

A Short Guide to Hunting Etiquette For Hunting With

Mr. Stewart's Cheshire Foxhounds

Foxhunting means many different things to those who love the sport: watching the hounds work; the thrill of following hounds across country; not knowing what is ahead in the way of terrain and fences; the reward of a view of the magnificent red fox; comradeship; love of nature and the outdoors; and just being on a horse on a lovely day. To make each day go smoothly, certain rules should be followed. Each participant should show courtesy and respect to everyone else. Remember, whenever people gather on horses crossing the country, unforeseen things can happen and often do. Take it in stride and remember how lucky you are. If you are new to the sport, do not hesitate to ask other members for guidance on how to conduct yourself. Here are the most important rules of conduct that must be observed.

Foxhunting is a privilege and most importantly requires your attention to courtesies to our landowners. We hunt because of the generosity of the landowners. Their land, fences, and livestock must be respected. Lack of care by individuals can cause land to be closed to the hunt. A cheerful "Good morning!" or "Thank you" as you ride across a property is never out of place. Whenever you get the chance, thank a landowner for letting you and the hunt ride across his or her land.

**With Landowners in mind, please
observe the following rules:**

Once your trailer is parked at the meet, do not sweep manure out of your trailer. Trailers bedded with shavings or straw are discouraged. Landowners do not want to find waste of any kind when we depart.

The Field Masters know exactly where the Hunt is permitted to go and where it is not. Closely follow the Fieldmaster, going only on land that the Fieldmaster is on. Do not assume that you are permitted to be anywhere else.

Ride single-file around planted fields—wheat, corn, soybeans, alfalfa, etc. Take the time to learn how to tell a planted from an un-planted field. When in doubt, stay to the edge. "Stay close" means single file on the edge.

When riding next to paddocks where livestock is turned out, walk or halt your horse, if the livestock starts to run.

Stay off grass that has been cut like a lawn. Do not cut corners.

Close gates if they have been opened that day. Pass the word back "Gate please" or take a turn to wait and close it yourself.

Anyone's horse can break a fence. When you do break one, it is your responsibility to fix it temporarily and permanently. Stop immediately and try to fix it temporarily. Sometimes you can use the bottom rail to temporarily fix the fence. If you cannot secure the fence, stay until help arrives and the fence is repaired. Tell the landowner or someone on the property right away before leaving the scene, if damage has been severe (landowners often keep their horses in until after we hunt, so alert the landowner even if you see no livestock in the field where the fence is compromised).

You are responsible for fixing the fence, either by yourself or by paying someone to do it. Call Michael Beeson (610-291-7343) immediately to repair the fence. You will be charged for the new rail or post.

If you lower a rail, be sure to put it back up before moving on.

**With hunting in mind, please observe
the following rules:**

Be punctual to the meet. **Arrive no later than 15 minutes before the hour.** If hacking to the meet, ride around all coverts.

Be mounted on a horse you know and can control. Otherwise, you compromise not just your safety but also the safety of others.

You and your horse should be well turned out—clean horse and tack in good condition, clean clothes, and polished boots.

Upon arrival, say “Good morning” to the staff and the Masters. If you have brought a guest, introduce him or her to the Masters and Fieldmaster and be sure the cap is paid and a release is signed before moving off. A member should get permission at least one day before the meet from a Master or the Hunt Secretary to bring a guest. A guest is permitted to hunt on a capping fee basis only five times per season. You are responsible for the comportment of your guest in the hunting field.

One of the most discourteous things you can do is intentionally separate yourself from the field. At all times, keep with the Fieldmaster. It only takes one straggler or person taking his or her own line to turn a fox, or prevent it from being pushed out of the covert by the hounds which could ruin the hunt for everyone. People on their own often go on land that is forbidden to the hunt and, as a result, may get the hunt in serious trouble.

Stay behind the Fieldmaster. This keeps you from interfering with hounds and is respectful of his or her position. When galloping behind the Fieldmaster, pay attention to when he or she begins to sit up. This is the signal that he or she is pulling up.

Masters and older members of the field who can keep pace with the Fieldmaster are entitled to be in the front. They should not have to jockey for position. People who enjoy riding with the Fieldmaster must recognize that others also enjoy it and not preempt the spot.

When staff or hounds are passing you, turn your horse's head towards them so there is no chance of your horse kicking them.

Keep a safe following distance, particularly when approaching a fence. Choose your panel early and keep perpendicular to it. Do not cut in or change panels. (The riders behind and to either side of you are counting on this.) The rider in front of you should clear the fence before you start to jump it.

If your horse refuses, do not let it run down the fence line (thus cutting off other riders), but get out of the way quickly. Go to the back of the Field to try the fence again.

If your horse is a frequent kicker, it should not be in the hunting field at all. If it is an infrequent kicker, put a red ribbon in its tail and when at a check, keep its hind end clear of other horses. The red ribbon does not absolve you of the consequences of kicking, but it at least warns others. If your horse kicks or tries to kick a hound, horse, or person, reprimand it immediately and apologize to the person kicked. It may teach the horse not to kick and is a courtesy owed to the person kicked. All horses have the potential to kick. It is your job in the Field to give the horse and rider in front of you enough room and not step on their heels. Horses that are not settled should stay towards the outside and rear

of the field. If your horse continues to be unsettled, you should, for the sake of others, take it home.

When hounds are working, speak softly or not at all. Noise in the field is distracting. Be aware when the Fieldmaster is listening for hounds or the horn and be quiet.

If you have to go in early, ask the Fieldmaster or an experienced member of the field for the recommended route so you do not interfere with the rest of the afternoon's sport. Go only on land on which you know the hunt is permitted.

"Hounds please" "Huntsman please" "Staff please" "Fieldmaster please" are signals to get off the path with your horse's head facing the path and letting hounds, staff, or those previously ahead of you pass by. "Reverse please" means that the field should quickly go in the opposite direction to the first open area without waiting for the Fieldmaster to pass.

If you view a fox, go stand on the line with your horse's head facing in the direction taken by the fox and hold your cap in the air. Send someone else to tell the Fieldmaster to radio the Huntsman. Rarely should it be necessary to shout "Tally Ho!"

If you wish to lower a fence or open a gate, let all those who want to jump the fence do so first. If someone has generously dismounted to open or close a gate or drop a rail, say "Thank You" as you pass and make sure before leaving that this person has company while remounting. Dismounting to help with gates or fences is everyone's job. Take your turn.

Take the trouble to introduce yourself to a person in the hunting field that you do not recognize. Please make guests feel welcome. When riding to a fence, it is courteous to let a guest go in front of you.

If you see a loose horse, whether a member's horse or a farm animal, do not expect someone else to catch it. Make an effort yourself to help. The same people should not have to give up their sport every time this happens.

If you fall behind during a run or are late in arriving, proceed as rapidly as possible to catch up, but stay on land on which you know the hunt is permitted. If you have any doubt, proceed by road quickly. When at a check on or near the road, try to move yourself and everyone around you off the road to let cars continue.

A ringing cell phone is an unwelcome sound in the hunting field. Please turn our ringer off and put it on vibrate only. A

We prefer that you do not smoke in the hunting field.

If you observe someone not following these rules, you should feel comfortable reminding them in a pleasant and courteous manner. If we are all constructive policemen, there should be few problems.

A few notes on attire

Headgear: At all times a black or navy blue (women) ASTM-approved safety helmet of your choice with a chin harness securely fastened is mandatory. Ladies must wear a hairnet.

Hound Exercising: Shirt with a collar, helmet and boots with heels.

Cubbing: Tweed coat, breeches or jodhpurs, brown boots, shirt and tie or colored stock. Dark blue and dark green coats are discouraged.

Formal Hunting: At all times it is correct to wear a black coat, white stock, breeches, and black boots. Ladies may wear navy blue coats. Tuesdays and Thursdays, except holidays, tweed coats, colored stocks, breeches or jodhpurs, and brown boots may be worn. Colored stocks may also be worn during the week with black or navy blue coats. All clothing should be clean and in good repair. Boots should be polished.

Gentlemen who have, prior to May 2005, worn a Pink Coat may continue to do so. For others, permission from the Masters is required.

At all times, horses should be well turned out with clean tack in good repair.

Children

Mr. Stewart's Cheshire Foxhounds has always encouraged children to hunt. After all, they are the future of hunting.

Children should be on ponies they can control. Children, who can go at the pace set by the Fieldmaster, and jump whatever he or she jumps, may hunt up with the adults as long as they are with an equally proficient adult responsible for them.

Like the adults, both children and their mounts should be neat and clean. Children under 16 may wear cubbing attire at all times and should be accompanied by an adult.

Encourage your children to cheerfully get off and open gates when needed and cheerfully do anything that the Fieldmaster or a Master requests.

Be sure your child follows the rules that have been laid out for everyone. Being polite is most important.

Guidelines for Car Followers

Many loyal foxhunting enthusiasts enjoy following the hunt by vehicle. They are not only welcome but also can be very helpful to those hunting. There are several guidelines, which, if followed, make foxhunting more enjoyable for everyone. We ask our car followers to do the following:

Please always be aware that your position or the position of other car followers may turn the hunted fox. For example, if hounds have been cast so they are coming toward you, please move your vehicle further to the side. Please do not park at the end of a tree line or a covert that is being hunted even when hounds are moving away from you, because a hunted fox often reverses and goes back. Instead, move your vehicle down the road so that the hunted fox coming down the covert can cross the road and not be turned by you or your vehicle. Please help us by asking other car followers to do the same.

Please stay off private property. The fact that another vehicle is on the private property is not a reason to be on it. That vehicle may not have permission. The public road is always permissible.

Please assist a rider who has a problem.

- Help the rider fix a fence (consider carrying rope in your vehicle; it can be used to temporarily seal off a smashed fence).
- Help the rider who has a problem with his or her tack.

- Help catch a loose horse.
- Help with a gate.

When hunt staff or the Fieldmaster approach a gate near you and indicate they would like it opened, please offer to help open it and let the horses through. (When horses are jumping a fence, let all riders who wish to jump go by before assisting nonjumpers in opening a gate.)

Please do not park or stop where you are likely to interfere with riders jumping into or out of a field. Give them plenty of room.

Be helpful in slowing down or stopping traffic for hounds or horses.

In a pleasant and courteous way, please help less knowledgeable followers comply with these guidelines. In that way, you will be making a real contribution to great hunting.

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Recognized in 1912

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