



Offa's Dyke Group of Endurance GB

Newsletter- August 2017

www.egboffasdyke.co.uk



Chairman's Comments

It seems like yesterday that I last sat down to write my introduction, and the season had barely started, but now it is already drawing to a close. The Group has held the Bluebell Graded and Social rides, and Social rides Wye Valley, Govilon, and Blaenavon

Bluebell was marred by the perennial problem of insufficient helpers – and with 3 no-shows on the day there were at least 2 important roles unfilled. I have told the committee that I will not be running further rides unless we can change our volunteers' recruitment to be more successful. I do not wish to be in the position of cancelling a ride when vetting has started, but we cannot open the route due to insufficient stewards.... The feedback from riders was very positive, so it would be a shame to lose the ride when riders had mostly arrived, because we cannot steward the route.

The inaugural Wye Valley ride was a great success, with loads of excellent feedback – thanks to Sarah and Rachael for starting this ride up from scratch! It will likely run in 2018 as a Group ride again, but there are hopes to develop it into a Graded ride in the future. Both Govilon (on a very hot day) and Blaenavon were (as always) very well received, so thank you Nicola and Belinda!

As ever, Offa's Dyke members have been entering many CERs and FEI rides, with great success – we extend congratulation to: Golden Horseshoe 80km class – Sue Loveridge, Fiona Griffiths, and Kerri Costello, at Three Rivers in the 136km 2-day CER Abbi Tennant was first, in the Kings Forest FEI 3* 160km class, Louise Rich was 1st and in the 80 CER, Mary Stubbs was 3rd. At Cirencester Park, Abbi Tennant won the 163km 2-day CER, and in the 82 CER Sarah Rogerson was 3rd, Andrea Champ 7th, and Sue Loveridge 8th, with Louise Rich 3rd in the Veteran Horse 82 CER. At Lindum, as part of the 2nd place (to Scotland) Welsh Home International team, Fiona Griffiths was 3rd in the 3-day 170 CER, and in the 80 CER Belinda Stewart was 1st and Piers Geddes 9th.

Myself, I have had a somewhat mixed season – sadly in March Takwenya had a repeat of her 2016 field injury, and is now in foal, but at least I have had 3 great 80km rides with Peponi until a hiatus due to breaking my fibula – but I am still hopeful of recovering in time to fit in another couple of events before year end.

We still have the final 6 weeks of the season, and with Fiona's Talybont Group ride, and Bwlch Raid GER rides soon, and for many the season end championships and party at the Red Dragon ride. The monthly Schooling lessons will continue through the winter with many thanks to Nicola, and there are several committee members working on winter training sessions and talks to keep us all busy and engaged during the off season! I hope you will be able to partake of many of these opportunities!

Chris Wray

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Editor's Comments

Since our last newsletter we have had four rides take place; Forest of Dean Bluebell, Wye Valley, Govilon and Blaenavon. I organised the Govilon fun ride in June on one of the hottest weekends of the year! Those riders that completed the ride managed not to melt (just about) and had a lovely ride albeit very hot. This year I trialled the ride at a different time of year again and from rider feedback it was a hit- fern wasn't too overgrown and the going wasn't too hard or slippery. I'm now already thinking about the two fun rides I will be organising in 2018; Maryland and Black Mountains as well as the monthly schooling sessions with the fabulous Carole Broad over the coming months (details can be found later on in the newsletter).

We were lucky enough to have the new Wye Valley fun ride in May which was a lovely ride with varied going and fantastic views kindly organised by Sarah and Rachael. Hopefully we will be lucky enough to have this ride on the calendar again next year. Our last group fun ride to take place was Blaenavon kindly organised by Belinda which was well attended and all ran very smoothly.

We have two more rides left for this season; the fantastic two day graded ride, Bwlch Raid on 9/10th September for which Fiona has worked hard to find an alternative route. And finally to finish off the year we have a brand new fun ride at Talybont on 22nd October kindly organised by Fiona. We are currently waiting for final approval but it's all looking very hopeful. It would be great to see as many people as possible at this ride for an end of season blast round the beautiful Talybont reservoir. And if you can't ride why not come along and help.

We also have an open evening at Bromyard fire station and an Equine Gait Analysis day to look forward to (details can be found later on in the newsletter) both kindly organised by Abbi Tennant.

Following the Volunteering article which can be found in the newsletter, the committee are working on this issue and a future newsletter will outline what we plan to do for 2018 - but all members need to be aware that helping must be part of their annual ride plan..

Nicola Davies

**** Don't forget to enter our last National ride of the year, Bwlch Raid which is taking place on 9/10th September ****

Fiona has worked hard to find an alternative route to avoid the narrow two way section and the steep downhill back to the venue this year.

It's not too late to put in a entry 😊

If you don't plan on riding Fiona is in need of helpers so if you can spare a few hours please get in touch with Fiona.

Bwlch Raid

National

Sat/Sun 9/10th September

@ Gilfach Llangors, Bwlch, Brecon LD3 7HU

Mostly open hill with wide grassy tracks one steep climb on all routes up and down one rocky section. There is a NEW ROUTE to avoid the narrow 2 way section and the steep downhill back to the venue. 1km road work however the road is slippery and Road Pins are recommended. None on PR.

SATURDAY

1. 40km GER
2. 40km Novice GER
3. 32km GER
4. 32km Novice GER
5. 16km PR

CLOSING DATE EXTENDED TO: 1st September

SUNDAY

6. 64km GER
7. 40km GER
8. 40km Novice GER
9. 32km GER
10. 32km Novice GER
11. 16km PR

Entries to: Fiona Griffiths
Ty Mawr Farm,
Bwlch,
Brecon,
Powys,
LD3 7NX

More info:
07941049485
info@golden-castle.co.uk

Ride info can be viewed at <https://www.egboffasdyke.co.uk/bwlch-raid>

Volunteers by numbers

This year we had a particular problem attracting volunteers, specifically at one (out of our four) National rides. The organising committee had many sleepless nights over not getting enough volunteers as this leads to major safety concerns as well as preventing a smooth enjoyable day by all.

Usually volunteers come in dribs and drabs and we are very appreciative of these offers of help as they come in. For some reason this did not happen at Bluebell. We have discussed in depth within the committee about why this might be happening. As part of this we decided to look at the numbers of volunteers needed to safely run our national and local fun rides, and here is the summary of this work.

Between August 2016 and 2017 Offa's Dyke have run **nine** days of rides, **four** national and **five** fun rides, with a total number of **138** required volunteers.

We have **69** members. Out of these members, **35** have helped at least once, this is only **50%** of our membership.

At the top of our volunteer list we have Belinda Stewart who has volunteered at **six** out of **nine** of our rides! Closely followed by Martin Moore and Nicola Davies with **five**. A total of **17** members have volunteered more than once, meaning that **74** out of the **138** roles required were covered by Offa's Dyke members. This leaves **64** roles left to be filled by non-Offa's Dyke members, which is **46%** of our roles. We are very fortunate to have some willing non-members who are at or near the top of the leader board.

However, without volunteers we are unable to run safe rides, and if the rides are unsafe then we as organisers and the committee cannot run the rides.

The impact of lack of volunteers is not just a drain on the organisers in the run up to the event. Due to Bluebell being so close to the required number of volunteers (despite many times of asking), this almost led to cancellation on the day. A few volunteers could not attend on the day, meaning that the organisers had to make a very difficult decision whether or not to go ahead. The responsibility of a rider or horse becoming injured because we are not able to cover steward points should not just be the poor person who has volunteered to coordinate the ride. It should be each and every one of us.

PLEASE, if you are in the **50%** of the membership who are not currently volunteering then perhaps it is time to consider this as part of your membership of Offa's Dyke. If the remaining **34** members were to help just **once** a year this would reduce our reliance on family and friends by **half** and reduce the already huge burden of responsibility of our ride organisers. Our ride organisers are very precious to the successful running of our group. We really need to look after them. Without rides we cease to exist.

Lindum 2017

We have been going to Lindum for a few years now as they always put on a good week of rides and fun. This year they were having a minicamp which Alex attended, I put myself forward for the Welsh team along with Belinda, Piers, Sue and loads of others. And then I was asked to do the three day 170k-that sounded hard (it was).

If you have not been to Market Rasen some things you should know, they have one quite steep hill which you go up and down a lot. There is a lot of road work, some great grassy verges, you will need your map and also that each day is marked in a different colour which is not necessarily the same colour as the loop you are riding. It is very important to read the info and check in the office each day.

It's also a long way from Wales. We decided to go up on the Thursday setting up camp near to the Welsh contingent. Crewing was going to be difficult as Sam had to stay with Alex so Belinda offered to do Friday 68km which was 2 loops of 32km. Echo vetted well on the Thursday night after being walked. Ready to set off on the Friday at 8am there were 4 of us in my class, Helen McFarland for Ireland, Heather Whitley for England and Constance Newbauld for Scotland. I set out with Helen and we were trotting fine making good time when just after the first crew point Echo lost a shoe, Helen rang Belinda explaining where we were and where to meet us and I put on his boot. Constance caught us up and they waited while I mounted, we then set off for the next crew point where Sam and the team farrier Elian who is a magician met us. They went on as Echo had his shoe replaced, he did behave very badly then Heather came passed I was then ready to go and set off after her, but now it was all about getting him round. We spent the rest of the day with Heather, putting the world to rights but losing time then just as we were getting back to the venue on the first loop we heard horses coming up behind, as we pull over it was Helen and Constance they had got a little lost.... so we went out on the second loop just behind them and then went quite slow coming in 29mins behind them. Echo was sound and passed the vet we get to start on Saturday,

Saturday arrives and we go down to see the 80k riders go out then it's time to trot up all is good I watch Helen and Constance go out then tack up waiting for my start time no sign of Heather, just as I'm about to go I'm told she has retired, oh well a long day on our own 32k and 18k I was hoping to do 12kph and set off with a very happy horse who didn't seem to mind being alone we did catch a couple of Scottish riders for a short time, today our crew was Phil whose wife was riding on Sunday. I think he had hoped to play golf but he was super and when we lost a shoe met us with Elian who soon put it back on, Echo behaved much better today and we only lost 15 min on the others today. We also got to see Belinda win the 80km, fantastic.

Sunday trot up and fit to go, each day there is a briefing where they go over the route and set out what will happen, I am now 45 min behind the other two but they offered for me to

go out with them on the last day which could have given Echo some company but I thought it may pull us too fast, so I opted to go out 15min after them. Belinda offered to come out with me which was fab and gave Echo some company, good thing too as the marking was a little slim on some parts. Carys came too telling us later that she had ridden this route on Saturday aggggh. But we made good time and I was catching them (if I had had another day) out on the last loop hot on their tails hehe. Sam crewing now with Barbara they were great, a long road section home and a short path to the last wooded section and we were nearly there I was going to ride in with them and he lost a shoe! I rang Sam to find Elian, totally defeated how was he going to be sound now, 3 lost shoes in 3 days over 170km, we walk home but he was a happy horse had his shoe on and off to vet. Sound omg so pleased with him. We have more work to do with my ever patient farrier Nigel but we will get there I'm sure.

Echo got better and better over the 3 days eating everything he could, drinking and resting, so third place that was amazing, the team did brilliantly with a win for the Celtic challenge and second home international,

Thank you to all my crew especially Sam who always made it to the vet gates and finishes and everyone else who made our ride possible, but mostly to Echo,

Alex had great fun at the camp too but can't wait to be 8 and do proper rides.

Fiona Griffiths



Just passed the final vetting

Photo courtesy of Kerry Dawson

Congratulations to all Offa's Dyke members who took part in the Home International and Celtic Challenge at Market Rasen Racecourse on the 26-30th July.

- ❖ Fiona Griffiths riding Echo came 3rd in the 3 day 170km at 12kph
- ❖ Belinda Stewart riding Penny Clawd won the 80km CER at 14kph and then went on to gain a grade 3 in the 32km on the Sunday meaning she won the 120km for the team
- ❖ Piers Geddes riding Arabella Shaikh Al Jassan finished 10th at 11.5kph



Overall the Welsh Team finished-
1st in the Celtic Challenge
2nd in the Home International



Belinda on her way to winning the 80km CER
Photo courtesy of www.west-end-photography.co.uk

A trip with Peponi to Lignieres

Peponi qualified to start FEI earlier this season with 82GER at Tilford – 12th March, 13.0kph, finishing pulse 45; and 80GER at Haywood Oaks – 30th April, 13.3kph, finishing pulse 50. The purpose of taking her to Lignieres was the following: Get her used to long travelling and ferry crossings and ensure we have or develop optimum travel management of her, have her experience a big and busy venue (racecourse), live in FEI stabling, experience a large warmup and start, experience trotting and cantering in groups of a dozen or more for much of a loop at least, competing at higher speeds than she has previously, competing in hot conditions, and experience things like public address commentary and giant inflatable arches and such like!

Just before the entry deadline Peponi was checked over by Abbey Equine orthopaedic specialist Emma Jones, and was cleared so I registered her with the FEI, applied for her FEI passport, and entered the ride. Training had been mostly hill work at trot, with some hunt and PC fun rides most weekends. She had been shod with front pads (her first time in pads) following Haywood Oaks to ensure she was comfortable with them and they didn't change her action, and she was reshod in new shoes all round with front pads on 17th June (1 week before the ride). I gave her a 45 minute hack the following day to check she was comfortable in them. I had bought (2nd hand) an FnE elite saddle with VGS to ride her in (following stirrup leather rubbing my knee at Haywood Oaks) as I am a fan of this model having been riding Takwenya in one (not VGS, so not useable with Peponi) for the last 4 years. I adjusted it (as I always have for less than 120km – I get Lesley Dunn to review when riding 120+km), and rode in it for training for the last 4 weeks before Lignieres (including 3 fun rides). Crew for the trip was Diane Gillings, who has crewed me in all my FEI rides since 2014 and has also crewed Peponi several times each in both Novice and Open, and at Haywood Oaks this year; and Becky Bertram who was new to crewing us but is very experienced with horses (her mum has a stud), and she has ridden FEI herself and crewed her sister occasionally.

I have travelled Takwenya to Fontainebleau in 1 day twice – but Lignieres was going to be 15 hours rather than 13 and it was Peponi's first long distance travel, so I decided to split it fairly equally between 2 days. Pedens found us a stable (and space to pitch our tent) at Le Touquet racecourse, so that was our destination on the Tuesday (ride day Saturday). It was a hot day (low 30s), we left home near Monmouth at 8am following final packing after crew arrival, and drove to Dover with a drink stop for Peponi at Clacket Lane services (3 hours). P&O told us our intended ferry had been cancelled and we were on the next but one, but waiting on the quayside in the heat we were put on the next one. We had the front ramp down and gave Peponi drinks and entertainment. She wasn't fazed by the ferry – we took the breast bar out and lengthened her lead rope so she could reach hay and water on the ground, but not turn around. We had an hour off the ferry to get to Le Touquet, where Peponi was walked out for an hour while we put up the tent and made tea. Peponi had only been stabled once before, at Tilford in March, but seemed fine and ate and drank well.

On the Wednesday morning, Peponi had another walk while we made tea and packed everything up, and we left around 8am. We drove via Rouen where we filled up and bought lunch in a big mall, and drove down via Chartres and Orleans, stopping for the best part of an hour at a picnic services area where Peponi grazed and ate mostly in the shade, and tried to sample our lunch. It

was extremely hot – we had 37deg for most of the drive, and we stopped regularly for Peponi to drink and we sloshed her and wiped her down each time. We drove the rest of the way, arriving 5pm at the venue. The venue didn't open until the Thursday, but we put up a corral and got Peponi grazing, to be told after a while where we ought to be! After putting up our tent near the proper corralling field and close to an electric hookup, we went out to dinner and moved Peponi's corral when we got back. She stayed out overnight, and exercised herself well as she grazed – particularly at trot when the adjacent sandschool irrigation started up! The Thursday was our rest day – again extremely hot, so we checked in and set up our grooming and hold areas and stable, and stabled Peponi away from the flies for much of the day. We relaxed next to her in the shade and breeze to keep her occupied, until later in the day when she got a neighbour and we got a copy of the road book and went out to recce the crew points. We put her out again before we went for dinner as it was cooler and the flies had reduced.

Friday was vetting day, so we were pretty busy – fortunately it was quite a bit cooler – around 30 deg. First thing I walked Peponi round the grooming, hold and vetting areas and then back to her corral with breakfast – later we put Peponi back in the stable and recce'd the remaining loops, then brought her over to our camp and got on with preparing for vetting. Diane clipped her, then Becky and I shampooed her, and Becky plaited her mane. We took her to the treatment vet and had her dripped as a precaution (he having recommended this after Takwenya tied up at Monpazier, and which we have done for every foreign ride since – with no further tie-ing up). Vetting was smooth and Peponi was relaxed and trotted out well – all As and 1s and pulse 32.

Ride day was forecast to be cooler again, but in the event heated up to around 32 degrees, the start had been brought forward to 6:30, we were well prepared, but without much time to spare. I joined the main pack warming up, Peponi staying pretty relaxed, and we started off with them. A small group broke away very quickly, and we let them go and then rode the first 10km with 2 or 3 others cantering/trotting at around 20/22kph, until a group of about a dozen caught up, and after about another km I decided we shouldn't go any further at that speed and I pulled Peponi back, much against her wishes! She had been pulling the reins out of my hand, and I was holding onto one so that it pulled her head across, but she wasn't understanding the message – need to get some advice for this. The group ahead had fully disappeared by around 15km, and Peponi was trotting and cantering nicely with loose reins for the remainder of the loop. Crewing went very well – she was drinking by the 3rd crewpoint (at 18.5km), and was off again quickly each time. We didn't see anyone else until just before VG1, and we let them pass – only to overtake them again preparing for vetting. The walk between entrance to grooming and vetting was around a minute and a half, and we had avoided the busy area on the shortest route, so we knew our recovery would be over 2 minutes. In the event it took 3:32 after we had removed strong Velcro on overreach boots and picked out hooves. We had averaged 18.15 for the 36km first loop. I knew in about 3 seconds after applying the stethoscope we could vet, and as expected her pulse was 42/44bpm with all As and 1s. She ate and drank really well in the 40 minute hold, Diane washed her down and massaged.

We actually started loop 2 a few seconds late due to Peponi not wanting her bit back in her mouth (sore after the first loop pulling?), so we left after the person we had overtaken, which was fine by me as we were on 18.1kph, and Peponi's previous fastest had been 15kph – I wanted her

to continue at a steady speed rather than racing someone else. She rode the second loop (20km) as she usually does when we see nobody – switched off, so I had to do my usual (with her) energetic riding, and we trotted and cantered steadily for a loop speed of 14.55kph. She continued to drink well – it had warmed up, but not excessively hot (upper 20s). Vetgate 2 was a repeat of the first, only we managed to get the overreach boots off a little quicker and presented in 3:13, pulse 46/48, all As and 1s except gut sounds B. The hold this time was 50 minutes and we had a compulsory recheck. Peponi drank well, but didn't eat quite so much as the first hold. At the recheck pulse was 48/46, all other parameters identical.

On the final loop (29km), Peponi continued to be switched off and I had to work fairly hard – it had really heated up, and I didn't know how much was the effect of the heat. I had seen at the restart that the next people behind us were 10, 11 and 12 minutes back, so I knew we had a gap but there would be other horses coming! Two of them eventually caught us just after the 15km board, and Peponi was straight up to their speed on their tail without any urging from me. After another 5km we were on the same route home as loop 2, and Peponi was quite happy to lead our group at trot and canter. When one didn't crew at the final crewpoint, she had her drink and was off after him, pulling the reins again! The 3 of us rode round the racecourse into the finish – I was relieved as I didn't know how Peponi would react to the big inflated arch! When we got there, the other 2 horses checked, but Peponi looked long and hard, but went straight through as I kept her straight. We had ridden the final loop in 14.3kph. Those we finished with rode it in 15.7 and 16kph – so we had ridden the first half loop at around 13kph, and the second half at around 16kph. Final average for the whole competition was 15.79kph. Preparing for final vetting was the same as the vetgates – we took 9:26.

Final vetting parameters were much the same – pulse 42, all As and 1s except B for gut sounds, and 2 for capillary refill. We were asked to trot a second time, which worried me – but the 3 slips of paper showed 3 passes and she was given an A for gait. She hadn't been very enthusiastic the first time, but the boot rubs were in the back of my mind! At Tilford however, she had quite a big cut in her heel bulb on loop 1 but was still sound at vetgate and the end – so she's pretty tough!

We chilled for an hour in our hold area, then she went back to the stable while we cleared up – and then out into her corral for a few hours until after the Repas. The whole event had been beautifully run – the venue was a modern racetrack (banked tan surface for harness racing, and a grass track outside it and steeplechase jumps inside) with a very nice grandstand with large hall, bar and restaurant facilities. The permanent stables were large and of a very high standard with washbays etc.. The course was quite reminiscent of Keysoe – gently undulating with green lanes, farm tracks, field headlands, some woodland paths, a small amount of road but with good rideable verges – very nice indeed except for one track we did twice with a load of large hardcore – just no airfield and chainlink fence! One lady in the secretary office had excellent English, and we never felt less than very welcome. Of course many of the officials had good English, some of which we knew from Fontainebleau (x3) and Monpazier. The town is small but quite pretty with a river and nice bridges and a decent chateau! Not many eateries in town, but we had 2 excellent meals – we ate at the venue after that and the laid-on meals on the Friday and Saturday nights were lovely. Parking was good, and there were very adequate permanent loos and showers next to the parking/camping. Really nothing to not like! Except the heat! And doing all the crewpoints

was a driving challenge – the roadbook was perfect, and we recce'd all of them – but it was tight and crew only arrived on a couple of occasions a minute or so before the rider!

On the Sunday morning, we packed up and left about 9am – we had decided to do the shortest distance route in a single run, so we just stopped every 3 hours or so to give Peponi a drink. She was less keen on drinking coming home, Diane had already tried her on diluted carrot juice (didn't like it) and apple juice – she liked that and it stimulated her to drink – 25% juice to get her going then 12% juice. It was quite a lot cooler than going down, and there was the odd shower, so she wore a cooler rug. The traffic was a bit slow round the Paris periferique (even on Sunday lunchtime) other than that we were able to cruise at 60mph, and we got onto the 17:55 ferry with almost no wait on the dock. We eventually got home and turned a rugged Peponi out with her mother, sister & brother at 23:30.

In summary, I could not have been more delighted - Peponi took the travelling in her stride, despite it being a lot further than previously – she ate and drank well and suffered no abnormal stiffness or muscle problems. She was relaxed and controllable in her first race start, and was happy going in a group at speed. Her vetgate presentations were no different to home, when crew is at full strength and we don't have a distance to walk she'll be vetting quicker than 1:30 – as she gets fitter it will be interesting to see how quickly she can go before the presentations start taking longer. She had loads of new experiences, and saw many things for the first time, and nothing seemed to worry her at all.

As I usually do following FEI rides, I took Peponi to be seen by Abbey Equine orthopaedic specialist Emma Jones on return (Friday 30th June), and she was checked over thoroughly. Emma found her slightly stiff in the scapula suspension muscles, and there was one trigger point in her back below my right buttock – apart from that Emma said she was extremely impressed how well Peponi had taken all the travelling and the ride.

Chris Wray

Bromyard Fire Station – Animal Rescue Open Evening

Thursday 28 September 2017 at 18:15

At Bromyard Fire Station, 21 New Road, Bromyard, Herefordshire HR7 4AS

An open evening at the station to view the team run their drills when a large animal is in need of rescue. They will show the specialist equipment used with the use of their horse mannequin.

They will demonstrate some of the rescues they have carried out as well as be able to comment on scenarios they are trained for. This is a chance to be able to see the team at work and they will be on hand to answer any questions.

A small donation to the fire department is recommended by all attendees. So we have an idea of numbers please let Abigail Tennant know you are considering attending, abbi_tennant@hotmail.com or 07873755827

Go West

But where were all the riders? Pen Ddol Y Gader is a fine ride, and a fine Welsh ride if such a thing exists, and it needs your support. It's not that far off; from Abergavenny it takes two hours to reach, and many of us travel further than that for endurance rides. What you get is a wonderful combination of woods and wide open space, and a sense of uncluttered freedom in a lovely part of the world. The route's been altered this year, and took riders through oak filled nooks with flashing streams mixed with unfamiliar and canterable forestry. After that, open hill around Llanybydder mountain, with plenty of good going for the speedy, great views for the slower-paced, and the gratitude that comes with riding where you'd never go if someone hadn't kindly organised it all.

Yes, on the weekend of 10/11th June this year the weather was bit rubbish, but as a friend once said, you've been wet before; anyway, last year was dry, so as usual things even put. Sheep, ponies and cattle dot the moorland, but they barely stir; self-crewing's a breeze with the brooks and streams. Most important for some of us is the marking, and that's reassuringly good. Across wide stretches of splendid grassy nothing you can see a line of little poles topped with fluttering tape; thick orange spray arrows help out at junctions.

Do go. It's a great ride. You can go fast- two riders achieved 14.3kph on their 40km- or more sedately. Riding Little Miss Come-On-We-Mus-Hurry, we finished at 11.3kph. Lord Lunatic is turning into Captain Sensible. The bonus, it must be admitted, was a suit of dry clothes at the end. The outing though was well worth the soak. You think you're just doing a ride? Not there. You're nurturing yourself, and even bringing joy to your horse Thank you sincerely for both.

Piers Geddes



Saturday 2nd December
Branch Annual Meeting & Awards Evening
@ Riverside Hotel, Monmouth
7pm to start at 7:30pm
Free for members and £5 for non-members

New ride

Talybont Reservoir

Fun Ride

Sunday 22nd October

(Subject to final approval)

A lovely ride with beautiful views of the reservoir. A mixture of forestry tracks, old tram roads, grass verges and quiet lanes.

Steep uphill section on long route. Route options of approximately 14km and 22km. Option to repeat the top loop.

Start between 10:00 and 12:00

Venue-

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

Entries to-

Fiona Griffiths
Ty Mawr Farm,
Bwlch,
Brecon,
Powys,
LD3 7NX

Enquires-

07941049485 or info@golden-castle.co.uk

**** HELPERS NEEDED- if you can spare a couple of hours please get in touch with Fiona ****

Equine Gait Analysis Day

Saturday 4th November 2017

At Abbey Vets, Llansabbath Barns, Llanellen, Abergavenny, Gwent NP7 9BY

Russell Guire from Centaur Biomechanics works with many horses across the UK in all disciplines. Markers are placed on the horse's skin which identify the joint centres. The system is then able to track these markers and the joint movement. The high speed cameras are able to pick up any subtle changes within gait pattern which can indicate weakness/lameness. Each horse will receive both gait and farrier analysis.

Benefits of the analysis:

- Evaluating the horse's soundness and asymmetries
- Evaluating any weakness and provide advice on support
- Evaluating horse's foot balance
- Ultimately help to prevent injury and maintain soundness

Each horse assessment will receive:

- Slow motion images of foot balance on the day
- Receive all farrier files and FREE software to show images within 3 days which can be useful for your farrier
- A detailed report of the horse's motion and foot analysis within 5 days



Price £135 per horse to attend. Please note there are only 10 spaces available with an exact appointment time given for attendance. This is on a first come first served basis. Please contact Abigail Tennant to book a place by email abbi_tennant@hotmail.com or phone 07873755827. All cheques need to be made to Offas Dyke Endurance Group and posted to 2 Linnet Close, Hereford, HR2 7TJ with a booking form.

Season Highlights

Where do I start? Both my FEI horses at 3* level. This year really has started well with Oakleazefarm Czamak heading out strong in then 120km 2* at Kings Forest in April. The day went perfectly he just flew, we did the first loop in a small group before breaking off to finish the day with David and the lovely Vite. Today's plan was to get the distance for Czamak to go 3* this season. I hadn't planned to leave with a win.

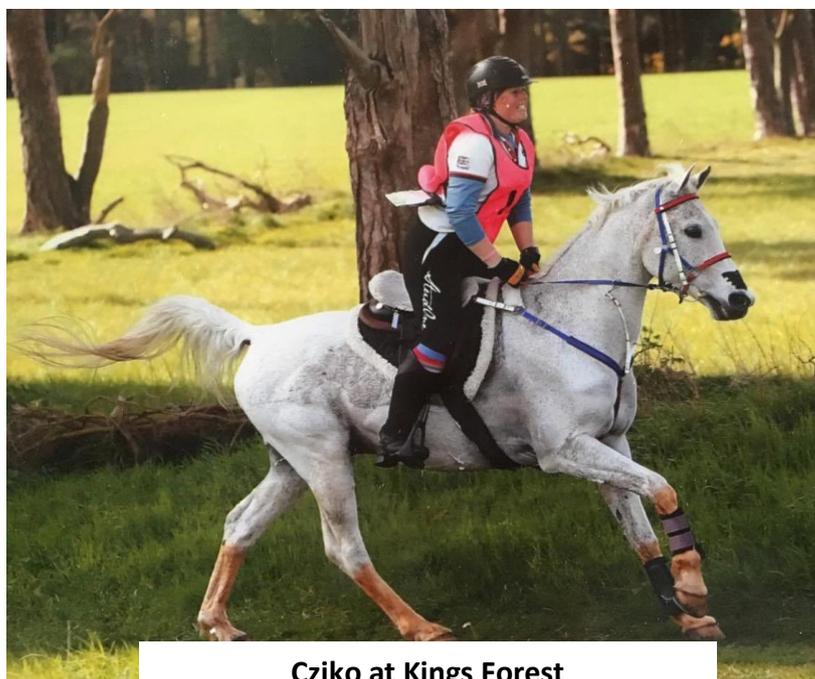
After returning home from Kings Czamak had some time out to rest so my concentration turned to Cziko as he was on the list for the 1* at Royal Windsor. This would be Cziko's first time at Royal Windsor. Our entry was accepted so the packing began only a few days before having to leave. We headed to Windsor with the two boys as mum had entered too. Cziko has made it to Royal Windsor! As always he took everything in his stride nothing phases him. This time we had a different team alongside us as mum was riding too; Bella, Abby & Tess became the A Team for the day.

The relaxed Friday morning came where we decided to grab some breakfast in style. Once again today was just some fun for Cziko and I as he's 17yrs old and owes me nothing, his achievements are ever growing. The start came and we flew the first loop in a lovely group with mum, Fiona, Beth, Lauren and Annie. The canter around ascot racecourse still beats anything although you wouldn't get me jumping those fences. Cziko knows his job when it comes to a vetgate so there was no need to worry, with three loops down and the finish line insight we canter over the line in 4th. The final vetting really sinks in that we could be off to see the queen.



Czamak winning Kings Forest in April

Photo Courtesy of David Saunders



Cziko at Kings Forest

Photo courtesy of David Saunders

I really can't thank this horse enough for the opportunities he's given me over the years, he really is a one in a million horse. From my first ever 120km 2* to competing on the Development Squad, Young Rider Squad, completing our first 160km 3* and now meeting the queen. After a fantastic race and a morning of cleaning tack he headed in convoy to the show. The horses all went into stables while we had chance to shop before needing to smarten up for the prize giving.

8weeks later it's 160km time for Czamak, so back to the beautiful Kings Forest we go. Once again Czamak flew, unfortunately there were only three of us in this class all wanting that 3* qualification. 5.30am came and off we went, 5loops later we were still going strong, 16km to go we settled into our steady canter and bowled along the green loop. I crossed the finish line thinking both my horses have done 160km, all my training and care had paid off as we pass the final vetting with flying colours.

Not in a million years did I expect to once again come home with a win. Kings Forest really is a lucky ride for me. The following day mum and I took Cziko and Czako for a canter around the 32km. People commented on how crazy I was riding again, I didn't think that until being pulled around the whole 32km. Cziko really was fresh ready for his next bit of fun. I can't begin to say how proud I am of all my horses, it's so rewarding when you personally put everything in and get great results. Thank you to all the fantastic people who have been part of our team so far this year especially my parents it wouldn't be possible without them.

Louise Rich

Summer/Autumn Schooling

Due to popular demand there are going to be two additional sessions with Carole Broad FBHS at Lesley Dunn's in Trellech, NP25 4QN (by Maryland venue). If the weather forecast for the day of the schooling is bad we cancel in advance.

Lesley has a lovely new 42 x 27 arena with parking in her field (with the exception of severe weather). Groups available to cater for all abilities and needs. Also the option of doing some pole work. You are welcome to go for a hack in the neighbouring forestry after your lesson.

The sessions will be in groups of 3 and cost £23 for an hour.
(PLEASE NOTE THESE ARE A DIFFERENT PRICE TO THE WINTER SESSIONS)

NEW DATES ADDED-

Sunday 15th October

Sunday 5th November

For more information please don't hesitate to contact me.
Nicola- 07968928870 or n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk

**** Special rosettes will be presented at the BAM for the highest attendances over the years schooling sessions ****

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. Unfortunately I couldn't book all the sessions on Sundays this year so I do have two Saturdays.

Sessions will be in groups of 4 and cost £21.50 for an hour.

Dates are-

Sunday 8th October

Saturday 18th November

Sunday 3rd December

Sunday 14th January 2018

Saturday 10th February 2018

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 or from me

Radnor Forest Fun Ride

After the cancellation of Barbury Castle due to our wonderful 'wet' summer I decided a trip up to Dolau the following weekend would be on the cards. There was a new fun ride organised by Karen from the Mid and North Wales EGB group which was only 49 miles away. I gave Belinda and her Connemara a lift to the ride where we met up with friends Kelly and Donna. The drive there was nice and straightforward; up to Builth and then on to Llandrindod Wells before heading to Dolau, took us about 1 hour 40 minutes. The venue was a lovely flat field with easy access, toilets and refreshments.

On arrival we were greeted by lots of friendly helpers, including Colin the parking steward in a very fetching pink cowboy hat and some familiar faces who had also made the journey to the ride. Off we set, gradually climbing through several fields away from the venue before entering the forestry. The first section of forestry was a bit muddy with some deep puddles but we soon reached nice wide forestry tracks which we stayed on for mile after mile. The views were fantastic with different views after each km.

At the route diverge checkpoint there was the option of a glass of squash for the riders and water for the horses. After 1 or 2 miles gradually climbing on up through the forestry we were up onto the open hill where there was a poor lone steward manning the gate. Due to all the wet weather we have had the mountain was very wet and quite deep and slippery in places but it was quite nice to let the horses pick their way and enjoy the magnificent views where you could see for miles and miles. Even the gate in the middle of the mountain was manned by a lady all by herself! From here we could just about make out three riders that were in the distance.

What goes up must come down and we were soon at the top of a very long downhill path off the hill. I think we must have been about 20 minutes getting from the top of this hill to the bottom. It just seemed to keep going and going but luckily the ground underfoot was good and Pie just picked his way down. At the bottom of the hill it was a nice wide grassy track where we had a nice canter past the photographer before crossing a couple of fields, through farmyards and down a quiet road then down a couple of fields back to the venue. 17 miles completed in 3 hours 15 minutes.

They even had a BBQ and refreshments with lots of homemade cakes which kept those that weren't riding fed and watered as well as the riders. The burger was very nice too.

Definitely a ride to put on the calendar for next year 😊

Nicola Davies

Other Groups Fun Rides 2017

Date	Ride	Group
17 th September	Lambourn Downs	Cotswold
24 th September	Pembrey	South & West Wales

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 3rd September	Schooling @ Trellech
Sat/Sun 9/10 th September	Bwlch Raid National
Thursday 28 th September	Bromyard Fire Station Open Evening
Sunday 8 th October	Schooling @ Usk College
Sunday 15 th October	Schooling @ Trellech
Sunday 22 nd October	Talybont Reservoir Fun Ride
Saturday 4 th November	Equine Gait Analysis Day
Sunday 5 th November	Schooling @ Trellech
Saturday 18 th November	Schooling @ Usk College
Saturday 2 nd December	BAM & Awards Evening
Sunday 3 rd December	Schooling @ Usk College
Sunday 31 st December	Christmas Cracker Fun Ride
Sunday 14 th January 2018	Schooling @ Usk College
Saturday 10 th February 2018	Schooling @ Usk College

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

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.