



*Thomas Assheton Smith*

Digitized by Google

## Thomas Assheton Smith

During the uneasy peace between England and France following the treaty of Amiens in 1802 Assheton Smith had occasion to visit Paris where he was presented to the Emperor. Having heard of his prowess as a foxhunter, Napoleon turned to his officers and said, "Voici, messieurs, le premier chasseur, d'Angleterre. And it was no wonder that he later earned the soubriquet 'the British Nimrod' for his exploits on the hunting field.

Between 1806 and 1816 he was Master of the Quorn Hunt in Leicestershire and then, from 1816 to 1824, Master of the Burton Hounds in Lincolnshire. He also hunted with the Craven and the New Forest.

In 1826 he returned to live in Hampshire where he established a pack at Penton Lodge near Andover, with draft hounds purchased from Sir Richard Sutton. But his father warned him off the Tedworth covers. However, his father died in 1828 whereupon he inherited the estate, and between 1828 and 1830 he demolished

and rebuilt the house and had new kennels erected at New Farm in Tedworth Park. In 1830 he moved his hounds from Penton to South Tidworth. He then began clearing and establishing rides through the vast tracts of woodlands – Wherwell, Doles, Faccombe, Collingbourne et al – so he and his hunt staff could work hounds.

In 1834 he bought many of Sir Thomas Burghley's hounds and in 1842 the whole pack of the Duke of Grafton together with the huntsman, George Carter. Between 1842 and a year or two before his death he hunted hounds (two packs) on four days a week, those being Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. George Carter hunted with a third pack on Wednesday and Saturday.

Thomas Assheton Smith died in September 1858 and his widow, Matilda, donated the hounds to the country. The hunt was then in the hands of a committee with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marquis of Ailsbury taking on the Mastership. It was at this time it became known as the Tedworth.

During his life he served as a Member of Parliament, representing Andover (1821-1831) and Caernarvonshire (1832 – 1837). He was High Sheriff of Wiltshire in 1838. He also made 45 known appearances in first class cricket as a batsman, including the inaugural match of The Gentlemen v. The Players in 1806.

**NB.** In the 1850 edition of Hobson's Hunting Atlas the country is shown as T.A.Smith's country and not the Tedworth. The neighbouring hunts are listed as the Beaufort, the Craven, the Hampshire, the Hambleton, the New Forest and the South Wilts. The 1870 edition, however, lists the former T.A.Smith country as the Tedworth.