

GENERAL TURNOUT FOR THE SHOW HUNTER RING

A Basic Guide to Hunt Follower's Attire

By Samantha Watson

Throughout the hundreds of years of hunting on horseback, little has changed regarding gear and attire, much of which is based on practicality. Hunting is an activity which is enjoyed in varying weather conditions and it is seldom that a hunt will be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions, so clothing and tack needs to be appropriate for any condition. The stock tie, fastened with a plain stock pin can serve as a bandage or sling for human, horse or hound should the need arise, likewise the hunt whip can be used as a splint for a broken limb. Some of the formality has perhaps evolved from the fact that most hunters on horseback are guests of landowners and farmers who enjoy the spectacle of formally dressed riders on well turned out horses. Many landowners feel the hunt increases the value of their property and embrace the hunt's traditions. The most experienced foxhunters wear colours on their collars along with cast metal hunt buttons with the individual hunt's insignia which is in part so that they can also be identified by less experienced hunt followers if necessary should assistance be required. The highest honour is to be awarded the hunt button by the Hunt Master followed by permission to wear the hunt's colour. This means a follower can then wear their hunt's colour and buttons with the hunt crest on them. The 'Master of the Hunt' wears four buttons on their red coats, so that again, landowners or followers are aware of who is in charge should necessity arise. Other huntsman and professional staff wear 5 buttons.

Some hunts, including hare hunts, use green rather than the red jackets which are only worn by huntsmen, former masters, whippers in (regardless of sex) and other staff members. It would be deemed exceptionally out of order for one to arrive at a hunt meet wearing a red jacket, again, a follower may only wear a red jacket at the invitation of the Master of the Hunt.

The red jacket is occasionally called a "Pink." Various theories about the derivation of this term abound, ranging from the colour of a weathered scarlet coat, to the name of a famous London Tailor named Pink. Ladies who have been awarded colours and buttons may wear these on a dark navy or charcoal coat.

Those members including children who do not wear colours, dress in dark coloured coats with unadorned buttons to match the fabric colour or tweed jackets. The general colour of breeches or jodhpurs is buff or tan. White breeches should only ever be worn with a red jacket.

Another differentiation in dress between amateur and professional staff is found in the ribbons, at the back of the hunt cap called the "Petersham". The Petersham is designed to deflect rain over the collar of the coat rather than allowing it to drip down the neck. Professional staff wear their ribbons down, amateur staff and members of the field wear their ribbons up. The traditional reason given is that professional staff have no option but to remain out in inclement weather, whereas amateurs or field members may go home whenever they wish.

In the writing of this article, please remember that it is a guide only with points taken from New Zealand, the United States and the United Kingdom and general common sense would certainly apply to appropriate attire for a hunter class in Australia. In regard to the issues of headwear in Australia, naturally most shows require the rider to wear a safety approved helmet and if no specification is made in regards to this in the regulations of the programme. It is then obviously up to individual choice as to what headwear is chosen. As long as a workmanlike appearance forms the basis of your turnout, and the class is not a hunt turnout class, it is doubtful you would lose a class if you chose to use or not use any of the following points.



Adult Formal Hunt Dress for Finals: Adult dressed formally and correctly to compete in a Championship class at a HOTY or Royal Show. Note the full hunt whip is carried in this class and the navy coat with plain white or cream stock and plain gold stockpin. The buttons on the coat are cast metal. This lady's makeup is subtle and note that earrings are not worn.



Dykebeck Wild Foxglove bred by Mrs S Cranston and ridden by Henrietta Windsor-Phillips was the Champion Show Hunter Pony & Overall Supreme Ridden Champion Of Show At The Midland Counties Show 2008 - United Kingdom. Photo Stephanie Fitt

TACK AND GENERAL TURNOUT OF MOUNT

Some traditionalists prefer quarter marks on horses whilst others prefer not. For example, other countries rulebooks suggest that these are unacceptable. For hunt turnout classes, it may be best to not apply these. Being a traditional division, plain and workmanlike appearance is the guide to follow. Brown should be the first choice for all saddlery. Bridlewear should not be fine, but substantial with a plain, flat browband and cavesson, both should be plain which is preferable to stitched. Coloured or decorative browbands should never be seen on a hunter under any circumstances. Hannoverian or grackle nosebands are more suited to working hunter classes rather than show. If the horse has a plain head, a wide noseband will cover the plainness. Reins may include leather lacing as practicability will dictate a secure grip on the reins if galloping in wet conditions. The colour of the bridle and whip, if not the same should be similar to the saddle. The curb chain should be enclosed and done up on the near side. Both snaffle and double bridles are perfectly acceptable. Most modern day show riders compete in a dressage saddle, however, a general purpose saddle should not be penalised and is apparently seen by some as more correct due to its practicability for riding across country. A leather Fitzwilliam girth is seen to be most correct, however,



Rock Star [17.1hh] owned, produced and ridden by Louise Bell was the Overall Reserve Champion Hunter at the Hickstead Derby 2008 - United Kingdom. Photo Stephanie Fitt

for general hunt classes any girth is permissible as long as the girth is not white. A surcingle is occasionally used out hunting and may be necessary for a larger, rounder horse and this should not be penalised.



Child and Adult informal notice the adult wears garter straps on top boots

ATTIRE

Conservative clothing is most appropriate for this section. Again practicability should dictate what is worn. The whole outfit should give horse and rider the appearance of being able to last a day's hunting whilst looking neat and tidy. Garments should be of good quality and fit the wearer well but need not necessarily be new or expensive. Even very old clothes can look extremely presentable if well cleaned and properly worn, in fact some old coats and boots are of much higher quality than those made today and are much sought after. The coat should be a well cut hacking jacket with either one or two vents at the back. There are many choices of material and colour, but the smartest will usually be a fairly plain tweed, however, the tweed fabric should never be too gaudy or loud. In the UK, tweed jackets are worn mainly at agricultural and qualifying shows teamed with a collar and tie for both adults and children. Darker coloured jackets worn with a stock are mainly worn by adults at top level shows. Ladies may however, if they prefer wear a blue or black coat in these classes. By tradition, the bowler is the most correct attire. If a bowler is worn, a lanyard should be attached to the brim of the bowler and to the inside of the jacket, this allows you to retrieve the hat if it is blown off during a gallop. The bowler for men is distinguished by a wider ribbon band. In today's modern age of showing, safety requirements often dictate that a crash cap is worn. The top hat used for actual hunting is silk and quite different to the modern style of show topper. Likewise, tails and dress wear belong to evening performances.

Coats traditionally for showing hunters and to wear hunting are made of wool fabric in black cavalry twill with black silk lining. To be correct, red coats may be worn in the show ring, but as previously discussed, traditionally these are at the invitation of the hunt master. For general classes, tweed with a gold or darker lining is perfectly acceptable. Some believe that hunt jackets should all be single vent at the back. Hunt jackets should fasten to the waist and have dark buttons or metal cast hunt buttons as opposed to brass. The collar lapel and all edges of the jacket should be hand stitched. In regard to flowers, some traditionalists believe three violets and one leaf should be worn on the right for women and for men, the left lapel. Hunt colours properly affixed to the collar usually denote the hunt one hunts with or may be in toning colours to the vest. The waistcoat should be check or mustard or a gold hue, however toning colours again would not be incorrect for general classes. For adults a white collarless shirt with double cuffs fastened with plain gold cuff links and a hunting stock is the correct attire, however in general hunt classes a collar and tie worn with a tweed jacket or dark jacket with a ready tied stock is permissible. A stock pin, tie pin or stud may be worn, fox masks or other appropriate decoration are a nice touch as long as these are unobtrusive and plain. Children should not appear to be dressed as mini adults. For children, a tweed jacket worn with a white or cream shirt and tie and a small tie pin or stud may be worn. String gloves with leather palms to



Junior with Hunt Crop. A child rider dressed in Tweed Jacket with matching fabric covered buttons, toning tie, mustard vest, mustard jodhpurs, leather gloves, carrying a Bamboo Hunt Crop complete with Antler

Adult Informal. An adult rider dressed in attire suitable to compete informally or in preliminary classes at a HOTY or Royal show.



match the breeches or jodhpurs or leather gloves in toning colours to the general attire should be worn. Breeches or jodhpurs should be beige, cream or banana, never white in the hunter show ring. To finish off the traditionally correct outfit for adults, a garter strap which is fitted to the top boots and worn between the second and third button of your breeches or on its own should be part of the attire. If your breeches do not have buttons, two buttons could be sewn on each leg so that the garter straps can be fitted correctly to look the part. Boots for adults are black leather top boots with a garter strap. Men only may wear brown cuffs on their top boots, these should then have a garter strap to match. Generally it is more appropriate that full boots are worn as opposed to short boots and gaiters, traditionally laces are not seen on boots worn on the hunt field and field boots are also deemed as inappropriate by traditionalists. Spurs, if worn should have straps to match the boot and sit on the ankle seam of the boot. Children wear plain short jodhpur boots, fasteners may be used to ensure the jodhpurs don't ride up. In the UK children are not to wear spurs.

CANES AND WHIPS

A workman like plain leather covered or bamboo cane is acceptable as long as it is more substantial than a general showing cane. The cane for a general show hunter class may have plain brass or silver decoration but must remain subtle. Popular canes may be (and are not limited to) leather plaited with antler tipped, leather covered or bamboo horse head or fox head mounts. Obviously in turnout classes and in fact all hunter classes, a hunt whip is the most correct accessory to be carried. These may be leather covered or in wood form. The hunt whip should be carried complete with the tongue and lash attached which should be complete with a string cracker. The hunt whip should be carried correctly with the antler horizontal to the ground with the lash wrapped around the stock of the whip.



Bamboo Hunt Show Cane complete with Antler

Hunt Whip complete with Tongue and Lash (suitable for Hunt Turnout Classes and Finals Performances)

Horn Tipped Plaited Leather Show Hunter Cane

Leather Covered Show Cane with Foxhead Mount

A selection of crops shown which would be suitable to be carried in showhunter classes, the horn tipped show cane is very popular in the UK, the leather covered handstitched cane with foxhead mount and bamboo cane with antler are both elegant and suitable for a child or adult. The full hunt whip is the choice for formal attire and the most correct item which can be carried in a hunter class.

DRESS FOR SPECIAL PERFORMANCE AT MAJOR SHOWS (IE EVENING PERFORMANCE, FINALS OF HOTY OR ROYAL CHAMPIONSHIPS)

Gentlemen are expected to wear full hunting costume which traditionally includes a silk top hat and stock. Gloves, white or yellow breeches (white breeches may be worn with a red coat or for special performance classes) and a pair of top boots (ie black with mahogany cuffs) garter straps and spurs are required apparel. Gentlemen can wear a red coat which can be swallow tailed or the traditional frock style. A black or swallow tail coat would be equally correct but not quite so smart for a gentleman. The black coat should be accompanied by fawn or yellow breeches and plain black boots.

Ladies have the choice of wearing a silk top hat or bowler with a blue or black coat complete with cast metal buttons and any colour breeches as long as these are not white with black boots and spurs.

The hunt whip complete with tongue and lash is most appropriate to suit the formality of these classes, however a cane may be carried instead if desired. Both ladies and gentlemen should of course wear a waistcoat with the bottom button left undone.

SIDE SADDLE

The correct attire for a lady showing a hunter side saddle before noon is a bowler hat, veil, navy, black or tweed habit, collar and tie and woollen or leather gloves. Black nylon or twill breeches are correct, however fawn can also be worn and cannot be seen when mounted. Hair should always be tied back and covered by a net. If your hair is long enough to be worn in a bun, do so, otherwise wear a false bun. Earrings are considered to be incorrect and this rule also applies on the hunt field. Afternoon, it is considered correct etiquette to wear a top hat, veil and white hunting tie as opposed to a stock. Hunting ties should be tied tightly with a small knot and well pinned with a plain gold pin only. Naturally a whip suitable for side saddle should be carried.

SIDE SADDLE FOR CHILDREN

Children riding side saddle are allowed to wear riding caps. They should not wear veils or spurs.

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Models dressed by Showstoppers Equestrian Wear, Hunt Whips supplied by Greg Watson Showing Canes & Whips



Fox Mask with Hunt Whip Tie Tack