



Offa's Dyke Group of Endurance GB

Newsletter- April 2019

www.egboffasdyke.co.uk



Chairman's Comments

It has been a frustrating spring again! The only really nasty few days of weather of the whole winter took out Maryland. It is always especially hard for the organiser who has done almost all the work by the time the weather intervened so commiserations to Abbi but many thanks that she is willing to reschedule in the autumn. The flu outbreak has caused some rethinks and delays but hopefully everyone is on the way to getting any horse they want to compete or just do fun rides with vaccinated so they can take part. I think it is likely that this ruling will stay even when the outbreak dies down. Most other disciplines require this.

Charlie and I have had issues with the Forest of Dean venue as the normal one is having it's hedges cut back by volunteers prior to fencing which will make it boar proof in the future. Long term good but short term there are piles of brash and rolls of old stock netting dotted about rendering it unsafe at the moment. With the cancellation of Wentwood we had a rethink and were delighted to discover that Speech House was available for Sunday 21st April - it was already booked so it wasn't an option for our original date. Apologies to anyone whose plans have been disrupted but the good news is that it means we can run a group Pleasure/Fun Ride on the same day - see elsewhere in the newsletter for details.

There are also plans afoot for a couple of new rides over the summer- provisional details of the brand new Lydney Park Estate Fun ride can be found on page 9 and more details for the others will be available in due course.
Happy riding!

Mary Stubbs

Editor's Comments

It's been pretty quiet since our last newsletter, there was the final winter schooling lessons and a talk with Belinda and Mary in February. Unfortunately Maryland was postponed due to the inclement weather and then the Equine flu which meant we haven't yet had a group ride in 2019. Maryland has been rescheduled for the 27th October subject to forestry approval. FOD Bluebell has come forward a week due to the cancellation of Wentwood which means we now have a lovely venue at Speech House which has allowed us to run a group fun ride now also.

As a group we have lots to look forward to this year with two new rides; Lydney Park Estate and Michaelchurch Escley Estate as well as FOD Bluebell National and fun ride, Govilon fun ride, FOD Autumn Belle and then Maryland. Unfortunately Wye Valley has been cancelled for 2019 but don't panic it will return in 2020!

The popular summer schooling lessons have been arranged with Sarah Spencer-Williams kindly to be held at Lesley Dunn's in Trellech. But I'm still awaiting date confirmation from Carole Broad.

Hope you all have a successful and enjoyable season ☺

Nicola Davies

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Endurance GB Equine Influenza Policy

In consultation with the Animal Health Trust and the British Equestrian Federation, Endurance GB have drawn up the following policy with regard to flu vaccination and vaccination records. ***This policy remains in place during the current Equine Influenza outbreak but may be subject to change as this is an ever changing issue.***

The equine's flu vaccination records **must be uploaded with the event entry, emailed to the event organiser, or, in the case of paper entry, forwarded to the Endurance GB event organiser with the event entry.** This applies to national or social rides, training events, etc., where equines are present. **Please note that the vaccination record and identification pages of the passport must be forwarded.**

Equines must undergo a primary course where the first and second vaccinations are no less than 21 days and no more than 92 days apart. **For equines attending Endurance GB events, the vaccination following the second vaccination of the primary course must be carried out within 7 months;** the BEF strongly recommend the window for vaccination being between 150 and 215 days after the primary course. Equines who have undergone the initial 2 vaccinations in the primary course are permitted to take part in the event.

Vaccination 1

Vaccination 2 21-92 days after vaccination 1

Vaccination 3 within 7 months of vaccination 2 (150 to 215 days after vaccination 2 preferred)

Vaccination 4 onwards within 12 months of the previous vaccination

The vaccination records will be checked for the 4 calendar years preceding the event date.

3. Equines may not take part in an event until 7 days have elapsed after any vaccination.

4. The equine's passport must be with the driver of the vehicle on entry to a venue ready for examination and must be taken to the secretary on registration at the event.

5. Venues may have individual protocols for vaccination and checking, and may put additional criteria in place. These will be detailed in the event information and must also be complied with.

6. In cases where equines are unable to be vaccinated for veterinary reasons, these will be referred to the Endurance GB Welfare committee for consultation and advice.

7. Owners of equines who also compete in competitions overseen by other organisations (ie SERC, the FEI, the Jockey Club, British Riding Clubs, the Pony Club, other disciplines, breed societies, etc) should check that their equine's vaccination records also comply with the criteria set out by those organisations as they may have different requirements.

New date

New venue

Bluebell Fun Ride

Sunday 21st April



Mainly forestry woodland and tracks, with less than 1km road work. Route options of 17km and 32km (TBC).

On all routes there is a small, safe wooden bridge over a weir - there will be a mounting block and steward available in case anyone chooses to lead.

Venue: Speech House Fields, Speech House Hotel, Speech House Road, Coleford GL16 7EL

There will be loos and catering, but you will need to bring your own water.

Start times: Between 10:00 and 11:00

Entry fee: £10 for EGB members, £15 for non members.

Entries to:
Mary Stubbs,
Slade Farm,
Woodside,
Woolaston,
Lydney,
Gloucestershire,
GL15 6PS

**ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED
ON THE DAY**

Enquiries: 01594 529100 or mary@yewtc.demon.co.uk

Ride information will be available for download from
www.egboffasdyke.co.uk/bluebell-fun-ride

Ride Organiser's Perspective

Daffodil Ride 2019

The ride idea was originally hatched from a conversation between Lise Cooke and my mum Jane last year whilst they were reminiscing over lost routes and tracks from the old Yet Goch ride that ran through Brechfa Forest. Mum felt that 'Daffodil' would be a great name to encompass the area and spirit we wished to run the ride! Lise lives local to the Daffodil route so was the perfect person to plan and prepare a real endurance challenge! Off we went....



Before I knew it I was roped in to sort all the pre ride information out – EGB ride application, permit with the forestry, caterers, toilet, entries, emergency wristbands, officials, volunteers, health and safety. You name it – I needed to know it!! Martin Moore in liaison with Lise produced an amazing ride map and it was all starting to feel real. Everything was going smoothly with the Saturday full and Sunday almost at capacity but then Equine Flu struck! No matter... this just meant unfortunately some poor competitors did not have enough time to vaccinate their horses for the ride so sadly had to withdraw. We were determined though if we only had one competitor – we would have run this ride.

With the close of entries it was a sight to behold at my house as my eighty five year old grandma, Mum and boyfriend all helped me get the ride information posted out. Phew I was glad when that was done! It was some very late nights in the week preceding the ride, sorting out the entries and ensuring that all officials would have the correct information for their role (I have soo much respect for our big ride organisers – they are simply amazing!)

Friday finally dawned and Mum and I took the journey down to Carmarthen with Lise and Val already started marking out the route. We set up the venue and then it was off to the supermarket to get started on all the volunteer packed lunches. One thing you realise as a ride organiser is you never stop thinking or planning until the ride is done.. there is always something to keep the mind on.

Saturday arrived and it was day one begun! Our brilliant volunteers began to arrive and I gave them each their pack and briefing; very ably assisted by the incredibly experienced TS, Liz Hinings who kept us all on the right path.



Finally our first riders started to pull in – this was exciting after months of planning for this moment! Our helpers did a brilliant job getting everyone parked as tight as they could to maximise the space. The first riders set off at 9am to enjoy what was beginning to show as a lovely day. I had worried all week about the weather but now it was time to enjoy it!

Before we knew it the day was done and it was just a case of packing away the ride flags before we set off for a pub meal with a few others in Carmarthen.

Day Two and the real challenge began! All week the forecast had been for high winds on the Sunday and I was just hoping they'd all got it wrong. Unfortunately the sight of a fallen tree blocking our way to the venue first thing wasn't a great start! Luckily Lise and Edwin Cooke were the heroes who managed to clear six trees (!) that had fallen over night to enable us to start. We were very lucky though as the ride was mostly sheltered on route and it didn't feel that windy on course at all. Most of the day turned out to be sunshine! Relief!

Before we knew it the ride was over and we were the last ones back at the venue. It was great to see how many happy riders had been enjoying their horses and this ride.



Our purpose with Daffodil was to bring back a true endurance ride that offers real variety and a challenge for all riders to come and enjoy. This was the elevation from the 32km route at Daffodil – 1,117 metres! ▲

To compare with others rides I have recorded –

✦ **Wentwood** 32km – 781m

✦ **Pen Ddol Y Gader** 35km – 816m

✦ **Golden Horseshoe** 41km – 1,053m

✦ **Red Dragon** 55km – 1,634m

Daffodil could well be the toughest Endurance GB ride in Wales [?] and even the U.K.!



I would say for any new ride organiser thinking about putting on their own ride – go for it! There is no escaping it's a lot of hard work, at times stressful, but all in all so worth it to see all the riders enjoying the sport we all love.

Thank you to my brilliant co-organisers Lise and Mum, South and West Wales Group, all the officials and of course the brilliant helpers who made it all possible! We are looking forward to putting on an even better Daffodil 2020 and welcoming more riders and crews to enjoy the challenge and scenery of the Welsh Hills!



Alex Tennant

Please Note

Wye Valley Fun Ride 2019- CANCELLED

Team Trophy Nominations

It's time to enter a team for the Offa's Dyke Team Trophy which will be presented at the awards evening at the end of the year!

Team Trophy –

Highest Points for teams of 3 combinations (3 riders, one horse each) in all types of ride except CERs. No limit to numbers of rides or distances. To be eligible, team names, riders and horses must be provided to Trophy Secretary (Chris Wray-c_wray@tiscali.co.uk) by 19th April

You've got to be in it to win it!

The Daffodil Ride 9/03/19

This was a new National ride on the Calendar with joint organisers of Jane & Alex Tennant and Lise Cooke and family. Rob and I decided we really should support this new venture but I really wanted to ride a 64km distance, preferably, (as I always ride alone at home), with some company. It was not to be – my 64km entry was the only one!

We planned our route to the venue and estimated approx 2 hours 30 mins (ish). The alarm sounded at 4.20am – I was already up, dressed and drinking coffee – I quickly pulled on waterproofs as it was torrential rain outside, pulled on wellies and ventured forth to feed horses, dogs, cats and chickens before dressing Sekora ready for travel. Rob was dragged from his bed at 5am, (full of cold and deaf from an ear infection!!!) 4 slightly surprised horses were turned out into wet paddocks in the dark, Sekora loaded into the trailer and wagons rolled at 5.45am.

The venue was tight for parking; lots of shuffling of trailers, lots of friendly helpers, everyone knew what needed to happen and got on with it. We presented to vet with a very chilled Sekora with a starting pulse of 33, tacked up and were out on course by 9am. The rain had stopped, the sun was threatening to push through the clouds and we were on our way round the first 32km route.

The route was lovely – so nice to be riding somewhere different - some exceptional ascents and descents (!!), definitely a good hill fittening ride...some wonderful views from the highest points, lots of water along the way and some super canter tracks!! The forestry looked almost magical with its many ancient trees festooned in moss – felt very ‘Lord of the Rings’. We had two crewing spots (ideal for dog walking) and Rob found them with no problems.

As we headed toward home we bumped into 4 other horses all heading out instead of home – much to Sekora’s surprise, she was convinced we were the only ones out on route! We arrived back at the venue for our vetgate and Jane came to greet me with “Oh I am just so pleased to see you Gill!” They were waiting for me to return as first horse out so they could relax knowing the route and marking was good! It was – I hadn’t had to search for a marker once.

We gave Sekora chance to stale before presenting to vet with a pulse of 41 – which I was very pleased with as it was quite a climb back to the venue. Our first ride of the season and Sekora was a bit picky about what she wanted to eat..... didn’t drink a lot either so we adjusted our ‘treat drinks’ for our first crew spot and syringed her with sugarbeet juice and hand fed her the beet pulp before tacking up again for round two.

The sun was out now and we took lots of opportunities to drink from puddles and fast flowing streams whilst feeding and sloshing Sekora at the crewing spots. She was really enjoying the second loop as she knew where she was going and that she could choose her pace – we stopped to let her munch some lush grass at the top of the last steep climb before crossing the last stream and climbing back up to the vetgate and finish. It was starting to feel cooler so tack was removed and rugs piled on – the mud would have to wait until after vetting..... we found a spot for staling that Sekora approved of and made our way to our final vetting. Pulse of 40 and a sound trot up – success! and another Grade 1 to add to the collection.... made the early start all worthwhile!

Sincere thanks to everyone who made the ride possible – Alex, Jane, Lise Cooke and family (who were luckily wizards with chainsaws!!) Liz Hining - for venturing deep into Wales to support this new ride with her TS expertise!...Rob (full of cold and feeling unwell) and 3 happy, smiling JR's... and ALL the many happy, smiling helpers out on route and at the venue. We really enjoyed our day and we do appreciate the fact that you had to wait for this one and only 64km combination at the end of a long chilly day!! – THANK YOU!!

Gill Talbot & Sa'da Sekora

Lydney Park Estate Fun Ride

Sunday 23rd June

Venue: Lydney Park Estate, Lydney GL15 6BU

Beautiful route through the estate including fields, woodland tracks, farm tracks and deer park. Route distances TBC.

Entries limited so pre-entry is essential!

Entries to:

Mary Stubbs
Slade Farm,
Woodside,
Woolaston,
Lydney,
Gloucestershire,
GL15 6PS



Enquiries: 01594 529100 or mary@yewtc.demon.co.uk

More details will be available shortly

**** Helpers needed ****

Please contact Mary on 01594 529100 or mary@yewtc.demon.co.uk if you can spare a few hours.

New date

New venue

Bluebell National Ride

Sunday 21st April

Mainly forestry woodland and tracks, with less than 1km road work.

Venue: Speech House Fields, Speech House Hotel, Speech House Road, Coleford GL16 7EL

There will be loos and catering, but you will need to bring your own water.

Classes:

1. 80km GER 1 hold
2. 65km GER 1 hold
3. 50km GER 1 hold (try a vetgate class)
4. 40km GER
5. 40km Novice GER
6. 32km GER
7. 32km Novice GER

Closing date: Monday 8th April

*** Helpers needed for Forest of Dean Bluebell ride
on Sunday 21st April ***

If you are able to help, please contact Mary Stubbs on 01594 529100 or mary@yewtc.demon.co.uk - she will be completely delighted to hear from you!
We promise to look after you well.

Remember: no volunteers - no rides!

Trip to Quantocks

The first week of March once the warm unusual February sunshine had changed back to rain and wind my mare Penny and I headed off to meet up with friends for some hill training.

Last year the 6 of us met up at Shanti Roos' Triscombe Barns for 4 days of slow hill work. These 4 days really set Penny and I up for our successful 2018 season so I was keen to repeat the training prior to any competitions.

We decided to try a different venue to access the Quantocks from the A39 side. We stayed at Pardlestone Farm. Just like at Triscombe Barns we had access straight up onto the hills.

The weather was wet and quite windy at times but this did not deter our horses who all enjoy being in company if their humans are going to make them work. We clambered up well used tracks and down onto beautiful wooded valleys. At times I felt I was in a film scene as the sun tried to appear and shadows cast by old twisted Oak trees. Occasionally we would disturb a deer or flock of sheep grazing. Sometimes Penny would suddenly stop and tail in the air start snorting, nothing to see. The other horses would give her an odd look and not react. She'd indicate to me there was a horse eating monster about to strike so flight would be the best option. I'd hear the other riders laugh as Penny would spin and try to canter off. Their horses preferring to put their heads down to graze while Penny fought the demons!

There are several herds of Ponies scattered across the hill. Some real quality looking horses. Apparently a palomino stallion was running the hill last spring. The locals all have their own version as to his breeding /heritage. They are used to happy hackers and don't cause you any trouble except photo bombing your selfies!

On the Quantock you are spilt for choice for routes but you can't go far without a climb or descent. The ground is good enough for fast work but the 6 of us always opt to try and stay in WALK (A common repetitively spoken to my mare!) Sadly the nuclear power plant at Hinckley point is an eye sore when you're admiring the view but at least it gives you a pointer for direction as the valleys can be disorientating as you windy up and down different tracks.

The 6 of us spent 3 long days doing about 20km a day, taking 4-5 hours before heading back to our luxurious accommodation. The horses each had a stable and individual turnout. The local pub was a mile away and serves excellent food which we sampled on our first night, having only ridden for 2 hrs on the day of arrival. The other nights we catered for ourselves in a well equipped kitchen.

This is my idea of a great 4 days of endurance preseason training. Good company, excellent countryside and plenty of food and wine so catch up on friends' experiences as we sat by the fire, having spent several hours in the saddle, knowing the horses were warm and safe.

Belinda Stewart

VOLUNTEERS LOYALTY SCHEME

From the start of the 2019 season we are introducing a Loyalty Scheme for our Volunteers. This will replace the scheme in the past where we have run a “Helpers’ raffle” for 5 Countrywide Vouchers at the BAM.

The Trophy Secretary will maintain a list of all people who help at rides and events, and every time a person reaches 6 helping occasions they will be able to receive a Loyalty Reward.

The Loyalty Reward will be either a free Group Fun/Pleasure Ride entry (if a riding member) or a voucher for a store (if non-riding volunteer). The ride entry/voucher are not transferrable to other persons.

The Volunteers list will be maintained by our Trophy Secretary, Chris Wray, so when you wish you can ask him how many helping occasions he has recorded for you. Organisers will update Chris following their events with the list of those who volunteered, so if Chris does not have you recorded as helping - then the Organiser is the one to query.

Rules to note:

- ❖ Ride Organisers will not get a Helping Occasion under this scheme as they will still receive a free Group ride entry as previously.
- ❖ Each volunteer giving at least a full half day will be recorded as a helping occasion.
- ❖ For those that give a full half days volunteering prior to or after the ride (e.g. route marking or setup etc) will also receive a helping occasion (an additional one if they were also a volunteer on the day).
- ❖ The consideration of what is required to be “a full half day” will be at the ride or event Organiser’s discretion.

There is no expiry date on these volunteer occasions so they will continue with a Reward every 6th occasion until the scheme is terminated by the OD committee.

We hope this new initiative will benefit and incentivise volunteering, and demonstrate how much we appreciate you giving up your time for everyone’s pleasure.

We hope to see you volunteering at our rides/events through the year!

Endurance Training Weekend Guided by Belinda Stewart

7–10 June 2019

Triscombe Barns, Quantock Hills, TA4 3HE



A weekend away training over the beautiful hills of the Quantocks. The riding provides both great fittening hill work and superb tracks for long canters - there are wooded valleys, stream crossings, open moorland tracks and endless views.

Triscombe Barns has stables, paddocks, an equine spa, arena and endless tracks right from the farmyard.

Ride length: Fri 1.5h, Sat 3-4h, Sun 3-4h, Mon 1.5h

£195 riders

£125 riders sharing room with other riders (double/twin/triple)

£100 non riders (sharing room with a rider)

Corralling included. Stabling £20 per night (myscanthus bedding included, 4 stables available)

The above prices are self catering so no food is included.

For further information or to book a place please email Shanti Roos - shantiroos@hotmail.com

www.triscombebarns.com

An Evening With....Belinda Stewart & Mary Stubbs

Each autumn your Committee discusses what we can do during the 'dark months' of January & February, to educate, enlighten or simply amuse our members.

This time, after the crowning of Offa's Dyke stalwart & long time organiser, official & general helpful member, Belinda Stewart, as EGB National Champion, we had a bright idea! 'How Did She Do It?' came to mind as the title of our Winter Talk on February 9th.....& this metamorphosed into the idea of a simple Q&A session in a warm & friendly atmosphere, maybe with the help of another of our very successful members. Sarah Rogerson sprung to mind as a suitable co-host, & a date was chosen that suited them both.

The good news & the bad....Rachael Cratchley, Sarah's twin sister, gave birth to Isabel just a few days before our event – a future Champion is born! This is/was excellent news. However, unfortunately for us, newly crowned aunt, Sarah, had to travel some distance to meet her, thus she was otherwise engaged for the date of our meeting. Mother Mary stepped into her shoes, & a good get together was set-fair.

With a warm room & pleasant atmosphere, it became obvious that we had a venue filled with many years worth of Endurance experience. There were some eager young faces, but we all agreed that one is never too old to learn.

To my shame, I was personally astonished at how many of our senior riders make serious efforts to keep fit – not just exercising their horses, but their own bodies as well. Some of us have assumed that because we do masses of physical work looking after our horses, then nothing else is needed – & that has always been my approach, I'm ashamed to say. However, numbers of older & very able members admitted that they go to yoga & Pilates, swim, run up mountains, go to the gym & even have personal trainers, to my utter astonishment! Belinda – a waif of a thing (apologies Belinda) - does core strengthening exercise, as well as miles of dog walking & riding exercise up the inviting Welsh hillsides...or should that be mountains...??

We discussed how years of one-sidedness - mucking out, carrying heavy buckets & sweeping, for example, took its toll on our bodies & reflected in our riding, further effecting the musculature of our horses in some cases. For some years I have been addressing this myself – the ability to brush my teeth left handed is a personal triumph, but my ability to mount either side, with such ease that I no longer know which is the 'correct side', is the more obvious benefit.

Another major topic was 'Having a Plan'! There was emphasis on planning your ride, & riding your plan – not being dragged along too fast, early in a Ride, being a very important matter to practice. Of course, some horses like particular company – maybe a stable mate, or just the horse you've ridden beside for a while – herd animals like to stick together! It's all too easy to go too fast & spoil your result by failing to pull back. Teaching your horse to ride alone & politely in company is so very important.

If your horse is particularly excitable, tactics at a mass start are important, as well as being calm yourself (haha), keeping out of sight & starting 'late' are an often used tactic. Easy to say, but not always easy to master!

Training your novice horse was touched upon as particularly important – not over training, & understanding what training works best. Rest is a key factor for the equine athlete, & endless, daily, hard training is not to be recommended. We discussed our various methods to produce peak equine fitness when it mattered – cardio-vascular fitness & where to train, including visits to gallops & their effective use during both fast & structured exercise routines. Longevity within Endurance was an additional topic.

Last, but by no means least, the matter of what to feed was talked about in some depth. Get a room full of riders together & you will have a room full of differing ideas....

Attendance was good, & we all appreciated a friendly atmosphere at a dull time of year, to exchange ideas & renew friendships.

Here's wishing everyone every success in the coming months - & don't be afraid to ask questions of your peers.

Heather Evans

New Forest Runway ride

This was a new ride for the 2019 season. I had not ridden in the new forest for many years. As this was the week before our annual ski trip it was the only one we could go to in March and we wanted to get the boys out before our holiday.

The weather had been spring like for the last few weeks, we should have known it couldn't last. The day before the ride the weather changed and storm Freya had arrived.

We arrived at the venue it was raining and blustery, luckily it was an old airfield site and had trees around to give a bit of shelter.

We vetted and set off in the rain and wind. It was very wet under foot, but thankfully the ground is sand and gravel and did not ride deep. The route took us through woodland and open moorland, lots of wild ponies trying to shelter behind the gorse hedges from the wind and rain.

The route was well marked and varied, even riding besides a motorway for a while, a bit noisy but the horses took no notice. Lots of river crossings and bridges to cross over the rivers. Plenty of cantering and a good ride for a first outing of the year.

We arrived at the finish to a very cold wind and still raining, we quickly untacked and washed off the horses, rugged them up and took to the final vetting. All passed and an enjoyable ride in not the best weather, we certainly felt like the cobwebs had been blown away.

A lovely ride and one that we will definitely do again.

Sue and Louise Rich.

Summer Schooling

I have organised some schooling sessions over the next few months with Sarah Spencer Williams BHSI, HT, UKCC L3 and am awaiting date confirmation from Carole Broad FBHS (I will email these dates when I have them). They are very kindly going to be held at Lesley Dunn's in Trellech, NP25 4QN (by Maryland venue). Directions will be provided with booking.

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. You are welcome to go for a hack in the neighbouring forestry after your lesson.

The group have purchased some new coloured poles. We are lucky to have Sarah Spencer Williams taking lessons with the hope she will provide us with some exciting polework exercises. Possibility of small jumps if there is demand also.

There will also be flatwork only lessons.

You can do whatever you like :)



The sessions will be in groups of a maximum of 3 and cost £25 for an hour for Carole and £21 for Sarah.

Dates are:

Sunday 12th May- Sarah

Sunday 9th June- Sarah

Sunday 18th August- Sarah

Sunday 29th September- Sarah

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

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

PONIES/HORSES MUST MEET THE ENDURANCE GB FLU VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS AS OUTLINED ON PAGE 3.

Govilon Fun Ride

Sunday 4th August

Venue: Govilon Car Boot Field, Near Abergavenny, NP7 9PT

A lovely ride with a mixture of mountain tracks, quiet country lanes and a lovely stretch of forestry on the longer route.

Fantastic views from the Blorenges with a few steep hills.

Route options of approximately 20km and 28km (12 & 18 miles)

Start times between 9:30 and 11:30

Very easy access straight off a main road, unlimited parking and water!

Entries to:

Nicola Davies
Pentre Hendy,
Twyn Allwys road,
Govilon,
Abergavenny,
Monmouthshire,
NP7 9RT



**** Helpers Needed ****

More info:

n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk
07968 928870

TRAINING – SOME RANDOM THOUGHTS

Latest text from Nicola would you write something on “Training” - me “OK” - thinks what am I doing this for, on such a massive subject with so many opinions and ideas. Here are some random thoughts.

What do we mean by training? To me this means preparing your horse and yourself to be capable physically and mentally of achieving your endurance ambitions, large or small.

What are your goals long term and short term? It's no good thinking you are going to excel at Horseshoe 160 or race round Euston Park without the slow ground work before and this will probably take at least three seasons starting with a sound horse of the right type.

Assess what you've got, be honest is he/she a racing snake just waiting to go, a sure footed steady type who will excel on the hills and in all weathers or something in between. Do an equine SWOT analysis on your horse. What are the strengths, weaknesses, and what opportunities or difficulties may be shown up?

While you're at it do one on yourself! What time do you have available, what funds can you realistically put into training and preparing? What facilities and terrain are nearby? If you are aiming at the hills then can you train easily on them, or are you aiming for the flat faster rides in which case how close is the beach or adequate good tracks for canter work. Are you fit enough? - think of Yoga or Pilates classes or are you self disciplined enough to do some extra exercise at home, skip, run, swim.

Careful preparation and attention to detail win out every time. Question the professionals what does the farrier think of the feet, tell him what you are aiming to achieve, can anything be improved. Same with the vet, the equine dentist and saddler – hours in the saddle mean regular reassessment of fit to your horse's changing shape. Keep a diary – note work done, weather conditions, was the horse up for it or maybe not, if not why not. How does he/she respond to schooling - if you can afford a professional trainer fantastic, if not get a friend to watch from the ground and tell you if you list to port or starboard and if your efforts at turns and circles are inaccurate. The more supple, balanced and responsive your horse the easier he/she will find the endurance tasks he/she is asked to perform. In your training diary make notes on feed changes and why, any setbacks and treatment given and ongoing reviews required e.g. physio/ vet/ farrier input.

Competitions - Think of them as progress assessments. Make a plan of what you want to achieve in each competition e.g. novice/ new horse - how did travelling go? Did he/she behave at the vettings? What happened during the ride, easy to manage, or pulling, behaviour with other horses? Eating, drinking? Attained planned speed? Weather conditions, too hot, too cold? What can be improved? Make notes and then you can compare at a similar ride later on in the fitness programme. Don't get carried away ride

your own ride, someone else may be using the ride as a pre-race pipe opener and their plan may be far removed from your own. All this is part of a training plan.

If your horse has problems mentally with rides is this down partly to you getting stressed with all the arrangements and the fact it is a “competition” and you quite naturally want to do your best. Your horse will pick up so quickly on your frame of mind. Would some cross training such as fun rides, riding club clinics or competitions be useful to get him/her used to different places and people.

If you have paid attention to detail and done the groundwork, over a period of time success will come. Don't expect too much too soon and be realistic about your horse and yourself. Above all enjoy many years of competing with your horse knowing you have given him/her the best possible training to achieve your goals, nobody else's!

Pam James, UKCC Coach

Other Group Fun Rides

<i>Date</i>	<i>Ride Name</i>	<i>Group</i>
Saturday 13 th April	Pembrey	South & West Wales
Saturday 13 th April	Cleeve Hill	Cotswold
Saturday 1 st June	Cwm Sirhowi	De Cymru
TBA July	Badminton	Cotswold
Saturday 27 th July	Wentwood	De Cymru
Saturday 10 th August	Barbury Castle	Cotswold
Sunday 18 th August	Radnor Forest	Mid & North Wales
Sat 31 st Aug/Sun 1 st Sept	Pen Ddol Y Gader	South & West Wales
TBA September	Lambourn Downs	Cotswold
TBA September	Pembrey	South & West Wales
Sunday 8 th December	Mince Pie	Cotswold

Dates for your Diary

Sunday 21st April	FOD Bluebell National Ride
Sunday 21st April	FOD Bluebell Fun Ride
Sunday 12 th May	Schooling Lesson @ Trellech
Sunday 9 th June	Schooling Lesson @ Trellech
Sunday 23 rd June	Lydney Park Estate Fun Ride
Sunday 4 th August	Govilon Fun Ride
Sunday 18 th August	Schooling Lesson @ Trellech
Saturday 24 th August- Provisional	Michaelchurch Estate Fun Ride
Sunday 15 th September	FOD Autumn Belle
Sunday 29 th September	Schooling Lesson @ Trellech
Sunday 27 th October	Maryland Fun Ride

(Subject to NRW approval)

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.