



Offa's Dyke Group
Of Endurance GB
Newsletter – October 2015
www.offasdykegb.co.uk



Chairman's Comment

Hello Members,

Well here we are, the end of the season already – Red Dragon completed, and only the final weekend in a couple of days.

2015 has been a pretty good year for Endurance – the weather has generally been very kind, apart from a couple of notable exceptions (Tresham and Barbary spring to mind), the tracks have been great, and many rides have been oversubscribed. I hope all of you have had a good time, and some success with achieving your goals. I've managed some, but fallen short on others, which is the way things are with Endurance!

My last Chairman's Comment was full of Offa's Dyke successes – and this has continued during the second half of the season – having had 100% of the finishers in the May Kings Forest FEI 3*, further podium successes in the July Kings Forest - Louise Rich in the 3*- and well in touch with those ahead, Andrea Champ likewise in the FEI 2*, and Sharon Parr one place higher in the FEI 1*. At Hanslope, Louise was the first Brit home in the FEI 2*, missing out only to the European Champs runner-up. At the Barbary Castle 80CER, Gill Talbot and Heather Evans led the field home in the first 2 places. At Keysoe Hannah Verkerk was 4th in her first FEI. At the Red Dragon last weekend, Gill was 4th in the 2-day 160km, as the Welsh Team Home International rider, and Belinda Stewart was 8th. In the Little Dragon 80CER, Rachael Cratchley was 4th, Karen Jones 5th, Sue Loveridge 8th, Abbi Tennant 9th and Andrea Champ 10th.

Fiona Griffiths made the very long trip to the European Championships in Slovakia, a report of which is in this newsletter – but the longest trip has to be that made by Charlie Fleming all the way to the Nevada/California borders to compete – and be the only British finisher – in the Tevis Ride, the original and still the greatest of all Endurance. Charlie will be giving a talk to the Group about her experiences.

So our thoughts now are turning to annual awards! Please send requests in to the EGB office for national distance awards – there is a thread on the EGB Forum “General Discussion” page with full details, and don't forget to buy your Awards Dinner tickets.

The following weekend is our own Branch Annual Meeting – Saturday 5th December, at the Star Inn – including hot meal free to all members, and then prizegiving – you must send in your Trophy Forms per the instructions elsewhere in the newsletter, where you will find full details of the evening. Please let anyone on the committee know if you or any others would be interested in standing for election to join the committee!

I look forward to seeing you at the winter schooling lessons, or the BAM – or even both!

Chris.

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Editor's Comments

What an action packed season it's been for many Offa's Dyke members. This newsletter includes articles from Gill Talbot and Chris Wray about the Welsh Team at the Red Dragon ride and also reports from two of our group pleasure rides and details of our last remaining ride for 2015 – the ever popular Xmas Cracker ride. Please get your entries in early to avoid disappointment as spaces are limited.

We also have details of the group Awards Evening Saturday 5 December at the Star Inn, Llansoy. This will be a fun evening catching up with endurance friends (without the horse in tow). We have lots of lovely trophies and rosettes to give away – so please send your completed trophy card to Chris by 1 November to claim your awards. Also book your tickets with Kerri Costello – Buffet meal free for members and AMs, guests £5.

Also in this newsletter is information of several winter events planned by the committee – starting with the Farrier talk 26 November. Book your place with Fenella.

On a personal note, I've had a very quiet time with Prophet this season, competing in only one Endurance ride. We've had a go at Trec and a bit of dressage, but on the whole enjoyed just hacking out with friends. Having competed regularly since 1996, it has made quite a nice change for Robin and I to have lots of free weekends to concentrate on our other hobbies and have more holidays.

We organised the Cranham national ride for the last time this year. Those of you who rode or helped will know what horrendous weather we had on the day. It was such a shame to end on such a soggy note having been involved with this ride for nearly 20 years and being sole organiser for the last few. I'm very grateful for my helpers who managed to keep cheerful despite being absolutely soaked all day. The success rate was also excellent given the conditions for those who were brave enough to turn up and ride. My biggest thank you goes to my husband Robin who gave a huge amount of time to help me organise the ride. I couldn't have done it without him!

Thanks you to everyone who has contributed to this newsletter. We have a nice variety of articles and information this time. Please continue to send me anything you think may be of interest to other members of the group. All contributions very gratefully received!

Carolyn

Offa's Dyke National Rides for 2016

We are currently writing ride proposals for the 2016 national rides – we will have the 2 Forest of Dean rides as usual – March Hares will be on 28th Feb, and we are proposing Bluebell for 24th April though the date will need to fit in with other rides in this area of the UK. Next year we propose to have the Bluebell Group Fun Rides on the same day as the GERs – the combined entries are fewer than March Hares, and it saves on loads of helpers!

Unfortunately Cranham has reached the end of its life due to the various stewardship schemes that the landowners are signed into, but in 2016 Fiona will be upgrading the Bwlch Raid ride to GER for the first time. In the longer term we are looking to extend this ride much further east across the Black Mountains, but this will be for the future!

Chris

Winter Schooling Sessions

Our usual winter schooling sessions have been scheduled with Carole Broad FBHS at Usk College. Usk has a fabulous spacious indoor school, ideal for the cold winter months.

Sessions will be in groups of 4

Dates are-

Sunday 22nd November
Saturday 12th December
Sunday 10th January 2016
Sunday 7th February 2016
Sunday 21st February

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

Nicola- 07968928870 or n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk

You are invited to Offa's Dyke Trophy evening & BAM Saturday 5th December 2015 7pm With buffet and bar

Same great venue as last year
The Star Inn at Llansoy

www.thestarllansoy.co.uk



We've loads of lovely awards, but we need your completed trophy card to reach Chris Wray before 1 November. If you've lost your card you can print one from the OD website, or ask Chris.

We will be having a buffet meal. Drinks can be bought from the bar. Please bring along a raffle prize on the evening. The proceeds from the raffle help to offset the cost of the evening for the group.

Buffet is free to members and associate members, £5 per head for guests, **all tickets must be booked / bought and paid for by 1 November.**

Please complete the form below and return by the 1st November 2015 to:

Kerri Costello, The Beeches, Barbadoes Hill, Tintern, Monmouthshire

NP16 6ST with cheque for any guest attendees payable to Offa's Dyke Group of EGB.

Or if no monies payable, you can confirm via email:kerri.costello@yahoo.co.uk

OFFA'S DYKE GROUP OF ENDURANCE
THE STAR INN, LLANSOY - 5TH DECEMBER 2015.

		Please tick if you require vegetarian option
Name & Membership Number:		
Guest Name:		

Winter/Social Programme News and Events!

Wednesday 26th November: 6.30pm

Hoof and Leg dissection with farrier Nigel Brown Pandy, nr Abergavenny.

Nigel is farrier to several members of the Offa's Dyke Group of Endurance and has arranged a hoof and leg dissection for November 26th at 6.30pm to take place in his forge in Pandy, near Abergavenny.

This is a brilliant opportunity to see what is really going on inside a pretty vital part of your horse!

Numbers are limited and will also be offered to Nigel's own existing customers. Nigel has very kindly offered the first places to members of Offa's Dyke Group of Endurance so we would encourage anyone interested to book a place as soon as possible

To book a place contact: Fenella Lloyd at: fenellal10@gmail.com or by phone on 07549152708.

Thanks to Delwyn Hall for helping to arrange this with Nigel.

Please make sure you bring warm coats if attending this as the forge can be chilly!

Address and Postcode: Bryntirion, Pandy, Abergavenny NP78DR.

Nigel's forge is on the side of the A465. There is a bus stop outside house and Nigel has said that he will put a sign out on night with 'Forge' on it. Other information about Nigel and the forge can be found on

http://www.nrbrownfarriers.co.uk/nigel_brown_awcf.htm

We are also really pleased that there are several other events planned although dates and locations and full event details will be confirmed nearer the time. Keep your eye on the Website for updates and new events!

We are Planning:-

- Veterinary Talk on 'Travelling with your Horse' with Georgina Hirst date, time and location to be confirmed.



Charlie tackling the famous Cougar Rock during her Tevis ride this summer

- **Taking on Tevis!** Talk with Charlie Fleming: we are hoping we may be able to combine this with Georgina's talk.
- **Get Fit and Bendy for the 2016 Season!**: Stretches and Exercises for Riders – workshop style session, probably on a Saturday with qualified, experienced and highly recommended fitness and Pilates instructor. Date, time and location to be confirmed.

- **Nick West – Veterinary Talk and Veterinary Q & A:** As many will know Nick is a local and very experienced Endurance vet- frequently seen at Welsh rides and has participated in Endurance himself. This will be an invaluable opportunity to benefit from Nick's perspective and be able to question him! Date, time and location to be confirmed.
- **Eat like an Athlete! Rider Nutrition Talk:** with a qualified Nutritionist. A really valuable opportunity to get some great advice on rider nutritional needs: we all spend a lot of time and money ensuring our horses have great diets but how about the rider?
Date, time and Location to be confirmed.

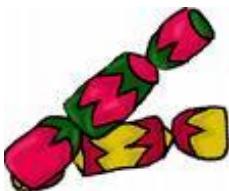
We are really grateful to everyone for agreeing to come along to talk to us and share their expertise and experience and we know how busy everyone is! We have had a brilliant response to all our requests and could fill many more sessions (and hope to in time!) so please make the most of these events and come along and enjoy!!

Team Quest News

In the last newsletter we asked if any members were interested in Team Quest Dressage. Well the result is that it looks like we have some interested people (you know who you are!!) and even possibly a team. There is still room for more budding dressage divas so if anyone else fancies 'Dressage Lite' in 2016, please contact Fenella Lloyd.

I am hoping that we can arrange an informal get-together for those who have expressed an interest in Team Quest before long: it may have to be in a pub somewhere...

Christmas Cracker Ride



Sunday 27th December 2015

Staunton, Forest of Dean



Put the Xmas cracker ride in your diary!

Ride organiser Charlie Fleming aims to add some new loops this year including a shorter one (see website for up to date route and information). She'd love to see some fancy dress again and will provide mulled wine and mince pies as usual. This year part of the proceeds will go to the Welsh Endurance team to help towards the team traveling to Ireland next year.

A lovely social ride on forestry tracks, no gates & no road work

See Website for distance options and entry forms

Fancy Dress optional

Mince pie and mulled wine.

Come and work off those Christmas calories!

Entries to: Nicola Smith 24 Heol y Pentre, Pentyrch, Cardiff, CF15 9QE

Email: nicolajanesmith24@gmail.com Tel: 07885 555349

Closing date 22th December, entries limited to 70, so late entries may only be accepted by checking with Nicola about available space. Last time this ride was full, so please enter early to avoid disappointment!

Cheques payable to Offa's Dyke Group of Endurance GB.

£10.00 members and associate members, £15.00 Temporary day members

Enclose an SAE if you want information posted to you. Otherwise download from Website

If you don't intend to ride and can spare a few hours, please consider being a helper!

Govilon Ride Report from Kerri Costello

Govilon - what a super ride - I really look forward to this one - a great easy to get to venue, lots of lovely green open space then I remember I am taking Baylee whose has a different view to me of lovely green open fields! Oh well tack up quick, let Nicola know we are on our way, set garmin and we are off heading and climbing across fields, through a farm yard, a quick hello to a very elderly lady watching us and the world go by. Start climbing steeply now up towards the tumble and check point one. The tumble is well known to many cyclists - apparently the following weekend a local fire fighter was going to attempt to ride up around the tumble 20 plus times (equivalent of climbing Everest) to raise money for Velindre. Awesome really admire the madness of this guy!!

We continue with nice canter work along the track to the Blorenge with amazing views across to Abergavenny and beyond! Pleased that the weather was good today and could enjoy the scenery. Onwards around the mountain and now both sides of the path we have shoulder high bracken with a few hidden walkers! Then come across one walker who shouts "I need to make sure you can see me and my dog before I move to the side - I was asked to do this by one of your fellow riders earlier" - I knew immediately who must have told him to do this - thank you Gill (?!)

As we start to approach the punch bowl there is quite a gathering of riders ahead. It's looking a little chaotic (apparently an earlier fall with a very loud air jacket going off). We pass a couple of horses and riders at a gate who were planning on staying put and thank a cyclist who is patiently holding the gate open with his collie dog trying to round everyone up!! We slow right down and as we get closer to the riders the gathering becomes a uniformed line and we are off again. Within a few hundred yards we are riding around the beautiful punch bowl - a hidden gem. As we climb up to where the route splits I am hoping that most of the riders decide to take the long route and yes they do - so Baylee and myself can enjoy our own company again and head towards check point two and surprise - I have a crew in the right place and time (I guess Harry must have been navigating this time). A quick slush and then the steep climb up towards the top and Keepers Pond. We trot past three very chatty riders and I think they are probably going to miss the markers on the hill and I'm right - further along I look back and they are cantering in the wrong direction !

We are heading towards home, climb up over the old slag heaps and think of all the old pits which once worked the valleys and then a reminder of the modern day - I hear in the distance motor bikes and they are getting closer! However they were very polite and turned back on themselves. We head towards the single mast before we descend, a quick wave to Celia (hope we all visit her website and check out the photos) and head back down the mountain to the venue. Baylee has done well – foot perfect all the way around – he does enjoy his rides. Switch off garmin at 19.81km - brill thank you Nicola. A very well marked route, excellent venue facilities and really hope that one day a national ride could be organised from here.

Kerri



photo with permission:- Equine Pix Photography - Sarah Lane
welsh-ponies@equinepix.co.uk

Barik turns his hoof to showing.

After the stress of trying for team GB for WEG 2014 (final result reserve).and then later the 1st.only ever vet failure for Barik at an endurance ride Tennant Hall Endurance decided to take a step or two back and have a fun stress free year and concentrate on our 4yr. old Djelanza.

I had thought about the Racehorse to Riding show classes before so now was our opportunity. Firstly find the show, then scan the schedule then ring the organizers—just to make doubly sure---we were entering an Arab after all! Only criteria had to have raced.

Show day approached and panic set in as we realized Abbi's little navy jacket she had as a Young Rider for GB team was far too small, luckily a friend of similar size loaned a hacking jacket. Off we went polished and plaited. There were 7 horses in the class all T.B.s including a 17hh Gold Cup winner, making Barik look very petite. Please bear in mind neither Abbi or Barik have been near a show ring before. By watching the others Abbi deduced she had to walk, trot, canter a fig 8 and extend a bit at the finish. Barik behaved beautifully and changed legs perfectly, but during their show

the ponies were jumping in the adjacent ring and the tannoy was shrieking its head off. To our knowledge Barik had never seen coloured showjumps and certainly not mad ponies and riders hurtling round.

The result 3rd, “lovely horse but didn’t let him out at gallop” was the judges remark----no answer to that. We were mightily pleased.

Abbi and Barik then had a go at clear round jumping over the coloured poles, and then to his utter amazement we watched the fancy dress with the little ponies and their jockeys in their fantastic outfits. A certain change from endurance.

Off next to a larger show, 2 classes this time R to R, and Riding horse, both with larger entries.

The adjacent ring this time hosted the hunter class with off site natural jumps, and on the other side of us the in hand ponies strutted their stuff. Again Barik behaved beautifully, but again the judge wanted a better performance from the pair, she quickly deduced they were novices and said she took that into account as there were competitors who were showing people in the class. This time 4th in R to R and 5th in the riding horse class.

Well we didn’t expect a rosette, we went for a change of scenery and to do something different, we have learned lots, seen some lovely horses and had days out without a care. I daresay if we did it again Abbi might be tempted to practice more! But I don’t think showing will take the place of endurance just yet.

Delwyn

Red Dragon & Home International by Gill Talbot

A week before Red Dragon and Welsh Team Member Hannah Maskell has a lame horse and sadly has to withdraw from the 160km class – Jane Tennant rings me to ask if I would consider riding for Wales as I have an entry in the Red Dragon 160km CER and Sa’da Sekora is slotted into the vacant position.

The Friday before the ride is busy as a team member, but also good fun as we parade around the show ground with the Irish, Scottish & English Teams. Later that evening we welcome the visiting teams to Wales with drinks and canapés followed by wonderful singing from the local Welsh children and a hugely entertaining speech from the local Mayor of Builth Wells.

Saturday morning arrives, the mist is present and it’s cold. There is a good entry of 17 starters in the 160km class this year and we start out in the mist behind the car along the road. Sekora is quite chilled out in this her 2nd CER mass start and quite bemused by some of the antics going on around her. She settles into

her wonderful ground covering trot and we are soon striding our way to the top of the first hill. We canter and trot through the mist to the first CP, take a slush and trot off down the very familiar road...familiar to me that is.... my three companions suddenly veer off to the right, up the hill and away.... I am slightly behind them at this point so a bit bemused as I was not aware of a route change. As I get to the right turn I realise the markers are still taking me to the left so I trot on and shout at the top of my voice that they are going in the wrong direction!

The mist comes and goes which obscures the scenery but the turf rides extremely well, bit slick in places but far less mud around than in previous years. We are soon heading into the first vetgate and riding a section of route completely new to me.

Rob is waiting with a slush and bucket, we check the pulse as I dismount, dropping nicely and settling well at 59 bpm so we pull off the saddle and head toward the vetting area....we are about to present in first place.....our 'Team' is hovering around us, ready to offer assistance if needed.... It is at this point I realise the vetting is to take place in a cow shed – now Sekora can be tense about strange surroundings, especially if they include cows, but before I can consider the implications, Rob has presented us... I try to hover by the doorway, but Sarah Coombs is having none of it, "all the way in Gill please"... I watch Sekora's head start to raise, her nostrils flare and her eyes widen as she enters the gloom of the 'shed' - she seems OK, her head starts to lower and her breathing is good and regular.... then the horse in the next lane skids towards us on the concrete floor.... Sekora flinches, her body stretches upward to its full 15'3" and I watch the pulse in her neck strengthen...her breaths become dragon like..."sorry Gill, it's 66" Rob rushes off to get rugs and a pulse monitor. I try to keep her near to the doorway as I know there is nothing more I can do to lower her pulse other than let her 'see' others vetting without incident in the shed and keep her warm. My riding companions all start to present so we soon have lots of horses entering and leaving the shed, trotting up and down. We can't take a risk and present her again too quickly, I have to be sure she is happy – otherwise our ride will be over. We hover around, let her see and smell the shed, listen to the echo of the horses hooves and after 6 minutes we present again..... '52 / 44' and a sound trot up.

We head to the crew area to feed her and get ready for the Begwyn loop! I have been told by John Hudson this is a most beautiful area to ride and the views will blow me away, so I'm really looking forward to it.

Sekora eats, drinks and stakes in text book fashion and we are soon heading out of the vetgate on our own. As we head up the hill out of Painscastle the mist gets thicker and by the time we arrive at the first crew spot the mist drops and I really cannot see where I am going – so much for the views! Rob tells me to keep left and ‘if’ I could have seen the markers, they are heading off up the slight hill and to the left. We head out into the fog and we are soon lost. More by luck than judgement we find markers and eventually hear voices ahead and the metal ‘clunk’ of a gate. So pleased to find Kathy Carr and Fiona Kirk at this gate and enjoy Kathy’s company round the steep Begwyn route, out of the fog and back into the vetgate.

I decide not to present immediately, I want Sekora to see the shed again. I check my pulse monitor before dismounting and it’s dead – or Sekora is - so we call for help from the Welsh Team, pull off her tack with a good pulse of 56 and wander her over to the vetting area where I walk her round and let her look at the cow shed again. She is not interested, her head is low and her heart rate is dropping so after 5 minutes we present 48 / 44 and a sound trot up.

The ‘spare’ pulse monitor fitted we set off for home. Our journey is interspersed with 80km CER riders. Sekora happily leads and chases them along the tops of the hills. We lose our companions as we drop down to Aberedew, attack the long climb back up the hill, face the fear of the snapping, snarling, chained up sheep dogs and enjoy the wonderful canter along the top, back down the hill and home into the overnight hold in 5th position. Day one accomplished.

Day two soon arrives. Sekora is trotted up sound and tacked up. We make our way down to the start, a very different start to yesterday as we ride alone into the mist. By the time we reach the top of the first hill, the sun is shining and this sets the standard for the rest of the day. Sekora is quite chirpy and happy to bowl along as we ride alone through the crew spots to be greeted and crewed by Rob, the Irish and the Scotts. Lots of encouragement from everyone we meet along the way.

Into the 1st vetgate I once again want caution, just in case, so we allow Sekora time and let her look at the cow shed again! Not a problem today 56 / 52 a

sound trot up and we are quickly through and soon cantering back out of the vetgate still holding our 5th position.

We ride the Begwyn loop alone, take in the superb, breathtaking views (no fog today!) stop for a while and listen intently silence, nothing but silence – what a magnificent place to be alone with your horse. I have a quiet word with Pat and tell her how much she would like this mare. Sekora happily canters and trots back into the vetgate - she is now fully aware of where we are going. No need to hesitate with the presentation, tack off and straight in 56/52 a sound trot up we head into the hold area and our Irish friends wander over and offer to hold Sekora and help Rob with the water containers. We have to re-present 15 minutes before exit from this last vetgate, this done we tack up and to the cheers and encouragement from the Irish and Scotts we head for home. Sekora is homeward bound – and knows it! She carries me forward, quite happy with just me for company.

As we trot along to the last crew spot at CP4 the Scottish contingent shout encouragement, the Irish throw water on us, Rob dashes back to the venue. Up the last steep hill, past the gnashing teeth of the chained sheep dogs for the last time, we canter over the top and look down on the Show Ground. Sekora does her best to drain the dew ponds before powering down the hill. We shout sincere thanks to the couple sitting there and once back on the road Sekora tries to dictate the pace back to the venue – she is flying, yes, she definitely knows home is very close now!



As we enter the showground many of the Welsh Team line the finish, they shout, whoop and cheer (as do the Scottish crews out on the road)....Sekora power trots across the line – I think she really enjoyed that finish!

(photo Rob Talbot)

As we head to the crew area we are surrounded by our fellow team members and friends, they offer water, bring rugs and it really feels like a party. Back at the car I find a small cut on Sekora's heel, slight pressure shows she is feeling it, so we decide to get her into the final vetting quickly before she decides it actually hurts. We present to vet, her pulse is taken - 44 – we trot, but we are asked to trot again, I bite my lip, hear the Welsh supporters all standing anxiously at the far end of the trot up start to sigh and shuffle..... I don't look at them as I ask Sekora to trot again... I listen to the footfalls and she definitely sounds OK..... the 3 vets scribble on their scraps of paper and hand them to Liz Hining as Georgina Hirst completes Sekora's metabolic check – all is good - Liz steps forward and tells me Sekora has passed the trot up! – Jane Tennant raises her arms, the Welsh Team and friends cheer and clap – what a wonderful feeling – such a relief. What a special and talented mare she really is - Sekora has completed the 160km Red Dragon in 4th place and completed the 2nd day entirely on her own from start to finish. What a tough cookie she is proving to be.

The 'Team' congratulate us and send for the Welsh winner of the Red Dragon 160km ride, Beth Langley, then produce some 'fiz' and chocolate cake to celebrate the Welsh Team's 1st and 4th positions! Perfect!

(photo Alex Tennant)



Later that evening the Home International results are announced and rosettes handed out – Wales are the Winners of the 2015 Home International AND the Celtic Challenge! What a result for the Home Team! .. and of course Rob, Sa'da Sekora & I were very proud to have been a part of it!



(photo Bethan Jones)

Huge thanks to my husband and crew Rob, Karen & John Jones, Gina Harris, the Irish & Scottish crews for all their crewing support and of course, the Welsh Team of wonderful people who allowed us to join them and supported us at Builth Wells.

Gillian Talbot & Sa'da Sekora

Bwlch Raid ride by organiser Fiona Griffiths

It was very foggy, very foggy when I arrived to set up the venue at 8am. You couldn't see across the venue field, but as the stewards and helpers arrived it started to burn off. Briefing and everyone went off to their appointed places. We thought Ray net hadn't arrived, but they just hadn't thought to come to the field and tell us. So all set to start. First rider was ready to go by $\frac{1}{4}$ to but I had lost Pam who was doing the gate on to the hill, found and put in place in time.

There were only 37 riders but everyone had a great time, quite a few on the longer route, who did the lollipop got lost. The farmer, had cut the fern covering all the markers. But they all got home safe. The hill road very well the rolling grassy canters making up for the long pull up and the slow walk down. Celia got some fantastic pictures.

After expenses we will have made a profit, which will be shared with our RDA group, so thank you everyone for coming. Especially as we had a late change of date.

I would like to thank Belinda for coming to my aid and helping (doing most of it) mark the route. Also for supporting me to make this a national ride next year, we are hoping for the 17/18 Sept 2016. A two day ride, roll on 2016. Thank you to all my helpers we couldn't do it without you.

Hereford Equestrian Website - Fun Ride Feedback

I am sure many, if not most of you, occasionally visit this site for a variety of reasons. It is invaluable for spare weekends as the 'What's On' is very comprehensive these days, & almost all Fun Rides in Hereford, plus the surrounding areas, are listed, along with anything else one might fancy doing equestrian-wise.

The Fun Ride listings are particularly important to us, in my opinion, as FRs provide such excellent training for Endurance. However, some are much better than others, & few seem to be up to the distance advertised, which is frustrating when planning serious training!

I know the lady who created & runs the Hereford Equestrian website - I have lessons with Sally - & I have asked her for a way to report 'Feedback' about the Fun Rides she lists. Eureka! She has kindly added a specific topic category to her (rather under used) forum page at:

<http://www.herefordequestrian.co.uk/collecting-ring/forum/#bn-forum-1-1-2302797333/10424/show>

(Or Just google 'Hereford Equestrian' & navigate to the forum pages).

I would like to suggest that anyone who has attended a Fun Ride this year should start a topic (named as that FR) & say what it was like - distance as advertised, type of going, safety aspects, etc. I am constantly stunned at the lack of H&S at many FRs I attend.

This would set up a good system for next year & beyond to help us all, plus we might encourage more non-endurance riders to consider entering EGB Fun Rides by giving them write ups as well! We may not provide jumps, but we do cover some spectacular countryside.

Heather

A slightly different perspective on the Home International & Celtic Challenge-Chris Wray

This year it was Wales' turn to be hosts, so the competition was held at the Red Dragon ride last weekend. Some months ago I had offered my services to Jane Tennant, the Welsh Chef d'Equipe, in any capacity she wanted me (apart from bringing a horse!), and she asked me to be her deputy. I spent the final 2 weeks before the event preparing loads of crewing maps, and timecharts for all the different riders (the competitions covered several different classes and many riders had different speed parameters to aim for).

On the Friday, first we had the Team Chefs meeting – it was news to Jane and I, but apparently the host nation did the competition results! So my weekend just got busier! Jane had already asked me to make sure each rider and their crew were happy with all the information provided, they understood the speed parameters (though the primary objective was to finish successfully), and to answer any queries. Then the team were vetting together at 2:10, and the Teams Parade was at 3:30 – at which I was to raise the Welsh Flag. Then at 5pm, the Welsh Team hosted a welcome and bib presentation ceremony – I was allocated to welcome everyone as they arrived, and after the speeches, to give out all the bibs as each rider was clapped to the front of the room. Then the ride briefing from the Ride organising team, and finally I could go home to feed my horses and myself!

Saturday dawned in thick mist, and I arrived in Builth at 9am, to see off (and record start times) of all the Graded riders in the Welsh team. The CER riders had started earlier, and Jane and our Chair Charlie Fleming were following them round the route and supporting them. After they had all started, I went into the ride office and started work on an HI/CC results spreadsheet to list all the teams' riders, horses, classes, speed parameters etc.. And add formulae to calculate the results as I entered in the riding times and finishing pulses (Graded classes only) as the completed vet sheets were passed to me from the TS.

I went out at lunchtime, to a lovely sunny day, and monitor the finishing of all the Graded riders, to ensure we didn't get any penalties for going faster than the speed parameters; and then to help with the vetting, to try and help keep pulses at 48bpm or less (there were penalties for higher). I started to become a bit disappointed at the results I was seeing – the HI team was not managing to make the optimum speed (13kph - it was 12kph for the CC), and some horses were getting pulses into the 50s, and one was at 60 (penalties for over 48). I must be so fortunate to myself have

horses that fly round, give me pulses in the 30s or low 40s! Anyway, after all the GER riders in our team had vetted, I went back up to the ride office and started processing vetsheets as the TS was completing them. As I was entering the times and pulses of the other teams into the spreadsheet it became apparent to me that the other teams seemed to be struggling even more than the Welsh team to make the speed and pulse parameters! I started to feel pretty good, though of course so much depends on the CER riders – the winners are the team that has the most horses round, and the 1st tie-breaker is the furthest distance completed. Then came the news that our Home International 80CER rider had been eliminated slightly lame at VG2... Day 1 ended with a Chef's meeting, where I clarified some aspects of the scoring, and I headed home in the knowledge that all was to play for on Day2, with nearly all the teams running their Novice riders on Day 2 (ours had competed on Day 1) and the finish of the 2-day 160s and 84s.

Overnight, the HI was led by England and Ireland as Wales and Scotland had both had their 80CER horses eliminated, and in the CC Ireland was in 4th having had their 80CER eliminated but the other 3 teams were still at full strength.

Sunday dawned in even thicker mist, which took longer to clear than the day before, but the riding on the tops was reported to be again absolutely wonderful, with amazing views. The weather was perfect – clear and sunny with mid-teens temperatures. I arrived in Builth to see off the GER riders, impress upon them that successful completion was the primary objective, and note their starting times. I was told that 2 England HI team horses had not been presented for vetting, along with a Scottish CC team horse – if true this would drop England to 4th and leave Ireland leading, and in the CC the leaders would then be Wales and Cornwall..... But I would have to wait for vet sheets!

The Welsh team GER riders all finished with smiles on their faces, having had a lovely day – no speed penalties and pulse penalties similar to the day before. So I went back to complete the results as they flowed in. It was getting very exciting! I managed to complete all the Graded vetsheets, then had to go in search of evidence of the 3 missing ones – first I got their bib numbers from the ride secretary, then I had the vetsheets down at the vetting barn checked (not there), then I checked with Raynet if those bib numbers had been out on course – and they had not been.

So with the 160CERs still out there, but Raynet calling out progress of each of them through the checkpoints, I looked through the results so far. For Wales, all the GERS

had passed, so it was just the 80CER eliminated. For England, it had not been a good day – their 120km horse and a 84km horse had not been presented for vetting, and their novice horse had been eliminated – 3 out. Scotland, like Wales, had lost their 80CER horse, but looking at the 2nd tie-breaker it was apparent that Wales had a couple of hours less riding time, and 40 mins penalties against Scotland’s 1:05. Ireland had had their 120km horse eliminated, so had dropped behind Wales and Scotland on distance completed (the 1st tie-breaker). But any of Wales, Scotland and Ireland could win, depending on the 160CER results!

While we waited for the 160CERs, in the CC Scotland had lost both their 2-day 84GER riders and thus were 4th, Ireland had lost their 80CER rider and were 3rd, but both Cornwall and Wales still had complete teams, though I could see that the 2nd tie-breaker (penalties) would resolve in Wales’ favour – neither had any time penalties, but Wales had 6 pulse penalties against Cornwall’s 17.... However Ireland could still win if they completed the 160CER and Cornwall and Wales did not!!

In the ride office, the Raynet reports were getting very exciting – Beth Langley (Wales CC rider) was being reported with a few minutes lead, only to be caught several times by Annie Joppe (Cornwall CC rider) and Nicky Sherry.... Katie Bedwin (not in the HI/CC) was almost in touch with them, and Gill Talbot (Wales HI rider) was a little further back.... Still going but unlikely to catch Gill were Sally Toye (England HI), Francis Bakker and Fiona Kirk (the Scotland riders) and riding together a little further back were the Ireland duo of Helen McFarland and Belinda Stewart.

At the finish, Beth appeared first, alone, and then all the others without changing positions – and into final vetting – Beth and Tissy were passed, cue big cheer, but the day just got a lot worse for England – Annie Joppe and Sally Toye’s horses both failed final vetting, as also sadly did Fiona Kirk. As ever, the final class home – the 160CER – had made the greatest impact on the results.

Now the difficult bit – do not betray any hint of how I am feeling – the Team Chef’s meeting – we go through the results - each team Chef already had a fairly good idea of where their team stood, but they were pleased to see all the detail, and to also discuss the individual prizes (novice and junior – scored on Performance Formula) and some outstanding performances. Now there are 6 of us who cannot betray any emotion until the results are announced in the prizegiving!

The final Home International results saw Wales and Scotland both with 5 horses home, both having lost the 80CER – but Wales not only had a faster riding time and fewer penalties on the GER classes, but also Gill had finished the 160CER ahead of Francis – win to Wales, with Scotland 2nd. Ireland were 3rd, having lost their 120km, no moving up by 160CER failures in the teams ahead. England were disappointed to be relinquishing the trophy won in Scotland last year, but had only managed 2 finishers. The best Junior was Alicia Reeves from England, and the best Novice was Emily Redman from Wales.

The final Celtic Challenge result had Wales at the top – the only team to have 6 horses round, with Ireland second with the 120km failure. Cornwall were 3rd, dropping behind Ireland at the 160CER final vetting, and Scotland 4th, with 3 horses finishing. The best Junior was Emily Cooke from Wales, and the best Novice was Lindsey Walters also from Wales.

The prizegiving was very well attended, and extremely noisy! Our sponsor, AloeRide, gave out all the prizes, and each team Chef gave a very heartfelt speech about the competition, their team, and picked a specific individual who had contributed most – for the Margaret Montgomerie awards. All the teams then joined the huge buffet dinner in the bar!

So, on to Ireland for 2016 – Downpatrick racecourse and the St. Patrick's Coast Ride!

Chris

Sad News

It is with sadness we report the death of a former member of Offas Dyke Endurance Group. Jenny Higham of Woolhope. Hfds. Passed away Sept 8th aged 74years. Jenny was an active member of O/D in the early years, enjoying pleasure rides, graded rides and generally helping out when not riding

Jenny was for many years a teacher at Hereford Cathedral Prep school, and was involved with the Woolhope community at many levels.
A service of remembrance was held in Hereford Cathedral.

Advertisements

Does anyone have any tack/rugs/riding wear they want to find a good home for?

Monmouth based equine charity, SWHP, raises an amazing amount of cash each year from the sale of equine items. This money is a really valuable source of income and Vikki who runs the tack sales (on a voluntary basis) is always looking for more items to sell.

If you would like to donate anything please let me know and I can arrange to collect them or you could bring them along to the BAM.

Many thanks

Karen Jones 01873 890771/karenjones649@googlemail.com

For Sale



Stable Rug 6'3 Brown Blue check. Little used, Excellent cond. £20

Wool rug 6'6 Dark blue. Little used £15

Exercise rug. 56" Wool - Blue, Red, Green stripe. New £15

Head collar and lead rope. Full size. Red, White, Blue. New £15

Fly mask. Roma. New £5

Cooler Rug 5'9 (not pictured). White/Blue/Red stripes. £10

All can be collected from the BAM 5 December or posted at cost

Carolyn Edwards 01452 857352 carolyn@edwardsglos.fsnet.co.uk

Dates for your diary

Schooling Lesson	Sunday 22 nd November
Hoof & Leg Dissection	Wednesday 26 th November
BAM & Awards Evening	Saturday 5 th December
Schooling Lesson	Saturday 12 th December
Xmas fun ride	Sunday 27 th December
Schooling Lesson	Sunday 10 th January 2016
Schooling Lesson	Sunday 7 th February 2016
Schooling Lesson	Sunday 21 st February

More information on the website ‘rides & events’ page

Web site: www.offasdykeegb.co.uk

HELP!

With the rising cost of printing and postage it would be a great saving for the group if more people could receive the newsletter by email PDF or download it from the Website. If you'd like to try, please email me. If you try and don't like it you can always change back to a paper copy at any time.