

**M**IDSUMMER IN Britain falls in June. But if a boy or girl is planning to spend a summer holiday at one of Britain's 170 Pony Club camps, he or she probably began seeing about the reservation in January. Last year, 8,000 youngsters had this kind of holiday, and this year it looks as if the figure will be nearer 10,000. Some camps are already fully booked up and are taking reservations for 1963.

The horse as a worker has all but disappeared from the streets of Britain, and in the fields it has been replaced by the tractor and the combine harvester. But for recreation its popularity goes up and up.

The International Pony Club has 242 branches in Britain, with nearly 32,000 members. This is more than half the world membership. Australia, with about 14,000 members, is second, and New Zealand, with about 5,000, third. The United States of America comes fourth, with some 4,500 members.

## *Holidays On Horseback*

**P. Drew**

### *Open Land Set Aside*

Nor is the trend confined to youth. In Britain there are something like 300 adult riding clubs, in addition to about 200 hunt clubs. For many of these riding clubs there is already a waiting-list. Then there are the riding schools. In 1950 they numbered about 150; now there are more like 800.

In and around London before the war, riding was confined mainly to large open spaces such as Hyde Park and Richmond Park. Today riding schools flourish in the outer suburbs where, in a number of cases, development planners have set aside open land for recreation. The same is true of the large provincial cities like Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol and Coventry.

Another development is the addition of riding to the social

activities of large businesses. Organizations that have formed riding clubs for their staffs include the British Broadcasting Corporation, the General Electric Company, Esso Petroleum, Pearl Assurance Company, Birlec Ltd., and the Vauxhall Motor Company.

What has increased the popularity of riding? Is it the urge to escape from the pace of the scientific age, or just the city dweller's longing for fresh air and country scenery? Is it stimulated by the achievements of champion show-jumpers like Pat Smythe? Or admiration for the grace and dexterity of screen and television heroes? Who can tell why any hobby catches the imagination of the young of any generation? But the horse in Britain is certainly right in the front rank of winners.

---

*Daughter: I've just accepted Mr. Offleigh, mother.*

*Mother: Gracious, child! I refused him myself twenty-five years ago.*

*Daughter: I know; we've just had a good laugh about it. — Punch.*

\* \* \*

*Mrs. Bim: Harry took part in an amateur play last night and today he's so hoarse he can hardly talk.*

*Mrs. Bam: Oh, he was the leading man, then?*

*"No, he was the prompter." — Toronto Goblin.*