bit more complex and complicated than the situation you are presenting to me.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns. I am aware that we are drifting slightly off points --

THE CHAIRMAN: The last point was very close.

There actually was a question at the end of it, which just about qualified. If I could say that is the out of bounds issue.

MR SWANN: At the risk of being ruled out of order, just in response to that question if I could just point out that the state of the countryside review by the Countryside Agency

looked at social activities within the countryside and quantified them, there is no mention of hunting there, but I am aware that I am tempting fate.

I think in terms of what we were talking about that is intimidation, I did not want to get this off-track because I think it is an important point that we were trying to make. I think we got off a little bit on the fear aspect, but I think the point we are trying to make is that these were areas where hunting is very

important, we accept that, because we are right slap bang in the heart of hunting territory and you have explained this is the purpose of the research to look at areas like that. This issue is very sensitive, it is very political, enormous awareness of this issue, and rural communities are highly conscious, in a great state of change; there is enormous flux in rural communities, people are moving in, communities are changing, and I think the point we are trying to make, and this is something that you can perhaps comment on, is that people in these communities who do not hunt and maybe do not have strong views on hunting are inclined at the moment to be aware of the political importance of it and are making statements where they are not wanting to show antagonism towards hunting, or are not wanting to overtly oppose it because they feel this may jeopardise their own position in that community, given the sensitivity of the issue at this point. I think what we are talking; not individual threats to people or fear; it is this overall pervading culture at the moment which must exist in the heart of hunting territory and whether this had had a bearing on statistics you have come up with.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think the answer to that is there has probably been an effect. I think there has been an effect of this wider political point you talked about which is why I made the point in the presentation, which you presumably recall, that we are conducting this research in a very peculiar period of time, but I do not think we can go beyond that, because

we just do not know as researchers what effects this issue has had on the research findings. I guess we could have done the research five years ago and these things were still bubbling under the surface, if not sort of emerging their heads. It is one of those things. It would be very interesting to have done the research ten years ago and to use this as a comparison, but, other than sort of agreeing that there have probably been effects, I do not think I can go any further than that.

Your point about communities, yes, I am aware of that document, but, again, we must not lose sight of that is claiming to be representative of rural areas, that is rural England as a whole. We are talking about areas where hunting is taking place and, again, I think, although we make the point that hunting provides some sort of social or community function, it needs to be placed within that sort of context that you are talking about. There are a number of reasons why people feel part of rural communities.

DR GARRY MARVIN: Methodological point about people being willing to talk or not -- it is not a criticism -- it is more complex where people are willing to talk and what they are willing to say and what circumstances. You do have people here quite clearly saying, "Well, we do not like to talk about it". That is fine, but they have told your researchers they do not want to talk about it. They are not frightened of talking about it, it depends on the situation. You do already have data, it is there. It is very different to



saying, "I do not want to talk about it here in the privacy of my own home" or, "I do not want to talk about it if you are interviewing me in the local pub when the hunt are all standing around", yes, I think the material is in there, so if you are worried about that.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: That is a good point and also the point about guaranteeing respondents and interviewees anonymity. We did not sort of make the point that we were going to include their first and last names within the final report, and although we have unique numbers relating to respondents within the report, those numbers are there just to show people reading the report that we have not focused on three particular people, that a different number indicates a different person and that what we tried to do, and also just by stating the study area name we have tried to involve different people, we have used different transcripts and so on, so they are there just to show the reader that we are talking about different people living in different areas.

MR TODHUNTER: Good morning, Lord Burns, ladies and gentlemen. Barry Todhunter from the Blencathra in Cumbria. Might I ask you a question on your report, Dr Milbourne? I think paragraph 5.16 in your report --

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Is this the farmer who does not like hunting?

MR TODHUNTER: Yes.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I can probably work out why you are picking on that one.

MR TODHUNTER: I probably know him actually.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Have we got a spelling mistake in the quotation, is that the point?

MR TODHUNTER: You quote one farmer who says, "I can get my foxes caught in a matter of days that the hunt catches in 12 months". I can assure you that this is not the view of the vast majority of farmers in Cumbria.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: We are not claiming this is representative, it is a particular part of Cumbria.

MR TODHUNTER: Question 1 is how many farmers expressed that same opinion or, question 2, out of the 31 per cent who said there were better ways of controlling foxes, how many were actually farmers?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Off the top of my head I could not tell you. We could probably put that figure in, because we can work that figure out from it. I think we would be safe in saying not many farmers. I think the reason that quote is in there, when we worked with qualitative methods -- when I work with qualitative methods, I generalise now -- when I work with qualitative methods and these fellow academics use them both to make points that reflect sort of general feelings, general attitudes, general findings that emerge from the research, but also to highlight particular differences and the case you are outlining there it was to just make the point that we were not just talking about non-farmers; that there were, albeit a very small number, one or two farmers who were expressing generally not anti-hunting viewpoints, but

they were trying to place, position themselves at some distance, not a great distance, but some distance from hunting practices, that they recognised that foxes and pests had to be controlled but they could look at these issues from a wider perspective at the same time.

MR TODHUNTER: I just thought it was totally unrepresentative really of the attitudes of the farming population in our county in general.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Do we not precede that quotation with the sentence:

"As one farmer said"?

MR TODHUNTER: Yes, "As one farmer". I know obviously farmers with that opinion, the same as I know in the area of people with the same opinions who have talked about intimidation. I know of people in the area that do not like hunting, but I know them quite openly and speak to them quite openly on a very friendly basis, so as to the intimidation point I would say no, there is not, sorry.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I would agree with you to an extent in that --

THE CHAIRMAN: We are slightly getting into the next stage of the discussion. Presumably you could actually answer it by looking back at the results. You could actually answer that question of the one farmer.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: In terms of the intimidation, I would agree with you to an extent there because the levels of intimidation, although we are only talking about a small proportion of people I need to stress that, were highest in Devon and Somerset. That is where

people mostly talked about feeling intimidated, because the culture of hunting was a bit stronger than in the other three areas. I cannot think, although my memory is terrible, of any instances of people talking about intimidation within the other areas, but I could check for you.

DR REBEKAH WIDDOWFIELD: Just going back, while we could work out the proportion of those 31 per cent who were farmers what we can say at this moment in time -- it is quoted in the report -- is that:

"...high levels of support [this is on page 51] Were recorded amongst those respondents engaged in rural occupations (predominantly farming), with 76 per cent stating that they were in favour of hunting."

MR HART: Lord Burns, just one very minor point just to put the state of the countryside report in perspective, neither did it mention fishing, one of the highest participant activities, shooting, or, indeed, agricultural shows.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is one question I would like to put. As we have been going around the country to meetings, with people who are opposed to hunting, what is often mentioned is the extent to which hunting takes place either on their land or in the neighbourhood of their houses and they do not like it. Or of points made about hounds, et cetera, being out of control. I notice that this is not given in the reasons for people being against hunting in the report. I wonder if that has been captured by one of the other answers, or whether these words did not appear. Have

they been caught up with one of the other categories?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: The issues that you are talking about did emerge from the research. What we have done in terms of that table, not table, the point you make, categorisation --

THE CHAIRMAN: Of the three reasons why --

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: They were the three main reasons, the four key reasons. Because MORI supplied to us a more comprehensive list than that, very comprehensive list, for the purposes of writing the report what we did was select most frequently cited reasons. Within that table they presented us with, those sort of issues were being raised, but we were faced with the situation in which the categorisation -- I think we had something like 20 to 25 categories and so what we did for the purposes of this report was just to focus on the main ones. The issues you are talking about did emerge within the follow-on interviews and I think we do pick up on those sort of issues. What we have not done within the report, and we could do this within the report -- there is no problem doing and this -- we could categorise or quantify that sort of information.

THE CHAIRMAN: The other question I had was about the interesting request about the extent to which people feel it

matters more to the community than it does to them individually. Presumably, this is a general feature that one would get out of research work about many activities. If I was to ask people in Newcastle to what extent Newcastle United mattered to them individually

and whether it would affect them if it disappeared, you will get a low proportion of people affected greatly but a large proportion who believe that it is important to the community as a whole. This presumably is a characteristic of a lot of activities of this type.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: We have discussed this and Rebekah made the point if we substituted the hunt for the church we would get few people attending the local church but probably a high proportion who would defend that church being there if it was faced with a ban, or, indeed, would recognise it provided a wider community function even if they did not participate in it, so I think, yes, whether it is a football team, whether it is another institution, I think you can pick up on those essential issues.

Just to stress that point I made before that when you actually look in a bit more detail about what people mean by the wider community role, for many it was a particular group within, or particular groups within the local area that they were talking about most notably, so, again, it goes back to my response to Simon, that these issues are very complex and looking for sort of single unifying factors is difficult.

THE CHAIRMAN: I think we are beginning to stray into the wider question and I can tell I am being slightly guilty of that myself. So I think the best thing now for the period ahead of lunch, is if we go round the table and get some observations of a more general nature about this research and people's response to it. I thought I would start over there, as

I usually do, on the left-hand side with Gary, if you are able to make any comments. If you do not wish to comment at this stage --

DR GARRY MARVIN: I am not quite ready. I would rather wait until something more general gets done. I will make some points: I think it is a very interesting very well done survey, especially with the time you had to do it. My point comes with more issues I think a bit later on.

PROFESSOR HOGGART: I concur with the last sentence, you have done a very good job in the time. I think that some of the issues that come out for me are quite interesting: One is simply the lack of direct correlation between size of hunt and impact, if you want to call it that, which is something that is quite instructive; the link into the share of the population with a farm background is also very instructive.

I think also if you want perhaps a distance factor that is important, if you compare your results with other work that has been done, the fact that you have concentrated on the areas of the hunt I think probably explains a lot of the inconsistencies in terms of views and so on. This raises one question in my mind, which is particularly about Quorn, but not only there, that if you look at the figures for participants in the area and then the size of the hunt, it is fairly obvious, as some previous work has said, that people are coming from quite a distance to participate in hunting activities. That raises questions about follow-up work in terms of other areas outside the hunt

that have a lot of support amongst, again, a certain section of the population, and other perhaps different attitudes amongst the rest.

Perhaps one of the intriguing things that you only really in the report did not make a lot of, but that struck me was the reaction of some of the people in the area not to the hunt but to the followers of the hunt and their car parking activities and so on which would have, I think, an effect, or is an interesting observation perhaps I should say.

I think the other thing that struck me probably more was the question of trajectory in terms of your results: What is clear is that you have some areas that you might call relatively isolated from the impact of commuting effects and so on, and yet you have quite a high turnover of the population, and that turnover of the population is linked to the introduction of more non-rural occupations, more professional managerial workers and yet, when you look at your results, turnover is linked to attitudes to the hunt, youth is linked to attitudes to the hunt and its impact, and so is occupation, and the way rural areas are moving, if you could project this forward, you would anticipate that support will decline over time and I think that does come out quite clearly from the results, and although you are projecting into the future, based on one-off observations, I think that is quite a powerful result in many ways.

I think probably the other thing that I would say as an initial statement is something which really



could have been said before in the last section, which is that many of your results are from closed questions and closed questions tend to yield higher response rates than open questions, and that this tends to suggest -- well it does not suggest, what it indicates is that you really need to take the percentages as a relative statement rather than an absolute statement; that a lot of people will say "yes" to a closed question when they really do not have a strong interest - they sort of vaguely think hunts should be kept for the area, but if you question them they do not really know why. They think Newcastle United should be kept in the area and supported strongly, but they have just gone down to the second division so is it really that important? Context is also important.

I think you mentioned one thing in passing which is that some people -- I think you said about 20 per cent -- felt that this was some sort of Central Government imposition and I think that this attitude or the feeling that many people have that the countryside is under threat, I would suspect will boost support for local institutions, of which the hunt is one, in the same way it is doing for local shops and so on and so forth. Whether or not that is just a temporary passing phase or an enduring feature is difficult to say, but those are just some of the things that struck me.

MR WHITE-SPUNNER: Thank you very much. Two sort of main points: First, I would just like to come back on that, about this idea that as time progresses people who support the hunting world will progressively

decline. I am not certain that I would necessarily agree with that and I think if you look at the history of the countryside, certainly since the agricultural depression at the end of the last Century, you actually see is people move into the countryside, as they actually get used to the countryside and get to understand hunting, support for hunting actually stays remarkably constant and I think one of the interesting points about your report is it does show that when people are knowledgeable about hunting they do tend to support it. So I am not sure I totally take that last point.

Going back to the report and more general comment, one of the things -- and I appreciate that you did not have an awful lot of time and I think the report is generally very objective, but what I do not get from it is much of a sense of the wider culture of hunting. Lord Burns made the analogy with a football team. Hunts are very much one of the main social structures in the countryside, as we have seen. I think the analogy was that you could take a hunt much as you could take Newcastle United. Even though people might not support Newcastle United, as a social institution it is very important to Newcastle. In the same way, in a country area, even if you do not support a hunt, the hunt is one of the fundamental social institutions which you regard as being vital to the area. There are, of course, some areas where hunts are much more than that, where they actually are, as I think you said, the hub of the community for some people and they do actually

spawn their own vitality, their own culture. You have the songs, the literature, that go with them. I just think at times you see hunting slightly blandly and actually for a local resident in that area hunting is just as important as Newcastle United is for the people around Newcastle.

I know there is not an awful lot of time. It might have been interesting at some stage to see some research on the wider cultural aspects of hunting.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Am I expected to respond?

THE CHAIRMAN: No.

MR WHITE-SPUNNER: I know you did not have much time.

THE CHAIRMAN: I will come back to it at the end when we have collected together a number of comments.

MR HART: Lord Burns, three things really. Simply to re-emphasise the last point that Barney made, support directly linked with knowledge and experience and the period of occupation I think is an interesting confirmation of a belief that was previously held. I think that the fact that the report has revealed that hunting is generally carried out by a wide spectrum of people than a particular social class is something which, again, most people knew, but has never actually been even half confirmed. I think this goes some way towards that. Interestingly enough, one of the main reasons people gave to objection to hunting, two, for example, were animal welfare and whether it was an effective method of pest control. I do not believe, for

example, trespass featured very highly in the reasons for objection to hunting.

MR TODHUNTER: Thank you, Lord Burns. I would just like to touch on the sections in the report that talk about the lower classes; a lot of the lower classes of people hunt and have a fundamental knowledge of hunting and take part. I believe that it is very true, because in our area there are quite a number of people who are, I would say, lower classes. Some are disabled in the fact that they cannot take part in a lot of other recreational activities in the area, but they can within the hunt social structure, whether it be a sing song night or a domino do or whatever it might be. They are totally fully accepted for who and what they are and are quite welcome and do take part in hunt activities so, therefore, there is no set structure of people who are allowed to take part. Everyone is welcome. I think that can be said throughout the British Isles, but particularly so in our area.

DR RYDER: The report mentions that hunting has been cited in the literature as a divisive issue, yet the report does not actually ask respondents about this. Respondents were asked about hunting and hunting related activities and what I quote:

"They contribute to life in this parish and community."

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: What, if anything, they contribute to.

DR RYDER: I am just saying that was the word you used and question 9, it has been said that the hunt

provides some sort of community function. I would just like to suggest that phrases like "contribute" and even "community" and "function" have connotations that seem to be searching for positive rather than the negative effects of hunting and we hear a great deal, as Lord Burns said, about the damage and nuisance caused by hunting to people living in the country. If someone lived in the countryside for almost 50 years, I know there is a lot of nuisance caused and a lot of resentment and a lot of bad feeling created by hunting and yet nowhere were respondents asked whether they thought hunting detracted from the life of the community or divided it.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns. I think the one thing that I find most interesting about this report is the fact that it is in the individual circumstances that I think it tells us most. I think there is a danger here perhaps from what is a relatively small sample size, four samples, in drawing too many conclusions from the amalgamated data, but I think what is certainly highly interesting is what it tells us about the individual snapshots. I think we have Wales and Cumbria where we have remote isolated rural areas with a large percentage of people who farm or who are involved in the farming community and the principal reasons given where the hunt is supported are pest control and economics and I think this is what one would expect.

Perceptions of pest control, perceptions of economics we have talked about in previous seminars,

but this is not unexpected given the remote and agricultural nature of those communities. In Leicester we perhaps have a more cosmopolitan rural area where people are coming from a much wider spectrum and the data for Leicester do in fact very much mimic the national picture in national surveys, such as those conducted by MORI. There is certainly more direct ability to compare what goes on, in my view, then we have Exmoor, which is different again, in that here we seem to have hit slap bang in the middle of one of, if you like, the hunting hot spots where we have 10 per cent membership of the Countryside Alliance and where you make mention of intimidation as being a feature in this area, so it is not the amalgamation of all this that I find interesting; it is each one individually on its own.

I suspect -- and we had this with drag hunting -- that every drag hunt seemed to be individual and have its own individual characteristics and I think probably the more hunts we have looked at, or are looked at in this way, every one would have its own individual characteristics and there would be particular reasons why people would give views. I think that to me is more instructive. I have grave concerns on the sample of four amalgamating data and drawing conclusions where we have these grave differences on this sample. How much that would represent the national picture, how many hunts are as remote as those in Wales and Cumbria, so to what extent does the impact of the farming input apply in other areas; to what extent is

Leicester repeated throughout the country and how many Leicesters do we have in terms of big hunts with a more cosmopolitan picture within the rural community and how many hot spots like Exmoor do we have? The danger is trying to amalgamate this I feel, but I think what it tells us about each area I think is absolutely fascinating. Thank you.

MR ROLLS: I would agree. I do not think you can draw any general conclusions about the countryside from this report, nor did you set out to do so, but I think there is a risk that other people reading this research may draw those conclusions and I think that it is necessary to stress that it tells us a lot about four very specific areas which lie in the heartland of hunting itself.

What I have picked up from the research is that there are a number of different communities that operate within the particular areas that you have studied and only some of those communities participate in hunting with dogs. What for me would have been interesting would be to see the conflict between those communities in terms of that particular issue.

I also feel that, given the nature of the Deadline 2000 submissions, in terms of this question which concentrated on trespass and infringement of the civil rights of many people in the countryside by hunts, is that the issue in terms of intimidation should have been taken up within the questions that were asked, but in general I agree with Bill; it is an interesting comment on those very specific communities

but, again, the heartland of hunting and perhaps some of the conclusions are less welcome than they would have otherwise been. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Gary, I just give you another chance, if you wish, to comment at this stage.

DR GARRY MARVIN: No, I am afraid to wear my academic hat again. It is notions of remoteness, for example, from where is our centre that we are looking at and contested notions of community? That is what I got out of it, and also the point I made earlier -- again it is not a criticism of the report -- is that the notion of cultural impact is actually a bit more subtle than comes across in the report. It is no criticism of the report, but it is the different nature of social activities and cultural activities, and I would go back to the point that was made I think by Simon earlier, that of course what this report did not consider was that the hunting itself is a social and cultural activity. Perhaps it is so obvious that it was the activity. I think an event that brings quite a few people together every day of the week during the season actually is the process itself.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I will have a go.

THE CHAIRMAN: Over to you.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think picking up on Keith's points about trajectories. Let me start making a more general point, and I think that is that for us as a research team and as a team of people writing this report, that the most difficult part has been not being able to stand back from it for a sufficient amount of



time in order to try and reflect on these sort of issues, because, as you might expect, we wrote it relatively quickly but the quality does not reflect that. In terms of Keith's point about the trajectories, that is a point that we have discussed between ourselves. I think in terms of the different opinions, I think I would side with Keith in that if these rural areas are left on their own that, with new groups moving in and selective out migration with reduced contact with agriculture and primary industries, then I think attitudes towards hunting would become less strong in these areas, and participation in the same, although I think the participation one is a bit more tricky because we have not sought to look at hunt participants. If we were doing that, we would be going into urban areas as well as rural areas, but I think just to respond, was it Barney, sorry, to what you said, I think the Leicestershire study area is the evidence that would lead me to support Keith that in an area where we have seen probably a little bit more in movement from urban area, support for hunting in an area which is, to just respond to John's point, these are hunting countries. Whether we are in the centres of hunting countries is another point, but clearly we are. The Quorn is a very well-known long established hunt and it is the largest hunt and I think, again, on Keith's point, and it was in this area that support for hunting was lowest amongst the four areas, so I think that does support Keith's point about the dynamics of rural areas and selective processes, there being an

outmovement and so on.

In terms of whether we have asked -- I think it is probably Richard's point -- whether we have asked -- he was polite enough not to use the phrase, but I will use it, whether we have used leading questions.

DR RYDER: No, questions of one side rather than the other.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I will use that term, whether we have used leading questions and I think I pick up here, again, with, was it John mentioned the trespass issue. I think John mentioned the trespass issue. I do not think that is true. There were certain issues we were asked to explore by the Committee, and one of them was the contribution, if any, that hunting made to rural life and there have probably been phrases that I have started there and fed through into the process. In terms of whether we have allowed people to talk about some of the tensions and conflicts, I think we have and in terms of the question 8 on the follow-on interview we asked people:

"What do you think are the key issues and problems surrounding hunting with dogs in and around this parish and community?"

That was where issues of trespass were mentioned and I think within the report we made reference to those sort of issues, where damage to walls and fences were mentioned; where the inconvenience of the hunt in terms of access to roads and parking arrangements were mentioned. I am not saying they were mentioned by lots of people, but they

were mentioned.

So I think we have got at those issues, but it is very difficult. The question you probably would have wanted me to ask would have been -- and I am paraphrasing here -- is trespass a significant problem for you in terms of does it get into your every day lives? The point I am trying to make, probably go a little too far in that question in order to get to the trespass issue, the point John was mentioning we probably would have to ask a very different question and I think we then would, I think rightly, be accused of asking leading questions. So I think the issues you are mentioning are coming up as issues within the research, but mentioned by relatively few people in terms of this follow-on question anyway about key issues and problems and people were asked to state the reasons why they expressed particular feelings about hunting or a ban on hunting. For some of those people that is where issues that you are talking about, the inconvenience issues, the trespass issues, were also coming up, so I think people have had the opportunity to talk about those issues without this prompting or specifically asking questions about those issues that you are talking about.

I think we cover in terms of the report itself, and I think I covered that in terms of the presentation, the issue about the representativeness of the findings. I think we do stress in the report that it is difficult to generalise, because we are dealing with different study areas, both in terms of issues

outside of hunting and also different hunting areas at the same time.

I think the point -- I think it was Bill made the point -- about Leicestershire being more typical. That might be the case, but still in Leicestershire we were picking up 39 per cent for hunting whereas I think nationally it is 25 per cent in terms of rural areas, and in terms of the English population as a whole it is 8 per cent. So I do take your point that in the Leicestershire type of area support for hunting is less strong, but it still remains the case that -- I think my colleagues might correct me -- but I think that a higher proportion of people were supporting hunting than were against it, which is an interesting finding, although the absolute number of people who support was much lower than in the other three areas.

I think that point about Leicestershire, I think that does fit in in terms of the other work I am involved in at the moment on five other rural areas, that overall 29 per cent support -- that is an average, so we are looking up at figures a bit higher within that study.

The reason -- just to stick on this; it might sound a little bit specific -- but the reason I do not make any more use of that figure is that we have not really been able to ascertain the extent of hunting within those other five areas, so it would be difficult to make any sort of wider points, but we felt that it was important just to include that area as a comparison type of figure.

I am just going through my list. I think I have covered the issue of local specificities verses generalisations, and I think the problem in terms of interpreting the findings is less of an issue I think for the group of people that sit round these tables, and it is more of an issue about how outside groups construct the findings, and I do not think you are ever going to get away from the fact that certain groups, certain newspapers are going to present the findings from this research in a particular light.

The point I think we do try to express about this research is that the headline figures need to be understood in a wider context. I think there is a more general point here, whether we are talking about policy makers or we are talking about Central Government, or whether we are talking about the press, those types of individuals, groups, organisations, prefer statistics than they do to a more complicated reading of situations.

I think the final point, just responding to the comment -- and this was a comment that I picked up in the press on Friday -- that these are heartlands of hunting. I do not know if they are heartlands of hunting. They are areas in which hunting takes place. What we have tried to do in each of these study areas is select a range of parishes, communities in Wales, within these hunt countries. What we have tried to do was we included one parish, one community that contained a hunt kennel, because we -- Andrew having done a lot of research, recent research, on hunting and

talking together as a research team -- we felt that the visible presence of hunt kennels may influence attitudes towards hunting awareness of hunting and that there would be some sort of distance decay type of effect. I think for those people who have read the report that does not seem to be the case; that the location of the hunt kennels on the whole does not seem to make any noticeable difference in terms of people's awareness of hunting in these areas.

So I would like to say, yes, we have conducted this research in hunting areas, but whether these are the heartlands of hunting -- and whether we can generalise like that -- I think I would want to argue against. I think in the case of the Devon and Somerset area we probably could say we are in an area which is perceived to be -- I do not know because I have not talked to any people who participate in hunting -- but it may be perceived to be one of the "better" hunting areas of England and Wales. Maybe others around the table would like to respond to that, but we have not deliberately gone out looking for heartlands of hunting; we have gone out deliberately looking for areas which are indicative of different types of hunt areas, indicative of different degrees of rurality and different types of rurality and I think I will stop there.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. That more or less takes us to the point at which I think we should break. I think we have made a lot of progress in terms of understanding the work and being clear about

what it applies to. And some of the complex reasons and some of the problems. I have written down a number of points at this stage that I would like to pursue a little bit more this afternoon. Maybe others will crop up when we come to talk about it later. One is the whole question of differences between the areas which have been studied and how much more we can possibly tease out of that. I would also like to have a little bit more detail about some of the differences of social groups, backgrounds, about people coming into an area as opposed to people who have been there a long time. I think I would like to explore slightly further too this whole question of different definitions of rural, so that I think we are a little bit clearer about where this fits into other types of results that we get. Bill asked a question which I think we should just try to explore a little bit further. This is to what extent from these four cases we can design something that would be more representative of hunting areas more generally and whether we have got a reasonable spread. I would just like to say a little bit more and explore a little bit further the question from this morning about the impact of hunting upon the individuals situation, and about the importance of it to the community as a whole.

The final point we might just touch on is the impact of Government intervention and the opposition that you picked up towards that, even from people who were less supportive of it in general.

Other people may have other points that they feel have come out, and if you wish to approach me over

lunch and mention any others I am more than happy to add them to the list. But maybe we can make a bit more progress on some of those issues which would then give you some feedback for the next stage of this report. But I think we have covered a lot of important ground this morning and I have certainly found it very interesting. We will resume at 1.30.

(Adjourned for lunch)

(1.30 pm).

THE CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, and thank you for returning. Douglas Batchelor has also joined the Group and welcome Sir John Mortimer, who is here for this afternoon's session.

Before lunch I set out a number of issues that we might look at this afternoon. Maybe we could start with the question of the different characteristics of the people in the survey and their attitudes towards hunting. My memory of it is that people who are older; people who work in rural activities; people who have lived in the community for longest; if anything of slightly lower social-economic class were the people who were more inclined to be supportive of hunting. The people who have come in from the outside; the people who were younger; the people who worked in non-rural activities were less inclined.

The issue was raised this morning as to what the dynamics of that might be over time. I suppose one issue is as they age and as they have lived there longer, to what extent they



will take on the characteristics of other people who are older and have lived there longer. And to what extent they will keep their present characteristics. This has some quite important implications for the dynamics of this.

I thought if we took this as the first topic and just see to what extent there are any observations that people wish to make. Or if there are any other insight you can throw on that both in terms of present views and in terms of projecting how things might develop over time.

The first question is: is that a fair summary of the position, and if you could say just a little bit more about how these views might evolve over time? Maybe you could start us off.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think you summarised the findings very well. The one variation you did not mention was the gender variation, the higher proportion of men to women participated in and supported hunting. I think that social breakdown is useful in that I think, as far as I am aware, the first time we are actually looking or beginning to look at differences within communities or hunt participants, whereas previously we had lots of general statements about who hunted -- I remember a few weeks ago I had my attention brought to an article in the Daily Mail which was trying to make this point that hunting was not just about the higher social classes and status and I thought, "Well, that is all wrong", but then I started thinking where is my viewpoint on hunting coming from? It is coming from, I think, a set of literature which

is not based on any research, and I do not think there is any research there which has tried to look at these different compositions so I think your summary is correct.

The point we need to stress is that we have not looked to conduct a breakdown of hunt participants. Rather we have looked at proportions of people within our areas who are participating, and I think we need to go back to that point. I think Keith made the point this morning, and others made the point, that a proportion of hunt participants come from outside of the areas, but in terms of the social trend aspects and the trajectories and the dynamics that we have been talking about this morning, from other work I have been involved in, it would seem to indicate that a lot of people want to move to the countryside, a lot of people wish to move from city or town-based environments to rural based ones, so I think there are sets of issues there, that people who maybe are, use this term, less supportive of hunts, because I think another issue that came out of this research was that higher proportions of more recently arrived people in the areas supported hunting in general terms than opposed it. So we are probably getting, I think, degrees of support rather than any sort of absolute sort of thing, but I think the point needs to be made that as more and more people move in to rural areas from outside of these areas, then I think we are going to get maybe less participation in hunting and maybe a different set of attitudes towards hunting. It is very difficult to say

in any categorical terms for clear reasons.

Another issue that emerges from other work I have been involved in has been the issue that young people, they find it difficult to remain in certain types of rural areas which do not have a wide range of employment opportunities, housing opportunities, opportunities in terms of securing everyday services, so we could see, if we do see a sort of continuation of selective processes of in and out migration, I think over time attitudes towards hunting in these sort of areas may change, but I think you did make the point before very strongly that what we are actually seeing here is sort of a culturisation type process, that people are moving into these areas from outside and maybe involving themselves in particular local or traditional activities or, at the very least, largely supportive of things that are going on in the okay areas.

Maybe if you just think through that is commonsense. If you move to a new area, you do not immediately start to oppose things that are going on and have gone on in the area over a long period of time.

SIR JOHN MORTIMER: I think I might have written the article in the Daily Mail. I do not know whether the Committee have seen a film that was made by my wife in which unemployed Welsh miners have their hunt, a lorry driver as a Master of Foxhounds, and you are not talking, of course, about people actually go on horses but an enormous number of followers of hunts, it

would be right to say, they are all classes of people.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: In terms of the research that we are discussing here today, just to reiterate a point I made this morning that we have not looked at those people who participate in hunting, we have just picked up on those people within our general sample of these areas, but I think I would concur with what you have said there, that we have picked up a range of different groups engaged in hunting practices within these areas, yes.

SIR JOHN MORTIMER: When you talk about generations, it is right those who participate in hunting largely consist of middle-aged, and young people from pony clubs.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think we probably picked up the point a lot of people middle-aged -- support to hunting tended to be skewed towards middle-aged, middle-age thing. In terms of participation we picked up more men than women.

SIR JOHN MORTIMER: A long of young people also.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: We picked up young people within that group.

SIR JOHN MORTIMER: Just finally, I do not know whether your statistics show, the number of, there must be a large proportion, large percentage of people not interested in hunting at all who never do it, as I have never done it, and I would certainly fall off if I did, who whether or not they like hunting would object to it being turned into a criminal offence.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: That point was made this morning, yes.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns. Could I pick up, please, on one point which you made in your introduction to this afternoon about age and the support for hunts in different age categories? Young Farmers AGM reported in the Farmers Weekly this last week or two voted very much against support for the Countryside Alliance and part of this was in respect of its support for fox hunting and so there appears to be a definite trend among younger people already within the rural communities. One thing that was evident from your statistics is that there was a high percentage of older people, particularly who had been more related to the traditional farming types of employment. Do you see this trend at all from your investigations that you see a change in younger people's attitudes and do you think these are just a product of age or do you think these opinions may well carry through as these people grow up within the rural communities? It is a very difficult question but it is an interesting one.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I would like to see the report that you actually sort of base your comments on actually; that sounds interesting. If it is picking up on those things, I think there are probably other things involved in that sort of decision rather than just being based around hunting issues to do with the whole, maybe the construction of hunting issues and constructions of debate about town and country. One of the reasons why I think we have a high proportion of

older people than younger people supporting hunting is because those are the people who have lived in those areas for longer periods of time and have grown up with those sorts of activities. I think sort of the younger generation, these days, rural areas are probably growing up with a wider range of social activities; some based on those traditional types of pursuits; others based on other types of activities. It is a very difficult question to answer, I am glad you said that. We do not know. The only way we would find out is to repeat this piece of work in a few years's time.

DR REBEKAH WIDDOWFIELD: That was what I was going to say, those figures you quoted from the Young Farmers, that we cannot actually say it is a trend unless we know the earlier figures, and the point you raised this morning that would be the advantage of having an earlier study all parts included in this research in a few years's time.

MR HART: Lord Burns, it may just be background information really, but the original Alliance submission referred to the Produce Studies Report of 2000 which actually addressed 39,000 individual hunt supporters by way of the hunt supporters survey and that actually sets out quite clearly their sort of age/sex ratio, who does what, where they come from and gives a generally reasonably representative summary of the occupations and activities of the people across, I think, 89 tie per cent of hunt supporters in the UK. There is also evidence submitted from individual hunts which give

profiles of membership, age, occupations, which I think, again, are not in the target areas that you referred to, so that may also be background information.

By way of just referring to the suggestion that popularity for hunting is in some form of decline, I think if you actually look at the number of hunts which appear in Bailey's Hunting Directory at the turn of the last century and related to the number of which are in Bailey's Hunting Directory at the turn of this one, I think you will find there is a substantial increase in those numbers.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Is that in terms of numbers of hunts or numbers of people hunting?

MR HART: Numbers of hunts, because Bailey's does not actually account for individuals and it does actually just account for the general hunt detail. Just to pick up on one thing about the Young Farmers AGM, mainly because I think a considerable proportion of Young Farmers actually have no connection with agriculture, but I am not saying that is a good or bad thing. I think that the very fact that the issue was raised at the AGM this year and of course it would be no surprise that we knew about it. In previous years there has never been sufficient even interest or enthusiasm for the work of the Countryside Alliance which has even been discussed, and the very fact it was raised this time actually in terms of the Young Farmers we spoke to was a considerable move towards sympathy and understanding of rural issues than had previously

been adopted.

DR RYDER: Sir John said he might fall off if he tried to hunt. I am sure the same would apply to myself. I suspect this is a function, among other things, of age. In your study you asked the question: Have you participated in the last 12 months? Which actually means are you a current supporter. I wonder how many of the other people whom you spoke to actually had hunted at some time in their lives. They were not actually asked have you ever hunted or have you ever participated? I just suspect therefore that, you know, after maybe 50 or 60 quite a lot of people retire from hunting because it becomes physically uncomfortable and, nevertheless, remain very keen supporters.

SIR JOHN MORTIMER: Actually I do not think so. I think it is an admirable way to die. You know Reggie Paget, the great Labour MP, all his family died breaking their necks. If you want a nice clean death on a fine morning with the wind blowing it is admirable.

MR TODHUNTER: Thank you, Lord Burns. Just touching on the Young Farmers, the Cumbrian Federation of Young Farmers are holding a field day at the end of this month and as well as crafts of tractor driving in hedged lanes and all kinds of things like that, one of the categories is horn blowing, and there have been all kinds of complaints over the area for parping and blowing and horns, parping and blowing all over the place. There has been more than one club touching me and asking me did I have any spare horns? I am afraid not, but that is the category that this year is for one



of the categories to do with the Young Farmers is horn blowing, and last year it was hound judging, they had to not only judge a section of cattle and sheep but they had to judge five foxhounds and put them in their place in order, so it is very, very strong in the Young Farmers clubs in the north of England, I can assure you. The question of old and young people, we have a tremendous spectrum of young and old, retired people, obviously, and infirm that can see hunting from their car on the fell sides without having to walk or participate any more than watching with binoculars, but we have a lot of young people walking hound pups for us and after our opening meet at the Blencathra I always call at the village school, I blow the horn as I come round the corner and they come into the yard and I call and the children see the hounds and pat them and give them a biscuit. Association is very, very strong in young and old. I would not say at all that it is purely an old pastime at all. Thank you.

MR BATCHELOR: Just really a comment on the confines of this particular study in that it is looking at the social and cultural life in the countryside and I think I would like your comments on the fact that there were 1.3 billion day visits to the countryside, which is about 26 per cent of all visits in England and Wales, and 144 million domestic tourism lines and we are conducting this discussion on the rather narrow basis that the only people in the countryside are the people who live in the countryside and yet we have a massive amount of visitation to the countryside that

far exceeds the countryside population and yet nowhere, I think, in this report are they mentioned or the social or cultural impact of hunting, is that taken into account? I believe that is an important issue which should be reflected in the study. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Have you anything to add on that?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: No.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could we move on to the question of the different definitions of "rural" that we spent some time on this morning, just to see if we can push it any further. It may be that we cannot. But one of the conclusions that to me seems to be coming out of this, is that the involvement and the support for hunting increases as you become more rural rather than less rural and the more you have people who are living in remote areas. Is that a reason for the conclusion that can be drawn from this survey and what we know from other surveys of the rural economy and what we know about the national economy as well? There seems to me to be a pattern. The closer you live to other people the less likely it is that you are going to participate, or certainly that you will be supportive of hunting. And that the more remote the area that you live in, the more likely it is that you will be supportive of hunting. Is that a reasonable conclusion?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Again, that is very interesting.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have to say that was not

meant to have any great meaning. It was an analytical question, trying to put together different surveys.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think in talking to people at lunchtime it would have been nice if we could have had more study areas so that I could probably answer your question a bit more comfortably. I think what the issues that we were picking up are that in what you might call more accessible rural areas there has probably been a higher proportion of movement over recent years and not so many recent years in terms of the south-east and some of the rural environment surrounding London. What we are seeing in the more accessible places is this sort of greater infiltration of ex-urban residents, probably farming not too strong for various reasons, one of which being that one can generate quite a lot of income through placing farm buildings in the upmarket sort of areas, so I think it is correct in saying that in the more accessible areas we are getting -- we have a greater mix of populations, and we probably have a smaller proportion of people who have lived in those areas all their lives and also in those areas, because there is competition to live in those areas and because we are talking predominantly about private property markets that competition is passed on to the property market and it becomes a little bit more difficult, people who do want to remain in those areas, particularly young people, to remain in those areas, so we do see in various ways these sort of processes for selective in and outmovement and maybe a

greater turnover. So I think that would be the critical issue for me. It is about different mixes of people being in these areas and different mixes of people making different uses of rural and urban spaces because in the Leicestershire area, for example, even though a lot of people have moved in from Leicester, from Nottingham, they were still making use of those urban centres, in terms of commuting and having those areas as places to work, others in terms of using supermarkets and using other urban services and facilities. So I think I have answered your question in a roundabout sort of way, just making the point that it is probably a little bit more complex than the categorisation of these things that you are making.

THE CHAIRMAN: I can see that. Presumably you take the various categories that we were talking

About; which is that if you lived in an area for a long time and you were a farmer, or you were engaged in rural work, if you are male, if you are older. If those are the things which define views then I suppose it follows that people who tend to live in the more remote areas tend to have those characteristics.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Yes, I think, but I think we need to make the point that we are not talking about, I suppose, a sort of spatial distinctiveness here; we are talking about sort of different mixes of social groups within these areas, and that is the point I was trying to make.

DR REBEKAH WIDDOWFIELD: The point I wanted to make is that though it is difficult to make any definitive statement about whether rural equates with more

support, certainly at least a couple of the Parish Chairs that we talked to did make some sort of statement along the lines of in these remote rural areas you cannot just go to the cinema, you cannot just access those sort of entertainment facilities so easily as you can do in an urban area or in a city, and that they use that to say that the hunt was a more important as a social activity.

DR RYDER: Lord Burns, I think that MORI a year or two ago went to great trouble to try to define "rural" and in fact some of the big national surveys that took place in recent years, looking at attitudes to hunting in rural areas and finding a very large majority of people in rural areas against hunting, actually were very, very carefully defined and I wonder whether John Leaman could talk to that.

MR LEAMAN: Certainly. I think the survey Richard is referring to is the one we conducted in 1997. It was not our definition of "rural"; it is not the only one by any means, but it is a generally used using so-called Mosaic classifications, which breaks down the country into probably about 40 or 50 different types of housing; it is primarily a housing based classification. Within those 40 or so six specifically are deemed to be rural or country dwellers, as they are called, and they are a mixture of people retiring to the country, farms, and so on. So it is a fairly tight definition. It represents about 7 per cent of the population. That is the definition that we took for one of our surveys and it serves as one possible

definition. The results we found were about 57 per cent of people opposed to hunting and about 25 or 30 per cent in support. So there is a majority in favour of a ban in that case. I mean, I think the assertion that you have made or the suggestion, Lord Burns, that there is to some extent a correlation is broadly true, but it is a question of degrees and it is a question of how steeply, if you like, the scale declines. I mean, the fact is as far as we have found anyway, there is majority support for a ban in rural areas generally in Britain as well as in Britain itself, a national survey of town and country. This survey, as Paul has been at pains to state, is a very different exercise and of course the results reflect that, but if you are talking about a national picture, whether it is rural or truly national there does consistently seem to be opposition to hunting.

THE CHAIRMAN: We are talking about rural in hunting areas and we are talking about rural which is what I was describing as "rural rural." It is more remote rural areas. Are those the two things that you would use to characterise these results, as opposed to --

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I would not use the term "remote", because, for example, our Exmoor area is very accessible to Minehead. So --

THE CHAIRMAN: I was thinking about remotely from other people; I was thinking about the distance from their neighbours.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: What would be interesting, and I have not talked to John about this, would be if that

MORI sample was able to be -- was constructed from these different categories of rural would be to breakdown and I do not know if this has been done, to breakdown responses to that survey and to see if there are different types of rural areas that different levels of support or opposition to hunting. If we could get at some of that information, it would maybe allow us to dip into that wider context, if it was, if that word was pointing to people, the more remote rural areas being more supportive of hunting, then I think we were making a start. But the problem for us as a research team was that this detailed, this quality type information, breaking down different types of rural areas, in terms of attitudes towards hunting was just not available and I think it needs to be made available.

DR GARRY MARVIN: Wearing my anthropologist hat, I would agree with this, but the rural is also a cultural construct; so it is not just a geographical entity; you cannot go out and discover it; it is people's views of it, and I think that ties in with something Paul was saying earlier, to get the added richness in this, when people move into what we call the countryside are they just moving into a certain space which happened to have a landscape or whatever, but are there other people who are coming into it because they want to make a contact with what they perceive to be a rural culture, even though I would not say there is a single entity which is rural culture, but certainly would seem to be people getting involved in that and what we as anthropologists

would call revitalisations of traditions going in and in terms of people coming into the countryside just as a side point, the number of people coming in for tourist purposes, of course fox hunting also, peculiarly, forms part of this heritage which crops up across rural space that people seem to want to also look at and so in a sense it becomes a tourist attraction in that sense.

So I think what you have not been able to do much in the project is look at the cultural rather than social. I mean, I would argue that the fox hunt is itself a cultural event and that is a very important point for its status in the countryside.

MR HART: I do not think this definition of the rural person easy, as I said before lunch. When I tried to explain, we had considerable difficulty in establishing whether somebody was simply in the country or of the country actually had quite a bearing on the result you were expecting. But I think a word of caution, and I have not tried to be deliberately rude about MORI --

THE CHAIRMAN: Not deliberately!

MR HART: The rural Mosaic, because there are flaws, and the particular study referring to would reveal a postcode was actually in Chingford which would not in anybody's estimation be described as a rural area.

MR LEAMAN: We did check that over the weekend and it is not actually the case there are not any E4 postcodes in there.

MR HART: The point I am trying to make is



that the Mosaic postcode is not necessarily an exact reflection of what is technically rural or technically urban. It does not seem to be a definition which could make the clear comparison between the two, that is the point. The example may be argued about, but the actual point I am trying to make is the fact that it does not actually reflect -- if you actually go out and visit those individual properties, would they then hit you in the face as being rural or urban, that is the definition which I do not think that system makes entirely clear.

MR LEAMAN: The definition we have used covers six different very distinct types of areas which are collectively grouped under rural or country dwellers, as Mosaic calls it, and, as I say, it can cover anything from an upland farm with tied accommodation to an affluent area of elderly retired people retiring to the country, so we get back to the point again and you say it is difficult to define and it certainly is and there is no definition that will suit all.

MR HART: That was the only point I was trying to make.

THE CHAIRMAN: We do not want to spend too much time on a study that we do not have in front of us, as opposed to the study that we do have in front of us.

MR SWANN: Could I quickly make a point, Lord Burns? People who live in the country do not necessarily come from a country culture and I think

that is probably what they are trying to say.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am in grave danger myself in being led into musing about things that we should not. John, is there anything you wanted to say?

MR ROLLS: I was just going to take up the issue of the definition of what was rural and I think in these terms it has been defined in terms of these four specific areas which clearly have close connections to hunt being there and the hunt kennels in one of them, and that is all you can say about the four areas and that no general conclusion can be drawn.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could we move on to the question of the differences between the areas which was the next of my topics to see if we have exhausted that. My understanding is that of the four areas we had, we have one area, which is Exmoor, which has got a set of characteristics which are to the extreme in terms of the examples we are looking at; support of hunting, the part it plays in the community, the integration, et cetera. We then have the Leicester part of the country, which is much more on the borderline than between town and rural, where there is greater movement between them where people are working and living between them, and where we are seeing survey figures which are more like the figures that have been produced throughout large areas. Then we have the two intermediate areas of the study with Wales and Cumbria which is producing numbers that are in between, in terms of the impact on the social life of individuals and in terms of their support for hunting

as a whole, or their view of the impact it has on the community as a whole. One is also seeing some quite sharp differences there. I just wondered whether anyone wanted to say anything more about this issue and the differences between the areas. I would like to then lead on to ask, do these types of area cover most of the hunting areas of the country, or is there another type that has been excluded from this study? Would they have produced some quite different types of results?

Or, if you wanted to study hunting as a whole, are we talking about some weighted average of these types of areas? Or are there any parts that are missing? I think that would be the question that I am trying to press you on here.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think --

THE CHAIRMAN: You might say I do not know because I have not asked them. But I think we have to get into speculative questions. The issue is whether we have captured the world, we have been asked to look at. It is obviously quite an important issue.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think the way I would respond to that is it is very difficult to capture the world you are attempting to capture from just four study areas. The reason why we restricted it to four study areas is sort of common knowledge and, as I say, in an ideal world we would have wanted to look at further study areas to try and pick up further levels of difference. I think we are happy as a research team that we have focused on different areas in relation to

their ruralities and also the types and the scales of hunting going on. Clearly, in terms of your remit, you had four animals I think which you were looking at. Clearly, we have only focused on two of them, but that was as a result of discussions with members of your Committee.

So I think we are comfortable with the findings, with the caveats, the very sort of bald caveats that I have stressed throughout the day, that we cannot claim that these are representative of wider situations.

THE CHAIRMAN: Can any other members of the seminar say whether they could identify other types of areas which are clearly missing from these and which would not be represented in one way or another by the four areas that we are looking at?

DR GARRY MARVIN: I would suggest perhaps, Lord Burns, you were mentioning different types of hunting, other people might better comment on this than me. It seems to be related to different types of hunting, hunting is this type of activity it might well be where it occurs, what the catchment area is, the nature of the rural population rather than the types of hunting per se, looking at all the hunting with dogs. But sort of the essential difference between a hunt that goes out on foot where you can expect larger participation; one that goes out on horses where you have to look at the economic investment in it. I would have thought some of the comments from this morning, yes, we could find other areas which would have different

characteristics and it would be the characteristics of the region rather than the hunting I would think that was important.

DR RYDER: There are of course areas of the countryside where there is no hunting at all. Those areas theoretically covered by hunting countries but do not see much hunting. As I see it, these four particular sites, two are genuinely remote and unusually remote: One, the Quorn, is the site of the perhaps most famous hunt in the country, so it is odd in that sense, and Exmoor, well Exmoor has been the crucible really for the hunting controversy over the last 10/20 years. I have known people move in and out of that area because of it. It is really a highly politicised issue, a well-established politicised issue, with a lot of strong feeling in it in that particular case. So in a sense all four are unusual.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Could I ask what you consider to be a particular hunt? It is a serious question, because in order to operationalise this project we have to come up with four study areas based around four particular hunts, and it is an issue that we have gone through to something we have discussed at length amongst the research team, but if you could provide me with four "typical hunts", then I would be very appreciative.

DR RYDER: I will think about it.

MR SWANN: It strikes me, Lord Burns, the difficulty with this is we have looked at something which now we do not seem to have a definition for. I

keep referring back to it, but we had the same situation I mentioned this morning with drag hunting, when the research team have looked at drag hunting and found that the studies that they had taken and study areas that they have taken were almost unique and that each one had its own characteristics which were specific to the organisation of that particular drag hunt. I have a suspicion that what we are seeing here is that there is a degree of specificity within one particular hunt where it is a live quarry hunt, but people do things in a certain way for a certain reason that reflects the needs of that population that do hunt, that hunting population, and the difficulty, as I see it, with using your data in a wider context, I do not believe it can be used in a wider context because you could not possibly, I do not think, say how many of each one of these four types of hunt there are nationally in order to weight them with the correct degree of significance, nor indeed state that those four particular types of hunt represent the total number of situations that might occur, the total. The picture covers all eventualities so you have the problem with weighting them to give them a national significance, in other words how many of the Exmoor type are there, how many of the Quorn type are there, how many of the Powys type are there. Unless you know the number nationally that fit into that particular pattern and type, you cannot give it that sort of weighting and if there are six types and not four types, or if there are 10 types or 12 types, then you

have not covered all eventualities anyway. This is not a criticism of the way you have done the research; it is just the limitations of the way in which you have been required to do it.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Can I respond very quickly. I think we are all in agreement, let us try and get some consensus here, we are all in agreement we have rural areas -- I do not think anybody is disputing that -- but I think --

THE CHAIRMAN: I think some rural areas have street lights and some do not.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Some areas more rural than others I think is the discussion. But there have been lots of research, there has been lots of research undertaken that has focused on study areas, and the comments, the comments that I am picking up here would seem to be at odds with comments that have been made about other research that I have focused on about other pieces of work that have been commissioned by Central Government departments. My own work on the MAFF project, for example, focused on five study areas. So although, as I keep stressing, we are not trying to claim that this is a representative sample; we are not trying to extend the findings to the national situation. I think what this methodology has allowed us has been to select different types of hunt areas, hunt areas and rural areas, to try and provide an overall context of attitudes and levels of participation in these areas but also -- and I think we are missing the point here -- importantly, to look in a more in depth

way at the connections between or whether there are connections between hunting and rural life. If we were to do things differently, and I admit we could do things differently, we could have adopted a national survey, not focused on particular areas but just on particular individuals selected randomly across the English and Welsh countryside, if we would have done that, then, yes, we could have made claims about representativeness, but what we would not have been able to do would have been to look in any great depth at these issues to look at why people say things. We would never pick up really, I do not think, on the issue we are picking up on this morning in terms of the intimidation and non-expression and those sort of things, if we had not focused on areas in which hunting takes place. So I think we need to be aware of that wider context and I think there are lots of interesting things, and probably more interesting to Gary than most people, through focusing on small areas and talking in a more detailed way with individuals within those areas.

THE CHAIRMAN: Let us be clear: Our remit is to look at the impact of hunting on the social and cultural life of the countryside and it is difficult to imagine one could do that other than looking at areas where there is hunting. That is the reason for of having the focus on areas where there is hunting. It is clear and it is therefore not surprising that we are looking at that.

PROFESSOR SIR JOHN MARSH: I think we do pick



up Bill's point, in a sense, the opposite way round.

What we are discovering is how specific situations are and that of itself is a very important outcome of this sort of study.

MR SWANN: Exactly, yes, it is.

MR HART: Lord Burns, I just really emphasise what I said this morning, which is from our point of view we welcome any opportunity there was to expand it. If I was to make a comment at all about the four selected areas, they all in their own way are actually quite modest examples of what we are looking at. For example, the Black Coom Beagles in Cumbria are by far the smallest operation in that part of the world, as I think you implied when you talked about yesterday the responses you had during that. For example, the Quorn in Leicestershire is not a particularly big hunt these days. It has got a big name, but there never has been a huge support. It has always been famous for people coming in because of there peculiarities of hunting in Leicestershire, whereas if you went to the Heathrop or the Beaufort in Oxfordshire you would actually find a very different category there. Similarly, in Exmoor you would actually have a much bigger participation in the Devon and Somerset Staghounds than you necessarily would from the Exmoor Foxhounds. There is another aspect of this as well and that is that we have not at any stage, again, really addressed the foot hunters, the terrier, the lurcher people, 100,000 lurcher owners, all of them have their own sporting and sort of community-based activities which have not appeared

anywhere in this research, and many of whom actually reside in urban or suburban places, or indeed touched on the sort of community within the community, which happens to be point-to-point racing which is connected to and often dependent on hunting.

MR ROLLS: I do not think we believe that those sorts of studies would tell us anything more than Professor Marsh has said about specificity, i.e. that each one will have its own characteristics and when general surveys have been carried out they have shown that there is opposition to hunting.

THE CHAIRMAN: What we are in danger of doing of course, and I am as guilty myself of this as anyone, is emphasising the issue as to whether or not people are supportive of hunting. Whereas what we are trying to get at is something well beyond that. Obviously support for hunting is an umbrella issue, which of course affects other things. But what we have been particularly wanting to look at is the impact that it has more generally in terms of social and cultural life. And this takes us into the whole issue of the impact of it upon the individual, the perceptions of the individual to the importance that it has in the community, the extent of the social interaction that takes place through hunt supported activities, as opposed to other activities. My understanding of this is that basically in the areas chosen hunting rates quite highly. It is not the only thing by any means. We have other things, particularly the church and the pub that also play a big role. But in relation to the fact that there are a lot of other

activities in the world, although they may not be available to people in rural areas, it still does rate, I would have said, at quite a high level relative to what one might have expected. And what we are looking at here is a general view as to the part that it plays because that is what we have been asked to do.

I think the conclusion I reached from the research is that it does not dominate; it is not the only thing; the community is not dependent upon it in terms of social life.

Nevertheless by the standards of other things it does rate quite highly, and I am not sure that one can say much more about it than that. I am really looking in a sense for you to either agree or to improve upon that summary.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think I would generally share that assessment. The issue for me, and I think the issue for us as a research team is how we equate a particular proportion with a level of importance or significance. When does a particular proportion of people become a significant proportion of people? So in many cases 31 per cent is considered a small minority of people.

What you are putting to me here is that in the context of these areas, in the context of other activities, it is relatively important and plays a role alongside other activities. So I could generally share your assessment but just stress how difficult it is and that was the reason why we do not make those sort of values within the report to say that a particular

proportion is a significant amount or otherwise.

THE CHAIRMAN: If I asked a similar question to people who live in the same road that I live in in London you would not get remotely 31 per cent who shared any activity. Activities would be much more widely spread across a whole vast range of issues. What comes out of this, whether it is hunting or it is the pub or the church is that actually quite a small range of activities are providing quite an important part in the social life of people. This is different to the answers that you would get from a street in London suburbs.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think it goes back to Rebekah's point earlier today that we are talking about a restricted range of opportunities within any of these rural areas, whether in terms of jobs; whether in terms of housing opportunities; whether in terms of social provision of sort of social support and services.

MR BATCHELOR: I would like to refer you again to the report of the Countryside Agency looking at the organisations active in the rural communities, and 60 per cent of communities have a WI or Mother's Union. You will be delighted to know about 45 per cent have a football club and its recreation covers older people, cricket clubs, Rainbows, Brownies, keep fit, bowls, beavers. Go down the list in terms of social organisations or activities in rural communities and on this list hunting does not even feature, so I think that while one can accept that it is important to a small group of people within the community, and nobody

denies that, when you actually look at the social fabric of those communities, the organisations around which the social activities occur in most communities, I think the report has been produced by the Countryside Agency is very important with regard to that and I do not know exactly what their sources are, but I suggest that the Committee should take a good look at the report and try and put this work into, or your work into the context of their report to see if the two differences can be reconciled.

THE CHAIRMAN: If I can answer that, one of the issues here of course is the extent to which we are looking at areas where hunting takes place. I think probably one of the things that comes out of this is that we are going to be getting different results in areas where hunting is an important part of the local community compared to areas where it is not. But I just wanted to try a supplementary -- would any of the activities that Douglas has mentioned have figured in your survey? Did people have the opportunity to raise all of these?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: That is what I was going to say. Those activities you are talking about, most of them are present within I think it was table 12 of the report, page 52, and we have WI present as an organiser of social events in each of the study areas, and if you want a game of bingo you can go to these study areas and participate in that said pastime. So I think I agree with what you are trying to say, but I think you are also trying to compare two things that cannot be

compared. You are comparing something which is nationally based with something which is focused on four study areas. What we do within these study areas is in that fairly full table on page 82, set out, albeit from what our interviewees have said to us, that the range of activities. You will see that hunting is there in all four study areas, but so are a number of different types of social activity. I should say that hunting is probably there on more than one occasion, just picking up on Simon's point, the point-to-point there, and things like that, puppy shows, which maybe linked too, so what we are saying is that there are a number of social activities going on there that hunting plays a role, but it plays a role within that wider context and I am not disputing those findings at all, because that is what I would expect that across rural areas more generally those sorts of activities I think are going to dominate that type of survey.

SIR JOHN MORTIMER: Can I just say this cannot emerge from the statistics. The statistics may not show the intensity of loyalty to any particular activity. I live in a very privileged Thames Valley area, but still hunting is a very important part of it to many people, they have a lot of social events connected to it and figures do not really particularly help. You may say a very small proportion of a community may be interested in the Glee club or doing Japanese theatre, but the intensity of loyalty and the intensity of emotion of people who take part in hunting in rural areas is perhaps not possible to be

reflected in those statistics.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns. I think it would be very surprising if in areas where people hunt and hunting is important they did not have social activities which are important to those people. I think that is self-evident. I think what is important is that what has come out of this report as well is that rural communities, particularly small rural communities, do have a higher degree of cohesion in organising social events and whether it is through the church or through the pub or, where hunt exists, through the hunt and if the hunt organises a social event, I think it would be again silly to say people would not take advantage of it because it has been organised; one would expect that it would.

What I would like to ask is that in areas where there is not current hunting or in these areas, should hunting cease, to what extent do you feel these communities are robust enough to replace activities which are currently organised by the hunt?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I cannot answer that on the basis of the research and I do not think we are sitting around the table offering sort of personal opinions based on sources other than this research.. I think the point you are making is a good one and needs to be researched. At the moment we do not have any research evidence to answer that one way or another.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am worried that you are not speaking into the microphone.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I am.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not switched on and

working.

MR HART: Just by way of an example, the Wigtownshire Hunt in Scotland which closed down a few years ago attempted to sustain their social activity. They managed I think one event for two years and then local support petered out to such an extent that they disbanded and even those activities did not last two years.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Can I just make one further point, and that is that a lot of social activities that we were picking up -- and this was particularly the case when we did the more in depth work, the interviews -- social activities were not -- this is a more general point, it relates to football clubs and it relates to other types of clubs and associations. On the whole social activities were being organised to make money, to sustain these activities. The community, the wider community function was a by-product. They were organised to meet the needs of specific communities. They were not exclusive to those specific communities and we make that point within the research that report that people were not barred from going to them, but if you were not interested in rugby, would you go to the rugby club to socialise? The answer is probably, unless you have a warped sense of humour, probably no. So I think we again need to think about why quite a few of these activities are going on. Now some of them are probably going on regularly and do not involve any sort of financial interest, but the larger types of activities, people were saying to us the same



way that other activities, other organisers were arranging activities, that the prime purpose was to make money for understandable reasons, to sustain particular activities, particular organisations.

MR HART: Can I come back on that? I accept that entirely, but from a position of experience where I tried to persuade people to come to hunt events for a decade, unless they were fun people did not come and you did not make money so they had to go home satisfied that their evening or their day had been well spent.

MR TODHUNTER: Lord Burns, might I add to that that in our area we have social events, sing songs and get-togethers and dos. If hunting were not there and the local pubs or the church tried to organise similar sorts of dos, they would not work at all. I mean, I would not go to them because I would not want to go and sing about my hunt just disappeared and you would not get people to go at all; it just would not work at all. But it is still a very important part of the rural community and people go there, as I said before, disabled people, they can enjoy joining in and because, as Simon says, it is a good night out and it is fun and everybody is welcome. But without the hunt, just not at all. Thank you.

MR SWANN: Thank you. I just wanted to come back, and this is another question you may not be able to answer and I am sorry if you cannot. In terms of fundraising events, a lot of events which are organised in areas which I have lived in, in rural areas, which is the greater part of my life, have not been just for one

organisation, but they have often been jointly organised things like sheep dog trials and the hunt and in this case a drag hunt and in cases of other rural events taking place within that community and I wondered if any of the activities, the fundraising activities that were in your report, are they all specifically just raising money for the hunt or is there a possibility these had a broader base?

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I am not quite sure I understand the question. Are we talking about hunt?

MR SWANN: I will give you an example in an area in which I have lived in when I was much younger. We used to have fundraising events, the proceeds from which, part of which would go towards the organisation of a small country show, with sheep dogs trials, part of it would go to the hunt, and part of it would go to young people encouraging -- it was a scout hut in this case and these sort of things. These functions were joint fundraising functions. What I wanted to check was that the ones you had used were specifically fundraising for hunts and were not these type of community organised events for multiple purpose fundraising of which the hunt was one.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: We did not look specifically at fundraising for these activities. We are slipping into an area because we have gone into that area. We asked people more generally about what types of social activities were organised by the hunt more generally, what social activities were going on in the areas and we have just looked at participation in those

activities. The issues, the issue of funding was coming out and was mentioned by several people, that, not just about hunting but more generally, the community function, the wider community functions are vital. There was a financial issue there and there was the issue of meeting the needs of specific communities. So we did not really explore that issue of -- it is like being in a quiz show here -- we did not explore whether things were being organised by more than one group and monies.

THE CHAIRMAN: There is not a million pounds at stake!

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: Whether money from those fundraising activities were going to more than one group.

MR SWANN: Could I come back on that, because I think it is quite an important point? I hate to give an anecdote -- I seem to do an awful lot of it through this inquiry -- one particular event which I had in mind, the Committee was principally raising money for sheep dog trials and so we would talk about it if the sheep -- if people asked what impact does the sheep dog trials have on if you were to stop sheep dog trials, what impact does it have on your local community, we would say devastating because we organise this fundraising event for the sheep dog trials. Because it was multipurpose and money goes to organisations they would think of it as their fundraising event. The point I am making a lot of these events organised by communities, the kitty is split at the end of it. If

you ask people about hunt related events where there is also fundraising, you have a suspicion some of these are not specific to the hunt.

MR HART: If I can go back to the Produce Studies Survey, which 124 supporters clubs organised 1,678 social or fundraising functions per year. More importantly 260 charities, 50 different ones, are supported by 123 out of 124 of those clubs. The important thing, just to pick up on what Bill said, of course is one of the attractions of using the hunt for a joint effort such as this many of the events we are talking about are horse-based, land-based or involve facilities only the hunt can provide without them whilst there might be a willingness to have a go, there simply is not the facility to do it.

MR TODHUNTER: Lord Burns, in our area we have the Hound Trailing Association which is the equivalent really to drag hunting you might say, albeit individual people with hounds. They run social events for the hunt. We run social events for the Hound Trailing Association. They struggle, as it is, to get venues and to be able to run the hounds on the drag lines because a lot of farmers are not that keen really. But because of the joint ventures between the hunt and the Hound Trailing Association, they are tolerated over the land. But if hunting were banned the Hound Trailing Association or the Lake District drag hunting you might say, would also go to the wall; they would not be able to survive. The farmers would not have them and the social side would be destroyed also. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: Could I put a hypothesis to you and just see to what extent you would agree with it. That is that in rural communities people are particularly tolerant of other people's activities. And they are particularly tolerant of other people's activities if they think they are providing support for the community which makes it more likely they will stay there, and that the community will prosper. And that this goes some way to explain why there is more general support for this in your survey than comes out to the extent to which it affects individuals. Maybe this statement applies to all communities, maybe it does not. Maybe people are quite happy to tolerate people doing things which they feel are important more generally, which will provide the prosperity which will provide interest, and which will encourage people to stay.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: That is an interesting hypothesis. I think there is some truth in that, but I also think it is more general than that. We could use the example of the local shop. Again, I will put my hand up, I tend not to use my local shop as much as I should, but I would be upset if it disappeared. Therefore, the local shop would not play a significant role within my life if somebody was doing a survey, but if you were banning the shop or taking it away from me I think I would be a little bit upset. Whether in the face of that ban I would use it more often is probably doubtful. So I think there is a general truth there. I think from other work I have been involved in, particularly with Rebekah, looking at issues of poverty

in the housing problems, looking at homelessness, I think things are a little more complicated than that. Yes, there is probably sort of a stronger community spirit, probably more people willing to help others, but only if people behave in particular ways. The moment you start transgressing particular norms, rural communities get very heavy. Homelessness is not an issue.

THE CHAIRMAN: Which is why you smiled when I said "tolerance".

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: If you are a New Age traveller, if you are a hunt sabo, if you are homeless, if you have particular problems, if you are practising particular types of lifestyles, it can be more difficult; it is often more difficult to be living in close-knit communities that we are talking about than it probably is in a city environment.

SIR JOHN MORTIMER: Can I ask Lord Burns, I am very pleased to hear the word "tolerant" at all times, in rural or city areas, but have you come across a feeling in rural areas that everything is being removed from them; the shop is being removed from them; the churches are being removed from them; the pubs are being removed from them and having hunting removed from them will be a kind of final straw? I just remember a phrase the miners use, "You have taken away our jobs and now you want to take away our hunting". It is a part of the livelihood of a rural community which particularly at times of countryside diminution and deprivation seems

particularly valuable to us.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think if you are taking away particular services, particular social activities from rural areas, you are not going to enhance those areas, but at the same time a lots of things are changing in rural areas and things have been changing in rural areas for a long time and very few people have mentioned or discussed those issues. I think at the moment with a general sort of decline in the services in rural areas people are starting to talk more generally about the future of the countryside and about how difficult it is for particular people to live in those rural areas, but I think we need to make the point that for most people living in rural areas who are experiencing problems, those problems are probably more to do with employment, more to do with housing, general service provision, low pay, isolation, poor transport, poor services and so on, so I would agree in one sense with what you are saying that we need to think long and hard about what services --

SIR JOHN MORTIMER: Removing anything else.

MR TODHUNTER: Lord Burns, I would definitely say that rural people in the country village areas have always been very supportive of each other's interests and organisations, particularly so in this day and age with the unfortunate demise of the Post Office and various amenities and I know myself, my wife and son who support the various other little things from football club, the cricket club, bring and buys and various things, not because they are particularly

involved at all in those organisations, but you always will support your neighbour, so to speak, or the village, because when you go there you have face-to-face verbal contact with people, you get to know more of what is going on in the area through the various organisations and it keeps everybody involved and everybody ticking over in their own little organisations. At the end of the day we are all supporting each other. Thank you.

THE CHAIRMAN: The final topic that I wanted to spend maybe just a brief time on just to see if anyone wants to add to it. This is the point that came up this morning of Government intervention and opposition to that. We learnt that even those people opposed to hunting bridled somewhat at the prospect of it being imposed upon them by Government. Presumably this comes back to the point that has just been mentioned. That there is a degree of alienation around at the moment in rural areas about the rest of the economy and about Government and the feeling that they have been on the wrong end of either economic pressures or of Government decisions. And that, therefore, this would be another step in that. Or are people in rural areas particularly prone to be anti interventions coming from Central Government.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: They are not Socialist hotbeds, are they! I think, again, it is a collection of factors. I think some people through their own particular situations, the economic situations do feel that there are very real problems within the



countryside and rightly or wrongly, point the finger at a lack of Central Government investment in particular areas. I think related to this also is a wider political campaign to pitch town against country, which I do not think is helpful, because what is happening there is that a lot of differences within rural areas, a lot of similarities between urban and rural areas are being missed in terms of some of the causal processes at work.

I think, thirdly, in terms of that last point you made, I think there is some truth in that, that rural areas on the whole have not been characterised by too much state intervention. The obvious example is housing. Rural areas are characterised much more by private modes of provision and consumption. Some might call it sort of cultures of voluntarism and self-help, but I think generally from different pieces of work that I have seen there is probably more suspicion about intervention from outside.

Now for some of the areas I am talking about, some of the work I have seen outside is the Local Authority administering that district, it is as small-scale as that for many people. So I think in terms of those three things I have mentioned there is a mistrust of outside intervention and particularly, I mean it struck me when I read one quotation again, the idea that somebody can come from outside or an institution can come from the outside and tell me what I can or cannot do within my own field in terms of the case of the farmer where we have got this sort of

coming together of this proposed threatened external legislation impacting on very local areas and of land that that farmer rightly or wrongly sees as an area in which he or she normally has control over. I mean, the reality is that in terms of these rural areas that if you look at one of the biggest parts of state intervention, the Common Agricultural Policy and the taxpayers are paying to intervene within rural areas, the situation is a bit different but, again, we are talking about perceptions within this project, not about assessments made on the whole around factual evidence.

SIR JOHN MORTIMER: Lord Burns, may I just say I did make a submission to this Committee along these lines, and can I say this very quickly, because this I think is a general principle which applies equally to town dwellers, country dwellers, everyone in the country. There is a terrible feeling of being told by other people how we ought to lead our lives. That is the first thing. The second thing is that the test of democracy is not that the majority should always have their own way but that there is a due respect paid to minorities. It is perfectly legitimate, in my view, for everybody to detest fox hunting, to say fox hunting is awful, to try and persuade people from doing it. To say that it looks silly and is a nasty piece of work. What is not permissible is for one section of the community buttressed by some sort of statistical majority to make, to criminalise a substantial honest, honourable and decent section of the community who regard hunting

as a perfectly legitimate way of life and which has long been their way of life.

The idea that the things that we dislike must be made criminal offences is, in my submission, repulsive to people whether they live in the countryside or whether they live in the town. And the idea that we are going to handcuff Masters of foxhounds and girls from pony clubs and haul them in to overcrowded prisons, the police in the countryside cannot even stop murders, to try and stop hunting when very many mounted policemen eagerly participate in it, is, in my mind, totally ludicrous. And the ludicrousness of it is demonstrated by the Bill which is before Parliament which is to send someone to prison if their dog started off chasing a rabbit and changed its mind and chased a hare and one of the proposers of that Bill confessed he could not tell a hare from a rabbit so it is not improbable that the dog might make the same mistake.

We have, in my submission, to be tolerant of minorities and there is perhaps a lesson to be learnt from religious butchering, infinitely crueller than anything that might happen in hunting. We tolerate that because it is supported by important religious and decent minorities. We must, in my view, whatever the end of these proceedings is, come to the conclusion that the debate on fox hunting, and we will never persuade each other ever, however many statistics we read, the debate on fox hunting is not something which could possibly end in a criminal solution. And I say that as someone who has never hunted, never has the

slightest intention of hunting and never will hunt. It is a matter which rouses enormously strong feelings, talking about terrorisation or whatever you were discussing this morning, what was the word, "intimidation". Just for writing an article in the Daily Mail I have had death threats, excrement through the post, my wife has death threats, razor blades in an envelope, it is not a subject which is going to ever reach some amicable agreement. But it must be a subject which continues to be debated and continues to be debated strenuously, but is not in my view and, I hope, in all our views a subject which can be solved by a criminal offence.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. I think what you have just done probably has been to make the opening closing speech!

SIR JOHN MORTIMER: Sorry to have done it, but I have come here and I just felt I had to say it.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is fine. Given the timetable, I think that probably neatly takes us on actually to where I was going to go. This is to invite people to make their closing statements and maybe they could pick up this whole question of Government intervention in the context of that. I will come back to this end of the table and go round and end up with the presenters to see whether there is anything more that needs to be said about this subject. This will give people the opportunity to make any more general remarks that they might want to make about it. So that that was not in any sense a reprimand.

SIR JOHN MORTIMER: I am grateful.

THE CHAIRMAN: But I think having taken us into that tone, it is probable we should continue with that and bring our proceedings to a conclusion. I am looking to this end of the table.

MR BATCHELOR: I think the issue of Government intervention has been raised and we accept it in terms of food production, we accept it in many areas. I think it is a consequence of a developed society, and I think what you have here is a society that pays through its taxes in large measure to support the countryside, that has an interest in the countryside and visits the countryside and therefore it has a strong cultural and social interest in that countryside. I think it has every right to exercise its view as well and I am concerned in this inquiry that we seem to be falling into the trap of separating the country from the town and town people stayed in the towns and country people stayed in the country. That cannot be the truth. Truth of it is the wider British public, and a fair number of foreign tourists as well, come to enjoy the countryside and all the things which go on in it which, I admit, may include hunting. I think we should be seeing this as a wider social debate in which many people in this country participate and, as you know, from the opinion survey evidence, many would like to see their countryside without meeting hunting when they do so. Thank you.

MR ROLLS: We obviously agree that this should be a democratic country. There is no wish to

criminalise communities, but I think this committee has realised that there is a deep repugnance to cruelty to animals where they are caused unnecessary suffering. This is not a frivolous or petty issue, but concerns cruelty which for us is non-negotiable, and I believe it is of great importance to distinguish between reasons why individuals should be -- individual freedom should be maintained and it is the view of the RSPCA, the League Against Cruel Sports and IFAW that maintaining such individual freedoms at the expense of cruelty to animals is totally unacceptable.

MR SWANN: Thank you, Lord Burns. I think these two have probably stolen most of my thunder on what I was going to say as a closing address. I think I would emphasise.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is what happens when you have a big team!

MR SWANN: Yes, thank you. I will remember that for the next session! I would like to re-emphasise the point that John has made, that our opposition to hunting is based entirely on the cruelty and unnecessary suffering involved. It is not in any way an attempt to stop people enjoying activities in the countryside. Obviously, hunting is important to people who hunt and it is a self-evident thing to say and social activities surrounding the hunt are also important to people who hunt. The research has done no more than state that in a way and it would have been surprising if you had found otherwise.

I will reiterate the point that I have

concerns about taking these four specific hunts and drawing greater conclusions from them and I think those are misgivings that you have expressed yourselves.

In terms of the social activity in rural villages and in the countryside more generally, there is a whole raft of activities which take place, based around fund raising for specific events, based around general community activities and these take place now in areas where there is no hunting and I believe that areas where there is now hunting, should hunting stop, which we believe it will, that these other activities will come to replace them and I think there is ample opportunity for communities to express themselves in this way.

I will go back to that first point, that this is not an attempt to persecute a minority. It is not an attempt to stop people exercising the legitimate right to enjoy the countryside; it is purely an opposition to animal cruelty. Thank you.

DR RYDER: I think this is a very interesting study of attitudes within four rural areas that are highly pro-hunting. Indeed, it is a record of attitudes at the extreme end, I think, of the pro-hunting dimension. It is rather like asking people who live in the vicinity of the Lords cricket ground whether they have heard of cricket, et cetera.

The team itself points out that their findings are not representative of the countryside, nor even of all hunting areas. Unfortunate therefore perhaps that the title should be countryside because

that has been picked up in the media.

In view of the highly selective and pro-hunting nature of the area studies, it is really quite remarkable that even in this small enclaves or heartlands only half of the respondents said they were in favour of hunting and only a quarter -- excluding Exmoor, considerably less than one fifth -- considered that hunting was an important part of their lives and 41 per cent said that as hunted related activities only played a relatively insignificant role locally they considered that a ban on hunting would have a positive or broadly neutral effect socially.

In no way, therefore, does this study contradict the more general surveys carried out in recent years. For example, the one for the Daily Telegraph for Gallup which showed that 77 per cent of country people disapproved of fox hunting. I feel some more notice could be taken of the damage and devisiveness caused by hunting and the hunting controversy in rural areas.

As regards Sir John Mortimer's last point, I think some activities of minorities are beyond the pale and do require legislation. This was much debated in the 19th Century with other forms of cruel country sports and in fact JS Mill, and I shall end with this quote from him, actually wrote on the subject:

"It is by the grossest misunderstanding of the principle of liberty that the infliction of exemplary punishment on ruffianism practised towards those defenceless creatures has been treated as a



meddling by Government in things beyond its province and interference with domestic life. The domestic life of domestic tyrants is one of the things which it is the most imperative on the law to interfere with."

John Stuart Mill was making an analogy between child abuse and animal abuse. Thank you.

MR TODHUNTER: Lord Burns, ladies and gentlemen, it is said that we should not generalise from the figures in the report that show the 59 per cent of respondents are opposed to a ban, but I would like to talk really about my area, Cumbria, which has been part of the study. A ban on hunting in my native Cumbria would have a severe impact on the rural fabric of the Lake District. For centuries and generations of people the local hunt has been, and still is, the focal point of the community. The Lake District has a very large and very busy national park with hundreds of thousands of visitors and tourists. Local and traditional way of life must be maintained at all costs. The Lake District now that all the people come to see and enjoy is a direct result of farmers and hunting and country people having cared for the landscape and wildlife for generations. Even in the summer months prior to the hunting season the hunt plays a large part in supporting the local agricultural shows and fetes with foxhound and terrier show classes and hound parades. Nearly every show in Cumbria has classes for foxhounds and terriers which shows the importance that hunting holds in the agricultural and village communities. Throughout the season at the

Blencathra we have 18 coffee mornings before a day's hunting and 10 social events, a dance and two shepherds meets where all walks of life and professions, young and old, can join in and be part of the hunt.

People also go to socials organised by churches and pubs, but they will never replace the type of socials organised by hunts that will be lost for ever.

I meet thousands of people in my day-to-day course of hunting the Blencathra hounds on the fells and the vast majority of those people will be supportive, speak, want to take a photograph, or perhaps might think Billy Smart's Circus has come to town, I do not know, but they show a very positive response to myself and the hounds.

The famous huntsman John Peel, who was immortalised in the song, "Do you ken John Peel?", has been sung in every circumstance and place from Cumbria to Tasmania and was adopted by the Border Regiment to march into battle in two world wars and it is still the regimental marching tune of the King's own Border Regiment. This is part of our culture and part of our way of life in the area. Without it, it would be totally gone.

As Barney White-Spunner said this morning, this Inquiry is investigating the cultural impact of hunting as well as the social impact. That seems to be forgotten sometimes. The RSPCA and other members of Deadline 2000 do not raise the cultural issues of hunting; presumably they do not dispute that they

exist.

Just to close, Lord Burns, I would like to say that a ban on fox hunting would be the final nail in the coffin for the rural people of Cumbria because without the hounds the heart of our area would be gone. Thank you.

MR HART: Lord Burns, you will be pleased to hear my closing statement has been reduced to one page this time.

The Alliance welcomes this report in as much it is the first detailed study of its kind into hunting attitudes across England and Wales in the specific areas where that actually happens. The findings of the report confirm evidence put forward by the Alliance and by many others opposed to a ban on hunting, namely that only 22 per cent of rural people in these areas think hunting should be criminalised but 59 per cent oppose a ban, that 16 per cent neither oppose nor support a ban, possibly, and most interestingly of all, 64 per cent of those questioned considered it important in their local communities. The report confirmed that support for hunting from farmers and rural workers was an overwhelming 76 per cent. The report dispels once and for all the myth that hunting is an exclusive preserve of the upper classes, whatever they are. Hunting welcomes anybody who wishes to try it. That support for hunting seems to be directly linked to knowledge and experience. It is short, but the more you know, the less you object to it. The report also touches on some negative aspects. The Alliance has never claimed that

there is 100 per cent support for hunting in any part of the world, even these. Nor have we ever claimed that it should be made compulsory. What is clear is that there is no overwhelming desire for a ban in the places where it actually happens. Indeed, the opposite seems to be the case and on that subject of so-called intimidation, I am just going to read one brief extract from Douglas Batchelor in one of the first oral sessions:

"I have chaired the Simonsbath and lived right in the middle of one of these communities. I was known to be against hunting. My employer was very pro-hunting. As long as we understood each other's position that was okay."

The report shows, as has been borne out in other evidence, that people have strong beliefs and feelings about their way of life and how they want to lead it. The reasons may differ, but the common factor is hunting and all that goes with it is important to them and their community. In short it is something indefinable, incalculable, not something that can easily be analysed. It is something people wish to protect and cherish. The Alliance has always known that the majority of rural people do support hunting, and that making it a criminal offence is the goal of a small but vocal minority.

It is this determined support that put 300,000 people on the streets of London in 1998 and another 100,000 on regional city streets in 1999 and noticeably without a single arrest.

The report, if nothing else, shows that to a significant number of people simply hunting is worth fighting for. Thank you.

DR GARRY MARVIN: I do not have -- I am more reliant with this side of the table and the research team. As an anthropologist my job has been to try and understand the meaning of this event in the British countryside and I would like to congratulate the team, as wearing my sociologist hat tomorrow when I teach -- I am a sociologist -- being able to put together a project like this so quickly and getting interesting things. I can see there is all sorts of problems with it, but I think it is a very interesting study.

From the position of academics it has advanced our knowledge; whether it is useful to the Committee is for them to decide.

All I would like to add at the end, I do not think there was enough emphasis on this, the social and cultural impact. We have heard a lot about the social impact and I would stress that Paul and his team were not able to get at this so easily, I think, because it is not something you can mesh, but there is an interesting cultural engagement here and if hunting goes, a cultural tradition will go, whether that is good or bad, for the people to decide, but I think there through qualitative study you get a more interesting area there.

DR PAUL MILBOURNE: I think we have said enough.

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. Your paper has provoked a vigorous discussion and we have

all been interested in the results of it. We have been trying to make sense of them. We have been trying to fit them into some of our preconceived notions. We have been trying to decide how much is new, how much is different, how much can be explained by different circumstances. So it has been a stimulating paper itself and I hope that, in turn, you have picked up some ideas as to how you might look at your data between now and finalising the report.

I think it remains for me to thank everybody for coming and for discussing this issue. I would say that as far as the general title is concerned that we have been sticking as closely as we can to the remit we have been given. Issues about the countryside and the impact of hunting of course are central to that. We have another seminar later this week on the economic aspects and for those of you who are going to be present at that, I look forward to seeing you again. For those that will not be coming to it, can I say thank you very much for coming and participating in such a constructive way. It has been a very good discussion. Thank you.

There is some tea outside.

(3.10 pm)

(The hearing adjourned)