



Offa's Dyke Group
Of Endurance GB
Newsletter – April 2010
www.offasdykegb.co.uk



Chairman's Comment

Spring at last and the group has moved on. We have new committee members in Liz Taylor as treasurer and Sue Loveridge who taken the role of purchasing. Delwyn Hall has taken on liaison with pony and riding clubs to encourage new and younger people to try our sport.

The first few events have been very successful and thanks must go to the organizers and all helpers:

- Mark Holland for Maryland on the booked date (and not having snow).
- Judy Taylor for being organizer on the day for March Hares so the rest of us could ride.
- Fiona Griffiths as dressage was great fun. Well done to all those who were placed and to the rest of us who enjoyed it and didn't fall off.
- Nicola Davies for Govilon ride. Such a wonderful turn out of riders and beautiful scenery, a great help to the group funds.
- Carolyn Edwards and Liz Taylor for Novice training afternoon for 11 people.
- Belinda Josephi and Chris Wray for the Bluebell rides.

Bluebell ride organization has been easier thanks to all the volunteers so please keep it up for the rest of the year.

Please help us publicise the social rides by printing off the info sheet from website and putting it in local tack shops (forms page /2010 pleasure ride info).

Website has been updated with some excellent photo's (if you have nice photos please send them in, Carolyn is getting slower at rides as she has to take photos on the way round) please browse and thanks to Rob Edwards for this and also excellent maps of the ride routes plus other changes to ensure it's easy to use.

Group continues to develop riders with 5 of the group on international development squad: Sue Loveridge, Chris Wray, Fiona Griffiths, Louise and Sue Rich well done to you all. Good luck to Sue and Louise Rich on the team in Belgium first week of May (see page 5 for details).

Well that's it from me. I hope to see some of you at all our rides.

Lots more to come over the next 3 months. Info in newsletter and on website

Gina Harris

This newsletter is free to Offa's Dyke members of Endurance GB. Annual subscription by post for non-members is £5.00. If you would like to subscribe, please complete the form on the back page or download for free from offasdykegb.co.uk.

Committee Contacts

Chair

Gina Harris

14 Oak Way, Huntley, Gloucestershire, GL19 3SD

Email: g.harris31@btinternet.com

Vice Chair

Debbie Williams

The Tump Farm, Whitchurch, Ross-On-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 6DQ

Tel: 01600 891029 Email: clinwilcharmaine@hotmail.com

Secretary

Rachel Williams

The Tump Farm, Whitchurch, Ross-On-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 6DQ

Tel: 01600 891029 Email: racheljw@hotmail.co.uk

Treasurer

Liz Taylor

Wrens Nest, Pauntley Drive, Redmarley, Glos GL19 3JA

Tel: 07737 871085 Email: elizabeth.taylor@stonegate.co.uk

Junior Representative Abigail Tennant

Email: abbi_tennant@hotmail.com

Trophy Secretary

Chris Wray

Pentrewheeler Farm, Cwmcarnvan, Nr Monmouth, Gwent, NP25 4PL

Tel: 01600 860938 Email: c_wray@tiscali.co.uk

Membership Secretary &

Groups Liaison Officer Carolyn Edwards

Duart House, Brookfield Road, Churchdown, Glos, GL3 2PF

Tel: 01452 857352 Email: carolyn@edwardsghos.fsnet.co.uk

Newsletter

Margaret McKiddie

Kimsbury Cottage, Upton Hill, Upton St Leonards, Glos, GL4 8DF

Tel: 01452 813670 Email: margaret.mckiddie@btinternet.com

Others

**Belinda Josephi, Heather Evans, Delwyn Hall, Sue Loveridge,
Gabrielle Franklin, Sharon Parr, Mark Holland**

Web site: www.offasdykeegb.co.uk

Editor's Comment

Somehow newsletter time seems to come so quickly. Already we are into the second quarter of 2010. Due mainly to the horrible weather: snow, rain, frost and mud I have done less riding than ever and am very unfit. Bonnie, while not really fit seems determined to behave more like a 2year old than a 20year old. She had me off twice in a week (Misty made it 3 just to keep me happy!) and for the first time ever at Cannock Chase instead of her usual standing still saying 'What are you doing down there?' took off at speed and had to be chased after and captured by the riders I was with at the time. She did behave better at Major Oak, but I was in trouble there, struggling to do 40 miles. I know I am getting old even though Bonnie does not think she is.

Offa's Dyke season has got off to a good start with 2 successful pleasure rides and Forest of Dean March Hares, blessed for once with lovely weather. As a completely new departure for the Group Fiona Griffiths, inspired by the training sessions at Huntley, offered to organise a Dressage competition which was well supported. Two of our committee members did very well Carolyn Edwards having a first and a third and Delwyn Hall being second in both classes.

Let's hope the weather improves soon and you all have a successful season. Please do keep sending reports of rides you have enjoyed (or not!). Also remember that we are always short of helpers at rides. Every one of you should try to help at least at one. Ride organisers have enough to do without having to twist people's arms to come and help

Margaret McKiddie

Dates for your diary

Blaenavon Group PR	Sun 4 July
Ludlow National	Fri –Sun 16-18 July
Black Mountains Group PR	Sun 25 July
Cranham National	Sun 22 August
Under Hay Bluff Group PR	Sun 29 August
Tintern National	Sun 19 September
Plump Hill Group PR	Sun 26 September

More information on the website 'rides & events' page

New Offa's Dyke Trophies for 2010

We have two brand new trophies this year:

Associate Members Trophy

Team Trophy

Details of both are on the revised list of 'Trophies and Special Rosettes 2010', which Offa's Dyke members should find enclosed with this newsletter. There are also a few minor changes to the rules of some of the other awards, so please take a few minutes to read it and see which you may qualify for.

You should all have received a trophy card to note down each event you either ride or help at. Please fill it in as you go along to make it easier at the end of the season. We should have records of all helpers and riders at Offa's Dyke events, so you no longer need to get the ride organiser to sign on the day. If you help at another group, or do a social ride, you will need to have your card signed, as we have no record of these to verify.

Please nominate your team for the new 'Team Trophy'

Form should be enclosed. Either post or email Chris Wray before 15 May. Any three horse & rider combinations can have a go at this. Even if you're only doing short distance rides - they all add up. Every ride counts (except ER's)

New Helpers Reward Scheme for 2010!!

Every ride and event we organise needs lots of helpers to make it a success. We want to thank everyone who contributed to the group in 2009 and ask you all to help us in 2010. We appreciate that many of you want to ride on the day, but there are some things you could help with before or after a ride. Maybe you could ride some days at Ludlow and help on others (you get free camping for doing this).

This year we're introducing a new scheme to thank our helpers. Each time you organise an event, or help in a significant way (e.g. at least ½ day stewarding or helping) your name will be entered in a raffle, to be drawn at the end of the season. The more times you help, the more times your name goes into the hat. Prizewinners will be announced at the Annual Awards evening.

If you can help in any way at any of our rides or training events please contact the organiser or any member of the committee.

International Teams

Offa's Dyke has an amazing record of having members on the EGB international squads. For a relatively small group, we have several past and present members of EGB teams including young riders, development and elite squad.

Development Squad

This year the development squad started with 19 people, of which 5 were Offa's Dyke members. These were Fiona Griffiths, Sue Loveridge, Sue and Louise Rich, and Chris Wray. They had training days and assessment rides and from this list the team was chosen.

Unfortunately, Chris's horse retired from endurance and he withdrew from the squad, but following the final selection ride at Kings Forest, Sue and Louise Rich were both offered places on the Team. Sue Loveridge and Fiona were offered reserve places, but decided to decline.

Congratulations to Sue and Louise Rich on being selected to represent Great Britain on the Development Squad team!

They are travelling 27 April to compete in an FEI 120km ER at Mont le Soie in Belgium on Sunday 3 May. Neil and Gwen Pickering are also travelling with them to crew. There was a last minute hitch with the team vet Jo Woodman, who was stuck in New Zealand due to the air flight restrictions. Jenny Leatherbarrow, who many of you will know from vetting Offa's Dyke rides, has stepped in at the last minute. The Development squad team is as follows:

Larissa Whiley	- Ben Shah
Sue Rich	- Czako
Heather Whiteley	- Shafabah
Claire Bruce	- Ah Diba
Louise Rich	- Cziko
Charlotte Hirst	- WFA Leena

We wish them all the very best of luck and look forward to reading all about it in the next newsletter!

Elite Squad

This year 's World Equestrian Games Championships is being held in Kentucky USA and a major fund raising effort is taking place to send a British team there. Our own fund raising ride will be Plump Hill Social ride, which takes place on the actual date of the WEG.

Offa's Dyke's hope for the Elite Squad to compete in Kentucky is our own Sarah Rogerson. Sarah and her twin sister Rachel have competed from being juniors on a small pony up to FEI level. Over winter Sarah has been working in the USA for UK rider Dom Freeman and has competed on several FEI rides out there. We hope she is going to write about her fantastic experiences for us & maybe even give us a talk about it at a Pub social evening.

Sarah just needs to complete one further 120km FEI ride to satisfy the very complicated qualification process to allow her to become a member of the elite squad. Then she can be considered for selection for Kentucky.

We all have our fingers crossed for you Sarah!!

Sara and Rachael Rogerson have an exciting new blog – both of these top Endurance Riders are now featured on the Horse and Rider website and will be in the next issue of the Horse and Rider magazine – go to <http://www.horseandrideruk.com/article.php?id=814> to see their first blog.

Cotswold Group Social Ride

Bibury Ride 9 May. 18km Old Airfield Abbingdon

www.endurancegbcotswold.co.uk

Come and enjoy approx. 14 mile route over glorious Cotswold Countryside mainly made up of tracks and grass with some roadwork through quiet villages and country lanes (2 unavoidable road crossings but we hope to have crossing stewards present) Venue is on hardstanding at Ablington by kind permission of the Mason family – please bring along a £1.00 donation towards the cost of parking.

Entries on EGB entry form or Cotswold Group entry form to: Members: £10.00 Non Members: £15.00

Entries: Claire Blizzard, 23 Gibson Court, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1PN, Tel: 07811514640 Email claire.blizzard@live.co.uk.

Offa's Dyke Summer Social Rides 2010

Entry fees for all Group social rides are £10 for EGB members & associate members, £15 for temporary day members (use the social ride entry form, which is available on the web site). Cheques payable to Offa's Dyke group of EGB

Blaenavon Group Social Ride

Sun 4 July

Thanks to Belinda Stewart for kindly agreeing to run the very successful Blaenavon Ride again this year. The landlord of the Whistle Inn very generously allows us to use his field as a venue.

Plenty of cantering over open hills with fantastic views. The ride incorporates part of the National Cycle Network. 16km & 26km routes (10 & 16 miles). The Pub is open all day. Non riding members can visit Big Pit National Coal Museum within walking distance of the venue.

Entries: Belinda Stewart: Ty Jarrett, Brunant Rd, Clydach, Abergavenny, Monmouthshire, NP7 ONG. Tel: 01873 832272 Email: belinda@kolvox.net

Venue: If not local, I advise you follow the A465 pass Abergavenny towards Brynmawr. Do not turn onto the B4246 signed Blaenavon / Big Pit but continue on the A465 for about 2 miles to a roundabout. Go straight ahead to continue on the A465. As you climb through Clydach Gorge you approach another roundabout. Take 1st left signed Brynmawr & Big Pit, follow to next roundabout & turn left. Follow this road for about 2 ½ miles, crossing over 2 cattle grids. You will see a sign for Whistle Inn, turn right down to the pub car park.

Black Mountains Group Social Ride

Sun 25 July

Thanks to Karen Jones for agreeing to bring the popular Black Mountains ride back to our calendar. This is a very popular rides so please book early to be sure of a place on this ride. Places will be limited and no entries will be accepted on the day.

Come and join us in the Black Mountains on 25th July. The ride has a mixture of quiet country lanes, forest track and spectacular open mountain. Steep climbs in the first section but easy descents. 2 routes - approximately 18 or 25km (11 & 16 miles) - you can decide at the checkpoint. Part of the proceeds will be donated to Abergavenny Riding for the Disabled Group

Entries: Karen Jones, The Pentre, Cwmyoy, Abergavenny Monmouthshire, NP7 7NT
Tel:01873 890771

Under Hay Bluff Group Social Ride

Sun 29th August

A new Offa's Dyke social ride on the borders of England and Wales, at the top of the Golden Valley in the shadow of the Black Mountains.



Offa's Dyke Group is lucky to have another first time ride organiser willing to put on a social ride for us. Gabby Franklin offered to do this ride last year, but an unfortunate clash of dates led to it being cancelled. We've tried to avoid that this year and are all looking forward to another brand new ride for the group. The route sounds absolutely lovely!

The route will be as varied as possible. We've now been granted permission to ride over the Michaelchurch Escley Estate (huge thanks to Mr John Williams). This will give us some lovely large old turf fields to play in and should allow us access to the old gallops and an 8 furlong old turf stretch. All the gates on the estate are very horse friendly. From the estate you will follow quiet country lanes passing the famous Llanarth Stud (short compulsory walk section, which may enable a good look at the lovely foals and not scare them all silly as we clatter past) taking you up onto the open hill alongside Hay Bluff and some amazing views on a clear day. We may go through the forestry tracks (dependent on access to the forestry later in the year) and home via two other open areas of common land. We are fortunate enough to have a number of route options open to us.

The venue has good access from the road, but no loos or water. There should be a photographer on course. The venue will be signposted from the B4348 and the A465.

Entries: Gabbie Franklin, Tanners Place, Michaelchurch Escley, Hereford HR2 0LA with the usual SAE. Tel: 01981 510 606. Email gabzfranklin@yahoo.co.uk

Hope to see you on the 29th!

Gabbie

Govilon Ride report



This was a fabulous new ride for our group organised by Nicola Davies – with guidance from Belinda Stewart. Everyone I've spoken to enjoyed the ride and wants to go back again next year (please Nicola?).

The venue was by kind permission of Nicola's dad – thanks Mr Davies. Her family all chipped in to help out and steward. We kept bumping into Mum on a road crossing, Dad on his quad bike & other family & friends out on course.

The only ride I'd done in this area is the Blaenavon ride (another fab ride coming up on 4 July). This ride was different again, with some challenging hills leading to the most spectacular views from the Bloreng. It was a great training ride for Patches preparing for the Golden Horseshoe ride on Exmoor in May.

Anyone who came across Patches & I will know that my husband Robin had handed me a camera and tasked me with supplying photos of the ride for the website. This proved a very interesting challenge! Anyone who's tried taking photos on horseback will appreciate how difficult it is to get a well framed photo of your subject without including your own horse's ears in the picture. Add to this some pretty steep hills to ride up one handed whilst turning around to capture the view/riders coming up behind etc. and I think you get my drift! One of my more successful attempts is shown above and lots more are on the 'Govilon' page of the website. Follow the new 'quick page link' from the Rides and Events page.

Nicola publicised her ride well and had 85 entries, several of them non-members. This is what the group needs; lots of new people coming along to our rides - hopefully some going on to join as members of EGB.

Carolyn Edwards

If you are able to put some of our pleasure ride flyers in local tack shops or feed merchants, please download one from the 'forms' page of our website & copy it. It's also good to take one along to other rides & events if you can pin one on the notice-board or put them on a table for people to take.

Training events 2010

We're always open to ideas and suggestions for training events and talks. Part of our aim as a group is to provide training for our members and we're happy to use some of our group funds to subsidise the cost of suitable events.

The schooling lessons over winter are self funding and in fact made a small unintentional profit this year. This was used to subsidise the entry fees for the Dressage competition.

We've also had two evening talks at pubs. Luckily both landlords were kind enough to give us use of the pub room for free and the group covered the cost of speakers.

On 20 March we held our usual spring Novice Training afternoon at Liz Taylors yard near Newent. This was very well attended by 9 new members starting out with Offa's Dyke group, either as full members of EGB or Associate Members and 2 crew. This event was also free to those who attended.

See reports on all below

If you have any ideas for speakers or training events, please let us know.

FARRIER TALK by TIM CHALLONER (report by Suzanne Garlick)

The Red Lion Inn at Huntley was the venue one cold January evening for a gathering of about 40 members and friends who turned out to hear Tim Challoner speak. Several in the group arrived early to eat in the restaurant and a few timing problems in the

kitchen resulted in a late start for the talk, but this enabled a few latecomers to squeeze in without missing anything.

Tim's career as a farrier spans 30 years and he gave us a fascinating insight to the evolution of the horse's hoof, describing how the hoof's amazing structure is perfectly formed to resist stress and concussion whilst supporting the horses' weight. Tim shared with us his own research of many years into how the shape of the hoof influences its ability to function properly, and thus the importance of regular trimming and balancing to ensure that the correct shape is maintained. He also spoke of the importance of maintaining a correct moisture balance and impressed the need to pick out feet when bringing the horse in from the field in order to facilitate air circulation and moisture regulation.

The talk was supported by some interesting slides, thoughtfully projected onto two screens so that everybody in the room could see them, and Tim intrigued us with some paper models of the hoof to explain some of his research.

Tim is the farrier of Gina Harris, our chairman, and he impressed the group with his knowledge and caring and inquisitive approach to his craft. The evening was well supported, and Tim was presented with a bouquet of flowers (for his wife!) as a mark of our appreciation. He was an excellent speaker and I could happily listen to him again!

Suzanne Garlick

Comments from Gina (Tim shoes her horses & she arranged the talk)

'Tim said there were 3 main things we needed to help horses' feet':

- Balanced diet (for good health + hoof growth)
- Pick out hooves regularly (allows feet to dry out)
- Diary (book farrier visits regularly)

Offa's Dyke Dressage competition Sunday 14 March

A fabulous day was had by all competitors in our first ever Offa's Dyke Dressage competition. 16 competitors entered – several of which had never taken part in a dressage competition in their lives!

This was the brainchild of Fiona Griffiths, who thought it would be a good way to follow on from the series of lessons we arranged over winter at Huntley School of Equitation with Carole Broad FBHS. Most of the participants, but not all had taken part in some of the winter lessons and so our horses were used to the indoor school. Carole very kindly agreed to judge the competition for us free of charge, for which we are very grateful.

Fiona's idea was to have relaxed rules, allowing us to ride in our normal endurance tack and clothing and this was the factor which persuaded several people to have a go. Everyone enjoyed the day and asked us to arrange another competition next winter.

Results

Class 1 Intro Walk and Trot test

1st	Carolyn Edwards	Oakways Patchwork Girl
2nd	Delwyn Hall	Duette
3rd	Jo Williams	Spinway Blackthorn
4th	Fiona Griffiths	Dear Kate
5th	Lesley Dunn	Chiana
6th	Suzanne Garlick	Shushi

Class 2 Prelim 7

1st	Sam Owen	Oliver Twist
2 nd	Delwyn Hall	Duette
3rd	Carolyn Edwards	Oakways Patchwork Girl
4th	Lesley Dunn	Chiana
5th	Janet Dobbryn	Faline
6th	Fiona Griffiths	Dear Kate

Report by Janet Dobbryn and Faline

My first ever dressage test – at the grand old age of almost a half century! I started riding late in life and had my first riding lesson when I was 27. The only other horse I have owned was a Welsh Cob schoolmaster so buying Faline (a pure bred Arab) as a 2 year old from Lesley Dunn has been quite a challenge for me.

Warm up The other competitors looked very professional in the warm up arena. My warm up consisted of just trying getting her moving whilst avoiding spooking at the sheep!

Competition Last to go Faline was keen to get going as we entered the indoor school. I think she found the deep sand in the outdoor arena heavy going and was pleased to be able to move freely at last. She was focused and obedient and I thoroughly enjoyed riding her that day. Out hacking she can be very spooky – mainly to amuse herself, I think, as we usually ride out alone. However she was perfectly happy to work alone in the school and soon got used to Carole and her helper “hiding” in the judging box. I decided not to have the test called as I thought it may distract us but, as I don't have a brilliant memory, I

was amazed to complete the test correctly. It was a pleasant surprise to be given a rosette for 5th place at the end.

I'm pleased that my first attempt at a dressage test went so well and would like to thank Carole Broad (and my previous instructors) for their help with Faline's schooling and my riding. I've attended the Huntley schooling lessons for two years and Faline really enjoys working with the other Offa's Dyke horses. Our confidence and way of going have improved tremendously in that time due to Carole's insights.

I hope we can do it all again next winter but without the snow!

Novice Training afternoon Sunday 20 March

Each spring we run an informal training afternoon for new members. This is a chance to meet other new people and ask any questions about getting started in endurance. We wrote to invite all our recently joined members and associate members and were very pleased to have such an excellent response with 11 people coming along.

Liz Taylor once again allowed us to use her yard near Newent. This is perfect for us, as there is unlimited parking in the Church car park and plenty of space at the yard, either under cover, or as at the last two events sit outside in the sunshine. Liz also allowed everyone to have a go at using a stethoscope to take the pulse of her novice horse in the stable and then showed us how to trot up for the vet.



The attendees on the day, most of who are in the photo above: Jacqueline Gardner, Jane Smith, Helen Mayo, Fran Brown, Geraldine Barker, Zena Jeffries, Bridgett Wilson , Rebecca Sealey and crew Tracey Reynolds, Angharad Morgon and crew – dad Alan.

We brought along our own gear and crewing vehicle to show which bits are essential and which are very nice to have eventually. Between the three of us, we have quite a variety of clothing & gear and each have our favorite things. Gina did her usual comprehensive talk on getting started and we all shared photos around of our own horses. It was nice to see such an amazing variety of horses doing endurance. Liz showed a picture of her 13.2 pony Trixy who went on to compete internationally with EGB. The least likely looking endurance racehorse you could imagine, but what a lot of fun they both had!

Gina and I love to meet new members and recognize faces if we bump into them at rides. We've already seen several at rides since either on horses or helping out.

Carolyn Edwards

Vet talk and social evening Saturday 17th April

By Emma Jones MRCVS (Report by Margaret McKiddie)

Despite the alternative attraction of a beautiful evening, this talk was well attended by approximately 30 members. Emma, who has spent most of her professional career in equine orthopaedics: most recently lecturing at the University of Edinburgh, is now based at the Abbey Vets near Abergavenny. She is obviously very knowledgeable about leg injuries in horses and although most of the research she quoted is work done in Thoroughbred Racehorses and the work and injury pattern they have is rather different to our Endurance horses, she paid due attention to that.

She began with a clear description of the normal structure and physiology of ligaments and tendons, followed by fascinating ultrasound pictures of what injuries look like. She went on to discuss the various treatments available and the value (or otherwise!) of the various nutraceuticals available: such as Glucosamine, Adequan, Chondroitin and Hyaluronic Acid. Finally she discussed the latest stem cell treatment: expensive but potentially very effective.

Emma had said at the beginning that she was happy to take questions as she went along and the informal meeting room in the Queen's Head pub was conducive to good exchanges with the audience and could have gone on much longer! A thoroughly enjoyable and instructive evening.

Instead of a fee, Emma generously asked for donations to a local horse rescue charity. A significant amount was raised from those present as well as the official cheque from Offa's Dyke. A total donation of £100.57 was sent on her behalf to 'The Society For The Welfare of Horses and Ponies', based at Coxtone, Monmouth. Thanks to Belinda Stewart for organizing the event.

Following the talk we have received the following letter of thanks from 'The Horse Hospital'

We were so thrilled when Emma Jones from Abbey Vets came to see us following the talk she had given the Offa's Dyke Endurance Group recently. She brought with her a wonderful collection of £100.57 donated by your members.

Please would you pass on our thanks to Belinda Stewart who organised the event and to everyone who supported us, it really makes a difference and allows us to carry on helping all the horses and ponies in our care.

Yours sincerely

Mrs JS MacGregor, MBE, Chairman

Thermal Jodhpurs 3 types test driven (Gina Harris)

As I am not working this year, I have spent more time in jodhpurs than any other clothing. Bad weather has meant I now have 3 thermal sets!

My feedback

Musto: cost approx £90 size large.

Warmest of all.

Very comfortable and easy to get on.

Fit: not so clingy, calves are widest, bit of spare room for me

Have caught on door and have small rip

Ariat: cost approx £80 size large

Warm, dry quickly easy to get on

Fit well all over

Did catch on something small hole

Irideon: cost approx £60 size medium

Not as thick as others so not so warm. Needed to keep moving in coldest weather

Dry quickly

Fit very well, don't wrinkle (have done competitive ride in these)

Not damaged at all.

Hydration, it's more than a drop in the bucket

by Lucinda Stapleton

Hydration is very easy to balance in humans but is not that easy to balance on a horse. Every one of you who has taken your horse out for an endurance ride or put him in your trailer or lorry and tried to get him to drink away from home, knows the problem all too well! We've all been there - horses can be difficult.

Some horses are like pigs: they drink up anything. Others seem to have a more delicate palate and little interest in drink altogether. Some endurance horses are too wound-up during and after a ride to drink water in unfamiliar surroundings, their attention is elsewhere. Some might be fussy about the taste of the venue's water or they might be stressed from the journey. In these situations your horse may not think he is thirsty and therefore it does not occur to him to drink. But in situations such as these it is very important to get your horse to drink.

If your horse won't drink water when he needs to, you can run into serious health problems with dehydration, loss of performance, fatigue, tying up - and even colic.

Dehydration prevention is especially important during the warmer weather of spring and summer. Serious cases of dehydration have killed horses in as few as two days, and dehydration losses of as little as 4% can impact your horse's health. The difference between a horse with 4% dehydration and one with 10% (in very serious trouble requiring immediate veterinary attention) is just 30kgs loss of bodyweight or 30 litres loss of fluid --- roughly 3 hours sweating during an endurance ride.

Even minor dehydration can have a negative impact on performance. For human distance runners, running pace is slowed by 2% for every 1% loss of body weight due to dehydration. A runner capable of running 10,000 metres in 35 minutes may be slowed by 2 minutes and 48 seconds. That's well out of the top ten! If this decrement in running performance is applied to an endurance horse capable of a nine-hour 100-mile ride, then a 4% loss of body mass (an average loss seen on most rides) could increase ride time by about 45 minutes. Many horses are dehydrated by 5-8%, so this could increase ride time by over one hour, and maybe out of the top ten!

Fluid losses tend to occur early in the ride, even though your horse might look normal. Research conducted at endurance rides has demonstrated that many horses experience the greatest loss of fluids and electrolytes within the first 20 miles of exercise. During a 32kms ride, or trotting the first loop of a longer ride, your horse will produce enough heat to bring 15 gallons of water to the boil! This is true regardless of weather, it is internal.

Signs that you might want to look out for are dry mucous membranes, sunken eyes, fatigue, high heart rate and respiratory rate that doesn't come down with proper cooling-out measures, or colic. It may not be that obvious there is a problem especially as dehydrated horses have been shown to sweat less than normal animals.

While a person might shed 2 litres of sweat in an hour, an endurance horse has the potential to sweat 15 litres in an hour. Add to this the potential for your horse to not drink well on the journey to the ride, or when corralled or stabled, then his water intake might be considerably reduced and dehydration started prior to the first drop he sweats.

In no instance is the adage "you can take a horse to water but you can't make him drink" more appropriate than with horses in a state of dehydration. This is because a horse's thirst response hinges on the salt concentration in his blood. In instances of heavy or prolonged sweating, your horse will lose water and salt equally but because there is no build-up in salt concentration in his body, his thirst sensors fail to recognise this loss of water. So, even though your horse is clearly dehydrated, he will not drink. He is not stubborn - his body is just not giving him an early enough warning signal.

This problem is compounded by the fact that horses have significant muscle mass and can generate a tremendous amount of muscle heat and will sweat profusely when worked hard in warm temperatures. As a result, horses are more susceptible to dehydration than most other animals. They will lose more body fluids and the ionized minerals (electrolytes) that they contain. When muscles contract, ionised potassium passes through cell walls into body fluids. These fluids, which contain concentrations of sodium and chloride ions, absorb the potassium. Sodium and chloride ions from body fluids are absorbed by the muscle cells. As the ion composition in the muscle cells and body fluids become similar due to the exchanges taking place during exercise, muscle fatigue occurs which can lead to cramps and tying up. The dehydrated horse has lost body fluids and the electrolytes found in them. He will exhibit muscle fatigue, a lack of will to

win, poor recovery from exercise and/or skin which when pinched is slow to return to normal.

Whether your horse turns his nose up and won't drink water or acts like an eight-year old child refusing to take his medicine, the good news is there are water-enticing strategies that you can use to try and encourage your horse to drink, enabling you to relax and enjoy your ride instead of spending the entire day stressed out and worrying about dehydration.

One way is to bring supermarket water or water from home, although this isn't always practical given your horse can drink a minimum of 10 gallons a day! Add to this the excitement of the away day and even this can be refused. Try offering sloppy sugar beet water or putting an apple, carrot or peppermint additive into water.

Offer your horse water in a quiet area, where he will not be disturbed by all the action around him. Always wait for your horse to drink - give him a minute or two to relax. Hold the bucket waist-high. Horses in strange environments don't want to hide their head in a bucket, they want to keep a watch out for danger. If it's a cold day, bring a thermos and add some warm water to his bucket. Recent research has shown a 40% increase in water intake when horses are offered warm water on cooler days. In general, fussy drinkers tend to be more nervous and highly-strung so try to keep everything as similar as possible to your routine at home. Use the same containers and if you are going to use new additives or products, introduce them at home first.

Try and get your horse to drink before you leave home and again 30 minutes before the start of the ride. At water stops and crewing areas, try and wait until all horses closest to you are done drinking before leaving. The herd instinct is so strong that some horses won't drink if they are distracted by the fear of being left behind.

Electrolytes can also be given to replace important body salts lost through sweat but they are only useful when your horse is already hydrated. If your horse drinks just electrolyte water, that may in the long run contribute to him becoming dehydrated because it increases urination. Don't give your horse dry hay or a dried-out net of haylage after a ride or on the way home as this will make him more dehydrated, both draw water into the hindgut that the horse needs elsewhere in the body. And if your horse is stiff after a day of severe exertion, hold his water up to him.

Water is the most important nutrient that horses need to consume daily and regardless of your level of endurance, keeping your horse hydrated throughout the season is an important consideration. He will run faster and for longer and he will have fewer health problems with all the fresh water he can drink. Even the slightest dehydration affects your horse adversely and prevention is the best medicine.

Special Offer to Offa's Dyke members

This article was sent to us by Lucinda Stapleton, who is a member of the EGB Icen Group. She has just started a new venture promoting a new product called Horse Quencher (<http://www.horsequencher.co.uk>). It is the Official Hydration Product of the AERC, the national governing body for endurance riding in the US. Endurance GB 2009 Supreme Champion Thay Stephenson is also an advocate of the product.

Lucinda would like to offer the first 10 people to contact her on 01842 879161 or info@horsequencher.co.uk a free sample of the product to try

Web Site

We hope those of you with access to computers are enjoying our new website. As you know, we only got it started mid 2009 and it has been a steep learning curve for all of us, particularly our webmaster Robin Edwards who'd never built a website before. What to put on there was a bit of a guess at first and it is definitely a 'work in progress'.

Recently we've added a 'button' on our home page aimed at non-members coming to the website. This takes them into some pages about our rides for 2010 and a brief description of what to do at our rides. We'd welcome feedback and ideas about how to make the website more friendly and accessible to everyone.

We'd also love to receive ride reports, photos, anything of interest to our members. Maybe some of our more experienced members could write some information about what you feed, how you train, gadgets or equipment you find useful. If you have any ideas or suggestions, please contact Robin through the website:

www.offasdykegb.co.uk

or email: robin@edwardsglos.fsnet.co.uk

Forest of Dean March Hares Ride Sunday 7th March



For once the Weather Man was kind and we were blessed with a lovely day for this our first competitive ride of the season. Hopwas Hop had been cancelled because the original venue was waterlogged and the alternative arranged with the MOD fell through at the last minute.

No such problem with March Hares. The venue was drier than I have known it and there was no need for the tractor which we had on stand -by in case anyone had to be towed out.

I rode with Carolyn Edwards, who had her own drama getting there as a wheel on her trailer jammed. Luckily she was able to hitch a lift with Sue Loveridge and although Patches had never travelled with another horse before she was fine (*note from Carolyn* – this involved a panic phone call at 8am, running down the main road ½ mile to Sue's house & loading Patches on the 'wrong' side of the trailer with another horse in – a miracle we arrived in time!)

The route rode well. The hard tracks in the Forest are at their best when it has been wet which is why we run both of our Forest of Dean rides early in the season, though sometimes it can be too wet!

Last winter Debbie Williams had put in a huge amount of effort finding an alternative route for the latter part of the ride instead of the usual long hard track. Unfortunately on the Ride day in 2009 the new route was extremely muddy, the weather was foul and it seemed to take a long time to get to the finish! Debbie just happened to be near the finishing line when I got there and asked how I liked the new route. Being very wet

and cold all I could think of saying was 'It was interesting' which she did not find very complimentary

This year I must say with the weather being so much better I really did enjoy the new route and realize how much time and effort Debbie had put in to researching it. Well done Debbie!

Margaret McKiddie

Cannock Chase Ride Saturday 13th March

This was a new ride for me having come back into the calendar last year after a long gap. Although it is a long way from our patch, the venue being very close to the M6 made it a very easy journey and it was well worth it. It is a ride with no road work, no gates, and no hills, a good venue with a trot-up on tarmac. Very good heathland tracks; not stony or muddy. The only slight drawback is that, being close to several cities there are quite a lot of walkers and cyclists and care is therefore needed. Bonnie decided the tracks were ideal for racing, which would have been true if we had not been sharing the route with others. She dislodged me and went racing off on her own, luckily managing to avoid the pedestrians. After that I let the others get out of sight and was able to enjoy the rest of what is a very nice ride and worth the journey up there.

Margaret McKiddie

Tresham Ride Sunday 4th April

This was also a new ride for me, though the venue is probably nearest of all to home apart from Cranham. The weather had been so wet I expected it to be cancelled, but the Ride Organizer obviously has a very good relationship with the venue owner. We were all met at the field entrance and advised if available to engage 4WD and I certainly did not have a problem. There was a tractor available and I did see him towing some lorries out, though the ground had dried up considerably by the end of the day. A lot of the tracks were very muddy but quite rideable. The second part of the ride through Ozleworth Park was quite hilly and slow but very scenic. I do not think I have ever seen so many daffodils or been aware of their perfume!

Thank you Jane

Margaret McKiddie

TESCO VOUCHERS APPEAL (from Young riders Chef –Helen Boston)

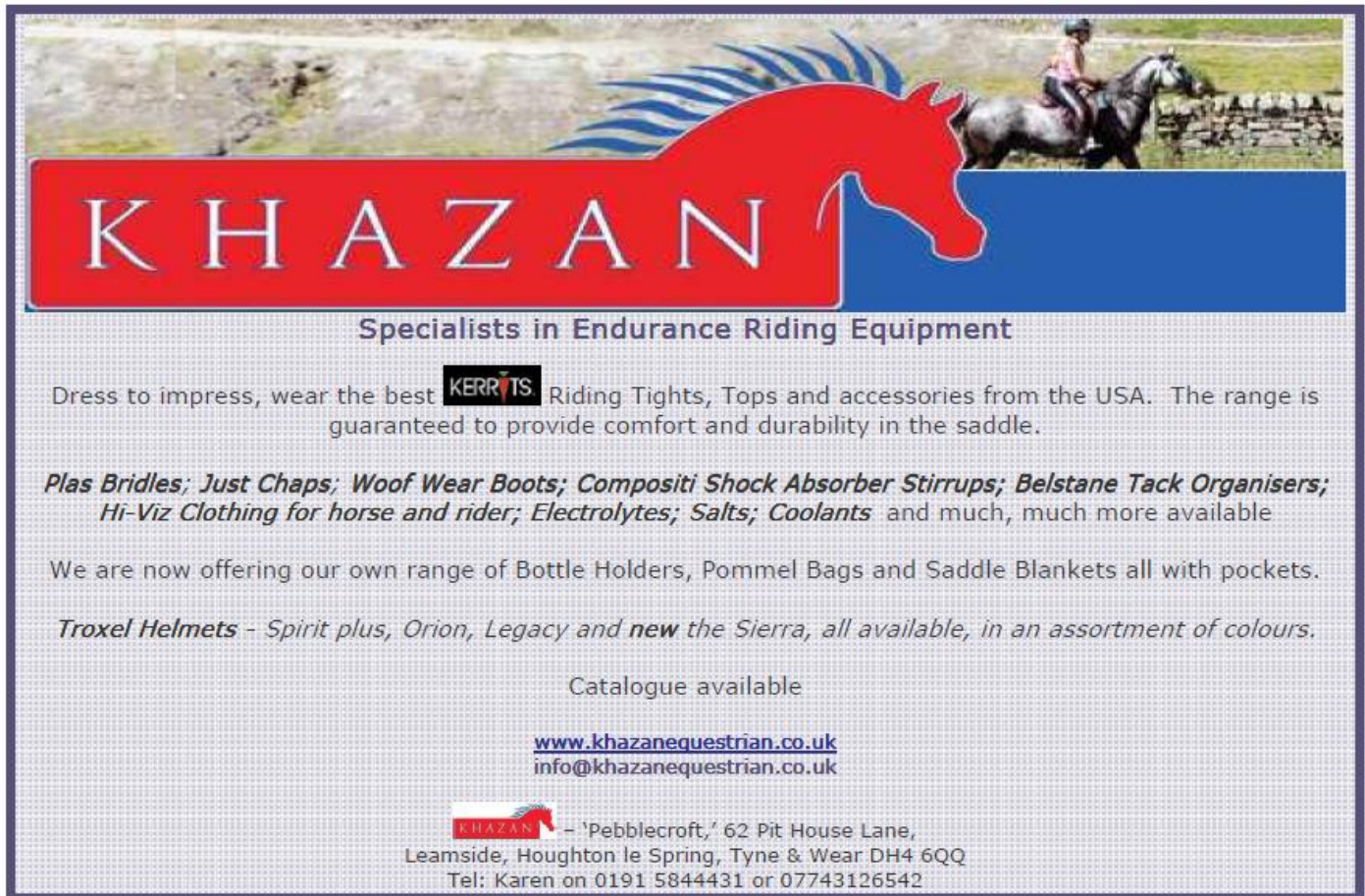
I have today registered the British Young Rider's Endurance Squad with the Tesco shopping vouchers scheme, so that we may take advantage of obtaining various goods for use by the squad at their training weekends and camps throughout the year.

On behalf of all of the "Young Riders" we would like to ask that you collect these vouchers and forward them to me!! The scheme closes on May 9th this year, so it would be great to collect as many as possible before this date.

Please send any vouchers to Helen Boston at: 28 Ash Grove, Kirklevington, Yarm, TS15 9NQ

Advertisements

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



KHAZAN

Specialists in Endurance Riding Equipment

Dress to impress, wear the best **KERRITS** Riding Tights, Tops and accessories from the USA. The range is guaranteed to provide comfort and durability in the saddle.

Plas Bridles; Just Chaps; Woof Wear Boots; Compositi Shock Absorber Stirrups; Belstane Tack Organisers; Hi-Viz Clothing for horse and rider; Electrolytes; Salts; Coolants and much, much more available

We are now offering our own range of Bottle Holders, Pommel Bags and Saddle Blankets all with pockets.

*Troxel Helmets - Spirit plus, Orion, Legacy and **new** the Sierra, all available, in an assortment of colours.*

Catalogue available

www.khazanequestrian.co.uk
info@khazanequestrian.co.uk

KHAZAN – 'Pebblecroft,' 62 Pit House Lane,
Leamside, Houghton le Spring, Tyne & Wear DH4 6QQ
Tel: Karen on 0191 5844431 or 07743126542

FOR LOAN Grey thoroughbred mare to good home as a companion. She is really good with youngsters, very motherly. She also loves attention and just does not get enough so she thinks!

For further details: Debbie Williams 01600 891029 or 07980 013311

Free to good home

Does anyone want any old-style Comfort slosh bottles?

Please phone Karen Jones on 01873 890771 to arrange collection.



**Rachel Williams BSc (Hons) Dip ICAT
Equine Sports Massage Therapist**

Equine Sports Massage treatments provide a full evaluation of your horse's musculo-skeletal system, to ensure its performing at its best and not concealing any problems.

Follow-up treatments can ensure the horse receives full benefits of massage. Massage may also benefit presenting problems, including...

Muscle fatigue after competition?
Recovering from an injury?
A musculo-skeletal condition such as arthritis, tendonitis?

Pre and post event massage treatments are also available.

For more information visit

www.rachelwilliams-esmt.co.uk

Contact Rachel today to book an appointment

Phone **07980 013355**

Email **info@rachelwilliams-esmt.co.uk**

Don't delay, once your horse has had an initial consultation, it can have a massage treatment anytime, anywhere, for any reason. Why wait for your horse to tell you it needs help, get it examined today!

Vet consent required prior to initial consultation, ask for a consent form.

Wanted

Caravan for Offa's Dyke Group.

Our trusty old caravan is now looking sadly dilapidated and we are urgently in need of a replacement to take to rides. If anyone hears of a suitable second hand caravan for sale, can they please let any member of the committee know? It doesn't need to be fancy – just water tight & structurally sound. Reasonable price paid.

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTION FORM - 2010

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

POST CODE.....

TEL. NO.....

EMAIL.....

Are you willing to have your name, address and phone number circulated to ALL members and newsletter subscribers? Yes/No.....

Would you like receive the newsletter by Email? Yes/No.....

Would you like receive other news about the group by Email?
Yes/No.....

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. Please send this form with 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

www.offasdykeegb.co.uk