

Trainers open their doors to public during National Racehorse Week

Racehorse Trainers based in Scotland, including one in Duns, another in Selkirk and one in Kinross, are offering an opportunity to discover the inner workings of a race yard by opening their doors to the public.

A number of leading trainers such as Ian Duncan, Iain Jardine, Harriet Graham and Gary Rutherford, will host open days as part of National Racehorse Week. The family friendly nationwide event runs from 10 -18 September and launched last year with great success.

Over 150 venues will open across Britain, including eight in Scotland, offering the public the chance to see the love, nurture and attention to detail that goes into caring for racehorses.

The open days are free to attend and people of all ages are welcome and visitors will have the opportunity to meet the stars of the sport and the team of staff and professionals who provide highest level of care to these magnificent animals 365 days of the year.

Ian Duncan is one of the trainers involved and as well as hoping to enlighten visitors and give them a fun day, the yard will be raising money for charity. There will be tractor rides for children, hosted tours of the stables, visits to the gallops and the chance to meet the retired racehorses as well as cute foals. There will also be demonstrations from the equine support team including the chiropractor, physio and farrier.

Duncan said: "We are looking forward to welcoming visitors to

Ian Duncan Racing again to visit our racehorses and youngstock and raise money for some outstanding local charities. We will be supported on the day by members of Fossilfield Training Centre who are starting their careers in the horse racing industry. Come along, meet our team, and enjoy a tractor ride and some good company and all in aid of a good cause.”

Other opportunities in Scotland include:

- Iain Jardine – based near Dumfries is open on 12th September
- Mike Smith – based near Galston, is open 10th September
- Harriet Graham and Gary Rutherford – based near Oxnam, is open on 10th September
- Sandy Thompson – based near Duns, is open on 14th September
- Jacki Stephen – near Lilliesleaf, on 10th September
- Nicholas Alexander – based near Scotlandwell, is open on 17th September
- James Ewart – will be running a community project, bringing racing to local schools

The open days will showcase a range of activities which varies from yard to yard, but all will offer the chance to meet racehorses in training, as well as the much-loved stable stars who have retired.

The trainers and their team will host a guided tour of their facilities offering the chance to see horses exercise on the gallops, and on the treadmills and walkers.

Some yards even have purposefully-designed equine swimming pools, an activity most horses enjoy and just like with humans, it offers a great low-impact workout.

Physiotherapists, chiropractors and farriers (who put the horse's shoes on) are an intrinsic part of any trainers' yard,

and many open days will offer demonstrations and insight into this important aspect of horse welfare.

Even for those with little interest in horses and horseracing, these open days promise a unique and wholesome 'day out', amidst beautiful countryside. There will be light refreshments in most cases.

A recent survey commissioned by Great British Racing, highlighted some startling figures concerning city-dwellers. Whilst 84 per cent of participants in the survey reported feeling happy when close to animals, 34 per cent had never touched a horse and 50 per cent of 18-24 year olds who lived in cities have never seen or can't remember seeing a horse 'in person'.

It is no secret that spending time in the countryside and around animals is excellent for health and well-being, yet almost half the people surveyed had not visited the countryside in the last year.

TV Star and ITV Racing presenter Chris Hughes, himself a huge racing enthusiast is an ambassador for National Racehorse Week, said: "The impact of getting up close to a horse cannot be underestimated. And racing has created a unique opportunity through National Racehorse Week to help people meet these incredible animals, experience the life of a thoroughbred and talk to the dedicated teams who care for them 365 days a year. There is nothing quite like this in any other sport. More than 11,000 places will be available to book free of charge at locations up and down the country with everyone welcome to join."

Visits to the event must be booked in advance. To find out which yards are open in your area, there is a useful postcode search on the National Racehorse Week website that will advise you of a number of events in your area. Please visit www.nationalracehorseweek.uk