



Offa's Dyke Group  
Of Endurance GB  
**Newsletter – January 2014**  
[www.offasdykegb.co.uk](http://www.offasdykegb.co.uk)



## Chairman's Comment

Well - what to say as a cheery introduction in the run-up to your Endurance riding season? No one can be finding this winter easy...winter never is, but this one is especially challenging in many areas, & there's a long way yet to go! I hope that you are all coping.

Looking ahead - again this year Offa's Dyke Group is hosting the first National EGB Ride of the season in the Forest of Dean. This is an event eagerly anticipated by many. Entries Secretary Gill Talbot had a flood of entries as soon as entries 'opened' for March Hares! & with the enlarged venue field we hope to be able to accommodate more entries than in the past. Fingers crossed the venue won't be one big lake!.....in either March, or April for 'Bluebell'.....Although I have yet to see a hare, March or otherwise, in the forest, I have seen one dash across my own garden twice in the last couple of weeks, which is a huge thrill. Hares are much larger than one might imagine, & the speed quite extraordinary!

I digress.....

Your Committee are always looking for ways to encourage members to participate, & have challenges to achieve. To this end we have tweaked a couple of the Trophy rules, so please check through the sheet carefully when it arrives.

One alteration which is applicable to all levels of rider, & hopefully will be appreciated by our members, is a slight alteration to the 'Pleasure Ride Rosette' (also called 'Fun Rides') qualification - this rosette is fun to achieve & always a very pretty one! It will now be awarded for participation in one less Fun Ride than the number actually run by Offa's Dyke Group, **of which** one need not be an Offa's Dyke Fun/Pleasure Ride. Other slight changes are to the Shimara Cup & Offa's Dyke Challenge, PLUS we also have a new Trophy, kindly donated by previous Group Chairperson Gina Harris....watch this space!

The message that accompanies these changes is PLEASE - send in your Trophy Form at the end of each season, however many or few rides you've completed! We only ask for proof of participation in non-National Rides, as all National Rides included on your sheet for the season are verified via EGB records. Our Trophy Secretary Chris Wray can only do this if you send in your form to trigger your entry into his system. You have to be in it to win it....as they say!

*Heather*

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## Thanks to Debbie

A huge THANK YOU is due to a long-standing member & supporter of Endurance, who has served on the Offa's Dyke Committee as Vice Chair for many years, standing down as of the BAM last December.

Debbie Williams has been a Group member since shortly after its inception - maybe 24 years? In this time she has successfully completed competitive rides of at least 6,273km on her horses Kazy, Bramble, Fable, Cully, William, Woody & Kystralle, plus Gill's Ranazak & Sharon's Forge Quest!, not including Group Rides & other training either!

Debbie has also been Ride Organiser of March Hares! for many years, as well as organising our wonderful Christmas Ride for several. In addition she has welcomed new members to her home for Novice Training &, more onerously, given the Group caravan a home for more years than she wishes to remember!!!

Personally I would like to thank Debbie for the hay & friendship & support for many years. Endurance is a wonderful sport for creating life long friendships!

*Heather*

## HELPERS NEEDED FOR MARCH HARES RIDE (2nd March) AND BLUEBELLS RIDE (26th+27th April)

The March Hares ride is only a month away and Bluebells on 26-27 April will come round sooner than we think!

This is a plea for helpers to contact us - we really really need your help to make these rides successful. Please contact us if you are able to help. Every little bit of help is valuable to us, even if you can only give us a few hours!

Many Rides struggle to find enough helpers to run and some events in the past have had to be cancelled due to lack of helpers. Not only can helping be very enjoyable but you also have the satisfaction of putting something back into the sport. It's also a great way to learn about the sport and get involved - no experience is needed. The caterer is booked and we will ensure you are fed and watered!

Please bear in mind that if no one helps, there will be no rides.

Many thanks in advance,  
Cecilia Lindberg ([acl@ceciliaindberg.co.uk](mailto:acl@ceciliaindberg.co.uk)) and Andrea Champ ([quinnchamp@gmail.com](mailto:quinnchamp@gmail.com)) - co-organisers

# Editor's Comment

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2014. Full Riding members of OD group should find enclosed with the newsletter (or posted separately for those of you receiving the newsletter electronically) a Trophy Card, along with the up to date list of all the lovely rosettes and trophies Offa's Dyke Group award at the end of each year. It's surprising how few people complete and send in their trophy card each year and it is a shame to see that some were not even awarded last year because there were no applicants.

Please remember to take your trophy card to rides (I keep mine in my log book) and ask the secretary to sign it for you at the end of Fun and Pleasure Rides. There is no need to have it signed for National GER and CER rides, as Chris can check the rides you list on the EGB database. If you help at a ride or event, please remember to get that signed for too, as some of the awards require you to have helped.

The BAM this year was a special celebration of 25 years of the group and was attended by many founder members who came along to share their stories and photos of the early days of Offa's Dyke. I have a report and photos later in the newsletter, but hubby Robin has put lots more photos and details on the website if you'd like to take a look.

The committee will soon start planning the BAM for this year and we would welcome feedback and suggestions of what you'd like us to arrange. It would be nice to see more of our newer members coming along to the BAM. Please contact any member of the committee, or use the 'contact' button on the website to let us know your comments or suggestions.

Personally I'm looking forward to my first season with my baby horse Harry. He's booked for his first 30k Novice ride at March Hares. I just hope I don't meet a family of Wild Boar as I did last year with Prophet. I'm not sure Harry quite has Prophet's laid back attitude to life!

I hope you enjoy the reports in this newsletter. I'm especially grateful to Nicola Davies for her article about her very successful season with her Welsh Cobs – inspiration I'm sure for those of you who don't own Arabs that you can still have a lot of fun and success in Endurance.

Please send me lots of articles for the future newsletters. I'd love to hear about rides you've been to, fun you've had, tips for other riders or anything else you'd like to tell us about.

*Carolyn Edwards*

## *Changes to the Associate Members Scheme*

This year the Associate Members' scheme has been changed by EGB to include members' rate entry fees for Pleasure Ride classes at National EGB rides. This means a saving of £8 per ride for PR classes at any National ride in the country. Offa's Dyke have these classes on offer at March Hares and Cranham this year, but there are PR classes at most EGB National rides – so this could work out quite a saving for AMs who enjoy Pleasure and Fun Rides.

EGB have increased the annual fee for Associate Members this year to £35 per person. There is no longer family membership for either AMs or full EGB members. There is also now the option to join or renew online through the EGB website using your debit or credit card (note the 2.5% fee for credit cards)

If you would like to renew your AM subscription or find out more about the benefits in 2014 please look at the membership pages of the Offa's Dyke website.

*Carolyn Edwards (OD membership secretary)*

## *Offa's Dyke Fun Ride Fees 2014*

In order to remain competitive in the face of competition from local fun rides, the fee for non-members at Offa's Dyke Fun rides has been reduced to £15. This means the entry fee for all OD Fun rides for 2014 will be:

Members and AMs	£10
Non-Members	£15

The social ride entry forms on the website have been changed to show the new fees. Entry fees for National Rides are as shown in the members' handbook, which should be with us shortly.

## *Pleasure and Fun Rides for 2014*

Offa's Dyke have a pleasure ride class at March Hares Ride this year in addition to the usual pleasure ride class at Cranham Ride. Bluebell has the group fun ride on the Saturday before the National ride as usual. Nicola has also kindly agreed to run Black Mountains Fun Ride again this year. She will run Govilon and Black Mountains Fun Rides on alternate years.

We hope to have more Offa's Dyke Fun Rides in 2014, which are currently in the planning stage. Keep an eye on our website and future newsletters for updates on these. The back page of this newsletter lists the confirmed dates of Offa's Dyke Ride for 2014 so far.

In addition to our rides, keep an eye on the website 'Rides and Events' page and links to websites of surrounding groups for their Fun Rides. Remember Members and Associate Members can do Pleasure and Fun Rides of any group at members' entry rates.

### **Group Fun Rides 2014**

Sunday 9 March	Quantocks	Wessex Group
Saturday 15 March	Wentwood in Spring	De Cymru Group
Sunday 30 March	Cleeve Hill (see advert below)	Cotswold Group
Sunday 20 April	Bibury	Cotswold Group
Saturday 26 April	FOD Bluebell	Offa's Dyke Group
Sunday 1 June	Rudry	De Cymru
Sunday 6 July	Black Mountains	Offa's Dyke Group

## Cleeve Hill Fun Ride (Cotswold Group) Sunday 30th March 2014

The ride goes over Cleeve Common Nr Cheltenham with minimal roadwork. The ride follows tracks across the common itself as well as adjacent bridleways, including tracks over private land not normally accessible. As the common is 1083 feet at its highest point, there are extensive views towards the Malvern Hills on a clear day. If you are new to Endurance this ride offers enjoyment without the nerves of competition.

### **Virtually No Roadwork.**

There will be 3 loops of 8km, 12km and 8km. You can ride 1 or all 3

Starting from Black Barns, Charlton Abbots Nr Andoversford, Glos.  
Start Times Between 10am and 12pm

**We have news from Margaret Barry** that the 8km Easterly route is almost all now on stubble fields with the kind permission of the Charlton Abbots Estate –sounds fabulous

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## Schooling Lessons Winter 2013-14

This winter I have run a total of 9 sessions of schooling lessons with Carole Broad BHS Fellow. 6 of them were at our usual venue of Huntley School of Equitation. For the first time this winter 1 added a further 3 dates at Usk college, using their very spacious indoor school. This catered for our members living at that end of the Offa's Dyke area. Some of the very keen stalwarts actually attended sessions at both venues. It's very nice to get positive feedback from those who attend these sessions, such as the email below from Gill Talbot:

*Thank you Carolyn for organising the Schooling Sessions at Usk this winter, Sekora and I have thoroughly enjoyed riding in that lovey indoor school.*

*We have regular schooling lessons with my local instructor Sarah Spencer-Williams (Chief Instructor @ Usk) in her outdoor menage, but it has been most beneficial to have the Offas' Dyke lessons as it has given my young horse Sekora the opportunity of regular travelling, schooling with other horses, (something*

she found very disconcerting at the first session, but by the 2nd session, well, she was hardly noticing the others at all!) and thoroughly enjoying being able to canter round that lovely big school! It was also nice to have a different instructor's opinion and guidance. Another benefit to us was the opportunity to see and hear so much traffic whizzing past the trailer parking area! We even had 'blues & twos' at one visit..... Sekora never turned a hair I'm pleased to say - excellent training for next year's rides 🤔

Really hope we can all do it again next year!

Gill Talbot & Sa'da Sekora.

**HELP PLEASE:** For next year's lessons we will no longer be able to rent the school at Huntley School of Equitation following its closure. If anyone has an idea of a suitable indoor school we could rent at this end – or central to the Offa's Dyke area, please let me know.

Carolyn Edwards

## Offa's Dyke 25th Anniversary BAM



Thanks to all the members old and new who came along celebrate 25 years of Offa's Dyke Group in December. To mark this a special occasion we had a 'Hog Roast' supplied by Perfect Pig Roast of Ross-on Wye, along with a vegetarian crumble from Woods of Whitchurch. Thanks to Debbie and Rachel Williams for organizing both for us. Robin and Carolyn bought a fabulous variety of deserts and cakes including the specially decorated cake pictured above.

The Priory was beautifully decorated with silver banners and balloons and we brought along a noticeboard for everyone to bring along and share their old photos and memorabilia of their own early days in Endurance. This proved a great talking point for members old and new.



The evening began by founder member Margaret McKiddie sharing her memories of what started her out in Endurance. She then kindly read out the letter sent by Fiona Wilton, who 'set the ball rolling' 25 years ago to found the new Offa's Dyke Group. Fiona had hoped to be with us on the evening, but unfortunately due to a clash with a family event she couldn't. We thought it would be nice to publish her letter in full for those of you who didn't make the evening:

*"Good evening everyone.*

*I am so very sorry not to be able to come to this very special meeting tonight. I thought I would be here but due to one of those clashes with another event it's not possible. It seems that special anniversary reunions are like buses- none for 25 years then two of them come along at once on the same night and at exactly the same hour.*

*It's hard to believe that its quarter of a century since I organized a pleasure ride in Trellech followed by a couple of indoor meetings at The Narth. Out of my first determined efforts grew a little set of interested people - and within 2 years we had become a proper group-affiliated to the EHPS of GB.*

*Realizing that we were almost all beginners at this new discipline we ran a number of training classes, usually generously taught by our handful of more experienced members. They were informal and very friendly sessions - and delivered at our own homes. Every time I was at any sort of competition I got enquiries about this unusual support. There wasn't a*

*night when I didn't have phone calls and letters asking for advice and membership flooded in - so relatively soon we had a viable membership number and then riders rising through the distances and speeds. Members were retiring their fell ponies and cobs to switch to more specialist horses -and we collectively began winning ERs and then major titles.*

*One of the hallmarks of the Group in those days was the slightly wacky programme of social events, which served a useful purpose as training rides but which also glued the group together and at which our long suffering partners and children played a vital part as well as having fun. We had a mothers' day barbecue ride, a lawn meet on Boxing Day in full fancy dress complete with a stirrup cup, several of our small sons proudly marked routes on trail bikes, we survived trial by Ride and Tie and much much more. It was a genuinely family club atmosphere -and without those same family members enjoying their roles as stewards, timekeepers and vet pens our events would never have happened. They were valued and they knew it.*

*Importantly, as we added longer competitive mileage classes, we still managed to have a class for everyone .From the hairy hackers who loved to talk faster than they rode, to the twice rounders getting ready for some more prestigious day. This variety kept it financially balanced and socially balanced too.*

*The first cup the group was given, the silver Shimara cup, named for my beloved silver mare (which will be presented again later this evening), reflected this ethos. It was originally awarded on the basis of points which were earned by keeping the group vibrant. You could get points for completing a ride class of any distance and you could get more for helping at any event. Officially valuing all who contributed was a wholly new concept at this wholly new group and it worked so well.*

*We also had indoor meetings with excellent speakers. I doubt any of us will forget Rosie Swales account of her ride the length of Chile, the Olympic Show jumping vet letting us see film of how he cared for teams flying to the other side of the world (and taking their own growing grass with them), a really high powered nutritionist from Spillers or a specialist remedial farrier showing how fractional changes in shoeing made such a difference. It was amazing.*

*So- that's a quick glance back to our first years. Since then tack, rules, people, horses, and even our official affiliation have changed, but I hope that the values which were important then are still important to you all today. Care for our animals and the encouragement of others at all levels was paramount.*

*The FEI says To finish is to Win- but in the case of a successful group I always felt it was the business of getting people started and helping them to improve which made it a winner - and for 25 years this is where Offa's Dyke has scored so highly.*

*I wish you all a great evening tonight -and here's to the next enormously successful 25 years.*

*Fiona Wilton*

# Trophies and Awards 2013

<b>Pleasure Ride Rosettes</b>		
Awarded to members and associate members who have completed 5 pleasure rides, 4 of which must be OD rides	Alison Knight	Ann-Marie Pelc
<b>Pandora Distance Rosettes</b>		
Presented by Margaret McKiddie in honour of her long distance mare Pandora. Awarded to horses completing at least 240, 320 or 400 km in the current season. If your horse has already gained a 240km rosette for a previous season he/she will need to complete an extra 80 km to be eligible. 200 miles/320 km rosettes can be claimed for two seasons, thereafter an extra 80 km will need to be completed to be eligible. 250 miles/400 km rosettes can be claimed in successive seasons. Only one Pandora rosette can be claimed for each horse.	<b>240km</b>	
	Chica Gitano	Ally Knight
	Montanna	Ann-Marie Pelc
	Shaikha Bint Krayaan	Amanda May
	<b>320km</b>	
	Stella II	Sally Lewis
	Sa Sacred Spirit	Ann-Marie Pelc
	Bint Al Reeh Janoob	Greta Verkerk
	Warrens Hill Troy	Sharon Parr
	<b>400km</b>	
	Oakleazefarm Czamak	Louise Rich
	Oakleazefarm Czako	Sue Rich
	Roundhills Harvest Shine	Heather Evans
	Cs Ibn Fiesta	Debbie Williams
	Barik	Abigail Tennant
	Talishla	Fiona Griffiths
<b>Warrens Hill Arabians First 80 km Rosette</b>		
For horses completing their first 80km or longer ride.	Roundhills Harvest Shine	Heather Evans
	Sa Sacred Spirit	Ann-Marie Pelc
	Talishla	Fiona Griffiths
	Bint Al Reeh Janoob	Greta Verkerk
	Shaikha Bint Krayaan	Amanda May
	Warrens Hill Troy	Sharon Parr
<b>Warrens Hill Arabians First 160 km Rosette</b>		
For horses completing their first 160km or longer ride.	Barik	Abigail Tennant
<b>Grade 1 Rosettes</b>		
Presented by Sharon Parr for EGB cumulative grade 1 distance in increments of 400 km.	<b>400km</b>	
	Hendrewen Pirate	
	Kenitra Du Somail	

<b>Bilbo's Rainbow</b>		
Bilbo started his Endurance career as a 20y/o. To commemorate Bilbo, this rosette is awarded to any horse aged 20 or over in the current year, ridden or owned by an OD member, who successfully completes any competitive Ride.	Zawadi	Chris Wray
	Midnight Star	Rachel Williams
<b>Junior Rosette</b>		
For riders aged 15 and under on 31st December at the end of this trophy season completing any 3 rides.	Non awarded this year.	
<b>Clear Card Rosette</b>		
For a horse's 24 consecutive competitive ride passes without a fail (novice rides – on a separate card – may count towards the required 24 passes).	Hendrewen Pirate	
<b>Thoroughbred Rosette</b>		
Presented by Delwyn Hall for the Thoroughbred or 50% (no less) Thoroughbred who successfully completes the highest distance.	Talishla	Fiona Griffiths
<b>Native/Neddy Rosette</b>		
Presented by Delwyn Hall to the full/part bred native or unregistered with less than 25% Arab, Thoroughbred or Warmblood who successfully completes the highest distance.	Hendrewen Pirate	Nicola Davies
<b>Associate Members Trophy</b>		
Awarded to the Associate Group Member who gains most points overall (riding and non-riding).	Not awarded this year	
<b>Rough Close Lady Trophy</b>		
Presented by Delwyn Hall for the rider completing the highest ER distance in their first season of ER's. (Rides can be in any country).	Warrens Hill Troy	Sharon Parr
	Roundhills Harvest Shine	Heather Evans
<b>Starlight Trophy</b>		
Presented by Janet Evans for the best novice horse in its first competitive season. No competitive rides to have been completed in the previous season. No more than ten rides may be entered in total, those of up to and including 50km will be accepted.	Druimghigha Lantana	Andrea Champ
	Montanna	Ann-Marie Pelc

<b>Pandora Trophy</b>			
Awarded by Margaret McKiddie for novice riders, who, before the commencement of the current season, have not started in more than 5 competitive rides. The horse or pony need not be novice. Not more than 10 competitive events to be entered. Rides to be 50 km or below.	Bint Al Reeh Janoob	Greta Verkerk	
<b>Mistress Harriet Trophy</b>			
Presented by Paul and Gina Harris to the junior rider (17 and under during this trophy season) who successfully completes the highest distance.	Not awarded this year		
<b>Cindy Trophy</b>			
Awarded by Gareth and Lindsay Williams to the veteran horse aged 16 years and over at the start of the current season who successfully completes the highest distance.	Stella II	Sally Lewis	
	Zawadi	Chris Wray	
<b>Chandor Trophy</b>			
Named for the horse which took Abbi Tennant, the donor, through her Young Rider career. Awarded to the high point Young Rider aged from 19 to 22 on 31st December at the end of this trophy season	Oakleazefarm Czamak	Louise Rich	
	Hendrewen Pirate	Nicola Davies	
<b>Mitchell Arab Racehorse to Endurance Horse Trophy</b>			
Awarded by Gabrielle Franklin to the Arab (minimum 50%) horse that has raced, scored on points for all completed EGB rides including NCRs.	Barik	Abigail Tennant	
<b>Warrens Hill Arabians Trophy</b>			
Awarded by Ray and Lesley Dunn to the Homebred horse who successfully completes the highest distance. The owner/breeder must be an Offa's Dyke member and to have helped at a EGB or EGB group ride	Oakleazefarm Czamak	Louise Rich	
	Chica Gitano	Ally Knight	
<b>Team Trophy</b>			
Awarded to the highest points for a nominated team of 3 combinations (3 riders, one horse each) in all types of ride except ERs.	Nicola Davies	Belinda Stewart	Sally Lewis

<b>Bonanza Trophy</b>		
Presented by Ray and Lesley Dunn to the highpoint registered Pure, Part or Anglo Arab in Endurance GB competitions.	Barik	Abigail Tennant
	Oakleazefarm Czamak	Louise Rich
<b>Madoc Trophy</b>		
Presented by Margaret McKiddie for the highpoint horse in Endurance GB competitions. To be eligible the rider or owner must produce evidence of helping at at least one Offa's Dyke ride.	Barik	Abigail Tennant
	Oakleazefarm Czamak	Louise Rich
<b>Belstar Trophy</b>		
Awarded to the highest point horse and rider Open or Advanced combination in graded rides only. Best 10 graded rides to count. Winners of the Madoc and Bonanza Trophies are excluded.	Talishla	Fiona Griffiths
	Roundhills Harvest Shine	Heather Evans
<b>The Offa's Dyke Challenge Trophy</b>		
Presented by Carolyn Edwards in memory of Tarr Steps Hannah to the Horse/Rider combination scoring the most trophy points in their 3 highest scoring completions on Offa's Dyke Group rides.	Cherekee	Fiona Griffiths
	Talishla	Fiona Griffiths
<b>Shimara Cup</b>		
Awarded by Fiona Wilton for the group member who gains most points overall (riding and non-riding).	Nicola Davies	Debbie Williams
<b>Unsung Hero Award</b>		
Awarded by the Committee to the individual who has contributed most to the Group during the current season.	Gina Harris	

## **Helpers' raffle**

In recognition of our wonderful volunteers, we have a raffle each year of all our helpers' names. Each time you help your name goes in the 'hat' again. This year the following people received a £10 Countrywide voucher:

Julian Costello, Lin Brown, Rachel Williams, Phillipa Cherryson and Wendy Clyde

## Welsh Inter-Group Challenge

Chris Wray announced that Offa's Dyke was this year's winner and Katherine Thornton performed the presentation of the special rosettes to:

Louise Rich, Fiona Griffiths, Karen Jones, Nicola Davies, Andrea Champ, Debbie Williams, Heather Evans, Abbi Tennant, Belinda Stewart, Sarah Rogerson, Sally Lewis, Alison Knight and Kerri Costello

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*Thank you to Nicola for writing this report for me about her very successful season on her Welsh Cob horses. It is very nice to see that Endurance can be fun and enjoyable for riders with lots of different breeds of horse – not just Arabs. Congratulations Nicola!*

### **Season of my 'Native' Neddy's**

For those of you who don't know, I have a Welsh Cob called Hendrewen Pirate or Pie to his friends and a Cob x mare, Stella. I am lucky enough to have a very good friend, Sally who rides her at most rides and also Janine a De Cymru member who has been unlucky with her horses so happy to get a ride.

Our season started with the Christmas Cracker ride at the end of December before the first competitive ride of the season at Forest of Dean March Hares, a fairly local ride for us. After the hard winter it was great to be out again and get into the swing of the new season. The tracks in the forestry rode very well and I always find it easy to keep a good rhythm there. Soon we were back after a super ride. Both easily trundled round the 33km at 10.1km/h to both get grade 1's.

Next was Wentwood one of my favourite rides and only an hour away. Again took both and did the 40km. Pie never likes the venue in the wood so usually struggle to get his heart rate as low as it could be but wasn't too bad this year as we got it to 44. The route rode well with some great tracks although I have to admit we did miss the turn up left up the 'hill' and ended up riding a fair way before we met other lost riders (no names mentioned!) and decided we had missed the track and went back and found the track. Not bad a grade 2 and 3, shame we got lost time getting lost! Somewhere after this I managed to organise the Govilon fun ride as well.

Back now to Forest of Dean Bluebell where I helped at the pleasure ride on the Saturday and did the 34km on the Sunday. Janine rode Stella at this ride and we were soon off on our way. The forestry tracks rode very well with some interesting new bits that always make a ride that bit exciting.

Pen Ddol Y Gader was my favourite ride of the year and the most traumatic! This was a new ride for me and as it was only about 2 hours away we decided to give it a go. We did miss the one turning getting there and had to turn around but apart from that getting there was fine just slow and twisty. The going on the top of the mountain was great with lots of places to canter. Just before checkpoint 2 Pie pulled a shoe so we steadily went on, luckily the going on that section was really good so didn't slow us down too much. At the next checkpoint they radioed for the farrier to meet me at the next checkpoint. We carried onto the next checkpoint a bit slower as there were a few rougher tracks. Shoe went on, off to go. Strangely enough we found out the farrier had worked with my farrier. The rest of the ride just flowed and before we knew it we could see the final checkpoint in sight. What happens next... we are having a lovely final canter on the top when Stella pulls a shoe!! Only once have any of my horses pulled a shoe off at a ride but 2 shoes off 2 horses in 1 ride this definitely isn't my day! We walked for the last 45 minutes home as it was either road or forestry tracks as I knew we had just under an hour to get back in time. We got back with 6 minutes to spare, cutting it fine I know. Shoe back on as soon as we were back and both vetted fine. Both got completions but I didn't mind at all as long as they passed. What made this pass even more of an achievement was that this was Pie's 24th consecutive pass. This was a momentous ride which meant we got the beautiful 'Clear Card' rosette at the BAM. Hopefully this year will be less traumatic!! Our next outings were Blaenavon fun ride a few weeks later and then the Wentwood fun ride where both horses went with two different jockeys. Both were super rides that helped keep them ticking over between rides.

Saintwestwell was on one of the hottest days of the year so I downgraded to the 34km as this wasn't ideal with Pie being a black cob. This ride was mostly forestry tracks with a few repeated loops and a killer hill that we had to go up twice. We personally didn't find it too bad but a lady we rode up it with couldn't believe that it just kept going. We met up with several familiar faces on the way and soon we were back at the venue just, as we missed the turning home due to crew cars but thanks to Fiona for pointing us in the right direction. I had done plenty of ice to try and help cool them for the final vetting, Pie's heart rate didn't come down as low as it usually does but it was just so hot with no shade at all. Stella had a lovely low rate to get a grade 1 and Pie just got a completion which was relief.

Cranham was our first solo ride of the year so I rode with Belinda in the 40km, always a ride I really enjoy as it's a lot of headlands and soft tracks through woods passing some beautiful properties and polo yards. The only ride that you get to push a button and the gate opens for you! Why can't all gates be like that! This was not our day and unfortunately he was slightly lame at the end but nothing serious as he was happily

cantering round next day. My next focus was to do the final preparations for my Black Mountains fun ride which all went smoothly.

Cirencester has to be my other favorite ride, where else can you go and canter so much. Only ever done this ride once before a few years ago so it was great to be back. Miles and miles of estate ground with the added bonus of water points on course. Again a solo trip but met with Jane and Belinda there so rode with them and with the cantering and talking we were soon back at the venue. Our fastest ride of the year at 11.6km/h and was definitely as good as I remembered.



Next was Long Mynd which was a lovely new ride in 2012 so we returned again. Only did the 32km as had done Cirencester the week before. A mixture of country lanes, fields, mountain and the odd bridle path which gives a lovely varied ride. Once you're on the top the scenery is fab and you have gone for miles without even noticing. There were a few wild ponies on the one track which we trotted through with no problem. Both passed with grade 1's at 10.4km/h, this also meant Pie now had got over 400km of grade 1's.

Our last ride was the Red Dragon a ride I hadn't initially planned to do this year as its not one of my favourites but it came to the end and I couldn't resist. Stella had a different jockey for this one with Janine kindly riding her. Once up the big hill onto the top there is plenty of good going before diving back down, good stretch of road before climbing back up and then down I can't remember how many times until finally going back down the big hill. We finished and we passed with grade 2's what a great end to the season and an added bonus it didn't rain!

Overall we had a very successful season and were thrilled with the trophies and rosettes they both won at the Awards evening. Thanks to all the organisers and sponsors for a great night. However I couldn't do all this without Sally, Stella's main jockey and my mum who's chief chauffeur and crew. Now we have been doing some flatwork and dressage and are fit and ready for an exciting 2014!!

*Nicola Davies*

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Alternatively, the newsletter can be downloaded free of charge from our website 'news' page. Some previous newsletters and archives are also available

## Dates for your diary

Schooling lesson	Huntley	Sunday 16 February
March Hares	National ride	Sunday 2 March
Bluebell	Fun Ride	Saturday 26 April
Bluebell	National Ride	Sunday 27 April
Black Mountains	Fun Ride	Sunday 6 July
Cranham	National Ride	Sunday 27 July

**More information on the website 'rides & events' page**  
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