

## Who's Who?

This document describes some of the people and activities often involved in a hunt.

### **Earth stopper**

Sometimes the same person as the terrier man.

The earth stopper knows the location of fox earths in his area. On the evening or early morning before a hunt he covers earths so foxes, which hunt by night, cannot return.

The task is controversial, as other species, including badgers, may be earthed up. The earths are blocked with bracken or straw filled sacks and the material is removed after the hunt.

### **Field master**

Hunts, which have large numbers of followers on horseback, may have a field master in addition to the master of foxhounds. He or she will keep the riders in order during the hunt.

### **Farmer**

Without the permission of farmers and landowners to cross private land the hunt cannot pursue its activities. Hunts often host social events to acknowledge the support of their local farmers.

The hunt may collect the carcasses of fallen livestock for feeding to the hounds.

Some farmers join the hunt, in order to control local foxes.

### **Fence repairer**

The fence repairer may be employed full or part time. He follows the hunt on the day of the meet and repairs any damage.

He is usually kept informed by the "gate-shutter" a nominated member of the field.

### **The field**

Mounted followers who subscribed to the hunt rode after the field master. They would follow the hounds without getting in their way. They seldom saw the fox die or go to ground.

### **Grooms**

Paid employees at yards where the hunt's staff horses are kept, and at larger private stables.

The groom cares for the horses. In the past, large private stables would employ a head groom and numerous under grooms. Today many grooms are employed for the hunt season.

### **Hunt saboteur**

The hunt saboteur will take action to hinder or disrupt the progress of the hunt.

Saboteurs can employ numerous tactics to disrupt a hunt that involve delaying or confusing the hounds to give the fox time to get away.

Techniques such as calling, cracking whips, blowing hunting horns, and covering the scent of the fox with strong-smelling sprays can be used to split the pack or to remove the hounds from the hunt entirely.

Other techniques can include removing the blockages from fox earths (fox holes) put in by members of the hunt to trap foxes, or securing gates in the area, causing the hunt inconvenience and delay.

'Gizmos' or amplifying devices play recordings of hounds 'in cry' or have recordings of barking packs to trick the lead hound into following the sound and distract a pack of hounds from the scent of a hunted animal.

In recent years saboteurs have used mobile phones to help them follow hunts.

Typically a group of saboteurs will have a driver constantly with each vehicle, to guard it against vandalism and ensure it is immediately available to pick up saboteurs or drive off in pursuit of the hunt.

### **Hunt secretary**

The secretary of the hunt is responsible to the hunt committee. His or her main duty is to collect the subscriptions to the hunt and the "caps" – fees paid for following the hunt on the day.

The duties of the secretary vary from hunt to hunt. In addition to financial and administrative work he or she may also organise the repair and maintenance of fences. Sometimes hunt secretaries are paid employees.

### **The Huntsman**

In a large hunt this is a full-time paid position. However one of the masters may undertake a huntsman's duties, or there may be an amateur huntsman.

The huntsman carries the horn and controls the hounds during the meet.

### **Hunt supporters**

People follow the hunt not only on horseback but also on foot, by bicycle or in cars.

Hunt supporters may organise a committee and raise funds for the hunt through social events, subscriptions and donations.

Hunt supporters attending a meet usually pay a “cap” a modest fee, which is used to support the hunt.

### **The Kennelman**

A paid hunt employee, his first duty is the care of the hounds.

The kennelman collects fallen stock from farmers and skins, guts and prepares the meat for feeding to the hounds.

He attends the hunt but does not take part and may be called on to humanely destroy old or injured horses.

### **The Kennel huntsman**

Hunts that have an amateur huntsman may engage a kennel huntsman to perform some of the duties of the professional huntsman.

He will “whip-in” or assist the amateur huntsman with control of the hounds during the meet.

The kennel huntsman will also care for the hounds in kennel.

### **The Master of Foxhounds**

The master of foxhounds is responsible for the management of the hounds, kennels and hunt staff.

The master will lead the hunt on the day and liaise with landowners before and during the main season. The master or joint master may combine his duties with that of field master. Today there are often joint masters and many are women.

### **Terrier man**

During the hunt a fox sometimes runs to ground or ‘goes to earth’. Then the master may ask the terrier man to use his dog. The dog ‘bolts’ the fox – chases it out of the hole – or locates and traps it underground.

The fox and terrier are then dug out and the fox is either allowed to run or is humanely destroyed.

### **The Puppy walker**

The puppy walker cares for one or more hound puppies after they are weaned until they are ready to join the pack at about one year old. Puppy walkers meet the costs of feeding the puppies and begin to train them. Special shows are held in the summer to acknowledge the work of these volunteers.

### **The Whipper-in**

The whipper-in supports the role of the huntsman. This is usually a paid position and is often the first step towards becoming a professional huntsman.