

ETIQUETTE AND CONDUCT

It is essential for your own safety and enjoyment, that you have an understanding of how the hunting day is arranged. If you have any questions or problems during the day, ask either a Master or a senior member of the hunt.

The Hunt Masters and Huntsman wear a distinctive livery (blue coats with a grey collar and silver hunt buttons). Senior members of the hunt wear a grey collar on their hunt coats and may also have silver hunt buttons.

You should understand, as with all horse riding, there are risks involved and knowing what goes on and what the rules and regulations are will help you to manage those risks.

The Masters run the days hunting and must be listened to at all times. They know the plan for the day and where we are / aren't allowed to go.

At the start of the day, the Field Master will introduce themselves. He or she will lead the field (you are a member of the field) and it is ESSENTIAL THAT YOU LISTEN TO HIS / HER INSTRUCTIONS AT ALL TIMES AND ON NO ACCOUNT MUST YOU OVERTAKE HIM / HER.

You should at all times follow the route taken by the Field Master, or if you are not jumping, follow the instructions of a senior member who will direct you to the alternative route.

The direction of the Lines have been carefully worked out with the Farmers beforehand and the necessary permissions obtained. If by any chance you get left behind, follow either the path of the Line or go back the way you have come. **DO NOT** take a Line of your own. If delayed, try to find another rider or foot follower who will direct you.

You must consider that the Farmers and Landowners have allowed the hunt across their land and the reputation of the hunt is at risk if you do not treat their land and generosity with respect and may influence whether we are welcomed again in the future.

If you hear an instruction being passed through the field such as "ware rabbit holes", "gate please" you must pass that instruction to those in front or behind you. Don't be scared to shout – it is important the message gets to everyone.

The Huntsman rides ahead of the Field Master with his Whippers-in. They control the hounds and must not be interfered with in any way. LEAVE THE HOUNDS ALONE.

You must never get too close to the hounds, ride over them or allow your horse / pony to kick them. If you get too close behind them, it will frighten them and they are likely to stop suddenly and lie down, increasing the risk that you will trample them. They are the most valuable possession of the hunt and the Huntsman will be very annoyed if they are injured.

Keep an eye open for any hounds that are coming up behind. If someone shouts “hound on the right / left”, this means there is a hound coming behind or in front of you. Move over to allow the hound to pass you and pass the message on.

If the Huntsman brings the hounds past you, always turn your horse to face them, to minimise the risk of your horse kicking them or standing on them.

Care of a farmer’s stock and crops ALWAYS takes priority over our enjoyment. It must never be forgotten that without the goodwill of farmers, the Hunt would not exist and no sport would be enjoyed by the members.

At the Meet

On arrival at the meet, it is courteous to say “Good Morning” to the Masters and Huntsman.

Arrive at the meet with enough time to pay your cap. Seek out the correct person to pay. Do not leave it to him/her to come and seek you out.

When you come out for the first time you will be given an emergency contact card. Please complete the card and carry it with you at all times.

Thank the farmer whose land we use, if you know who he/she is and thank the person who has provided the stirrup cup.

Hunting is a social sport to enjoy. The more people you talk to at the meet, the happier the atmosphere. Remember to greet people on foot and try to make those out for the first time feel welcome.

During the Hunt

Make sure that you stay behind the Field Master, Hounds, Huntsman and Whippers-in.

On the way to the lines, thank those car users who slow down or stop to allow us to pass.

Thank people who are kind enough to hold a gate whilst you ride through.

Never fail to thank a farmer or farm worker who may be holding a gate or helping in some other way. Not only is it discourteous to ride past ignoring them, or taking their assistance for granted, but without their help and permission, we would not be able to hunt.

Hunt Followers are reminded that they are crossing land by the kind permission of the Farmers and Landowners , which is given to the Masters on a hunting day and therefore must never be construed as a public bridleway or footpath outside of this time.

If you leave early, make sure you tell the Field Master so that we can make sure everyone is accounted for at the end of the day.

At the close of the meet, everyone should make a point of seeing the Masters to thank them for the day's hunting and to say "Goodnight".

Did you fall off, get shouted at?

Don't worry; we've all been there. It is all part of becoming an experienced horseman/woman and learning about draghunting!

General Etiquette

It is surprising how many people leave their manners on the ground when they get on a horse. Please thank cars for slowing down, wave cars on when you see the Masters wave them on and keep to the nearside if you hear the shout "car please". A smile and "good morning" to people on foot will help to dispel the myth that everyone on horseback is a snob and too good to talk to people on foot.

If you are a visitor or a new comer to hunting and this all sounds complicated and scary don't worry the members of the hunt are always be willing to help you. Never be afraid to ask for advice.

At all times remember that you are a guest of the Farmer or Landowner.