



Offa's Dyke Group
Of Endurance GB
Newsletter – January 2011
www.offasdykegb.co.uk



Chairman's Comment

Despite all the Snow we had a wonderful turn out at the annual meeting congratulations to everyone who achieved their endurance goals in 2010 and well done to everyone who received a rosette or trophy.

The group is constantly changing, membership is doing well and we have changes to people on committee.

Sharon Parr who organises Plump hill ride, and previously chairperson has resigned from the committee due to work commitments, although she will be on the scene at the rides, as she has trained to be technical steward.

Abi Tennant our young rider rep will be a senior rider shortly and she will be giving up her representation of the younger members of the group. The efforts of both Sharon and Abi have been much appreciated by all of the committee and we would like to thank them for their support over the years.

New committee members are Suzanne Garlick who completed her first 50 miles in 2010, and Louise Rich who has competed at advanced level and ER's for several years. She takes the role as junior/young rider rep (watch out for the webpage)

We have another very full year with events/rides in most months, details in newsletter and on website. We **haven't** increased social ride entry fees for members for this year to try and help you with the cash crisis, TDM was increased to £8 by national.

Good luck to you all for the coming season and please keep volunteering to help we 125 people help last year.

Webpage/newsletter will only remain interesting if you send in photo's and articles

N.B. Please let us know if you have changed address or e.mail info recently

Gina

Editor's Comment

Another year has disappeared, a successful one for many of our Group. The season has got off to a good start. Against the odds, in a winter when there has already been a fair bit of snow, the weather man relented and we had a lovely day for the first ride of the season. We are very grateful to Belinda Josephi for again organising the Christmas Cracker Ride, in some ways the most onerous one to do, in that it clashes with all the other things the organiser might rather do over the holiday period, the weather may be dreadful and even lead to the ride being cancelled at the last minute. Thanks also to the others who helped; Heather and Mark for route marking and organising parking, Sharon Parr and Suzanne Garlick and Belinda's friend Clare as starters and bib dispensers and for providing us all with mince pies and mulled wine. I rode with Carolyn and had a lovely ride except that Bonnie wanted to use the Sustrans section as a racetrack and could only be controlled at a walk, being nearly 21 it is time she grew up! One of our newest associate members doing it as his first ever ride has kindly done a full report for us. His daughter Angharad who started her Endurance career in 2010 has also, at my request, written a good account of her first season. It was lovely to see her collecting so many trophies at the AGM. On a slightly sadder note we have a report from Sue Loveridge about her beloved Dancer who is sadly no longer with us.

Margaret McKiddie

Enclosed with this newsletter

- Social Ride entry form
- Team Trophy Nomination form (send back by 16 April)
- List of Offa's Dyke Awards
- Members trophy record card. (Associate Members receive theirs when they renew their membership- Due now!)

Additional copies of all available to download from the 'forms' page of the website

Complete your trophy card as you go along with the events you've completed including other groups rides. Also fill in each time you help at an event, as this gives points for some of our awards.

Note: This year you need to get your card signed by the organiser at each event to verify it (exception for 2011 Xmas ride – sign yourself)

Please take a look at the awards you may qualify for this year, including Team Trophy- open to all Members and Associate Members, Associate Members highpoint trophy and new Warrens Hill Arabians Trophy.

Wear a yellow ribbon

Those of you who are local, and perhaps others as well, will be aware of proposals to sell off Nationally owned forests including the Forest of Dean and the public disquiet about this with potential loss of access, which could particularly affect riders as there are no public bridleways through the Forest. We have been asked to support the protest movement HOOFF (hands off our forest rather apt for riders).

Some of you may be aware that there is already a campaign group tying yellow ribbons round trees and your committee have decided that we could support the campaign by riders at the Forest of Dean rides being asked to wear a yellow ribbon & we plan to have a supply of yellow ribbons to be given out with the number bibs. At a recent Husky race in the Forest of Dean yellow ribbons were worn by people and dogs and newspaper publicity of the event was good. Hopefully we could arrange similar publicity for our protest at the rides

We have been forwarded a press release from the Forest of Dean Horse Riders and Carriage Drivers Association concerning Sale of the forest. We have included it here as it might be of interest to members.

Forest of Dean Horse Riders and Carriage Drivers Association

On the 18th January “Ben” and his owner Erica Rye drove John Craven of the BBC TV programme “Countryfile” around the Forest near to where they live. They were accompanied on the drive by Jenny Carling, Chair of the Forest of Dean and District Horse Riders and Carriage Drivers Association who was interviewed by John on the subject of the possible sell-off of Forestry Commission land.

In response to John’s question of how it might affect horse riders and carriage drivers Jenny said “If land is sold off then under current legislation we would have no rights of access unlike walkers whose rights are protected by law” She went on to say “Any loss of public safe off-road riding and carriage driving in the forests could be disastrous”. Jenny went on to explain to John that the Association had developed a potential coherent network of routes from Dymock in the north of the District to Bream in the south. The routes are called “The Forest of Dean Greenways Project” and the work is supported by funding from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. This network, with all its associated benefits of healthy exercise for walkers and cyclists, as well as equestrians, together with economic development opportunities for local businesses, could be severely damaged by any sell off as around 60-70% of the route goes over FC land.

The team from the BBC were also interested in learning about the good relationship that exists between local management of the FC and the Association in developing equestrian access. Not least they were impressed by the fund raising that had taken place to pay for clearance of The Pylons track on behalf of all users by the Association.

The filming that took place during the drive and of the interview will form part of a larger item on the “Countryfile” programme to be broadcast on 30 January.

End of Press Release - For further information tel. 01989 720252

Dates for your diary

Offa's Dyke events

Maryland - social ride	Sun 6 Feb	See page 7
Schooling lesson	Sun 13 Feb	
Pub Talk and social evening	Sat 19 Feb	See page 6
Schooling lesson	Sun 27 Feb	
March Hares – National ride	Sun 6 March	
Dressage competition	Sun 13 March	See page 9
Govilon – social ride	Sun 27 March	See page 10
Committee meeting	Thurs 7 April	
Novice training afternoon	Sun 10 April	See page 8
Bluebell – social ride	Sat 16 April	
Bluebell – National ride	Sun 17 April	
Ludlow - National Ride	Sat 18- Sun 19 June	
Blaenavon – social ride	Sun 3 July	
Cranham – National Ride	Sun 21 August	
Tintern – National Ride	Sun 11 September	
Plump Hill – social ride	Sub 18 September	
Under Hay Bluff – social ride	TBA	

[More information on our website 'rides & events' page](#)

Other Local Groups Social Rides

[Heart of England Group www.heartofenglandeqb.co.uk](http://www.heartofenglandeqb.co.uk)

Wyre Forest

Sun 12 February

Bewdley, Worcestershire. OS Map No. 138, Grid Ref: 752 740

Forest ride, mixture of hard and soft tracks. Road crossing (out and return) on long route.

[Mid Wales Group www.midwalesendurance.moonfruit.com](http://www.midwalesendurance.moonfruit.com)

Mortimer Forest

Sat 30 April

Mortimer Forest – Ludlow- Shropshire. Grid Ref. SO 491 732 .

Forest Tracks, Common, Bridleways, a mixture of hard and soft going, some testing climbs with stunning views. This is a good training route or ride it purely for pleasure. No main A49 road to cross; start & finish is in the forest.

[South West Wales Group www.enduranceeqb-south-and-west-wales-group.org.uk](http://www.enduranceeqb-south-and-west-wales-group.org.uk)

Tower Forest

Sat and Sun, 19th and 20th February

Pleasure Rides in the Brechfa Forest (formerly called Valentine Ride).

Pembrey pleasure ride.

Sun March 27th

[More information on their group websites](#)

Pub Talk and Social Evening

Saturday 19th February 7.30pm

Illustrated talk on Endurance Equine Nutrition by Sybil Soulsby BVSc MRCVS

English Bicknor Village Hall- Bar available to us

Sybil is a team vet at the Cross-Country Clinic at Devauden, part of Chepstow Veterinary Health Centre - but more importantly for us is also an experienced Endurance rider, competing to FEI level - some in the UK, but mainly in the US and Canada.

Sybil will be speaking to us on feeding Endurance horses through the year, with reference to the nutritional needs of competing at different Levels (distances and speeds), keeping horses well and happy. Her talk will be informed by both her veterinary training and her experience of successfully competing in a wide range of Endurance events.

English Bicknor is a small village in the Forest of Dean, about 5 minutes drive from the March Hares/ Bluebell venue.

From Monmouth: from the A40 dual carriageway take the left hand turn across the old bridge signposted Wye Valley. Go straight ahead at both mini roundabouts taking A4136 Staunton Road (as if going to Christmas Cracker) towards Coleford. Pass through Staunton village, then at the traffic lights go straight ahead towards Gloucester. Turn left after about 1 mile or less, at The Pike House (new building of flats on the LH corner) towards Ross, Symonds Yat and English Bicknor. Keep straight on for about 3 miles. The Village Hall is on the left on a straight stretch of road in the middle of the village, just before the phone box.

From Gloucester: At Huntley take A4136 towards Monmouth and the Forest of Dean. Pass through Mitcheldean, past Cinderford turn, through Brierley and past Five Acres College. At traffic lights go straight ahead towards Monmouth, past Five Acres petrol station on right and take next right signposted Ross, Symonds Yat and English Bicknor. Keep straight on for about 3 miles. The Village Hall is on the left on a straight stretch of road in the middle of the village, just before the phone box.

From Coleford: from the B4028 (Chepstow Road) at the traffic lights by Police Station go straight ahead towards Monmouth and take right turn up hill past houses towards Ross. At junction with A4136 go straight across at the Pike House towards Ross, Symonds Yat and English Bicknor. Keep straight on for about 3 miles. The Village Hall is on the left on a straight stretch of road in the middle of the village, just before the phone box.

From Ross: take B4234 towards Lydbrook and Coleford. After Lydbrook continue straight on towards Coleford and English Bicknor. After English Bicknor sign keep straight on for about a mile to find the village on the right on a straight stretch of road in the middle of the village, just after the phone box.

Congratulations to Offa's Dyke Members Chris Wray and Jenny Lees

Breeders of potential endurance horses for the future were at a glittering gala in London on Saturday 8 January to receive their awards for their Baileys Horse Feeds/BEF Futurity youngstock, which were awarded premiums in the endurance section in 2010. Certificates of Merit were awarded to the highest scoring potential endurance horses in each age group. These were Christina Andreson for her Akhal Teke foal Muromets (Richelshagen x Perimli by Melesur, Chris Wray for yearling Peponi (Krayaan Dilmun x Zawadi by Cloud Stepper, Mark King for Ashsham Amir (Prince Sadik x Dhamma Fielen by Ibn Charismma) and Jan Varty and Dominick Atkinson for three year old Seren Procyon (Hanson x Winter Queen) The top endurance sire went to Pearl Island Arabians' Krayaan Dilmun. Delighted owner Jenny Lees plans to take her certificate and rosette back to the breeder of the stallion in Bahrain

******* Change to Maryland *******

No longer a National Ride – now:

Group Social Ride

Sunday 6th February 2011*

Entries to: Heather Evans, Springfield, Walford, Ross-on-Wye. HR9 5RB

Entry questions? Tel: 01989- 565 249 (speak clearly on answering machine) or email: horse@mark-holland.info -- NO ENTRIES BY E-MAIL.

Send completed social ride entry form. **Enclose** minimum C5-size self-seal SAE for return of ride information and cheque payable to "Offa' Dyke Group of Endurance GB": £18 for non-members giving 'temporary day membership', or £10 for Members and Associate Members.

We look forward to meeting you at the Ride. Organiser: Mark Holland.

Questions not related to entries? Also tel: 01989- 565 249.

*** Ride may be moved to 13th February if weather, etc is unsuitable**

Training

Each year we try to provide some training opportunities for the group in addition to our rides and social events. Details are in this newsletter and on the 'rides and events' page of the website.

This year we have once again been running the very popular schooling lessons over winter and plan to round these off with an 'endurance friendly' dressage competition. Liz Taylor has again kindly agreed that we can use her yard for a Novice Training afternoon. In addition we have a pub social evening with talk by Sarah Rogerson in January. The second pub evening planned for February had to be cancelled due to loss of the venue. If you know of a suitable pub with room for future events we'd love to hear about it.

We have also been asked to run a training session for members wanting to progress to longer distances or ER's and hope to organise something over summer, details in the next newsletter.

If you have any suggestions for other training events or would like to volunteer to help in any way, please let us know.

Novice training afternoon

Sunday 10 April

Following the success of last year's novice training afternoon, Liz Taylor has kindly agreed that we can use her wonderful yard again. The yard is situated beautiful surroundings at Oxenhall near Newent and has everything we could ask for. It has plenty of parking, undercover facilities if we need them, Liz's horses to practice vetting on (see website 'news' page 'training' link for report and photos from previous years).

This is a free training afternoon open to anyone either just starting out in endurance or working at a novice level and wanting a few more tips and advice. You can ask us any questions you like & we'll show you some of the kit and equipment we find useful. It's a great way to meet other novice riders and for us to get to know you.

Everyone is welcome including crew. If you know anyone who may be interested, please mention it to them.

For more details please email or phone Carolyn Edwards (contact details page 2)

Offa's Dyke Group Dressage Competition

Sunday 13th March

Huntley School of Equitation, Huntley GL19 3HA

Class 1 Intro A Walk and trot (Restricted- combination not to have been placed in top 3 of any dressage competition)

Class 2 Prelim 7

Offa's Dyke Group EGB members and associate members only

Special rule: Normal endurance tack and clothing allowed. We hope this will encourage people to have a go who may normally be put off by having to wear the correct 'dressage' outfit and tack.

Facilities; we have use of the outdoor school to work in and the indoor school with judges box and public viewing gallery for the competition. We can call your test if you like. This can be very helpful if you have trouble memorizing the test! We also have use of the office to deal with entries and hand out results & rosettes to 6th place. The car park is hard standing, but due to numbers we will have to park very tidily and close to fit everyone in. Be prepared for a bit of a wait if you enter both classes.

You will be given times for your tests in advance (see below) and these will be strictly adhered to, so please be on time and ready for the steward to call you to the indoor school. Tests will be judged by Carole Broad and you will be given a copy of your test results with her comments at the end of the competition, along with your rosette if you're placed. If you can't wait until the end to get your result, please leave a large SAE at the office for us to post it on to you.

Entry fee £8 per class. Cheques payable to Offa's Dyke Group of EGB

Entry numbers are strictly limited. Closing date 4 March, but may fill up sooner.

Entries on Offa's Dyke Social Ride entry form (sent out in January mailing or available to download from 'forms' page of the website). Please note on the entry form which classes you wish to enter. Also note if you need us to send you a copy of the dressage tests enclosing an SAE.

To Carolyn Edwards (see page 2 for contact details)

Times will be emailed by Friday 11th March or alternatively phone Carolyn for times on the Friday eve 6pm to 9pm

Group Social Ride

Govilon

Sunday 27th March

O.S Landranger 161: Grid ref 263142

Route options of 16km and 25km (10 & 16 miles). Lovely ride with a mixture of mountain tracks, quiet country lanes and a lovely stretch of forestry on the longer route. Fantastic views from the Bloreng with a few steep hills.

Start times between 9:30 and 11:30

Entries to:

Nicola Davies,
Pentre Hendy,
Twyn Allwys road,
Govilon,
Abergavenny,
Monmouthshire,
NP7 9RT

Enquires: 07968928870

n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk

Please send entry along with a large SAE to receive maps and ride details.

Entry forms available from Nicola or off the website.

Directions-

Heads of Valleys road (A465) Abergavenny to Brynmawr. At Gilwern roundabout take the first exit signposted Govilon. Field on right after 400 yards in the layby.

Entries-

Entry fee £18 for non members or £10 for Associate or EGB members. Cheques made payable to Offa's Dyke Group of EGB

Facilities-

Easy access straight off a main road with double gated entrance with ample parking and a section of hard standing for lorries. There is water available at the venue but no toilets.

Trophies and Awards 2010

For more information about our Trophies and rosettes, please see the trophy list, which is included with this January Newsletter and is also available on the website

Pleasure Ride Rosettes		
Awarded to members and associate members who have completed 5 pleasure rides, 4 of which must be OD rides	Nicola Davies	Debbie Williams
	Suzanne Garlick	Rachel Williams
	Gill Talbot	Chris Wray
Pandora Distance Rosettes		
Presented by Margaret McKiddie in honour of her long distance mare Pandora. Awarded to horses completing at least 240, 320 or 400 km in the current season. If your horse has already gained a 240km rosette for a previous season he/she will need to complete an extra 80 km to be eligible. 200 miles/320 km rosettes can be claimed for two seasons, thereafter an extra 80 km will need to be completed to be eligible. 250 miles/400 km rosettes can be claimed in successive seasons. Only one Pandora rosette can be claimed for each horse.	240km	
	Florentina	Meriel Picton
	Firefox Tango	Suzanne Boulton
	Clio	Dawn Wilson
	Three Steps	Jane Smith
	320km	
	Oakleaze Farm Cziko	Louise Rich
	Swallow	Heather Evans
	Chiana	Lesley Dunn
	Llangennydd Flying Comet	Angharad Morgan
	Hendrewen Pirate	Nicola Davies
	Shuwaiman Al Bahrain	Amanda May
	400km	
	Oakleaze Farm Czako	Sue Rich
	Druimghigha Luxor	Andrea Champ
	Auburn Emblem	Gina Harris
	Malabar Storm	Gill Talbot
	Frayaa	Maria Stapley
	Oakways Patchwork Girl	Carolyn Edwards
	Shushi	Suzanne Garlick
	Lady Dancer	Jan Rath
	Bonnie Anne	Margaret McKiddie
Warrens Hill Arabians First 80 km Rosette		
For horses completing their first 80km or longer ride.	Shushi	Suzanne Garlick
	Swallow	Heather Evans



Grade 1 Rosettes		
Presented by Sharon Parr for EGB cumulative grade 1 distance in increments of 400 km.	400km	
	Malabar Storm	Gill Talbot
	800km	
	Auburn Emblem	Gina Harris
	1600km	
Midnight Star	Rachel Williams	
Junior Rosette		
For riders aged 15 and under on 31st December at the end of this trophy season completing any 3 rides.	Spartacus	Lucy Champ
Thoroughbred Rosette		
Presented by Delwyn Hall for the Thoroughbred or 50% (no less) Thoroughbred who successfully completes the highest distance.	Oakways Patchwork Girl	Carolyn Edwards
Native/Neddy Rosette		
Presented by Delwyn Hall to the full/part bred native or unregistered with less than 25% Arab, Thoroughbred or Warmblood who successfully completes the highest distance.	Lady Dancer	Jan Rath
Associate Members Trophy		
Awarded to the Associate Group Member who gains most points overall (riding and non-riding).	Firefox Tango	Suzanne Boulton

Rough Close Lady Trophy		
Presented by Delwyn Hall for the rider completing the highest ER distance in their first season of ER's. (Rides can be in any country).	Druimghigha Luxor	Andrea Champ
	Frayaa	Maria Stapley
Starlight Trophy		
Presented by Janet Evans for the best novice horse in its first competitive season. No competitive rides to have been completed in the previous season. No more than ten rides may be entered in total, those of up to and including 50km will be accepted.	Llangennydd Flying Comet	Angharad Morgan
	Florentina	Meriel Picton
Pandora Trophy		
Awarded by Margaret McKiddie for novice riders, who, before the commencement of the current season, have not started in more than 5 competitive rides. The horse or pony need not be novice. Not more than 10 competitive events to be entered. Rides to be 50 km or below.	Llangennydd Flying Comet	Angharad Morgan
	Three Steps	Jane Smith
Mistress Harriet Trophy		
Presented by Paul and Gina Harris to the junior rider (17 and under during this trophy season) who successfully completes the highest distance.	Llangennydd Flying Comet	Angharad Morgan
	Spartacus	Lucy Champ
Cindy Trophy		
Awarded by Gareth and Lindsay Williams to the veteran horse aged 16 years and over at the start of the current season who successfully completes the highest distance.	Auburn Emblem	Gina Harris
	Bonnie Anne	Margaret McKiddie
Mitchell Arab Racehorse to Endurance Horse Trophy		
Awarded by Gabrielle Franklin to the Arab (minimum 50%) horse that has raced, scored on points for all completed EGB rides including NCRs.	Sengoran Bin Krayaan	Gabrielle Franklin
	Cal Karamah	Gabrielle Franklin



Warrens Hill Arabians Trophy

Awarded by Ray and Lesley Dunn to the Homebred horse who successfully completes the highest distance. The owner/breeder must be an Offa's Dyke member and to have helped at a EGB or EGB group ride

Frayaa

Lesley Dunn

Bonnie Anne

Margaret McKiddie

Team Trophy

Awarded to the highest points for a nominated team of 3 combinations (3 riders, one horse each) in all types of ride except ERs.

Gina Harris

Carolyn Edwards

Sue Loveridge

Jan Rath

Suzanne Garlick

Tracy Reynolds

Bonanza Trophy

Presented by Ray and Lesley Dunn to the highpoint registered Pure, Part or Anglo Arab in Endurance GB competitions.

Malabar Storm

Gill Talbot

Oakleazefarm Czako

Sue Rich

Madoc Trophy

Presented by Margaret McKiddie for the highpoint horse in Endurance GB competitions. To be eligible the rider or owner must produce evidence of helping at least one Offa's Dyke ride.

Oakways Patchwork Girl

Carolyn Edwards

Auburn Emblem

Gina Harris

Belstar Trophy		
Awarded to the highest point horse and rider Open or Advanced combination in graded rides only. Best 10 graded rides to count. Winners of the Madoc and Bonanza Trophies are excluded.	Lady Dancer	Jan Rath
	Auburn Emblem	Gina Harris
The Offa's Dyke Challenge Trophy		
Presented by Carolyn Edwards in memory of Tarr Steps Hannah to the Horse/Rider combination scoring the most trophy points in their 3 highest scoring completions on Offa's Dyke Group rides.	Auburn Emblem	Gina Harris
	Oakways Patchwork Girl	Carolyn Edwards
Shimara Cup		
Awarded by Fiona Wilton for the group member who gains most points overall (riding and non-riding).	Margaret McKiddie	Nicola Davies
Unsung Hero Award		
Awarded by the Committee to the individual who has contributed most to the Group during the current season.	Belinda Stewart	

Annual Awards Evening success

Thanks to all Offa's Dyke members who braved the snowy weather to make our annual meeting and awards evening such a success. Despite the icy roads almost 60 people came to the evening, which filled the new venue nicely. We've booked a bigger room at the same venue for next year. We were lucky to get the room at Bridges at short notice thanks to Chris Wray and had the added bonus of sharing the bar, due to a function in the Ballroom. We had a most splendid paneled room with an enormous Christmas tree in the bay window.

The business of the Annual Meeting was swiftly conducted by Gina, who doubled as secretary for the evening due to a crisis with Gabbie's car. Liz Taylor made her first report as group treasurer, reporting a very healthy bank balance, meaning we are currently in the process of buying more bibs for the group and also hoping to buy a new caravan to replace our dying old one.

We then moved on to our fantastic banquet. Once again we had an 'American Supper' and everyone was most generous in bringing along plates of savory food to share. It's always amazing that we end up with a super selection and not 50 plates of the same thing! We decided that, as the venue didn't allow us to

provide the usual glass of wine, the group would instead lay on the deserts this year. These were a mixture of home made by members of the committee, supplemented by a couple of bought deserts. All seemed to go down very well and very little left-overs!

Next came the presentation of our group annual trophies and rosettes. Thanks for all the hard work by Chris Wray in collating all the results, ordering the rosettes and making sure that all the trophies were returned in time to be presented on the evening (see the photo Robin Edwards took of all the awards beautifully displayed). Gina did a great job of presenting the awards & Robin took photos of everyone posing to receive them (see the website for all the photos).

We finished the evening with the usual Raffle, organised by Margaret McKiddie, which this year made a record breaking £100, going a great way to financing the costs of the evening. Thanks to everyone who generously contributed prizes and purchased tickets.

Next year we hope that even more of you will come along and join us to celebrate the successes of our group and have the chance for a lovely sociable evening with other members without a sweaty horse in tow.

A huge thanks

To all our helpers in 2010

We have never had such an amazing response for helpers, with over 125 different people coming along to help at our group rides and events. This included Members, Associate Members, friends and family, who all volunteered to give up their time to help.

As a thank you, we decided to have a raffle of all the helpers. Each time you helped, your name went into the 'hat'. We drew 5 names out to each win a £10 Countrywide voucher. The winners were:

Joyce Wathen
Oscar Hughes
Virginia Crane
Roger Brown
Gwen Pickering

Young Rider News

As Gina mentioned on the front page, Abi Tennant is shortly to be a senior rider, so Louise Rich has kindly agreed to take over from her as young rider rep for Offa's Dyke. Thanks to both Abi and Lou.

For those of you who don't know her Lou is aged 19 and is a very experienced young rider, having ridden her home bred horses from novice level up to International Teams.

'I started endurance aged 10 on my little pony then I carried on with Czelo, and then the others all came along. I enjoy endurance because of all the different places you get to go and see and where you can ride, plus all the people on the endurance circuit are very friendly.'

Lou is also has her own website if you'd like to get in touch with her about endurance: www.louiserich.weebly.com. We'll also be updating the young rider page of our Offa's Dyke website soon. Keep an eye on it for news from Lou. (go to 'about Offa's Dyke /young riders')

My First Season

Angharad Morgan

Although in the space of a mere year with my first pony, a 14hh bay section D gelding by the name of Comet, I had dabbled in nearly every discipline from dressage to gymkhana, I had never even heard of endurance until I moved yards. There, I became friendly with a lady who asked me to accompany her on an NCR. Having done several fun rides of varying distances and riding almost every day I figured Comet was plenty fit enough and off we went!

I was most certainly in for a shock! Used to just ambling down roads and over any tracks that weren't fit for canter, my legs had a rude awakening into the world of continuous trotting! Even more alarming to me was the aspect of map reading and time keeping, which seemed overly complex and completely unnecessary! On returning to the venue, I had, of course, thoroughly enjoyed myself but caused further embarrassment to my friend (and maybe the entire horse world) upon asking the vet if 43 was a good heart rate!

Next year, the start of 2010, my friend suggested that three of us join Endurance GB and ride a complete novice season together - she had compiled a schedule of events and classes and training opportunities as well! The season started as planned, doing the 17km route at Maryland together (in fact it went so well my friend's horse refused to load on the box to go home!)

Our first competitive ride would be the 30km at Forest of Dean - March Hares which unfortunately my friend's horse become lame before leaving two 'newbies' to their own devices. Luckily, the route was incredibly well marked and we took no deviations,

arriving back at the venue with a time of 10.4kph and a heart rate of 40 for Comet, giving us our first Grade One. This successful completion led us to the Offa's Dyke Novice Training to learn more about the sport we had blindly entered. There, we met Carolyn Edwards, Gina Harris and Liz Taylor who were all extremely friendly and helpful. We also learnt about trot-ups and taking heart rates (I'm thinking of sponsoring a zombie-pony trophy as I still can't find Comet's heartbeat!) The rest of the season would be plagued by lameness in my friend's horses leaving me to sometimes ride solo. I was nervous about the prospect of keeping time and following the route without an extra pair of eyes, especially as my stopwatches either flew off my map case or pressed their own buttons leaving me to rely heavily on my parents at crew points for time checks! My first solo ride was the Forest of Dean Bluebell ride, which shouldn't really be counted as a solo ride, as it was on the ride here that I met Charlotte Fleming and rode practically the entire 40km course with her, until just after the last check point when Comet decided he was actually a race horse and joined two Arabs in their gallop back to the venue (thankfully the riders were very friendly and didn't mind my intrusion!). Finishing at a speed of 12.5kph we feared for Comet's heart rate but he passed the vetting with 41bpm gaining his second grade one.

Encouraged by his results, we continued the season gaining grade ones at Mynydd Machen, Margam Park and Ludlow and a grade two at Cirencester (which was a particularly fabulous ride with the Red Arrows flying above us for the majority of the course.)

Around this time, I became an avid reader of the Endurance GB website, checking daily for any news. I had noticed several posts about a Home International and Celtic Challenge in Burgie, Scotland. I considered putting my name forward but with the ride being on the weekend just after our return from Florida, I figured there would be far better people than I who would make up the team. Imagine my surprise when Pat Conn rang to ask if I could ride the 40km Novice for the Welsh team!! We took Comet back to a friend's yard where I had loaned horses before buying my own so that her girls could keep him fit for the three weeks we were away and we planned to make the two day journey to Burgie the day after our arrival back in Britain. Delayed flight from Orlando and security scare at Newark aside, our plan ran smoothly! Comet was an angel through all the travelling, from queuing on motorways to crossing The Forth Bridge (although I'm told only I found that part scary!) and he excelled on the ride, teaming up with Charlotte Fleming and Mr Darcy again to arrive just 6 seconds off the exact time required and with an initial heart rate of 38 and a second reading of 41 we took individual gold and incurred no penalties for the team.

After our success in Scotland it would appear our endurance career had peaked. We were delivered a devastating blow just two weeks later, at The Gower Gambol, when I unfortunately parted way with Comet, knocking myself unconscious. Although I continued to ride to the end of the first loop, I was advised to retire as I was concussed and completely unaware of my surroundings. To this day I can't remember anything

from what I presume was just before the fall to getting in the car sobbing my little heart out because I wanted to complete the ride.

The next and last two rides of my first season would be in the shadow of my fall. Three Rivers, although having the potential to be such a fantastic ride, was tainted by my nerves at riding completely alone without even a soul in sight. This was completely my fault, Liz Hinings had been very kind in even letting me start the ride after turning up 3 hours late (of course we had rang ahead to let Liz know of our situation). I'd left his stable door open while he was having an early breakfast and he'd escaped and refused to be caught. Field head collar = catch, no head collar = no catch (if anyone would ever like to buy him, it's best to ask me when I can't catch him!). We finished the ride on a respectable grade two as was the case of the final ride, Red Dragon. I'm not averse to hacking out in the rain but all I can say for the weather that day was that my waterproofs had soaked through. I was lucky to meet a lady doing the same distance at the start of the ride because we didn't see a soul for the rest of it! At times, it was hair-raising especially when Comet got his leg stuck in some unknown source under a puddle turned lake atop the mountain but like every ride, I was pleased to finish and complete successfully.

At the Group awards ceremony, I was completely shocked to win The Pandora, The Starlight and The Mistress Harriet trophies! It was the icing on the cake and the perfect way to end such an amazing season. I'm so proud of my little pony. He'll definitely be having a photo shoot with his trophies (but I have to wait for summer when he looks respectable as opposed to his winter style, imitating Ice Age's 'Manny the Mammoth'.) I would like to thank everyone at Offa's Dyke for being so helpful and friendly to me, I've really felt welcome at all the group rides and other rides where I've seen members! I'm also vowing to help out more this year now I know the work and effort that goes into the rides!

I have upgraded both myself and Comet to open level and have already started the season with The Christmas Cracker Ride and hope that this year can be at least half as successful as last year!



***Karen Jones and Abbi Tennant
enjoying the Christmas Cracker
Ride – January 2011***

My First Endurance Ride- The Christmas Cracker Ride 2011

By Alan Morgan (Angharad's Dad)

Having only owned my six year old mare Maisie for 4 months and having only been riding regularly for 6 months, I class myself as a complete novice. I was a bit dubious when my daughter, Angharad, suggested I try endurance. Angharad has just completed her first season, so I had experience from a crew's perspective but I had a feeling that riding would be something completely different! Eager to start the season after a long white winter, my daughter suggested we try Maisie out at a social ride with her and Comet.

The day of the ride was cold but dry. We rolled up at the venue a little before 9:30am, tacked up quickly and eagerly set off ... Maisie and Comet being a little too eager! We were the first riders to go and there was little chance of anybody not riding a Grand National winner catching us up! The route was superbly marked with shavings and exceptionally easy to follow even at our high speeds! Some of the tracks were slippery where the sun had yet to reach but apparently this was not enough to slow Maisie, who had turned into a two pace horse; walk or gallop.

Our aim had been to complete the ride in a speed of 11kph keeping in a steady trot. Needless to say we were alarmed to find ourselves on the downhill section, nearly at the river at the hour mark! Thankfully, the downhill stretch and the river path allowed us to walk, take in the beautiful scenery and slow our time dramatically! After this, we became wise to Maisie's way of galloping off when in a prolonged trot and shoved her behind the calmer but unfortunately, grumpy Comet. Having left the river path it wasn't long before Maisie was back up in front galloping and the hill before the two way section provided the perfect opportunity for a blast.

All good things come to an end and we finished the ride with two yummy mince pies (one each!) and a lovely purple rosette for Maisie and a pink one for Comet.

I was very pleased with my first ride and thoroughly enjoyed myself and will definitely be attending more in the future. Next time I think we'll try for a bit (or maybe a lot) more control and trot though! We'd like to thank everyone who helped to organise and run the event. It was a fantastic day and a fabulous ride!

Robinhood Ride Sept 2010

Gina Harris

At last we had managed to get to an ER. This year I decided to concentrate on Embers as he is getting on so everything is a bonus now. Decided to try and do 3- 80k ER's in the year. Dukeries, Tally Ho, Robinhood, plus usual CR's.

But with horses nothing goes to plan. Dukeries didn't make it as horse didn't go as well as I wanted at 2x40k at Horseshoe. Perhaps he was too old, but he flew round 2 days at

Cirencester. Tally ho was the same weekend as Ludlow. Husband Paul was working and with the change to a single day at Ludlow I couldn't borrow friends crew.

Embers continued to go really well and faster than usual in 40k at Barbury Castle, so Robinhood ride was on. Paul managed to book Friday off work and we set off for Southwell racecourse mid morning. Having mainly travelled this way on bank holidays we arrived in good time. Lovely stables and our tent pitched in stables car park.

Weather was perfect and the going seemed to be quite a lot of fields so we set off at a good pace. Embers was at the front all the way, but all 8 horses seemed to go at same speed, arriving in the vet gate almost together. Paul was in relaxed mode and wouldn't hurry into vetting, insisting on washing Embers head and me saying pulse 56. Went in as second horse- pulse 48, way too slow. Slow motion seemed to take hold, Paul getting water and we missed our time out by 4 minutes -not good. However Mary Stubbs was just in front. Embers took a liking to her grey so hurried to pass him and stayed just in front and we opted to ride together.

Out the same way as first loop, we took route divergence at the road crossing. Met crews who asked had we passed 3-4 horses in front of us 'no 'seems they gone the wrong way. Horses continued to go well and final part 2nd loop was round cross country course. Mary overtook, but then missed a turn. I shouted and she came back and we had lovely canter round the jumps. Then Embers hit a rock and off came a shoe. Pulled up and picked it up, as we had recently changed way of shoeing and spares would require some adjusting. Mary waited whilst I mounted and then rode on I followed a little slower as Embers has very flat feet and I was worried about bruising. I rode into the vet gate waving the shoe and shouting for farrier. Paul wanted to vet without a shoe on as trot up was very smooth, but I thought he wouldn't look level. Shoe took 8 minutes to be put on seems like forever and we couldn't take any water into that area so we couldn't let him drink or wash down. Went straight to the vetting covered in sweat. Embers pulse was 52 and he was sound.

Got out on time for last loop, Embers was a bit fed up, as I had kept walking around back and forth across start line whilst waiting for exact time so would canter out (must remember not to do that again.)

Route went across same fields as first 2 loops then diverged quickly. Embers was keen, thinking he was on way back to vet gate. Got crewed, me asking Paul how close was I to Mary- only a few minutes and what about horses behind, but we had no idea. Then out round cross country course again cantering. 3rd horse caught me up and Embers will only go his own pace so Dot Matthews passed us on her Warrens's Hill horse (Lesley Dunn's Stud) There was a big loop at far end I could see Mary and Dot, a horse going along each side, but I knew Embers wasn't likely to make ground on horses a good 7 or more years younger.

He went really well until we turned away from race course. He did his 'I can only go slow' bit, then got a move on until it came to going on racecourse needing to walk down one side of hedge which was towards vet gate and then back up the other side away from vet gate. I hate nappy horses but that is what he was trying. He should

know better at his age. Eventually he got on the race course back in the right direction he thought, trotted and cantered down happily to finish and we achieved 3rd place. I really enjoyed the ride. Perfect conditions on the day, and makes an excellent ride for any horse that isn't worried by the 2 way sections. Stayed Saturday night so got to catch up with lots of people. Riding club championships was on Sunday they turned out to very high standard. All brushing for hours before they started. A good weekend and who knows if it will have been Embers last ER? We will have to see what 2011 brings at the age of 20.

GALLANT CAVALIER (Dancer) 1987—2010

By Sue Loveridge

Bred by Mrs Jayne Paget. Sire Golden Cavalier (General Gold/Crystal Gold)
Dam Lahtifah (Dancing King/ Moulton Lucia)



Dancer was half brother to Imad and was renowned for his *showing qualities* and wonderful personality.

His striking looks with 4 beautiful white stockings (you all know the saying leave well alone).

Starting his endurance career with Desiree Davies and schooled by Eric Winters, Dancer could do almost anything and proved himself very successful in the Endurance World.

The luckiest day of my life was when Dancer came to live with us aged 11 and still in his prime. We gained many friends old and new and everyone loved him for his character and athleticism. The steeper the hills the happier he was. He taught me so much about endurance and with his personality and *bossiness* always a perfect gentleman and a thrill to ride (thanks to all who had the pleasure to ride him and help us out in the latter years).

Dancer completed the Man V Horse no less than 7 times and was always placed with the leaders. We had such fun with the chase and Dancer breathing right down the neck of the runner a few feet in front, down the steepest part of the ride still brings me such joy and laughter. He gained best condition and 2nd aged 20 in 2007.

We completed the AHS Marathon twice (well not strictly true cos Dancer almost completed our first attempt on his own making it 3- less said about that time the better). Our third attempt was in the veteran class and Dancer got Best Crabbet Award. He was aged 22!!!

He continued to enjoy his work and still competed right up till the end. Our last ride was just 2 weeks before when we had a lovely ride to the Black Horse in Cranham with a friend. (Coffee and Dancer ate the biscuit) before flying home for the last time down our Helter Skelter route which was his favorite). Those memories I will cherish!

Sadly we had to say Goodbye early in October he was all dressed up in his travelling outfit and nudged me *hurry up* where are we going? as we walked to the end of our field. A final look up to the hills and a beautiful spot to be buried.

Thank you Dancer. A once in a lifetime horse. A true friend.

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Cotswold Farm Park - Offer for Offa's Dyke Group

Adam Henson, owner of the Cotswold Farm Park and TV presenter on Country File has agreed to give a £3 reduction on the normal entry charge of £18 for adults and £12 for under 16's on 2011 Cotswold Farm Park Fun Rides to Offa's Dyke Group members of EGB.

Members should take along their membership card and trophy card to identify them as Offa's Dyke members. You can start any time between 9 am and 1 pm, with no limit on how long you take, provided you are finished by 4 pm. The route is approximately 12 miles (with an alternative shorter route) and 60+ optional jumps to cater for all abilities. Simply come along on the day, there are no advanced bookings. Several of our members already use these and report that they make excellent training rides with good going (some go round twice or even three times!).

2011 dates

January	Sunday 9 th	February	Sunday 6 th
March	Sunday 6 th & 27 th	April	Sunday 17 th
May	Sunday 8 th	June	Sunday 5 th & 26 th
July	Sunday 17 th	August	Sunday 14 th
September	Sunday 4 th & 25 th	October	Sunday 16 th
November	Sunday 6 th & 27 th	December	Sunday 18 th

www.cotswoldfarmpark.co.uk

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