



Offa's Dyke Group of Endurance GB Newsletter- October 2021

www.egboffasdyke.co.uk



Chairman's Comments

Dear all

I do hope you have managed to get out and do something since more rides have been available. Sadly due to Forestry England restrictions due to Covid we have not been able to put on any competitive rides this year and there are discussions ongoing at national level to try and reach a sensible agreement with the FC over pricing going forward as they have taken the opportunity to try and make massive price increases.

We have had 2 (nearly 3) Pleasure rides at time of writing and my sincere thanks to the organisers and helpers for making these possible and the riders for making it worth while!

Please come along to our BAM at the start of December (see advert elsewhere in the newsletter) As well as conducting the annual business of the society there will be presentations, meal and a chance to see you friends.

We need some new faces on the committee! You do not have to be a long standing member of the group or have done anything spectacular- we need the input, opinions and help of ordinary members who are willing to contribute just a little time. We meet (in normal times) very informally about 4 times a year in Monmouth at the same venue as the BAM to arrange the rides, talks, lessons and conduct general business of the group. Please come forward and join us- your opinions matter. You can let anyone on the committee know or simply say at the BAM.

Pleasure ride rosettes will be awarded to anyone who has done 3 or more rides, 2 of which are Offa's Dyke rides. Please email me with the rides you have done by 5th November.

With no OD competitive rides this year many of our trophies cannot be awarded and no trophy cards were sent out back in the start of the year but there will be awards for those who have been able to compete at all levels. I will for this year make these awards based on the Clubhouse data. Please if you have done any competitive rides check that the entries on the system are correct for you and your horse(s) and contact me asap if there are errors.

Let's hope 2022 allows us to return to a fuller calendar

See you at the BAM

Mary Stubbs

Editor's Comments

Since our last newsletter we have had Courtfield fun ride and Black Mountains fun ride. Lots of riders had a thoroughly enjoyable ride at Courtfield on a scorcher of a weekend in July. Many riders made the most of the access to the river and went for a paddle to cool off. Then we had Black Mountains which again was well attended but fortunately was on a much cooler day at the beginning of August.

Next up we have Maryland fun ride this weekend and then hopefully the Christmas Cracker ride (Details can be found in the newsletter). We also have (fingers crossed) our BAM at the beginning of December.

Over the coming months I have organised several winter training events both mounted and unmounted. I have organised monthly schooling sessions with Tash Smith at a new venue. Usk college are still not hiring out their facilities which we usually use over the winter but I have fortunately booked Rupert Humphreys in Usk. This offers a lovely indoor arena which is ideal for the cold, wet winter months. Tash has been teaching a number of Offa's Dyke members and has also been riding/bringing on a few of our youngsters with very pleasing results. These lessons can either be private or in a group of 2 and cater for all abilities. You also have the option of combining pole work within your lesson. I have also organised a simulator session with Tash Smith for mid November (See details on page 14). Why not attend this and then put what you learnt into practice at the schooling sessions.

Don't forget to send in your article/reports for the next newsletter ☺

Nicola Davies

HELPERS DESPERATELY NEEDED

Maryland Fun Ride

Sunday 17th October

I am in need of Checkpoint stewards and a Start/Finish steward. First horse is due to start at 10:00

Please contact me on n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk or 07968 928870 if can spare a few hours

Committee Contacts

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Offa's Dyke EGB
Branch Annual Meeting
&
2021 Awards

Saturday 4th December 2021

At the Riverside Hotel, Monmouth, NP25 5EY

7pm for 7:30pm start

Includes 2 course dinner

Free to members, £10 for non-members

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

To book your place

<https://egb.myclubhouse.co.uk/Events/Calendar/View?id=529>

Any queries contact Abbi on 07873755827

Please advise any dietary requirements

Winter Schooling

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



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

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

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

Dates are:

Sunday 21st November

Sunday 12th December

Sunday 9th January 2022

Sunday 13th February 2022

ALL BOOKING MUST BE MADE VIA CLUBHOUSE

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

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

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

PONIES/HORSES MUST MEET THE ENDURANCE GB FLU VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS

Our Year

Being of the older generation I have started endurance a little late, but having bought an unbroken eight year old Arab mare I thought I had better do something with her and since I love hacking then the obvious choice was endurance. I have only done pleasure rides with her so far, as this is her first year being ridden, but I have thoroughly enjoyed it. She is rode both barefoot and bitless.

The whole experience of getting her fit, and riding in new and different areas is really great. Then to arrive, on the day to smiling faces who are so encouraging which helps to calm the nerves! I joined Offa's Dyke group as it's the closest group but I'm very pleased I did. Everyone I speak to are only too happy to help or share experiences which makes for fab days out.

Next year I'm hoping to progress into the novice class as Lady and myself have really enjoyed ourselves and she is getting faster with each ride. I just hope I can keep up with her.



Courtfield Fun Ride

Photo courtesy of Equinepix

Caroline Pitt



Christmas Cracker Ride



Tuesday 28th December

Symonds Yat East

(Subject to forestry approval)

A lovely social ride on forestry tracks, no gates and minimal road work.

Keep an eye out for further details

Ride Report: Poplar Park 1st May 2021

Location and venue

Poplar Park is based at an equestrian centre near Ipswich in Suffolk. It is the same distance from Holland as it is from Abergavenny (about 250 miles), give or take a few trot ups, and in fact if you take the wrong road out of the venue (as I did) you may find yourself on your way to Rotterdam via the Felixstowe ferry Check your route, I found the roads quite confusing signposting places I had no idea where they were: Colchester, Ipswich, Norwich, Diss and Ulan Bator... OK I made the last one up. The drive takes between 5 and 6 hours depending how much you stop: and the route is virtually all motorway and dual carriageway so if the going is favourable you can eat up the miles.

The venue is a field at the equestrian centre and is slightly sloping but spacious and compact. There is camping, stabling and corralling. I found the equestrian centre looked a bit tatty and deserted (Worry No 1 please) when I arrived the afternoon before, with no signage at all, but the Reception were incredibly helpful, friendly and informative and we found the stables and venue field easily. There was bags of room and they just let you get on with doing your own thing, splendid. There was hardly any grazing so the fact they had spare hay was helpful.

The Ride

The route: This was not the usual route apparently (all together now, BECAUSE OF COVID) but it felt good to me, splendid soft going, sometimes sand a bit deep but you could often ride on the harder verges. Flat as the proverbial pancake so for those of us not sure how fit our horses are, a very attractive ride. A mixture of heathland and forestry with some roadwork and some of it across the Poplar Park cross country course and gallops. Really lovely. The ride instructions said "there are pigs". We had met the odd porker on rides locally so I was not concerned. Pigs ?? Pigs ?? . A worldwide pig convention held in Pigsville, capital of Pigland, on a special Piggy anniversary, would not have had more pigs, in enormous fields pigs probably dream about when they go to Piggy heaven. Thousands of the bloomin' things all by the boundary fence snorting their piggy welcomes and banging and crashing against their food troughs. And on the 40k loop we had to do it twice. A benefit was that Moon , although going sideways , increased her speed (never fast) by about 50% so that helped our overall kph no end. A horse and rider had overtaken me at speed about 20 minutes before I saw the pigs and when I arrived they were still there, twirling around. Oh dear. What with the pigs and the giant irrigators and pipework looking like Martian refugees from War of the Worlds and spraying water everywhere , I don't believe it is a ride for the nervous novice, either horse or rider .

Route marking: we did a recce the night before and could see no evidence that a ride was taking place early the next morning, where was our lovely orange tape? Lost down a country lane looking in vain for crew spots, a couple of locals in a big tractor stopped unasked to assist: how kind !! They said "the hunt marking is blue spray paint". Hunt?? Blue spray paint ?? Worry number 2 please, although I do think it's best to have something specific to fret over rather than just a general feeling of dread. The Hunt it transpired was us (fair enough) but the

blue paint looked a disaster, I could hardly see it. Worry worry, I am going to get lost, waahhh. But of course, it looked clear as day from the horse and the marking was absolutely excellent, so all good. A funny thing was that the helpful couple frequently visited an old haunt of mine, the Hare and Hounds in Gloucester, and knew my brother so it goes to show there is really no escape...

General: ride really well organised, extremely friendly, helpful officials, great venue, good map and instructions, fab going ... they really must get a grip..

I will do this ride again. Well done ICENI group, but if you could arrange for the piggy convention to be held in Ulan Bator next time that would be useful.....

Barbara Rees

Talybont Fun Ride

Although this ride was run by the De Cymru group I had offered to help Fiona mark the route. I had been with her the previous week as she very kindly helped me at Black Mountains ride and had mentioned a low branch and a tree to step over on the 16km route. Armed with a map and a saw I went up an hour early and with my trusty hand saw managed to saw through the low branches. I'm not entirely sure Paddy and Dolly would have actually fitted under them, even when dismounted. Anyway, low branches cleared, fallen tree trimmed and marking done just before it got dark. I was borrowing Dolly, my friend Donna's horse as Pie had had a few weeks off and Tash who has been bringing on my youngster Paddy was riding him for his second ever fun ride.



Anyway ride morning arrived, both horses travelled beautifully together, they had not previously travelled together but had rode out together and I did practise loading them together the day or so before. Donna accompanied me to the ride and Tash met us there. Paddy was his usual chilled out self and behaved impeccably at the venue to be tacked up. Both horses were soon ready to go and we set off- there were some very confused faces seeing me on a skewbald. Apart from riding Dolly once the week of the ride I had not rode Dolly since Donna went to try her 7 years ago.

After the short section of road at the start both horses managed the slippery canal bridge and then the wooden bridge that I had totally forgot about and off we went up the Taff Trail. Over the dam where there were lots of scary campervans, past the photographer and up the road. We were soon heading into the forestry which we followed gradually uphill for some time before the 16km turns off and the other routes carry on. The cut off was quite tricky as it was narrow in places with some fairly low branches and care was required underfoot and we had to step over the fallen tree!

Not long after we hit the road after coming down the 16km shortcut onto the road the herd of cows in the field decided to run and moo. Paddy is not a fan of cows and this caused much excitement, he turned into a fire breathing dragon briefly. Next up, my biggest concern of the ride, the stream! Back in February Paddy had taken almost an hour to cross the stream on the bridlepath by me. Nothing worked, I ended up freezing after being stood in a steam for so long trying to persuade him to go across, even treats didn't work and he loves food. He will put his front feet in the water but finds it hard to commit to putting his back feet in. Since then we have taken him to the stream on our farm and he will walk across and play in that! Anyway, as we approached the stream John Jones kindly opened the gate and told us he had just had to lead others



across the stream, little did he know there was about to be another one. I went in front with Dolly to give Paddy a lead but Paddy didn't follow. Before he was given too much chance to dither John came and led him across- sorry for the second helping of wet feet!

The rest of the ride was uneventful, we trundled on down the forestry track taking in the beautiful views and were overtaken by some of the longer distance riders heading for home. He was a tired boy by the end and was quite happy to let Dolly go off in the distance.

All in all a perfect educational outing for him with lots of firsts. He is now entered for another small riding club fun ride and then the vetted Pleasure ride at Talybont.

Nicola Davies

Maryland Fun Ride

Sunday 17th October

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

The route consists of mainly forestry tracks connected by quiet country lanes. Some moderate hills with some fantastic views over the Wye Valley. There will be two loops of approximately 13km each and a 7km lead rein/novice loop within the South loop. Route options of 7km(4 miles), 13km(7 miles), 21km (12 miles) and 26km (16 miles)

DUE TO A TRACK CLOSURE THERE ARE 2 CHANGES TO THE NORTH LOOP COMPARED TO PREVIOUS YEARS- those of you that did Maryland ride years ago (10 years maybe) will recognise the bridleway we are using to reduce the 2 way section as a result of the closure. As a result the North loop is now 14km.

Entries close: Friday 15th October

PONIES/HORSES MUST MEET THE ENDURANCE GB FLU VACCINATION REQUIRMENTS

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

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

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

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

FOD Misty Blue

In 2018 I was lying in hospital following a riding accident saying “I’m never riding again!

Somehow later that year I ended up buying a 2 yr old PBA. Her breeder had nicknamed her “The Grey Witch” and described her as evil, as she kicked and bit for no reason.

She’s really called Forrest of Dean Misty Blue, or Tilly to her friends (if she had any!). This year I decided to see how she would cope with endurance, so I re-joined EGB as an associate member. We headed off to do the Black Mountains ride, and despite my nerves we had a fantastic time. It reminded me of why I enjoy endurance so much, as everyone is always helpful, happy, and friendly.

Next stop was our 1st vetted pleasure ride at Bonham. She couldn’t quite get the idea of trotting up, but the vets were very understanding. It was a beautiful sunny day and the going was perfect. Lovely long open stretches, with the wonderful scenery that comes with endurance rides.

After a successful day at Bonham the decision was made to go to the Red Dragon. It’s a ride I have always loved, so I was looking forward to going back there. Unfortunately entries were low this year, but anyone who didn’t go really missed out on an amazing ride. The weather was perfect so the views from the top were stunning. The route was very well marked as usual, so no chance of getting lost!

And a Red Dragon with no rain doesn’t happen very often! It’s a tough ride but any doubts about her fitness soon disappeared, as we seemed to canter forever. I wish we had done a longer ride, as it was over far too soon.

We now have Maryland and Talybont to look forward to.

It’s been lovely to be back doing endurance, and even though these seasons’ achievements have been small in comparison to most peoples, it’s not bad for someone who was never riding again!

Let’s see what 2022 brings!

Kerry Carson

Other Group Fun Rides

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ride Name</i>	<i>Group</i>
Sunday 5 th December	Mince Pie Ride	Cotswold

Our Year

As like everyone else the year was not going to be straight forward, but we kept the training going with everything crossed that we might get out to a few rides. All the Dressage and Jumping competitions were cancelled over the winter months too.

When we got the go ahead with the Bibury Salt ride, I took my daughter on her first EGB fun ride with us both riding, she enjoyed it just a little tired after 10 miles, all going well we will both be at the Maryland ride in October. Then on Sunday we took 3 baby horses and a nanny mare to look after them. All passed the vet with 2 grade 1's and 2 grade 2's!

We then upped the training for 4 of the older horses ready to have their first go at 80km at Cirencester (both horses and riders)! The younger ones went on the Friday and all passed again in the 30km Novice, then an over night with the older boys and girls for the 80km Performance Formula on Sunday. All was going well until 64km when one was vetted out being unlevel, the vet checked him at the end of the day and seemed fine and all well to travel, so there were only 2! final vetting and both seemed to get a second wind and vetted brilliantly with a second and third place.

With many rides being crossed off the ride calendar we thought the year was over for competing but the lion's tail popped up and another overnight, with the fish and chip shop found on google maps and a cheeky can of Gin and Tonic we were all happy!

The ride was lovely and another 80km under their belts and the rider that didn't get through at Cirecester passed. As I did most of the crewing this year (no I am not pregnant again!) it was lovely to have the app of whatthreewords for crew points! Really made the day enjoyable. And then to the final ride! The Red Dragon, we took the 3 baby horses and the 'nanny mare' on the Saturday 'the hill' at the start was a bit of a shock to them but they got around and all passed again. I took the older mare so had to leave them at CP1 to make up some time as she and myself were riding at Advanced level. The going was the best I have ever seen it but even as dry as it was it was very slippery under foot.

I would like to thank all the organisers and helpers with a very difficult year for all their amazing dedication to the rides and we appreciate all the work you do for us to go out and have loads of fun over the countryside.

Also to my girls Vicky Brown, Emma Lewis, Oonagh Lonergan for taking care of my horses so well at home and on the rides. We also have Granny (Jenny) and my mum (Jean) for looking after my boys George and Harry. The other crew members Elsie (my Daughter) and Will (the husband) members of the team at home Kathy Milne and Liz Hasler for looking after all the horses at home when we are away. BUT the biggest thank you goes to the horses for looking after us and giving their all! Fingers crossed for 2022 and hope to see you all soon.

Amanda May
Pearl Island Arabians

SERENITY THE SIMULATOR

Would you like to improve your riding position, develop better balance, gain fitness and have a better understanding of how your riding can affect your horse?

Serenity, our mechanical simulator, can help you do just that (and more!). There are only a handful of these mechanical simulators in the UK! Serenity is completely rider powered and relies on the rider moving in sync with her movement.

Learn to better your position without the guess work. Serenity enables me to break down each movement to ensure the rider is balanced and in sync, allowing the horse to move freely underneath the rider.

Come and have a go and take the guess work out of riding!

Sunday 14th November

2pm Start

Newchurch area, Chepstow

£26 for Private 30 min session



To book your place visit

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

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 17th October

Sunday 14th November

Sunday 21st November

Saturday 4th December

Sunday 12th December

Tuesday 28th December

Maryland Fun Ride

Simulator session

Schooling session @ Usk

BAM & Awards Evening

Schooling session @ Usk

Christmas Cracker Fun Ride

(Provisional)

2022

Sunday 9th January

Sunday 6th February

Sunday 13th February

Sunday 20th February

Schooling session @ Usk

Maryland Fun Ride

Schooling session @ Usk

Maryland Fun Ride

(Bad weather alternative date)

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

www.egboffasdyke.co.uk