

# A Brief Guide to Hunting with the Tedworth

## Where to start

Fancied trying out Hunting but not sure where to start? ...

Then come and join in the fun with The Tedworth Hunt. Although the Hunting Act is now in force, hunts are still hunting within the law, so there is no need to feel you are too late to start and everyone is welcome, on foot, in a car, on a bike or on horseback. Contrary to some misconceptions hunting people are friendly and always keen to welcome new people.

You do not need to be a member of a Hunt to get started as you can buy a day's membership or 'cap'. You are normally allowed 3 'cap' days before having to become a subscriber. Details of the Dress Code can be found below but as long as you wear appropriate safety clothing (e.g. correctly fitting hat and boots) then that is fine for when you are starting out.

If you are riding then you should feel confident that you can control your horse at all paces and jump natural obstacles. Most of our hunt jumps are around 3 foot and are timber. However, if you don't feel confident jumping there are normally alternative routes but make sure you shut all gates and try to keep up with the field.

Your horse should be fit and be able to keep going at a fast pace for a couple of miles or so. Make sure your tack is in good condition and that you can control your horse in open spaces. If your horse has never hunted before then Autumn Hunting provides a gentler introduction. If you don't have your own horse then look at our Links Page for information on yards that offer a Hirelings service.

We normally hold Newcomers' days in October and we have a special rate for all those who have never hunted before. **You need to contact the Hunt Secretary before you come out** so she knows to expect you and on your arrival can introduce you to an experienced hunt follower who will explain what is going on throughout the day. **For Insurance purposes all mounted followers are required to be members of the Countryside Alliance.** (Benefits include legal liability insurance up to £5 million, £30,000 disability insurance and £15,000 accidental death cover)

Below we have put together some general information if you want to find out more.

Approximately 5000 people try out hunting for the first time each year so make this year the year that you give it a go!

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## **What's it all about?**

The season runs from around the End of August to March/April each year.

It starts with Autumn Hunting / Hound Training from August – October when young hounds are taught to hunt a trail. Meets normally take place early in the morning and in confined areas. This limits distractions to young hounds, allows for more limited fitness of horses and hounds in the early season.

From the end of October the full season starts with the Opening Meet. From then on Meets normally start at 11 am. These are hosted and refreshments are provided to help calm the nerves, boost energy levels and socialise.

## **Who's Who in the Hunt**

The Masters (MFHs) are in overall command of the hunt and their word is final in the field and in the kennels. They decide when and where hounds will meet, what coverts are to be drawn, and when hounds will go home. They are responsible for hounds showing the best possible sport under existing conditions; and they are responsible for the hounds, the staff, and the Field neither damaging nor annoying the landowners who make the sport possible.

The Huntsman controls the hounds, indicating to them by signals where he wishes them to draw for a 'fox' (the trail). The hounds work together as a pack with the Huntsman encouraging the tail hounds and steadying the lead hounds, and assist hounds to recover the line by use of a cast if necessary.

The Whippers-In assist the Huntsman in controlling hounds by turning them back to the Huntsman or by encouraging them forward as necessary. Also, they are used by the Huntsman as scouts. No one except the Huntsman gives orders to Whippers-In. No one except by request of the Huntsman or MFH should accompany them or attempt to assist them.

The Treasurer takes care of all of the hunt's finances and keeps the committee informed of the overall financial situation.

The Secretary assists the Field Master in his job of observing and reporting the behaviour of the Field, particularly as it affects the landowners. Damaged fences should be reported to the Secretary. "Capping Fees" - (a set fee per hunt) must be paid to the Field Secretary at the meet.

The Committee help the Hunt Servants with all of their roles as well as being responsible for organising the wide variety of events throughout the year.

The Hunt Supporters help to raise money for the general upkeep of the kennels and are responsible for many of the social events throughout the year.

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## A Guide to a Hunting Day

You will find a handy Hunt Rules reference below which you should follow at all times.

- If you are not a subscriber then call the Secretary for details of Meets. As there are often last minute changes due to weather or other circumstances you should check arrangements the day before
- Park as directed making sure you are not blocking any road users
- At the meet it is customary to greet the Master(s) with a simple "Good Morning"
- If you owe a Cap then make sure you find the Hunt Secretary
- If your horse is excited make sure you keep out of the way of people on foot and other horses
- Before moving off the Huntsman will address the field. Listen carefully for any instructions and to identify your Field Master(s).
- The Huntsman will always explain who is laying the trail. The trail may be laid from a quad, horse or on foot depending on terrain and conditions and several methods may be employed on any one day. Often several trails are laid which can be broken to replicate natural hunting, slow the pace and increase the challenge
- When setting off let the Hounds and Hunt Staff set off first. Always turn your horse's head towards hounds. To kick a hound is the worst 'sin' and you can be sent home
- Keep behind the Field Master at all and follow his/her instructions as to where you can ride
- If you are at the back of the field please make sure you close any gates
- If you are coming up to a jump do not gallop in front of other people, wait your turn and if your horse refuses, get out of the way and try to follow someone further down the field
- Do not interfere with the hounds or Hunt Staff during the day
- If you see a fox during the course of the day do not holloa as was traditional but indicate the direction of the fox to Hunt Staff so they can take appropriate action
- If riding along a road always say thank you to any cars that slow down even if you are in a group
- If you damage any fence then please inform one of the Hunt Officials immediately
- You are free to go home at any point in the day and if you don't know your way home then ask someone in the field and they should be able to either direct you or hook you up with someone who is going home as well
- On your way home, please continue to be courteous and respectful. Ride carefully round crops, stewardship land and around livestock and close any gates!

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## Hunt Rules – Ambassadors for the Tedworth Hunt

### **When hunting you should ensure that:**

- Please appreciate you are a guest of those on whose land you ride over or walk on. Do not park or drive on private land without the express permission of the landholder.
- Please be courteous at all times to farmers, landowners and members of the general public.
- Make every effort to avoid causing damage to land, fences or crops. Any damage should be reported immediately to a hunt official.
- All gates should be shut immediately and avoid disturbances to livestock.
- Follow the instructions at all times of the field master especially where with regard to riding over land where stewardship schemes are in operation.
- Do not ride or drive on mown verges, or ride several abreast through villages and along busy roads
- Avoid causing obstructions when parking vehicles, horseboxes or trailers at any time.
- Do not park on both sides of roads and so interrupt the flow of other traffic. Help and acknowledgement must be afforded to passing traffic. Remember every delayed motorist or lorry driver becomes a potential enemy of hunting
- Members of the hunt may be asked to assist the hunt staff for safety reasons
- Mounted and foot followers are asked not to holloa as this may confuse the hounds
- **Handling Hunt Saboteurs/Monitors**  
There is extensive advice available on the Countryside Alliance website. Please make sure you have read and understood the very useful booklet: **Hunting without Harrassment.**

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## Dress Code

Although when you first start out there is no requirement to dress correctly it is always best to understand the dress code protocols which are steeped in Hunting tradition:

Hunting attire developed over the years to be practical to wear when faced with the variety of weather conditions and terrain met during a day's hunting. It has become an iconic symbol and part of the traditional spectacle of hunting.

Since the ban we have allowed Hunt Staff to adjust their clothing according to tradition. The most important part of the clothes you wear whilst hunting is that they are safe and tidy. As a guide we have listed below the traditionally accepted turn out.

**Coats:** Tweed Coat during Hound Exercise Season and Black during the Main Season. *Hunt colours and buttons are awarded at the discretion of the Masters only. The traditional Pink (as the Red Coats are known) are normally reserved for Masters, Hunt Staff or those with special dispensation only.*

**Breeches:** Tan or Buff. Jodphurs are acceptable for children.

**Boots:** Black with garter straps. Jodphur boots are acceptable for children.

**Hat:** It is most important that you get a well-fitting hat. This could save your life so we recommend a skull cap with a black velvet cover.

**Shirt & Stock:** White shirt and white stock, fastened with a plain gold pin.

**Gloves:** Black or brown

**Children:** We recommend that all children wear a back or body protector.

**Hair & Jewellery:** Always have your hair tied up and in a hairnet if long. It is strongly advised to take off all jewellery especially earrings which can get caught up in woodlands

### **Horses:**

All horses should be neatly turned out, fit and well shod.

**Plaiting:** During Hound Exercise it is not necessary to plait your horse but during the main season it is normal practice to plait.

**Clipping:** If you are hunting regularly then it is likely your horse will be stabled and therefore a Hunter Clip is recommended. Hunting is fast and muddy and a fully clipped horse is easier to clean, check for injuries etc. However, if you keep your horse outside then a clip such as a Trace Clip may be more suitable. It is a good idea to clip your horse for comfort and ease of care.

**Young/Inexperienced horses:** It is advisable to plait a green ribbon in a young or inexperienced horse's tail to warn people not to crowd you in the field.

**Horses that Kick:** If your horse kicks then you must plait a red ribbon into the tail to warn other members of the field. Keep out of the centre of the field and stay away from hounds!!

**Other tips:** Dress for the weather! Wear tights underneath your breeches and two pairs of socks. If you are hunting regularly it is a good investment to spend money on a specially made hunting coat as this will help keep out the cold and wet!