



# Offa's Dyke Group of Endurance GB Newsletter- October 2022

[www.egboffasdyke.co.uk](http://www.egboffasdyke.co.uk)



## Chairman's Comments

Hi All

Where did it go? I hope everyone had some fun and enjoyed some challenges at rides over the year. I certainly did.

As we look forward to our BAM on Saturday 3rd December I would take great delight in awarding as many of our trophies and rosettes as possible. Please notify me of Pleasure Ride Rosette claims, PR mileage awards and the harder to identify things such as Clear Card rosettes. Have a careful look at the page on the website which lists everything except the new PR trophy for the greatest PR distance.

You can notify me by email either listing what you have done or send a photo of your trophy card. The closing date is **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November**. Email to [mary@woodsideendurance.co.uk](mailto:mary@woodsideendurance.co.uk)

People who have done national competitive rides will automatically be considered for all appropriate awards apart from Mileage claims.

I hope as many of you as possible can come along.

I will be stepping down as Chair this year having done 4 years as per the Group's rules. We would welcome any new additions to the committee- and would also love to hear from anyone who could suggest a new ride and/or help organise an existing one.

Many thanks to those who have organised events or helped this year- without your input there would be no rides.

***Mary Stubbs***

## Editor's Comments

We have one group fun ride left before the season draws to a close for another year. I'm sure you'll agree after the previous years interrupted by Covid it has been great to enjoy a full season! I know I have!

Don't forget to enter our last fun ride of the season, Maryland fun ride on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October. Alternatively if you don't intend to ride I am still in need of a few helpers- remember you must have helped to be eligible for some of the Offa's Dyke trophies.

Over the winter months we have the schooling lessons with Tash Smith and Groundwork clinics with Gillian Bradley both at Castle Farm, Usk in their lovely indoor arena. We are looking to arrange further events over the winter so keep an eye out for updates.

We have the Branch Annual Meeting (BAM) and Awards evening coming up at the beginning of December- details can be found later on the newsletter. Don't forget to book your place and send your Trophy card to Mary.

Finally, I want to thank all the contributors to this newsletter, I'm sure your articles will be enjoyed by all our members.

*Nicola Davies*

## HELPERS NEEDED

### Maryland Fun Ride

### Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October

I am in need of Checkpoint stewards, venue stewards and a Time keeper. First horse is due to start at 10:00 (tbc)

Please contact me on [n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk) or 07968 928870 if can spare a few hours

# Committee Contacts

## **Chair and Trophy Secretary**

***Mary Stubbs***

Slade Farm, Woodside, Woolaston, Lydney, Gloucestershire, GL15 6PS  
Tel: 01594 529100                      Email: mary@woodsideendurance.co.uk

## **Vice Chair**

***Heather Evans***

Springfield, Walford, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5RB  
Tel: 01989 566034                      Email: zzaapp999@googlemail.com

## **Membership Secretary, Newsletter, Publicity and Events**

***Nicola Davies***

Pentre Hendy, Twyn Allwys road, Govilon, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 9RT  
Tel: 07968 928870                      Email: n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk

## **Secretary**

***Amanda May***

Pearl Island Arabians, The Mill, Preston on Wye, Hereford, HR2 9JU  
Tel: 07748 988867                      Email: amanda@pearlissandarabians.co.uk

## **Treasurer and Health and Safety**

***Barbara Rees***

Clouds Edge, Llanvihangel Crucorney, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 8EG  
Tel: 07801193971                      Email: barbararees549@btinternet.com

## **Safeguarding Officer**

***Donna Williams***

8 Hillcrest, Cross Ash, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 8PF  
Tel: 07762072245                      Email: donna.bontej@btinternet.com

## **Publicity**

***Chris Wray***

Pentrewheeler Farm, Cwmcarvan, Nr Monmouth, Gwent, NP25 4PL  
Tel: 01600 860938                      Email: chris.wray938@gmail.com

## **Other Roles not on the Committee**

### **Young and Junior Rider Representative**

***Andrea Champ***

Urishay Barn, Michaelchurch Escley, Herefordshire, HR2 0LR  
Tel: 01981510686                      Email: quinnchamp@gmail.com

### **Website**

***Cecilia Lindberg***

Email: ACL@cecilialindberg.co.uk

**Offa's Dyke EGB  
Branch Annual Meeting  
&  
2022 Awards**

**Saturday 3rd December 2022**

**At the Riverside Hotel, Monmouth, NP25 5EY**

**7pm for 7:30pm start**

**Includes 2 course dinner**

**Free to members, £10 for non-members**

**Please bring a raffle prize. To be held after the awards.**

**Booking will open shortly at [www.endurancegb.co.uk](http://www.endurancegb.co.uk)**

**Any queries [mary@woodsideendurance.co.uk](mailto:mary@woodsideendurance.co.uk)**

**Please advise any dietary requirements**

# Red Dragon

I had never completed the iconic Red Dragon ride- the 2 day 160 km race across the Welsh hills, the traditional end of major rides of the season. And it was not for lack of trying.

I tried twice with Warrens Hill Chanda in 2002 and 2003 and was out on Day 1 variously on both occasions. I tried with Gryphon (Lori) in 2005. Out at the start of Day 2. And with Lesley Dunn's Chantalle in 2007. Out Day 1.

Sachiya aka Pink was born in 2008 Chanda's first foal by Tango D'Ayres, a Persik son. When the long awaited day came she was born- a midget. Would she ever be big enough for me to even ride let alone compete? She finally made 13.3hh. She was not an easy horse- extremely sharp and extremely easy to fall off I found. She made her Endurance debut in 2014 and did 2 novice rides. It was a short season as she dumped me at the second one (Cranham) and trod on me. Being the stupid/determined person I am I climbed back on and finished the ride but then ended up in hospital later in the day with a ruptured kidney.

Long story short she gradually grew up and I fell off less often. In 2017 she ticked off her FEI1\* and first FEI2\*. 2018 had us doing her second required FEI 2\* and then gaining a silver at Golden Horseshoe which I had never successfully completed previously. The year was rounded off with a 1 day CEI 3\* 160 km at 15 kph at Euston Park carrying 75 kg- remarkable for such a little soul.

Fast forward past a year out with injury and then Covid to 2022. What would I like to achieve in the year I turned 70?

Several things. The 4 day trail ride across the Cairngorms which I had been signed up for for 3 years but hadn't run due to Covid. It was brilliant. Tick. A decent race at Cirencester- we entered the Denbigh Slate 105 km but was sadly the only entry- but as they say to finish is to win and we did! Tick. Oh and then there is Red D to put to bed.

4 entries Nikki Malcolm and Oso Spiralling Wind, Georgina Vaughan and Vlacq Journeyman, Elizabeth Rowland and l'Qaad and us. It poured on the Friday so much so the the Friday classes were cancelled. Saturday morning was very slippery so I

needed to go carefully. Georgina and Nikki made their intentions clear by the foot of the first hill so we let them go as even if I could keep up safely for 100 miles we were never going to beat either in a racing finish. Liz and I had a good ride together to VG1 with Pink vetting first a minute or 2 before her. Off we went across the Begwyns



On the Begwyns

and down to the stream crossing near Erwood – it was stunning. The grass was drying up views to die for and my wonderful little enthusiast of a pony cantering along on her own for mile after mile. VG2 and a slight issue in that her girth/ armpits had got a bit sore- cream applied and Sarah got some highly effective nappy rash cream on the way back to the venue. Back over the hills and home. End of Day 1. Day 2 and she was bright and well, very sound and armpits much improved so off we went. As we climbed up the inappropriately named Little Hill we heard voices behind and we were joined by 2 graded 80 km horses. We rode the rest of the day together- they were really good company for pony and rider. The going was EVEN BETTER. I have never known it ride so well. As we headed for home down that final hill the realisation of what Sachiya had achieved brought the odd tear. Only hazard left was getting to the race finish with her mates going up to the graded finish but after pointing out my apparent error quite firmly she agreed to go where asked and bowled across the line at a jolly canter.



**On the ridge before Aberedw on day 2**



**Cantering in at the end**

And so to the final vetting. There was a hushed group of fellow competitors and friends to watch. You could have heard a pin drop as her pulse as taken. A perfect sound trot and she had passed. We were 3<sup>rd</sup>.

I have a huge debt of gratitude to my family and friends who have crewed me and supported me over the years. Sarah Dene and Steve were brilliant all weekend at Dragon but none as brilliant as Pink.

So think big and don't underestimate what you and your horse can do. And don't be afraid to fail trying. Its only then you get the amazing buzz of the togetherness understanding and deep affection for your horse that climbing those mountains together real or metaphorical can bring.

As a post script trawling through the results archive I looked for horses that had completed Golden Horseshoe, Red Dragon and an FEI 3\* 1 day 160.

In alphabetical order as far as I can tell they are:

Aberllwyd Femme Fatale- Kathy Carr

Auchengean Khalif- Avril Bruce

Dacoit- Anne Newton

Fantom- Annie Joppe

HS Ametista- Beth Langley

Haszar- David Yeoman

Infidella- Carolyn Pacey

Sachiya- Mary Stubbs

Those doing Horseshoe, Red D and a non FEI 1 day 160km:

Dinmore Dougal- Mary Korn

Firebird- Lesley Knott

Grey Medlar- Jo Chisholm

J St Jake- Helen McFarland

Saintwestwell Mr Peach- Lorna Winn

Song of Fire- Liz Cooper

Vlacq Gilfae- Gail Andrews

There may be others as the early records especially BERA are patchy. I cant believe Margaret McKiddie and Madoc didn't but there isn't a 160 km Golden Horseshoe record for him.

***Mary Stubbs***

# Trust and Confidence Groundwork Clinics

An introduction to building trust and confidence between the horse and rider through a series of 3 in hand clinics, designed to develop that vital bond between you and your horse.

Targeted at young, inexperienced or nervous horses, and those wanting to gain more confidence. Provides insights into the handling of the horse through a varied programme of exercises, tasks and challenges all aimed at increasing both your and their confidence whilst deepening your relationship.

Delivered by Intelligent Horsemanship Recommended Trainer Gillian Bradley.

Each session lasts approximately 2 hours and can be taken either individually or as a course of 3 (1 session each month).

A maximum of 4 participants per session.

## Dates

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December



**Venue:** Castle Farm Equestrian, Usk, NP15 1SD

To be held in an indoor school so ideal for the Autumn/Winter.

**Cost:** £65 per session for members and £70 for non-members

To book a place visit- [www.endurancegb.co.uk](http://www.endurancegb.co.uk)

[www.yourhorseandponymatters.co.uk](http://www.yourhorseandponymatters.co.uk)



# To Finish is to Win

2022 was my first year competing in endurance events and what a year it has been! At pushing 60 I felt rather late to the party as it were, but nonetheless determined to succeed. My cob mare Puzzle turned 12 this year and I bought her as a rising 6 year old mainly to hack, do fun rides and enjoy riding holidays. My enjoyment for long distance riding developed mainly from those riding holidays and it seemed a natural development to have a try at endurance riding. We were fit and ready in 2020 with Puzzle a well matured and fit 10 year old but covid scuppered those plans so 2022 was our endurance debut.

The year was to begin in March at the Offa's Dyke March Hare but much to my disappointment it was cancelled due to the weather just before so we rather hurriedly put in an entry at Breamore Down for the 32km GER. This turned out to be the perfect first event for us. It was a fantastic ride over fairly easy ground with very few hills or tricky terrain. We made our first rookie error of getting lost adding 8km to the ride but we had the advantage of tagging on behind some really experienced riders at a good speed for Puzzle and finished with a HR of 46 earning us a grade 2! I was thrilled and full of enthusiasm believing us to be a formidable and competitive partnership. And this was the biggest of the many mistakes I made in this, my first year as a rookie endurance rider.

So next up was 25km GER at Speech House in the Forest of Dean. I set out on this ride feeling sure all I needed to do was go a bit faster and I'd bag a grade 1 and be the next endurance champion in the making. Next big rookie error! We set off at a blistering pace tagging along behind an advanced rider on a very wonderful arab. Big mistake! My poor girlie was really flagging up those steep forest tracks and soon got left behind and really lost motivation. We struggled

through the middle section of the ride all alone and I felt I'd really let Puzzle down. Thankfully we were scooped up by some other riders for the last 5kms and still managed to get a grade 3 with a HR of 49 so all was not lost. We could still be endurance champs with a bit of minor tweaking.

To achieve endurance champ status, I decided it wasn't as simple as going faster. I needed a clear 'ride strategy' that didn't involve being distracted by advanced Arabs! So I set off for Pembrey for a 32km GER

including a lovely beach section. This ride was not too hilly, and mostly easy going under foot and the 2 sections on the beach could potentially give us a good speed. This turned out to be on paper our best result with a good speed and a finishing HR of 48 giving us another grade 2. However, as a ride, we struggled the whole way with Puzzle feeling unmotivated, it was too hot and Puzzle was uncomfortable, I got dehydrated and Puzzle point blank refused to go down the gully onto the beach on both circuits meaning I had to get off and lead her. Despite



our good result we came home feeling a little bewildered about whether we actually enjoyed or just endured endurance riding.

With our dreams of endurance champ status in question, we took a break until June. We enjoyed lots of recreational riding at home and on holiday and came back fresh and determined to Wentwood in the Summer 32km GER. I had a new strategy up my sleeve. We would try and tag along with other novice riders out there avoiding going too quickly too early but getting ahead enough to take the last 3 km really steadily to get a good finish HR. What could possibly go wrong?! Well 2 further big rookie mistakes ensued. Firstly I forgot my gloves and it rained. I had absolutely no grip on my rubber reins and subsequently no brakes. Puzzle turned into a bulldozer and any plans regarding speed went out of the window. We went Puzzle speed! Second mistake, even if I'd had any significant control over speed, I had accidentally set my Garmin watch to average pace not average speed. We ended up going far too fast for us - 13.4kph which resulted in a HR of 55. So no grading and we returned home with a completion. I felt like we were failing!

July and August were fun filled months with 2 riding holidays, one in the Lake District and the other in the Quantocks. This restored my faith in Puzzle and I as a team as Puzzle was just awesome on the steep hills, rugged terrain and long distances. We just had the best time and I loved every moment. During this time, I reflected that I was trying too hard with endurance and I needed to worry less about grades and more about giving Puzzle a good experience.

With this in mind we set off for Michaelchurch 32km GER. I decided we would just let the ride evolve depending on how Puzzle was feeling and not set ourselves any hard and fast targets. A Good move as it turns out. We had an amazing ride. Puzzle was really motivated and loving life. She was like a Trojan horse throughout and did our best balanced downhill work to date and some lovely relaxed canter work at times too. We came In at a lovely speed of 10.5kph. I was so pleased and felt sure we had the perfect new strategy putting us back on track for endurance champ status after all! All my dreams were dashed though in the vetting. She had a HR of 62. I was horrified. My initial reaction was I had worked her too hard and broken my poor girlie but the vet totally reassured me that she was absolutely fine. My next reaction was pretty much toys out of the pram. Where was I going wrong? We had tried lots of the advised cooling down strategies, flavoured drinking concoctions, learning to wee to my whistle etc and her HRs were getting worse not improving. With my next event already booked and paid for, my threat of chucking the towel in and giving up my endurance dreams were, as my husband put it, not an option.

So 2 weeks later we set off for Bonham for our first try at a 40km GER. So little was my faith in my own ability to ride 40km due to my aged knees we set off on this event with the aim of just getting to the finish line. And during this ride the penny finally dropped. I had been chasing the wrong dreams all year and losing sight of the bigger picture. At Bonham, we rode mostly within our comfort zone with sections of harder work when we had company to help. We enjoyed the riding, we admired the scenery, we chatted with other riders and I marvelled at how much my lovely mare had learned and matured over the past year. I didn't watch the clock and we slowed down if we needed too. We still came in with a respectable speed of 11kph and a HR of 51 which I was pleased with after a long ride. This was my turning point. My perspective had changed. I was delighted to have finished and everything else was a bonus.

As a final challenge of our rookie year, I decided we could give the Red Dragon a go. It would be our first overnight stay at an event, our first try at corralling and our first 2 day event - we

did the Dragons Claw - two 26km rides. We had the most amazing time. I was determined to



enjoy every moment of the weekend focussing on what was important to us. We had 2 incredible rides, both over the same route but both very different experiences. Puzzle gave me her everything. She dug deep on those steep hills, she listened to me on the really slippery ground and she flew like the wind when we had the opportunity. For much of the second ride we rode alone and she looked to me for her motivation. We listened to the skylarks and we admired the autumnal colours on the mountainside and we gave no thought to our times or heart rates because we just wanted to end our first rookie year as finishers! As for becoming endurance champs? Well in my eyes Puzzle is an endurance champion and that is all that really matters to me!

*Ruth Ferris*

## Red Dragon

Well, what can I say? 2022, you have been very kind to us! From the first GER in early March, through Speech House, Exmoor, RC camp, Cirencester and finally it was time for the Red Dragon.

A year ago, I took Jacinto to the RD for the 34k, on the Friday, reasoning that this would be the quietest day of the ride, with my heart in my mouth and a knot in my stomach. No doubt I whinged the whole way to poor Mary Stubbs about how scary and bucky he was, while he trotted and cantered along without any thoughts in his pretty little head of misbehaving or playing up. I was so nervous, I almost didn't enter the ride and having entered, I had sleepless nights worrying about how it would go.

One year on, and I entered him for the Dragon's Egg, 44/34 km. I didn't bother arranging company on the Saturday, and only in retrospect arranged to ride with Andrea Champ on the Sunday. Slightly optimistically, I also arranged to take my 15 yr old daughter Lucy, her Connie x TB Fred, Lucy's friend Saffi and her SecD mare Cleo for the 34k GER on the Friday, with the plan to crew them myself and then take them home and return on Saturday morning with Jacinto, stay overnight in Builth Wells and go home on

Sunday afternoon.

Things didn't start too well: Friday's competition was cancelled due to horrendous weather in Builth, the girls were in tears, all seemed a complete disaster. And then, with the help of the wonderful John Hudson and his equally wonderful ride secretary Liz Hinings, we rebooked the girls into the 34k on the Sunday, I managed to upgrade my single B&B to a double, and early on Saturday Lucy & I set off for Builth with Fred and Jacinto. Arrived to discover that one of the trailer tyres had blown and I hadn't even noticed (?!?)... No matter, we were there, so might as well just get on with it.

Got the horses settled in the stables, sorted out all the gear, vetted Jacinto and then I set off. Had to pass behind the stables where Fred helpfully (ahem) shouted for his mate and Jacinto equally helpfully shouted back and leapt up and down, snorting and tossing his head and doing little half rears & bucks, but unlike last year when I would have been terrified of what he'd do next, I felt in charge and told him to bl\*\*dy get on with it and we did. He was an absolute superstar all the way through the ride - going in front, behind, passing others, leaving them behind, jogging next to me down the hills and basically doing his very best A1 impression of being a seasoned endurance horse. 😊

Fast forward to Sunday morning when I learnt a valuable lesson - if you stable your horse that isn't used to being stabled (ours live out 24/7 all year around), you must manage his hydration better and walk him more so his legs don't get puffy. Hm. Lesson learnt. I discussed the puffy legs with the vets at the pre-ride vetting and trotted him up 4 times, although he wasn't lame, before we decided I would take him and take extra care. Not sure he got that memo, because he was extremely full on and pulled the whole way around the 34k, but we got through and at the final vetting he had A for action, but was dehydrated.

Lucy and Fred did their first GER and it was a joy to see them. Fred started in his typical thoroughFred way, leaping around and being generally over excited, but once I tucked Jacinto in behind him, he settled and went very well, just flying across the turf up on the open hill. I think it's safe to say that both Lucy and Saffi had a great time and both girls managed their horses super well, doing beautiful trot ups for the vet and riding them considerably - and much faster & further than they've ever gone before. Super proud of them all!

Once we were all through the vetting and had gathered all our gear up, Saffi's mum helped me phone the equine rescue services (since I'm deaf and can't phone) who sorted out our blown tyre, and we finally got home at 20:30. As they say: endurance riders do it for longer.

And that's a wrap for Jacinto's and my 2022 endurance season!

***Cecilia Lindberg***

# Maryland Fun Ride

## Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October

Venue: Trelleck, halfway between Chepstow and Monmouth off B4293, NP25 4PQ

The route consists of mainly forestry tracks connected by quiet country lanes. Some moderate hills with some fantastic views over the Wye Valley. There are route options of 7km(4 miles), 13km(7 miles), 20km (12 miles) and 26km (16 miles)

*DUE TO FORESTRY OPERATIONS THERE WILL NOT BE THE USUAL 13km SOUTH LOOP, RIDERS WISHING TO DO 26km CAN EITHER DO THE NORTH LOOP (Along the River Wye) TWICE OR DO THE NORTH LOOP AND THEN THE 7km LOOP TWICE.*

Entries close: Monday 24<sup>th</sup> October

**PONIES/HORSES MUST MEET THE ENDURANCE GB FLU VACCINATION REQUIRMENTS**

Enquiries: 07968 928870 or n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk

**ENTRIES IN ADVANCE ONLY.** You will need to enter via:

<https://egb.myclubhouse.co.uk/>

**All ride information will be available for download from  
<https://www.egboffasdyke.co.uk/maryland-fun-ride>**

# My Endurance story so far!

So my mum has always been into Endurance and I had never done anything bar 10 mile funrides on my little 12hh pony. I started doing EGB fun rides on Zodie my 14.2hh i got to replace my 12hh pony as my mum said my legs keep growing! ( I blame that on her) but after the first few we realised he didn't really enjoy it... so i had to resort to a home bred Arab, so we had a little think about who would look after me and we thought shaikha....but it was a big step up from my 14.2hh to 15.1hh and I didn't enjoy it. My mum told me to try out Burkaan (he's 14.3hh), we were unsure at first as he was only 6 and it was his first season doing endurance and fun rides. I instantly fell in love with him and have been riding him since the beginning of April this year ready for our first competitive ride at Speech House on the 10th April. We had a great ride, 32km and finished on a grade 3. My legs were a little tired the next day and it was a good job I didn't have PE at school until the Thursday! In the lorry home I asked my mum if I could do another, and that week i was booked in for the 32km at Wentwood where we got another grade 3 (i think 3 is his magic number). Wentwood was lovely and we were soon back there for the summer ride too but mum had upped it to 40km and we sailed around (another 3).



Mum had always said how she loves Cirencester park rides and i have always crewed her with my dad but this year i got to go and i can see why she loves it so much! Another ride ticked off and another grade 3!

Being in the Pony Club i had qualified to go to the Championships at Lions Tail in September, he had also through the year had to go to my local pony club rallies where he had to join in with the lessons and he took it all in his stride!

Mum put me down for the open 40km class at the Lions Tail where there would be a vet gate which

Burkaan nor myself had done, but it didn't bother him, he stuck into some food after passing the vet and we were soon tacked up and back on, the second part of the loop went really fast and soon back at the venue and vetted to get our first GRADE1!!!

We finished of the season with the Red Dragon and only a short one 26km as mum and the stud has been really busy and not had time to do much hill work. I had also just come back from a week away on a school trip so i was quite tired. 'The Hill' was a bit steeper than i expected but we made it and got the amazing view and photos as we got to the top. We didn't have much road work on the 26km and the going had become very slippy from the rain we had had on the Friday, so we took it steady. And finished with a grade 2.

We may go along to the Maryland Funride i am working on mum!!!

I am really looking forward to 2023 and riding Burkaan all over the countryside.

Thank you to all the ride organiser and helpers without you none of it would run.

*Elsie May*

# Winter Schooling

I have organised some schooling sessions over the next few months with Tash Smith (Classical Dressage Trainer and Enlightened Equitation Trainer). They are very kindly going to be held at Rupert Humphreys, Castle Farm, Usk, NP15 1SD. Directions will be provided after booking.



Castle Farm has a lovely indoor arena which is ideal for the cold, wet winter months.

There will be groups available to cater for all abilities and needs. You also have the option of incorporating some polework or small jumps within your lesson if you desire. You can do whatever you like 😊

The sessions will be in groups of a maximum of 2 and cost £26.00 for an hour or you can have 1 hour private for £36.00

## Dates are:

November (TBC)

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2023

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2023

ALL BOOKING MUST BE MADE VIA CLUBHOUSE

<https://egb.myclubhouse.co.uk/>

For more information please don't hesitate to contact me.

Nicola- 07968 928870 or n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk

**PONIES/HORSES MUST MEET THE ENDURANCE GB FLU VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS**

# Our Season

FOD Misty Blue (AKA Tilly) is the most miserable horse I have ever owned! She doesn't actually like anybody, but will tolerate some people more than others!

Her passport says she is part Arab, but it should say she's part Mule, because when Tilly says No, she means No!

We did some PRs with EGB last season to see if we could actually find something she enjoyed and get competitive. Our first outing should have been the March Hares, but storm Eunice put paid to that,

so instead we had to wait until Speech House. The day arrived and my normally reliable lorry decided it wasn't going to start! A frantic call was made to my trusty mechanic (who was still in bed!), and he managed to start it.

However it then took longer than expected to get there, so time was running out for our allotted Vets time. Somehow we made it and Tilly had a great starting pulse (which was probably more than I did after all the drama!).

She made 32KM seem easy and it was all going so well until she went back to be vetted. She wouldn't let the Vet get near her, and I could see "Eliminated" being the first entry on her pristine green Mastercard!

Eventually after a lot of patience from the long-suffering Vet, all hooves returned to the ground and to my utter amazement she had a pulse of 39. She not only achieved a Grade 1 but also won the PF award.

I thought this must definitely be a case of beginners luck!!

After that came Wentwood in the Spring & Summer (more Grade 1s), and then Michaelchurch – yet another Grade 1. Perhaps the "moody mule" did have some talent after all!!

We then went to the Red Dragon, which is always one of my favourite rides. Arriving on Friday in pouring rain, it didn't seem such a good idea – definitely not Wales at its best.

However Saturday morning was sunny and dry, perfect riding weather to do 34KM. Another good pulse to start and off we went. Tilly felt a bit enthusiastic but I thought that the climb to the top of "the hill" would sort her out.

Yet again she made it all seem so easy. The going was a bit slippery after the previous days rain, but the views were spectacular and the time went very quickly. Before we knew it we were heading back to the venue, and she definitely

didn't feel as if she had exerted herself. Another good finishing pulse, and another Grade 1!

We headed home on Sunday and discovered she had also won the PF award.



I couldn't really believe that her 1<sup>st</sup> season had gone so well as she is such a difficult horse. It has all gone way beyond my expectations, considering that I am not by nature a competitive person!

We now have a 32KM at Talybont to finish the season, so lets see how that goes. Hopefully we won't get lost!

The next challenge for the dark winter months is to persuade my moody mare that she wants to be a dressage horse as well. I'm not sure we both have the same opinion about that, but who knows.

Maybe Mules can do dressage!!!

*Kerry Carson*



# Christmas Cracker Ride



Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> December

@ Yat Rock Car Park, Symonds Yat, GL16 7NY

**(Subject to forestry approval)**

**A lovely social ride on forestry tracks with a section along the River Wye, no gates and minimal road work.**

**Route options of 12km, 20km and 26km.**

NO lorries larger than 7.5t permitted.

**£18 for members and £23 for non-members (includes Forestry fee)**

**To enter- <https://www.endurancegb.co.uk/Events/Calendar/View?id=1896>**

***Please note the early entry closing date of 17th December to allow validation of flu vaccination information well before the start of the Christmas period***

**\*\* HELPERS NEEDED \*\***

# How hard can it be?

I was sticking a sign saying “**Stop Fussing**” on my bedroom door . I couldn’t decide where to put it : when I’m fussing about a sign saying “**Stop Fussing** “ things have gone too far..

Like all good films ..... *A FEW MONTHS EARLIER...*

I was in my first Offa’s Dyke committee meeting. The Chair was allocating new roles for the coming year, one of which was Secretary. I had decided Donna would be good at that “do that Donna, have a go, you’d be good.. go on, do that Donna, go on, go on...”. Donna politely declined “I’m best with children...”. Next role was Health and Safety; that had her name on I decided .. “Go on Donna do that one then, go on...” . Donna declined this time with a glare which I was too stupid to notice. Next role was Safeguarding “ What’s that ?” I said. “Children “. I shrieked with excitement: “DONNA THIS IS YOU , GO ON DONNA GO ON..”. “Yes I will” she said. They say revenge is a dish best served cold: but this one had n’t even come out of the oven when the Chair asked for ideas for new rides. “You have one ! “ exclaimed Donna.. this was sad but true. I had been boasting during a ride we did together a few weeks before that I could probably cobble a new ride together for the group. “How wonderful , what shall we call it, when will it be, I’ll put it on the list ” the Chair said and I was trussed up like a turkey or kipper or something... Donna said nothing but it was game set and match.

So there I was endlessly writing lists , scribbling random notes which I then lost, showing people potential routes, and generally being irritating with numerous phone call, emails and questions (often repeated since I had forgotten the first answer or got the wrong end of the stick ) to get the new ride (Crucorney) off the ground. It is often said to succeed you just need to surround yourself with good people, and luckily for me that is what happened. Nicola Davies, Karen and John Jones and Piers all piled in early on with wise counsel. So this is not an essay in what a ride organiser has to do and how marvellous I was, but rather a recognition and thank you to all those whose wisdom, experience, practical capacity, energy and local knowledge and connections was essential in planning and running a decent ride.

First of all the route: Karen Jones and Piers Geddes both knew and frequently rode lovely tracks that could connect the key parts of the route , and shared their thoughts on what to miss : I was wisely advised that including some practice for the Tevis was not a particularly good idea. This was supported by the Brecon Beacons National Parks who refused access to one of the local hills. We shall ignore the fact the hunt use it in winter, and not be bitter. The National Trust proved their strapline “Access for Everyone” should be “Access for Everyone unless on horseback” but I am still NOT bitter. However never underestimate the value of your local Parks ranger: ours was sympathetic and brilliant, arranging for gates to be mended and tracks to be cleared and talking to local landowners on our behalf.

Process, process: without Nicola Davies’s ~~encyclopaedic, encicopedic~~ great knowledge of the bits of paper required (legion), where to get permits and when and who needed to be told what we were doing and when eg: graziers, I never even knew they were a thing... (they are people who graze the hills, well not them, obviously, their animals WHO KNEW ? ) , nothing would have happened, or if it had, would have stopped within 10 minutes of starting.

Venue: The internet is wonderful but you can't beat local. Alison Amey from Crucorney volunteered her livery yard which is in a fab location and dead flat, a bonus in these thar hills and on ride day she was an excellent venue steward.

Marking: the gang of 5: Nicola and Donna, Karen, Belinda and Helen, turned out willingly on a Saturday morning (I am well aware some people have jobs and their time is short so how generous of them) to mark the route and what a thorough job they did with riders commenting how fab the marking was, hurrah. We all know that sinking feeling when we have joined the "hellarwe" tribe (if you don't know that joke someone will explain it... ) so it was wonderful that was avoided. Particular thanks to Belinda who did not know the route before she had a recce walk with Karen but whose marking was as efficient and effective as always.

Of course, no helpers on the day, no ride. After a worrying start with few volunteers and 18 gates, by ride day numerous good people had volunteered their services and turned out early to get things off to a flying start. THANK YOU HELPERS !!

Then it was over. Only of course it wasn't. A social media s\*\*\*storm started just over a week later about the desecration and ruination of the Llanthony valley due to ride marking. I had left 1 (yes ONE) direction sign on the forestry track and lack of rain meant orange spray was still in evidence (heigh ho ..). An hour after I found out via an email from EGB about the sign I beetled along to pick it up. The end. I don't do social media and that nonsense did not persuade me I am wrong.

I was obsessive about wanting the ride to go really well. Not just well but REALLY well. I have never been a fan of "that'll do" and "it's OK", but I thought about why it was important to me this should be a good ride. My mind went back to my first Golden Horseshoe, a pleasure ride on my cob. At the end I was nearly in tears. Why? Not because I was exhilarated we had done it, or delighted at my Cob's performance, but because of the realisation that that first Horseshoe was the best ride I had ever done and it was over. And I could never do it again.

This ride was my Horseshoe.

***Barbara Rees***

# Our First Season

For all of my life, any time spent in the saddle has been time well spent. When I started to work at Pearl Island Arabians early January 2022, I knew I had hit the jackpot of jobs. But I would be lying if I said I wasn't completely nervous about being in the saddle for longer than a couple of hours, whilst still being able to walk the next day.

The last time I was classed as a novice rider was about 20 years ago, when I used to wear long rubber boots with a sparkly whip that had a star on the end of it. Before you ask, I have burnt all of those photos!!

But this is where I started off at Pearl Island; at novice level with 20-25 mile rides in front of me. Luckily for me, I had amazing mentors in the form of Jenny Lees and Amanda May, who made everything look effortless. As I am a naturally competitive person, I thought to myself 'I have got this!'. I didn't. I came back from my first ride and had to roll myself out of bed the next couple of days. From that day on, every ride - and following morning - got a lot easier, with less Deep Heat gel needed and quickly I got the bug!

I couldn't sit here and write about my first endurance season without talking about my incredible mounts. SD Stella and Jellaby Bahar have helped me every step of the way. I like to think I have only annoyed them a couple of times by telling them to go slightly slower than the speed of light down a hill. They've pushed me when I wasn't sure and have taken me past some very scary logs, that I am sure would have killed them if they didn't stare directly at them. Now at open level, I cannot wait for the new season to start and to go on longer adventures with the mad team from Pearl Island Arabians.

If anyone reading this gets the opportunity to go to an endurance ride, or become part of this fantastic community, please do it, no matter your knowledge of the endurance world. I'm sure we can all relate to having bad experiences with other riders in the horse world, especially when there is competition afoot. But my experience of the Endurance community has been nothing but amazing. Everyone is friendly, chatty and down to earth. Let's be honest - we must all be mad about horses to do rides of up to 160km, so support is given in abundance to all - especially us newbies.



Photo courtesy of Westend Photography

***Philippa Lowin***

# Why Equine Touch is the endurance secret weapon you've probably never heard of

As endurance riders I feel we spend more time than most competitive disciplines looking after every single aspect of our horse's care. We are just in the saddle too long for anything to be more than a little bit out of balance. Hoof care, veterinary care, balanced feeding, saddle fit, the right saddle pad and bridle, all these things can make or break to our success. Generally, we need to rely on professionals to help us with most of these things.

The Physio/Osteopath/bodyworker is also an essential member of the endurance team. They provide valuable insight into our horse's movement patterns and relief from the inevitable issues which arise during our many miles of competition and training. Becoming a professional bodyworker in whichever specialty takes years of study and dedication. Trust me, I know! Fifteen years into my career as an Equine Bodyworker I have gone back to university and am one year into a degree in Equine Osteopathy

As with all things in horses and life, if you are passionate about it the learning can be never ending. However, I'll wager that as an endurance rider you have learned your fair share of bits of these professions along the way; how to tell if the saddle fits, even though you can't necessarily re-flock it. How to know when an injury is superficial and you can nurse it yourself, or when you need the vet with diagnostics and prescriptions. Endurance really attracts or creates great all round horse people with a real depth of knowledge. Did you know that the same can be true for the soft tissue, bodywork part of your horsemanship? Without spending years of study, you can learn enough bodywork to be able to help your horse yourself. Before competitions, after big days training, as often as every week if you like!



You may be asking yourself exactly what I mean by bodywork as it's not a word everyone uses. I use this word to encompass all the different ways of helping your horse's body using hands-on means. Physiotherapy, osteopathy, chiropractic, and massage are the best known. Bodywork allows encompasses the valuable but less known Equine Touch, T Touch, Masterson, Acupressure, Myofascial Release and many more too.

The first bodywork modality I trained in, sixteen years ago, was Equine Touch. It blew me away so much that it has been the main stay of my practice ever since. Even now as a student osteopath I was delighted to be told in class that one of the best things that could happen to a horse following an osteopathic adjustment is a session of either Masterson Method or Equine Touch. And yet somehow, Equine Touch remains one of the most obscure, little known ways of helping horses. Lots of people have heard of TTouch and assume we are the same thing. In fact, Equine Touch is its own unique modality. The practitioner uses a very light,

vibrational move which affects the muscles and fascia and helps to release pain and tension. Generally, people find after an Equine Touch session that their horse is more forward going, moves more easily and is happier in their work much like after a massage. The big difference is the lightness of touch used to achieve these results. It is so easy on the person's body, not requiring any strength, whilst being profoundly effective on the horse's body.

The magic thing about Equine Touch is its' simplicity. In the early stages of learning you follow a prescribed pattern of moves in set places on the horse's body. By faithfully following this pattern you can be assured that all the major muscle groups and most common areas where niggles are found will get attention. This makes Equine Touch an ideal modality for horse owners to learn. The initial course is just two days and in this time you learn to confidently apply the foundational pattern, known as the Basic Body Balance. No, of course I am not saying that after two days you will be able to give up your regular professional bodyworker visits. However, after two days you will be able to confidently keep your horse more comfortable between professional visits. You will be able to spot bigger issues sooner and bring relief to your horse in the short term. And as an endurance rider, most excitingly, you will be able to help your horse feel tip top the day before a competition; you will be able to help your horse feel softer during a vet gate; and you will be able to help your horse recover better the



day after a ride or in an overnight hold. Clearly, if your horse is injured then nothing should be used to paper over the cracks and keep them going. But if they are a little fatigued, tight or just a niggled by something, it feels amazing to be able to help them right there and then.

Personally, I don't know how to do endurance without Equine Touch to boost us along the way, and I hope that you can see having read this, how Equine Touch can become a serious tool in your competitive tool kit. Courses run throughout the year and there are instructors all over the country. I am an Instructor and am based near Hay on Wye. Here I have a lovely yard of appreciative teaching horses who are always thrilled to see a bunch of new people holding their manuals ready to start practice. Check out [www.theEquineTouchUK.com](http://www.theEquineTouchUK.com) for more information and to find a course near you or email me [suz@aholiticsolution.co.uk](mailto:suz@aholiticsolution.co.uk)

***Suz Crichton-Stuart***

## Other Group Fun Rides

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ride Name</i>	<i>Group</i>
Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> December	Mince Pie Ride	Cotswold

# Dates for your Diary

**Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> October**

**Groundwork Clinic**

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October**

**Maryland Fun Ride**

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November**

**Groundwork Clinic**

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**

**BAM & Awards Evening**

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December**

**Groundwork Clinic**

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December**

**Schooling @ Castle Farm, Usk**

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> December**

**Christmas Cracker Fun Ride**

**\*\* 2023 \*\***

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> January**

**Schooling @ Castle Farm, Usk**

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> February**

**Schooling @ Castle Farm, Usk**

More info on the Offa's Dyke website under 'Rides and Events'

[www.egboffasdyke.co.uk](http://www.egboffasdyke.co.uk)