



Offa's Dyke Group of Endurance GB

# Newsletter- October 2018

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



## Chairman's Comments

Well we have now come to the end of the season – ALMOST! Please come to Sunday's Talybont Ride, Fiona is looking forward to welcoming us all – details in this newsletter! After that we just have our Branch Annual Meeting and Trophy Night – more on that later! This has certainly been a year of parts – snow and ice wiped out pretty much all of March, rain and more rain in April – but what a truly amazing summer! I hope you all made the best of it and had many happy hours on horseback, and enjoying EGB events! After a very late start, I managed to fit in 5 competitions with Peponi, and even got Zawadi (now 25yo, mother of my babies) fit enough for 36km at Red Dragon! Since I last wrote, Offa's Dyke members have continued with amazing achievements! Huge congratulations to the Inter-Regionals team (joint team with De Cymru Group) excellently led by Jane Tennant and Delwyn Hall to 2nd PLACE. This was principally through very sensible team riding to get all 12 horses home and passed. Belinda Stewart was 3rd in the 80CER on Penny. Other individual noteworthy results include: Summer King Forest: Sunday's 1\* was won by Louise Rich on Czamak, and completing Saturday's were Pam James, Andrea Champ, and Steph Cole on another of Andrea's horses. Alex Tennant had a great ride to a Grade 1 in the 2-day 160GER on Watibou Coutillas. At Euston Park, at the early August weekend, Fiona Griffiths on Echo was 9th in the 2\*, and Louise Rich 6th in the 1\* on Cziko. At the big mid-August event, in the 3\* 20th & 21st at 15.0kph were Sarah Rogerson on Rubyn and mum Mary Stubbs on Sachiya; in the 2\* there were completions for Fiona Griffiths on Balishla, and Andrea Champ on Lantana; and in the 1\* for Rachael Cratchley on Open T'Offers.

The Scottish Championships (166CER) at Brodie Castle was won by Belinda Stewart on Penny, and Piers Geddes was successful in the 2-day 83GER. Our teams were less successful – Scotland won both competitions... though Wales did win the Turnout Award! At Red Dragon, Belinda Stewart was 4th in the 2-day 160kmCER – you might see that Belinda has featured rather a lot – good luck to her in the EGB Senior and Supreme Championships next month! The final weekend of the year at Royalties (while I was sunning myself at the Lac de Madine) saw a deluge, but despite that Alex Tennant on Inferno won the 3-day 173CER, Sarah Rogerson and Rubyn were 2nd in the 2\*, and Fiona Griffiths and Balishla won the 1\*. While all that was going on, there were several Group events taking place – there was the regular monthly Schooling Lessons – thanks to Nicola Davies for organising, and Lesley Dunn for the venue; and there was the July Wye Valley ride on a beautiful day, organised by Sarah Rogerson.

As mentioned above, there is the Talybont Ride this Sunday organised by Fiona Griffiths, the Schooling Lessons have now moved indoors to Usk (thanks Nicola), and the BAM is on 1st December. The new season kicks off on the 30th December with the Christmas Ride, organised by Charlie Fleming. Could I please urge you all to participate in the BAM and Trophy Night!! Please get your Trophy Cards – or at least an email to me – to be considered for the huge range of trophies and rosettes to be given out – and come for the evening and get those which you win! I need trophy cards by 10<sup>th</sup> November. Please also consider joining the committee – it is not at all onerous, and we would like some fresh ideas! Please contact any of us on the committee (contact details on the committee page) to ask about what it would involve or to express an interest! I hope this will be my final “Chairman’s Comments” - I have completed my usual 3 year term, and stayed on a further year, so I am hoping to be let out for good behaviour! I have enjoyed my time as Chair very much, but it is time for a fresh approach! Good luck to all of you for the EGB Annual Awards, and the Group Trophies and Rosettes!

***Chris Wray***

## **2019 Graded Rides**

Those of you who have been looking at the draft 2019 Rides Schedule on the EGB website will have noticed that we have not put in a March Hares ride next year – this is because we have had such poor luck with the weather over the last 3 or 4 years, and we have had several cancellations – one of which was on the morning of the ride when all the competitors were already on the road... Instead you will have a new ride to go to on the same weekend – it is called the Daffodil Ride, is near Carmarthen, and is being organised by Jane Tennant and Lise Cooke. The Talybont Ride is going GER !! Fiona will be running next year’s ride in late March (instead of October), so this will be the second new ride close to our Group. We plan to run the Bluebell Ride as usual, being organised next year by Mary Stubbs and Charlie Fleming – the date a little uncertain at present, but it should be late April or early May. And we do plan to run a second ride in the Forest of Dean – this will be called the Autumn Belle, will be in mid-September, and organised by Andrea Champ. And there will be the usual Cwm Sirhowi and summer Wentwood Rides from De Cymru Group; Pembrey and Pen Ddol Y Gader from South and West Wales Group; Trawsgoed and Red Dragon from Mid & North Wales Group; Barbary Castle from the Cotswold Group, Cannock Chase and Cirencester from the Heart of England Group, and many more just a little further afield – loads to look forward to!

## Editor's Comments

Another season has flown by in record time! Since our last newsletter we have had a fairly quiet time as a group with only Wye Valley fun ride taking place, the summer schooling lessons and the first of the winter schooling lessons at Usk College. Wye Valley, kindly organised by Sarah Rogerson with the support of her family took place on a lovely sunny day and was a super ride!

As you can see from the Chairman's report our group has had some phenomenal results this year but I would also like to add our Chairman, Chris Wray (who's too modest to say) has had some pretty impressive results himself this year with Peponi; 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 166km CER at Broadie Castle and recently finishing 10<sup>th</sup> in the 160km FEI\*\*\* at Madine, France.

In the next few months we have lots taking place; Charlie Fleming has kindly agreed to run the Christmas Cracker fun ride again, scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> December, there's the usual monthly schooling sessions with Carole Broad at Usk College and in the new year we have Maryland Fun Ride which is kindly going to be run by Abbi Tennant in 2019 as I'm busy in University doing my PGCE.

I hope to see lots of you at our BAM and awards evening on the 1<sup>st</sup> December in Monmouth. Remember to send in your trophy cards to Chris Wray by 10<sup>th</sup> November. We have lots of lovely rosettes and trophies to be won!

Lastly, thank you to all those that sent me in reports and don't forget to send me some ready for our January newsletter.

*Nicola Davies*

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

**Christmas Cracker Fun Ride**

**@ Staunton, Forest of Dean**

**Sunday 30th December**

Please get in touch with Donna if you can spare a few hours.

Donna- 07762 072245 or [donna.bontej@btinternet.com](mailto:donna.bontej@btinternet.com)

*Remember without helpers, rides can't run!*

# Committee Contacts

## **Chair and Trophy Secretary**

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Nicola Davies

### **Events Organiser**

Nicola Davies

### **Membership Secretary & Newsletter**

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## **Other Roles**

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### **Website**

Cecilia Lindberg

Email: ACL@cecilialindberg.co.uk

Caroline MacBrayne

# Please apply for the 2018 Trophies!



A list of the trophies is available from: <https://www.egboffasdyke.co.uk/forms> and the Trophy Card can be found on the last page of the newsletter. Trophy cards can be mailed, or scanned and emailed !! It is really easy to do!

You only need to fill in the trophy card if you are claiming for Group rides or for helping (note, helping is necessary for several trophies) - both of which need to be confirmed by Ride Organiser signature on the trophy card.

If you are not claiming for helping or Group rides, all you need to do is email me your horse(s)'s EGB registration number - but I will only consider people from whom I get an email or a completed trophy card. You have to be in it to win it!!

Those who apply I will consider for all trophies except a few for which you **MUST** confirm eligibility (I don't have the life history of your horses!) - these are listed in the top right corner of the trophy card - e.g. the breed trophies/rosettes, and others.

Good luck, you may get a big surprise at the BAM !!

**Trophy cards to returned to-**  
Chris Wray,  
Pentrewheeler Farm,  
Cwmcarvan,  
Nr Monmouth,  
Gwent,  
NP25 4PL

**By 10<sup>th</sup> November**

# Barbury Castle Ride

Unfortunately the venue for Barbury Castle had had to change this year from the cross country site to a field nearby, kindly donated by a farmer. This is a great pity as the previous venue allowed camping and corralling and ran as a 2 day event while this years was not able to provide this and was a 1 day only- but at least it took place .The plus side was that my horse always went a bit mad in the old vetting area- and I have heard other riders experiencing the same effect on their horses- whereas at the new one all was calm!

The venue is easy to get to from the M5, more or less a straight road through Cirencester to Marlborough. The venue was spacious, well laid out with not too much walking from lorry to vet etc and all flat with everyone being very helpful even though they were getting used to new venue too. I did the 42k and after a bit of road work on a quiet lane we were back on what was the old route. This is mostly bridleway, Sustrans path and some open fields and borders as well as the margins of the racetracks. The route was well marked and there are some great cantering opportunities on the flat and when climbing up to the Ridgeway. Even though it was wet, windy and rainy the ground was good and most of the gates were manned until the top section but they are all proper horse friendly ones BUT.... About halfway round, I came to one which looked a bit narrow and opened toward us- I went through but then the wind blew the gate onto Nettys backside which made her jump and run through with my leg colliding with the gate post, me ending up on the floor gazing skyward and my stirrup leather resting on the gate latch- with no other riders around. After I got my breath, readjusted the saddle and stirrups I got back on to complete the ride, very narrowly missing out on a Grade 1 and drove back home. It does make you ponder that there is a very fine line between coming off and being OK or not, especially when I am usually crewless.

Anyway I lived to tell the tale and enjoyed the ride and would recommend it to anyone that has not done it .It's been a funny season with highs and lows. Being invited to be part of the Offas Dyke team at Cirencester was great, Pembrey was great but we've also had issues with intermittent lameness, that is going to be fully investigated soon, which meant missing out on Day 2 of Golden Horseshoe and not doing Red Dragon . Have an enjoyable Winter, if such a thing is possible, and hopefully be back in March fingers crossed.

***Maureen Langham***

# Christmas Cracker Ride

Sunday 30th December 2018

Staunton, Forest of Dean



**A lovely social ride on forestry tracks, no gates and no road work. Route options of approximately 12km and 25km.**

Mince pie and mulled wine at the finish.

Come and work off those Christmas calories!

Entries to:

Donna Williams,  
8 Hillcrest,  
Cross Ash,  
Abergavenny,  
Monmouthshire,  
NP7 8PF

**Email:** [donna.bontej@btinternet.com](mailto:donna.bontej@btinternet.com)

**Tel:** 07762 072245

**Closing date:** 22nd December, entries limited to 70, so late entries may only be accepted by checking with Donna about available space

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 can spare a few hours to help at the ride please get in touch with Donna (contact details above)**

# My 2018 season!

I've had a brilliant first season as an EGB member! Myself and my pony Mrs Tiggywinkle (Tiggy) have completed 7 Graded rides this season, with 5 of those being Grade 1s!

Our first ride of the season was supposed to be March Hares but unfortunately the ride was called off due to the bad weather! Our first ride of the season was the 32km at Wentwood in Spring. After all the bad weather, whether it was snow or just lots of rain it was great to get going! We've become quite familiar with Wentwood as we often box up there for a quick ride so Tiggy doesn't always find it quite as exciting as new places! I was surprised at how fast we managed to go, as when we've done this ride as a PR we've sometimes found it hard to reach 10kmph, so finishing the 32km at 12kmph was amazing! Tiggy and I had a brilliant time as we got our first Grade 1 at our first ride of the season!

About a month later we headed off to Pembrey to do the 30km. We rode on the Saturday so the sun was out in full force! Tiggy even had a slightly sunburnt bottom after the recent sunny weather so that was noted on the vet sheet! It was the second time that we had been on the beach so I knew that Tiggy should hold it together when faced with so much open space! The path down to the beach was a bit unnerving as it was quite and steep and Tiggy could sense that the sand was moving under her feet. However, we made it onto the beach in one piece and had lots of fun cantering up and down the beach! We'd been going so well that when we finished my mum and dad weren't at the trailer as they'd decided to go and get an ice cream. They arrived around 15 minutes after I'd finished but thankfully all of the crewing stuff was either in the trailer or on the back of the pickup so I could sort Tiggy out ready for the vetting! Her sunburnt bum wasn't any worse and her heartrate was fab so we again got a Grade 1.



Tiggy at Pembrey, photo credit: Nicky Rhodes Photography

The next weekend we went to Bluebell and did the 33km ride. It was significantly colder than the previous weekend so crewing wasn't as much fun for mum and dad! I however had another brilliant ride! I rode most of the route with another young rider, Ella Green, so it was great to have some company! I usually ride on my own which is good but occasionally it's nice to have some company for both myself and Tiggy! Another good heart rate and speed resulted in another Grade 1 which felt great.

It was nearly three months before our next ride due to me having AS exams to focus on so Tiggy had to take a back seat! After this 'pause', Cirencester Park was our fourth ride of the season but this time we were doing our first 40km! We were also part of the Offa's Dyke and De Cymru Inter-regional team so our aim was to complete the ride in one piece! It was quite a hot day and as Tiggy is a "cobby" type the hot weather doesn't practically work for us! In all honesty she wasn't as fit as she really needed to be, as I hadn't done enough with her in May/June and she was a bit fat. Tiggy felt really good throughout the ride but getting her heart rate down at the end wasn't as easy as usual! Tiggy's heart rate was 50 at the final vetting, so we had a Grade 3. We were really happy with this as it was our first 40km and the weather wasn't the best for us. The team also did really well as everyone finished and we came second, so that was an added bonus! Cirencester was also good preparation for the Pony Club Endurance Championships as this was also going to be a 40km ride.

Two weeks later we were back at Wentwood but decided to do the 40km. The weather wasn't exactly the best, heavy rain isn't the most fun! Tiggy felt fitter but after about 32km she started to feel a bit miserable and didn't feel enthusiastic. I think the combination of the weather and having not seen any other horses for a long time had taken its toll on Tiggy's mind. She needs to be happy in her head in order for her to function properly as a pony mare! Thankfully as I was coming to the end of the loop with the 40km, we caught up with Nicola Davies and Pie. We rode with them for the remainder of the ride, so got round in one piece again! After Tiggy had settled down at the venue she decided to have a wee and then seemed a lot happier in herself. Another Grade 1 at the end with a great heart rate and a speed of 10.1kmph.

Three weeks and a DofE expedition to the Lake District later we were off to Euston Park for the Pony Club Championships! We had qualified for Intermediate level which was 40km with a vet gate after 20km. We arrived the day before and it took around 5 hours to get there from home. The ride itself was a great experience, well marked route (almost no need for my map!) and very flat! I don't think I've ever ridden somewhere so flat before, Cirencester Park was probably the flattest of the rides I'd done. We completed with a speed of 12.6kmph and we had trotted the majority of the ride. On our first loop we managed to miss my mum and dad at every crewpoint as we were going faster than they expected; thankfully on the second loop they managed to meet us! However Tiggy being Tiggy, she wasn't impressed by the vetting area. The forest of

posts and line making up the trot up lanes, combined with flags at the end, was all a bit too exciting for her. She was in season as well which usually adds a few to her heart rate! Therefore, she finished on a heart rate of 56 which was a shame because she had gone so well, but really I was happy to get a completion and we ended up coming third in our class. We stayed an extra night as the journey home seemed a bit too much to do after the ride. It was a great experience to ride at an FEI venue, we all learnt lots and we know for next time to probably turn Tiggy away from the scary trot up lanes when vetting!

Our final ride of the season was Red Dragon. We had qualified for the Novice Championship, but decided that 48km up a Welsh Mountain was maybe a bit too much! After some advice, we decided that 36km seemed right! It was a great ride as it wasn't too hot or too wet so made the uphill sections almost pleasant! We started just before a large group of



Red Dragon, photo credit: David Saunders Photography

pass. However, Tiggy had her eyes on them for the entire road section and nearly pulled my arms out which wasn't appreciated. We caught them up on the first uphill section and they started to split into two and I ended up riding with two of them. It was nice to have some company to keep Tiggy happy on the harder sections of the ride and helped us keep a decent speed going. We earned another Grade 1 with a speed of 11kmph and a heart rate of 42. I was thrilled with the result as riding at Red Dragon was one of my aims for the season! It was a great way to end a successful season.

We're now going to have a quieter winter, doing the odd Pony Club rally and hunt once or twice a month; so there'll be plenty of time to plan for next season!

***Sara Williams***

# **Offa's Dyke EGB**

## **Branch Annual Meeting**

**&**

## **2018 Awards**

### **Saturday 1st December**

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

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

**Includes 2 course dinner**

**Free to members, £5 for non-members**

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

**To book please contact Abbi Tennant by email:  
abbi\_tennant@hotmail.com or 07873755827**

**Please advise any dietary requirements.**

# Pearl Island Arabians

The seasons training started off slow due to the snow! But we soon got out and about. With 3 new girls starting at the stud this January they all needed to move up the ranks as well as the young horses at Pearl Island. We ventured to the Forest of Dean on Gelliwen and Stella passing the first ride of the season and showing one of the girls, Vicky the ropes on the endurance circuit which she enjoyed thoroughly. Then it was off to Cirencester with SD Stella passing 64km so that we could qualify for the AHS Marathon to be held in October the going was a little slippery so we took it steady! On the Sunday at Cirencester we took 3 youngsters all being their first EGB ride. Noora Bint Rabdaan (6 year old mare 75% Bahraini) Qader bin Krayaan (6 year old gelding 1/2 Bahraini) Leyla Bint krayaan (7 year old mare 1/2 Bahraini) and Isis bin Goudah (9 year old mare 1/2 Bahraini) they all passed the vet and we were off, Leyla proved to be a bit of a challenge at the start but Asha her jockey stayed with her!! We just put this over enthusiasm to her season of flat racing the previous year. Soon as Leyla had settled the route rode beautifully and we were soon home and all passed the vet on quite a warm day.



*Cirencester- Left to right Qader, Leyla, Isis and Noora*

*Pearl Island photo*

Next ride wasn't until the Red Dragon (but we did manage to fit in some dressage and jumping events with them all) we took 3 youngsters and Stella (a warm up before the Marathon the following weekend after all the gallop work she had done on the run up to the Marathon it was a lovely change of scenery) the hills were a little challenging for the young ones but we made it home in good time. Qader didn't want to leave the party (by refusing to load) but we persuaded him that he can go to more as this was his second outing and he achieved a grade 1!

The Marathon had come around so quickly and we took Stella to Newmarket the

day before, putting her in a strange stable, it didn't bother her she scoffed her dinner and was really happy. The morning of the race she took it all in her stride passing the vet on her lowest heart rate to date, 40! The going was amazing, we all bowled along, not many brakes and very little steering!!! We were soon at the half way vetting where we made up some time and we were soon back out for the next 13 miles which she flew around. In the final mile I could see the leaders going down to the finish on the opposite side of track to me, I couldn't believe the time we had made up, Stella ate up the ground finishing 5 minutes behind the winner. So proud of her we had finished 8th out of 17. She was a little tired at the end but she passed the vet sound and well. Hopefully we can run the Marathon next year at the same venue and maybe encourage a few more entries!!!???



*Stella at the finish of the Marathon*

*Photo by West End Photography*

Hopefully we can get out training earlier in 2019 with all the boys and girls. And I don't think I have scared off my new girls on Team Pearl Island!

Best of luck to everyone for the 2019 season

***Amanda Pearl Island Arabians***

# Winter Schooling Sessions

Our usual winter schooling sessions have been scheduled with Carole Broad FBHS at Usk College, NP15 1XJ. Usk has a fabulous spacious indoor school, ideal for the cold winter months. These sessions are very friendly and cater for all abilities.

Sessions will be in groups of 4 and cost £23.50 for an hour.

## Dates are-

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

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December**

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2019 (Revised date)**

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

First group will start at 10:00 and run at hourly intervals.

Please send the completed booking form along with either a single cheque or multiple cheques for the sessions. Separate cheques will not be cashed until the week of the session.

Full refunds will be given if cancellation is before the publication of the times (a week before session) and any time after that I will do my best to sort something out.

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

Nicola-

07968 928870

n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk

Booking forms are available from [www.egboffasdyke.co.uk](http://www.egboffasdyke.co.uk) or from me

# Talybont Reservoir

## Fun Ride

Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October

A lovely ride with beautiful views of the reservoir. A mixture of forestry tracks, old tram roads, grass verges and quiet lanes. Route options of approximately 12km, 22km and 30km.

Start between 10:00 and 12:00

Venue- Talybont on Usk Livestock Market, Talybont on Usk, LD3 7JE

**\*\* ENTER ON THE DAY \*\***

Enquires- 07941049485 or [info@golden-castle.co.uk](mailto:info@golden-castle.co.uk)

Map and ride info available from <https://www.egboffasdyke.co.uk/talybont>

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

# BRENTOR : A RIDE

“There is no secret so close as that between a rider and her horse” Surtees 1803-1864

I crewed at Brentor last year and thought it looked interesting so this year tried the 34k pleasure ride. Summary : a varied ride with long inclines and stony tracks in places and some fast going. Venue easy to get to , spacious and relaxed, ride well organised and marked, with excellent ride instructions. The route is 2 loops, one north of the venue, hilly and stony in places and a southern loop mostly flat and good going. Highly Recommended.

Here is the detail: *names have been changed to protect the innocent*

I left Saturday afternoon around lunchtime with crew (Pierce Brosnan) Toby the terrierist and Arabian grey mare Princess Leia aka Syrian Moon. Easy journey down the M5 and A30 to the organisers' house where they had generously provided stabling (and camping if required, I didn't I'm allergic) and then we repaired to our hotel up the road. All near the venue and very convenient. Even better a kind, kind, kind, fellow pleasure rider offered to feed Moon in the morning so I could have a lie in, hurrah !!

Next day, arrived at the venue, a bucket of sugarbeet's throw away from the organisers' house, and Moon and I trotted off at 10 am . The day was warm and visibility good; that is the end of the shipping forecast. The going was fairly stony at first with serious undulations ( or "uppy and downy") so I walked quite a lot given I was only on a pleasure ride, no point in going lame I thought, although a few people were bombing past, meaning we rode mostly on our own. The views were lovely for most of the route, open moorland with few people about and with a lot of interesting what I think is called "technical riding" , with stream crossings and a few little ditches, splendid. At CP1 we started to head back to the venue and I became more focused on my headache than the scenery, and the fact that I was now boiling hot (no shade and black jods, black airvest, vented hat doing its best..) and the chest infection I had had all summer decided now was a good time to remind me I could hardly breathe and had better spend all my time coughing and wheezing. At the unmounted section over the picturesque dam before the venue crew spot, a pair of walkers cheerily remarked "Nearly back now!!" "I've got another loop to do" I muttered wearily and then remembered I was an ambassador for the sport, so gave them a Jack Nicholson grimace. I'd been about 2 hours doing 10 miles.

I thought I might as well stay unmounted to get back to the venue crew area , a decision I regretted trudging up the hill back to the venue. At that point I felt beyond knackered, and if someone had come out of the venue saying "Your ride has been stopped for an unspecified reason, you have to go back to your car and drink tea and put your feet up" I would have given them my house. Or my dog. Which is not very generous since he farts a lot. And he is a rescue so I am probably not allowed to give him away. And I love him anyway, mostly. But no one said that, instead Pierce Brosnan gave me a slosh and motivation: " you've got the fast bit now".

On we went to the south loop, the going a bit hard to start so I did the walk /trot hokey kokey we indecisive riders do: "I better trot or I'll never get round,oo it's too rough, I'll walk, oo I'd better trot or I'll never get round..." etc. I was then spared this agony of dithering because LO!! Lovely grassy sward opened up and off we shot at a lovely trot and then canter .. weeeeeee this why I do it!! Things improved even more when a lovely strong looking gelding overtook us and we rode all the way at a cracking pace to the turnaround checkpoint over the lovely turf and open moor. Moon went really well and was having a great time and so was I . Was it worth a couple of hundred quid for fuel, accommodation, food etc ?? Definitely, FANTASTIC ..... I have one of the best photos I possess of my lovely girl on that stretch.

Arrived at CP2 where I caught the crew napping (love it when that happens) and it all unravelled. Pierce Brosnan decided topping up my water bottle with slosh water was a good idea (it was n't, DON' T DO IT, IT IS VILE) so no drink for me til the venue . Strong handsome gelding vanished to do the long route and we turned round for home. Moon decided she did not want to a) go back the way she had come, b) leave her new boyfriend c) do anything but a grudging trot and I'd really rather walk d) look where she was going e) go the opposite direction to all the other horses. The 5 miles or so back on the lovely turf was hell on earth, I was still hot and extremely tired, Moon moving at a scruffy walk type jog with me slumped like a sack of potatoes coughing for Britain and no energy left to give to her . I ended up with every painful hoofbeat chanting "I want to die, but it's called endurance, I want to die, but it's called endurance ". Moon kept looking round at me: she probably wanted to die as well as I found out she had a sore back that day, so how rubbish did I feel when I found that out , forgive me my gorgeous girl.... although at the time if she had been a human being and had free will I would have hung her from a tree and beaten her with the lead rope, but she was a dumb defenceless animal with no free will so I just sang my little dirge instead.

People I am not a wimp. I ran a department for a grasping American Corporation with 500 people "yes Barbara-ing" me all day, been lost in the African bush, jumped out of aeroplanes, and been scuba diving and pot-holing. And I wanted to cry.

Fortunately my fighting spirit came good, the same fighting spirit that won the Robinswood Junior School egg and spoon race, a victory subsequently snatched away after my spoon was decreed the "wrong shape" . HOW CAN A SPOON BE THE WRONG SHAPE???? Still bitter after 52 years 6 months 3 weeks and 4 days ? Not me.

We eventually staggered into the delightful venue, met by crew and beaming organiser (thank you Mr C ). Pierce Brosnan crewed brilliantly, Moon passed the vet and after pouring gallons of slosh on myself and slurping 32 million cups of tea I was almost restored.

So will I be back? Yes fate willing, it was a wonderful ride and next time, I will try not to cry.

***Barbara Rees***

# Reunions

One delightful aspect of endurance rides is the accidental meeting of horses' former pals, four-legged or two. A couple of years ago it was time for sturdy grey Flynn, at sixteen, to try the Cumbria Challenge (it's a grand ride, but choose a dry day if you can). Home turf for him, more or less, as he'd spent his early years near Barrow in Furness with Joanne and Steve at their smallholding. Would they like to come across to the venue? Over they came. Joanne hadn't seen him for ten years. She'd looked after him from foalhood until he was six, and she talked to and stroked him with such fondness. Well, you're moved by these things or you're not.

Seeing Jim again after this year's Cleeve Hill ride in April – he'd carried me round it in 2009 – where kind Camilla Mascall put me in touch with his present keeper, meant trotting off to Droitwich. He's twenty-three now, gently active and utterly himself, munching the dates I'd brought him and murmuring at me and licking my hand relentlessly. Dear Jimlet. He was never much of an endurance horse, but we did a few things together and were pretty close.

At Builth Wells this year I'd entered the Little Dragon with Gully, the long-legged and charming Mr Chestnut. At the vetting on Friday afternoon who should we meet but Boreina, Gully's former field mate, and mine until last year. Much calling and squawking then, and not just from Gully. How well she looked! Anita and David Gordon bear the blame for that. And while we stood there who should appear but Sue Rogers, from whom Gully came to me. Their mutual acknowledgement was sweet to see – she talked so affectionately to him as he bent his head low to her. (I once saw him taken off to his field by her son aged about eleven, riding bareback – well, Guls had a rug on – with headcollar and lead rope. That said quite a lot about Sue, her son, and the lovely Gully). Sadly, we didn't complete the ride just as we didn't two years ago, so now I've proudly joined Karen Jones's Little Dragon Club of Three: she's won it three times, and I've failed to finish it three times!

I nearly forgot . Anybody remember Thomas? No reason why you should but he was the stout black traveller cob who got me going in endurance, as well as brilliantly doing several long walks. He's thirty, perhaps thirty-five now, and if you were to stick a bridle on him I'm sure he'd be pleased to give you a stately tour of the farm where he lives with a companion cow. I know this because I took him a carrot a few weeks ago. And I'll carry on doing this until either he or I can no longer offer or receive. What more can these kind creatures give me? And yet they're giving still. Thanks all of you, as always.

*Piers Geddes*

# Maryland Fun ride Sunday 3rd February

(Subject to forestry approval)

**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 will be two loops of approximately 12km each and a 7km lead rein/novice loop within the South loop. Route options of 7km(4 miles), 12km(7 miles), 19km (12 miles) and 25km (15 miles)

**Start Times:** Between 10:30 and 12:30. We recommend that lead-rein and novices start on the South loop before 11:30am. Other riders start on the North loop.

**Entry Fees:** £15 for non members or £10 for Associate or EGB members. Cheques made payable to Offa's Dyke Group of EGB

## **Entries to-**

Abigail Tennant  
Mitchmore Del  
Holme Lacy  
Herefordshire  
HR2 6LJ

## **Enquiries-**

07873755827  
abbi\_tennant@hotmail.com

Ride info will be available for download approximately 2 weeks before the ride.

# Dates for your Diary

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> October**

Talybont Reservoir Fun Ride

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

Schooling @ Usk College

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December**

BAM & Awards Evening

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> December**

Schooling @ Usk College

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

Christmas Cracker Fun Ride

## 2019

**Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January**

Schooling @ Usk College

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> February**

Maryland Fun Ride

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> February**

Schooling @ Usk College

**Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> April (Provisional)**

Forest of Dean Bluebell National

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> September (Provisional)**

Forest of Dean Autumn Belle  
National

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

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