

COTSWOLD VALE FARMERS HUNT



Below is a simple guide on what to wear and what to do out hunting but please don't be afraid to ask. There is a certain amount of "Hunting Etiquette" which can be confusing to a newcomer, some is based on tradition, but actually a lot is just common sense and good manners.

WHAT TO WEAR – RIDER

The idea is to be neat and tidy as well as practical and safe (No jeans, wellingtons, or bright coloured jodhpurs, breeches or jackets). Below is a guide:

General:

Light coloured Jodhpurs or Breeches.

Riding or jodpur boots.

Riding hat. If it is a skull cap the cover should be black or navy blue. If the hat has ribbons at the back these should be cut off or sewn up as only Masters and Hunt Staff wear them down.

Long hair should be in a hair net or tied or plaited.

Gloves are a good idea as they keep you warm and stop blisters.

Wear plenty of layers if it is cold.

Body Protectors are perfectly acceptable if you want to wear one.

Specific for Autumn Hunting:

Tweed (hacking) Jacket

Shirt and tie or coloured stock. The stock should be secured with a plain stock which is worn horizontally.

Specific for after Opening Meet:

Black or Navy Blue Jacket. (Ladies usually wear Navy Blue).

Shirt with a white or cream stock. The stock should be secured with a plain stock pin which is worn horizontally.

Adults may wear tweed jacket and coloured stock or tie if they want.

Specific for Children (16yrs and under):

Children should wear a tweed jacket and tie at all times, however if they do not have one then a black or navy blue one would be acceptable. Remember these show jackets are not very warm or waterproof.

Pony Club Members should wear a Pony Club tie. Pony Club sweatshirts are acceptable for Autumn Hunting if riders do not have a tweed jacket.

The following is recommended to bring in your pocket - a piece of bale twine (useful to tie up a gate or fence), chocolate, money for emergency (this was for a phone call but nowadays a mobile phone is more appropriate), money for the "cap" (that is to pay the Secretary for your hunting). It is a good idea, especially for children to have their details and a contact phone number on them (like the medical armbands used in competitions).

WHAT TO WEAR - HORSE

Your horse should be clean and tidy. Nummahs should be dark or sheepskin. No bright colours please.

A suggestion is to use the sort of tack you would use for cross-country. Your horse will be keener in company so you may need a stronger bit. If your horse wears boots that is ok.

It is correct to plait the mane after Opening Meet but not for Autumn Hunting.

If your horse is young or new to hunting, then put a green ribbon on his tail. Other riders should respect this and understand.

If your horse kicks then put a red ribbon on his tail to warn other riders BUT it is your responsibility to stay at the back and away from other horses and hounds. A kick can do a lot of damage to an innocent follower or hound.

HUNT OFFICERS – WHO IS WHO

Master – He or she is in charge of the Hunt. A Hunt may have more than one, but one will be “Master of the day” The Master of the day will usually be the “Field Master”, and if not will announce at the meet who is the Field Master. All mounted followers must follow and stay with the Field Master. You must address all Masters as “Master”. Gentlemen Masters wear Red Coats and Lady ones wear a Blue Coat with brass buttons.

Huntsman - He or she is in charge of the hounds. He/she will wear a Red Coat and carry a Hunting horn.

Whipper-in – There may be more than one. They help the Huntsman and will ride out on their own and collect up hounds. They usually wear a Red Jacket but not in every occasion.

Field Secretary – Collects the money (known as “cap”) from the mounted followers.

WHAT TO DO

Before the meet.

If you are not a Subscriber or regular follower contact the field Secretary who will confirm where the meet is and what the “cap” (charge for coming out) is. If you need she will be able to advise you about where to park.

Please be considerate with your parking and do not block gateways or the road or park on mown verges. If you park in someone’s yard, please ensure you thank them (should you see them) and make sure that you don’t leave any mess so pick up any muck your horse might do. Remember also that parking space may be limited so park sensibly and considerately.

At the Meet.

Find the Secretary and pay your “cap”. Correct money if possible.

Say “Good Morning” to any Masters and find out who is the Field Master.

Stand quietly away from the hounds with your horses head facing inwards towards others.

During the Day

Stay with and behind the Field Master and do as directed by him/her. Try to keep up and do not wander off or dawdle behind. If you get left behind try to catch up as soon as possible. If you are unable to follow over a jump then go through a gate if there is one nearby. If there is not then look for someone who will know where to go and if not go back the way you have come. You must not go wandering round fields that you have not been in during the day.

If you do any damage to a fence or jump you must stop and check if it needs to be made stock-proof then, and tell the Field Master.

Gates – Gates should always be left as found but if in doubt it is better to close. As you go through a gate-way if the person in front calls “Gate Please” it means that the last one through must close the gate. You must clearly shout “Gate Please” to the person behind you and make sure that they have heard. If you are the last or second last you must shut the gate. Do not leave one person alone to shut the gate. If there are people behind you but a long way away you must either wait at the gate for them or shut it. DO NOT assume that they will know to shut it and that they have heard you. Please take your turn at shutting gates. If someone (either mounted or on foot) is holding a gate open for you make sure as you go through that you thank them.

If you see the Huntsman or Whipper-in approach a gate, please offer to open and close it for them. When approaching a closed gate behind the Field Master offer to open it and do not expect him/her to do it.

Always move aside to let a Hunt Official pass you and always turn your horses head to face them and the hounds.

DON’T ride too close to the horse in front – you can do a lot of damage by treading on their heels.

DON’T ride on planted crops or new grass– follow where the Field Master and keep in round the edge.

When riding on the road DON'T ride on mown verges or into gardens. Be aware of non-hunting vehicles and don't block the road.

When standing waiting or watching hounds please try and be as quiet as possible so as not to distract them or the Field Master.

Be polite and courteous and remember you are a guest of the Farmer or Landowner who is allowing the Hunt across his/her land. Without their goodwill hunting would not be possible.

You can leave to go home whenever you want. It is polite to say "Good night" and "Thank you" to the Field Master. Tradition states it is always "Good night" at the end no matter what time of the day. It is a good idea to tell someone out that you are going home as otherwise they may wonder what has happened to you.

ABOVE ALL ENJOY YOUR DAY AND HAVE FUN.

HUNTING TERMS

Below are some of the calls you may hear during the day and an explanation of what they mean:

"Huntsman Please"	The Huntsman is coming past you so please move out of his way and turn your Horses head towards him.
"Hound Please"	A Hound is trying to pass you. Turn your horse towards it and move away. If a Horse should kick a hound it could cause a major injury.
"Hold Hard"	The Field-Master is asking you to stop.
"Gate Please"	The gate needs to be shut. Pass the message back and close the gate if you are one of the last two.
"Ware hole/wire"	Beware of hazard – hole or wire or anything else.
"Cap"	The daily charge to come hunting. Paid to the Secretary at the meet.
"Good morning"	The appropriate greeting at a meet.
"Good night"	The appropriate thing to say when you leave for the day.
"Loose horse"	Someone has fallen off and the horse is running away.
"Opening Meet"	The start of formal hunting. The first meet after the end of Autumn hunting.
"Autumn Hunting"	The first part of the Hunting season during which the young hounds are trained.
"Single file please"	Called by the Field Master to tell the mounted field to keep in and go single file.

HINTS FOR FOOT FOLLOWERS

At the meet find the person collecting the Foot Followers Cap and make your contribution of at least £2 per person.

When following do not park or stop on a corner, or in someone's private drive or on a mown verge. Please all park on the same side of the road to allow traffic to pass.

Try not to block the road to non-hunting traffic.

Turn off your engine when stopped.

Be friendly to local residents.