



Elaine Hill sheepdog and duck display.



Wood carving display.



4X4 off-road course.



Making a splash at the Dock Dogs display.

# Family fun at the fair

It is a family event that attracts people to Norfolk from across the country. This year's East Anglian Game and Country Fair, supported by EDP Norfolk magazine, will be at the Norfolk Showground on April 25 and 26.

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Featuring the likes of clay-pigeon shooting, archery and fly fishing, the East Anglian Game and Country Fair more than lives up to its name. But take a closer look at what's lined up for the colourful weekend in April and you'll find there's so much more to this event than simply the expected outdoor and country pursuits. Fair organisers Andy and Tracey Grand have been expanding the East Anglian Game and Country Fair since they first launched it in 2004. Once more supported by EDP Norfolk magazine, it is very much a family weekend, offering an array of activities to appeal to people of all ages. "The show now is almost unrecognisable from the event we first launched six years ago," said Tracey, who, with her husband,

starts planning the next fair when the current one is taking place. "Every year there are more displays and activities, and every year we have more people coming along to see them. We have visitors from all over the country – some even booking their holiday in Norfolk around the dates of the fair." Along with event manager Didi Fenwick, the husband-and-wife team organises the event. They book the displays, sort out the stands and oversee the planning of the whole fair from start to finish. "It is very busy. Although there are lots of people who are involved during the weekend itself, there are only three of us who do it full-time, all year round," said Tracey. "Andy and I also have two young children, so life can be a juggle sometimes!" The couple decided to launch the event after realising there was a big gap in the show calendar. "I was at a trade fair where people were complaining that there was nowhere to exhibit between Christmas and the summer," explained Andy. "Having worked in advertising as well as running a business that attends shows, I had a good knowledge of the media and marketing too, and I began to wonder whether this might be something Tracey and I could do together." Tracey remembers being in the bath with shampoo in her hair when her husband first mooted the idea.

"I said: 'Let me think about it', then dipped my head under the water while I considered it!" she said. "I agreed – but little did I know then that it would turn into such a major event." The East Anglian Game and Country Fair has grown every year. Last year, almost 50,000 people walked through the gates – and the Grands hope to top that figure with their exciting plans for April 25 and 26, 2009, which includes the growth of the show layout by a fifth in size this year. "What we are trying to do this year is to ensure there really is something for everyone – from toddlers who can barely walk to our more senior visitors," said Andy. "There are displays for people to watch and activities to take part in. There are craft stalls to browse over, and restaurants and bars where visitors will find all sorts of things to eat and drink." For the very young, the fun includes Jo Jingles' singing and music sessions, for slightly older children there are pet dog shows, donkey rides and fishing competitions. "Children are also very involved in some of the events in the main arena," said Tracey. "In the owl display, for example, they are invited to feel what it is like to be a mouse. They line up and then the owl is flown just above them." "We also have the Tigers Free Fall Parachute Team who will be descending.

John Bidwell, who wows audiences with his off-the-hip shooting, often hitting up to six simultaneously released clay pigeons, as well as eggs, watermelons and other fun items. Then there is the 4x4 off-road course, where visitors can ride with professional drivers, as well as helicopter pleasure flights and archery stands. Animal events include horse logging, a falconry display, sheep-shearing, ferret displays, alpacas, goats, reindeer, tortoises and various dog displays and competitions. "Last year we introduced the Dock Dogs, where any dogs can have a go at jumping into a pool to see how far they can go. It was great fun, so we have decided to bring it back this year," said Andy. There will be a members' enclosure with a prime view of the central arena; more than 300 trade and craft stalls to enjoy; and the Food Hall, which will include stands selling local produce, as well as displays from top chefs, such as TV presenter Chris Coubrough and award-winning restaurateur Richard Hughes. There will be sit-down restaurants and bars, as well as music from the likes of Winston the Singing Farmer, the Sheringham Shantymen and Scottish pipers. As family people, the Grands are keen to keep admission as low as possible. Parking is free and discount day tickets bought in advance cost just £22 for a family of five or £9 for adults and £2 for children. Under-fives are free. "We want people to be able to come along and have a good day out. There is plenty to

Have a go at:

- Clay-pigeon shooting.
- Mountain boarding.
- Archery.
- Dog shows – Dock Dogs, Dog Agility, Gun Dog Scurry.
- Helicopter rides.
- Fly fishing.
- Holding birds of prey.
- Riding in an off-road 4x4.
- Air rifles.

keep them busy all day – or all weekend, if they choose to visit on both days," said Andy. "If it rains, the main arena seating and other activities are undercover, and the showground is great because it doesn't get too muddy as it has a mixture of tarmac and grass avenues." He added: "Tickets are selling well already and we have been contacted by people from as far afield as Wales asking for information. "There really isn't another event in Norfolk quite like the East Anglian Game and Country Fair, so we hope as many people as possible will come along and enjoy the fun." To complete your perfect day, be sure to visit the magazine team at the EDP Norfolk stand, where there will be lots of special promotions on offer. 🐾

Book tickets in advance to make the most of discounts. Call 0871 230 1099 or visit [www.ukgamefair.co.uk](http://www.ukgamefair.co.uk). Tickets are also available from all EDP offices.

Would you like the VIP treatment?

Show membership costs just £20 for adults, £7 for children and £45 for a family, for one day; or £30 for adults, £9 for children and £69 for a family, for two days. Becoming a member includes entry to show as well as privileges, such as priority admission and parking, and access to the members' enclosure – which has a prime view of the main arena – and its restaurant and bar. Call the Show Office on 01263 735828 to book.



Getting up close at the owl display.

Make a weekend of it

Some visitors to the East Anglian Game and Country Fair like to make a weekend of it and camp on-site. Special weekend break tent or caravan tickets are available for £69. This covers three days' camping and weekend admission to the show for up to four people. For a booking form, call 01263 735828 or visit [www.ukgamefair.co.uk](http://www.ukgamefair.co.uk)

The horse whisperer

Would you like horse whisperer Gary Witheford to try taming your pony or horse during the event? If so, call 01263 735828 or email [info@ukgamefair.co.uk](mailto:info@ukgamefair.co.uk) for further information.

- In next month's issue of EDP Norfolk magazine, we will be finding out more about Gary and his work in an in-depth interview.

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