



Going for Gold

Lincolnshire Life looks at the runners and riders at the forefront of the equestrian scene this year

SPLASHING AROUND

Seventeen-year-old Gina Ruck is a local rider to watch. After scooping second place in the novice section at last year's Lincolnshire Horse Trials, just behind international star Oliver Townend, she has her sights set on the Junior Team on the 2012 equine pathway.

It's a fast-track route to the Olympics, which identifies talented horses and provides a special programme of tuition.

Gina, a previous gold medal winner for Britain at pony level, also came seventh in last year's under-21s Young Riders Section at Lincolnshire.

Since she started eventing five years ago, she has notched up an impressive track record, winning her sponsorship agreements with Baileys Horse Feeds and French saddler, Devoucoux.

This year, she will be riding Rehy Too in the under-21s and Viper Priba in the open novice and is again working for Judy Bradwell, a local dressage trainer, who gives Gina an extra insight into this local course. "It makes a big difference having that extra

input," explains Gina.

She added: "I like the course - it's where I first started eventing on ponies, although it seemed very big the first time I rode at intermediate. You have to concentrate on getting the lines right, because there are quite a few 'skinnies' to watch out for."

"It's always very well organised and a great one to watch, because you can see so much of the riders going round."

HOME TERRITORY SPURS ON ALEX POSTOLOWSKY

From Market Rasen, Alex Postolowsky is a well regarded up-and-coming rider. She won her open novice section last year and followed that up with five other top ten slots.

And riding on home territory is a real spur she says. She explained: "This is one of the important events in the year for me, and it's brilliant to have a course like this on the doorstep.

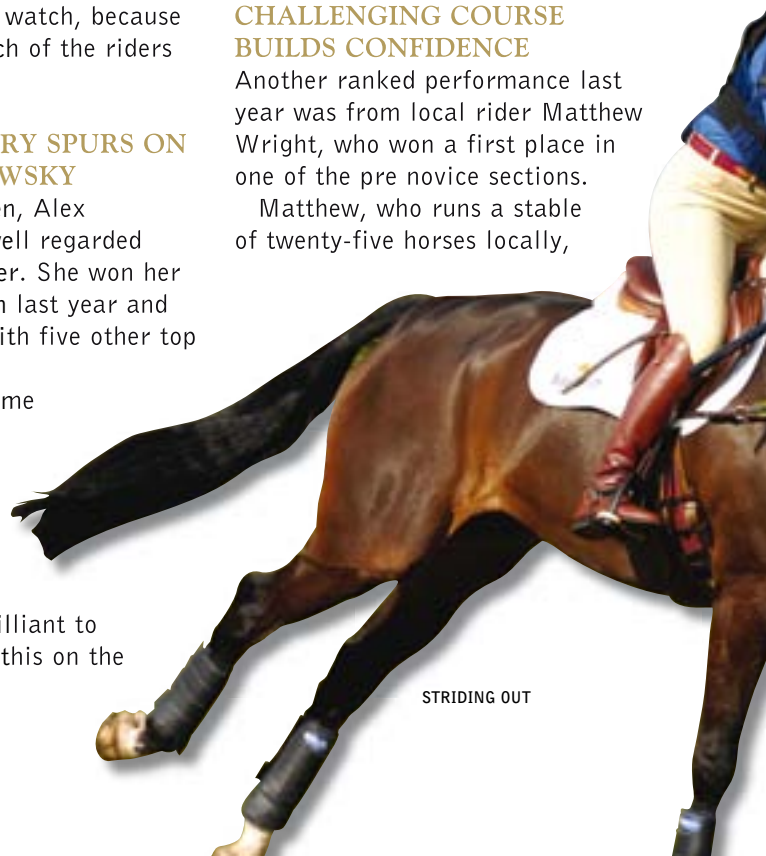
"Local people come to watch you and that's a real motivation to do well.

"Because the course is relatively flat, it takes out the early season tiredness factor. The jumps are well designed and test the bravery, technique and accuracy of the horse and rider."

CHALLENGING COURSE BUILDS CONFIDENCE

Another ranked performance last year was from local rider Matthew Wright, who won a first place in one of the pre novice sections.

Matthew, who runs a stable of twenty-five horses locally,



STRIDING OUT



ON THE HOOF

WORLD CLASS EVENT DRAWS INTERNATIONAL NAMES

Lincolnshire is winning an international reputation in competitive equine events with more than 700 competitors expected to take part in this year's event.

Taking place at the Lincolnshire Showground from 19th-21st March, this annual world class event attracts internationally renowned riders as well as many talented riders from across Lincolnshire.

The competitors take part in dressage, show jumping and cross country over the three days at pre novice, novice and intermediate levels. And selectors for the British team are expected to be on the lookout during the pony trials that are also held.

The venue is recognised as an excellent event for early season because the flat, well-drained ground is a good proving ground for both horse and rider.

International names to watch for this year will include Oliver Townend, Piggy French, Nicola Wilson, Polly Stockton, Caroline Powell, Sharon Hunt, and Ruth Edge. Last year's line up included both Olympic riders William Fox-Pitt and New Zealand double gold medallist Mark Todd.

For local riders, the event is a showcase for Lincolnshire talent. Among those expected to help draw in enthusiastic local supporters are Alex

Postolowsky of Market Rasen, Gina Ruck of Tealby, Tiny Clapham from Grantham, and Retford rider Mathew Wright.

Show director, Charles Hood, has high ambitions for this year's event. "This annual event has proved itself year on year for both

riders and visitors. It's a great course to see what's going on and we're looking forward to even higher numbers this year."

said: "The course drains well so it's good for an early event in the season. It's also well built and the event itself is very well organised.

"The course presents just the right level of challenge for an early season event. It is difficult, but not too difficult, so it's suitable for building confidence."

Matthew, who competes internationally, added "The Lincolnshire course compares well with other leading courses overseas."

Rider Tiny Clapham added: "It's a very good course and perfect for early season because it allows you to assess new horses and give them confidence."

Other local riders to watch out for this year are Rosalind Canter of Louth, who achieved a third and a fourth in the pre-novice sections last year, and Deborah Doyle of North Scarle, who came fourth in one of the novice classes.

The event is organised by Lincolnshire Events Centre on the showground site at Grange-de-Lings, which is also home to a major national conferencing venue and the groundbreaking EPIC green building project.

RUNNING ORDER:

Each day of this three day event is focussed on a particular class, giving visitors the chance to see all events each day, cross country, dressage and show jumping.

Friday 19th March:

BE100 and Open BE100 classes.
8.00am Dressage
8.50am Show jumping
9.30am Cross country
5.00pm Approx finishing time

Saturday 20th March:

Novice and Open Novice plus Pony Trial dressage and show jumping.
8.00am Dressage
8.50am Show jumping
9.30am Cross country
5.00pm Approx finishing time

Also taking place on Saturday is Pony Trial dressage and show jumping. The pony cross country is on Sunday at 9.00am.

Sunday 21st March

Intermediate and Open Intermediate classes plus Pony Trial cross country.
8.30am Dressage
9.00am Show jumping
9.00am Pony Trial Cross country, then the open intermediate cross country

Entry on Saturday and Sunday is £5.00 per car to include all occupants.

Lincolnshire
Events Centre
@ the showground