

Pictures: Bill Smith/submitted



Calling all country lovers

Keen on the countryside but stuck in the city? Don't worry – we have just the thing. This month the East Anglian Game & Country Fair comes to Norwich, and it promises to be a fun-filled, family day out. Carolyn Bowden reports.

If you've been out and about in the county lately, you may already know all about the East Anglian Game & Country Fair. That's because hoardings advertising this event – at the Royal Norfolk Showground in Norwich on April 22 and 23 – have sprung up all over the Norfolk countryside over the past few weeks.

Sponsored by EDP Norfolk magazine, this year's East Anglian Game & Country Fair promises to have something for everyone. No doubt dog lovers will head for the gun dog displays, the gun dog scurry, dog jumping, and the Terrier and Lurcher show, not to mention the presentation put on by the Essex dog display team. Plus, there'll be terrier racing, a Lurcher display team, a dog agility competition, a hound parade and a pet dog show – set to get both tongues and tails wagging!

Those keen on our feathered friends should look out for The Quack Pack (a duck agility demonstration) and Ye Olde Redtail Falconry Display, while followers of furry creatures will enjoy the ferret display demonstration, the ferret racing, and the ferret show (on Sunday). Other attractions over the weekend will include a sheep dog demonstration, sheep show and sheep shearing – a big crowd pleaser in previous years.

However, you don't have to be an animal lover to enjoy the event, as there will be all sorts of other experiences on offer. You can shop to your heart's content at over 300 trade stands, pay a visit to the craft hall or even take to the skies with a hot air balloon or helicopter flight. Plus, there'll be lots on offer

for the little ones thanks to children's entertainers, as well as all sorts for adults thanks to a beauty, health and lifestyle roadshow.

Last year around 40,000 people flocked through the gates and this year the event's organisers Andy and Tracey Grand are hoping for as many as 50,000 visitors. And to encourage everyone to come along, they've even more to offer this year – the third time that the East Anglian Game & Country Fair has taken place.

Established attractions at the show will include archery and fly fishing as well as clay shooting with fifth-time World Clay Pigeon Shooting champion John Bidwell (pictured right). Visitors to the event last year will remember his exciting, off-the-hip displays and this time you'll be able to see these again plus have a go yourselves thanks to his clay shooting course and shooting competition.

Meanwhile, other attractions at this year's event will include a fascinating forestry area, a long netting display, alpacas and horse logging.

After all those activities, you're bound to be peckish so will be pleased to hear about the food hall as well as all sorts of catering concessions around the ground. What's more, this year there'll be a special members' marquee offering a host of extra

facilities. Members' tickets are £15 (including admission) or £35 for a family and they offer a range of privileges. These include members' badges and show tickets, access to the members' bar, prioritised parking, a free glass of Pimms or a soft drink, plus entry to the members' enclosure and marquee with a lawn overlooking the main arena. Members' tickets can be booked on 01508 531143. Whether

or not you decide to become a member, clearly there'll be plenty going on, with events aimed at a range of ages.

No doubt tickets will be in hot demand. You can book yours in advance at discounted rates until April 14 – online at www.ukgamefair.co.uk or by phoning 0870 120 2224 (local call rate). Discounted family tickets are £18 (for two adults and three children); adults £7; children aged five to 16, £2; and under fives free. After April 14 and on the gate, a family ticket will be £25; adults £10; children (five to 16 years) £3; and under fives free. Parking is free for everyone ●

The East Anglian Game & Country Fair will take place at the Royal Norfolk Showground on Saturday, April 22 and Sunday, April 23, 2006. Open from 9am to 5.30pm.

