



## **Horses and Ponies take centre stage at this year's Kent County Show MAY 2015**

The Kent County Show will be hosting many Horse of the Year Show qualifiers during the three day event at the Kent Showground, Detling. These prestigious qualifiers are part of the outdoor season ahead of the main event, which takes place at the NEC Birmingham from 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2015.

There are 665 miles (1072km) of rights of way in Kent to explore with horses and ponies, and as such the county has a large number of equine owners. For visitors with an interest in horses and ponies, the classes and qualifiers range from Heavy Horses to the wonderful Miniatures.

New for 2015 will be the Heavy Horse Village; visitors will be able to see these majestic and powerful horses in a specially built stable area. Horses competing in the Heavy Horse classes will not only be housed there but visitors will get a unique opportunity to see them being prepared for competition.

The main attraction will be the Metropolitan Police Mounted Branch Activity Ride who will also be stabling the display horses in the Heavy Horse Village. These horses are highly trained and when not taking part in displays, are part of the Metropolitan Police Service.

The Police riders will demonstrate their skills by removing and replacing their jackets, taking off the stirrup irons and finally the saddles whilst the horses continue to jump. The horses and riders are drawn together at the Mounted Police Training Establishment, near Kingston, Surrey, for a period of training in preparation for this performance. This is an exciting display that highlights the relationship between the horse and its rider, and what makes this one of

the most incredible equine displays around is the fact that these officers and horses are all fully operational.

Many of the officers, when they have finished at this show, will all be part of front line policing in the capital, providing high visibility patrols in neighbourhoods and managing crowds at high profile events. These horses are a regular sight at football matches, ceremonies, pop concerts and policing demonstrations.

Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager said, "In previous years all horses have been stabled off-site, this year we wanted to give our visitors the chance to see some of the animals. The heavy horses are without doubt an excellent choice, the preparation and dressing of the horses for competition is a spectacle in itself. We hope visitors will take the opportunity to visit our new Heavy Horse Village".

The Kent County Show has an impeccable reputation for all its equine competitions and the main ring showcases some really exceptional show jumping competitions. This year, organisers are delighted that Kelvin Bywater will once again will be the principal course builder for the extensive Astor Ring competitions. Kelvin is an experienced and seasoned International course builder who works at Hickstead, Olympia and the Birmingham International Horse Show as well as many venues overseas. Kelvin also played an important role for the 2012 London Olympics when he was asked by Bob Ellis the appointed Chief Course Builder to be Assistant and Artistic Course Designer.

Katie Bell, Livestock and Equine Co-ordinator said "We are delighted that the schedule has now been sent to our equine competitors. We have a few new competitions and have also extended the entry date for our show jumping classes in response to competitor feedback. Riders and owners can now enter and pay online, this makes it a much easier process and saves time filling in and posting entries".

The star attraction at 2.00pm on Friday 10th July will be RAF Aerobatic Team, The Red Arrows. One of the world's premier display teams will be flying above the Kent Showground to the delight of visitors. In light of the display, all equine and livestock competitions have been suspended for the duration of the twenty minute display. The full competition schedule can be found on the Kent County Show website [www.kentshowground.co.uk/compete](http://www.kentshowground.co.uk/compete)

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The Kent County Show starts at 8am and stays open until 6pm. The Show has over 120 different activities, workshops, displays and competitions which run throughout the day and are often repeated daily.

The online ticket system is now open to purchase discounted tickets for the 2015 Show. A family ticket will cost £41 in advance or £48 when bought at the gate. The family ticket entitles 2 adults and 2 children aged between 5 and 15 a full day entrance. Children under 5 go free and parking is free. Adult tickets are £18.50 in advance and £22 on the gate, concessions are £13 when bought online and £15 on the gate. Child ticket is £5 in advance and £6 on the gate.

For more information and images contact Lucy Hegarty, Show Manager  
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Kent County Show – 10, 11, 12 July 2015

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