

WHAT IS FOXHUNTING?

Foxhunting is the pursuit of wild fox, with hounds. The hounds possess a sense of smell which enables them to follow the trail or scent left behind. It is a competition between fox and hound, with the advantage clearly in favor of the fox.

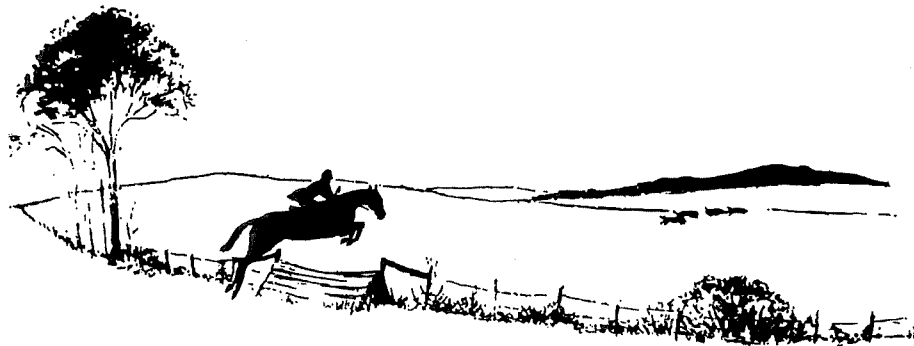
The fox and hound have enjoyed a close relationship throughout time. Over the years the foxhound has been bred to improve his ability to pursue fox. With his keen sense of smell, the diligent hound follows the trail of scent left by the fox as he travels over the countryside. The fox, a hunter himself, seems to enjoy outwitting the persistent hounds and will lead them on a merry chase before seeking refuge in a ground hog hole or other safe haven. It is important to keep in mind that the fox is in command of the hunt, as he may elect to run, or he may choose to simply go in a hole at any time. When the fox goes in a hole it is said that he has "*gone to ground,*" and that ends the chase.

Foxhunting is also a demonstration of the skill and art of the Huntsman, as he works for and with the hounds and they with him. The Huntsman's teamwork with the Masters and Whippers-In contributes to the success of the hunting day.

The hunt staff is made up of the Masters, the Huntsman and the Whippers-In. The Masters manage the hunt, lead the field and strive to provide good sport for the subscribers of the hunt. The Huntsman hunts the hounds. He is the central figure on the hunting day. His knowledge and skill is essential in the successful partnership with the hounds. The Whipper-In is the Huntsman's assistant and provides him with an extra set of eyes and ears. The Whipper-In uses the whip as a noise making device to attract the attention of the hounds. The people who follow the hunt are referred to as the Field.

In a nutshell, the Huntsman hunts the hounds, with the assistance of the Whippers-In. The Masters lead the Field, jumping panels and galloping as fast as necessary in an effort to keep the Field in a position, so as not to interfere with the line of the fox, the hounds or Huntsman, but where they are able to watch and listen to the hounds.

Foxhunting knows no age barrier. Adults and children alike come together to share the joys of an autumn countryside as it is brought to life with the cheerful hunting song of the hounds. Organized hunts, seek to bring the enjoyment of the hunt, one of the most exciting and challenging of all pursuits, to all its subscribers.



GLOSSARY OF FOXHUNTING TERMS

All on: All hounds in, present and accounted for.

Away: A fox has "gone away" when he has left the covert (cover). Hounds are "away" when they have left covert on the line of a fox.

Babble: To give tongue on scent other than fox, on no scent at all, or on a scent too faint to follow.

Blank: To draw blank is to fail to find a fox.

Brush: A fox's tail is always called a brush.

Button: To receive, or be awarded the hunt buttons and colors.

Bye: A bye day is a hunting day not scheduled on the fixture card.

Cap: A fee that is paid by non-subscribers for a day of hunting, "capping".

Check: An interruption on the run caused by hounds losing the line temporarily.

Colors: 1. Colors that distinguish the uniform of the hunt. 2. to be awarded colors is to be given the right to wear them.

Couple: 1. Two hounds for convenience in counting. 2. a device for keeping two hounds attached for training.

Covert: (Pronounced "cover") A patch of woods or brush where a fox might be found.

Crop: The stiff portion on a hunting whip, to which the thong and lash are attached.

Cry: The sound given by hounds when hunting.

Cub: A young fox.

Cubbing: Early hunting before the formal season begins to benefit the young entry.

Double: To blow a series of short sharp notes "double the horn". Signifies a fox is afoot.

Double Back: A fox that returns to covert after having left is said to double back.

Draw: To search for a fox in the covert.

Drive: The urge to get forward well with the line. "That hound has drive"

Dwell: To hunt without getting forward. A hound that lacks drive is apt to dwell.

Earth: A place where a fox goes to ground for protection, but usually a place where foxes live regularly-a fox den.

Enter: A hound is "entered" when he is first regularly used for hunting.

Feather: A hound "feathers" when he indicates, by actions rather than by voice, that he is on a line or near it. The stern is waved and activity is concentrated and intensified.

Field: The group of people riding to hounds, excluding the MFH and Staff.

Field Master: The person designated by the MFH's to control the field in their absence.

Fixture: The card sent out to list the times and meeting places for the given period.

Ground: "To go to Ground" To take shelter (usually in a ground hog hole).

Hark: 1. "Please be quiet and listen." 2. Hounds rushing to a hound that has opened.

Head: To head a fox is to cause it to turn from its planned direction of travel, (every effort is made not to do this).

Heel: Backward, hounds following the line the wrong way are running "heel".

Hill Toppers: Those who follow hounds on horseback at a distance behind the regular field without jumping.

Hold Hard: "Stop quickly please".

Honor: A hound "honors" when he gives tongue on a line that another hound has been hunting.

Hunting Whip: The crop, thong and lash is known as the hunting whip.

Huntsman: A Staff member who trains the hounds, hunts the hounds & controls them in the field.

Lark: To jump a fence unnecessarily when hounds are not running.

Lash: The short piece of cord attached to the end of the whip thong. See also thong.

Lift: To carry hounds forward.

Line: The trail of the fox.

Litter: Young born of the same mother at the same time. In foxhunting it applies to whelps (puppies) or fox cubs.

Mark: A hound "marks" when he indicates that a fox has gone to ground. He stops at the earth, tries to dig his way in, and gives tongue in a way quite different from his hunting voice.

Master: The MFH. The person in command of the hunt in field and kennels.

Meet: 1. The assembling of the hunt for a day's sport. 2. The actual place is called the meet.

Nose: The ability of a hound to detect and interpret the scent.

Open: A hound is said to "open" when he first gives tongue on a line. See also tongue.

Pad: The foot of a fox, or the center cushion of a hound's foot.

Panel: A jumpable fence between two posts.

Point: 1. The straight line distance made good in a run. 2. The location to which a whipper-in is sent to watch for a fox to go away from the covert.

Ratcatcher: Informal hunt attire, and is as follows: tweed or dark colored coat, fawn, tan or brick colored breeches with brown, tan or black field boots or jodhpur & jodhpur boots. Approved hat & harness, either shirt with necktie, colored stock tie (not white) or turtleneck.

Rate: A warning cry given to correct hounds.

Ride: A lane cut through the woods.

Riot: Anything that hounds might hunt that they shouldn't.

Run: Describes action after hounds find the line of a fox. This usually implies a gallop for the field.

Scent: The smell of the fox, and the physical and chemical phenomena by which the smell gets from the fox's footprints to the hound's nose. Scent can be good or bad, meaning easy to follow or difficult. It depends in general on the weather.

Speak: For a hound to give tongue.

Staff: The Joint Masters, Huntsman and Whippers-In.

Stern: Tail of a hound.

Thong: The long flexible braided leather portion of a hunting whip joining the lash to the crop.

Thruster: A member of the field who rides too close to staff or hounds.

Tongue: Cry, A hound "gives tongue" when he proclaims with his voice that he is on the line of a fox.

View: To actually see the fox. Should a member of the field view, they should quietly inform the Master right away.

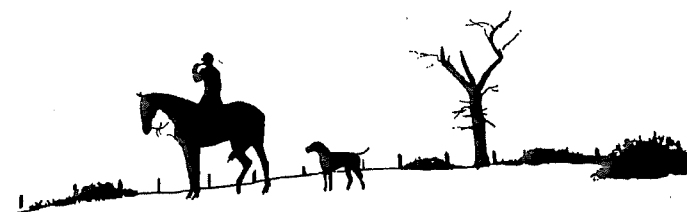
View Holloa: The high pitched cry given only by a staff member on viewing a fox breaking covert.

Walk: Puppies are walked during the summer for training.

Ware: A caution to riders. "Ware hole", "Ware Wire", "Ware Hound" etc.

Whelp: A young puppy, or to bear puppies.

Whipper-In: A Staff member who assists the Huntsman in the control of hounds.



PRACTICAL & HELPFUL HINTS FOR FOXHUNTING

Put your hunting **license in the lining of your hat**, coggins also if you can.

Wear **leather gloves**. **String gloves for wet weather**.

Wear a traditional & (ASHA) **approved safety hat with harness**.

Use **traditional leather hunting tack**, clean fitted saddle pad, & a properly adjusted **martingale**.

Put a little **more bit** on your horse, just in case **you might need it**.

In the beginning, a **neck strap** on your horse is a help & your animal will appreciate it.

Try to remember to **look up, sit up & watch where you are going**.

Be aware of what is happening in **front** as well as **behind** you.

If a horse around you could be a threat, **don't crowd**, move & keep a **safe distance**.

Bees, stay calm move quickly & safely away. Carry a B-sting kit if allergic & tell someone.

On a hunting day, **if you go in early** make sure to **get word to the Masters**.

Put a **red ribbon** in your horse's tail & ride in the rear if you think it might **kick**.

Put a **green ribbon** in your horse's tail & ride in the rear if your animal is inexperienced.

If your horse is a **known kicker**, foxhunting is **not the right activity** for this animal.

On **cold hunting days**, **dress warmly** & in layers.

Out hunting, always give the **hounds the right of way**.

Out hunting, always give the **Masters & Staff the right of way**.

When you **yield right of way**, **turn your horse's head** towards the horse & rider approaching.

Beware of any **hazard** on the trail and pass the word back, (**ware, whatever**).

Stay together, **keep up** with the Field at all times or **keep up** with the Hilltoppers.

Be courteous and considerate to fellow riders & help if needed.

Always be **courteous** and **considerate to landowners and farm workers**.

Be aware of traffic **on the road**, smile, say "**Good Morning, thank you for slowing down.**"

Tie your hair up and **use a hair net** to keep it neat and tidy.

Arrive at the meet with a **clean horse & clean equipment**.

Clean your mount the night before. Load your equipment in your trailer the night before.

Be on time to the hunt meet.

Say "**Good Morning**" to Masters & Staff prior to hunting & "**Thank You**" to each at the end.

Put your **name, address phone # & insurance information on a card** in your pocket.

Please **no smoking**, the woods are dry in the Fall & fire could be a hazard.

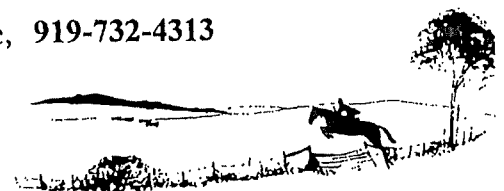
Use the **support group** for questions and a **buddy to hunt with** if you need to.

Check local tack stores **for used** jackets, riding pants, hats, and boots, you can **save \$'s**.

After hunting, remember **everyone** is always **welcome to refreshments**, don't be shy!

For directions, or possible meet changes, call the **hunt line**, 919-732-4313

In the event of **cancellations** due to **weather**, call the hunt line, 919-732-4313



SUGGESTED READING LIST

Riding to Hounds in America

An Introduction for Foxhunters
by *William P. Wadsworth, MFH*

Foxhunting in North America

A Comprehensive Guide of Organized Foxhunting
in the United States and Canada, 1985
by *Alexander McKay Smith, MFH*

Fox Hunting in America

-From Jamestown of 1607 to 1912-
by *Allen Potts*

The Manual of Horsemanship

The Official Manual for the United States Pony Club

Foxhunting-Some Reminders

A pocket size flyer available from The United States Pony Club

A Bit of Magic

The art of biting from a rider's viewpoint
by *Alixé Etherington*

Magazines and Newspapers

With articles and stories relating to foxhunting.

Coverside

The Horseman's Magazine, Inc.

In & Around Horse Country

The Chronicle of The Horse

Horse Talk

The Virginia Horse Journal

Horse and Hound, (UK)

