

## Chapter 26 HOW THE ORDINANCE SHOULD BE MA...

When the king or my lord the Prince or any of their blood will hunt for the hart by strength, the Master of the Game must forewarn on the previous evening the sergeant of the office, and the yeomen berners at horse, and also the lymerer.<sup>194</sup> And then he must ordain which of them three shall go for to harbour the hart, and with them the lymerer for the morrow, and charge the foresters, or if it be in a park, the parkers to attend to him busily. And all the four must accord where the meeting shall be on the morrow, and he must charge the sergeant and one of the two yeomen, if the sergeant be not there, to warn all the yeomen and grooms of the office to be at the meeting at sunrise. And that the yeomen berners on foot and the grooms that are called Chacechiens bring with them the hart hounds and this done ask for the wine, and let them go after. And he that is charged to harbour the hart must accord with the forester of the bailie in which they seek him where they should meet in the grey dawning. Nevertheless it were good readiness to look if they might see any deer at its meating (feeding) the previous evening to know the more readily where to seek and harbour him on the morrow. And on the morrow when they meet the forester that well ought to know of his great deer's haunts, he shall lead the hunter and the lymerer thither, where he best hopes to see him or find of him without noise. And if they can see him and they be in the wind they ought to withdraw from him in the softest manner they can, for dread of frightening him out of his haunt, and then go privily till they be under the wind. And as he stereth (stalks) and paceth forth feeding, they are to draw nigh him as readily and warily as they can so that the deer find them not. And when he has entered his covert, and to his ligging, they ought to tarry till they know that he be entered two skilful bowshots from thence. And then ought the lymerer by bidding of the hunter to cast round with his lymer the quarter that the deer is in, if it be in a huge covert, and if it be in a little covert that the deer is in, set<sup>195</sup> all the covert to know whether he is gone away or abides there still. And if he abides, then shall the lymerer go there where the hart went in, and take the scantilon (measure) of the trace for which he should cut off the end of his rod, and lay it in the talon of the trace, there where he went in hardest ground, in the bottom thereof, so that the scantilon will scarcely touch at either

end. And that done he should break a bough of green leaves and lay it there where the hart went in, and cut another scantilon thereafter to take to the hunter that he may take it to the lord or to the Master of the Game at the meeting which some men call Assembly. But on the other side, if it be so that they cannot see him as before is said, the forester ought to bring him where most defoil is (tracks) of great male deer within his bailiwick, and there where the best haunt is, and most likely for a hart. And when the harboure and the limerer be there, the limerer if he crosses the fues of a deer he will anon challenge it, and then shall the limerer take heed to his feet to know by the trace what deer it is that the limerer findeth, and if he finds thereby that it is no hart he shall take up his hound and say to him softly, not loud, "Ware rascal, ware!" And if it be of a hart that the limerer findeth, and that it be new he ought to sue (hunt up) with as little noise as he can contreongle (hunting heel) to undo all his moving<sup>196</sup> till he find his fumes (excrements), which he ought to put in the great end of his horn, and stop it with grass to prevent them falling out and reward his hound a little. And that done come again there where he began to sue and sue forth the right line till he comes to the entering of the quarter where he thinks that the hart is in. And always with little noise and cast round the quarters, if it be in a great covert as I said before. And also if it be in a little covert, to do of the scantilon and of all other things right as I have said before. And if he be voided (gone) to another quarter or wood, and there be any other covert near always to sue forth and cast round quarter by quarter, and wood by wood till he be readily harboured. And when he is harboured of the scantilon and of all other things do as before is said, and then draw fast to the meeting that men call assembly. And it is to be known that oftentimes a deer is harboured by sight of man's eye, but who should do it well it behoves him to be a skilful and wise hunter. Nevertheless to teach hunters the more readily to seek and harbour a hart according to the country that he is in, I have devised it in certain chapters as ye may hereafter hear.

194 The man who leads the hound in leash when harbouring the hart.

195 To set the covert was for the huntsman or limerer with his hound on a leash to go round the covert that he had seen the deer enter, and to look carefully whether he could find any signs of the stag having left the place. This in more modern parlance is called making his ring walks.

196 Moving, moves. See Appendix: Move.

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