

# Quorn Hunt

Quorn Hunt is the oldest hunt in the country and was founded by Thomas Boothby in 1696 at his home at Tooley Park, eight miles to the south-west of Leicester.

## Origins of the Hunt in Quorn

Hugo Meynell was the second Master of the Hunt and moved to Quorndon Hall in 1753, when the hunt took the name of the village. He established modern hunt protocols and became known as the 'Father of English Foxhunting'. The 'Quorn Country' was initially very open, but the Enclosure Acts of this period changed the countryside to fields divided by stock-proof hedges. Hugo Meynell bred horses not just suited to going fast over open land, but also capable of jumping over the new barriers at a gallop. He retired after 47 years as Master in 1800.

## Quorndon Hall

The original hall, known as the Nether Hall, was built in the fifteenth century by the Farnham family. Hugo Meynell made significant improvements after he moved to Quorndon Hall in 1753 and he entertained on a lavish



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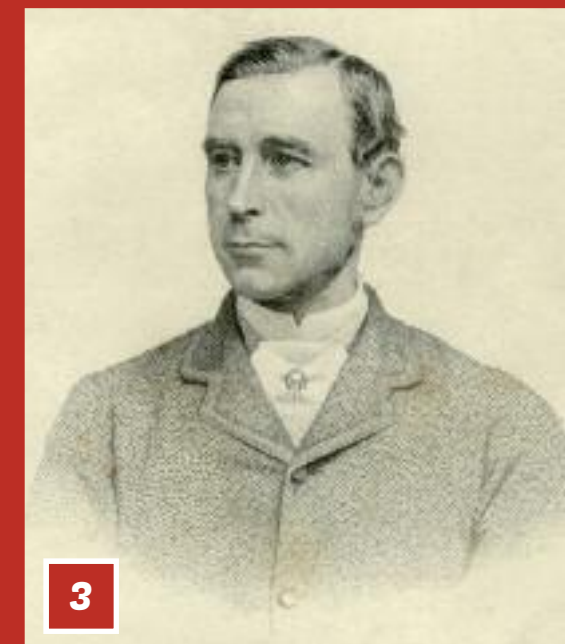
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- 1 Thomas Boothby (1677-1752).
- 2 Hugo Meynell (1727-1808).
- 3 Tom Firr (1841 - 1902).
- 4 Quorn Hall.
- 5 Postcard of Quorn Hunt at the Cross in the early 1900s.



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scale. An extract from Baily's magazine in 1805 records:

***"The stable at Quorndon Hall is said to be 290 feet long, and has a noble appearance at night, being lighted up with an immense number of patent lamps, which give it the appearance of a street in London. These stables are filled with the finest horses in the kingdom. The kennels are large and spacious and contain enough hounds to hunt four or five days every week".***

## Tom Firr

Tom was huntsman to the Quorn for 27 years from 1872, served under six masters and was known as 'the greatest huntsman in England'. During his working life he lived at Huntsmans Cottage next to Quorn Hall, but after a severe accident was forced to retire in 1899. He died in 1902 aged 61 and is buried in Quorn churchyard.

## Quorn Hunt and the Village

As the popularity of the hunt increased, it brought work, wealth and fame to Quorn. Many were employed directly such as huntsmen, whippers-in, kennelmen, terrier men and

grooms. Work was also created for trades, including farriers, blacksmiths, saddlers, provision merchants, field labourers, servants and builders.

'The Quorn' became the most famous hunt in the world. Many grand houses, such as Quorn Court and Soar House were built as hunting boxes and visitors included the nobility and even royalty. As a result Quorn became quite a tourist destination and local shops sold many souvenirs and postcards.

In 1906 Quorn Hunt moved to new premises on Paudy Lane, Barrow upon Soar, ending the Hunt's direct link with the village. It is now based nearer to Melton Mowbray. Fox hunting with hounds was abolished in 2004.

## Historical Context

Whilst hunting is a controversial subject today, it is indisputable that the presence of Quorn Hunt in the village from 1753 to 1906 had a huge effect on the development of Quorn.

