

THE OLD CHATHAM HUNT CLUB

Introduction to Foxhunting

Please see the booklet, *Foxhunting Formalities* (available from the Honorable Secretary) for information on dress and etiquette.

You are expected to: Introduce yourself to the Masters prior to starting out. Inform the Field Secretary of your status – guest of whom, Adult or Junior. Sign your liability waiver and pay your Capping fee to the Field Secretary.

We start the morning with announcements by the Masters who will introduce you to the group.

Dress: **August** Cubbing (informal attire) – ASTM certified riding helmet with safety harness, green polo shirt, britches, field boots or paddock boots and half chaps.

September

Cubbing (Ratcatcher) – Hunt cap with safety harness (hairnet for the ladies), ratcatcher coat (plaid or colored) with tie or stock tie, britches, brown gloves and brown field boots (black field or dress boots if you do not have brown).

October- November (Opening Day to end-of-formal season)

Black velvet hunt cap with harness, shirt with white stock tie, plain stock pin in horizontal position, canary vest, beige britches, plain black boots, gloves, and black hunt coat.

Field Etiquette The Field or Flight is organized into 3 groups – First for those who want to follow hounds very closely at varied speeds over all terrain. This field may jump fences with no go-arounds. Second Flight is for those who want to go at a slightly more moderate speed and jump only some of the jumps. It is very important if you do not plan to jump consistently in either 1st or 2nd flight that you stay to the end of the group. Third Flight or “Hilltoppers” do not jump and go at a slower pace. For safety riders must be able to keep a safe distance from the horse front of them and be able to control their mount at all times. Socializing is welcome during the hunting day but we do ask that talking is kept to the bare minimum when hounds are “speaking”.

When the Huntsman, hounds or any Staff need to pass by, please move your horse off the trail and point your horse’s head towards them. If your horse gets jittery, move deeper away from the trail. This is also true for when individual fields pass by.

If you need to change fields or leave the hunt early, be sure to get the Field Master’s permission. Do not canter or gallop past other fields as you leave. Please be sure not to ride over un hunted territory and be aware that you are a guest on our landowner’s properties – do not disturb livestock and leave all gates as you find them (when in doubt close and latch gates).

If you are having problems with your horse inform the Field Master or a member of the hunt

nearest you. They will try to help you out. Horses new to hunting can easily be overwhelmed by all the action. Your safety is paramount to us.

Cub hunting focuses on teaching the young hounds about hunting and gives riders and young horses an opportunity to gain experience and get fit for the formal season. This is a great time to watch the new hounds learn the skills they need to chase our quarry. Notice how the older hounds initiate the younger ones into hunting. Please note that the duration of the hunting day can be short during Cubbing as hounds may be collected early if a good learning experience has been provided to the younger hounds.

Formal Hunt Season: The chase is on! The hunt is often 3-4 hours of fast paced, cross country action. Our hunt country is both open fields with spectacular views and wonderful woodlands threaded with trails. It is important that you make every effort to stay with your Field Master as it is easy to get lost as we change directions frequently and move at a fast pace over the territory.

Check out our web site (theoldchathamhuntclub.com) for more information about hunting and our club. For membership information, speak to Membership Chairperson Kathy Stoddard, or for Foxhunting information contact James E. Buckley MFH.