



Offa's Dyke Group  
Of Endurance GB  
**Newsletter – January 2016**  
[www.offasdykegb.co.uk](http://www.offasdykegb.co.uk)



## Chairman's Comment

I am writing this in the middle of December, so the EGB AGM, and the Offa's Dyke BAM have just taken place, I and my horses have had a brief rest, one of them started preparation for the new season a couple of weeks ago, and the other will in another 2 weeks time.

Looking back to the year ending, our Group has had some major achievements – the 3 greatest that spring (sorry about the pun – it really was a glorious May for the Group) to mind are Gill Talbot's win in the EGB National Championships at the Golden Horseshoe, Fiona Griffiths qualifying for and later competing for Team GB at the European Championships, and Rachael Cratchley (ex-National Champion and recent OD committee member) giving birth to Ivor. As I said at the BAM, there were so many podium positions achieved by our members it would have taken half the evening to run through them all (space permitting, they may be in this newsletter!) – outstanding results from many members.

Fiona was again prominent in the National Trophies, and Lesley Dunn's Chatanz was again the leading endurance Sire. In our own trophies, Gill was unsurprisingly very successful in taking home the Bonanza Trophy (highest points AHS registered), the Warrens Hill Arabians Trophy (highest distance homebred), and the Madoc Trophy (overall highest points) – not to mention the Thoroughbred rosette, 400km Grade 1 rosette and 400km Pandora Distance Rosette! A full list of the trophy results is in this newsletter.

Another great achievement this year (at least to our Welsh resident members) was the comprehensive win at the Home International and Celtic Challenge competitions held this year at Red Dragon – Wales not only won the Home International – Gill was the 160km team member – but also the Celtic Challenge, which team was the only one to get all 6 horses round successfully. Wales also one both Novice awards and one Junior award, only missing the second Junior and the Presentation awards from a complete full sweep.

So now it is time to look forward. I am extremely grateful for a talented and committed committee, there are no anticipated changes from 2015, aside from Suzanne Garlick stepping down, though we would welcome new members if anyone would like to join us. The committee have worked very hard to develop a programme for 2016, and inside you will find a mix of unmounted and mounted training opportunities (including schooling lessons every month of the year planned by Nicola), three National GER rides, and a further 4 fun rides. With the very near further rides and events organised by the De Cymru Group, there is plenty to keep members busy – please do your best to recruit some new members – with so many local opportunities EGB membership is fantastic value!

The weather so far this winter has been extremely mild, and my horses are smothered in mud – I hope when they are shod imminently it doesn't mean weekly farrier visits! I hope all your horses have benefited from some time off, and your preparations are winding up for the new season – February 28<sup>th</sup> and March Hares (sic) will be upon us very soon! Best wishes from me and the rest of the committee for a great 2016 season – see you out there on the rides!

**Chris**

# Committee Contacts

Chair and Trophy Secretary      Chris Wray  
Pentrewheeler Farm, Cwmcarnvan, Nr Monmouth, Gwent, NP25 4PL  
Tel:            01600 860938      Email:            c\_wray@tiscali.co.uk

Vice Chair                                  Heather Evans  
Springfield, Walford, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 5RB  
Tel:            01989 566034      Email:            zzaapp999@googlemail.com

Vice Chair and Health and Safety      Fiona Griffiths  
Ty Mawr Farm, Bwlch, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7NX  
Tel: 01874730987      Email: info@golden-castle.co.uk

Secretary                                  Kerri Kostello  
The Beeches, Barbadoes Hill, Tintern, Chepstow, Monmouthshire, NP16 6ST  
Tel: 01291680084 / 07900 926811      Email: kerri.costello@yahoo.co.uk

Treasurer                                  Sarah Rogerson  
11 High Street, Ayleburton, Lydney, Glos, GL15 6BX  
Tel: 01594 529100      Email: s.l.r@hotmail.co.uk

Junior Representative                  Andrea Champ  
Urishay Barn, Michaelchurch Escley, Herefordshire, HR2 0LR  
Tel: 01981510686                          Email: quinnchamp@gmail.com

Groups Liaison Officer                  Fenella Lloyd

Others      Nicola Davies

## Other Roles

Membership Secretary & Newsletter      Carolyn Edwards  
Duart House, Brookfield Road, Churchdown, Glos, GL3 2PF  
Tel:            01452 857352      Email: carolyn@edwardsglos.fsnet.co.uk

Child Welfare Officer                  Delwyn Hall  
Mitchmore Dell, Mitchmore Farm, Holme Lacey, Hereford, HR2 6LJ  
Tel:            01432 870348      Email:            dave\_dell@mypostoffice.co.uk

*Web site: [www.offasdykeegb.co.uk](http://www.offasdykeegb.co.uk)*

# Editor's Comments

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2016, full of lots of exciting events planned by Offa's Dyke Group. We have to thank our hard working committee which has put a lot of work into providing such a varied program.

It was lovely to meet so many OD friends at the BAM in December and I would like to offer my personal thanks to Piers Geddes, who once again gave a bottle of Champagne to each ride organiser in the group. You may know that 2015 was my last year of organising Cranham ride and Robin and I will enjoy our Champagne and raise a toast to our times (good and bad) of running the ride over the past few years.

I gave out Trophy cards to everyone who attended the BAM and more were available to collect at the Xmas Cracker ride. For anyone who hasn't yet received one you can download and print them from the Offa's Dyke website forms page <http://offasdykeegb.co.uk/forms/forms.htm> Group ride entry forms are also available to download from the website forms page, or from the individual ride page.

If you are unable to print your own and would like me to send you a paper copy, please let me know (contact details on page 2)

*Carolyn Edwards*

## **\*Helpers needed for March Hares 28th February\***

It's that time of the year again: please contact either Cecilia Lindberg ([ACL@cecilialindberg.co.uk](mailto:ACL@cecilialindberg.co.uk)) or Andrea Champ ([quinnchamp@gmail.com](mailto:quinnchamp@gmail.com)) if you are able to help with this ride. Remember: no helpers = no rides!

Please help us avoid the usual sleepless nights and volunteer to help! We need vet writers, runners, road marshals, assistants for ride secretary and many others. We look forward greatly to seeing the offers flood into our mail boxes!

THANK YOU in anticipation, Andrea & Cecilia

# Winter Talk

Thursday 28th January at 7:00pm  
Venue - Clthya Arms, Abergavenny, NP7 9BW

A talk from local vet and experienced endurance rider Georgina Vaughan (Hirst) and Charlie Fleming with cake at half time.



Georgina will be talking about travelling your horse and Charlie will be talking about her experiences at the Tevis Cup, the well-known 100-mile Western States Trail Ride, being placed 50th overall

## **PREPARATORY HORSE MOT FOR THE NEW SEASON:**

Bring your horse for a check-out prior to the new season of Endurance – you will have:

- 1 hour group (of 4) ridden lesson with instructor Samantha Owen (BHS AI Stage 4, advanced Endurance rider and international crew)
- observation of the lesson by vet Emma Jones MA VetMB CertES(Orth) MRCVS, farrier Lee Morgan DipWCF, Master Saddler Rob Jenkins, physio (TBA) and dentist (TBA).
- followed by an hour of trot-ups, hands-on assessments, and 1 on 1 discussion of their observations with each of the professionals.

**When:** Monday 8th February – first session for 4 from 10:30 to 12:30, second session for another 4 from 1pm to 3pm. Possibility of further dates if popular!

**Where:** Abbey Equine, Abbey Equine Clinic, Llansabbath Barns, Llanellen, Abergavenny, NP7 9BY.

**Cost:** £20 per horse, or £5 for observation without horse – profits to SWHP (professionals giving their time free). Note, for any treatments suggested you would need to make arrangements (appointment, payment) with the professional concerned.

Bookings and payments to be made through Fiona Griffiths – email [info@golden-castle.co.uk](mailto:info@golden-castle.co.uk)

# Strength and Flexibility for Riders

**What is it?** A workshop on strength and flexibility for all riders - suitable for ALL levels (or lack of!) fitness and flexibility and all ages. There will be something for everyone. We will prepare a handout with exercises so that riders can continue to work on their own at home, and there will be plenty of time for questions afterwards.

**Who is teaching?** Agneta Lindberg is a fitness professional with 30 years' experience in the fitness industry. She teaches all types of fitness classes and Pilates. She is also a former horse rider. Feel free to contact her with any questions you have before the event - [info@studiolindberg.com](mailto:info@studiolindberg.com), mobile 07957 233 134, website at [www.studiolindberg.com](http://www.studiolindberg.com).

**What do I need to bring?** Wear comfortable clothes, bring a yoga mat if you have one or a big towel if you don't.

**How much?** £5 per person. Please email Cecilia Lindberg [ACL@cecilialindberg.co.uk](mailto:ACL@cecilialindberg.co.uk) if you would like to attend, as it would be helpful to know approximate numbers.

**When?** 17:00 on Saturday 13th February 2016

**Where?** Staunton Village Hall, near Coleford. There is plenty of parking at the rear.

# Maryland Fun Ride

## Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March

(Subject to forestry approval)

Maryland is back after a few years break and hopes to be a super ride!

**Route:** The route consists of mainly forestry tracks (can be a little stony in places) connected by quiet country lanes. Some moderate hills with some fantastic views over the Wye Valley. There will be two loops of approximately 13km each and if there is enough demand a 7-8km lead rein loop within the South loop.

**Venue:** Near Trellech, halfway between Chepstow and Monmouth off B4293  
This year the venue is in a slightly different location allowing for easier access with a one way system. As before, there will be limited parking for lorries and non-4wds near to the start. Please email Lesley Dunn, who will suggest possible lorry parking places if you are concerned on [lesley@wh-arabians.co.uk](mailto:lesley@wh-arabians.co.uk)

**Start times:** Between 10:00 and 12:00

We recommend that lead-rein riders and complete novices start on the South loop before 11 am. Other riders start on the North loop.

**Entries to:**

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

Parking is limited so please get your entries in to avoid disappointment!

**Enquiries:** [n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:n.davies91@yahoo.co.uk) or 07968 928870

## Offa's Dyke Group Forest of Dean March Hares ride 28<sup>th</sup> Feb 2016.

For a couple of years now I have been working on route changes to remove a nasty boggy track (a 4x4 was stuck there for part of the ride last year), and also quite a nasty road section. This year my plans will come to fruition!

The first half of the ride will be substantially different, with 2 much safer road crossings compared to before, some nicer new tracks, and a better crewing place. The worst bits of the route (see above) are now avoided. I hope you like the new tracks!

The only road sections now are the short one (less than half a km) just north of Parkend, on the dead-end road through the quiet village of Ellwood (0.7km), and quiet residential roads as the route twists through the Palmers Flat area (0.6km) – so the total distance on public roads is now about 1.7km on each loop.

The 65km class will be 64km, and will do the 32km route twice with vetgate at the venue between loops. The 40km class will be 42km, and the 50km class 52km which will do the 40km route plus one section of 10km twice. The 30km class will be 32km.

There are some crewpoints where “Larger Vehicles” (over 5m long – see page 21 of the 2015 members handbook) will not be permitted, but they WILL be permitted at the following crewpoints: 6 on the 52km route, 5 on the 40km route, 4 on the 32km route – these are all pretty well spaced, so crewing in “Larger Vehicles” should not restrict your enjoyment or competitiveness!

**BUT THE RIDE CAN ONLY BE CONSIDERED PROVISIONAL AT THE CURRENT TIME:**

Cecilia has been posting on the Forum and Facebook for volunteer helpers to assist with running the ride. IT CANNOT RUN WITH INSUFFICIENT STEWARDS. There are 19 roles that need to be filled (Secretary, Timekeeper, Car parking – all needing 2 people, Vet Steward and vet writers, on-route stewards for directing riders and at road crossings (no gate stewards needed, hurrah!). Cecilia as of today (7<sup>th</sup> Jan) has 3 volunteers to fill these 19 jobs.... Please contact the organisers Cecilia Lindberg (send a PM on Facebook or EGB Forum) or Andrea Champ (PM via the EGB Forum) with your offers of help. They look forward greatly to hearing from you!

I will try and answer any questions on the route and crewing posted on Facebook or the EGB Forum. But my responsibilities only cover the route, so other questions need to go per the Ride Schedule to the Entries Secretary, Nicola Davies.

*Chris Wray.*

*I thought this year I would include the list of trophies and awards in the newsletter instead of sending you a separate paper copy. As you will see below there are a fantastic array of awards to be won –You just need to apply at the end of the season by sending your completed trophy card to Chris Wray. If you haven't already got your card, you can download a copy from the Offa's Dyke website or ask me to send you a paper copy.*

## **OFFA'S DYKE GROUP – TROPHIES AND SPECIAL ROSETTES 2016**



All members and Associate Members of Offa's Dyke Group are invited to apply for these fantastic end of season awards. It's very easy to do and there are awards for everyone – from pleasure ride rosettes up to high point trophies. Remember – you've got to be in it to win it! You need to send us your completed trophy card at the end of the season so we can work out the winners.

### ***What can Associate Members win?***

You can claim a Pleasure Ride Rosette, a Pandora Rosette, Junior Rosette, Team Trophy and the special 'Associate Member Trophy' (see below for details of each)

### ***What can Full Members win?***

You can claim for any award except the Associate Member Trophy

### *How do I apply for awards?*

You just need to take along your Trophy card to each ride (why not keep it with your horse passport – you should always travel with that). At the end of the ride when you collect your rosette, ask for your card to be signed (not necessary if the ride is recorded on your horse's mastercard). If you help out at a ride or attend an Offa's Dyke event just get the organiser to sign for you. At the end of the season – before 15 November post your completed card (along with a copy of your Mastercard for some members' awards) to Chris Wray, Pentrewheeler, Cwmcarvan, Monmouth, NP25 4PL. If you have any questions just email him at [c\\_wray@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:c_wray@tiscali.co.uk) - we suggest in any case you email him to ask to confirm card receipt.

***Associate Members Trophy*** - highest points - 1 point per km for any ride. 50 points for each Offa's Dyke event you help at. 25 points for attending one or a series of OD seminars/events

### *Awards open to all Members:*

**Pleasure Ride Rosette** - awarded to members and associate members who have completed at least the number of Offas Dyke Fun/Pleasure rides less one, 1 of which may be a ride organised by another EGB Group.

**Pandora Rosette** - 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 200 miles/320 km for the next rosette which can be claimed for two seasons, thereafter 250 miles/400 km rosettes can be claimed in successive seasons. Only one Pandora rosette per annum can be claimed for each horse, and the distance awarded will be the furthest for which the horse is eligible.

**Junior Rosette** - riders aged 15 and under on 31st December at the end of this trophy season completing any 3 EGB rides.

**Shushi Award** – in memory of Suzanne Garlick's Shushi, for riders aged 16 and under on 31st December at the end of this trophy season completing the highest distance in all EGB Rides except CERs.

**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) by 18 April.

## *Junior/Young Riders Awards*

**Mistress Harriet Trophy** - presented by Paul and Gina Harris to the rider (aged 18 and under on 31st December at the end of this trophy season) who successfully completes the highest distance.

**The Chador Trophy** - named for the horse which took Abbi Tennant, the donor, through her Young Rider career - awarded to the highPoint Young Rider aged from 19 to 22 on 31st December at the end of this trophy season.

## *Breed Awards:*

**Native 'Neddy' Rosette** - presented by Delwyn Hall to the full/part bred native or unregistered horse with less than 25% Arab, Thoroughbred or Warmblood who successfully completes the highest distance. Winner of two consecutive years not eligible for following year.

**Thoroughbred Rosette** - presented by Delwyn Hall for the Thoroughbred or 50% (no less) Thoroughbred horse who successfully completes the highest distance. Winner of two consecutive years not eligible for following year.

**Bonanza Trophy** - presented by Ray and Lesley Dunn to the highPoint Pure, Part or Anglo Arab horse in GER/CERs, registered with the Arab Horse Society, rider to have helped at an EGB or EGB Group ride (not restricted to OD rides).

## *Veterans Awards:*

**Cindy Trophy** - awarded by Gareth and Lindsay Williams to the veteran horse aged 16 years and over at the start of the current season (NB horses' birthdays are on 1st January preceding their actual birth date) who successfully completes the highest distance.

**'Bilbo's Rainbow'** - True Veteran Rosette- 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 GER/CER. Please claim by submitting Trophy Form, or by contacting Heather Evans (trophy form not required).

## *Achievement Awards*

**Clear Card Rosette** - for a horse's 24 consecutive GER/CER (or earlier equivalent) ride passes without a fail (novice rides – on a separate card – may count towards the required 24 passes).

**Grade 1 Rosette** - presented by Sharon Parr for a horse's EGB cumulative grade 1 distance in increments of 400 km.

**Warrens Hill Arabians Rosettes** - presented by Lesley and Ray Dunn:

- First 160 km Rosette- for horses or riders completing their first 160 km in a day.
- First 80 km Rosette- for horses completing their first 80km or longer ride in a day.

### *Group Champion Awards*

**Pandora Trophy for Novice Riders** - awarded by Margaret McKiddie for the best novice rider, who, before the commencement of the current season, has not started in more than 5 GER rides. The horse need not be novice. Rides to be 50 km or below, and the first ten GER rides started on a single (prior nominated if more than one) horse will count.

**Starlight Trophy** - presented by Janet Evans for the best novice horse in its first GER season. No GERs to have been started in the previous season. No more than ten GERs may be entered in total, those of up to and including 50km will be accepted.

**Open Class Trophy** - for the highest Point Open Class horse in open/adv classes (novice classes will not count). Best 10 rides to count. Applicants MUST provide copy of Mastercard to indicate for which events they were Open Class.

**Belstar Trophy** - presented by Hilary Cuming to the highest Point horse and rider Open or Advanced combination in GERs only. Best 10 rides to count. Winners of the Madoc and Bonanza Trophies are excluded.

**Warrens Hill Arabians Trophy** - Presented 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 an EGB or EGB Group ride (not restricted to OD rides).

**Mitchell Arab Racehorse to Endurance Horse Trophy** - for Arab (minimum 50%) horses that have raced, scored on Points for all completed EGB rides – OD rides will receive an extra 1 point per km. Main rider must have helped at an OD ride.

**The Offa's Dyke Challenge** - presented by Carolyn Edwards in memory of Tarr Steps Hannah to the horse/rider combination with the highest distance in their 3 longest completions on all Offa's Dyke Group rides. If no combinations have completed 3 Offa's Dyke rides, then the longest 2 rides will determine the winner. The rider must have helped at an OD Group Ride.

**Rough Close Lady Trophy** - presented by Delwyn Hall for the rider completing the highest CER distance in their first season of CERs. (Rides can be in any country), ties will be resolved by Points, then by placings.

**Madoc Trophy** - presented by Margaret McKiddie for the highPoint horse in EGB GER/CERs. The rider or owner to have helped at an EGB or EGB Group ride (not restricted to OD rides).

### *Helpers Awards*

**Offa's Dyke Hero Award** – to be awarded by the Committee to the individual who has contributed most to the Group during the current season. Nominations to the Committee by 30 September welcome.

**Shimara Cup** - awarded by Fiona Wilton for the Group member who gains most points overall (riding and non-riding).

Points are awarded as follows for the Shimara Cup:

Completing a non-OD GER/CER of any length	Flat rate 40	Completing any OD ride	2 per kilometre
Attending one or a series of OD seminars/events	Flat rate 25	Stewarding/Helping at an OD ride/event (per day, R/O discretion)	Flat rate 100
Organising an OD ride (50% for joint R/Os, and extra 50% for each subsequent day of multi-day rides)	Flat rate 200	Organising one or a series of OD seminar/events	Flat rate 150

Winner in two consecutive years is not eligible for the following year for the Shimara Cup.

### *Detailed notes on the rules above:*

Note 1: the word 'horse' above should be taken as to also include pony.

Note 2: "Distance" awards include Fun/Pleasure rides; "Points" awards also do, unless specified for GER and/or CER only. Where previous year rides are applicable, the earlier equivalent class name will apply to these.

Note 3: "Points" are scored as specified in the EGB Members Handbook, except for the Shimara Cup and Associate Members Trophy – where the points scored are as specified above. Where trophies include points for Fun/Pleasure rides, then the points counted for Fun/Pleasure rides will be distance points only.

Note 4: Points for Pandora and Starlight trophies: EGB national trophy Points will apply, up to 50km (note, no distance points limit as there is in the national Mira Trophy).

Note 5: Where "helping" is required, an equivalent level of help (to a full day at an OD Ride) at other OD events is an alternative means of complying.

## Offa's Dyke Group of Endurance GB -Trophies and Awards Results 2015

### Pleasure Ride Rosettes

Alison Knight Ann-Marie Pelc

### Pandora Distance Rosettes

#### 240km

Balishla (13819) Fiona Griffiths  
 Cha Cha Cha (14664) Fiona Griffiths  
 Gracie Rory Thomas  
 Prince Of Hope (14576) Kerry Carson

#### 320km

Shaikha Bint Krayaan (13982) Hannah Verkerk  
 Chica Gitano Ally Knight  
 Bint Al Reeh Janoob (13273) Greta Verkerk

#### 400km

Bright Dawn Sue Loveridge  
 Oakleaze Farm Cziko Louise Rich  
 Peponi (14611) Chris Wray  
 Roundhills Harvest Shine Heather Evans  
 Sa'da Sekora Gill Talbot  
 Hendrewen Pirate Nicola Davies  
 Zakhir Charlie Fleming  
 Stella II Sally Lewis

### Warrens Hill Arabians First 80km

Bright Dawn Sue Loveridge

### Grade 1 Rosettes

#### 400km

Bint Al Reeh Janoob (13273) Greta Verkerk  
 Peponi (14611) Chris Wray  
 Sa'da Sekora Gill Talbot

### Clear Card Rosettes

Oakleaze Farm Czelo (10026) Sue Rich

### Bilbo's Rainbow

Ground Kontrol Sue Rich

### Associate Members Trophy

Rory Thomas

### Native/Neddy Rosette

Hendrewen Pirate Nicola Davies

### Thoroughbred Rosette

Sa'da Sekora Gill Talbot

### Bonanza Trophy

Sa'da Sekora Gill Talbot  
 Zakhir Charlie Fleming

### Mitchell Arab Racehorse to Endurance Horse

Ground Kontrol Sue Rich

### Cindy Trophy

Stella II Sally Lewis  
 Oakleaze Farm Czelo (10026) Sue Rich

### Pandora Trophy

Suzanne Cruise Spyros (14424)

### Starlight Trophy

Peponi Chris Wray  
 Alleka Shareen (14597) Lindsay Williams

### Belstar Trophy

Zakhir Charlie Fleming  
 Bright Dawn Sue Loveridge

### Warrens Hill Arabians Trophy

Sa'da Sekora Gill Talbot  
 Peponi Chris Wray

### Offa's Dyke Challenge

Bright Dawn Sue Loveridge  
 Hendrewen Pirate Nicola Davies

### Madoc Trophy

Sa'da Sekora Gill Talbot  
 Zakhir Charlie Fleming

### Teams Trophy

Nicola Davies, Belinda Stewart, Sally Lewis

### Shimara Cup

Nicola Davies  
 Chris Wray

### Offa's Dyke Hero Award:

Lesley Dunn

*Thanks to new member Suzanne for taking the time to write about her novice season;*

## **2015 Endurance GB our Story thus far .... By Suzanne Cruise**

I have been asked to write a few paragraphs detailing my experiences of starting with EGB. Well here goes.

I have joined Offa's Dyke Group, lovely helpful group and boy did I need help. Ann-Marie Pelc has been my mentor & carer during my first endurance season thanks to Am I have survived - just.

Where do I start ... I lost my beautiful horse Galoul in April of 2015, therefore began riding my daughters horse beautiful Crabbet horse - Spyros and here my journey began.

Spyros is an X race horse who was sold to us as he had to come out of racing due to his stress levels. His heart rate was so high on my first ride I was nearly not allowed to start. Luckily the vet gave me the ok and we successfully completed passing the vet, with no grade due to his high heart but I was happy. Slowly Spyros is beginning to chill & we managed to achieve a Grade 2. I was so thrilled with the heart rate and result I kissed the vet, not sure this is allowed.

Mistakes, there have been many ... I managed to present at the vetting, forgetting to visit the lovely blacksmith. Forgot my map case, which I find a pain the strap rubs my neck & I can't see the map anyway as I need glasses to read. I have to ride with Am who maps reads beautifully or drag my poor hubby round the course on a bike as a mobile guide. Bless him he is a machine cycling up Bleanavon and Govilion which is no mean feat, I think there should be a medal for such men machines. On one of the rides the photographer said to my husband, 'You need to get yourself a horse'. He laughed, I was riding his horse Taranto (Andalusian).

Filling out all the paperwork properly, sending paperwork on time and managing to navigate EGB online entries has been a challenge for me. At Cranham my horse was tethered to my trailer a loose horse galloped over to my horse who then broke his quick release clip in panic and proceeded to do two laps of the venue prior to starting his route, certainly not the start I had planned.

Finally I think I am now beginning to understand what is expected of me and when, remember to present to Vet at the end of Ride WITHIN the allotted timescale, avoid horses with ribbons in their tails, in fact put red one in my horse's tail. I have lists for everything, Camping & Corralling equipment, Horse equipment, food for horse, food for humans, directions, remember to charge phone, torch & Garmin, remember to switch on Garmin when you start your route and finally remember to take Prosecco and lots of it, great for rehydration and nerves.

The end of the season has arrived, I went to the awards evening with no expectations whatsoever. To my surprise I won the Pandora Trophy. I was thrilled - what a lovely end to a very sad start to my horsey year. I am now looking forward to 2016 at least I can begin to relax and hopefully become more organised, although don't hold your breath.

A massive Thank you to everyone who has helped me find my way and to all the organisers. I have thoroughly enjoyed riding wonderful countryside on my daughter's and husband's horse. I am so lucky to have a new love of my life Jaakhil, aka Little J or Geoffrey as my husband calls him, a 7 month old Arab Colt bred by my dear friend, Pam Flowers, Llian Arabians. Could this gorgeous boy be my future EGB horse? Now there's a question, let's hope so....

*Suzanne Cruise*

*Below is a piece from my favorite contributor to the newsletter:*

### **Looking back....**

Perhaps the best piece of advice in 2015 came from Lesley Dunn. “It’s all right for them to go fast, after they have learned to go slowly”. The little bay mare, aged eight, who hasn’t done much in endurance but does like to get a move on, was having her saddle adjusted. She wasn’t a model client to begin with,

Philosopher Dunn considered a moment, then offered another small pearl. “It does them good to have a boring day once in a while”. Now we circulated slowly round the school, Lesley in the middle viewing our rather unsteady progress. It was suddenly easy to imagine the speech bubble over her head, “Tell me, have you ever considered taking up golf?”

It wasn’t a very successful year, at least in any obvious way. (Though one can have worse, such as no year at all.) But fifteen-year-old Flynn’s ligament injury repaired – delightful to be doing things with him again – after box rest, paddock rest and walking out in hand, months and months of it; perhaps his day is not yet done.

Under way again, at an October fun ride he discovered the thrills of simple jumping, changing his staccato bunny-hop into the makings of a curve. Why is jumping fun? No idea. But he thought so too.

Meanwhile Little Miss We-Must-Hurry got to the end of her novice season. In a rush, as usual. It’s not much fun fighting a horse for control of speed for mile after mile.

For chestnut Gully, lameness at the front end followed lameness at the back. This last was interesting, somehow, and showed it’s hard to think of everything. Though he’d travelled in a partitioned trailer with his old owner, he’s had the whole space to himself since. Lent for an hour’s schooling session, he travelled in the borrower’s partitioned one and gave himself a hell of a wallop on the coronet band. Who’d have predicted that? In July though he completed his first 64k, the one piece of fruit in an otherwise pretty barren year for him. And the rider? He went lame himself, driving a leg against an oak gatepost at a trot one morning in May. WAH!!!

Any practical wisdom to be pulled from the ruins of the year? Can't think of much. But it did occur to me, it's not trying to succeed that's important, so much as trying to stop yourself from failing. And of course, if you can do that – you know the pitfalls, just avoid them – you're likely to succeed. Not quite playing with words, depending as you are not on yourself but on a horse. So, can one addlepat ancient learn this lesson? Only if he can curb his desire to be Dick Turpin on Black Bess, escaping his pursuers, or a jockey in the Derby. Self-discipline versus exhilaration? It won't be easy.

*Piers Geddes*

*Thanks to Fiona Griffiths for this excellent report:*

At kings forest in May Oliver and I finished second in the FEI 160k 3\* class at just under 16kph. This meant we are now championship qualified. We then had to wait until after the second kings and the close of qualification to come round, to see how many combinations were qualified. Then there was an email asking all qualified combinations to put themselves forward for selection. Wooo very excited, definitely want to have the opportunity to represent my country, then we wait and wait forever... Only two people want to go. Will the OC let us go? There is to be an assessment weekend.

Oli was coming back to work and we had decided what we were going to aim for if not selected. The weekend was very interesting and informative, but Oli was not right. We were told that if there had been 12 horses forward we may as well go home, which was fair. But there were only two of us and we were allowed to go as individuals if he was right with continual assessment and support from abbey vets, who were reporting back to the team vet Sarah Coombs.

There were several worries; the travelling, leaving our business, crew, costs, management, how we would do it and Olli's soundness. Stress beyond, not sleeping worrying about everything, being told we shouldn't risk Oli, but this is a dream. We were given lots of help from Sarah about travelling; Georgina was very supportive and encouraging as was Rod. They all thought he could do it.

So plans lots of plans. Martin was fab and organised route and stop over's for us out and back. I got the paperwork sorted, packed the trailer, took it all out and repacked it. But finally we were leaving, Brian and I driving to Slovakia with Oli. 5hrs to Dover and a delay in port but only 4 hours to the lairage in Belgium, a paddock and stable for Oli. The rule was 2hrs drive, offer water, after 4hrs take him off to walk for hour.

Second day 12 hrs through Germany to Austria to our second lairage, loads of road works slowing us down. Here we were staying two nights, much walking and grazing and a gentle hack on our day off. Day four and back on the road for 4hrs to Slovakia and the venue.... it was huge and very impressive state of the art. Vetted and in to the summer stables, then on to the winter stables where we would be for the competition. Lots of security CCTV guards and vets monitoring every hour, wrist bands for entry, sign in and out. Made me feel much better that Oli would be safe, only problem was everything was a long way from anywhere.

We had more walking and the chance to ride part of the loops over the next couple of days. Drove out to see check points and out vet gate but mostly took Oli grazing in hand. Squad management arrived Wednesday- Mary chef, Sarah vet and Kelvin Farrier who were brilliant really reassuring and calm. I thought I was going to explode but I was also very stressed and tired and should have asked for more help.

The opening ceremony was on Thursday night and it went on and on, I was very proud to be there. Friday and Sam and Emma arrived. There was so much going on vetting today and they were excited. Rode out with Nicki in the morning after she arrived and Brian walked Oli - we were allowed to walk through the vet area and then there was the vetting. In the indoor school more pomp and ceremony, packing and sorting for crewing. Sam deals with Oli, Emma assists, Brian does heart rate, Leslie is our fourth member. Martin gave up his bib for management so we lost our time keeper. We decide to have two crews leap frogging so that no one had to be left in the vg.

Martin drove the second car with Leslie Belinda and Pam, Brian drove with Sam and Emma so they could get to the vet gate and set up ready as we don't own enough buckets for two vet gates. Emma was most disappointed that we didn't have 20 buckets with our name on lined up. Not sure we needed them, there were big trugs of water and we have jugs, also if we take that long to vet we are

not going on any way. So back to the packing - all sorted with Emma in charge of equipment. Fill the water barrels and I miss my footing stepping out of the trailer! I thought I had broken my ankle, but no just torn ligaments, Brian strapped it up and put me to bed, then made sandwiches and lunches for us all.

4am Brian goes to feed the horses, I try and get up- good thing he couldn't see me. I shouldn't have ridden but but..... The girls arrive and the circus started. Sam gets Oli ready and they take it in turns to walk him. I take pain killers and stand straight. No one was going to stop me from starting. Leg up and get moving - Oli is feeling great. Lots of horses were milling one or two messing around. The plan was start in the middle, trot to first crew point at 5k then canter when going allowed to vg at <18kph. Nicki wanted to go out at the back and go slower and we were asked to ride together.



Down to the start on the banks of the Danube still dark, the teams riding in ranks, intimidating, but very exciting. Oli behaving, the clock counts down and we are off. The teams come by like military formations and Nicki's off with the front runners, he was a bit fresh. Oli and I ride to plan. Amazing ride along the river in the dark and mist, through the town along the paths and fields. Glad to

see my crew, Belinda feeding me pain killers, to arrive at the vg, 2mins 5sec to presentation.

We are through, rest time, ankle re-strapped, Oli massaged and time to go. This was supposed to be the mountain loop with rough tracks and hills. There were brilliant views for miles and the water stations were great. We made good time but had got caught up in a group, my leg hurt and I should have backed off. I was so twisted I made Oli lame. He came in to the vet gate flying but took over 4 mins to vet and I knew we were out.

I was so cross with myself for letting him down, but as we say in endurance 'I learnt a lot' (it was shit) My fault, pride, I had set goals, get there, vet, start, each loop, get home. Well we did most of it and had a fantastic experience. Would I do it again? Hell yes. I did learn things, most importantly that I can't do everything, that we need an electric scooter and you never sell out.

Nicki and Grayson had a wonderful time, we all stopped to watch and cheer her home.

Oli was passed fit to travel the next day. We had a bit of a debrief, which was interesting and we set off for home, 3 more even days with another delay because of weather at Calais but good to be home. Oliver was fine within a couple of days and I have started riding him gently, we will do some dressage and jumping this winter and see what happens next year, bring it on.

Thank you to everyone who supported us with donations, raffle, feed, ferry, advice and offers of help, we could not have done it without you, thank you all Oliver and Fiona, Brian, Sam, Emma, Martin, Leslie, Belinda and Pam.

*Thanks to Delwyn for this report about the excellent talk organised by Offa's Dyke group in November*

## **Demonstration and dissection of the lower leg and hoof by Nigel Brown master farrier and championship winner**

Nigel touched on shoeing for comfort, longevity and competition. He prefers the part fullered shoe with plain toe for endurance horses, set very slightly back for quick breakover, with paired road nails and not studs to prevent slipping on roads.

Laminitis can occur not just in fat ponies but in stressed horses – after surgery, serious illness, foaling, long distance travelling and fast trotting on hard surface such as roads. Nigel showed us the result of bruising in the foot which will take 6/8 weeks to recover, often abscesses occur when the foot is subjected to further bruising before the first bruise has grown out.

After many questions and answers the dissection moved on to the leg. Here we saw the rope-like tendons and the finer ligaments and how they were situated in relation to the hoof.

I have barely touched on Nigel's talk, and cannot attempt to do justice to it. We arrived at 6:30 and some people left at 10:00p.m. but others were still asking questions when I left. Nigel holds these demos about every 18mths to 2 years. He would give another one sooner if there was sufficient interest.

I apologise for this skimpy report but however it is condensed no justice could be done to such an informative, interesting and fascinating subject.

On a another note, Nigel tells me that the Brit. Government and the W.C.F. are in talks with the E.U. as the E.U. want to lower the apprentice and exam standard of British farriers so that European farriers can work in the U.K. - So much for the work that B.H.S. and others have done over many years to raise our standards to the benefit of our equines.

*Delwyn Hall*

# Advertisements



**FOR SALE:** Grey Arabian gelding, rising 2, with super movement and temperament.

Warrens Hill Chakir will probably mature at around 14.3 to 15 h.h and is very similar in type to his uncle, our senior stallion and leading endurance sire, Chatanz.

**NOT FOR SALE:** I also have several horses enjoying the life of being field ornaments that could be ridden by someone suitable or used to breed a foal.

For further details please see my facebook page and our website [www.wh-arabians.co.uk](http://www.wh-arabians.co.uk)

Lesley Dunn [lesley@wh-arabians.co.uk](mailto:lesley@wh-arabians.co.uk) 01600 860746

**Advertisements are free for Offa's Dyke Members**

# Dates for your diary

Winter talk	Thursday 28 January
Schooling Lesson	Sunday 7 February
Horse MOT	Monday 8 February
Strength & Flexibility for riders	Saturday 13 February
Schooling Lesson	Sunday 21 February
March Hares	Sunday 28 February
Bluebell	Sunday 24 April
Blaenavon	Sunday 3 July
Black Mountains	Sunday 21 August
Bwlch Raid	Sat 17 – Sun 18 September

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

***Web site: [www.offasdykeegb.co.uk](http://www.offasdykeegb.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.***