



PICTURES: Julie Walker/MEM

ABOVE: Next month's Burnham Market International Horse Trials continues to attract some of the finest event riders in the world

The world's finest come to Burnham Market...

Over the Easter weekend, Burnham Market's Sussex Farm will once again provide a stunning setting for a field of elite athletes (and their horses!) and three days of thrilling competition

The Burnham Market International Horse Trials has long been a favourite amongst the top Event Riders in the country. It attracts Olympic and World medal winners, European Champions and a raft of Four Star (the highest level of competition) contenders.

Running a month before the famous Badminton Horse Trials in Gloucestershire, it's the perfect time for these elite athletes to have a final outing before tackling the most famous Three Day Event in the world. The

competition has been organised by Musketeer Event Management at Sussex Farm, Burnham Market since 1999.

The Horse Trials was the brainchild of Alec Lochoire, who met his wife Emily in a horsebox park 'many years ago' – not the most obvious place to encounter a future life-partner.

He attended her 21st birthday party at Sussex Barn, little knowing that seven years later the pair would celebrate their marriage in that very same venue.

"It's a wonderful spot for a Horse Trials, and over the years the event has

grown to become a major pre-Badminton run for many of the best horses and riders in the country," says Alec.

"Despite being just inland from the North Norfolk coast, top competitors willingly drive the length and breadth of the country to run their horses, which for me, as both Organiser and Course Designer, is very rewarding."

As a spectator, there can be few better places to sit than on 'the mound' on the cross country course, where you can watch a large part of the action from one place, and cheer the riders



PICTURE: Julie Walker/MEM

through the main water complex.

Back at the showjumping arena it's possible to get right up close to the stars of the sport, an opportunity that doesn't exist at the major events.

Alec's experience is vast – he runs numerous other events including Houghton and Blair Castle, which this year hosts the FEI European Championships. He's a 3*/4* (the top level in Eventing) Cross Country course designer, and he was Eventing Manager for the London 2012 Olympic Games. He has also been appointed FEI Technical Delegate for both the Badminton Horse Trials and the 2016 Rio Olympic Games. It's no wonder that competitors vote with their feet – or should that be hooves?

At the time of writing, entries have yet to open for this year's fixture but are likely to include Oliver Townend, a past Badminton and Burghley winner who won both of the big CIC3* classes at Burnham Market last year and went on to represent Great Britain at the World Equestrian Games (WEG).

Also likely to be competing at Burnham Market is New Zealander Andrew Nicholson, who also contested

the WEG and made history at Burghley Horse Trials last September by winning it for the third consecutive year on Rosemary Barlow's lovely grey horse, Avebury; William Fox-Pitt, who added two more medals to his collection at the WEG and needs no introduction; and of course, Zara Phillips who has made numerous appearances at Burnham Market over the years and was part of the World Silver Medal winning team (alongside William) last summer.

In the office, Gemma and Sam have been hard at work securing sponsorship, taking trade stand bookings, organising rosettes, marquees, portable stables, bedding, caterers and the all-important portable loos. With two more Horse Trials to



organise before the end of May, it's a true logistical challenge and a very busy time.

The Burnham Market International Horse Trials will feature an array of trade stands and food outlets all vying for your trade, and children's entertainment to keep the little ones happy. So, put the date in your diary – it's the Easter weekend (Thursday through to Saturday) and it's the perfect way to entertain the family for a day.

BURNHAM MARKET INTERNATIONAL HORSE TRIALS 2015

This year's Burnham Market International Horse Trials will be taking place at Sussex Farm, Burnham Market, Norfolk PE31 8AG from Thursday 2nd to Saturday 4th April.

For more information, details, and to book advance tickets from £7 (adult), £3 (children) and £17 (family ticket), please visit www.musketeer.co.uk