

## PREVIEW TREC IRELAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

## Record entry for annual TREC Championships

■ Louise Parkes

A RECORD entry of 62 horse and rider combinations from 11 countries has been confirmed for the 13th annual TREC Ireland Championships which will take place at Tipperary Mountain Trekking Centre in Borrisoleigh next weekend, May 17th-19th.

A large English contingent will be joined by visitors from Russia, Denmark, USA, Scotland and New Zealand, while Irish-based competitors representing Germany, France, Spain and South Africa will also compete against the best the host country has to offer.

## FAST-GROWING

The fast-growing sport of TREC has its roots in tourism, with sightseeing on horseback providing the opportunity to enjoy the countryside in a very unique way.

It is a three-phase activity, with riders tested in the MA which is about Control of Paces, the PTV in which they must negotiate some intriguing obstacles including jumps, and the POR which involves map-reading skills and which requires a great deal of skill at the higher levels.

The annual Championships provide a wide range of classes from one-star to four-star level with competitions for both pairs and individuals and stages the Irish leg of the FIVE European Cup League.

This year the programme also includes a Nations Cup which is expected to be hotly contested by teams from England, Germany, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland,

USA and Russia. Underlining the international aspect of the event, judges will be travelling from Denmark, England, Ukraine and USA.

Ireland's Allbhe Gavin and Niamh O'hUid will be the Traceurs and Chefs de Piste (course designers and managers), and the Technical Delegates will be Ireland's Adrian Flynn (PTV) and Great Britain's Mark Kendrick (POR). Clare and Lily Leon's AIRE

approved, Tipperary Mountain Trekking Centre won an EU Business Irish Enterprise Award last month, and with access to hundreds of acres of unspoiled mountain tracks that may take competitors past the remains of a Bronze Age settlement, an Iron Age hill fort, Celtic ring forts and a standing stone around 6,000 years old, it looks a sensational setting for this year's event. Of course the compet-

itors won't know where they are going until they enter the Map-Room on POR (Orientation) day which is always an intense experience as they only have a few minutes to copy down their route before they head off on their big adventure.

## PROGRAMME

The programme begins with sign-in, veterinary check and PTV course-walk on Friday

17th, and then it's down to the serious business on the POR phase which begins at 8am the following morning.

The early-morning veterinary check on Sunday 19th will be followed by the MA test and then the final phase, the PTV, will bring it all to a close in the afternoon.

Sponsors for the weekend include Boomerang Horse & Country Store, Claire Molloy Horse Hair Ceramics,

J&A Equine Express, Loughway Stud, Saoirse Saddlery, Shanahan's Centra Borrisoleigh and Tredstep.

With 40 volunteers along with friends, family and supporters also descending on the town, the local economy will enjoy a nice late spring boost.

And Burren Animal Rescue will be the beneficiary of a fun charity fundraiser on the final afternoon.



The TREC Ireland Championships take place at Tipperary Mountain Trekking Centre from May 17th-19th