

Dates for your diary

APRIL

- 3rd-5th Senior Affiliated Show Jumping at Arena UK.
Tel: 01476 591569
- 5th Cross-Country at Hackthorn Hall.
Tel: 01522 824524
- 7th Senior Affiliated Show Jumping at Elms Farm.
Tel: 01630 661314
- 8th Affiliated Dressage at Elms Farm Equestrian Centre.
Tel: 01400 272255
- 10th-11th Affiliated Dressage at Sheepgate Equestrian Centre. Tel 07748 338025
- 12th Senior Affiliated Show Jumping at White House Farm. Tel: 0777 8121653
- 12th Show Jumping and Combined Training at Elms Farm Equestrian Centre
- 12th Unaffiliated Show Jumping at LRAC Kenwick Park, Louth
- 12th Affiliated Dressage at Laughton Manor Equestrian Centre.
Tel: 01529 497410
- 13th WRDC Open Dressage and clear round jumping at Laughterton
- 14th Senior Affiliated Show Jumping at Arena UK.
Tel: 01476 591569
- 14th National Hunt Racing at Market Rasen.
Tel: 01673 843434
- 18th Equine First Aid Course at St. Johns School, Lincoln
- 18th-19th BSJA Show Jumping at Laughton Manor Equestrian Centre.
Tel: 01529 497410
- 19th Senior Affiliated Show Jumping at Horse World Equestrian Centre.
Tel: 01673 849967
- 19th Unaffiliated Dressage at LRAC Kenwick Park, Louth
- 19th Affiliated Dressage at Elms Farm Equestrian Centre
- 21st Senior Affiliated Show Jumping at Arena UK
- 24th Affiliated Dressage at Sheepgate Equestrian Centre
- 24th-26th Affiliated Eventing at Belton Park. Tel: 01949 829061
- 25th National Hunt Racing at Market Rasen. Tel: 01673 843434
- 25th Junior Affiliated Show Jumping at Elms Farm Equestrian Centre

Equestrian life in the county

Spring is definitely in the air, it is the real start of a new equestrian season nationally and here in Lincolnshire we have many great horse centres, great events, great horsey people and more especially, great horses and ponies.

Words: Bernard Bale

Equestrian Life is your new monthly window into the county's world of horses and ponies and we would love you to take part by sending us all your news, results, fixtures and fun stories. Happy riding!

Spotlight on Sheepgate

Sheepgate Equestrian at Leverton began as a general riding centre in the 1990s but the expertise and success of proprietress Sarah Payne as both a dressage competitor and qualified instructor led to the centre becoming more specifically focused on dressage. Show jumping competitions and clinics are also regularly held at Sheepgate but dressage remains the principal interest. How did it all begin?

"I was not a particularly brave girl when I was little," said Sarah. "When I had my first pony I entered showing classes rather than sample the thrills and spills of gymkhana. Ian Woodhead, who is well known in equestrian circles, suggested that I might enjoy dressage and obtained Gallivanter for me. He was a super pony and we shared many years and some great moments together in my first dressage competitions.

"I am a perfectionist and to be successful in dressage was fulfilling. To be second best was never something I could settle for. I think that is why I took to dressage so readily. It presents

a very different and disciplined challenge."

As a teenager Sarah was hugely successful in competitions and represented Great Britain.

She decided upon a career in dressage and became fully qualified as a British Horse Society Instructor and highly ranked as a List 3 dressage judge.

Her father and mother, Bruce and Fay Grant supported Sarah and now the whole family is involved in running the excellent Sheepgate Equestrian which can rightfully claim to have among the best facilities in the United Kingdom. There is a superb indoor arena which has a school area of fifty metres by twenty-five metres, a comfortable seated viewing area, the Sheepgate Savoy cafeteria and full sound and lighting. This arena was officially opened on 27th September, 1997 by Elliot Morley MP, then Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

In addition to the indoor arena there are three outdoor arenas all with silica sand and rubber surfaces plus further covered seated viewing areas, ten acres of



grazing, ample parking, accommodation for riders and both permanent and temporary stabling. Add to that the excellent Sheepgate Tack and Togs which is like an equestrian supermarket with everything from top of the range saddles to toys and it is little wonder that Sheepgate Equestrian has become so popular and so well known nationally.

Straight from the *horse's* mouth

TOP TIP

April is the month during which many start to ride out for the first time for months and that often means riding on the road so here are a few reminders for road safety and etiquette.

- Keep road riding to the minimum.
- Unless essential, ride in single file.
- Make sure you and/or your horse are very visible.
- Keep to the right side of the road - you are a vehicle while riding.
- Don't go alone if you or your horse are inexperienced.
- When vehicles slow down for you don't forget to acknowledge them.
- Do not attempt to cross the road unless it is totally clear and you have ample time.
- Remember to use hand signals as if riding a bike.
- Keep your horse's pace to a walk.
- Remember you are representing the whole riding fraternity.

News on the hoof

Everyone needs to feel that they belong and certainly a lot of people believe they need to belong to Heighington Riding Club which reports that it has recently had a surge in new members. Anyone wanting to know more make contact at info@heighingtonridingclub.co.uk.

Spalding and District Riding Club has announced that, as requested by its members, it is introducing a new 1'9" class in the mini showjumping ring as well as a points system for the showing classes and a family membership scheme. Learn more from www.spaldingridingclub.net.

VisitLincolnshire is having a lot of success in promoting the county for riding holidays so watch out for many visitors during 2009. If you have facilities for visitors and/or their horses, why not get in touch with the Lincolnshire Tourism team on info@lincolnshiretourism.com

PONY EXPRESS

Make haste and send us your news, photos, results and dates for the diary. Equestrian Life is interested in all things horsey so let us know what is going on whether you are a novice rider or an experienced carriage driver. Send to Lincolnshire Life, County House, 9 Checkpoint Court, Sadler Road, Lincoln LN6 3PW or email editorial@lincolnshirelife.co.uk



Law firm sponsors Horse Trials

Lincolnshire based law firm, Bridge McFarland, has agreed a three year sponsorship deal to become the naming rights sponsor for the Saturday at Belton International Horse Trials, which takes place in the grounds of Belton House, near Grantham. This is a huge boost for the prestigious event, which this year is due to be held on 24-26 April.

Lincolnshire's great venues

Never mind the NEC, Lincolnshire has some great equestrian and show venues with a busy programme of events. If you want to know what is going on, give them a call and they will be very happy to tell you what they have to offer.

- Arena UK, Allington nr Grantham. Tel: 01476 591569
- Elms Farm Equestrian Centre, Caythorpe. Tel: 01400 272255
- Horse World Equestrian Centre, Osgodby, Market Rasen. Tel: 01673 849967
- Laughton Manor Equestrian Centre, Folkingham, Sleaford. Tel: 01529 497760
- Sheepgate Equestrian Centre, Leverton, Boston. Tel: 01205 870236
- Trent Valley Equestrian Centre, Fiskerton. Tel: 01636 813588

Examples of stock include:

- Baileys, Redmills, Allen & Page Horse Feed
- Spillers Feeds
- Horsehage, haylage & shavings
- Selection of clothing, overalls Wellingtons & gloves
- Tuffa boots & riding hats
- Head collars & lead ropes
- Chicken, cattle, sheep, pigs & goats animal feed
- Selection of wire & fencing tools & posts and much, much more!



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