



Offa's Dyke Group
Of Endurance GB
Newsletter – January 2013
www.offasdykeegb.co.uk



Chairman's Comment

Happy New Year to all members!

I'm not sure what to say - the weather last year was almost uniformly atrocious, & I started writing this at home, when it was snowing enthusiastically outside, preventing me from even attempting to get to work a week ago! I love the challenge of driving in snow, & I am rarely unable to travel, but 'work' (a school) had closed its doors to drivers for safety! A day off & unable to ride - grrr. The best news though, is that a three day Cirencester Ride has just been announced for this year - something that had been looking increasingly unlikely.

On a further positive note, your Committee has been busy brain-storming, with plans for a Training / Fun Day, based on the 'Beyond Novice' training last year, but with wider appeal (hopefully) to all members, at all levels. More details will appear on the website when more is decided, so please pop in regularly!

Rachael Rogerson has offered to organise a team or teams(!) for the Lindum Spirit. For those of you who are too young to remember the Spirit of Sherwood Team Spirit, on which the competition is modeled, this is enormous fun, & can be enjoyed by riders at all levels - teams of 4, each riding a 40km route, as a relay. Lindum, a four-day Ride, is a long way to travel, but as a team outing, hopefully 'ordinary' members might consider it worthwhile. Anyone interested, please contact Rachael for further details.

We have five Group Rides planned this year - renamed as Fun Rides, to better reflect what we are aiming for, & to attract non-members to join us. There are also Pleasure Rides with all but the March Hares national ride in our area, so please do encourage your friends.

We intend to mark Offa's Dyke Group's Silver Jubilee this year.....plans in hand for silver rosettes!

Sad to say that our January Group Talk, kindly given by Louise Rich supported by her parents, covering her very successful foreign exploits, was poorly attended. We are hoping that the illustrated talk, in February, by Catriona Moon will attract more members, & we are intending to add a tack table-top bring & buy to the evening, with refreshments, to brighten up a gloomy February! Roll up at 7pm for a bit of exchange & barter in addition to the excitement of the desert starting at 8pm!

With the welcome return of Cirencester to the calendar, the date of Bwlch Raid Ride has had to be altered from 1st to 22nd of September - so PLEASE keep an eye on the website for any updates & changes, which can happen for various reasons!

Finally - Lost Property!

Left at our AM & Trophy Evening:

1 x Glass bowl

1 x Small plate (white with 2 red lines around the edge)

Heather

Committee Contacts

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Others	Alan Morgan (Health & Safety), Sarah Rogerson, Gill Talbot, Debbie Williams

Other Roles

Newsletter	Carolyn and Robin Edwards
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Editor's Comment

I would like to sincerely thank everyone who's contributed articles for this newsletter. It is lovely that people are voluntarily sending me stuff, helping me out with ideas and willingly writing things for me when asked.

Thanks to Piers Geddes for coming up to me at the Trophy Evening & suggesting I asked a group of people to write about their favourite ride of 2012. He kindly gave me the first to get the ball rolling. I must say that the feedback I've had from the last couple of newsletters is how much everyone enjoys Piers' contributions. Having purchased his Ebook 'A Tale of Three Horses' I must say I really enjoy his writing style. Please keep the articles coming Piers!

We have two other contributions to the favourite ride theme from Nicola Davies (unsolicited-thank you Nicola) and from Pam James. Lack of space in this issue allowed any more, but if you'd like to send me a write up about any ride you've enjoyed please do and I'll include them in a future newsletter. I must say if I'd had space, my favourite ride last year would have been the pleasure ride at the Golden Horseshoe on Prophet. I had an amazing ride alone on my lovely horse soaking up the view in glorious sunshine. That to me is what endurance is really about!

I am really grateful to both Fiona Griffiths and Abbi Tennant for writing comprehensive and informative articles on their amazing successes in 2012. Both won National awards. Fiona the Novice Championship and Abbi the Trophy for a horse in its first season of ERs. They each wrote exactly what I asked them for, which is a description of how they trained their horse, what they fed it, how they selected their rides & what they did to crew their horses etc. I hope these will be of help and inspiration to those of us starting out with a new horse (myself included) or looking to take that next step and take on ERs (or rather I should now say CERs)

Carolyn Edwards

HELP!

With the rising cost of printing and postage (now 50p for 2nd class stamp). 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.

Winter Evening Talk

Saturday 9 February

Catriona Moon 'Riding in the desert'

7pm for 8pm start at Whitchurch Village Hall

We will be having an informal bring & buy tack sale before Catriona's talk, from 7pm. Light refreshments available.

Catriona Moon was the only British rider at the 160km **President's Cup** three-star endurance ride in Abu Dhabi on Saturday 11th February last year, with her 13-year-old mare Leila. A Dorset vet, Catriona (BSc (Hons) BVSc MRCVS), graduated from Liverpool University in 2008 & spent 3 years in large animal practice in Northumberland before heading homeward to her roots in the West Country.

As first reserve, Catriona Moon and Leila were also called up to compete in the Longines FEI CEI 4* World Endurance Championships 2012 at Euston Park in August last year, with just 4 days notice. Catriona was previously selected for senior teams in 2009 & 2011. As a Young Rider she rode in the YR European Championships in 1997, YR Open European Championships in 1999 as well as the YR World Championships in both 2001 (Spain) & 2003 (Italy).

At the talk to Offa's Dyke Group, she will be telling us all about her experience 'Riding in the Desert' last year! One not to miss.....

Directions: *Whitchurch is between Ross on Wye and Monmouth on the A40.*

From Ross on Wye take the turning off the A40 to Whitchurch and Symonds Yat West. Follow the signs to Whitchurch and when you have crossed the bridge over the dual carriageway take the first left. A few yards on turn left again and the hall is on the right.

From Monmouth take the first exit off the A40 after the service station. The hall is a few yards along on the left.

Parking is limited in the hall car park but there is plenty of parking along the side of the road.

Many thanks to the Rich family for their very interesting talk in January.

Louise Rich and her parents shared some of their fabulous experiences with the



British Young Rider and Development squads. We are very grateful to the Rich family for taking the time and preparation for their interesting and entertaining talk which featured many photos and props such as the paperwork required for travel to Belgium, the vet card process, the ride and crew maps and the gradient profiles of each loop – clearly indicating that the Mont le Soie region is anything but flat!

Lou wearing her European Championships bronze medal.

Novice training afternoon

Sunday 17 March 1.30-4.30pm

Tump Farm, Whitchurch.

Each year we run a novice training afternoon. This is an informal event, for all our newer members and associate members. Anyone who is riding at Novice Level or doing fun and pleasure rides is welcome to come along free of charge. Crews also very welcome. It's also free to any interested non-members who'd like to find out a bit more about Endurance.

Would you like help & advice?

Training

Feeding

Crewing

This is your chance to meet other new members (nice to recognise familiar faces at rides). Ask any questions you like. See the equipment available to endurance riders & what we take along to crew the horse.

The session will be held at the yard of Debbie and Rachel Williams, long standing Offa's Dyke members who have ridden a variety of horses over the years. Rachel's pony Star is still competing at a grand old age and has successfully completed over 5000km. We will use some of their horses to practice taking the heart rate, presenting to the vet etc.

If you would like to come along, please let me know to give us an idea of numbers. You are welcome to bring your crew or an interested friend. Please email Carolyn at carolyn@edwardsglos.fsnet.co.uk or tel: 01452 857352. I will send details of what to bring along & directions to Tump Farm.

Carolyn Edwards and Gina Harris

Group Fun Ride

Govilon

Sunday 31st March

O.S Landranger 161: Grid ref 263142

A lovely ride with a mixture of mountain tracks, quiet country lanes and a lovely stretch of forestry on the longer route. Some steep climbs over the Blorenges with beautiful views. This won't be a fast ride, but some tracks are suitable for long canters, good fittening ride for Golden Horseshoe.

Route options of 16km and 26km (10 & 16 miles).

Start times between 9:30 and 11:30

Entries to:

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

Enquires: 07968928870

n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk

Please send entry along with a large SAE to receive maps and ride details.

Entry forms available from Nicola or off the website.

Directions-

Heads of Valleys road (A465) Abergavenny to Brynmawr.
At Gilwern roundabout take the first exit signposted Govilon.
Field on right after 400 yards in the layby.

Entries-

Entry fee £18 for non members or £10 for Associate or EGB members.
Cheques made payable to Offa's Dyke Group of EGB

Group Fun Ride



Forest of Dean Bluebell



Saturday 20th April (Day before the National Ride)

Mainly forestry tracks with some road work. Distance 26km

Entry fee £10 Members and Associate Members, £18 Non-members

Entries to Carolyn Edwards. See Offa's Dyke Website for entry form and full details

Membership now due for renewal for 2013

The good news is that there are no increases in membership fees for 2013. To renew as a full member of EGB please do so online, or by post to the EGB office. Associate Membership fees are also due and should be sent to our membership secretary Carolyn Edwards (see page 2 for contact details. Remember you must show your 2013 membership cards at all EGB rides to get members rates. Non-members pay an additional £8 temporary day membership at each ride. ***Offa's Dyke Group has lots of exciting rides and training events planned for this season and you need to join to enjoy all the benefits.***

Rule Changes for 2013

There were a few members' proposals voted in at the EGB National AGM. One of the major ones was the change in names of EGB rides. These will now be known as:

Pleasure rides	(formerly NCRs)
Graded Endurance Rides	(formerly Competitive Rides)
Competitive Endurance Rides	(formerly Endurance or Race Rides)

Groups are allowed to choose their own term to distinguish their own pleasure rides & Offa's Dyke Group have decided to call theirs 'Fun Rides'

Another members' proposal voted through was to allow crewing in horseboxes up to 3.5 tons and/or with a maximum length of 6m. However ride organisers have discretion to refuse to allow crewing in lorries if they feel it's unsuitable for their ride.

Please note: Offa's Dyke Forest of Dean March Hares ride will not allow crewing in horseboxes.

Other rides to look forward to in 2013:

Offa's Dyke Group is planning some great Fun Rides for this season thanks to all our great ride organisers. Some of the dates have now been finalised and some are still in negotiation – keep an eye on our website for up to date information on all our rides & events for 2013. Remember – all our Fun Rides (previously known as Group Social Rides) have cheap entry fees of only £10 for EGB members and Associate members. Non-Members pay £18 (including temporary day membership).

Make sure you renew your membership for 2013 to take advantage of all these marvelous rides at £10 entry fee.

The first Fun Ride will be Govilon 31 March – back in the calendar after a break in 2012. We are very grateful to Nicola Davies for not only organizing this ride, but for her family in very generously allowing us to use their farm as our venue and all coming along to help Nicola on the day.

Bluebell Fun Ride 20 April is run from the same venue as the National Ride the following day. We have a new organiser this year – Andrea Champ is being mentored by previous organiser Belinda Josephi.

Blaenavon is back as a fun ride on 16 June organised by Belinda Stewart. Belinda not only organises this ride, but helps out at many of our Offa's Dyke rides (often as first aid cover-as she is a doctor). Belinda has also been a great help to Nicola Davies in encouraging and mentoring her in organising rides for us.

New for 2013: 11 August Black Mountains Ride.

It's a few years since we've run a ride in this area and now thanks to Nicola Davies (organiser of the Govilon Ride) we are due to have it back in the calendar. Nicola is working with former organiser of this ride Karen Jones to come up with a route, which should be absolutely lovely. Nicola says the ride will be a mixture of quiet country lanes, forestry tracks and open mountain with some fantastic views. Route options of 18 and 26km (11 and 16 miles). Venue- TBA although will be in a similar area hopefully.

22 September Fiona Griffiths will run Bwlch Raid fun ride. (note change from original date to avoid clashing with Cirencester ride). This was run for the very first time in April 2012, although then due to the snowy weather Fiona had to cut some loops out of her original route. Hopefully, as it's being run in September this year we will get to

ride the whole route. If this ride is successful Fiona hopes to develop it into a new National Ride in the future.

In addition to all the above Fun Rides we are negotiating possible dates for rides at Plump Hill and Maryland. Keep an eye on the website and future newsletters for an update on these and other events and training days we are planning.

Can you help?

All of our rides and events can only go ahead if we have lots of volunteers to help on the day. This can be anything from Vet Writing or Timekeeping to Car Parking and manning a road crossing or gate. If you can manage even half a day that would be a great help to the group.

In recognition of our marvelous volunteers, Offa's Dyke have an annual raffle. Every time you help in 2013 your name will go into the 'hat' and 5 lucky winners will receive a £10 Countrywide voucher. Last year's winners were: Caroline Macbrayne, Helen Mayo, Rob Talbot, Phillipa Cherryson and Edi (helped Bwlch Raid)

If you can offer to help at any of our rides or events, please contact the ride organiser, or alternatively use the 'contact' button on the website & we'll pass on the offer.

To help at any of the Forest of Dean Rides (3 March, 20 and 21 April) please contact Gina Harris Email: g.harris31@btinternet.com or use the website contact button. Even ½ day would be a great help to us.

Schooling /Massage Training Event Saturday 8th June 2013

Following on from our very successful winter schooling lessons, we are planning a 'one-off' training session at Huntley School of Equitation. Focusing on the importance of physical health inc. horse flexibility, balance, coordination and core strength! Getting your horse into good physical health for Endurance.

We will have our usual instructor Carole Broad FBHS who will give a 1 hour schooling lesson geared towards the Endurance rider. Depending on the weather this will be either in the indoor school, in the bigger outdoor arena, or even in the field making use of the hills to work on our position & technique. Those of you who have attended our schooling lessons in the past will know what a fabulous instructor Carole is and how well she gears the lessons towards Endurance.

The lesson will be followed by an hour session learning about massage and stretching with our own Rachel Williams BSc (Hons) Dip ICAT PGDip CABC. This will be held in the 'Tie up Barn' and you will have the opportunity to practice the techniques on your own horse with Rachel's guidance.

We plan to run the sessions from 4pm onwards. Cost will be £20 per person for a group of 5. Offa's Dyke group do not intend to make any profit out of these schooling lessons – just cover our costs.

If you are interested in attending, please email me ASAP to give me an idea of numbers. Places will be limited, so please contact me ASAP to avoid disappointment.

Carolyn Edwards: Email: carolyn@edwardsqlos.fsnet.co.uk

NAF prizes at our 2012 Annual Awards

Thanks to local company NAF for their generous sponsorship of 'goody bags' for the winners of the major trophies at our Annual Awards evening in December. . NAF have long been supporters of local Endurance. Previous sponsorship has included the Red Dragon Ride and our own Lesley Dunn.



The NAF bags contained lots of useful items including Fly Fringes & bags of their minty treats. It was a lovely surprise to the award winners and our thanks go to Debbie Williams for asking NAF for their sponsorship.

Trophies and Awards 2012

Pandora Distance Rosettes		
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.	240km	
	Hs Prophet	Carolyn Edwards
	Cs Ibn Fiesta	Debbie Williams
	Cherekee	Fiona Griffiths
	320km	
	Indian Princess	Karen Jones
	Oakleazefarm Czamak	Louise Rich
	Hendrewen Pirate	Nicola Davies
	C S Kabira	Sarah Rogerson
	400km	
	Oliver Twist IV	Fiona Griffiths
	Three Steps	Jane Smith
	Takwenya	Chris Wray
	Gryphon	Rachael Rogerson
	Talishla	Fiona Griffiths
	Barik	Abigail Tennant
Warrens Hill Arabians First 80 km Rosette		
For horses completing their first 80km or longer ride.	Indian Princess	Karen Jones
	Llangennydd Flying Comet	Angharad Morgan
	Cherekee	Fiona Griffiths
Grade 1 Rosettes		
Presented by Sharon Parr for EGB cumulative grade 1 distance in increments of 400 km.	400km	
	Talishla	
	Oliver Twist IV	
	Gryphon	
	C S Kabira	
	Three Steps	
	2000km	
	Midnight Star	
Bilbo's Rainbow		
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.	Franzara	Lesley Dunn
	Midnight Star	Rachel Williams

Thoroughbred Rosette		
Presented by Delwyn Hall for the Thoroughbred or 50% (no less) Thoroughbred who successfully completes the highest distance.	Three Steps	Jane Smith
Native/Neddy Rosette		
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
Associate Members Trophy		
Awarded to the Associate Group Member who gains most points overall (riding and non-riding).	Sarah Titmuss	Zakana
Rough Close Lady Trophy		
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).	Barik	Abigail Tennant
	Takwenya	Chris Wray
Starlight Trophy		
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.	Talishla	Fiona Griffiths
	Layl Silver Haze	Dawn Wilson
Cindy Trophy		
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.	Gryphon	Rachael Rogerson
	Franzara	Lesley Dunn
Mitchell Arab Racehorse to Endurance Horse Trophy		
Awarded by Gabrielle Franklin to the Arab (minimum 50%) horse that has raced, scored on points for all completed EGB rides including NCRs.	C S Kabira	Sarah Rogerson
	Franzara	Lesley Dunn
Warrens Hill Arabians Trophy		
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	Takwenya	Chris Wray
	Gryphon	Rachael Rogerson

Team Trophy			
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
	Abi Tennant	Suzanne Garlick	Jan Rath
Bonanza Trophy			
Presented by Ray and Lesley Dunn to the highpoint registered Pure, Part or Anglo Arab in Endurance GB competitions.	Takwenya	Chris Wray	
	Gryphon	Rachael Rogerson	
Madoc Trophy			
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.	Takwenya	Chris Wray	
	Gryphon	Rachael Rogerson	
Belstar Trophy			
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.	Three Steps	Jane Smith	
	Indian Princess	Karen Jones	
The Offa's Dyke Challenge Trophy			
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	
	Llangennydd Flying Comet	Angharad Morgan	
Shimara Cup			
Awarded by Fiona Wilton for the group member who gains most points overall (riding and non-riding).	Carolyn Edwards	Fiona Griffiths	
Unsung Hero Award			
Awarded by the Committee to the individual who has contributed most to the Group during the current season.	Belinda and John Josephi for their hard work over the years. Belinda was a committee member for more years than she cares to remember and ride organiser of the Christmas Ride and Forest of Dean rides for many years. John has given so much of his time to help Belinda and stand for hours parking cars, stewarding etc. Thanks to them both.		

Vika Engel has just become a full member of Offa's Dyke Group and is intending to do her first competitive ride at March Hares. She and her friends from Golden Valley Pony Club then plan to use the Forest of Dean pleasure ride as a training ride for their planned 100 mile epic ride to raise funds for the Laurie Engel Fund. Please take the time to read the information below about Vika's planned ride to raise funds in memory of her brother Laurie and look at their website.

If you feel you can help by riding, crewing or helping in any other way please contact either Vika's parents or Offa's Dyke member - Andrea Champ (see contact details below). I hope you will agree this is an amazing cause and a fabulous target for Vika to aim to achieve in memory of her brother. I hope our group will rise to the occasion and offer her the assistance and support she needs to help her succeed.

From the Bay to Hay



Vika Engel plans to celebrate her 15th birthday on May 26 by setting out with her pony Sparkle on an epic ride. She aims to travel 100 miles over four days, from the sandy beach at Borth right across the mountains, forests and moorlands of Wales, to the English border at Hay-on-Wye.

Vika will be raising funds in memory of her brother, Laurie, whose 21st birthday should have been May 28. Laurie died of cancer at the age of 13, and the fund set up by his family after Laurie's death, www.laurieengelfund.org, has already raised more than £1 million to build a new teenage cancer unit at Birmingham Children's Hospital, where he was treated. A new Justgiving page tells the whole story: <http://www.justgiving.com/bchlaurieengelfund>.

Now the hospital is appealing for £4 million to refurbish the rest of the cancer department; and this is what Vika's ride is for.

Vika is looking not only for sponsorship, but for companions. She will need to be accompanied by at least one adult rider on each day of her ride. We already have offers of help from friends, but we are hoping that members of the Offa's Dyke branch of Endurance GB might be willing to take part.

Vika plans to follow the British Horse Society's 'Prince Llywellyn Ride' from Borth to Knighton, and then a specially devised route along the border down to Hay.

Vika (a new member of Endurance GB) has never done anything quite like this before: but she is a passionate and intrepid rider. She belongs to the Golden Valley Hunt branch of Pony Club, and the Hereford and District Riding Club, and attends

Lucton School. She loves show-jumping and hunting, and at every opportunity rides Sparkle on her family's farm and around the lanes and commons of the Golden Valley.

The ride will be a new adventure for Sparkle as well. He is an 11-year-old 14.3 hands chestnut gelding who was born wild on Clee Hill in Shropshire. He was expertly schooled by his previous owners before coming to Vika in 2011. He is a calm, sturdy all-rounder, who seems to love to be ridden. He will be going through a careful fitness programme between now and May to prepare him for the long ride. Probably Sparkle will do the first and last days of the route, with Vika riding one or two other horses in between.



Vika's parents, Matthew and Hilary, will be crewing for Vika on the long ride (another steep learning curve), but would also be glad of additional drivers. We are being helped enormously in the planning of the venture by our friend and neighbour Andrea Champ, an experienced endurance rider and member of the Offa's Dyke branch.

For more information or offers of help/participation, please phone Hilary on 01981 241 210 or write to hilary.engel@googlemail.com

Andrea Champ is an Offa's Dyke member and keen to establish our links with the Golden Valley Pony Club. She introduced us to the idea of our involvement with Vika's ride. Please get in touch with Andrea if you are able to help in any way with this fantastic fund raising event.

Vika's mother Hilary, approached me a few weeks ago with the idea of Vika doing a major fundraising ride with her pony, Sparkle. It sounded a fabulous idea to me. Vika loves spending many hours with her horse and is quite used to long days in the saddle, from her hunting experiences. Sparkle is an enthusiastic but sensible pony, with a great ground covering trot! Hilary, Vika and I are working together to both plan the ride and make the event a big success as a fund raising effort and as enjoyable as possible for both horse and rider. I am further hoping that as Vika is a member of the Golden Valley Pony Club and a new member of EGB, much may be done to encourage more young riders to experience the fun and challenges of endurance riding.

We would be delighted to have EGB members accompany Vika on this ride, which we do hope, will coincide with the Hay Literary Festival. Further updates for other possible ways to help/fundraise will be made on the Offas Dyke EGB website.'

If you'd like to help or would like to know more, please email me :Andrea Champ quinnchamp@gmail.com (please note that email contact may be erratic between January 20th and March 2nd.)'

Thanks to Fiona Griffiths for the following article about her fabulous success in winning the National Novice Championship (as well as our Offa's Dyke Trophy) with her horse Talishla. I asked Fiona to write about how she trained, what she fed her horse, her strategy in choosing rides and how she crews at rides and she has done exactly that! I hope this will be of especial interest to our newer members who may be planning to do Novice rides with their own horse.

Talishla - Novice Champion 2012

by Fiona Griffiths

The long journey to Daventry started in 2011, when by chance I had a call from a lady whose mother had passed away; she needed to sell some of the horses. As usual I had to have a look - two Anglo Arabs, home bred, rough broken, done nothing, oh well costs nothing to look. A week later and we had both..... Talishla 15hh 6yrs mare and Balishla 15.2 5yrs gelding and with all winter to start them off, they had done very little which is a good thing, as it gives us a chance to bring them on our way.

As they had never been apart, we kept them together and they lived out for most of the winter. We started work straight away, 10/15 mins a day in the school for the first few weeks, then building up to 40 mins twice a week flat work, with some jumping or pole work or a lunge session. Also hacking out twice a week, starting again with 15 min building up to ½ hr then 40 min. Gentle work, not too much trotting and hardly any canter. Lots of walk to build them up slowly. Although they are already 5 and 6 they had no foundation of fitness. They would normally work 4 days over a week sometimes 5 if there was time, I didn't want them too fit, just fit enough.

We also upped the work before upping the feed. I didn't want either of them thinking they were chocolate before they knew their job. We feed chop to everyone- a huge scoop (Stubbs scoop), Baileys no6 ½ scoop (depending on work and horse) Winergy Condition ½ scoop (as before) sugar beet large scoop. If they need extra condition we use calm and condition, and at a ride we take some of everything and let them eat what they fancy. Hay is soaked and haylage used when travelling away (introduced slowly during the week before).

Sam and I decided that we would do a novice year with both horses and if they did well, we would aim for the championship. But we had a very definite plan that if

there was any problem they could just back off. Talishla took to the rides straight away, always keen and very sensible and as a bonus easy to crew. Balishla was happy to go anywhere as long as his sister was near and would trundle along behind happy as Larry. He too found the distance easy and loved his work, but he would get cold very quickly and this made crewing a little more of a challenge. After doing his first 4 rides we decided to rest him for a while and give him more time. Unfortunately after doing his next ride he was lame so more rest and an expensive trip to the vets. He will now come back in to work slowly and do dressage for a while.- Growing up time.

Talishla was now going from strength to strength. Going away from home over night, learning about corralling and being good with the vet, meeting lots of new people and places. Taking it all in her stride. I try to arrive in time to let her settle and graze for a while before vetting and to have a chat... then set off quietly, warming up over the first few k's, then settling in to a steady trot rhythm for most of the ride. If I'm lucky and have a crew, we offer water when possible and at the last crew place sugar beet water. Walking in to the venue, one eye on the time, wash and sb water and off to vet.

Then there was the setback, we had been away competing over the weekend and on the Monday when I went to work her she was lame. We washed the mud off and found a deep cut in her pastern - probably put her foot through the wire fence? Vet out and the flap removed, dressing and antibiotics and box rest to keep it clean. This was new as she had not been stabled before, but was very good about it. Cut the food out, lots of hay to keep her amused and company all the time.

Plan, what plan? I start the year with the rides each horse is aimed for mapped out, then it rained and rides were cancelled and the plan changed - You have to have a plan and a back-up and a reserve and maybe you will get to some rides. Then they go lame, you get ill, you have to work, the car breaks down and all the other things that happen. I'm very lucky that I work with horses and my life is horses and Brian. Oh and Sam who Events when that's not rained off and does dressage. Then there's Alex - chief crew and time waster. But time is always too short and the list of jobs too long. Anyhow the plan back in the spring to do 10 rides of 40k but time was now running out. September was here and we needed to do more rides. I had tried to space them out, to give her time off after each ride, but it was getting close to the end of the season. We had to do 3 rides in August due to weather and other problems. A bit too much, too close together, but then time off. Our season had been going so well, on the bright side her wound healed very well and the break did her good. 'No rush' had been the chant all year, but what to do? Dragon was calling, do two days Friday and Sunday? But I didn't want to do too much and Dragon is a tough ride. We had purposely not over done the fittening work. Going slowly at rides, experience was what we wanted, not speed- I couldn't throw that away now we were so close. It would all come down to the New Forest. Only one week's rest, stabling away-

another new experience and all in the hands of the weather. What if it's cancelled? And it's a 45k ride - the farthest she had had to do.

And that they say is history.

It was a fantastic learning experience, testing our horsemanship at every turn, both crew and riders (as Sam rode her as well). We were told that we shouldn't do 10 rides - it's not necessary. I understand that to upgrade I don't need 10 rides, but the experience she has gained and the time I have spent with her has been more than worth it. Gates, bridges, flooded fords, cows, traffic, rain, walking miles in the rain when she lost a shoe, climbing on and off and everything else.....Not so long ago I joined EGB to ride in different parts of the country and that got a little lost, but riding Talishla gave me the chance to remember what is important to me, spending time with my horse, riding new routes and meeting wonderful people (and winning- sorry but I like competing too)

The rides we did	speed	time to vet.
18/3/12 Wentwood good fittening hills)	13.70kph	22mins (a mix of muddy tracks and forestry,
27/5/12 Pen dol y gader and mountains)	11.16kph	25mins (a little forestry, lots of open moor
10/6/12 3 Rivers	11.6kph	20mins (bridleways and tracks)
15/7/12 Wentwood	11.06kph	25mins
5/8/12 Phoenix can see the sea)	10.8kph	24mins (muddy tracks and bridleways, you
11/8/12 Myndd Machen	11.53kph	20mins (tracks and mountains)
19/8/12 Barbury Castle	11.27kph	26mins (bridleways grass tracks and chalk)
23/9/12 Bonham	11.4kph	15mins (forestry roads and fantastic gallops)
5/10/12 Red Dragon	11.56kph	25mins (mountains and roads)
14/10/12 New Forest sandy tracks)	11.59kph	18mins (muddy tracks and lovely canters on

Mud was the theme for most rides; we were so lucky that many were put on, as many more were cancelled. For Ghost it was a very good year.

I'm very grateful for Pier's suggestion of asking a group of people to describe their favourite ride of 2012. He kindly started the ball rolling with this contribution.

Best Ride of the Year

Piers Geddes

In such a wayward year, choosing your best ride is surprisingly difficult. So often, being on a horse's back in sunlight is enough. It's the foundation of everything. One evening in July, say, going out for a couple of hours in lovely if familiar scenery – Flynn lives by the Black Mountains – part walk, part ride, a big trot or two and a quick canter, and plenty of dawdle on wooded tracks or open hill. No driving, lists, expense, ambition, stress or complexity; just the two of you out for an easy spin, and you think, this is nice. Thank you for my ride. The rider is glad to be out, and the horse knows it.

But this year, amongst all those cancellations, the call of the quieter, western side of the Brecon Beacons was answered. It's an area I'd long wanted to explore. The Mountain Centre at Libanus, just beyond Brecon, has a spare paddock by the car park, perfect for trailers. It's all wonderfully easy, and within minutes of arriving you're leaving, trotting off across the common. Mynydd Illtud is spacious and undulating, lightly bracken-covered and blessed with turf strips lovely to ride; elsewhere one meets streams and soft marshy stretches, creeping tangles of gorse and thorn, all in a broad view-laden expanse of open ground with the Epynt to the north and the Beacons in sculptural stillness to the side. On our first trip Flynn and I walked part of Sarn Helen, the Roman road linking forts at Neath and Brecon, a long, hot, utterly brilliant day. Flynn's a superb companion on such jaunts, as quiet and steady as he's electric at the faster stuff; on varied and very rough going, sometimes peppered with flies, for hours in that majestic empty landscape he never put a foot wrong.

In September we returned, for a less ambitious but rewarding circular tour from the Mountain Centre. This had virtually arranged itself one evening when looking at the O.S. map. After riding round the common – no hardship, that – a bridleway led us through fields and down into woods which concealed a river and ford. Surrounded by trees, sunlight on water, a grassy patch to lie on...now a bit of a lane, and once past the O.S. pillar on Cefn Llechid we're crossing open moorland again. Come on my boy, canter! A little tarmac and a glorious overhung path and Flynn has brought us back to the common. What better way to spend three hours?

But there's one more candidate for best ride. Cadwaladr the giant Welsh Cob is not a natural for endurance. But he can do it, and for him it's just another day. Jumping, dressage, showing, fun rides – he's done them all, in small doses. What's the crack today, he says. Still a novice, his great calm presence amidst all that Arabian drama is very winning. I'd never intended to go to the Red Dragon with him, but shouldn't a Welsh Cob sample the top Welsh ride? For those of us lucky enough to be able to go, Friday remains special: its officials unharassed, the tracks untouched, no jostling or queues at gates. Time and space, then, for all and everything, including admiration of the scenery – the distant peaks and ridges, the magnificent panorama. You're riding alone on high ground, flat moorland for miles; then you see far ahead a horse and rider beetling along, a dab of movement and colour in the distance against a wide greeny-beige background. That's the Red Dragon.

Our intended 27km somehow turned into 36km, completed at a respectable 11 kph, and good Cadwal still had energy to spook at something – was it a marker? He'd only seen hundreds – on the way back in. Heart rates? 36/46. Staggering, to me – that's the calm in action. Built for comfort, not for speed, if he ever becomes an athlete it'll be a sight to see, though if he carries on growing his rider won't mount him but will have to be dropped by parachute.

So, you choose. Best ride? They all are. But perhaps, especially at this time of year, just to be on a horse's back in sunlight is best of all.

Nicola kindly sent me this report of her favourite ride of 2012

New Park Rufus Ride

Nicola Davies

After a rather disappointing season with so many rides cancelled, I jumped at the chance of going to New Forest with Sue Box who I am very grateful to. We left Abergavenny just after 4pm (2 hours later than planned, as Sue must be the only person mad enough to go and ride one of her other horses at Callow!). It was enough for me to get myself ready let alone do anything else. The boys, Pie and Kazeme, travelled great together with this being their first journey together and our furthest journey. It was dark when we arrived so we quickly got the corrals up and settled them in with their suppers. We decided it was too late to go and meet everyone in pub so got a Chinese and off to sleep. I decided I couldn't be bothered to put my tent up so we both slept in the trailer. I have never been so cold in all my life and don't think I managed an hour's sleep! At about 6am I gave in and got up to find a surprisingly hard frost and a horse happily grazing loose in the field among the corals.

It was a Chestnut so it wasn't mine thank god so we went and found it's owner as we couldn't get near her. Once it was light we found out we had Sharon and Heather parked next to us.

Pie was totally chilled in his corral so after some breakfast and getting myself ready we were ready for vetting. He vetted with a nice low heart rate of 36 which was about usual for him, so his sleepover obviously hadn't bothered him. I was quite worried in the night about all the deer wandering in the field we were in, although he didn't seem to mind them. We both bounced out across the first field and into the forestry where we went wrong near enough straight away. We soon worked out where we were meant to go as the markers were a bit misleading. We obviously weren't the only ones to make the mistake as there were lots of hoof prints in all directions. Once we worked out which way to go we were off in a good trot winding through the beautiful forestry. The forestry tracks were not too rough, so it was easy to maintain a good pace negotiating the horse gates on the way. I have to say they opened a lot easier than our Welsh gates. I was waiting in anticipation for the underpasses described in the talk though as he isn't very keen on low bridges or tunnels and wished I hadn't read it as it had been worrying me for days.

When we finally reached the first underpass he followed the horses in front and with very little fuss just jogged through. All that worry over nothing! The biggest obstacle was the wooden footbridge which I decided we wouldn't fit across mounted and as there was no way of crossing the ditch, I dismounted to cross. Before I knew it we were half way round the 45km and the going on the top made for some lovely canters taking in some spectacular scenery riding through the wild ponies and cows. Soon we were back at the footbridge where there was rather a queue with the most horses we had seen all ride. After safely crossing the footbridge I managed to slip over in a ditch in front of everyone! The long track back through the forestry was extremely deep mud which we walked mostly as it would have been such a shame to cause an injury in the final stretch. A nice little canter across the final field to the finish and we were finished.

Tack off; wash downed and time to chill before we headed to the final vetting. He finished with a heart rate of 44 and did a super energetic trot-up which the vet complimented us on. Yippee a grade 1 at 11.3km/h in one of our longest rides in two years. We were part of the 'Found on Forum' team which went onto win the Rufus Team Event which made it even better. This ride was one of the best rides I've ever done and hope to get the chance to compete there again. Big thanks must go to Sue!

Thanks to Pam for this very entertaining report of her favourite ride. It's nice to know I'm not the only one to make mistakes on a ride & get in a muddle!

ON THE ROAD AGAIN – I HOPE By Pam James

Late p.m. 2nd September 2012 and after a great deal of help and patience from endurance friends I have stumbled my way through a novice season on my lovely young 6 year old grey Arab, HS Azraf.

Following a bad fall in May 2011- not from Az - I was left with nearly no confidence and certainly not enough to bring on young Azraf. So off to Urchinwood Manor where Sally Hall and Eve Poole got Az going and cajoled me over a period of weeks into riding again – It was a slow process and I still hate mounting. Anyway back to September. Az is booked to do his first 40 something km ride in the Forest, having completed three 30 something k's earlier in the year. My daughter Libby has agreed to help, but this time no Sally in tow to ride with.

We arrive at the venue and after looking at the ground and my heavy trailer it is obvious we cannot unhitch for Libby to crew on the course – never mind. Ever optimistic, its only 40 + km and lots of others out on course. Number collected and Belinda Stewart will be at checkpoint two and agrees to take some water for me and the horse. Great, sorted. Az vets well and we point out the slightly pink place on his withers where the saddle has caused a problem, which we are dealing with. It has not been getting worse but is slowly improving. – Thinks once again “maybe I shouldn't be riding”

Az is tacked up and ready to go. I put on my Kantec body protector – won't now ride without it – downside will I be roasted? I hitch up my bum bag over the lot and check I have phone, map, hoof pick, vetwrap and dark chocolate! Libby gets mother on board. Fine off we go to the start – all good until the bum bag slides down my back and onto the ground behind me! Libby shouts at me to wait, but I've started. This is just how you should start a ride. No phone no map – people about I reason and I couldn't read the map anyway as I haven't got my glasses!- Pity about the chocolate.

The ride progresses well and we join up with Sue and Louise Rich for a period, but they will be going overall much faster than I want Az to go. At checkpoint two I am so glad to see Belinda as I really need a drink but Az only takes a few mouthfuls as he wants to stay with the others. We ride on for a while and I decide to drop back and slow my pace – I'm aiming for between 11 and 12 km.

The last section of the ride is the long and winding forestry track that seems to go on for miles. On various horses I must have ridden this countless times so on we go completely oblivious to the fact that the route has been changed slightly because of a biking event where they whizz down a slope and across a track at incredible speeds.

Did I check for changes before we started – no of course not! We come to a halt at some string across the track and one of the bike marshals informs me of the change in route so back we go and easily pick up the right track. Don't know how we missed the marker in the first place, oh yes no glasses. Anyway, the last few minutes go quickly as we join another rider; make another slight error by missing a turning – too much gossiping and no glasses. We arrive back at the venue.

Libby takes Az and we wash him off and look at the pink bit which is slightly pinker but not broken or swollen – Thank goodness this is the last ride of the season so we can spend the winter sorting the saddle. The vet decides the back is not any worse but agrees the problem must be looked at and Az finishes his first season with a grade 1 in spite of his rider. We have a very long way to go but we are on the road again with a winter of schooling and saddle fitting ahead of us.

Thanks to Abbi for the following article about her very successful first season of ERs (this year to be called CERs). Like Fiona's article earlier in the newsletter, I was very grateful to Abbi for all the detail she has given about her training strategy, feeding regime, choice of rides and what she actually does to crew the horse during the ride. I hope this article will be of especial interest to those thinking of trying some longer distance rides or CERs themselves.

Barik's First ER Season

Abbi Tennant

So 2012, has come and gone and what a fantastic year it was! Having some marvellous rides with Barik and finishing the year with the Offa's Dyke Rough Close Lady Trophy for First Season of ER's National & Windard Trophy for Best Horse Newcomer.

So how did we do it?

Barik is an Arab gelding who has previously competed in Arab Racing as a youngster before finding his career as an Endurance horse. His previous owner did Arab Racing with him and completed his Novice stage in 2010 with his three rides (rather fast!) before upgrading him to Intermediate. His first season with me was spent only competing in graded rides up to 80km, so that I could build him up slowly and get him used to endurance without the excitement of racing. As well as building up our bond as horse and rider.

My aim for 2012 was to compete Barik in his first ER with the ultimate goal of competing in a 120km, if all went well. Our training starts in December after his rest break with walking over varied terrain. This slowly builds his back up and strengthens his bones to be able to endure the long rides. As bone strength develops slower than muscle. This starts off as an hour and increase to about 3 hours of walking. It is boring

but it is after all more important to get this early strengthening work in. Towards the end of January trot is introduced. Starting with short lengths of trot and slowly progressing to longer. This mixture of walk and trot we did about 4 times a week for 2 hours at a time. Canter work was not introduced till the middle of February, by which time my plan of rides for the year had been mapped out and the first ride entered. My canter work starts off with short periods before increasing as time and fitness goes on. I was lucky enough to have had access to a 14km loop across headlands to do my canter work on. We did canter work once a week starting with 14km loop and building up to 28km with a crewing/ mock vet gate half way round.

March saw us start our endurance season with graded rides of 50km at Forest of Dean and 64km at Cannock Chase. This was in preparation of his first ER which was to be an FEI* 80km at King's Forest. The week before King's Forest had been light work with gentle hacks out but nothing strenuous. Due to Barik's background of racing it can mean he can get quite excitable and will take a hold of the bit. In order for me to be fully in control and for him to not realise we were about to do his first race I did not leave with the group but left a minute or two after. Barik breezed round the 80km quite comfortably in trot and never breaking out of his comfort zone coming in 4th place.

After this achievement I flew out to compete again back in South Africa for a month and half before returning at the beginning of June. In my absence, Barik was let down to doing short PR's and fun rides to maintain his fitness with Krissie Jones, who is also part of Barik's crew. I flew back in at the start of June and could pick up our training with some canter work back on the headlands. I also took a few trips to Cotswold Farm Park where I would go round the course about twice with the crewing/mock vetgate in between loops. Barik and I also took the opportunity to cross train by using the cross country jumps en route. I have found it is important to cross train so that my horses effectively use all of their muscles/ themselves.

Our next ride was the Young Horse 80km ER at Kings Forest. Both Barik and I loved the route there so it seemed perfect for us to go back. The class was small so I set out with the others, although Barik did not realise he was actually in a race. Once again Barik took the course in his stride and came home in 1st place. Following King's Forest, was to be Barik's biggest challenge yet, a 120km at Barbury Castle. Had Barik not of performed so well during his 80km rides I would never have entered this but I felt he was both physically and mentally ready to tackle this distance.

Barbury Castle was a very hot day and the class was large with some experienced horses and riders. This ride was also the first time Barik started a ride as a pack, which all proved very exciting as he knew he was racing! Barik's long trot was definitely shown off at this ride with both the 1st and 2nd loops being completed at 17kph. By the second loop the sun was in full force and the heat was reflecting off the white

chalk ground so we slowed down to a comfortable 15kph. At the third vetgate, the heart rate had to be under 60bpm and this was where a lot of horses failed. Due to the heat, we used plenty of water to cool him down. We left ice in our buckets to keep the water cool throughout the day. Unfortunately, on my last loop Barik lost a shoe 6kms from home so the farrier was called which lost us about half an hour. This brought our speed down to 13kph. With shoe back on Barik crossed the line into 5th place.

Although we did canter work to build Barik's stamina up, these rides were all done at a trot. It was not my intention to push him too far too fast or to go out of his comfort zone. My aim was to complete and the placings were just an added bonus!

Crewing/Vetgate Procedure

Due to Barik's racing background he can be excitable at the venue so I would dismount before the vetgate and walk him in slowly, in order for the heart rate to have dropped by the time we came in. My crew each have their own jobs to do during a vetgate procedure; one person to take off saddle and boots, one to handle stethoscope/ heart rate monitor and the other to have a slish/water if needed. This means no one is running around Barik and he has learnt our routine from our mock vetgates during training. Barbury Castle was an exception as my parents came to watch/help out as well as my Uncle and 3 small cousins. Barik is used to having my little cousins around him at home with supplying pony rides so this was not a major issue.

These rides would not have been achieved with our fantastic crew of course!

Feeding

Barik is fed on controlled grazing, with soaked hay and horsehage leading up to a race. During his high training he was fed; 8 mugs Baileys Endurance mix, 4 mugs Baileys Build Up Cubes, a mug Baileys Outshine, 2 handfuls Dengie Original, 2 handfuls Dengie Alpha A, 2 mugs soaked sugar beet (unmolassed), and a sprinkling of porridge oats, this was all divided into 3 feeds per day with a scoop of electrolytes as when needed during training and prior to the ride.

In a vetgate I have found my horses like to pick and choose their food so I do not mix it together. Barik instead has a few buckets with a bit of each in and he eats what he likes, his particular favourite being porridge oats. He has the option to drink either plain water or blackcurrent water as well (I use Robinsons Blackcurrent and Apple Squash or Horse Quencher). However, he does have a tendency to like to watch what everyone else is doing in a vetgate, so I often feed him by hand whilst I also eat. (This was where my little cousins came in useful at Barbury Castle as he could nibble his food from their hands whilst also watching everyone else). Before each loop and after eating and drinking Barik is given his electrolytes with an added supplement of calcium (the added calcium I learnt about from a personal experience in SA and after

consultation from my vet) mixed into greek yoghurt with a dash of honey and syringed into his mouth. All very tasty and there is no wastage!

After Barbury

Barik had fulfilled our goal of completing a 120km so I finished our season there. His shoes were removed and he enjoyed a 3 month break out in the field.

So that was our year in 2012! Barik is now back in the start of his training for this current season after his long rest.

Top tip from Delwyn Hall

Care of sheep wool numnahs, as told to me by master saddler and saddle fitter:
Wool numnah should be washed in soap and not detergent if you wish to avoid adverse effects on horses skin. When dry, comb the wool with a fine toothed hair comb, especially the areas which cover the back of the horse (cantle area). The combing will remove stubborn horse hairs and very importantly will prevent the build- up of knots of hair which will rub and irritate the horses back. This is especially important when the horse changes his coat.

I have started combing and it is surprising the amount of hair removed. *Delwyn*

Thanks to Gill Talbot (former long time editor of the Offa's Dyke Newsletter) for unearthing these 'blasts from the past' from her archive. Those of you who know Margaret Mc Kiddie and her home bred Bonnie Anne will appreciate the report of her very first pleasure ride. Bonnie went on to be EGB National Champion, winner of the 100 mile Solstice and to represent GB internationally on several occasions.

The second offering from Hilary Cuming seems very well timed for a New Year Resolution!

Bonnie Anne's 1st ride 1995- Woolhope Social Ride by Margaret McKiddie

Blue skies, primroses and daffodils and not a muddy track in sight! Set the scene for the Group's first ride of the season at Woolhope, which was conveniently timed for my first born youngster Bonnie Anne to make her debut. By Bonanza, out of Pandora she can perhaps be regarded as a true Offa's Dyke child

Despite her wooly coat she coped well with the full 20 miles without difficulty and only a few minor hiccups. Starting early we met several heavy lorries approaching the venue and I am grateful to the drivers who stopped and let me lead her quietly past. She also took strong exception to being "sloshed" with cold water - the white plastic

"dragon" that she could see out of the corner of her eye, was obviously very dangerous!

In general we found the route very clearly marked, perhaps we were round before the dreaded marker movers got to work! There seemed to be lots of helpful, smiling stewards around and very few unmanned gates. It was an area quite new to me, very pretty and especially the last section through the woods.

Many congratulations and thanks to the organisers. I hope they will be sufficiently encouraged by their success to repeat it another year.

New Year Resolution by Hilary Cuming

I really enjoyed my Long Distance Riding season in 1998. It ended with my first Open ride at the Red Dragon with good going and stunning views. I haven't done too well for photos though. My own camera packed up and I seemed to pick rides without photographers-except a very wet Forest of Dean picture! So I was pleased to receive 3 sets of pictures from Peter Orr after the Red Dragon.

I do think however, the photographer's notice shouldn't just say '**space out, photographer ahead**' but –'**photographer ahead, toes in and stop that stupid grinning!!**'—I think that might be my 1999 New Year Resolution!

Thanks to Chris Wray for this very comprehensive explanation of FEI rides

Onwards and Upwards – progression into and through International (FEI) rides.

The FEI (Fédération Equestre Internationale) is the international body under which all international equestrian sport takes place – in the same way that the FIA regulates motorsport, FIFA regulates soccer, FINA swimming, etc... The FEI was formed in 1921, and Endurance became a recognised discipline and came under FEI regulations in 1982. The FEI is governed by representatives elected by the National Federations in an annual meeting – in our case this is the BEF (British Equestrian Federation), which recognises EGB as the UK governing body for Endurance. The FEI publishes a set of rules under which all rides sanctioned by the FEI take place. The EGB rules are pretty well harmonised to the FEI rules, so you do not have to learn a new rule book – the only obvious difference I have come across is the complete FEI ban on whips or similar, whereas EGB permits these except for final loops of ERs. The main purpose of this article is to describe what you have to do to qualify to compete in FEI rides, and the first element of this is the National Federation qualification.

To undertake your first FEI ride, which must be a 1*, both you and your horse (though not necessarily together) must have:

- Both Registered (this is annual) with the FEI – you fill in the horse and rider forms that can be obtained from the EGB website (“Forms” on the left side menu bar), and send these with cheque to the EGB office
- Note, for 1* rides organised by your own national federation you will not need an FEI horse passport, but you will do so for foreign 1* and any 2* rides (application forms on EGB website as above)
- Successfully completed two rides of 40-79km at or under 16kph (which you will have done if you have progressed out of EGB Open to Advanced)
- Successfully completed two rides of 80-90km at or under 16kph – note, there is no +/- 5% like there is with EGB, so for your Advanced upgrade ride, you must ensure it really is recorded by EGB as 80km or more. And note that while you need only a single 80km ride to upgrade to Advanced, FEI require a second (which can be CR or ER).
- The 4 rides that you use to meet the FEI 1* qualification must be carried out in the 24 month period prior to your FEI 1*, but for those who have had a gap in their competitive history it is also possible to qualify with just 3 rides of 80-90km (at 16kph or slower) within the 24 month period.
- Your horse’s Flu vaccination must have been carried out less than 6 months + 21 days and more than 7 days before first vetting.

FEI 1* Rides are between 80km and 119km in distance on a single day. To compete in these, you and your horse must complete the National Federation qualification specified above, the rider must be in the year of their 14th birthday or older, and the horse must be 6 years old or more.

FEI 2* Rides are between 120km and 139km on a single day or 70-89km/day over 2 days. To compete in these, both horse and rider (though not necessarily together) must have been successful in a 1* ride in the 24 months (24 month limit only applies to horses, not riders) prior to the 2* ride, and the horse must have met the mandatory rest period since the previous FEI ride (80km or below is 13 days, over 80km is 20 day, with longer periods if eliminated for metabolics, but only 6 days if vetted out before 40km – see the FEI rules for full details).

FEI 3* Rides are between 140km and 160km on a single day or 90-100km/day over 2 days or 70-80km/day over 3 or more days. To compete in these, the horse has to be 7yo or more, and both horse and rider (though not necessarily together) must have been successful in a 2* ride in the 24 months (24 month limit only applies to horses, not riders) prior to the 3* ride, and must have met the mandatory rest period since the previous FEI ride (as detailed above).

You will see from the above that though riders qualify themselves for life as they do each distance, horses need to keep getting successful completions to keep a margin from the 24 month cut-off.

Finally, FEI 4* Rides are Championships (in our case European, World and WEG) which are run as single day 3* rides of 160km+ (Seniors) or 120-130km (Young Riders), for which only national teams can enter, there are no individual entries. Qualifications for these are:

- Horses must be 8yo or older
- For YR championships, the horse must have successfully completed at least two 2* events (for the rider it is three 2* events), one of which must have been with the same rider for the championship and have been at the same distance and minimum speed as the championship, and at least 60 days prior.
- For Senior championships, the horse must have successfully completed at least three 2* or 3* events (for the rider it is five 2* or 3* events), one 3* of which must have been with the

same rider for the championship and have been at the same distance and minimum speed as the championship, and at least 60 days and no more than 24 months prior.

What this means of course is that many competitors at FEI rides are competing with the main objective of achieving a successful completion, in order to qualify for the next stage, or to qualify for eligibility to a championship (in EGB's case this is also the qualification to join the national Senior Squad). You only see some riders actually competing for position, unless it is a 4*, and even then many have the national team's result as a more important objective than their personal result – so riding to successful completion is just as important (or more so) than maximising their position in the results.

How you go about entering an FEI ride is pretty easy. All FEI rides must publish their FEI Schedule (like an EGB ride schedule, but with many more details) that gives everything you will need to know to enter, and some rides have their own entry form. If they have their own entry form, you fill that out and post it plus your cheque plus an SAE to the ride secretary to Chris Scott at the EGB Office. Chris will obtain the mandatory National Federation (BEF) "entry-approval" stamp, and put the entry form and cheque into the SAE you provided and post it to the Ride Secretary. Most FEI rides do not appear to have a riders pack posted out, but check what the FEI schedule for the ride says, or phone or email the Ride Secretary or Organiser as specified in the Ride Schedule. You may need to contact them anyway for stabling/corraling/accommodation – though most rides have their own website from which most details can be downloaded. If the ride does not appear to publish their own entry form, there is a generic one available on the EGB website (under Forms) which you fill out instead. For FEI rides organised by EGB, so that I don't get hit with a late entry fee and so that the Ride Secretary has all my EGB data, I also send direct to the Ride Secretary a normal EGB ride entry form for the FEI class with my cheque, and a note saying the FEI form will arrive in due course after the EGB office have done their stuff. In this case you just send the EGB office the FEI entry form plus the SAE, with a note saying the cheque has been sent direct.

When you get to an FEI ride, you will find it only a little different from the bigger EGB rides, though you will see quite a difference to the smaller EGB rides. The things you will need to consider are:

Minimum weight – all FEI rides have this, normally 70kg for 1* and 2*, and 75kg for 3* - but check the ride FEI Schedule. The weight is of the rider/clothing/hat/bumbag plus saddle and its accessories (girth/stirrups/waterbottle/etc). Make sure your training has been done at your competing weight !! You weigh out after initial vetting, and may be asked to re-weigh at any point thereafter (I've never been asked to re-weigh, probably as I'm 73kg without saddle!)

The vetting area (and vetgate crewing area) often have much more in the way of flags, banners, marques, gazebos than horses are used to, and vetting is often done under a big awning that can flap in the breeze. There will usually be a noisy public address system that may even play loud music in the gaps between commentary! Be prepared!

Following initial vetting (which is very similar to EGB ER vetting) the horse will have your rider number crayoned onto both sides of the rump, and may be fitted with a transponder (sometimes on an under-bridle) – the ride timing may still be paper-based but many rides now use credit-card sized barcode swipes and some use contactless transponders

At any vetting, be prepared to be banned from talking to or touching your horse while the pulse is taken – vets can be variable in their application of the rules. You do still at this level get vets that are really helpful and want you to be successful. Once you have presented to the Vet Steward, the

"no crewing" and "go straight to vet without delay" rules tend to be more rigorously applied than under EGB.

Vetting can be stricter than at EGB rides, but you should not get eliminated for lameness without failing a "3 card trick", and final vetting will always have a "3 card trick" for the trot-up. You won't know if you've passed the final vetting until the vetting is complete and in quite an emotional moment the vet steward (with the 3 slips of paper) will congratulate you or commiserate with you. Stabling – the FEI rule only that stabling is required at 4* events, though they do require horses that have done 3* events to remain under veterinary supervision for up to 24 hours after finishing "in the stable area of the Ride". Last month I did a 2* at Euston Park and was permitted to turn up to vet on the morning of the ride, and leave after the ride. However you may find that some Ride Organisers insist on stabling for some or all classes before and/or after the event.

I hope the above will be useful, or interesting, or even inspire you! Speaking personally, I get a real buzz from the level of organisation and professionalism that you get at an FEI ride - riding at Euston Park, for example, is a real thrill. You still see some of the same people that you do at other EGB rides, and there is quite a feeling of camaraderie with them particularly where there is a significant foreign entry.

There are many people in our Group doing (or have done) FEI rides, and most will be delighted to tell you more, or help you get started, or give any advice you ask for. You could start with those who organised the "Beyond Novice" training days (Rachael & Sarah Rogerson and Chris Wray – all doing FEI this year), they are on the OD committee (contact details at the front of the newsletter) and can also be contacted though the EGB Forum or the Facebook group "OD Endurance Group". They will help you find others as needed.

Give it a try! And best of luck

Advertisements

Evening talks organised by Rachael Farley-Claridge 07789641014 of EGB Cotswold Group

Event: Less Bounce Sports Bra Talk & Meal
Date: Friday 22nd February 2013
Closing date: Monday 18th February 2013
Time: 7pm – 10pm (approx)
Venue: The Bell at Old Sodbury, Badminton Road, South Glos, BS37 6LL (5 min drive from J18, M4)
Price: £10pp
Raffle: In aid of the EGB international teams
Booking form Email: rjclaridge@yahoo.co.uk

Please could I ask for your assistance promoting an event I am running with Less Bounce Sports Bras on 22nd February in South Glos? Selaine from www.Lessbounce.com has kindly offered to come and deliver a talk on her products and also fit bras/underwear after working with Beth Langley and I for numerous years

It should be a good evening and with a hot meal included within the ticket price at a venue just off M4. There will also be a raffle to raise funds for the EGB International Teams

I have lined up Saracen Horse feeds to speak on 19th April and am confirming a speaker for 15th March
Rachael Farley-Claridge 07789641014

Warrens Hill Arabians

Warrens Hill Arabians has a selection of performance bred youngstock for sale. All are related to Endurance Champions.

At Stud: AHS Premium Performance stallion, Chatanz. Grade 1 Performance tested Arabian who is the sire of outstanding horses such as Takwenya, Falaina Bint Chatanz, EGB National Champion Gryphon, and WAHO Champion Al Reeh Janoob.

Also available: Free'n'Easy saddle fitting and demonstrations .

For further details please look at our website www.wh-arabians.co.uk and/or contact Lesley Dunn at lesley@wh-arabians.co.uk 01600 860746.

FOR SALE

16 inch Brown English leather wide GP saddle. A nice comfy saddle. Good condition. £200

17 inch GFS medium-narrow width, two tone Brown GP Saddle. Excellent condition. £200

17 ½ inch black foreign leather extra wide GP saddle. One of the girth straps has come off but could easily be fixed. Would be ideal for backing or breaking. £25 (Just outside Abergavenny) Nicola Davies Tel: 07968928870

Email: n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk

Wanted

Helpers for Forest of Dean rides.

We need lots of volunteers each day to enable these rides to run. Lots of jobs from Stewards & Vet Writers, parking, road crossings etc. If you can help for a day – or even ½ day we would be very grateful. Please email Gina Harris: g.harris31@btinternet.com or use the contact button on the website to volunteer. Remember all helpers get their name in the hat for the end of season draw for £10 countryside vouchers. The more times you help, the more times your name goes in the hat!

Adverts are free to Offa's Dyke members & associate members.
Other adverts cost £5 per half page.

Please note that the newsletter is FREE to members and associate members of EGB who have indicated a wish to be in Offa's Dyke Group.

For non members of Offa's Dyke Group, we ask for £5.00 subscription per year for the newsletter by post. Please send a cheque made payable to OFFA'S DYKE BRANCH OF ENDURANCE GB to: Carolyn Edwards, Duart House, Brookfield Road, Churchdown, Gloucestershire, GL3 2PF.

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 Lessons		Sun 10 & 17 Feb	
Winter evening talk		Sat 9 Feb	Page 4
March Hares	National	Sun 3 March	
Novice Training	afternoon	Sun 17 March	Page 5
Govilon	Fun Ride	Sun 31 March	Page 6
Bluebell	Fun Ride	Sat 20 April	Page 7
Bluebell	National	Sun 21 April	
Schooling/Massage lessons		Sat 8 June	Page 9
Blaenavon	Fun Ride	Sun 16 June	
Cranham	National	Sun 28 July	
Black Mountains	Fun Ride	Sun 11 August	
Bwlch Raid	Fun Ride	Sun 22 September	(note new date)
Plump Hill	Fun Ride	TBA	

More information on the website 'rides & events' page

Web site: www.offasykeegb.co.uk