



WHATEVER your equestrian interest, West Sussex has it covered. Despite being one of the UK's smaller counties, it punches above its weight in terms of events, facilities and services.

In *H&H*'s horsiest county survey (8 July 2010), the south-coast county ranked second in terms of iconic events — being home to world-famous venues Hickstead (showjumping), Goodwood (racing) and Cowdray Park (polo) — and was rated 22 places above its neighbour and rival, East Sussex.

At grass-roots level there are plenty of opportunities to compete and train, with eight affiliated riding clubs and 164 affiliated showjumping and dressage events annually.

The county's excellent transport links make it easy to get to other events in the region but, despite this, West Sussex, with its famous and picturesque downland, remains reassuringly rural. Over half the county is protected countryside and, in March 2010, a large proportion of it became part of Britain's newest National Park, meaning riding opportunities are many and varied.

Jackie Oxley, chairman of the West Sussex Riding Club, says: "The riding here is wonderful. We have great access and everything from lovely beaches down at the Witterings to bridle paths along the Downs.

"It's such a horse-friendly county — it's got everything you could wish for."

➤ **Insider's tip:** *H&H* hears that Stockley Trading in Littlehampton is one of the first shopping stops of choice for the county's equestrians.

Coming up in West Sussex

23 April Polo. Cowdray Park's first match of the year.

Visit www.cowdraypolo.co.uk

30 April Racing. Goodwood's opening card of the season.

Visit www.goodwood.co.uk

30 April Point-to-point. Countryside Alliance Club (south-east) fixture at Parham. Visit www.pointtopoint.co.uk

28-29 May Dressage. South East Championships at Hickstead.

Visit www.dressageathickstead.com

9-11 June Showing and showjumping. South of England Show.

Visit www.seas.org.uk

Number crunching

128 affiliated showjumping contests

5 major events

13 livery yards

5 polo clubs

6 pro-hunting MPs

BUT ONLY...

2 megacentres

3 point-to-points

Famous faces

International dressage rider Andrew Gould and his wife Polly run Priory Dressage from Bolney in West Sussex.

