

Mr. Stewart's Cheshire Foxhounds



Hunting Etiquette

Mr. Stewart's Cheshire Foxhounds
Recognized in 1912

Cheshire Hunt Conservancy
P.O. Box 528
Unionville, PA 19375-0528
610-347-1918 Office
610-347-2321 Kennel

Nina Stewart Strawbridge, MFH
Mr. Russell B. Jones, Jr., MFH
Mr. F. Bruce Miller, MFH

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. Observing hounds at work, the thrill of following hounds across country and 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. Sometimes just being on a horse on a lovely day. Foxhunting should be a joyous experience each day, and to make each day go smoothly, certain rules should be followed so everyone will have a good time. Each participant should show courtesy and respect to everyone else. Each person's enjoyment of the day depends on the conduct of 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 by every person.

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 pass 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:**

1. Only go on land that the Fieldmaster is on and only that part of the land that the Fieldmaster is on. Do not assume that you are permitted to be anywhere else.
2. 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.
3. When riding next to paddocks where livestock is turned out, walk or halt your horse if the livestock starts to run around.
4. Stay off grass that has been cut like a lawn. Do not cut corners.
5. 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.
6. 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 temporarily 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 was compromised. You are responsible for fixing the fence, either by yourself or by paying someone to do it.

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

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

8. Be punctual to the meet. If hacking to the meet, ride around all coverts.
9. Be mounted on a horse you know and can control. Otherwise, you compromise not just your safety but also the safety of others.
10. You and your horse should be well turned out—clean horse and tack in good condition, clean clothes, and polished boots.
11. 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 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.
12. One of the most discourteous things you can do is intentionally separate yourself from the field. At all times, keep with the Fieldmaster or with the designated leader of the second field. It only takes one straggler or person who takes his or her own line to turn a fox, or prevent it from being pushed out of the covert by the hounds; that will ruin the hunt for everyone. Persons on their own often go on land or a section of land that is forbidden to the hunt and as a result may get the hunt in serious trouble.

13. Stay behind the Fieldmaster. This keeps you from interfering with hounds and is respectful of his position. When galloping behind the Fieldmaster, pay attention to when he begins to sit up. This is the signal that he is pulling up.
14. 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.
15. When staff or hounds are passing you, turn your horse's head towards them so there is no chance of your horse kicking them.
16. 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.
17. 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. A horse refusing more than once should be taken to the back until the problem is solved.
18. 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. Horses that are not settled should also 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.

19. 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.
20. 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.
21. "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.
22. 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. Only if you cannot get to the Fieldmaster, hounds have checked, and you are positive you have seen the hunted fox should you shout "Tally Ho!" or give a holloa.
23. 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.
24. 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.

25. 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.
26. 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. Do not dwell somewhere on your own line.
27. When at a check on or near the road, try to move yourself and everyone around you off the road to let cars continue.
28. A ringing cell phone is an unwelcome sound in the hunting field to those around you. If you must carry a phone for an important reason, have the phone on vibration, not a ring.
29. 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 safety helmet of your choice with a chin harness securely fastened is encouraged. Ladies may wear a black velvet-hunting cap with the ribbons up. Ladies should wear a hairnet. Men should not wear a hunting cap unless they are a Master or former Master, or are taking the field that day.

Hound Exercising: Shirt with a collar, helmet, shoes (boots) with heels.

Cubbing: Tweed coat, breeches or jodhpurs, brown boots, shirt and tie or turtleneck and colored stock.

Proper Hunting: At all times it is correct to wear a black coat, white stock, breeches, and black boots. Ladies may wear dark 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 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.

Ladies and gentlemen who have, prior to May 2005, worn the Cheshire button approved by the Masters 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 and tack in good repair.

Children

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

30. Children should be on ponies they can control. Children who can go at the pace set by the Fieldmaster, and jump whatever he jumps, may hunt up with the adults as long as they are with an equally proficient adult responsible for them.
31. 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.
32. Encourage your children to cheerfully get off and open gates when needed and cheerfully do anything that the Fieldmaster or a Master requests.

33. 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:

34. 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.
35. 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.
36. 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.
37. 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.)
 38. 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.
 39. Be helpful in slowing down or stopping traffic for hounds or horses.
 40. If you believe you have seen the hunted fox, you may indicate that by a hand signal. We have our eyes on you for help. Rarely use a holloa.

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.

Approved by Etiquette Committee
May, 2005*
KC
DF
SJ
WP
WL
The Masters

*with minor revisions October 2009

Mr. Stewart's Cheshire Foxhounds
Recognized in 1912

Cheshire Hunt Conservancy
P.O. Box 528
Unionville, PA 19375-0528
610-347-1918 Office
610-347-2321 Kennel

Nina Stewart Strawbridge MFH
Mr. Russell B. Jones, Jr., MFH
Mr. F. Bruce Miller, MFH