

Hunting with hounds **the facts**

The case for repealing the hunt ban

The ***Hunting: forward not back*** campaign launched by the Countryside Alliance aims to bring about the repeal of the Hunting Act.

A Countryside Alliance document says: 'The hunt ban's very existence is an insult to democracy and sets a dangerous precedent for the future – it is the duty of all of us to fight for repeal.' And 'A Government determined to focus on working for the countryside could send no clearer signal than scrapping the Hunting Act.'

It goes on to say: 'The measure of a true democracy is tolerance: tolerance of minorities, and tolerance of activities that the majority might not support. Legislation, especially legislation that prohibits an activity of profound cultural importance, should be considered only if it can be proved to remove a demonstrable harm. Despite years of consultation and debate, and a Government Inquiry, there was never any evidence that hunting created that harm. There is, however, considerable evidence that the motivation of many who supported the Act was straightforward prejudice and the settling of old political scores.'

As long as the Hunting Act remains on the Statute Book, it will be a challenge to Britain's claim to be a tolerant and moderate society.'

Pro-hunt groups say that:

- Wild animals such as foxes, hares, mink and deer are pests that need to be controlled to protect farmers' livestock.
- Hunting with hounds is the most humane and effective means of controlling the populations of these animals.
- Hunting is an important traditional rural pastime that employs thousands of people.
- The Hunting Act does not work. No hunts have closed down and just as many people follow the hunt today as they did before the ban and there have been very few prosecutions.
- People have a right to go hunting. The hunt ban is an infringement of people's civil liberties and personal freedom.

Opinion poll results

Less than three in ten (29%) of UK adults think the Hunting Act is working.

Opinion Research Business poll, September 2006.

Only 47% of people said that they supported the ban.

MORI poll commissioned by the BBC in 2005.

Only 25% of people oppose a vote on the repeal of the Hunting Act.

Research commissioned by the Daily Mail in 2010.

Quotes

'I always thought that the ban was a mistake'. 'I was taught to fish by a wonderful grandfather. I was taught to shoot rabbits by my dad. I've always been a country boy and I went hunting as well.'

Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron

(the hunting ban is) 'one of the domestic legislative measures I most regret'

Ex Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his memoir 'A Journey' in 2010.

'This is what happens when democracy goes wrong.'

BBC Political Editor Andrew Marr during a pro-hunt demonstration in Parliament Square, 15th September 2004.

'As a Liberal, I cannot find it in me to declare that fox hunting should be a criminal offence.'

Sir Menzies Campbell MP, former Leader of the Liberal Democrats, 23rd September 2002.