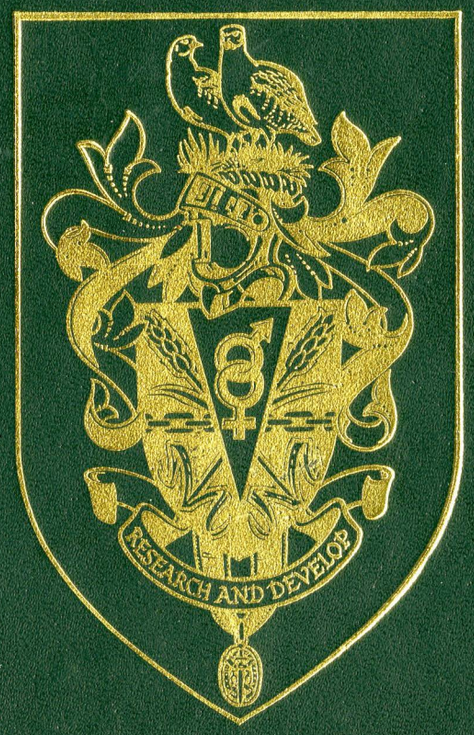
SHOOTING 1988-89



S H O O T I N G B O O K

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Compiled by Barbara Stevenson

SIR JOSEPH'S PERSONAL BAG 1988

30 July	Pigeon Shoot Bogle Hill Wood Stone Valley Wood Church Platts Wood Diana Wood		13 Pigeon 1 Magpie
8 August	Pigeon Shoot Bogle Hill Wood Stone Valley Wood House Top Wood		17 Pigeon
12 August	Reeth	5 drives	141 grouse with 228 shots

Slades Head	34 birds, 61 shots
Ashpots Up	43 birds, 63 shots
Ashpots Down	15 birds, 21 shots
Corbin Pasture	34 birds, 62 shots
Corbin Pasture	15 birds, 21 shots

Strong, blustery westerly wind, 18/30 mph. Sunny intervals and showers. Temperature of 19°C. Cloud base descending to 1,500 feet.

Spoke to Mark Alderson first thing in the morning to organise the loaders and decide on the beat. There was talk of trouble from the Anti's who had assembled in one car and two vans, but we experienced no trouble at all during the day. Lord Peel on the other hand was plagued by a group of 300 demonstrators.

The birds were very fast and very difficult. There were plenty of them. I was the only one of my generation in the line and experience was extremely necessary. I was shooting amongst the younger members of the family who were not frightfully accurate. Charles shot well, once he had warmed up and continued to do so for the rest of the day, from what I could see.

I was in number 5 butt and I got 34 with 61 shots. Sweep was with me and she ran in once during the day when I was waving my arms around. I felt she could have been better on the whistle but she did very well.

On Ashpots, Eugenie and I were in adjacent butts. I was in number 7 and she was in 8. I shot 43 birds. They were coming side wind, down-wind, and a few came creeping up-wind. There was a terrific show of birds, but a lot went out at the bottom end. Then as they drove them back I was one butt below and I shot 15 birds at terrific speed. They came faster than I could swing. We had 192 brace by the time we broke for lunch. We were not early in taking our lunch because we spent a lot of time picking up.

Back in the butts after lunch, at Corbin Pasture, I took number one butt. There were swarms of birds. It was a lovely shoot. I shot 34 birds, and then in number 3 butt I shot some more. It was a difficult up-wind drive.

We had only 5 drives and only 7 guns as brother Sam did not let his gun off. On this family shoot I shot with my wife, daughter, son, grandson, nephew and son-in-law. It was a very difficult shoot. The birds were very fast. You really had to move. It was a very happy affair.

We returned just before 7.00 p.m. and I sat in my study having tea and crumpets while dealing with the urgent mail. Mr. Waugh phoned to tell me the Stean bag. They had planned to start at Meugher but thick mist and a very strong south westerly wind prevented them from doing so. Instead they shot at Blayshawside and then Peat Moor and brought a short return drive in the morning. By lunch, the bag was 37½ brace and rain and wind forced the party to abandon the shoot at 3.00 p.m. There were 9 guns in total and they were single guns.

I was very tired and decided to miss dinner and retire for the evening. I gave orders not to be disturbed but did speak to Lord Strathmore before going to bed. He told me they had shot 327 brace on the South Side of Holwick that day. They had 8 guns and 6 drives, which meant they had 48 gun drives. We had only 35 gun drives. Apparently Lord Peel shot 50 brace with 2 drives, the Duke of Norfolk shot 130 brace.

I awoke at 9.00 p.m. and had a cold towel and a bath. Then I went back to sleep. I felt refreshed, well and ready to do battle again tomorrow!

13 August | Reeth | 5 drives | 82 grouse with 144 shots

10 birds, 17 shots
17 birds, 34 shots
12 birds, 13 shots
9 birds, 21 shots
34 birds, 59 shots

Breezy, south westerly wind, strong and fresh. As the day progressed the wind came more from the south. Temperature reached 16°C. The cloud was fairly high up, 2,500 feet up. As the rain came down in the evening, the cloud came down also.

Alex Holden woke me at 7.00 a.m. and having dressed I came down to my study. Miss Stanley was already there phoning the Newcastle Weather Centre for the forecast. Alex put on my shoes and my spats. In pulling them tight he pulled some of the buttons off so we had to start all over again.

I dictated some notes from shooting yesterday and then dealt with some mail which had arrived by Fax on Friday, and in a mail package that morning.

At just after 8.00 a.m. I made my way to the dining room in search of my breakfast. I ate a good hearty cooked breakfast and then returned to the study. George Graham came to get my bag packed and to discuss the allocation of loaders. I finished dressing and set out for the moor. I found it less windy today but it was still strong on the top and came from the west and the south. It really was quite cool for August.

We were the same guns as yesterday, apart from Tom Hamilton who had arrived for dinner on Friday. He is 26 years old and is to be married to Eugenie on the 9th September. My grandson behaved very well - I was most impressed. In fact everything went very well. Sam shot one grouse, wonderful news! I don't know how many shots I fired, but I got a few brace.

The wind made it difficult to hit the birds when we turned round and brought them up-wind. That is the difference. Yesterday we killed only 46 brace up-wind and killed 247 brace down-wind. These big bags do not like telling you how many they shot up-wind.

The birds flew very well. It was extraordinary. There was a fair show of birds on this Reeth High Moor, more birds than many times previously.

We only had the 5 drives and then returned to Middleton House for tea, toasted teacakes and sponge cake. I felt invigorated but tired, ready for a rest tomorrow when I would escape for a few hours to my study and catch up on some work.

From talking to the keepers, I found out that Lord Strathmore on the South Side got 310 brace. Lord Barnard's let day at the Top End shot 345 brace. Addis got 330/350 brace. Stanhope shot 230 brace. Ramsgill got 90 and the moor from Lord Biddulph shot 114/134 brace.

15 August — Wemmergill/Holwick Top — 6 drives — 162 grouse with 257 shots

Standards	40 birds, 65 shots
Corbus Pasture	12 birds, 20 shots
Green Grain	14 birds, 29 shots
Cock Lake Drive Up	17 birds, 23 shots
Cock Lake Drive Down	45 birds, 59 shots
Wemmergill Head	34 birds, 61 shots

Brisk breeze, easing as day progressed. West to north westerly wind. Fresh becoming lighter as the day progressed. Dry much of the day with patchy cloud in the afternoon. Showery but bright.

Today I was the guest of Tom Cowie as I swapped him a day. We met up at Holwick at 8.50 a.m. Tom Cowie was there and also a man called Holingbery whom I had never met. He is a rough little chap and he had come from Beverley that morning. I do not know where he lives. Then there was a fellow from a place near Hungerford in Wiltshire. He is a better brought up man, better educated, a tall fellow. I liked him. A round-headed fellow, shorter and with a wife who had a man's cap on, was there but I didn't think much to either of them. He has something to do with Lloyds.

I gather that the Chairman of C.T. Bowring had never shot a driven grouse before and he shot 23 at Shipka on Saturday.

The wife of one of the guns was a lovely lady, a great friend of Mary Strathmore. I had quite a discussion with her. She was a splendid person. She was going up to Glamis with Mary Strathmore and the Queen Mother will be there. Mickie's second baby is due at any time. Mary does not want to be around on the anniversary of Fergie's death, so she is going up to Skye.

John Apthorp had been shooting with John Tinsley at Kerrimuir next door to the moor that Lord Rank had. I shot there for 15 seasons, part of Lord Carruthers area there next door. They shot 300 brace there in the two days.

There were 8 guns in total. I had a word with the Agent and he said that on the days that I had rented he expected me to carry on just as I had done in the past. I am to liaise with the keeper myself, like I always do. I thanked him very much and said that I hoped I would not give him any surprises.

There was a little chap there called Sinclair. He said we had met before. There was also another man who has got thousands of sheep and thousands of birds on a little tiny acreage and he is letting it in Kent somewhere. It is a disgraceful way of going on. I have seen him somewhere before - frightful chap.

At the Standards we got 72 brace. The wind was very strong. We shot 20 brace in number 5 butt. George Graham loaded for me and Sweep was fetching the birds for me. There was a real lot of grouse. It was the biggest lot of grouse I had seen here and the biggest bag I had seen made on the Standards since we made the butts and built the road.

We went down to Corbus Pasture and we were in number 7 butt and we didn't get a lot of shooting. We shot 12 grouse but there was only a fair show and in total we only got something like 30 odd brace between us. Then we were off to Green Grain and we were in number one butt on the extreme right. Instead of the top car park butt, we had to go one higher. There were 8 guns and we were in the cold. However, we shot 7 brace and that was satisfactory. I didn't shoot too badly as they were difficult birds and it might have been unsafe and there might have been a little trouble. Anyway, we had just over 200 brace, 202 brace I think, by lunch.

Diana Cowie came and brought the Moet and Chandon champagne for lunch and I took just half a glass. I couldn't really refuse her. She brought all the children. One of her children will be going to the moor for the first time next month. She was very friendly.

Sitting in number 3 butt on the Cock Lake drive after lunch, there was a fresh wind at my right shoulder. We were going to spend 3 drives here. I expect we will get the same number of birds this afternoon, if everything goes well.

John Apthorp was on my right. He is a very decent sort of chap, and on my left was Sinclair. He sells china and glass by mail order and export. There was a fellow who knows the Bailey's and Macdonald-Hall and he was staying at Blanchlands overnight. He seemed to know a lot of people. Then this chap called Holingbery bought the lease from Tony Lampton for 10 years, which I bid for at Muggleswick. He was a wide awake, rough sort of chap, slim and frisky. He kept jumping about telling Tom Cowie to hurry up with the lunch as he wanted to go and get another shot and all that nonsense. He knows Dick Walgate and Caudwell and the Parkers, and those sort of people. I have never bumped into him before. He has a company called Comet which George told me sells electrical goods, a sort of superstore. He is doing very well with it. He is very tall and he knows Tristan Bailey. A very nice fellow. They are an interesting lot, not bad at all!

About half way through the drive I killed a good high bird and I stretched out and turned a fraction back, and John Apthorp landed me with a grouse on my left shoulder blade. It didn't knock me down but it might have done. Blast him! I even felt a little sick with it. I gave George my gun and he shot one grouse and missed another. I soon had the gun in my hand and I shot two or three afterwards.

It was quite dull, cloudy, dry and cold. I killed 17 out on that drive, but they were not picked up very well. We didn't go out of the butt with the dog. I asked if I could keep the grouse that hit me and I put it in my bag.

We got a big drive on Wemmergill Head from the Holwick boundary down. If you have someone flanking it is so much better. The wind had been quite strong, but it did get lighter. We had a big shoot there and killed 45. We must have killed over 100 but they were not picked up. The wind really brought the young birds through. We really saw some grouse. It was a super day. Apparently Senator Flowers shot 185 brace with 7 guns.

16 August	Holwick Top	6 drives	107 grouse with 188 shots
Black Arc	25 birds, 41 shots		
Nichol Hopple Up	6 birds, 16 shots		
Nichol Hopple Down	11 birds, 32 shots		
Silver Band	23 birds, 32 shots		
Lair	31 birds, 62 shots		
Black Arc	11 birds, 21 shots		

Very warm, dry and sunny all day. Fresh wind from the west. Speed 15/20 mph.

Once again I was the guest of Tom Cowie. We shot at the top end of Holwick. It was a lovely day, fine, but the light was bad. The birds came low, they flew close to the heather. Not just the old ones noticed it, everyone did.

On Black Arc and then Nichol Hopple up and down, Tom Cowie and I were at the top of the hill. It was a poor couple of drives for us both. It was a good day, warm and bracing.

We had 161 brace by the time we stopped for lunch. At Silver Band we were in number 3 and 4 butts and it was a super drive with strong good birds. I enjoyed it very much. We had a long hard walk up the hill though. I got Paul Simpson and George Graham to pull me up with a dog lead. I didn't put all my weight on it of course, but it really did help. They did very well. So well that I will do it again!

From Silver Band we went to the Lair and finally to Black Arc, returning from the north.

We had tea at Holwick Hall to be sociable, as we had done the day before. I enjoyed it, everyone was very friendly.

We were latehome but I had telephonedthe house on the return journey so that my bath would be ready for my arrival. The day had tired me out so I did very little work and climbed the stairs to bathe and get dressed for dinner.

Rosie arrived in time for dinner together with our other guests, and she looked beautiful. Sir Anthony and Lady Milbank were not staying overnight before shooting the following day, but Lord Stockton and Ned and Patricia Cook were.

17 August	Wemmergill	6 drives	119 grouse with 192 shots
Close House Up		29 birds, 51 shots	
Close House Down		17 birds, 22 shots	
Close House Up		27 birds, 38 shots	
Moss Drive		25 birds, 31 shots	
Long Grain Up		7 birds, 21 shots	
Long Grain Down		14 birds, 29 shots	

Little wind. Very calm in the morning but picked up as the day went on. Southerly wind of between 10 and 15 mph. Temperature of 17°C. High cloud in the afternoon, but this did not cause any problem at 1,800 feet. Sunny and pleasant.

I awoke at 7.00 a.m. when Alex knocked on the door. I came down to the study and Alex finished dressing me. I saw Miss Stanley and gave her some dictation and then I went to have my breakfast. The eggs were not to my liking. Helen cannot fry eggs! That put me in a bad mood and I came back to my study wishing that Marion would always cook my breakfast! I telephoned Peter Fawcett to arrange the loaders. I studied the weather forecast and prepared for another good day on the moor.

Lord Arundel and Sir Anthony Milbank arrived at the house at 8.45 a.m. and we set out having had our photograph taken for the grouse book.

I wanted to shoot Lead Mine but couldn't. I found Close House a very tiring walk and asked the keeper if we could do the high drive, which is what we always used to do, over to Lead Mine. Here you find some of the best sporting birds. However, he didn't want to do it or preferred not to do it. I was very disappointed - the birds are exceptionally high and superb.

After the first three drives we had shot 143 brace and we stopped for lunch. Ian Plaskitt had gone to the lunch hut at the start of the third drive and had laid out the lunch for the guns.

Ned Cook seemed to be enjoying himself. He had never shot a grouse before and I gave him some assistance in the art of shooting. It appeared that we had chosen well in allocating Sewell to him as he was very informative and kept Ned amused.

Having shot Moss Drive, we shot Long Grain and then the return, and headed back to the vehicles. As usual, I telephoned the study to ensure the tea was ready for our return and my bath was run.

I came back to my study for tea and Lord Arundel and Sir Anthony Milbank called in to thank me for the day's shooting and to leave something for the loaders.

Rocco Forte telephoned from his Ferrari to say that he was going to be late. He was just approaching Scotch Corner and his estimated time of arrival was about 8.00 p.m. He asked that we start dinner without him. Louise, it transpired, was not going to arrive that evening but was coming on the Friday in time for Rosie's party the following night. The table had to be re-arranged for dinner. When Rocco did arrive it was minus his loader who had been caught in a traffic jam. All his luggage was with the loader so he joined us for dinner in his casual wear and borrowed one of my ties!

18 August	Wemmergill	5 drives	121 grouse with 196 shots
Green Fell	32 birds, 54 shots		
Rake Fell Up	26 birds, 42 shots		
Rake Fell Down	25 birds, 36 shots		
Rake Fell Up	19 birds, 34 shots		
Rake Fell Down	19 birds, 30 shots		

Rain overnight made it very wet underfoot. During the morning it rained heavily but cleared slightly in the afternoon. The wind was south to south westerly and 15-20 mph.

Eugenie II left very early this morning. She drove down to London and was flying to America to spend a week there.

It was a miserable day. I dealt with the post and delayed our departure hoping it would clear, but the rain persisted. Ned Cook came to ask if my secretary, Miss Stanley, would cash a cheque for him at the Bank in the village. Alex helped me on with my waterproofs and my boots and we all ventured out for our day's shooting.

It was not a pleasant morning as it rained continuously and we were soaked through by lunchtime. I telephoned the office and asked for another weather forecast to try and ascertain when the rain was going to stop. The news was not good. The afternoon was going to be no better.

Having had our lunch, we shot two drives and made our way home. I cut out the little drive on the Allotments, the sixth drive, because it had rained for five drives and I didn't want to shoot it. I shoot for pleasure and it was not that I wanted to save money on the overcharge. The five drives had been quite enough.

Paddy Shillington was at the house when we got back. I had asked him to come while the Americans were here. Lady Nickerson and Patricia Cook had not been shooting today. Instead they had decided to go shopping in Durham. They wanted to have a look at the antique shops.

I escaped to the study for my tea and muffins. Miss Stanley and Mr. Shillington both sat with me while I went through the mail. Mrs. Brent had phoned from America to say that her husband had suffered another massive stroke and was on a life support system. He was in a coma and there was no hope for him. It was just a matter of time.

I had my bath and dressed for dinner. Charles Smith-Ryland had arrived minus Jeryl who had a throat infection and had lost her voice.

The phone kept ringing in my bedroom as people kept trying to transfer calls, it was like a mad house!

After dinner, Paddy and I did some more work in the study. We telephoned Tom Gullick and I had a long talk with him. I tried to contact Mrs. Brent to give her my love and support, but there was no answer. I expect he was at the hospital. Paddy will try again tomorrow.

19 August Wemmergill 6 drives 51 grouse with 99 shots

8 birds, 11 shots
9 birds, 16 shots
7 birds, 17 shots
13 birds, 21 shots
7 birds, 23 shots
7 birds, 11 shots

Cloudy with rain in the morning. Clearing and brightening during the afternoon. Some sunshine. Wind breezy but light and south westerly. Quite warm.

I had a word with Helen this morning as I wanted to clear the air about my comments relating to the cooking of my breakfast. I explained that I felt she just didn't know how to cook my eggs the way that I liked. She could do wonders with souffles and scrambled eggs, but fried eggs were not her forte. As it happened, she had cooked my eggs that morning and I had really enjoyed them!

Something that annoyed me today was the fact that at lunchtime I was not given a card by Peter Fawcett telling me the bag from the morning's shooting. He didn't come and see me as the other keepers do on my days shooting. I was not a happy man.

We had a fair day's shooting and came home for our usual tea and cake which I took in my study. I looked a wreck! "What am I going to look like by the end of the season?" I asked Miss Stanley on my return. Mr. Shillington had left mid-afternoon having done all the work I had left him.

Rosie joined me in the study and soon Louise was with me too as she arrived shortly after the shooting party. We had a chat and then I left for my bath, sneaking upstairs while the guests were not around.

Aliai Forte arrived safely. She had arrived at Darlington at 5.27 p.m. and had travelled to Middleton in a taxi which we organised. I had thought that the butler, Mr. Knight, would collect her but he was needed in the house.

Edward telephoned to say that he would not be coming to shoot tomorrow and he would therefore not be coming for dinner that evening. He had only just come in from work. The dinner table had to be altered accordingly.

Alexander Justham arrived around 9.00 p.m. He is one of Rosie's friends who she had invited to her party. He had some dinner on a tray.

20 August	Wemmergill	6 drives	164 grouse with 247 shots

Standards	27 birds, 38 shots
Corbus	20 birds, 36 shots
Green Grain	21 birds, 35 shots
Cock Lake	21 birds, 31 shots
Wemmergill Head	28 birds, 43 shots
Cock Lake	47 birds, 64 shots

Wind south westerly and light with a few showers in the morning. In the afternoon, the wind was stronger and north westerly. Showers became heavier and the mist came down below the hill tops.

Alex woke me as usual and I came down to my study. Miss Stanley was not there this morning as I had said she would not be required over the weekend and she had gone to Leeds.

We set off for the moor having had our breakfast. There seemed to be a lot of grouse. I feel this has been a very wet, warm and windy August. Having observed birds from the butts, I think people are getting a false impression of quantity. I think we shall run out of grouse earlier than people think.

We had shot 196 brace by lunchtime and in the afternoon we shot a further 171½ brace. It was a good day.

I still did not receive a card from the keeper to tell me the bag and I blew up a bit tonight on the way home. We could not get out as he was blocking the road with the game cart and was idly chatting to George and holding everything up. I lowered my window and said in rather a loud voice "Don't let's have a board meeting any longer, please clear the road, I want to get home". He is such a sensitive fellow, I don't think he has forgotten my asking for the high drive. Anyway, we wanted to get back fairly early as it was Rosie's birthday party and the guests would be arriving.

Chips Keswick left straight after shooting and so did Lord Buxton. The remaining party returned to Middleton House for a quick cup of tea and then everyone disappeared upstairs to change for dinner.

Edward and Mary-Anne arrived together as Edward had picked Mary-Anne up from Darlington station. Another of Rosie's friends arrived around that time also, Simon Cortenay-Walker.

At 7.30 p.m. everyone congregated for pre-dinner drinks. I had made sure we had some pink champagne for Rosie which I know she likes. The dinner seemed to go very well and everyone appeared to be enjoying themselves.

22 August	Holwick	6 drives	133 grouse with 218 shots

Slits Up	17 birds, 36 shots
Slits Down	10 birds, 14 shots
Slits Up	21 birds, 31 shots
Gulley	22 birds, 33 shots
Blaebeck Up	11 birds, 27 shots
Blaebeck Down	52 birds, 77 shots

Dry with some sunshine. There was little wind of less than 10 mph. It was north westerly changing to south westerly as the day progressed. There was some light rain in the evening.

It was Rosie's birthday today, twenty years old. I couldn't wait until today to give her her present, so I ended up giving her it yesterday. She had a gold bracelet from Garrards that she had chosen herself, a sweater and some perfumed talcum powder and soap. She seemed pleased with her things.

Peter Fawcett came to see me this morning. His phone was not working and it gave me a chance to tackle him about the bag cards that I had not received. I had everyone in the study when he arrived, George, Alex, Paddy and Bridget, who were all getting their instructions. I asked them to wait outside while I talked to Peter.

It appears that they had run out of cards and that is why he had not come to see me with the bag at lunchtime. He had been helping the other men pick up and had been very busy. I am glad we got things straightened out and I think we will get on fine from now on.

Everyone came back to the study and we discussed the plans for the trip to Bolton Abbey. I left it with Paddy to work out who would be driving the various vehicles and who would be travelling in them.

We decided to take all the dogs as Tug would scratch the kennel to pieces if he was left alone.

There were some tremendous birds today. Very high birds. On the Slits we shot 95½ brace by lunchtime. Philipp Harmer, Rosie's Austrian friend, had never shot a grouse before and he did really well.

We did the Gulley and shot 52 brace, and then Blaebeck up and down. It was a tremendous day for the 6 guns.

There was no rabbit wire/netting in the butts and I turned round for a fast bird and George usually manages to stop me, but this time he didn't and I slipped and landed on my back!

The Spaniards seemed to enjoy themselves. Jaime Botin appears to be a very nice man and worth keeping in contact with. They had arrived last night. Paddy and George had gone to meet them from Teeside airport where they arrived in Jaime Botin's private plane. They were expected at 4.00 p.m. but did not arrive until after 5.00 p.m.

23 August — Wemmergill — 6 drives — 121 grouse with 208 shots

Close House Up	6 birds, 10 shots
Close House Down	29 birds, 48 shots
Close House Up	41 birds, 59 shots
Moss	25 birds, 53 shots
Long Grain	11 birds, 21 shots
Lead Mine	9 birds, 17 shots

Cloudy start with the odd rain shower on the hills. Brightening during the day. North westerly wind of moderate speed.

I finally managed to shoot the high drive up at the Lead Mine today, so I got my way! It was a super shoot. I was using my number 9 and my number 10 guns for the driven grouse shooting. The number 9 is more open than the number 11.

Number 9	28111	- top barrel choked - bottom barrel ½ choke
Number 10		- top barrel ½ choke - bottom barrel was full, now bored up
Number 11		- top barrel full choke - Bottom barrel choke

I am still having trouble with the guns. It is the same problem I had last year. They are intermittent and hard pulling. I have written to Mr. Salter at Purdeys asking if he can explain and rectify it.

I had a terrific day's shooting. Philipp Harmer shot like a tiger! He killed a snipe from the stratosphere. He is taking it home to Vienna to have it stuffed and will not be eating it for his breakfast. I shot beside him on both days and he was a charming neighbour. He had never shot a grouse before and he proved to be very good.

When we came home I made straight for the study and sat and had my tea and toast and marmite in peace. I looked at my mail and talked with Paddy for a while. Miss Stanley had contacted Mrs. Brent and had arranged for me to telephone her at 6.00 p.m. our time. I gave her my love and asked if there was anything I could do, but of course there was nothing I could do. I asked her to try and give him my love if he regained consciousness. It is a sad affair but I know I have done a lot for him in the past and he has been a good friend to me.

Philipp Harmer came to say goodbye as he was leaving. He is a good fellow. He seemed to have thoroughly enjoyed himself.

24 August	Reeth	4 drives	88 grouse with 135 shots

Sladeshead	10 birds, 18 shots
Ashpots	50 birds, 64 shots
Pulpit	10 birds, 20 shots
Kearton Pasture	18 birds, 33 shots

Cloud and rain, but improved during the morning. The sun even showed through in the afternoon. The wind was fresh and moderate, south westerly.

This morning I had to pack all my work to take to Bolton Abbey as on Friday I was going to make my way to Rothwell where I would spend the weekend. Lady Nickerson was going to London as Eugenie was having a dress fitting for the wedding.

We packed one of my black box cases with the documents I needed to work on, and I instructed Miss Stanley to ensure that Mr. Waugh, Mr. Bates, the Keepers, etc. would be on standby for Sunday when they might be required.

Once packed and ready to leave for Reeth I said my goodbyes to Louise and Rosie who were leaving for Willingham House.

We set off in the Bentley with Pepe Mora-Figueroa, driven by George. Paul Simpson took Lady Nickerson and Jaime Botin in my Range Rover. The Bentley was left in the car park of the C & G hotel and we moved into the spare Range Rover which Paddy Shillington had brought. He then set off towards Surrender Bridge and turned up on to the moor at 10.20 a.m. Alan Sunter was in the usual place waiting to meet us. The lunch was dropped off at the lunch hut on the way up and we made for the first line of butts.

We started off with Pepe Jnr, Pepe Mora-Figueroa in number one, Lady Nickerson in number two, Jaime Botin in three, I was in number four, and Pepe Fanjul was in number five butt. The wind was very strong and the down wind birds proved very difficult to hit. I shot 10 brace and the others shot about 5 birds a piece.

For the next drive I swapped with Lady Nickerson and had Pepe Mora-Figueroa and Jaime Botin as neighbours. It was a fantastic drive, one of the most enjoyable I have had this year. Paddy Shillington was spotting on the right and Ian Plaskitt on the left. The birds came in a beautiful steady stream and I think I shot the best I have shot this year.

Before this drive my total for the season was 1,221 and I had 50 birds on the butt by the end of the drive, but I claimed 47.

The third drive was in the Pulpit. Pepe Fanjul was on my right and Pepe Mora-Figueroa on the end shot one beautiful bird, the highest of the day. Not too many birds came to me.

Ian Plaskitt went down to the lunch hut to light the fire and lay out the lunch. We had a very leisurely lunch and decided to do one big drive, the whole of Kearton Pasture. We agreed with Mark Alderson that we would be in the butts by 3.30 p.m.

Lady Nickerson had a siesta and Paddy took over from her. I think he shot four birds. It was a nice drive and I got about 33 brace.

We gathered on the road by Surrender Bridge and everyone went their own way. The Spaniards set off for Middleton House with Lady Nickerson and Paddy. The Fanjuls went to Darlington to catch the 6.35 train and I left with George for Bolton Abbey.

Lady Nickerson was going to join me tomorrow morning as she felt she should be at Middleton to entertain the Spaniards.

I rang the house to find out what was new and gave Miss Stanley instructions to work on the journal over the next two days and bring it up to date.

25 August	Bolton Abbey	5 drives	42 grouse with 82 shots
1	10 birds, 16 shots		
2	8 birds, 12 shots		
3	4 birds, 8 shots		
4	7 birds, 11 shots		
5	13 birds, 35 shots		

Cloudy all day but no showers. Cool and windy. The wind came from the west and the north west. Cloud level was not too low to hinder the shooting.

Lady Nickerson left Middleton House at 7.08 a.m. to travel to Bolton Abbey in time for the shoot. We were the guests of Rocco and Aliai Forte. Ian Plaskitt drove her in her Range Rover and they arrived in good time. She brought 4 lbs of Country Gentlemen sausages with her as a house gift. We thought the guests could have them for breakfast each morning.

I telephoned the office at Middleton to confirm that Lady Nickerson had arrived safely and also to get the weather report for the day. Mr. Dummer had faxed some mail for me to the hotel and I had already received the market figures.

Everyone was very pleasant and helpful on the shoot. We seemed to shoot round the perimeter of the moor. We never went into the heart of it. I suspect that there was a lack of birds and they were driving them inwards.

The organisation of the shoot also pointed to this as everything was very slow to get going. There seemed to be no sense of urgency about anything. Nevertheless it was a pleasurable experience.

26 August | Bolton Abbey | 5 drives | 49 grouse with 88 shots

1	14 birds, 19 shots
2	10 birds, 25 shots
3	10 birds, 22 shots
4	7 birds, 11 shots
5	8 birds, 11 shots

Bright and sunny. Weather best in the morning. Rain came from the west in the evening. The wind was westerly and 15 mph and then moved into the south and decreased to 10 mph.

We were staying at the Devonshire Arms which is a very pleasant hotel. The men, George Graham, Paul Simpson and Ian Plaskitt were in the Craiglands Hotel and they told me they were very well looked after.

I enjoyed shooting on another moor. You experience different things, birds, drives, terrain, weather, etc. It was also good to have a change of scene.

I felt that there was too much bracken on the moor and that more burning should have taken place.

The pleasure experienced when shooting has a great deal to do with the guns that make up the team. Obviously the quantity and quality of the birds and the weather conditions contribute, but if you are with a good team of guns you are on the whole likely to have an enjoyable day. The bag may not be so great but the atmosphere will have made up for it.

When the shooting came to an end George and I left for Rothwell in the Bentley. I had decided to spend the weekend there so that I could have a look at the farm. Mrs. Gething had very kindly offered to come in on Sunday so that I could get some business done as well.

Lady Nickerson had decided to go to London as Eugenie had a dress fitting and she left shooting slightly early so that she could catch the 6.00 o'clock train from Leeds. Paul Simpson was to drive her in her Range Rover.

29 August | Reeth | 5 drives | 67 grouse with 105 shots

Ashpots Up	2 birds, 5 shots
Ashpots Down	8 birds, 15 shots
Murrayfield Up	14 birds, 25 shots
Murrayfield Down	26 birds, 38 shots
Ashpots Up	17 birds, 22 shots

Very strong blustery wind coming from the south west. Sunny intervals and showers. Bright but cool.

I woke up at 6.00 a.m. when Sebio called me. I had some tea and bran and then Sebio gave me some massage and I finally left the house at 6.56 a.m. We arrived at 9.10 a.m. so the journey had taken only 2 hours and 15 minutes. George had driven me in the Bentley and he had made very good time. There was very little traffic as it was Bank Holiday morning.

In between showers it was quite a lovely day really. The wind was too strong to make a big bag, but the grouse were fantastic sport.

There were 8 guns altogether, including me. That was the deal. The guns included Ambrose Monell, Dudley Hughes, a couple of Englishmen and a polio victim. None of them could really shoot.

We shot 101½ brace in total during the day and we claimed 33½. Paul Simpson is a very good observer of what I killed and without being boastful, I shot extraordinarily well. There were some very fast birds and I showed them what I could do.

On the first drive on Ashpots we were in number 6 butt, the first from the right, and we only shot 2 grouse! There was a fantastic rainbow which lasted almost all day. It was unbelievable! I don't think I can ever remember a day when there was a rainbow shining so obviously for so long.

On the return we went all the way round and I killed 8 single birds there. One bird didn't come in so I only got 7 birds, but I killed them in rather good style! I was in number 8 butt, the outside right butt and I enjoyed it.

We had lunch after the two drives and then went up to Murrayfield and had two drives there, in the same line of butts. The first time I was in the second butt from the bottom and I think I shot 14, and then on the return I had 26. We then went back to Ashpots and did that the second time and I was in the same butt. I killed 17 birds. I shot a total of 67 birds and George took note of the number of shots. After the shoot 5 birds were picked up.

On the way home I dictated these notes. It is bright, the sun is shining and any minute now there is going to be a shower. It is quite lovely. It really is rather cool for this time of year though.

There is no doubt that the guns today were a good crowd, but if you are going to let the moor by the brace you want some better shots, or they want to pay a bigger minimum. I mean that there was enough grouse today to have killed 200 brace. Well, the conditions were not the easiest so perhaps 150 or 160 brace would be more realistic, with a decent team of guns.

Peter Fawcett told me that at Holwick they shot 297 brace in total today. They had 145 brace in the first two drives on the Slits and then they shot the rest in the afternoon.

In 14 days the total shot has been 3,248 brace.

30 August	Wemmergill	6 drives	76 grouse with 163 shots
Shipka Top	13 birds, 17 shots		
Shipka Top	24 birds, 49 shots		
Shipka Up	6 birds, 17 shots		
Shipka Down	11 birds, 34 shots		
Shipka Up	9 birds, 22 shots		
Shipka Down	13 birds, 24 shots		

Mainly dry and cloudy, but with light rain outbreaks. Wind moderate to strong coming from the south to south west.

At 7.45 a.m. George and I sat down to decide on the various drivers for the vehicles. Senator Flowers had his own car which he would drive. Paul Simpson would drive the Chapman Pincher's car and the Thompsons would take the spare Range Rover. Sam and Connie would travel in Lady Nickerson's vehicle and I would be driven by George in my Range Rover together with Harry Chapman Pincher. It would give me an opportunity to talk to him about the book.

Peter Fawcett rang at 7.50 a.m. and we discussed where we were going to shoot. There was going to be a strong wind so we would not get many birds. We decided to go to the South Side and not to take the 'Moreover'. There would be a good chance to tickle up the birds with a good wind. It was pointless trying to shoot at Holwick Top because of the wind.

I dressed in my waterproofs and we set off for the moor. I was taking Teal with me today. During the journey Harry and I discussed the book. We saw all sorts of birds, two kestrels, a merlin, a short-eared owl, a black-backed gull, a wisp of snipe, a hen ring ousel and a good covey of hill partridges. There must have been about 8 snipe in the wisp, a lovely sight. All the time I have been shooting at Wemmergill I have never seen as many snipe. In fact I have never seen more than 3 or 4 in a party. We also saw a curlew.

The first shot was fired at 10.40 a.m. They fooled a lot of people those birds. They flew side-wind. We didn't have an upwind drive at all during the day. We were on the South Gill all day and didn't go up on top where the lunch hut is, the two lines of butts. There were more birds on the second drive.

By lunchtime we had shot 43½ brace with 5 guns. Brother Sam was not well enough and he stayed in the vehicle and just came out for lunch. We had a good lunch and all the ladies looked after us. The cold grouse was excellent and so was the duck pate, much better than some we had earlier this season.

There was a really strong wind and there were intermittent showers. The wind was rather too strong for sensible killing of grouse. We could have done with 10 mph less wind. Peter Fawcett said tonight that the birds went back side-wind. They went everywhere. I think he was quite pleased that we had 100 brace. He thought we must have been working very hard for the bag.

I telephoned the house at around 4.20 p.m. to tell them to have the tea and toast hot and ready for our arrival at around 4.50 p.m. On the way back I spotted a grouse which had not been picked up.

Mr. Dummer had arrived in the afternoon and was waiting in the study with Miss Stanley. He had brought some mail and so we cleared that and then I went upstairs for my bath. I had not been given my tea, I was obviously forgotten.

At Stean they shot 67½ brace. Charles went with the party, the same as yesterday. He shot 14½ brace and did not draw the best number. The guns thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The weather definitely reduced the bag considerably. Thick fog after lunch just before the drive started spoiled the drive on Meugher. On the last drive they got 28 brace on the Moss which was quite amazing having driven it all the other way on the foggy drive. The atmosphere throughout the day was very good, both the staff and the guns. Charles Wyvill was very pleased. Hughes shot extremely well. There is enough grouse on the moor to warrant my going.

1 September	Reeth	4 drives	54 grouse with 98 shots
Kearton Pasture Up	10 birds, 19 shots		
Kearton Pasture Across	8 birds, 21 shots		
Low Moor Up	19 birds, 31 shots		
Low Moor Down	17 birds, 27 shots		

Cloudy and wet all day. Hill fog and heavy rain persisted all day. Broke slightly at midday. Wind strong and south to south easterly which increased progressively.

It was a miserable morning. I telephoned Mark Alderson to see if there was any chance of a couple of drives today. He went out to have a look and I 'phoned the weather centre again. This time I spoke to a very pleasant young lady who I hoped would be able to give me a better forecast than the gentleman I had talked to earlier. Unfortunately she couldn't.

I had breakfast with the guests and we decided to delay our departure until we knew what the weather was going to do. Mark 'phoned having assessed the situation and we chose to give it a try at least. I dealt with some post with Mr. Dummer and Miss Stanley and had ten minutes upstairs with Alex discussing my clothing requirements for next week. At 10.00 a.m. we finally set off.

The male forecaster and the female forecaster were equally accurate, it was a rotten, bad day, suitable for having your feet up in front of the fire.

Mark and I had decided to go to Kearton Pasture and drive over the valley and also the Low Moor. There was to be a man waiting at the B & B to tell us which we were going to do when we got there. There were only four guns. Sam was not very well so he was unable to join us. He had not come down to dinner the night before and I had gone to his room for a chat. He was setting off home later that morning. Lady Nickerson remained in the house with her Mother and Eugenie and Maury Flowers stayed in bed all day.

The Stock Market is at its worst since December last year. In fact, the whole of the year's gains on paper must be all wiped out. I have lost all the profit I could have had if I had sold during the year. However, although I haven't made anything I haven't lost anything, except the opportunity. Timing is the word in business. If you get the right timing you will always make a profit. You want some good watches and clocks around you in the shape of some good advisers.

Driving to Reeth, we went along a very narrow road and we met a bus which took up all the road. George drives very safely and he made a good point. Whenever we go to Reeth and we are not shooting the Low Moor, we ought to drive the Winterings across and Murrayfield. One way or another it ought to be driven every time we go there. There are a lot of grouse there. I am convinced that we have got to make a strenuous effort now to reduce the grouse.

We have had such bad weather that there will not be a lot of heather seed, there is not a lot of heather bloom. If we could get some sunshine it would improve the heather and the food for the birds for the winter. It would also improve the condition of the birds themselves. I feel we will get some disease next year. We may get through this season, but we must reduce the birds for next season. Perhaps we should think about putting up nets between the butts and drive the grouse into the nets. I have never done it before. We could give the grouse away or we could send them alive to other moors to stock them. They don't seem to die of stress when we catch them to give them a dose of worm powder. Although we do not know that. We do not know how many of these grouse have been wormed and released and died. I do not know of any evidence that any of them do die, but animals like that do not like to be frightened too much. Stress is an important factor as well as in humans.

We took all the dogs with us today and I used Paul Simpson as a runner and to park the car. He is a good observer. I had one of the most enjoyable day's shooting and experienced the worst weather ever.

Brian Dummer stayed at the house and left after lunch for Rothwell. Paddy Shillington came up for the benefit of the Americans and brought my 20 bores with him. Fred and Jane Hamilton arrived at Darlington Station at 6.14 p.m. from London, and Eugenie went to meet them.

I was exhausted and went straight upstairs to have my bath and relax before dinner. Sebio was instructed to collect all the mail from Miss Stanley and bring it up to me for my inspection. I told everyone that I did not want to be interrupted.

Diana Yates telephoned to say that Ian had been delayed and was stuck in a traffic jam and would be late in arriving for dinner. Louise also telephoned before dinner, but I returned her call once we had all eaten.

Yesterday had been a rest day as it was the day of the Reeth Show. Bill and Jessie Thomson had gone and had quite enjoyed it. I had spent the day working. I saw Harry Chapman Pincher in the morning and discussed the book. We had a very useful session. It was a lovely day and I felt it had been wasted. Next year we will shoot on another moor.

2 September	Reeth	5 drives	49 grouse with 116 shots

Murrayfield	11 birds, 29 shots
Lady Mary Up	10 birds, 21 shots
Water Cragg	11 birds, 23 shots
Ashpots Down	5 birds, 16 shots
Ashpots Up	12 birds, 27 shots

Cloudy, foggy and showery morning. Wind light and variable but increasing to become gusty and fresh by the evening. Wind direction west to south westerly. Clouds expected to break midday but some showers still around and the cloud descended at those times.

At 7.50 a.m. I spoke to Mark Alderson. There was quite a lot of hill fog, but it was expected to clear by the afternoon. It was breaking quite well at Reeth and he could see beyond the skyline. We discussed the alternatives. If the wind didn't get up too early then we could get a couple of drives in before lunch. His dog was still coughing so he was going to leave him at home. We decided that the earlier we start the better.

Alan Sunter was going to be left at the gates at Surrender Bridge as usual. The four dogs were going to come with us and four loaders would be needed as I wanted Paul Simpson to be my runner. We would have lunch at Lady Mary.

I had my breakfast and then before I knew it it was 9.00 a.m. Both Miss Stanley and Paddy Shillington were still in the study with me and I remarked that as Paddy had not had his breakfast his stomach must have thought that his throat had been cut!

Lady Nickerson, Eugenie and Paddy discussed the arrangements for the wedding and then Paddy drove the ladies to Lady Mary to join us for lunch. We were late in lunching and it was after 4.00 p.m. when Paddy, Lady Nickerson, Mrs. Monell and Mrs. Gubellman returned.

Eugenie stayed and shot in the afternoon. We had thought that she was going to spend the whole day shooting and I had arranged a loader for her. It was only when we were leaving that morning that George suddenly remarked on her absence and Lady Nickerson confirmed that she would not be joining us until the afternoon.

It was another enjoyable day's shooting although the bag was not as large as I had hoped. I am up on last year's totals but it is not going to be easy beating the Earl of Ripon's total.

Spoke to Joe Freeman who told me they shot 38½ brace. It was very windy and they did not see as many birds as on Tuesday. The guns were not a bad team and they seemed satisfied with the day's shooting.

Tom Hamilton arrived for dinner He is going to shoot tomorrow and will bring the guns to eight.

3 September	Reeth	4 drives	39 grouse with 89 shots 1 Snipe

Water Cragg	7 birds, 14 shots
Lady Mary Down	10 birds,27 shots
Slades	2 birds, 8 shots
Kearton Pasture	20 birds, 41 shots

A bright day but one or two showers throughout the day. Wind fresh and south westerly, 30 mph.

Spoke to Mark Alderson as usual before breakfast to decide where to shoot. I asked him about the heather and the lack of bloom. I felt that the wet weather and the condition of the heather meant that if there was any disease it would certainly multiply.

We decided to shoot at Water Cragg and then Murrayfield as it would be down all way and would make it easier for the beaters. We would just have 4 drives and lunch after 2 drives at the Old Gang. It is a good place for parking. We didn't want to move the Sladeshead birds until after lunch because we wanted to go straight on after them.

I suggested it might be an idea to have a joint day with the Duke of Norfolk and asked him what he thought. They could take position behind the boundary at Water Cragg to Lady Mary and the birds would be driven back. Mark thought that if the wind was right we wouldn't need them.

George Graham was to drive the Range Rover and we were to take the Hamilton's in the back. My car 'phone was broken and although Paddy had arranged for someone to come and look at it, it had to be taken away and so I had no means of communication.

The strong wind meant that you had to move quickly and use your arms. As one gets older you cannot move so quickly, but I feel I have not been affected more than anyone else.

I enjoyed my day's shooting, but I wish we could have shot more birds. I was disappointed with my bag today. I have dropped over the past two days. However, the weather and the wind have been much to blame.

5 September	Leadhills	7 drives	33 grouse with 63 shots
Lowthers Down	3 birds, 7 shots		
Lowthers Moss	12 birds, 21 shots		
Minehill	0	0	
Shiel Gare Rigg	0	0	
Goldsears	7 birds, 15 shots		
Hole Down	6 birds, 11 shots		
Hole Flow	5 birds, 9 shots		

Wet, showery day and fairly cold. The wind was moderate and north westerly.

Paul Simpson had driven me to Leadhills on Sunday night. We left Middleton House at about 4.45 p.m. I had spent the day working in my study clearing up some work with Miss Stanley. I wanted to get everything up to date before I departed. Paul drove me well in the Range Rover. It took us two hours and five minutes to the Leadhills corner and it was then only six miles up the road.

George had left earlier that afternoon with the Moreover. It was a miserable night. I hoped that we would get some fine weather without any wind and somewhat warmer, so that we would get a crack at the grouse. It was a dreadful night. However, we arrived safely at the Hopetoun Arms where we were to stay for the four days.

It is the first Monday in September and we have had such bad luck so far. It is unbelievable what happened to us, the things that went wrong. First of all the stupid people here did not tell us where we were going and George had to park on the heather with the machine, my Moreover, and it couldn't be pulled off. They didn't tell us we were going to have to cross the reservoir and of course we couldn't do that with the Moreover, so we went in the Agrocat.

The Range Rover broke down, I think George pulled the clutch out so he had to go and see what he could do. Kenny Wilson was very helpful and found a garage to take it to. To top it all, the telephone in the car broke as well and my three over and under 20 bores are with Purdey's because of the trigger pressures again!

6 September	Leadhills	5 drives	66 grouse with 126 shots
Clowgill	2 birds, 7 shots		
Lettershaws	13 birds, 27 shots		
Glencaple Down	5 birds, 11 shots		
Glencaple Back	19 birds, 39 shots		
Cleuch	27 birds, 42 shots		

Very wet and windy. Poured all day. Wind came from the north west and it was strong.

Today the weather was abysmal. It poured with rain all day and we all got soaked. I thought we should abandon shooting at lunchtime as the weather was not going to improve, but that decision was not taken.

I still managed to get some birds though, 66 in total. There were quite a number of birds to be seen. It really was a dreadful day though. My back was aching and of course the Range Rover was out of action and my guns were not working, and my car phone was broken. What else could go wrong!

When we returned to the Hopetoun Arms I was looking forward to a soak in the bath and asked George to see if one of the bathrooms were free and if so to run me a bath. Having had my bath I rested before dinner.

7 September	Leadhills	6 drives	32 grouse with 63 shots
The Moss	4 birds, 8 shots		
The Big Drive	3 birds, 9 shots		
The Return Drive	10 birds, 21 shots		
Glenae	4 birds, 6 shots		
The Rigg	9 birds, 13 shots		
The Stone Wall	2 birds, 6 shots		

Bright and dry and warm. Wind westerly in direction and light to moderate.

This morning we took the Moreover. The garage had been very quick and helpful and the Range Rover was in use again. George and Paul were with me, Paul being used as an observer.

The condition of the birds was good. There seemed to be a ratio of 3.2:1 young to old on average. I felt that the butts were dangerous, the ones we were in at any rate. There didn't seem to be as many birds today and I did not shoot as many.

Tomorrow would only be a half day of shooting as both the Hamilton's and myself were heading for London in preparation for the wedding on Friday.

8 September	Leadhills	2 drives	8 grouse with 21 shots
Standard Rigg	3 birds, 13 shots		
Thamish Cleuch	5 birds, 8 shots		

Foggy morning and damp. Wind blowing from the west and light to moderate, although stronger on the hillside.

We only shot two drives today before I left to catch my plane to London. The Hamilton's left also. George drove me to Glasgow Airport so that I could get the 14.15 shuttle flight to Heathrow. A representative from Claridge's met me and drove me to the hotel where Lady Nickerson was already.

There was a rehearsal for the wedding at St. George's Church which last about 30 minutes, and then a dinner engagement organised by the Hamilton's at Marks Club.

12 September	Reeth	5 drives	72 grouse with 138 shots
Healaugh Brow Down	20 birds, 36 shots		
Healaugh Brow Up	30 birds, 54 shots		
Healaugh Brow Down	4 birds, 9 shots		
Low Moor	6 birds, 13 shots		
Quarry	12 birds, 26 shots		

Bright, breezy, showery and cold. North westerly wind, gale force at times. Cloud cover mainly in the morning with brighter sunny spells in the afternoon. Temperature 11^{o}C.

Arrived late last night. George Graham had driven me from Rothwell and we had arrived after 10 p.m. George slept in the staff room as I wanted someone to stay in the house with me. I was fairly tired but was looking forward to the day's shooting.

Once dressed I went to the study to deal with some business matters and then I went to the dining room for my breakfast. Helen and Sebio had not come back to Middleton House as they were looking after Lady Nickerson who had remained there after the wedding. Marion was therefore to look after me and so I certainly looked forward to my breakfast. Marion knows just how I like my eggs done!

Having had my breakfast I returned to the study to discuss with George where we were going to shoot at Reeth. I thought we could go through Healaugh Brow and through Reeth village in the Range Rover. Paul Simpson would drive the Land Rover and take all the dogs. I thought he could help the beaters for a change as we were short of some.

I had a wonderful day's shooting. I really enjoyed it. I do feel that we really must get these grouse killed at Reeth. If we do not get disease this year then we shall get it next, if we don't get some of the grouse killed.

It was a cold, windy day and I looked forward to my bath on the journey home. I telephoned the office at Rothwell and asked them to tell Middleton House to get the tea ready and I would be home at 4.30 p.m. Miss Stanley had prepared my tea and it was hot and waiting for me just as I had requested. I dealt with some more mail, most of which had come via the fax as the postal strike is still causing havoc with the mail service. However, it was not long before I decided to go upstairs for a rest before dinner. I told the staff that I was not to be disturbed and asked Marion to wake me at 7.50 p.m. Sebio was not here so I was not to get my usual massage. I missed it.

13 September — Wemmergill — 6 drives — 85 grouse with 128 shots

Standards	23 birds, 38 shots
Corbus	18 birds, 27 shots
Green Grain	14 birds, 28 shots
Cock Lake	9 birds, 15 shots
Wemmergill Head	15 birds, 22 shots
Cock Lake	8 birds, 6 shots

Blustery north to north westerly wind of between 25 and 40 mph. Showery early on in the morning but clearing by 9.00 a.m. As the day progressed the cloud cover lifted and although there was the odd shower, it was bright and sunny in the afternoon.

Alex woke me at 7.00 a.m. as usual. I was down having my breakfast before Miss Stanley arrived at 7.40 a.m. I gave Alex a tape from my dictaphone to give to her as I wanted it typing out before I left for the moor that morning. By the time I had finished my breakfast the tape was on paper and I could then go through it with her. My mind was on the Cowie deal and I wanted that to take priority today.

As I was the guest of Lord Strathmore it was an early start as I had to be at the Hall at 8.45 a.m. Alex and George got me ready for the moor, making sure I had everything I would need and had clothing for every weather imaginable.

George drove me in the Range Rover. The car phone is not yet repaired, which is slightly annoying. Paul Simpson brought the dogs, and again I used him as an observer.

Once more, I had a super day shooting with Lord Strathmore. The fast, downwind grouse are a treat. Such a thrill to shoot, absolutely marvellous. It is essential that you keep your gun moving and keep it held firmly in your hand. The birds really are unbelievable. Such an enjoyable day!

By 4.30 p.m. I was back at Middleton House and sat at my desk in my study. Miss Stanley was nowhere to be seen when Paul Simpson and I arrived. However, a few minutes later she appeared having been upstairs with the plumber seeing to the toilet in my bedroom. I had been having trouble getting it to flush. I had hoped she was getting my tea, so I sent Paul to make me some. Marion had left out some chocolate biscuits for me which I really enjoyed.

There was quite a pile of paper waiting for my attention so I dealt with that and then Marcus phoned as he wanted to talk to me about various issues. Having spoken to him and having finished with the bulk of the paperwork, I went upstairs to have a bath which Paul had run for me. George and Paul gave me a massage and then I went to bed to rest before dinner.

14 September — Wemmergill — 6 drives — 40 grouse with 73 shots

Close House Up	6 birds, 11 shots
Close House Down	5 birds, 17 shots
Close House Up	2 birds, 8 shots
Wemmergill Head	17 birds, 21 shots
Allotments	4 birds, 8 shots
Allotments	6 birds, 8 shots

Odd shower, but much of the day was dry. There was a brisk northerly wind which was not as strong as yesterday. Some patches of cloud. Very like yesterday in temperature.

The postal strike was finally coming to an end. Things were not back to normal. It would take over a week before the backlog would be cleared but at least letters could be sent. Funnily enough, we received no post this morning.

Today I was to shoot with Tom Cowie as his guest. We met at Holwick Hall at the usual time, 8.45 a.m. George and Paul were with me as usual. It was quite an enjoyable day. I don't think much of the lunches. It was a good job that Marion, who always looks after me, had packed me a box with some duck and a couple of chocolate biscuits!

I managed to talk to Tom Cowie about our agreement. I will be a lot happier when it is all sorted out. I came back to Middleton House at about 4.45 p.m. and Miss Stanley timed it just right with a good hot pot of tea and some of Marion's jam tarts. I did enjoy them, and a couple of chocolate biscuits she had laid out for me. I have told her not to put any more out with my tea in future, it is too great a temptation and besides I stood on the scales this morning and the news was such that I only hope the scales are wrong!

I cleared my desk and then dictated a very long letter to Tom Cowie and asked Miss Stanley to type it and send it via facsimile that night. I was going to have my bath and then have a rest before dining alone. I told Miss Stanley the letter was very important and that she should send it in draft form, unseen by me. I asked George to tell Marion not to put the grouse in to cook until 7.45 p.m. so that I could have a good sleep. By this time it was getting fairly late.

At 7.50 p.m. I was woken by the phone. It was Louise. I did enjoy talking to her and we spoke for some length. When I came down to dinner Marion told me that Miss Stanley was still in the study working, so I went along and we managed to do a little more before I left to have my dinner. What dedication!

15 September	Holwick	5 drives	88 grouse with 147 shots

Slits 1	15 birds, 26 shots
Slits 2	32 birds, 52 shots
Sykes/Blae Beck	13 birds, 21 shots
Gully 1	22 birds, 39 shots
Gully 2	6 birds, 8 shots

Weather similar to yesterday, but more sunny and bright. Dry but some cloud cover and the odd shower at times. Wind north to north west in direction and 10-15 mph.

Set off this morning a little late as I was dealing with some business matters (Cowie) in the study. I finally left at 8.45 a.m. which is when I was supposed to meet everyone at Holwick Hall. We drove straight to Wemmergill which was what had been discussed the night before. Unfortunately, the party had changed their minds and had gone to Holwick instead. Tom Cowie's secretary had telephoned Miss Stanley at Middleton House to say that they had had to start the drive without me at the Slits. Miss Stanley tried to contact me on the car phone but it was not switched on. Luckily we realised our mistake and made for Holwick. They were in the middle of the first drive when we arrived, so I missed it. I didn't do too badly though as I shot a third of the total bag and I had missed the first drive and there were eight guns!

They were a nice group of people but they didn't know how to shoot. The trouble is, people with money can afford to shoot but they have not spent enough time shooting. They have spent most of their time making the money to enable them to shoot. This is why they have got so much money and that is why they are not able to shoot. It is a vicious circle.

It was a very enjoyable day and I came back quite tired and ready for a rest. Helen and Sebio had arrived that afternoon leaving Lady Nickerson at Rothwell with her family. They were coming up tomorrow. I was glad to see Sebio back and I immediately asked him to run me a bath and then give me a massage. I then had a sleep before dinner.

16 September	Reeth	5 drives	47 grouse with 78 shots

Watercragg	6 birds, 12 shots
Lady Mary Up	14 birds, 20 shots
Watercragg	6 birds, 11 shots
Lady Mary	8 birds, 15 shots
Winterings	13 birds, 20 shots

Dry, moderate north westerly wind between 10 and 20 mph. Variable. Mostly high cloud and temperatures of 10°C.

I 'phoned Mark Alderson this morning to discuss where to shoot. We decided to shoot at Lady Mary and then if the weather was still good tomorrow, we would go to Brownsea and the High Moor. I had a good talk with him and asked him if there were any disease problems, and said that I thought we might need some extra beaters on the 17th and wondered if we could drive a bit in. Ian Plaskitt could probably help. I was really looking forward to the day's shooting. It didn't matter how many we shot.

It was a good team. All the guns were connected with financial services. The Hon. William Grosvenor, a relative of the Duke of Westminster, owns Wheatsheaf Investments and he shoots regularly with Charles Wyvill. He was a good shot. Then Robert Andrews was an American, as was Ken Davidson who owns Davidson Capital, New York Financial Services. Another American was Bruce Waterfall of Morgan Waterfall and Vintiadis Inc. who was shooting with his wife. Both had shot before. Lord Poltimore was British and he was Head of the 19th Century Picture Department at Christies. Finally, Paul Dupee, also American, who had made his money in property.

Charles Wyvill had arrranged 3 loaders, and Mark Alderson had organised the remaining 4 loaders. I, of course had George to load for me. Paul to observe and Ian to look after the dogs. I thoroughly enjoyed the day and it was quite late when we finally returned to Middleton House. Lady Nickerson and her family had gone to York and they arrived after me. I was up in my bedroom at that time having my usual massage and bath and generally unwinding before dinner.

17 September	Reeth	5 drives	48 grouse with 90 shots

Slades	17 birds, 25 shots
Ashpots Up	3 birds, 8 shots
Ashpots Down	4 birds, 8 shots
Kearton Pasture	18 birds, 38 shots
Low Moor Wall	6 birds, 11 shots

Dry, cloudy at first, but patchy. High cloud base and no fog on the hills. Light north westerly wind, 10 mph. Temperature 14°C on high ground.



John Thompson, JN, Tom Cowie, David Nickerson, Robert Nickerson, Charles Nickerson





Lady Nickerson, Peter Dennis, Susie Dean, Ann Dennis, Andree Vilmorin, Patrick Dean, JN





Paul Simpson, George Graham, Ian Plaskitt, Eddie McAlinden (Stublick), Mark Alderson and Michael Southgate (both at Reeth)



This morning Alex had to stitch my tee-shirt at the shoulder. Sebio massaged my right calf while I ate my breakfast. I consider myself very lucky as today is the sixth consecutive day this week that I have been shooting.

It was a lovely sunny day, good weather for shooting. I did not do much work in the study as Miss Stanley was not in. George, Paul and Ian accompanied me as usual. We met at Surrender Bridge as we had done the previous day. I was looking forward to shooting as yesterday had been so enjoyable. There were a lot of grouse, but the guns were not such good shots, so the total bag was not as good as it could have been. The opportunities were there but the skill and experience were not.

If you want to hit these grouse, particularly when they have gone through the line behind, you must swing and swing fast. You must move quickly and as I get older I do not know whether I will be able to move fast. At seventy-four I can quicken myself up, but you must remember to quicken yourself up. I am certainly shooting well. I have a wonderful average for cartridges. We use both guns and we shoot everything behind other people. It is extraordinary. I am so happy and content. I hope I stay like this. I wonder whether it is the 28 bores that are helping me to keep swinging at this age. They must have something to do with it as they are light guns.

I had a most enjoyable day. I think Paul Dupee and the whole party did too. The weather stayed fine and Charles Wyvill provided an excellent lunch, unlike the lunches provided by the Strathmores!

The house was full again with Lady Nickerson's family.

19 September	Stublick	4 drives	22 grouse with 37 shots
Half Moon	2 birds, 3 shots		
Chairmans	11 birds, 20 shots		
High Eschells	5 birds, 6 shots		
Low Eschells	4 birds, 8 shots		

Dry, very sunny and bright. Variable amount of cloud. Wind light to moderate, westerly in direction. 15-25 mph.

We were going to shoot at Reeth today but I changed my mind so that I could see first hand the situation at Stublick. I know Eddie MacAlindon had wanted to leave the grouse and not shoot at all this season, due to the poor numbers. However, I needed to go there myself. There were not many grouse there as he had said, but they were beautifully driven in by eight keepers who were beating.

We lunched in the open air as it was such a beautiful day. Eddie did a good job and we really had a good time. It was great fun. After lunch we just did one drive and came home for tea and cake. I went back to my study to do some work, but before long I was upstairs and having had my bath, Paul and Sebio gave me a massage.

Lady Nickerson had left first thing this morning to take her family to London to catch their plane home, so I was entertaining my guests alone. Marcus Edmundson and Mike Kerrigan arrived at about 9.30 p.m. for the board meeting tomorrow. They stayed with the Keys and me.

21 September	Reeth	5 drives	59 grouse with 112 shots
High Moor Down	8 birds, 16 shots		
High Moor Up	13 birds, 26 shots		
Murrayfield Up	8 birds, 15 shots		
Murrayfield Down	14 birds, 22 shots		
Barras Edge	16 birds, 33 shots		

Today was the anniversary of the death of John William so I asked George to remind me to shoot a volley for him.

We decided to take all the dogs, the little spaniel, Teal and Sweep. Eddie MacAlindon came from Stublick to help beat and Peter Fawcett was going to come tomorrow. Ian Yates would drive my Range Rover and take Archie and myself.

We had another good day shooting and it managed to stay dry for us. We drove back at about 6.00 p.m. and I worked until 6.30 p.m. in the study. I had some tea and crumpets and then went upstairs for my bath and Sebio gave me a massage.

Lady Nickerson returned from London, arriving at 7.15 p.m. at Darlington Station. She managed to get here in time for dinner, which we held until 8.15 p.m.

22 September	Reeth	5 drives	70 grouse with 125 shots

Murrayfield Up	18 birds, 27 shots
Murrayfield Down	6 birds, 13 shots
Dr. Ghyll	8 birds, 14 shots
Ashpots	29 birds, 46 shots
Kearton Pasture	9 birds, 25 shots

Patchy low cloud. Generally cloudy. Major area of showers came in from the west and so showers developed and became prolonged by the afternoon. Visibility was poor. Winds were light but became stronger, 25 mph and south to south west in direction.

Spoke to Mark Alderson to find out what the weather was like at Reeth and also to decide on the moor. It had been showery, but it was now dry and the weather was going to get worse tomorrow, so we thought we would go to the High Moor today. There were going to be plenty of beaters. We had four good shots today so we would probably shoot more birds today than we would tomorrow with twice as many guns. I thought that if the weather was going to get worse then we could shoot the Low Moor then.

We decided to do the Winterings, Ashpot and then Kearton Pasture across the road and to the new butts. We would lunch at the Old Gang.

I telephoned Charles Wyvill to arrange a time to meet him. We were going to leave at 9.00 a.m. so would be there at 9.45 a.m. I told him to tell Maggie to meet us at 12.30 p.m. at the Old Gang for lunch and Lady Nickerson would also be there. Charles told me that he had been shooting at Danby for the last two days and they had shot an average of 80 brace per day there with moderate guns. I said that we had been at Stublick on Monday and we had had a jolly good day but there were very few grouse. Unlike Angram where there were lots.

As I said, we left Middleton House at 9.00 a.m. and took the same vehicles and dogs as yesterday. I travelled with George as usual.

We had a really enjoyable day and were late in returning home. I telephoned the office at Rothwell and told them to inform the staff at Middleton to have tea ready for 6.00 p.m. I was very tired when I got back and I went straight up to my room. My tea was brought up to me and Sebio came up to massage me. I asked Miss Stanley to bring up my mail and we dealt with that before I had my bath and changed for dinner.

The guests arrived at various intervals that evening. Michael Jopling arriving for drinks at 7.30 p.m. already dressed for dinner.

23 September	Reeth	3 drives	29 grouse with 55 shots 1 Snipe

Low Moor Down	11 birds, 12 shots
Low Moor Up	13 birds, 21 shots
Low Moor Down	5 birds, 14 shots

Very wet and windy. The worst weather was experienced up until late morning. It then brightened up but there were some heavy bursts until it cleared. The wind picked up as the day progressed, and was west to north west. There was some hill fog first thing in the day.

Today was a dreadful day for shooting, in fact it was a dreadful day full stop. The weather forecasters had said it was a day to stay tucked up in bed!

However, I had guests who I had invited to shoot and I wanted to at least try to get some shooting in. While I had my breakfast Miss Stanley telephoned the weather centre to see if the weather was going to improve. The news was not very optimistic. She then phoned Mark Alderson to find out if the conditions were any better at Reeth. He said that there had been some showers but that it was now clear.

When I had had my breakfast I telephoned Mark. We decided on the Low Moor, which really was the only option open to us. We would have lunch at the lower hut. I told Mark that we would meet him at 9.50 a.m.

I was not very optimistic about the day ahead but we set off with the intention to make the best of it. We arrived just before 10 o'clock and left the cars at the bottom lunch hut. We had had two good days' shooting. I had loved the shooting, it had been proper sport.

Mark had arranged the three loaders for the guests and so when we had allocated the various guests with the relevant loaders we prepared to shoot.

The weather really was awful and after 3 drives we stopped for lunch. It was a welcome break, being out of the wind and rain. Lady Nickerson had come out to meet us for lunch and had brought her guns. However, having eaten we decided to abandon shooting for the rest of the day, which was a disappointment, but the gale force wind and rain prevented us from continuing.

We set off for Middleton House, wet and cold. Sir Alex Alexander had had to leave for London due to business and so we would be one gun short tomorrow.

Having reached Middleton I chose to go straight up to bed and woke up at 6.00 p.m. to give Miss Stanley some instructions and make sure that she was coming in on Saturday morning to get me off shooting.

I then had another rest and dressed and came down for dinner. The guests had been amusing themselves by playing cards.

24 September	Reeth	5 drives	33 grouse with 61 shots

Water Cragg	6 birds, 8 shots
Lady Mary Down	5 birds, 7 shots
Slades	9 birds, 20 shots
Ashpots	6 birds, 10 shots
Barras Flats	7 birds, 16 shots

Windy but not as strong as yesterday. Westerly wind of 30 mph. Showery, but few and far between. Visibility quite good in between showers. Cloud broken. Temperatures much the same as yesterday.

I telephoned Mark Alderson as usual and we decided to have three downwind drives to start with and then have lunch. We would then do Ashpots in the afternoon.

The guns were to be much the same as yesterday with the exception of Sir Alex Alexander and Wing Commander Simon Bostock. I wanted to organise some guns for next week, so asked Miss Stanley to phone Ian and Charles and ask them if they were available for some late grouse shooting. I also had some correspondence to deal with concerning Tom Cowie before I left, so dictated a draft letter for my approval which was to be sent once I had gone shooting.

I calculated that we were averaging 70 grouse per day, that is my personal bag, for this season. I had young Paul Simpson as a runner and I took two of my dogs.

You really have to remember to keep moving the gun when these birds have got past you. It is no good moving the gun when they are swinging sideways or coming towards you. You must also move the gun when they have got behind you. It is no good shooting at a moving target with a stationary gun. You have got to keep moving.

This year I have gone in for a four-legged stool for sitting on, I find it much more restful than a shooting stick. It takes the weight off your legs much better, and off your hips. If you have a fair weight to support, like I have, it is a good idea to have a stool I think! For most of my life I have never sat on a stick, I always thought you missed too many chances, but I find it very good as I get older.

Today Wemmergill got 220½ brace at the Close House. They have shot 6,767 brace up to tonight. That is on Wemmergill and Holwick.

26 September	Wemmergill	6 drives	45 grouse with 81 shots

The Moss	11 birds, 15 shots
Long Grain	6 birds, 9 shots
JN Drive	7 birds, 11 shots
Allotment Wall	10 birds, 23 shots
Allotment 1	5 birds, 8 shots
Allotment 2	6 birds, 15 shots

Gale force wind coming from the west to south west. Wind stronger in morning that in the afternoon. 30/40 mph with gusts of 50 mph. One or two showers but brief. Temperature mild, but chilling with the wind.

Spoke to Peter Fawcett this morning to find out where we were going to shoot. He explained that we could drive the Range Rover nearer to the Wall and number 6 butt, there was a track giving us the chance to get nearer to the line of butts. I asked him if we needed to get to Holwick Hall at 8.45 a.m. as I was running late and hoped to catch the party before they left. Peter thought that as long as I arrived before 9.10 a.m. I should manage.

We had three drives before lunch and then after lunch the drive over the Wall was very good, and so was the one back. However, the sixth drive was awful. I was so frustrated, I only shot 45 birds with 81 shots.

I think it is interesting to note that on some moors the birds pack more than on others. On the Cleveland moors in Yorkshire the birds never seem to pack. They are quite confidential grouse for almost all of the season. It is quite extraordinary. I think the degree that the grouse get used to the human being is an interesting study.

When there are a lot of footpaths, like there are at Reeth on the Low Moor, an odd covey or two of grouse walk about and just look at you. Thank God there are not many that do that, it would put you off altogether!

At Angram today they shot 30 brace. There were a lot of grouse, but the wind was strong so it was difficult to connect.

27 September	Wemmergill	6 drives	59 grouse with 143 shots

Shot Sike	5 birds, 11 shots
Shot Sike Down	19 birds, 47 shots
Top Row	9 birds, 23 shots
Shipka	3 birds, 11 shots
Shipka	13 birds, 30 shots
Shipka	10 birds, 21 shots

Slightly less wind today, 30-35 mph with gusts up to 45 mph. West to south westerly in direction. Cloudy in the morning and patchy rain, showers getting heavier at midday when the cloud descended and it became misty. Temperatures of between 9 and 10° C.

Brendan woke me this morning. Alex had taken a week off to move his things to Rothwell and get settled in, so I was having to do without a valet. We had taken on a temporary butler, Brendan, so he was helping me.

I came down to the study as usual before breakfast and saw Miss Stanley. I phoned Peter who told me we were going to the South Side. George Graham and I discussed whether to take the Moreover. The sledge would take us as far as the bottom peg. If there was a river to cross the Moreover would not get us across it, so we decided there was no need to take it.

We set off for Holwick Hall, meeting as usual at 8.45 a.m. I found the grouse very hard to hit today. I think they were the most difficult grouse of the season. When I looked down the line of guns they were not killing the birds. We had 70 by lunch and I really thought the total bag would have been greater. However, it is not the numbers that matter, it is who you are shooting with. That is the most important thing. To shoot the birds with people you like is much more fun.

We left fairly quickly yesterday, so in order that we should not appear rude today we did not rush back to Middleton House. When we did eventually arrive back I made my way to the study to do some work and have my tea. It was not long before I went upstairs to rest before dinner.

The MacDonald-Halls were arriving in time for dinner, as was Charles Hughesdon. However, Jeremy Soames was staying at Holwick Hall with the Strathmores in view of the fact that he was arriving very late.

28 September	Holwick	6 drives	90 grouse with 135 shots

Nickle Hopple	8 birds, 9 shots
Mire Hole	9 birds, 14 shots
Black Arc	3 birds, 7 shots
Slits Down	18 birds, 27 shots
Slits Up	43 birds, 63 shots
Juniper	9 birds, 15 shots

Breezy, with wind south westerly and 25-35 mph. Occasional showers, some heavy. Also a little mist and fog. There were, however, some gaps in between the showers. It was sunny in the afternoon but still cold on the top of the hillside, 7° C.

Telephoned Peter Fawcett. I told him I wanted to go out and get as many birds as I could. We thought at first that after lunch we would do the Sykes, but changed our minds to the Slits. We then considered the drive at the bottom, Juniper, and decided on that. If the wind kept up the drive up Black Arc would lead to a good drive down the Slits.

We needed one loader for Jeremy Soames and Peter thought Les Sewell would be the best man for the job. Ian Plaskitt would load for Charles Hughesdon and, of course, Paul Simpson would be my runner and observer. Peter Fawcett would be picking up the birds.

As there were 9 butts in each drive, we left the butts on each end empty. We had Teal, Blaze and the young bitch with us. I was really looking forward to the day.

I came home around 5.00 p.m. and worked for a while in the study. Then Sam MacDonald-Hall came in to say goodbye, so I joined my guests for a cup of tea before they left. I then went back to my study to tidy up a few loose ends and then went to bed.

29 September	Reeth	5 drives	78 grouse with 133 shots
Healaugh Brow Up	17 birds, 26 shots		
Healaugh Brow Down	28 birds, 39 shots		
Low Moor Down	9 birds, 22 shots		
Quarry Down	12 birds, 20 shots		
Top Gill	12 birds, 26 shots		

Fresh north westerly wind. Speed 20-25 mph in the morning, but dropped to 15 mph by lunchtime. Better day than yesterday. Possibility existed of one or two showers. It felt warmer today because there was less wind. It was a bright, sunny day with little cloud.

I left Middleton House at 8.45 a.m. George drove me over in the Range Rover to the C & B Hotel at Arkengarth Dale and I met Charles punctually at 9.30 a.m. He had driven up from Binbrook at 7.00 a.m. We went on to Healaugh Brow on the Low Moor and we had a down wind drive. It was a strong wind, but it was cold and it was fine and the visibility was good. The birds were very fast. I was in the third butt from the foot of the hill and I stayed in that for the return drive.

The grouse were terrifically sporting. You really had to keep your gun moving and I was secretly pleased with the accuracy of the 28 bores. We turned around and brought them back. Allan, who is a perfect flanker, was just under the bottom and one big pack came and he just switched them up and I let them get right for the wind, exactly right for the wind and then set about them. I had seven shots into them and it had a rather devastating effect. Of course, seven out of a big pack doesn't make a big difference. However, it was seven less, and it was rather well done because the wind brought them back. The thing to do is to let them get so that they have to get through the line before you give them the first bang, or get them where they are frightened and they hang in the air. You can then change guns and we did, with great rapidity. George was excellent. I had seventeen to my own gun on the first, and twenty eight on the second.

Then we moved up opposite the lunch hut at the other side of the Low Moor and I went into the third butt from the left, and Charles was in the second butt. He shot well and he had a better shoot than I did. He had more stuck at him but he did very well indeed. Down wind grouse going like mad!

At lunch we had at the Low Moor, just the two of us, we had 47 brace. As many as we had yesterday and we had seven guns on Holwick.

Then we went to the Quarry near Reeth village and they were trickly. I missed a few birds there on my right. I was thinking about it since then and they were dropping. Those birds were sidling away downhill and I was shooting over the top of them. Anyway, we had a good do there and then we went to Mark's new drive and it looked most unlikely. It didn't look as if they would come with the wind where it was, but they came beautifully. Charles got 20 birds and I got a dozen. He had the better of it, but having said that, he shot well. I had a few more birds falling away on my left this time. The other way round and they were dropping. I missed two or three there.

The bag was 73½ brace, father and son, and we finished shooting at about 4.10 p.m. We had the bag all laid out and took a photograph and it was quite unique to have such a performance, father and son. Just had a sharp shower during the last drive, otherwise it had been a lovely day, clear, sunny day. One of those days that are the cream of cream.

Victor, Mirose and Francois Desprez arrived at Teeside Airport with Mme. A. de Vilmorin at 21.25 and we arranged for a taxi to collect them and bring them to Middleton House. They were not therefore in time for dinner. However, we did have the Denton's to dine with us and Robert.

30 September	Reeth	2 drives	17 grouse with 36 shots
Slade	6 birds, 10 shots		
Ashpots	11 birds, 26 shots		

The wind was lighter than yesterday, only 10-15 mph and north westerly in direction. A dry, fine day, cold first thing in the morning and a slight touch of frost underfoot. Temperature 11° C.

Wemmergill was not being shot today or tomorrow and Peter Fawcett tells me roughly 7,300 brace have been shot to date.

Sebio had to help me dress this morning as Brendan the temporary butler had left yesterday afternoon and we had not managed to obtain a replacement. As usual, I phoned Mark Alderson to discuss the plan for the day and then spoke to George Graham about the loaders and the vehicles to be taken.

Having done that, I went to the dining room for breakfast and after having our photographs taken at the door of Middleton House we left for the moors. I travelled in the Bentley with the Desprez's and George drove us.

Lady Nickerson and the other women joined the party in time for lunch having spent the morning shopping. I had to leave the moor at lunchtime to drive to Leeds for Louise's graduation.

I had arranged to meet Louise and her mother at 3.00 p.m. at the Queens Hotel, but this morning Louise had phoned to change the plans. They were going shopping and preferred to meet me outside the Parkinson building at the University. George and I arrived in Leeds in plenty of time, so we stopped for a cup of tea. Then as arranged I met Mrs. Erna and Louise and we went to the Great Hall. After the ceremony, I telephoned the office to get all the news and also to inform Middleton House that I would be arriving at about 8.00 o'clock that evening.

When I got back I was so tired I went straight upstairs to my room and asked for my dinner to be brought up on a tray.

Edward had been expected to arrive that night to shoot the next day, but Robert seemed to think that he was not coming after all. Mrs. Gething managed to contact a colleague at the College and he confirmed that Edward was spending the weekend in Cambridge with a friend.

1 October | Reeth | 5 drives | 26 grouse with 69 shots

Barras Flat	4 birds, 7 shots
Barras Edge	6 birds, 13 shots
Low Moor Wall	5 birds, 20 shots
Dr. Ghyll Up	5 birds, 18 shots
Hurdle Butts	6 birds, 11 shots

A dry, bright sunny day with good visibility. Wind was light in the morning, but it increased in strength and by the afternoon it was 20-25 mph and southerly in direction. Temperature was 6° C on the hillside.

Miss Stanley was not here today to help me get off shooting. Instead I enlisted the help of John Denton. I telephoned the weather centre for the forecast and then Mark Alderson to decide where we were going to shoot. We chose the Low Moor because of the direction and strength of the wind.

We set off at the usual time with George driving and arrived at Surrender Bridge where we met Mark. Paul was being my runner and observer and Ian was looking after the dogs. Barbara Denton was out on the moor with us, watching which she usually does.

We had a very enjoyable day even though the bag was not particularly impressive. It is going to be some task to beat Ripon. I may have to shoot some of the rest days I had planned.

Robert left after shooting and the other guests remained for dinner. The Desprez's were leaving at 6.00 o'clock the next morning and we had arranged for a taxi to collect them and take them to Teeside Airport.

3 October | Reeth | 5 drives | 46 grouse with 84 shots

Murrayfield Up	2 birds, 4 shots
Murrayfield Down	13 birds, 27 shots
Ashpots	10 birds, 16 shots
Kearton Pasture	9 birds, 18 shots
Kearton Ghyll	12 birds, 18 shots

Some mist, but this cleared early in the morning. Bright sunny periods. Light wind from the south, maximum speed of 15-18 mph.

Talked to Mark in the morning and told him that the wind was to be moving to the south. He was short of beaters because they were out gathering sheep. I thought Paddy Shillington could arrange for some men to come from the Army, but this was not feasible. We decided to do the two Murrayfields, Ashpots - three downwind drives, and then we would go to Kearton Pasture and stand in the butts, keeping the beaters back.

I spoke to Rosie and her mother to wish her all the best at Cambridge. Her mother was going to drive her there that morning and was going to get her settled into the flat. It is very modern, a ground floor flat. I told her to be careful and not talk to strange men and women. Louise had gone to Cirencester yesterday and found she had a line to her room but no phone. I asked Mrs. Erna to buy her a handset. Rosie seemed quite happy that we had Judy here at Middleton House and she asked me to take her out and work her whenever possible.

When I had had my breakfast I returned to my study and I talked to George and then to Mike Kerrigan. I wanted him to come up on Wednesday night so that I could go over a few things with him before he went on holiday. I then phoned Nicholas Waugh and asked him about the farm, Reads Island, and the progress of the clover.

I then went out to shoot. We had a good day, very enjoyable.

On my return I found Miss Stanley in the study. I had my tea and toast and marmite while doing some work. I then went off to my room to rest but on my way I stopped to talk to my guests. While I was talking to them Brian Dummer arrived from Rothwell. I asked him to come up and see me to go over the mail he had brought. Miss Stanley telephoned the keepers and obtained the weather forecast before going home.

4 October	Reeth	5 drives	51 grouse with 82 shots
Blades Up	15 birds, 27 shots		
Blades Down	5 birds, 8 shots		
JN Drive	12 birds, 16 shots		
Chamney Hurdle	9 birds, 17 shots		
Kearton Ghyll	10 birds, 14 shots		

Dry, cloudy start to the day. Good visibility. Heavy rain towards the evening. The wind was southerly and 15-18 mph. Temperature 8^{o} C.

I asked Miss Stanley to phone the weather centre while I phoned Mark Alderson. Mr. Dummer took notes. We decided on Kearton Pasture towards the wall to start with, and then considered Slades Head. This would be no good however as we would have to face the wind. We decided to start at that end of the moor and then we could do Murrayfield. In the event we did Blades and the JN drive and then on to Kearton Ghyll.

Before I left the moor I telephoned Mike Kerrigan and told him to bring his shooting clothes so that we could go out on Reeth and I could shoot. We could then discuss business over lunch in the hut. I told him to get a report ready to bring with him on Wednesday. He was supposed to be attending the Professional Panel meeting, but I told him to drop everything and get on with my report which was far more important.

I then left to go shooting. Again I had a most enjoyable day, and returned satisfied and ready for my bath and massage. I got Sebio and Ian to massage me and then had a rest.

5 October	Reeth	5 drives	61 grouse with 110 shots
Barras Edge	15 birds, 32 shots		
Kearton Ghyll Down	11 birds, 20 shots		
Kearton Ghyll Up	5 birds, 8 shots		
Murrayfield Down	6 birds, 15 shots		
Slades	24 birds, 35 shots		

Wind moderate and westerly. Dry for the majority of the day, but it was a wet start and there was the occasional shower during the day. Temperature of 8^{o} C.

Spoke to Mark as usual. He said that there was little wind so we could go on to the High Moor. There are a lot of grouse there. I told him that I didn't like the little drive off the top which we did yesterday, so we wouldn't do that one. I thought we would go where all the grouse are, and do the big drive on the North Moor. We would do the Low Moor tomorrow.

We decided against the Lady Mary drives and instead to Kearton, Murrayfield and Barras. I thought there were a nice lot of birds there. We would have lunch at the Old Gang.

It was a good day for shooting. The weather was fine and there were plenty of birds. I thoroughly enjoyed the day and so did my guests.

When we arrived home I had tea and crumpets, but had to send Sebio back with the crumpets as they were cold. I had had cold teacakes the day before and I was fed up with it. When he returned they were piping hot and I really enjoyed them. I went over a few things with Brian in readiness for the meeting with Mike Kerrigan the next day. Then it was off to bed for a rest.

Mike arrived at about 6.45 p.m. with a car load of provisions from Rothwell which had to be unpacked. There were only the four of us for dinner and once finished Mike, Brian and I retired to the study to do some work. Brian took notes of the meeting and we had a very productive and lengthy session. It was after midnight when we finally brought it to an end. Poor Brian had to make some notes for Miss Stanley before he managed to retire. I had asked him to come out on the moor with Mike and I the following day, which he had not expected. He therefore had to make notes and leave messages so that Miss Stanley could carry out the instructions that I had given him and which he had thought he would deal with tomorrow. I wanted him to be with us so that he could take any notes.

6 October	Reeth	3 drives	23 grouse with 57 shots

Low Moor Down	3 birds, 10 shots
Quarry Down	13 birds, 32 shots
Quarry Down	7 birds, 15 shots

Overnight rain cleared early in the morning. Thereafter it was a bright day with sunny spells and occasional showers. Wind strengthened as the day progressed and by midday it was up to gale force. The rain became prolonged and as the wind was strong it appeared very wet. The wind was westerly and the temperature was 12^{o} C.

Talked to Mark Alderson. I told him that I was shooting on my own and I was very excited. It was as if I had not shot before. The wind was coming from the west so the question was which side to choose. We thought the Arkengarth side would be the best bet. Mark would leave a man at the pub and if the wind changed to a northerly direction then we could change our plans.

We would shoot downwind to start with and then have lunch in the hut. Tomorrow and Saturday would be a rest for Mark. I asked him to try and get a fire going in the hut so that it would be nice and warm there for us while we had our chat.

As it happened, the wind was so strong that by lunchtime we had to abandon shooting. We had our lunch and then got down to business. The three of us had a long discussion. Brian took notes and contributed to the meeting at times. I sent young Ian back to Middleton House so that he could set off early for Rothwell and have a few days there.

We returned to the house at about 4.30 p.m. Mike had gone straight home from the moor and Brian had returned with me to stay another night. We went over a few things and then I went to have a bath and I advised Brian to follow my example if he was not to catch a chill. We would meet at 7.00 p.m. in my study before dinner. Brian had haddock for dinner as he is allergic to lobster and it looked so good that I had Marion cook me a piece to try!

Miss Stanley took dictation over the phone in the study. I spoke to John Thompson and Peter Braithwaite and then went to sleep again.

There were no guests staying with us tonight. It was a good thing too as we were just having dinner when there was a power cut and all the lights went out! Alex had to find some candles so that Marion could finish cooking our dinner and Lady Nickerson and I had a rather unexpected romantic dinner by candlelight!

7 October	Wemmergill	3 drives	28 grouse with 56 shots
Green Grain	7 birds, 17 shots		
Corbus	13 birds, 23 shots		
Cock Lake	8 birds, 16 shots		

Very strong winds. West to north west in direction. Speeds reached 50 mph at times. Very little cloud cover and only the odd shower.

Brian Dummer left this morning to return to Rothwell. He had been a great help over the past week.

The weather forecast did not look too favourable. The winds were going to be the problem. However, I set off looking forward to whatever shooting I was going to get.

The grouse were better than I was today. They did have a certain amount of help from the gales that were blowing. They came straight at me at a tremendous speed in direct flight. They dropped and rose and made it extremely difficult to hit them. In fact as far as I was concerned, they were virtually impossible to hit!

I shot 28 birds with 56 shots in 3 drives on the Low Moor on the North Side. We had one drive at the lunch hut butts and two at the Quarry. It was a waste of cartridges and brought my ratio of shots to birds down.

I attempted to take a few long shots using number 5, and I fetched longish birds down. However, the wind became so strong that we were forced to abandon shooting after lunch. The wind really battered me and I was quite exhausted when I returned just before 2.00 p.m. I had a cup of tea in my bedroom, bathed and went to sleep. I awoke at around 5.00 p.m. and dealt over the phone with my post.

8 October	Wemmergill	6 drives	65 grouse with 107 shots
Allotment Wall	21 birds, 28 shots		
Allotment 1	5 birds, 11 shots		
Allotment 2	9 birds, 18 shots		
Ghyll	5 birds, 9 shots		
Allotment 1	22 birds, 39 shots		
Allotment 2	3 birds, 7 shots		

Quite a bright morning with a passing shower or two. The wind was north westerly but turned south westerly later in the day. It started raining after 2.00 p.m. but they were light showers. Then it became dry again. Wind speed was between 20 and 25 mph. Maximum temperature of 16° C.

Spoke to Peter Fawcett this morning. I told him there was no need to tell Tom Cowie that we had spoken though! We discussed where we would be shooting today. Then I went through some things with Alex regarding the packing for the Island and went to have my breakfast. I was going to come back to the house briefly to pick Lady Nickerson up before setting off for Reads Island.

We had a good day's shooting. It was good to have some decent weather after so many days where the wind and rain hindered the sport.

We returned to the house just about 4.30 p.m. and it was not long before George was driving Lady Nickerson and myself in the Bentley on our way to the Island. We were going to spend a couple of nights there so that I could shoot some duck, then travel to Rothwell on Monday and visit the farm.

9 October	Reads Island	Morning and Evening Flight
Morning Flight - East End		4 Teal 4 Widgeon
Evening Flight - West End		4 Teal 3 Widgeon

I killed 8 Teal and 7 Widgeon, a total of 15 ducks. Will Jacob loaded, Ian Plaskitt was with Judy, Rosie's young spaniel and Sweep, my labrador and picked up. They didn't lose a thing.

I was up at 7.00 a.m, a light breakfast, and to East End new pond that's organised with fresh water. Saw about 200 widgeon in all, no teal to speak of, and not a single mallard. I would have been better out on the Green Shore. Widgeon have been busy there and were busy there this morning and there were plenty of droppings. So I stayed at the new pond. I missed at widgeon twice rather badly. Picked up 14 and 4 and went back to the house at 11.30 a.m. and had a cup of tea in bed. Up at 1.10 p.m. Lunch of duck pate, cold ham, pork pie and damsons.

A long talk after lunch, most illuminating. I've taken all the notes for the resident Les Burbidge. They are good people and they've worked hard. The real threat is from the north where erosion is now so serious only six or seven metres remain before the house and the lot is in danger. Discussed and planned the new bank as close to the house as possible behind the existing bank. This will involve moving the farm, the shed and the generator, and crossing the pond, and this will have to have the highest priority.

George Graham drove us down yesterday from Middleton, arriving at Ferriby at 6.30 p.m. The journey via the Humber Bridge took 2¼ hours. I had been shooting as a gun in the Cowie party on the Allotments at Wemmergill that day, about 160 brace. I killed 21 brace and a black cock myself. Half an hour after high water there were no steps on to or off the boat. Fit for an Admiral, a perfect crossing. The boat was spotless. The chariot carrier has been covered in and is much improved, but it is punishment to have to ride the bumps.

A happy evening. We tried two new products from Cherry Valley, an improved version of the duck pate, and the Duck Cashurai as we are preparing for Trust House Fortes, and it is going very well at Heathrow I hear. Bakewell 75 went well. Eugenie had brought some goodies and dinner was quite excellent. Another 15 grouse required to make the third thousand to my 28 bores. 8000 brace when we were on Holwick, 2,200 brace at Reeth, and Stean 6,000 approximately, Stublick 160 approximately, Angram 500 approximately.

Well, on Sunday, after we'd had our talk, to the West End and Jenny was with us still. The new pond which has a pump to regulate the depth, the sides are 3 inches to 8 inches and it is shallow all over. We arrived there at 3.10 p.m. and stayed until 7.10 and it seemed a very long time indeed. A very poor show, nothing tried to get into the pond, although Mrs. Debbie says it has been fed since mid-August and she has always told me the truth. She didn't say that, I'm saying that she has as far as I know.

When all the mud banks were covered there was an enormous flight of waders on the flood. It was so exciting to see the vast hoards of godwits and curlews and shank, etc. Teal came back from the west, high, and not interested in the island. I picked three widgeons at flight proper, that's all. The bag was 4 teal, 3 widgeon - 7 for four hours evening out. The pink feet talked to me as they flew up the river, not high at all. After foxhounds, perhaps the most thrilling sport noise.

Back for a whisky. The bag for the day was 8 teal, 7 widgeon, a total of 15. Will Jacob loaded, Ian Plaskitt with Judy, Rosie's young spaniel, and Sweep the labrador. Didn't lose a single bird.

11 October	Reeth	6 drives	59 grouse with 120 shots
Low Moor Up	2 birds, 2 shots		
West Ghyll	13 birds, 19 shots		
Healaugh Brow	11 birds, 30 shots		
Healaugh Brow	12 birds, 26 shots		
Healaugh Brow	11 birds, 24 shots		
Low Moor West Wall	10 birds, 19 shots		

Foggy in morning. Wind south easterly but becoming north easterly by about 3.00 p.m. and 15-30 mph. Some sunny periods and no heavy rain until around 5.00 p.m.

Spoke to Mark Alderson whilst Alex called the weather centre on the other phone in the hall. He seemed to be taking an age and I had to get Miss Stanley to go and hurry him up.

I told Mark I had seen a nice show of grouse on the top of the moor. I thought we could do either one side of the Low Moor or the other and Healaugh Brow over the Wall. I told him that I thought the new butts he had made were good. We arranged to meet Alan at the C & B and we would lunch at the Low Moor. I hoped we would get a good day in with any luck, that depended on whether the fog cleared.

In the event, we had a jolly good day, Robert and I. I shot 59 birds. That means that I need to shoot 391 birds over the next 9 days to beat Ripon. My mental arithmetic calculated that I would need to shoot an average of 43½ birds per day to do it, my new target!

I telephoned the office at Rothwell from the car on the way home from Reeth and then phoned Middleton House to let them know that I was going to arrive around 5.50 p.m. As usual, I had my tea and crumpet with marmite in the study and dealt with the mail. Sebio massaged my legs with the machine and then I went upstairs.

12 October	Reeth	4 drives	26 grouse with 58 shots
West Wall	2 birds, 9 shots		
Ashpots	13 birds, 29 shots		
Winterings	6 birds, 11 shots		
JN Drive	5 birds, 9 shots		

Very messyday. Patchy low cloud descending to 500 feet. Patchy fog. Occasional bursts of rain which were not heavy but appeared so because of the wind. Wind was moderate, 25 mph and easterly. The temperature was approximately 7° C.

Paddy Shillington arrived at Middleton House this morning at about 7.10 a.m. He was due to arrive at 7.45 a.m. but he had made good time and was early. He brought a mail package with him and we went through that. I asked him to go round the house with Alex and see what repairs needed to be done. He could also help Alex organise my things for Spain.

I telephoned Mark. I thought we could go to Healaugh Brow and down to Reeth village. We had had a very good drive last night. I thought we could drive the whole moor, it would be worth trying!

I told him we would not be too early and would arrive at Surrender Bridge at around 10.00 a.m. We would then get out and see how we got on. I had really enjoyed yesterday's shooting, it was super.

As it happened, I did not enjoy my day very much. I did not shoot many birds which was disappointing.

I made an observation. I think that in a way the smaller the moor, the more birds should be shot early in the season. I think this is absolutely definite. On a huge moor like Wemmergill or Holwick you can bring long drives and you can get your birds over the guns later in the season. On a smaller moor without any long drives on it, for example Reeth, although it is not so bad, when your Land Rover goes round with the guns and the transport goes round the other way with the beaters, you have about emptied those little drives. That is the conclusion that I have come to. So, the bigger the moor the later in the season you can have a chance to get the birds,and on the smaller moors you want to get after them early in the season.

We saw a lot of birds today on Ashpots Up. There were hundreds and hundreds of birds and we saw a very large stock in the distance. Big packs on Slades Head when we tried to take it to the Hurdle Butts. Those butts are a disaster. Although the wind was perfect from the east. I think I do not want to do that any more.

We shot 4 drives and then made our way home. We are 12 birds short of last year's total, which is a record - 3,083 we had last year and we are 12 short - 3,071, and we have had one more day this season than last.

After tea in the study, and having dealt with all the important mail, I retired upstairs for my bath. Ian and Sebio gave me a massage and then I felt rejuvenated.

13 October	Reeth	5 drives	66 grouse with 125 shots
Ashpots	15 birds, 24 shots		
Murrayfield Up	11 birds, 28 shots		
Murrayfield Down	6 birds, 9 shots		
Kearton Pasture	17 birds, 27 shots		
Barras Edge	17 birds, 37 shots		

Misty start to the day. Foggy patches slow to clear. Wind light, 10/15 mph and south to south easterly. Showers developed during the afternoon and occasional heavy showers. Temperature 10° C.

Ate my usual cooked breakfast and then at around 9.00 a.m. I telephoned Mark who confirmed that everything was fine for shooting. As far as the beaters were concerned, Eddie MacAlinden was bringing some, 3/4 beaters to help out.

We thought we would shoot at Healaugh Brow, upwind and straight through the hills. The wind was south easterly at the moment and we would merge two drives into one. We had no flankers which we thought might pose a problem. I told him that I thought the shooting had gone very well last night. We would go to the Wall where Mark was flanking yesterday. I told him that I was leaving in about three or four minutes and I would see him later.

I think that the amount of pleasure that I get from the day is in simple proportion to the amount of grouse that I miss.

This is the 48th day grouse shooting for me this season. It has been absolutely wonderful, apart from the weather.

The grouse on the higher ground at Reeth are much more difficult to get over 3 butts, and of course they are more prone to packing.

When I got home Paddy was still in the study with Miss Stanley. I had asked him to stay until I got back from shooting so that we could tie up a few ends.

Sebio came in at about 6.30 p.m. to tell me that the doctor had arrived. I walked out through the living room and caught sight of a Range Rover parked in front of the house. "Who the devil does that Range Rover belong to?" I exclaimed. Only to hear Doctor Littlejohn reply "Actually, it's mine, Sir Joseph!"

All I can say is that he is a wonderful doctor. He realised I had been cutting down on my tablets and having made sure I returned to the old dosage, I found that I had no trouble with my chest all night.

Paddy left while I was seeing the doctor and returned to Rothwell.

14 October	Holwick	6 drives	38 grouse with 62 shots
Murray Ghyll Down	4 birds, 6 shots		
Murray Ghyll Up	6 birds, 8 shots		
Silver Band	3 birds, 8 shots		
The Lair	12 birds, 20 shots		
Black Arc	6 birds, 11 shots		
Blea Ghyll	7 birds, 9 shots		

Misty, foggy morning. Mist lifted during the morning and by midday the visibility was good. Wind was light, 10/15 mph and south easterly. The afternoon was bright and there was even some sunshine. Temperature was around 7^{o} C.

Peter Fawcett phoned me in the morning to tell me where they were shooting. I was not pleased to hear his news. The thought of the walk did not fill me with joy. I emptied all my pockets to get rid of all the excess weight. We would go so far on the sledge, but it would then be a long walk to the butts. As it happened it really tired me out and I had an awful morning. I did not enjoy it at all. I hardly shot any grouse either.

Trust House Forte's shares were going up because of a rumour of a raid. I considered selling them and buying them back, but decided against it. I did not want it to interfere with my shooting and I did not want to upset the family.

We came home quite late and coming down below the Stang Forest we saw a bird flying among a pack of about 30 black rooks. It was a very brown bird and I thought, good heaven's, it must surely be an owl. All the rooks were around it. It seemed very funny to me. When we got nearer I saw it was a perfect rook. It was brown, as light a colour as you could ever wish to see. It was the same colour almost as a short eared owl but just fractionally darker. It reminded me of the rooks at Johnsons Wood Rookery at Thoresway, the rooks that are bred brown every year, it is hereditary.

This bird was amongst all the rooks but they were obviously aware that it was not one of them because of their behaviour around it. It must have been hatched in a rookery with them you would think, or it might have been banished from another rookery. Anyway, there it was and it was most interesting.

Lady Nickerson came back from London tonight and Chips Keswick also arrived. However, he had been delayed because of traffic and so had Lady Nickerson, so we were running late. Dinner was postponed until 8.45 p.m.

15 October	Reeth	5 drives	51 grouse with 109 shots 1 Pheasant
Blades	5 birds, 13 shots		
Ashpots	10 birds, 26 shots		
Healaugh Brow	9 birds, 17 shots		
Healaugh Brow	7 birds, 17 shots		
Far Ghyll	20 birds, 36 shots		

Rather like yesterday. The fog fell earlier and took longer to clear. However, at 1,500 feet on the hillside it was clearer. It was dry and sunny. The wind was light, 5/10 mph and easterly in direction. Temperature reached 9/10° C.

Spoke to Mark Alderson and told him that I thought we ought to go to the Wood butts. I wanted to be shooting all the time. We could do the little drive to Lowery Gate, then Ashpots and High Moor Down. We could then stop for lunch. I arranged to meet Alan at the C & B. Paul Simpson would load if necessary as Chips Keswick needed a loader.

I got all my papers ready to take to Rothwell for the Harvest Festival and the Queen's Award Presentation. Alex and I went through all the things I would need over the next couple of days and Miss Stanley packed all my papers.

After I had had my breakfast, Diana phoned. I asked her about the family. Ian was shooting partridges. I told her they were easy to shoot and he would not learn on those! I also told her what a wonderful son-in-law he was!

I told Diana about the day when Sam Macdonald-Hall was shooting with me. He was in the butt above me and his loader came down behind me and picked up a number of birds that were lying there. They were some birds that I had shot easily. He just scooped them up like a vacuum. I said to him "Where have you come from?" but nothing more. He is a scoundrel!

At just after 3.00 p.m. I asked Alex to come and collect me from the moor in the Bentley. He was going to drive me to Rothwell. Lady Nickerson had already left that morning. Alex drove me so well that I slept most of the journey.

17 October	Rookery Pond	Morning Flight	52 Mallard

Birds were very strong on the wing. They flew very well. Very little wind.

17 October	Stackgarth Kale	Morning Flight	2 Pheasant 1 Pigeon

Not many birds. Shot two very high pheasants and one pigeon in good style.

17 October	Ram Pond	Evening Flight	7 Mallard 4 Teal

JN's comment on the day : Yesterday the ducks flew well. There was a good recovery rate. Of those we shot, so many had their wings tagged showing that they had been domestically reared. The pick up was 7 mallard and 4 teal. I counted 11 on my counter.

JN proceeded to Middleton House following the evening flight.

18 October	Reeth	No shooting

Foggy, misty morning. Low cloud in the morning. Light drizzle in the morning, but heavy showers from midday. Wind south easterly and strong, 20/25 mph. Temperature 9/10^{o} C.

At 8.45 a.m. I spoke to Mark. It was very unlikely that we would be shooting today. It was very misty and the visibility was poor. We decided to wait until 12.00 p.m. and see if things improved. If we were able to shoot I thought we could do Mark's Drive from Reeth village to the butts.

Although I was the only one shooting it would still be a very important day. We would wait until after lunch and then go out. The beaters could go to Reeth and wait.

The weather did not improve and so I sent the men home. Ian Plaskitt had gone out to report on the conditions and when he and Mark phoned at midday the news was not good. There would be no shooting today.

I had spent the morning with Alex getting ready for Spain and then I spent some time in the study sorting out my papers.

After lunch with Lady Nickerson I retired for a sleep. Brian Dummer arrived at around 3.15 p.m. and when I woke at 5.00 p.m. I asked him to come up and we went through the mail. I saw him again before dinner and we went over a few things concerning Spain.

19 October Reeth No shooting

Very misty, foggy day. Broken cloud and visibility slightly better than yesterday. The fog was to lift mid morning. Showers in the afternoon. Wind south easterly and 20 mph. Temperature 10° C.

Once again the fog was the problem. When I spoke to Mark he could not see very much of the moor and he was not optimistic. I had my breakfast and asked him to phone again.

We decided to go out and try to shoot. Miss Stanley was coming out on the moor today to find out what we did each day when we left Middleton House. She had not picked the best day to come. Mr. & Mrs. Hughes from Thiernswood Hall were coming for lunch with us, so I telephoned them to tell them where we would be. I explained where the Low Moor lunch hut is on the road between Arkengarth and Reeth. They would join us at 12.45 p.m.

We left at about 9.30 a.m. George drove my Range Rover and took Miss Stanley. I travelled with John Denton, Paul took the spare Range Rover and Ian the Land Rover with the dogs. We were meeting Robert and his loader on the moor. He had travelled up this morning.

It was very misty and there was very little to see on the journey there. George slowed down to let a grouse cross the road and we saw a few pheasants, but it was impossible to enjoy the lovely views in such fog.

We met Robert and drove to the Low Moor. Mark was waiting for us there. It was too misty to shoot so we went to the lunch hut to wait for any improvement. There was a good fire burning and it became very warm sitting there.

It seemed pointless for the Hughes' to come out so Robert and I went off in Robert's vehicle to telephone them on his car phone, which has a better reception than mine. Mr. Hughes asked us to join him for lunch but I declined and accepted an invitation for tea after shooting instead.

We came back and waited a little longer before having lunch in the hope that the weather would clear. Miss Stanley joined us for lunch. Marion had prepared a good spread as usual. There was cold ham, tongue, pate, sausages, pickled beetroot, coleslaw, potato salad, tomatoes, cheese, fruit cake, chocolate biscuits, coffee, soup, beer, sloe gin, Tio Pepe, Lemonade and Aqua Libra.

Robert, John and I discussed a variety of topics. We talked about Robert growing turf. I thought he should go ahead and spend about £200 on advertising and sell it before he had grown it! Neither Robert nor John liked that idea!

Robert said he was getting a very good soil return with irrigation and the right variety of grass. John asked if Robert had been the person to tell him about the basis of getting rid of a lot of soil when lifting it. He said that growing turf cost about 22p and delivery was 77p! If the soil was light it falls off easily and by using a machine to lift it, it reduced the amount of soil brought up and so reduced delivery costs.

We entered into a general discussion about farming generally and the fact that I wanted my children to have a source of income. Then we talked about the Duck Cassoulet which I had tried and the possibility of entering the supermarket business. We came to the conclusion that it needed a lot of capital expenditure up front for electronic equipment.

I suggested that I might lay out Cabourne 6 and 7 in the Vales there and put a road in at the top from the High Street and build a model village. It would be quite an elite site. Robert said I would need to build a good underpass. Would we get planning permission? It would be out of sight and not on the hillside. You would not be able to see the houses from the A46 or the High Street.

The feeling at the moment is very opposed to the creation of new villages or the expansion of existing villages. Lord Yarborough has not got any poor land and he has nowhere deep enough to hide such a village. We would have to buy Cabourne 3, 4 and 5 from Merton before applying for planning permission. We would need to buy 72 acres. The ratio of buildings to farm land might be an argument from Merton.

It was still foggy so I went for a sleep in my vehicle. We phoned the weather centre to see if the fog would clear but they said not. It was time to abandon shooting. Robert and I were driven by George to the Hughes for tea and the others returned to Middleton. John Denton left for home. It was the first time that Miss Stanley had been on a grouse moor and the first time that she had been out on a shoot. We never even got out the guns!

Brian Dummer had been working in the study when I returned at about 3.00 p.m. Miss Stanley was also there. I went through my drawers with him sorting out all the things for Spain and we had a very productive session. I then retired upstairs for a massage and a rest.

20 October	Reeth	5 drives	31 grouse with 67 shots
Kearton Pasture Across	3 birds, 5 shots		
Kearton Pasture Ghyll	3 birds, 10 shots		
Kearton Pasture Ghyll	1 bird, 10 shots		
Ashpots	13 birds, 24 shots		
Barras Edge	11 birds, 18 shots		

Wet and miserable start to the day. The fog cleared mid morning. It became brighter, drier and fresher in the afternoon. There were sunny intervals but some showers which were light. Wind was south to south easterly and 12-15 mph. Temperature of around 7^{o} C.

Spoke to Mark. It was quite misty but he thought we would be able to shoot. I was so pleased to be able to get out on the moor and shoot some birds again. I gave Brian some work to take back to Rothwell and dictated some messages to Miss Stanley. Then I went off to have my breakfast with Robert.

Alex got me ready to go out, making sure I had plenty of spare clothes in the large bag that we had been taking with us every day in the Range Rover. It had been a very good idea of Alex's and ensured that I had a spare set of clothing in case I got drenched on the moor. We must remember to do the same again next year.

Robert and I set off for Reeth and then Brian had his breakfast in peace. He packed up his things and left for Rothwell soon after 10 a.m. He was to tie up everything in the office and then get his own packing done for Spain.

Alex drove the dog van back to Rothwell later that morning. Unpacked and packed my things for Spain and packed his own things as he had not had the chance to do so until now. He also ensured that the vehicles for Spain had come back in good working order from the garage and that all the work had been carried out.

By lunchtime I had shot 20 birds after 4 drives. The bag was not great but I was glad to be back in a butt with a gun in my hand after the last two days. I am sure Miss Stanley was glad too as I had probably been driving her mad over the last 48 hours! I had told her that too!

Robert and I returned at about 6 p.m. and we were both ready for our tea and muffins. I had my toast and marmite as usual in my study with Sebio massaging my shoulders. I was quite tired and retired upstairs to rest before dinner. David Nickerson arrived in time for dinner and a pre-dinner drink.

21 October	Wemmergill	6 drives	70 grouse with 110 shots

Standards	10 birds, 15 shots
Corbus	5 birds, 6 shots
Green Grain	16 birds, 24 shots
Wemmergill Head	22 birds, 35 shots
Cock Lake	12 birds, 22 shots
Wemmergill Head	5 birds, 8 shots

Foggy morning. However, the fog was quick to clear. The afternoon was sunny and bright. There was little wind in the morning but by the afternoon it picked up from the south to south west, 10-15 mph. It was mainly dry but there was some drizzle. Temperature was 9/10° C.

Two of the guns were arriving this morning, Charles and John Thompson. I spoke to Peter and he thought it was too misty to shoot. However, he said he would phone me in about half an hour to see if there was any improvement. I went to have my breakfast and talk to my guests.

Peter phoned to say that it was still uncertain whether we would be able to shoot so we decided to wait and I asked him to send Tom Cowie over to the house so that he could wait with the other guns.

Charles arrived and so did John Thompson and they told me that it was clear over at Wemmergill and that there seemed to be no reason not to shoot. I telephoned Peter at Holwick Lodge but he had gone out to check the conditions on the moor. He phoned me back and gave the go ahead, it was not as bad as it had seemed.

I summoned George to the study and got dressed in my goose and green jacket. I took my papers to read in the car and picked up a couple of Cox's apples which Miss Stanley had bought for me. I really enjoy them, they are so sweet and full of flavour. I must make sure I have some next year.

I left Miss Stanley to get all the things packed to go on the Cherry Valley van which was arriving that morning. Almost all the contents of the study were to go and only the bare minimum was to be left to travel down tomorrow.

By 11.45 a.m. the van was packed up and left for Rothwell. Stephen Chuck drove back to Rothwell in the pick-up as we were short of drivers for the journey on Saturday.

We had a very good day shooting. Peter Fawcett told me that they had shot between 8,300 and 8,400 birds this season at the last count which was on Saturday. He also told me that there had been three more days shooting at Bolihope, two days at 240 brace, and one day at 340 brace.

I returned to Middleton House to find it looked very bare with so many belongings being taken away this morning. I dealt with the majority of my mail in the study and then sent Miss Stanley out to tell Charles and David that I could be disturbed if they wanted to say goodbye. It was not long before David came in to say how much he had enjoyed the day and then it was Charles's turn. I asked him if he would like to go to Reads Island on Sunday, but he was entertaining guests at the weekend and did not think he would be able to accept.

It was not long after they had departed that I climbed the stairs to my room to have a bath and a massage before dinner.

22 October | Wemmergill | 6 drives | 63 grouse with 94 shots

Ghyll 1	19 birds, 22 shots
Ghyll 2	14 birds, 19 shots
Shipka 1	12 birds, 19 shots
Shipka 2	4 birds, 11 shots
Shipka 3	6 birds, 11 shots
Shipka 4	8 birds, 12 shots

Very similar to yesterday. Foggy first thing in the morning and this was slow to clear on the higher ground. Dry and bright afternoon. Wind light, 8 mph and south easterly. Temperature 9° C.

This was my last day shooting before I left for Spain. I knew that I was not going to beat Ripon, I might have if I had been able to shoot on Tuesday and Wednesday this week. However, I just might come back to shoot some more grouse on my return from Spain.

I was looking forward to my day on the moor, as always. I had some good shots with me so there was a good possibility that we could shoot a good lot of grouse. I spoke to Peter and we discussed the possibility of going to Holwick where there were a good lot of birds. I decided that I would like to spend my last day on the South Side where it is a joy to shoot. It looked like it was going to be a lovely day too, bright and sunny.

We had a slight hiccup in the arrangements for Spain when it was discovered that my 28 bore side by sides were at Purdeys. I was supposed to be taking them to Spain with me. Miss Stanley started to make arrangements for them to be picked up in London. Paul Simpson, Will Jacob, Alex Holden and Brian Dummer were travelling to Plymouth that morning with the Range Rovers so they would have been able to collect them on route. I decided, however, that I could take some other 28 bores instead so Miss Stanley was instructed to cancel all arrangements with Purdeys.

Having had my breakfast and left some instructions for Miss Stanley, I left for the moor with the party of guns.

I had a wonderful day shooting. It was good to have both my son and grandson with me at the butts. Although we did not kill many birds I thoroughly enjoyed the day. The weather stayed fine, glorious sunshine, it was a joy to be there!

We returned to Middleton House at 4.30 p.m. to have tea and crumpets which Marion had prepared. Helen and Sebio had left for Rothwell House early that morning with Lady Nickerson. Once refreshed, the guns began to leave with the grouse that I had arranged for them to have as gifts.

The loaders had also had something to eat in the staff room and it was time to leave for Rothwell. George was to drive me in the Bentley. The Rolls was in a garage in Darlington having some paintwork touched up.

John Bryan, Robert's loader, was to drive my Range Rover and take Miss Stanley home. Ian Plaskitt would take the Land Rover and the dogs back. We left in convoy at around 5.15 p.m. and had a very good journey back. We arrived at 7.15 p.m. and I had slept most of the way.

26 October	Nombela	5 drives	119 Partridges with 238 shots 8 Magpies

Los Banos	31 birds, 70 shots
Arteson	29 birds, 46 shots
Rentilla	27 birds, 37 shots
El Pino	14 birds, 37 shots
Los Caleros	18 birds, 48 shots

Wakened by Alex at 7 a.m. after a poor night's sleep and he and Will served my breakfast of poached eggs, cold meat, toast and tea at 7.30 a.m. Brian Dummer joined me to deal with instructions and messages for the day. At 8 a.m. I continued dressing and preparing for shooting.

We departed the hotel at 0.8.30 sharp. A lovely morning with a little haze.

Three drives in the morning totalled 222 and in the afternoon two drives when we shot 113. Rocco Forte claimed 125, JN claimed 119 and Lady Nickerson 102, which totals 346, so we were 11 short on the pick up.

There were a nice lot of birds. Of the 60 birds killed on the second drive there were 35 old and 25 young.

The birds were very strong and flew extraordinarily well. The first drives were downwind. Rocco Forte said they were as difficult as grouse. Certainly they were terrific. JN was very pleased. It was a good day's shooting and the sun shone all day.

The magpies were back in force on the El Pino area; last year they were missing. 20 were shot on this drive. JN said he was missing birds in front at the last drive.

27 October	Nombela	5 drives	120 Partridges with 226 shots 1 Pigeon 13 Magpies

Huerta Jarena	30 birds, 72 shots
Prado Dos Montones	19 birds, 39 shots
La Cabana	20 birds, 40 shots
Los Tomates	18 birds, 30 shots
Los Regueros	33 birds, 45 shots

Breakfast was served by Alex and Will at 07.30. Worked on plans for rest of year with Brian Dummer. Listened to the news at 08.00 - the reception was very good.

Today was cloudy, but warm with light winds.

JN killed one pigeon on second drive, three magpies on the third and five magpies on both the fourth and fifth drives. The first drive, also known as the King's bump, was shot in the normal way but are nothing like as sporting as when they are driven diagonally across to the west. We did not drive that way because it was where the wind was coming from - a head wind.

Eugenie was on the left and had a fantastic shoot, good birds. JN was in the centre. JN tried his 28 bore Buzzard side by sides for the first time. He bought them when purchasing a lot of different guns as a hedge against inflation. They are lovely little guns. JN said "they fit me". The stocks are beautiful. They are only chambered for 2½" cartridges and American cartridges won't fit them. When they were made there were no American cartridges about here. JN used Fiochi 9/16th oz of shot No. 7 (English No. 6).

I have not got the benefit to get the out of range stuff I have been killing. I thought I was unused to them. The partridges were difficult but I still killed 30 with 72 shots.

We have a continuous problem with the Purdeys over and under to get them to fire in what JN thinks is the normal way. They just won't go off and have cost me some birds. I worry when they get hot. Will carries three to each drive in an endeavour to keep them a bit cooler. This aspect is disgraceful.

JN added : "If you want to shoot well you want to be able to ensure that a slight pressure on the trigger makes the gun go off when it reaches your shoulder".

Rocco Forte left after shooting, about 7 p.m.

The dinner at the hotel was rotten. The oxtail in the stew had been separated and put back together again. Had to have merluza for the second night. They had also forgotten how to do the pomme frits, which they did well the other evening. The lunch on the shoot prepared by Rosario was excellent.

29 October	Nombela	5 drives	58 Partridges with 118 shots 6 Magpies
Los Olivos	13 birds, 22 shots		
Las Trochas	11 birds, 26 shots		
Prados Regueros	14 birds, 24 shots		
Los Riscos	7 birds, 13 shots		
Los Riscos	13 birds, 33 shots		

Did not feel too bright, having had a bad night due to sinus problems. After an hour, having had breakfast and working with BLD, felt much better. JN and Lady Nickerson had their first day's shooting together, part of it in the mountains.

JN was cross that Santos had planned the fourth drive badly because of the wind. However, we much enjoyed the fifth drive.

A car nearly caused an accident on the road to Nombela, overtaking on the narrow roads which have so many bends.

On the way home we called on Pupa Biaggi for tea. She has recently arrived at La Ronca for some shooting. Unfortunately she was called away on a shooting party due to a friend dropping out because of family illness. She phoned in the evening to apologise.

On returning to the hotel JN bathed and had a rest. Brian Dummer joined Lady Nickerson and JN for dinner. The sole millo steak was excellent.

30 October	Nombela	5 drives	163 Partridges with 282 shots 9 Magpies
Huerta la Gacho	28 birds, 53 shots		
Ladera	34 birds, 69 shots		
Ladera "The Best"	25 birds, 38 shots		
Casa Blanca	39 birds, 59 shots		
Santos Finca	32 birds, 63 shots		

The day started with rain but by the time we had reached the first drive it had stopped. It was a good drive. JN claimed 28 of the total bag of 37. The shooting on the second drive was good also but it started to rain before it was over. By the time we reached the third drive, which JN considers the best, it was pouring with rain. Lady Nickerson decided not to shoot, but JN continued and bagged 25.

Brian Dummer was having his first day out on the shoot and it was a great shame it was so wet.

We had lunch changed to the Casa Blanca, it is such a boon to have this house at our disposal when the weather is poor. We must show our appreciation. After Rosario's excellent lunch - the usual delicious starters, followed by rabbit, melon, rice pudding, figs, we had a siesta.

By this time the sun had come out and we were able to resume shooting. JN had thought it might be necessary to finish.

We went to the Casa Blanca drive which is so exciting, the gun had to move so fast in a limited space. A goshawk flew over while waiting.

The final drive was Santos Finca, which rounded off an excellent day's shooting.

We returned to the hotel. Robert and Prudence had arrived during the afternoon and had brought a mail package but BLD and I did not take long to clear this before dinner.

The four of us had a family dinner together.

31 October Nombela to Los Quintos

Up and about by 08.30 as there was a lot to do before departing to Los Quintos, finishing packing, clearing up any outstanding paper work. JN also had a long conversation with MSE about the business.

We left the hotel Castilla at five past eleven. Actually we are entering Talavera. At 11.17 we have passed the atomic station. We got up to the top of the mountains, right up to the very top where we stop for our lunch. It's now 1.17 and we have had a very good journey. The road is a good one once you have got through Talavera, so here we are with a cool band of air after the heat of the journey and a lovely end of the rainbow here.

We took 55 minutes for lunch and we set off just after 2 o'clock. It's now five past four. We are on kilometre 322 on A803. It is a beautiful afternoon. Will is driving very well, he says he is not tired, but I wonder. It's exactly five hours now since we left the hotel and I think we are an hour away. The Villa-Franca de los Barros, we turn at the Renault garage, 3A600. It's difficult to recognise the things on this big map, but at the Renault garage you turn left there and wind away through the town. It's a bit of a town, it says Palamas 26 but you want to ignore that and go to a placed called Peubla del Prior, 9 kilometres. You will find that in the middle of the town, it's not well signposted, they are little signs. The place is Ribera Del Fresno, 9 kilometres, and that's where you want to turn. We got into a dead end in the town, but that's the turn. We are on the right road now. In Ribera Del Fresno it is a bit confusing in the town with no map. We ignored the road marked Los Santos on the right before we got into Ribera, that's correct. We are following a road called Hinojosa, 9 kilometres.

We are now 27 kilometres away from where we want to be. Rather a lot of hens running loose and cockerels in the town. At the next little town you can't go any further, you turn left and then you turn right but it's still complicated, we won't come this way any more, but I still want a decent map. We are now following signs to a place called Llerana. There's another little place spelt nearly the same but not quite just to mislead you!

LOS QUINTOS 1988





Silvia Gomez-Torres, Pepe Mora-Figueroa, JN



NOMBELA

October and
November 1988



Robert and JN



Eugenie and JN with Rocco Forte





Robert, JN and John Denton
Angel helping. Alex and Will behind

On the way to Los Quintos....



Manolo, Will, Paul, Pru, JN and Eugenie







Los Quintos



Pru and Eugenie Nickerson
with Silvia Gomez Torres









Back in Nombela







At five past five after a terrible journey on those awful little roads, we have arrived at our garage, our filling station, near the big grain store in the Valencia village and it is now five minutes after five.

The sun is shining all the way, it's exactly 5.30 and we have filled up with petrol just before we got to the estate, and arrived safe and sound at Los Quintos.

1 November	Los Quintos	3 drives	195 Partridge 1 Grieve	318 shots

Will Jacob is reminding me we have been travelling over twenty five minutes since we left the house in a straight line in the Range Rover, so we couldn't be nearer the boundary, I'm sure. He's reminded me that we were here once before when it was raining and I dropped a partridge which landed on top of the umbrella. I killed 52 this morning, the first I have shot well, 34 in the second drive and didn't shoot so well, that's 86. Lady Nickerson only got 7 the second drive.

2 November	Los Quintos	3 drives	116 Partridge	185 shots

3 November	Los Quintos Morning Duck Flight	5 Mallard

Will Jacob and I arrived in our hide close to the side of the little river at Los Quintos - another year! I killed everything from 220 ducks there in a morning flight down to 28 last year. We were told that there was practically nothing coming this year and I don't think they were very keen on us coming. Anyway the thought of shooting a duck was too much for me and I was out of bed by 6 o'clock! At 7.10 we were already in position with all our kit organised around us for a siege. We had food and drink and 4/500 cartridges, 3 guns, etc. It is now after the first hour and there has been a single drake which came which was accounted for, and then a pair came. They landed between Manolo and us. Manolo put them up and they flew down the river towards us and I stupidly took the second bird, which is what I often do. The furthest one away with the first barrel and they were coming straight at me, and the second one by this time, the leader, had gone over my head and I missed him at close range over my head. There was another pair came and they did exactly the same thing. They settled in the same place and Manolo did the same thing, flushed them up, but I did not make any mistake with those. So the bag is 4 ducks - 4 mallard in hand in the first hour.

We saw a pair of ravens, 2 single ravens both following the same flight path, and a grey heron, not the normal heron that we see in England. My goodness he was there in the half light and he couldn't see us and he came back just five minutes ago and he had a look at us. He saw us some 70 yards away and he turned and off he went. Lovely graceful, huge bird.

Very poor show. We have had the best here.

We saw a host of rabilagos and what looked like starlings, one woodpigeon and several raptors a long way off. They were difficult to recognise what they all were.

We heard the red legged partridge calling out and the owl and quite a lot of bats about while it was almost dark, dragonflies and an English big jay.

It is quite cold. I have got my 28 bores and Will Jacob is loading. Remington cartridges. Lovely cloud scape, I think it is so wonderful to see the clouds. They are not appreciated by most people, to the great depth of their beauty. How they vary day by day and hour by hour, every five minutes for that matter.

A green woodpecker we have seen quite a lot. There are all kinds of woodpeckers here at Los Quintos. You can hear the lovely sound of the green one, crying yaffle of those flying neath the bow. A sandpiper has just flown over.

Nothing else has arrived. Paul is around here and he only saw two ducks altogether. I killed a very nice drake and so we have got 5 picked up now and we are leaving the hide at 9 o'clock and the sun is just coming up beautifully.

We have visited this estate a good many years. I think this is the twelfth or thirteenth consecutive year. They started shooting partridges at Los Quintos the first time I shot in 1975. I think I went there in 1976, and each year we wonder. But this year I think the decision is made and we shall not return, or it's very likely we shall not return. I think it's a whole lot of kilometres in relation to the amount of shooting. You get two days partridge shooting when it takes a day to get there and a day to get back, well that's four days with all that journeying which is tiring even if you are driven, and it's four days less for opportunities in England. This year we might have got back early enough to organise things properly. For example, we could get a trip to the island after the teal, or a little shoot at home. So, I think that is that.

They don't feed the ducks, there is much more water everywhere and a chance of getting a crack at them is pretty remote, but I killed five this morning, last year 28, the year before 50, so it will change the whole balance of the situation. Also we are never going to get Lady Nickerson in a good place, they are too chauvinistic to put us all in a good place particularly if you shoot well. The family are always going to have the majority of the best places for the partridges themselves. So, all in all, I think that's that. They are absolutely a charming family.

5 November	Nombela	5 drives	59 Partridges with 91 shots 1 Mallard 1 Pigeon 1 Magpie
Los Banos	9 birds, 16 shots		
Las Moreras	10 birds, 14 shots		
La Pililla	21 birds, 25 shots		
Cerro El Guarda	9 birds, 13 shots		
Las Casas	10 birds, 23 shots		

A large party departed at 08.30. JN and Lady Nickerson took Jaime and Rosa Mayol in their Range Rover. John and Barbara Denton in their hire car, took Harry and Billee Chapman Pincher. Robert (Prue was unwell) took Brian and Margaret Dummer in his hire car. Alex brought the other Range Rover which was wanted on the shoot for three areas it was difficult to reach.

The weather was dull and overcast, but warm with a little sun in the afternoon. Had lunch on the shoot. Rosario did an excellent lunch. The usual starters of tortilla, cheese, ham and nuts. Gambas, followed by soup, chicken, potatoes fritas, green beans, rice pudding, leche frita and menbria.

On returning to the Hotel the shooting party had tea in the lounge before saying goodbye to the Mayols.

Later we met for dinner, drinking an excellent Bollinger 1979 before, when we had smoked salmon (brought from England), consomme, chuletas (lamb chops), green salad, a selection of desserts - creme catalan (like a creme brulee) and ice-creams. Again a happy party to end an enjoyable day.

6 November	Nombela	5 drives	93 Partridge with 174 shots 4 Magpie 1 Grieve 3 Pigeons

Valdeprados	20 birds, 39 shots
La Parilla	21 birds, 35 shots
Navarro	25 birds, 48 shots
El Pleito	17 birds, 32 shots
Gorronal	10 birds, 20 shots

A dull, overcast day, perhaps a little cooler (there had been rain overnight), but we were able to shoot a full programme.

There was great excitement on the fourth drive when some cows/bulls ran through the shoot. JN, Prudence, Alex and Will had to jump a fence. Lady Nickerson took refuge in a ditch! John Denton's secretarios and loader went up a tree (with John's gun) leaving John and Barbara to fend for themselves!

Robert, with Paul Simpson, and Brian and Margaret Dummer stayed in their butt and the animals ran past them. The Chapman Pinchers also stayed in their butt.

During the morning an eagle owl flew through the line, having been disturbed by the beaters. Near JN's butt there was evidence of where he had eaten a partridge the night before.

Dinner was a happy occasion, the last night for this party. Dom Perignor 1978 before dinner. Consomme followed by steaks or sole - the men had steaks, the ladies fish. A selection of desserts including the famous Toledo marzipan.

Harry Chapman Pincher gave his view of The Spy Catcher case, most fascinating.

Everyone said their goodbyes as the Chapman Pinchers, Robert and Prudence and Margaret Dummer were departing tomorrow morning.

We have called the Gorronal drive "Harry and Billee" after the Chapman Pinchers.

7 November	Nombela	3 Pigeons

JN was wakened at 6.30 a.m. and had breakfasted and departed at 07.30 with John Denton to shoot pigeons at Nombela. It had rained hard overnight and was quite wet. It was not a very successful expedition as JN and JSD returned by 1.30 to the hotel, only having shot three pigeons. They had taken a packed lunch which they ate in the field.

JN said : 'I got all the kit ready, hide made, decoys up the tree, and everything by 9.30. Unfortunately it is raining, continuous rain but we are well equipped. The pigeons do not like getting their feet wet and it might not be a very good day. We do not know, but I might get one bird or one hundred, you never know with this game.

Anyway, we are on top of a rise, sharp bank each side of us, so we shall be able to see our decoy in the tree. The hide is well built and the wind is strong on our backs, so they will come into us from the front, the pigeons, we hope, and we have organised everything here except the pigeons!

Lady Nickerson went to Madrid, Barbara Denton rested, and the rest of the party had departed by 09.00.

JN rested during the afternoon but worked later with Brian Dummer, and phoned MSE and MK.

In the evening a quiet dinner with JN, Lady Nickerson, John and Barbara Denton. The excellent chicken was the main course.

To bed early, at 10 p.m.

9 November	Nombela	5 drives	90 Partridge with 174 shots 3 Magpie 1 Jay

Los Olivos	21 birds, 37 shots
Las Moreras	31 birds, 68 shots
La Pililla	16 birds, 34 shots
Cerro El Guarda	15 birds, 23 shots
Jardinillos	7 birds, 12 shots

JN was up at 07.00 as usual, after a poor night's sleep. As a result he had made a lot of notes while being awake and thinking. Dictated these at 07.30 to BLD.

Departed for the shoot promptly at 08.30.

It was a dry day, dull in the morning and sunny in the afternoon.

The first four drives had already been shot once this year. As always, Will Jacob loaded for JN and Manolo loaded for Lady Nickerson. Paul Simpson loaded for John Denton. Carlos, Santos's son-in-law, loaded for Ian Yates.

It was after six o'clock when the party arrived back at the hotel. After clearing the office work with Brian Dummer, JN had a bath and a rest. Alex Holden gave him some massage before dinner.

It was the same party as the previous evening, JN, Lady Nickerson, Ian and Diana Yates, and John and Barbara Denton.

10 November	Nombela	5 drives	91 Partridge with 167 shots 2 Jays 11 Magpie

JN was up at 07.00 after a slightly better night. Saw BLD from 07.30 to 08.00. The party departed for Nombela as usual at 08.30. It was a dry day, dull in the morning and a sunny afternoon.





Manolo Loading for Lady Nickerson



Jaime Mayol, Eugenie, Harry Chapman Pincher (behind), Margaret Dummer, Billee Pincher, John Denton, Rosa Mayol, JN and Barbara Denton



Party given by JN for the villagers of Nombela



Felipe Amores interpreting for JN



Keepers Jesus, Santos and Pablo with Jesus Jimenez, JN's Administrator

Don Pedro	11 birds, 26 shots
El Pleito	22 birds, 35 shots
Viana	10 birds, 15 shots
Navarro	29 birds, 59 shots
Valde Carrascoso	19 birds, 32 shots

The second drive was changed and driven in a different direction because a cow has given birth to a calf, and as this was the drive where the cows/bulls had given trouble the previous Sunday, it was thought wiser.

It was a long day and the party did not return to the hotel until 6.45. The guns and their partners met for dinner a little later than usual, when merluza was the main dish.

12 November — Nombela — 5 drives — 82 Partridge with 128 shots, 38 Magpies, 1 Pigeon

Cerro Pendon	20 birds, 35 shots
El Pino	10 birds, 19 shots
Los Caleros	31 birds, 40 shots
Los Trozos	16 birds, 25 shots
Casa Vidal	5 birds, 9 shots

There had been some overnight rain but it was dry when the party set out for the shoot. Diana Yates did not go out as she was suffering from the bad cold she had from the previous day.

The Dow Jones had closed 40 points down on the day and JN was uneasy about the Market. However, a phone call to MK seemed to indicate that the situation was not as bad as it first seemed.

On the whole the weather was cloudy and dull, but the occasional bright period and the odd shower of rain.

After the shoot a party was held for the farmers and landowners in the Bar Bolera in Nombela. Some 80/90 people attended including some ladies for the first time. JN, Lady Nickerson, Ian Yates and Brian Dummer. Lady Nickerson and Philip Amones did the interpreting. The bar is owned by the farmer who owns land on which the Tomato Drive is situated. The keepers were also present, as was Jesus Jimenez, the Bank Manager, who handles the administration for the shoot. The party started at 5 p.m. and finished at 6.30 p.m.

JN, Lady Nickerson, Ian & Diana Yates, Charles and Diana Norris met for dinner at 8.30 p.m.

13 November — Nombela — 4 drives — 77 Partridge with 109 shots

Carcaboso	7 birds, 10 shots
Valdemanares	25 birds, 34 shots
Finca Carlos	18 birds, 28 shots
El Bajaroso	27 birds, 37 shots

We woke to a lovely morning which turned into a very hot day, with some cloud in the later afternoon. As usual, the party departed at 08.30 with JN travelling with Ian and Diana (as they will be leaving the following day). Brian Dummer joined the party for the day.

JN decided not to have a fifth drive as it was already 4 p.m. and the fourth drive was very good. It always is and was named the Brian Dummer drive several years ago. The setting for lunch was particularly beautiful, looking towards the mountain range which had reflections of occasional drives on them. The sun was very strong and people changed seats at the lunch table.

Rosario presented her usual excellent lunch with paella, delicious tangerines, superb figs and as always leche frita and membria.

The first drive, known as the "Dirty Farm", and it still is, provided JN with very poor shooting. In addition the sun was shining in his eyes and Will rigged up a shield with a stick and a hanky.

15 November	Nombela	4 drives	106 Partridge with 196 shots 8 Magpies 2 Pigeon
El Molinillo	21 birds, 33 shots		
Huerta Jarena	24 birds, 47 shots		
Fuente Alonsete	36 birds, 75 shots		
Los Lecheros	25 birds, 41 shots		

There was a heavy early morning mist which cleared quickly, and the day was bright, sunny and warm with a cloudless sky.

The second drive is known as "The King's Bump". The third drive is "Rosie's Drive".

Rosario provided an excellent lunch with was served in superb conditions and surroundings.

JN decided to finish after the fourth drive. It was a very warm day so the party was back at the hotel by 5.15 p.m.

The party met at 8.15 - the Norris's last evening, for dinner.

16 November	Nombela	4 drives	88 Partridge with 165 shots 2 Magpie 1 Rabbit
Ladera "The Best"	30 birds, 53 shots		
Joseph's Mountain	13 birds, 41 shots		
Riscos West	10 birds, 13 shots		
Dirty Farm	35 birds, 58 shots		

Charles and Diana Norris were leaving the hotel at 08.30 as JN and Lady Nickerson were leaving for the shoot. Again, there was early morning mist which soon moved away and it was another warm sunny day.

JN said Joseph's Mountain is the best drive this season. They were most difficult birds. The Dirty Farm drive taken to the little ravine is very different. JN killed 35 and picked 35. In the afternoon the sun is behind you and in the birds' eyes.

On Joseph's Mountain JN considered they were the most difficult partridges one could shoot in a lifetime. They are very high mountain partridges whose speed is unbelievable. 32½ brace were picked on the first drive, and 29 brace on the last drive, which was shot in reverse. 61½ brace in two drives, two guns, is "going some".

JN has an average of 1.8 of cartridges for every partridge down, just under 1500 partridges to his own gun.

After shooting JN and Lady Nickerson took their leave of the keepers, arriving back at the hotel at 5.45. A quiet dinner with Lady Nickerson and Brian Dummer, JN watching the Spain versus Ireland football match on television. Result 2-0 in favour of Spain.

18 November	Black Springs	Evening Duck Flight	10 Mallard	
19 November	Stenigot	6 drives	61 Pheasant	111 shots
21 November	Ram Pond	Evening Duck Flight	25 Mallard 1 Pheasant	

My bitch Blaze, what a wonderful creature, she took rat poison on 20 November and died on the 22nd.

25 November	Otby	6 drives	47 Pheasant 1 Moorhen 2 Pigeon	81 shots
26 November	Ripley	5 drives	124 Pheasant 1 Partridge	190 shots
28 November	Manderston	4 drives	82 Pheasant 1 Woodcock	218 shots

I was feeling awful with the 'flu. I did not shoot well, but they were very difficult birds.

12 December	Rothwell	7 drives	75 Pheasant 33 Mallard	157 shots
14 December	Rothwell	5 drives	34 Pheasant 1 Moorhen 3 Pigeon	81 shots
16 December	Stiffkey	Evening Duck Flight	12 Teal 2 Mallard	

I was in the far butt of pair side by side, used 28 bores. Skyline of trees darkened my background. Teal were "on me" so quickly and settled if I did not shoot, not easy. Too much moon, half, and no wind.

Total bag was 30 picked up, 29 claimed.

17 December	Stiffkey	8 drives Single Gun	29 Pheasant 1 Partridge	51 shots

A lovely place. Geese overhead, plenty of Brent.

20 December	Rothwell	5 drives	166 Pheasant 1 Woodcock	279 shots
21 December	Rothwell	5 drives	139 Pheasant 2 Woodcock	264 shots

Foxes in Lincoln Hill, Great Walk and a brace in Boarding House.

26 December	Rothwell	4 drives	34 Pheasant 1 Rabbit	54 shots
27 December	Somersby	5 drives	80 Pheasant 1 Woodcock	113 shots
29 December	Rothwell	5 drives	163 Pheasant 1 Pigeon	262 shots
30 December	Rothwell	5 drives	157 Pheasant	325 shots
2 January	Rothwell	7 drives	55 Pheasant	109 shots
5 January	Rothwell	5 drives	56 Pheasant 2 Rabbit	99 shots

These and the following photographs were taken by Brian Fearnley in Rothwell : January 1989







Will Jacob











1989

7 January	Tealby	6 drives	131 Pheasant 1 Woodcock 1 Rabbit	193 shots
9 January	Rothwell	5 drives	97 Pheasant 2 Pigeon	168 shots
10 January	Rothwell	5 drives	193 Pheasant	273 shots
13 January	Tealby/ Roman Holes	5 drives	134 Pheasant 1 Mallard 2 Woodcock 1 Hare	260 shots
14 January	Rothwell	7 drives	102 Pheasant	181 shots
16 January	Tealby/ Roman Holes	6 drives	100 Pheasant	181 shots
16 January	Ram Pond	Evening Flight	19 Mallard 1 Teal	
18 January	Rothwell	5 drives	131 Pheasant	214 shots

19 January	Rothwell	5 drives	94 Pheasant	150 shots
21 January	Rothwell	7 drives	66 Pheasant 1 Pigeon	105 shots
26 January	Rothwell	5 drives	89 Pheasant	158 shots
27 January	Tealby/ Roman Holes	5 drives	96 Pheasant 1 Moorhen	222 shots
28 January	Rothwell	7 drives	132 Pheasant 1 Rabbit	214 shots
30 January	Rothwell	8 drives	122 Pheasant 6 Mallard 1 Pigeon 1 Rabbit	240 shots
30 January	Ram Pond	Evening Flight	3 Mallard 2 Teal 1 Moorhen	
1 February	Tealby/ Roman Holes	7 drives	73 Pheasant 1 Moorhen	146 shots

SUMMARY OF SIR JOSEPH'S PERSONAL BAG AT NOMBELA AND LOS QUINTOS AND GRAND TOTAL BAG FOR SPAIN 1988

Date	Part	Cum Total	Pgn	Jay	Magpie	Mallard	Rabbit	Other	Total	Cum Total	Shots	Cum Total Shots
26 Oct	119	119			8				127	127	238	238
27 Oct	120	239	1		13				134	261	226	464
29 Oct	58	297			6				64	325	118	582
30 Oct	163	460			9				172	497	282	864
1 Nov	195 Los Quintos	655						1	196	693	318	1182
2 Nov	116 Los Quintos	771							116	809	185	1367
3 Nov	Los Quintos					5			5	814		
5 Nov	59	830	1		1	1			62	876	91	1458
6 Nov	93	923	3		4			1	101	977	174	1632
7 Nov	-	-	3						3	980		
9 Nov	90	1013		1	3				94	1074	174	1806
10 Nov	91	1104		2	11				104	1178	167	1973
12 Nov	82	1186	1		38				121	1299	128	2101
13 Nov	77	1263							77	1376	109	2210
15 Nov	106	1369	2		8				116	1492	196	2406
16 Nov	88	1457			2		1		91	1583	165	2571
TOTALS 16 days	1457		11	3	103	6	1	2	1583		2571	
GRAND TOTAL	1457		11	3	103	6	1	2	1583		2571	

1988

SUMMARY OF SIR JOSEPH'S SHOOTING IN SPAIN - 1988 SEASON

13 days at Nombela	Partridge	1146	2068 shots
	Magpie	103	
	Pigeon	11	
	Jay	3	
	Rabbit	1	
	Mallard	1	
	Grieve	1	
		1266	
3 days at Los Quintos	Partridge	311	503 shots
	Mallard	5	
	Grieve	1	
		317	

NOMBELA VERMIN KILL - 1988

SPECIES	JAN	FEB	MARCH	APL	MAY	JUNE	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL FOR 1988
FOX	8	4	-	4	-	2	-	1	3	-	10	7	39
WILD CAT	7	6	3	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	7	7	33
BADGER	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WEASEL	3	23	29	31	13	4	15	4	13	2	1	-	138
HEDGEHOG	-	6	26	22	14	8	10	3	4	5	-	1	99
MAGPIE	80	126	155	130	115	140	244	156	222	99	479	555	2501
CROW	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
LIZARD	-	-	50	80	80	116	116	17	7	2	-	-	468
RAT	68	430	1355	1129	370	136	103	34	180	49	41	21	3916
SNAKE	8	23	62	71	61	92	90	25	27	30	41	8	538
TOTALS	174	618	1685	1468	654	498	578	240	457	187	579	599	7737

NOMBELA : 1988 VERMIN BONUSES		
FOXES	19.500 ptas.	(39 @ 500 ptas)
WILD CATS	10.790 ptas.	(33 @ 300 ptas)
WEASELS	6.900 ptas.	(138 @ 50 ptas)
HEDGEHOGS	4.950 ptas.	(99 @ 50 ptas)
MAGPIES	125.050 ptas.	(2501 @ 50 ptas)
CROWS	1.000 ptas.	(5 @ 200 ptas)
LIZARDS	9.360 ptas.	(468 @ 30 ptas)
RATS	78.320 ptas.	(3916 @ 20 ptas)
SNAKES	16.140 ptas.	(538 @ 20 ptas)
TOTAL	272.010 ptas.	

LINCOLNSHIRE VERMIN KILL - 1988

SPECIES	JAN	FEB	MCH	APL	MAY	JNE	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS FOR 1988
Crow	-	1	6	9	34	5	9	3	-	3	4	2	76
Hedgehog	-	-	-	19	25	17	1	11	22	10	1	-	106
Mole	25	2	2	14	13	6	7	9	14	10	14	50	166
Rat	56	48	59	38	19	21	15	22	53	45	73	71	520
Rook	4	8	9	11	23	37	231	65	31	31	31	7	488
Stoat	6	4	10	18	11	11	11	10	7	17	9	4	118
Squirrell	6	7	3	-	2	2	-	1	2	4	-	-	27
Weasel	-	3	6	5	7	6	2	5	15	9	2	4	64
Moorhen	2	45	6	2	-	-	8	-	3	3	7	-	76
Feral Pgn	-	5	7	-	-	18	-	-	-	7	7	9	53
Coot	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Jay	1	5	-	4	2	5	3	5	2	4	-	3	34
BB Gull	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	1	2	-	9
Jackdaw	-	1	4	5	12	3	57	19	4	9	2	2	118
Magpie	3	9	8	10	8	5	12	6	8	6	5	5	85
Starling	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42	-	-	-	-	42
Ferret	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Tab	-	1	2	5	4	6	5	6	5	5	2	2	43
Toby	3	3	29	12	9	-	6	5	8	9	8	4	96
Brock	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
TOTALS	106	146	151	152	170	142	367	211	178	173	167	163	2126

LINCOLNSHIRE VERMIN KILL - 1988

KEEPERS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APL	MAY	JNE	JLY	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTALS
Frankish	49	45	50	52	33	26	29	26	34	22	59	56	481
Hewson	9	8	22	14	18	19	5	4	19	21	19	25	183
Martin	10	13	40	21	26	24	7	17	25	16	22	38	259
Thompson	19	13	16	28	26	17	19	21	30	19	24	22	254
Wolsey	19	67	23	37	67	56	307	143	70	95	43	22	949
TOTALS	106	146	151	152	170	142	367	211	178	173	167	163	2126

TOTAL HEAD FOR 1988 : 2126

SIR JOSEPH'S PERSONAL BAG 1988/89 SEASON

ROTHWELL PIGEON SHOOT

Pigeon	30
Magpie	1
Head:	31

READS ISLAND

Teal	8
Widgeon	7
Head:	15

STACKGARTH KALE

Pheasant	2
Pigeon	1
Head:	3

ROOKERY POND

Mallard	52
Head:	52

RAM POND

Mallard	54
Pheasant	1
Teal	7
Moorhen	1
Head:	63

BLACK SPRINGS

Mallard	10
Head:	10

SIR JOSEPH'S PERSONAL BAG : 1988/89

GROUSE BAG : SPLIT BETWEEN THE MOORS

Holwick	223
Wemmergill	785
Reeth	1251
Stublick	22
As Guest	1109

PARTRIDGE UK

As Guest	2

PHEASANT UK

Rothwell/Tealby/Roman Holes	2443
As Guest	423

PARTRIDGES SPAIN

Nombela	1146
Los Quintos	311

SIR JOSEPH'S PERSONAL BAG

FULL SEASON SUMMARY 2ND FEBRUARY 1988 TO 1ST FEBRUARY 1989

UNITED KINGDOM	
GROUSE	3390
PARTRIDGE	2
PHEASANT	2866
MALLARD	158
TEAL	27
WIDGEON	7
WOODCOCK	8
SNIPE	2
PIGEON	41
MOORHEN	5
MAGPIE	1
HARE	1
RABBIT	6
TOTAL	6514

SPAIN	
PARTRIDGE	1457
MALLARD	6
MAGPIE	103
JAY	3
PIGEON	11
RABBIT	1
GRIEVE	2
TOTAL	1583

GRAND TOTAL BAG 8097

TOTAL DAYS SHOT 1988/89 107





ROTHWELL SHOOT

21 DECEMBER 1988

(Front Row) Frank Wolsey, Fred Thompson, Bill Jacob, Ian Plaskitt and Benjy Jacob

(Behind) Michael Southgate (Reeth), Will Jacob, John Hewson, George Graham, Eddie McAlindon (Stublick), Paul Simpson, Joe Freeman (Stean), Bob Martin, Mark Alderson (Reeth), and Alan Sunter (Reeth)

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO SIR JOSEPH FROM PHILIPP HARMER DATED 6th SEPTEMBER 1988

"YOU INVITED ME TO SHOOT AT WORLD FAMOUS WEMMERGILL MOOR SO I HAD OPPORTUNITY TO SEE GROUSE SHOOTING AT ITS BEST. THIS SPOILT ME FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE, BUT I DO NOT MIND AT ALL - IT WAS GREAT!

VERY MUCH I ENJOYED TO WATCH YOU SHOOTING. NEVER BEFORE I SAW A GREAT SHOT LIKE YOU SIR, AND ALL THIS WITH A 28 BORE".

W.C. THOMSON

Saxons,
45 Levylsdene,
Merrow, Guildford,
Surrey GU1 2RT.

13th January, 1989.

Sir Joseph Nickerson,
Rothwell House,
Rothwell,
Lincoln LN7 6BE.

Dear Joe.

Once again a very big thank you to you and Eugenie from Jessie and me for another very agreeable visit to Rothwell. Your hospitality was, as always, of the highest order.

As to the shooting, it was well up to the high Rothwell standard and I suppose I should apologise for helping to go over our quota! You have often commented to me that when shooting one should swing through and then add a little "jerk" as you pull the trigger. I have always understood what you were saying but had never felt myself able to do this until the drive before lunch when we were shooting into the sun. Suddenly I found myself doing exactly what you had said. This was in fact an instinctive action and not positively thought out. The result, for a short period, was that my striking rate rose markedly. It will be interesting to see if this phenomenon appears again! Perhaps I will be able to consciously recreate the action.

I shall look forward to seeing you again at the end of the month.

Best regards

Bill

HOTEL RITZ MADRID
Gran Lujo

Hotel Ritz, Madrid
8/11/88

My dear Joe, Nonkela already seems like a dream but a very wonderful one. The whole ambience of the two great days you gave us was far beyond my expectations. As usual, everything went like a smooth running operation and I know, perhaps better than most, the effort & the planning & detailed preparation that went into it. Again as usual, you were served by a devoted staff which, in a foreign country, is a great achievement in itself, of course Eugenie shares.

After the splendid shooting, the holiday & care taken up to Rothwell & Middleton standards - which says everything!

It was great to see you both knocking down those very difficult birds - how splendidly Eugenie shoots - but then she has had the advantage!

With warm affectionate wishes to us both,

Yours ever

Jamy

(CHAPMAN PINCHER)

THE SHOOTING LODGE
SOUTH PICKENHAM
SWAFFHAM
NORFOLK PE37 8DU
TELEPHONE: 07606 351

Wed - January 25th 1989.

Dearest Joe & Eugene -

Thank you so much for two memorable days -

There were so many highbirds & lovely weather & Roth well looking simply stunning, no wonder I enjoyed myself.

Guy's dear old dog had the time of his life too -

It was especially nice for me to be with Charles, Tristan & Edwin & to be Auntie Renee to them. They looked after me so well.

I am writing to Sam - it must be such an added sorrow to lose Connie - I didn't go back to Stenigot after the funeral in Norfolk - it was just too late & too far.

However David Keith asked us to pick up on Saturday. He shot so well in the morning & is so brave.

Bobo & I were at West Acre to-day & I think Joe will be amused to hear of an incident there to-day. KK was the only one driving his Range Rover round & pulled up behind Harry Borlase in a remote wood. Harry had no idea he was there & reversed smartly into him! They both took it very well. It caused a lot of innocent merriment.

It was cold, but the birds flew beautifully & we were a jolly crowd to finish the season.

Thank you again for a wonderful time. Great to see you both so well.

Much love
MORE ON Irene

old.
ie

TO LONDON.
(May visit)

House of Lords Jan 2. 1988.

My dear Eugenie

I so much enjoyed seeing you both again + staying at Rothwell, in the Cadishead Nicheson comfort. You have been very kind to me + we are both dear friends — it was so happy for Kay + I having our first house party into

you (the second was Sandringham!) & we really don't need more or better friends. It was a shame she missed out this time.

Would you both like to lunch or dine at the House here one evening if you are in London? So let us know if there is a chance after the shooting season — Tuesday is usually the best evening for me

Again a thousand thanks for the lovely visit

much love

Auberon

(LORD BUXTON)