



■ Eloise Carter, riding Craig Mor Tom, hurdles a jump during the opening day of Burnham Market International Horse Trials. Picture: MATTHEW USHER

Horse lovers descend on Burnham for opening day

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Horse lovers, holidaymakers and families flocked to the opening day of the Burnham Market International Horse Trials for a day of fun and world-class sporting action.

The EQ Life Burnham Market International Horse Trials got under way yesterday, featuring Olympic riders and top international stars including Emily King, Pippa Funnell, Sir Mark Todd, Francis Whittington and Oliver Townend.

Equestrian magazine EQ Life is the official sponsor of the event, with the EDP as media partners, and Norfolk and Waveney's Big C as the event's first official charity.

Hundreds headed up to the north Norfolk coast for the first day to see the early dressage, show jumping and cross country competitions in what has become one of Norfolk's biggest sporting occasions.

Away from the equestrian excellence, there was much more for families to enjoy besides the horses, with trade stands, children's rides, alpacas and an Easter egg hunt.

Lindsey Green, her husband Damian and their two children Mimi, seven, and Will, nine, decided to visit the horse trials yesterday while on holiday in Norfolk from York.

She said: "We didn't know it was on this week but happened to see it.

“ There is something for everybody to come and look at, and on Saturday we will see the horses and riders who will be trying to go to the world championships later this year

Alec Lochore, organiser of the Burnham Market International Horse Trials

We've enjoyed looking at the horses and watching the eventing, and the children have enjoyed the Easter egg hunt and the bouncy castle."

Rachel Burridge, 25, from Wymondham, who was with friend Sarah Turner and her daughter Katie Turner, 10, said: "We've got horses of our own and come each year.

"We like coming to see all the cross country and different events. We've walked the cross country course and there are a lot of horses here, which is nice."

The three-day event will build to a climax on Saturday where spectators will be able to see some of the top riders from around the globe.

And although North Elmham's Olympian Piggy French has withdrawn, event organiser Alec Lochore

said if all the gold, silver and bronze medals were to be counted up, they would need a "very big bucket".

Of the opening day, he said: "There seems to be a nice crowd here today, so far so good. It has got a bit chilly but the weather forecast for Friday and Saturday is good.

"There is something for everybody to come and look at, and on Saturday we will see the horses and riders who will be trying to go to the world championships later this year."

Mr Lochore also acknowledged his army of volunteers. He said: "We are very lucky that we have a really good volunteer base, we have 200 volunteers everyday to make it work. They start early in the morning and are here late, without the volunteer base, sport doesn't happen."

There are more than 40 trade stands and the children's Easter egg hunt has been organised by Big C with all money raised going towards fighting cancer in Norfolk and Waveney.

For more information about the EQ Life Burnham Market Horse Trials, visit www.musketeer.co.uk

■ To see more photos and a video, go to this story on our website www.edp24.co.uk

■ Full report and pictures from Burnham Market International Horse Trials - page 78



■ Above, Alida Tysterma walks with Innocent Flight, during the first day of Burnham Market Horse Trials. Below, Ballyhaise Niamh. Pictures: MATTHEW USHER

