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International feel to big Houghton event

EQUESTRIANISM

With just one week to go until this year's FEI EQ Life Houghton International Horse Trials, EQ Life magazine editor **VANESSA BRITTON** looks ahead to the event.

Reigning world champion Sandra Auffarth is taking three horses to Houghton, one running in each class from CICO3* down to CCI1*.

Entries for the event, from May 28-31, are truly international, with Andrew Hoy and Christopher Burton heading the Southern Hemisphere charge, Andreas Ostholt and Dirk Schrade backing up Sandra for Germany, Andrew Heffernan representing the Netherlands, Vittoria Panizzon a serious challenger for Italy and Toshiyuki Tanaka flying the flag for Japan.



■ The current issue of EQ Life is on the shelves.

Organiser Alec Lochore said: "It is great that we have got three members of the German gold-medal winning team coming to Houghton. Sandra has never been to our event before, but as she won individual bronze at the London Olympics, silver at the European Championships two years ago and is the reigning world champion, it will be interesting to see what she makes

of the course."

The strength of international entry is in part because Houghton International hosts the only British leg of the FEI Nations Cup series, in which Great Britain has been so successful.

"We've got seven strong teams coming to contest the Nation's Cup, although we don't yet know who will be in the British team," added Lochore.

He and the Musketeer team are really building on last year's event and have made a few changes to the cross country course. There are also more unaffiliated classes plus Arena Eventing classes that are qualifiers for the finals at Blenheim Palace and Blair Castle later in the year.

Houghton is a truly prestigious event attracting the top riders from around the world and with riders such as Pippa Funnell and Emily King already entered, it is a privilege to have such talent on Norfolk soil.

There is also children's entertainment, the Barking Bugle dog show, trade stands and food stalls galore – and there is also the option of camping.

■ To find out more about the event or to buy tickets visit www.musketeer.co.uk.



■ Norfolk's Piggy French and Carpe Diem IV in action at last year's Houghton event.

Picture: HELEN MATHIAS