

Fox-hunting speech to be read out at in protest



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Fox-hunting is a humane, natural, and traditional way of controlling the fox population. If certain culling exercises did not take place the number of these pests would dramatically increase. Do you really wish our beautiful country to be over run with pests and vermin? These animals murder livestock, cause havoc to farmers and scavenge in cities. As one of the main anti-hunting groups in the UK, the League Against Cruel Sports, is presumed to put animal welfare at the centre of its argument against the activity. This is rubbish.

Five people have left - two of whom are chief executives - in protest at the League's disgraceful behaviour, ridiculous statements and unruly protest tactics. Fox-hunting is a way of naturally decreasing the fox, mink, deer and hare populations. Master of the Fox Hounds Association Hunts is regulated by strict and detailed rules which hunt officials must obey. The standard of behaviour of followers has long been governed by an informal code. For this reason, hunting's conventions, and the responsibilities of its followers, are set down in the code of the fox-hunters.

The followers of fox-hunting are not blood seeking, death hunting, murderous members of the population. They are, infact, traditionalists who care for the environment and wish to preserve a practice that has take place for hundreds of years. There are three main rules for people who take part in fox-hunting: Foxhunting as a sport is the hunting of the fox in its wild and natural state with a pack of hounds. Nothing must be done which in any way compromises this rule. Hunting exists entirely because of the goodwill of landholders and farmers.

No-one who goes hunting should do anything that might jeopardise this goodwill. It must be remembered that for most of a day's hunting you are a guest on someone else's land. Fox-hunters take care not to damage property, crops or livestock of the farmers and landowners. Masters of Foxhounds, who are in charge of the hunt or their appointed deputies, are solely responsible for the conduct of each day's hunting and are bound by the strict rules and instructions of the MFHA. Their authority is absolute and their instructions must always be willingly obeyed.

These are the actions taken by a group who are serious about what they do, unlike the millions of people who are members of protest groups, who have never even seen a real fox. I can see no reason why the League against Cruel Sports protests against this sport. They suggest that hunting is cruel to the fox, but evidence collected from many important organisations disagrees with this statement: " Hunting by hounds is the most natural and humane way of controlling the population of all four quarry species - fox, deer, hare and mink - in the countryside.

This statement is supported by over 500 leading members of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. This is also confirmed by the findings of an earlier Government inquiry. Both inquiries found that death was almost instantaneous. The inquiry also found that shotgun and snaring - the main alternatives to hunting - are worse for animal welfare. I suggest that protesters consult all of the evidence before they launch their accusations.

Another hypocrisy on the topic of cruelty was that for a while, until we knew exactly of what the ban was going to consist, there was a very real possibility

that hundreds of hunting hounds would have to be culled. Luckily that has not been the case as the ban is not total in that sense. I find it highly ironic that these people are all for protecting vermin, however the fact that this might come with the consequence of the pointless killing of hundreds of dogs is somehow fine with them. If you can justify the murder of dogs for no benefit whatsoever, why is it so hard to justify the killing of foxes to help farmers protect their livestock.

Over 15, 000 foxhounds are involved in the 318 hound packs across Britain. Without fox-hunting, all of these animals would have to be removed. It would be crueller to have all of these animals put to sleep because there is no work for them and the animal sanctuaries could never hold and re-home that number of dogs. Do you wish the deaths of thousands of dogs to be on your conscience? Healthy, happy and free-roaming hunting dogs or hundreds of dead corpses? Happy dogs make thousands of hunts possible. Without happy dogs, who enjoy their work, hunts would not be able to take place.

There is also the destruction of an economy that has to be considered. The fact is that hunting supports the economy, which provides a large amount of revenue to the government every year, are we really so wealthy as a country that the government can afford to simply write this off as and when they feel like it, not only causing a loss of revenue from taxes, but also possibly leading to an increase in unemployment benefits.

Again, because of the type of ban, this never happened; however, it is amazing that people have so little disregard for someone's source of income. 14 businesses that trade with fox-hunting groups employ over 8, 300 full

time employees and 650 employ and 3, 200 part time employees. This is an average: 9. 1 full time and 4. 9 part time, if there was a complete hunting ban, all of these jobs and many more would be lost. Do you want to be responsible for destroying a person's livelihood and make them unemployed? Another statement in your argument suggests that the foxes are chased to exhaustion. We have found that there is also evidence that proves this statement to be nonsense.

Foxes are never hunted to the point of physical exhaustion and collapse, rather to the point where, when still running hard, they are caught up by the leading hounds. Equally the fox will turn and face the hounds when they are then shot by the huntsman. The huntsman cannot afford to deliberately prolong the chase because if he does so the hounds will be unable to continue the chase because of lack of scent. The percentage of people supporting the fox-hunting ban is also significantly lower than your research suggests. Only 36% of the British public support the hunting ban.

Only 7% of people living in cities are 'pro-hunting', but as 87% have never been on a fox-hunt, they cannot form an honest opinion. Can you possibly condemn something if you have not even experienced it? Surely this is judgemental and Many of the people living in cities do not understand the basic concepts of hunting and do not understand what happens during the hunt. Every year there are about 20, 000 hunting days and over 1. 2million people attend hunts, 42% on horse, 58% on foot. Fox-hunting is a social, enjoyable and well attended event.

The League also accuses fox-hunting as being a sport that is only enjoyed by 'toffs' who own horses and enjoy cruelty. This is a ridiculous statement, which is utterly untrue. 195, 000 ordinary women and men from all walks of life, support hunting, most of them on foot. Logically it cannot be right for MPs to ban hunting with hounds, and not hunting with a gun or a fishing rod, purely because they don't like the people they believe support hunting with dogs. The proposal to ban hunting is an attack on the people that hunt, rather than an improvement in animal welfare.

The vast majority of opposition comes from urban Labour MPs with no hunting in their backgrounds and is often based on old political scores and not on reality. The hunting ban is just an excuse to attack one of the dwindling numbers of ancient traditions of Britain. Decisions on hunting should be made by those involved in wildlife management and farming. The people who matter in wildlife management and animal welfare are the people who care for animals rather than those who care about them.

No person can form a responsible opinion without ever experiencing the event and being in possession of the correct facts. From this protest, which contradicts all statements, I hope that you can see that there is no argument against fox-hunting. The figures that have been produced are clearly wrong and leading members of the Veterinary College and the findings of the Government report in 1997 has refuted all statements and questions about fox-hunting. You say fox-hunting is cruel, we say it is necessary, sociable and traditional. We are prepared to fight for our traditional way of life.