A.M.D.G

COUNTRY PURSUITS HANDBOOK

2026-2027

WELCOME…

Stonyhurst is blessed with an estate of exceptional natural beauty. From the bluebell woods to the views of Pendle, it is a landscape that has inspired and moved generations of Stonyhurst pupils and staff. But the estate itself has always served a practical purpose, closely intertwined with the early history of the College.

Stonyhurst relied upon the bounty this landscape produced to feed and clothe its pupils. At a time where Catholic observance was still restricted to our recusant enclaves, the canals at the front of the College provided the school with its Friday fish, while the farms delivered every necessity for hungry pupils and the estate provided game in all its variety and beauty!

Charles Waterton, one of Stonyhurst's most celebrated alumni, was tasked with hunting polecats on the College grounds to create the distinctive Stonyhurst hats that all pupils wore, starting a fascination with fauna that built a career that has made a seminal contribution to Natural Science, and has influenced naturalists from Darwin to Attenborough. Sadly, our school hats are consigned to history, but the knowledge of how to rear and manage our game is a skillset that the next generation are taking up through this programme.

TIM HANLEY
ASSISTANT HEAD CO-CURRICULAR

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Clay Pigeon Shooting

Pupils use our own clay range to develop their proficiency, guided by the current English Over 50s Sid-by-Side Skeet Shooting champion, Mr Victor Annand. Pupils will be eligible for selection for the College Clay Shooting team which competes at the Birmingham Schools' Challenge tournament.

Fishing

The ponds on The Avenue historically provided essential fish for Friday observance to the pupils of the College. Though we thankfully have other ways of getting our fish and chips on Fridays now, the pupils have the opportunity to learn the arts of a traditional country sport, both course fishing and on the fly down on the River Hodder.

Pheasant Rearing

Drawing on the experience of local gamekeepers, pupils will learn about the process of rearing pheasants, how to ensure their safety and welfare and their diet, and will subsequently take part in the programme of clearing brush and feeding the pheasants on The College Shoot.

Pheasant Shooting

Pupils will travel to a local shoot to take part in an end of season rough shoot, using the skills they have honed on the clay shooting course and seeing the real product of the management of pheasant stock and countryside management.

Duck Shooting

The Country Pursuits group will travel to a local managed waterfowl marsh, LDWA Warton and Freckleton, to take part in a duck flighting shoot. Pupils will be able to put the skills honed on the clay course into action.

Mock Stalking

Pupils have the opportunity to accompany the stalkers on the Gisburn Park Estate, learning stalking techniques and the practicalities of managing their Fallow Deer herd, selection of culling stock and the processing of venison on site.

Countryside Management

Inspired by the Germanic Hunting License, pupils will complete a course of species identification, habitat knowledge, countryside management and the legalities of country sports. In support of this, a series of lectures will be given by those steeped in countryside lore.

SCHEME OF WORK

SEPTEMBER

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Theory	Introduction to the course	Fish Species of Britain	The Stonyhurst Fly Jan Graffius	Stocking and Management (Visiting speaker: Dunsop Trout Farm)	Game Birds of Britain
Practical	Paperwork and PPE Measurements	Rod set-up and dummy casting	Grayling Fishing on the Hodder	Grayling Fishing on the Hodder	Grayling Fishing on the Hodder

OCTOBER

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Theory	Pheasant Rearing	Gun Dog Breeds	HALF TERM	
Practical	Placing and filling feeders	Bird Audit. Filling Feeders		

NOVEMBER

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Theory	Game shooting laws of Britain	CPSA Gun Safety and the CPSA Method	Shooting: Traditions and Etiquette. Safety when Beating and Shooting.	St Hubert
Practical	Filling Feeders. Bird audit.	Clay Shooting	Walk through of The College Shoot.	Mock Game Day

DECEMBER

	Week 1	
Theory	N/A	CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS
Practical	Simulated Game Day	

JANUARY

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Theory	Duck Species of Great Britain	CPSA Gun Safety and the CPSA Method (Revision)	N/A
Practical	Duck Shoot LDWA marsh, Warton and Freckleton	Clay Shooting	Rough Pheasant Shoot Chipping Farm Shoot

FEBRUARY

	Week 1	Week 2	
Theory	Vermin of Great Britain	N/A	HALF TERM
Practical	Clay Shooting	Simulated Game Day + Stonyhurst Shoot Dinner	

MARCH

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Theory	Salmon Life Cycle	Salmon/Sea Trout/Brown Trout	N/A	N/A	N/A
Practical	Salmon Rod Set-up	Salmon Fishing on the Hodder	Salmon Fishing on the Hodder	Brown Trout Fishing on the Hodder	Sea Trout Fishing on the Hodder

APRIL

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Theory	Deer Species of Great Britain	N/A	N/A	N/A
Practical	Mock Deer Stalk Gisburn Park Estate	Brown Trout Fishing on the Hodder	Sea Trout Fishing on the Hodder	Salmon Fishing on the Hodder

MAY

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3
Theory	Gun Dog Breeds	Conservation and Gamekeeping (Visiting Speaker: The Stonyhurst Shoot)	Final Examination
Practical	TBC	TBC	

KEY BY SEASON

August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July
		Pheasant									
	Duck										
Salmon							Salmon				
Brown Trout								Brown Trout			
Sea Trout								Sea Trout			
Grayling											Grayling
Deer											





CPSA

Clay Pigeon Shooting Association



the british deer society