

WESSEX ENDURANCE NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2017

Committee Members

Chairman, Chef D'equipe, – Rosemary Henderson
Vice Chair, Treasurer – Claire Richards
Associate Member Sec, Branch Liason – Janthea Newman
Secretary – Geraldine White
Ride Equipment – Samantha Mowatt
Trophies Steward – Jane Perrett
Trophy Results Secretary – Carol Legg
Webmaster, Social Media & Merchandise- Sarah Davenport
Young Riders Representative – (Required)
Health and Safety – Required
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If you have any ride reports, articles or adverts you would like included in the next newsletter please send to amandatovey@outlook.com

Chairmans Note

The endurance season is drawing to a close for another year and the last of the Wessex national rides has been held. But there is still the Cerne Social ride to look forward to at the end of October. Entries and helpers very welcome! Details on Wessex website.

After beautiful sun for Piddle and Quantocks rides, it was very disappointing that the British weather then did its worst, resulting in Phoenix and Barbury being cancelled. So much time and effort goes into organising rides that it's bitterly disappointing for Organisers as well as riders when this happens but right that we respect landowner's wishes as there's always another year. And then there was Bonham! Wonderful sunshine the day before the ride but what a change on the Sunday. Riders, crews & helpers got soaked but showed what endurance is all about – still smiling and enjoying themselves despite the rain. Let's hope we manage a full programme of rides next year.

Elsewhere, Wessex riders have also been doing well:

- The Wessex Inter-Regional team came a very respectable 4th at the IR event held at Cirencester in July. The team comprised Sally McIlwaine, Claire Richards, Heather Whiteley, Hayley Gilmore-Andrews, Alison House, Jim Phillips, Steph Cole (riding Amanda Tovey's Diving Belle), Mandy Brown, Sarah Davenport, Jane Perrett, Katie Gardner and Debbie Tinklin. A great competition and a real team effort. Well done all of you.
- Not only had Steph ridden her first CER the day before but she had also won it – amazing, well done to both Steph and crew.
- Liz Ashmead and Heather Whiteley were selected for the England team in the Home Internationals held at Lindum this year. Liz coming 2nd in the 80km CER.
- Following on from that, Liz then came 3rd in her second ever FEI 80km 1* (with Lauren Mills, another Wessex member, coming 2nd in the same race). What a great year.

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This quarter has also seen our newest Junior rider, Sid Stanley-Whiteley aged 8, successfully competing in his first GER. His dream is to be on the England Home International team and I'm sure it won't be long before he's challenging his mum, Heather, for a place! Good luck Sid. I wonder how many members we have where 3 family generations are competing.

We are hoping to enter some teams of Wessex members in the team events at Red Dragon and New Forest Rufus. If you're interested and haven't already let me know, please get in touch.

Don't forget the Branch Annual Meeting (BAM) on Saturday 11th November. Details of this and the Annual Awards Dinner in January later in the Newsletter.

Best wishes for the remainder of the season.

Quantocks Ride Report, by Heather Whiteley

We entered the Quantocks 32km Novice class and this was to be my 8 year old son Sid's first ride on our pony Tiny a 12.1 Dartmoor. We bought Tiny in March this year after we sadly lost my old Anglo. I bought her for the children but even more as a friend for my now retired TB Mickey who was heartbroken when Kieran died. Mickey fell in love straight away and mercilessly herds Tiny round and round our field, keeping the other boys at arms length! He has a reason to live again and the children have a lovely pony to ride if they want to.

I asked Sid if he wanted to do a ride with Mummy and explained he would have to train himself and his pony to be fit enough to do it as Tiny was living a life of leisure having had no one to ride her at her old home. He said yes (and keeps saying yes, I do check after every ride if he still wants to do another one!!) He had never really ridden much before Tiny and doesn't do Pony Club, he just rides out with me. We did the 13km Pleasure ride at Three Rivers to see how he and Tiny got on, they both took it all in their stride, so I thought Quantocks would be a good first proper ride as it's local (my parents field is 5 minutes from Shanti's) and I couldn't get lost even if I tried as I grew up there!



Sid and Pizwell Nelly at Three Rivers, Photo

The day of the ride was forecast cloudy and not too warm, helpfully it turned out boiling and cloudless, ideal conditions for two fat hairy ponies! I had been trying to do as much hill training as possible at home to get poor Tiny ready for the contour heavy Quantocks, but she certainly got tested that day! I absolutely loved the route as I could show Sid where I rode with Grandma and Grandad when I was little and the bits we used to canter on (cue question 'why aren't we cantering Mummy?' to which I had to reply 'Mummy is on Lucky and he doesn't like cantering very much...or making any effort generally!'). Martin and the girls met us at Dead Woman's Ditch and then again at Great Wood Camp where I arrived to find Peggy and Beth playing in the middle of the stream in their trainers to cool down! I was especially relieved to see them on Lydeard Hill as we'd had a long climb to get there, but I knew it was all down hill after that back to the venue!

Tiny behaved like a pro all day, Sid does his own vettings and particularly enjoys practicing trot ups at home (what child doesn't love running?!). We chucked all our own water and all of our great leader Rosemary's on as well and managed to get their pulses down. My lasting memory of the day is of Lucky refusing to do the final trot up because it was on an uphill slope, he shot back on the downhill bit!

Thanks to Shanti and the organising team and helpers for a fabulous ride, Sid really enjoyed himself and he and the girls especially enjoyed the ice cream from Phil at the end!

Fast forward then to Bonham, we were disappointed after Phoenix and Barbary were cancelled as we had entered both, we had also entered Euston Park but Otis was kicked by one of the others (well alright, probably Lucky) and couldn't be left so we were going to Bonham to do 32km come what may!



Sid on Pizwell Nelly and Heather on Lucky at the Quantocks Ride, Photo courtesy of Shanti Roos

Weather wise it was one extreme to the other, from the blazing sunshine and heat of the Quantocks to the persistent rain of Bonham, Sid could not have a more real introduction to the joys of riding in all weathers! This time we were joined by another 8 year old, Lois, the daughter of Christie Cooper another young rider from back in the day! This time the going was much easier and again it was a familiar route for me and at both rides the marking was excellent so I didn't have to worry about getting lost in the wilderness with 2 children, one of whom didn't belong to me! Martin was on Secretary duty so Christie gamely crewed all three of us and we all had a great adventure, dealing with cows, slippy hills and the occasional gate. Lucky discovered bucking at this ride, so instead of going a little bit faster like I want him to, he tries to buck me off instead, a great game for us both and a bit of a shock for Lois!

Thanks to Rosemary super organiser and team for another brilliant ride, as her best secretary she kindly allowed me to ride and I happily volunteered Martin to take my place doing the numbers with June! Sid is now busy preparing Tiny and himself for 48km at Red Dragon and I am mentally preparing myself for a lot of legs legs trying to get Lucky up Aberdw!

Inter-Regionals 2017 – Cirencester Park



Claire Richards and CS Corinthian at the start of the 80k Veteran CER (Above)

Aberwellyd Briar Rose relaxing in the vet gate at the half way point of the 65k(right), Photos courtesy of Rosemary Henderson

This years inter-regional event was held at Cirencester Park . Wessex was able to field a full team . There was success for some not for others but there was a great team atmosphere over the course of the weekend. Thanks to team Chef d'equipe Rosemary Henderson for her help and encouragement over the event and to her and partner Phil Nunnerly for putting on a great barbeque for Wessex members on the Saturday night.



Cirencester Park, by Jane Perrett

We loaded up and pulled out of the yard at 6.30am – how uncivilised!

After a pretty uneventful drive, up the M5 we arrived at Cirencester Park in good time which was just as well because our son had to reset Salut's rear shoes! We really liked the venue, with nicely trimmed grass and plenty of parking space.

Rosemary was on hand to give us our Wessex team shirts and point us in the right direction to the secretaries' tent etc.



Jane and Salut at the start, picture courtesy of Rosemary

So off to the farrier inspection, with no problems and then off to vetting. I think at last we've cracked vetting, Salut prefers to stand sideways rather than looking straight down the trot lanes. We had our best starting heart rate of 44bpm- pre-ride vetting passed.

I tacked up and said goodbye to Marcel and said I would see him at the first crew point.

We set off on our first loop along the lovely manicured grass, Salut was happy to canter on at a steady pace, I met Marcel at the first crew point and remarked that it was going to be a fast ride.

The ride, which was well marked, took you in and out of the woods and also had some nice fast canter sections. There were several people on the route with water sashes, which was much appreciated.

Passing the venue, I started my second loop, I wasn't sure how Salut would react to this but he was more than happy to trot past.

The second loop was pretty uneventful, and I even managed to get Salut to walk for home despite other horses trotting past him.

We used plenty of water to cool Salut down and even Phil (Rosemary's partner) came over to check we had enough water. I waited until the last moment for final vetting.

Salut finished with a final heart rate of 46bpm and passed the trot up with ease – even if he was a bit tired.

Salut and I had a fantastic ride in beautiful surroundings and came home with our first grade 2, to say I was over the moon with this was an understatement.

Cirencester Park is a fantastic venue and one not to be missed, we're looking forward to next year.

BONHAM FROM ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE, by Geraldine White

For me Bonham 2017 was a perfect example of what happens when we make plans and then have to totally unmake them and start again. Sometimes clouds do have silver linings!

Bonham country is some of my very favourite riding and it always brings back many happy memories of different rides that have come and gone over the years including Great Ridge, Summer Solstice, Longleat, Alfred's Tower, Deverills and Witham Vale. At the beginning of the season my great master plan had been to do 80K at Bonham but by the middle of May that idea had been well and truly holed below the waterline and sunk without trace. Sats decided to tie up and then 3 weeks later to tie up again which meant time off and then, we started to walk and walk and walk a bit more until horse and rider were bored witless. The Summer was evaporating, Bonham was approaching and still we hadn't managed to start trot work. By the middle of August things were improving although everytime there was a hill involved I dreaded the telltale signs of cramping up. My 80K plan A went to a plan B 40K to a 32K PR and on the day we were thrilled to be actually starting a 20K pleasure ride.

I am not sure that "pleasure" was the right word though with the looming weather forecast and Bonham is one of those venues where there really is no hiding place, when the wind blows it goes straight through. Cold and wet is not desirable when you have a horse prone to tying up. However, the big plus about Bonham is that no matter what the weather gods throw at you the ride will not be cancelled. It just means that if you are only doing 20K you are at the end of the parking and it is a long walk to the Secretary and vetting. You have to get lucky sometime though and the TS very kindly decided that pleasure riders could trot up tacked and there was even a mounting block for senior citizens.

So far so good..... The horse was tacked up, trotted up sound and off we went. At this stage, the rain was no more than a gentle drizzle and the wind hadn't yet risen to storm force. That came later by which time I was back at home and watching Burghley. Oh how glad I was not to be doing 80K!! Muddy but not bottomless, the woods rode very well, a little bit slippery in places but no real issues. By the time I got up to the route split before the glider field the wind was beginning to get up but so far no problems, although it did feel a bit strange turning for home across Whitesheet when we had only just got going. Sats was her usual strong self and we nearly got upskittled by the red and white hazard tape just before the War Memorial but we stayed safe and then we were back at the main road. She knew exactly where she was going and within a few minutes we had finished and passed the trot up. What a massive relief!! I had forgotten a 20K Pleasure Ride could feel so good and she even loaded first go. Unfortunately, we have now run out of places to go this year so it's back to making plans for next season and keeping all fingers and toes crossed.

Bonham Ride Report – A different angle!

by Rosemary Henderson, Ride Organiser

"How are you going to fill your time?" / "Aren't you going to get bored?" non-horse & non-dog-owning colleagues asked me (& are still asking me!) when I retired from work 18 months ago. Well, as I'm sure you all know, horses (& dogs) can quite easily fill any spare time we have – even for someone like me with an extremely low boredom threshold.

Towards the end of last year it cropped up in conversation that Claire, who ran both Bonham and the very successful 2-day Snowdrop training ride in February, was looking to step down from one. So I put my hand up to take over Bonham. I love organising things so this was perfect to "fill my time"! But I live nearly an hour away from Stourhead (venue) and hardly knew the area at all which was a great excuse to go and ride it, dog-walk it and get to know it. And wow, aren't I lucky. Such fabulous scenery let alone the riding. I can still get lost in the woods as it all looks the same but I've learnt to look out for certain things & I'll admit to a certain degree of pride when discussing the route with the TRF who were doing the marking the day before the ride and realising quite how well I knew it.

By the beginning of this year, I had the venue and dream team (Stevie, Liz & June) booked as well as all the other critical officials & facilities. So I could sit back and relax for a little while and just enjoy getting to know the area better. Though dread to think what my carbon footprint for this ride is!

Apart from obtaining Stourhead Estate & NT permissions, fortunately the remainder of the ride is all on bridleways, byways or lanes though there is still a need to talk to landowners/tenants about gates, stock, TRF & other things but all were great.

When I had a proper job I always found my best “thinking” time was whilst walking the dogs. Well, the same was true for ride organising - so many questions kept popping into my head whilst walking bits of the route with them. Thankfully the experienced team around me were always happy to answer them & give me guidance but it made me realise quite how much we, as riders, take for granted.

Paperwork all sorted, all I had to worry about was checking the route from an H&S perspective – and whether the massive muck heaps covering the entire vetting area would be moved in time. Those that were at the ride will know only too well that there was still a pile of muck at the side which didn't have the best of aromas. The vets, vet steward and vet writers must all have been nose blind by the end of the day! A million thanks to them all for putting up with it.

And then there was the many piles of logs which had appeared on the venue which meant we had to further restrict entries. EGB has a great online system for ROs, enabling them to check entries. Unfortunately, it also enables us to do things with those entries! To cut a long story short, I accidentally managed to withdraw someone. Fortunately, it all got sorted but the message came back loud and clear from my Entries Secretary, Heather, – “Leave the spreadsheets alone, Rosemary!”.

Trying to find helpers is often a problem for ROs – understandably we all want to ride but without helpers there is no ride. I was lucky in that there were several people new to endurance who wanted to learn more (& helping is a great way to do this) so, along with other more experienced people, I had all the main roles covered. But it's always nice if there are a few extras to open gates for us so I managed to rope in several friends – friends who have known me long enough that when I tell them I need them at the big heavy farm gate on the LEFT, should know I really mean on the RIGHT!! Oops, what a gate to get wrong. Apologies to front-runners in the 64km who had to open it themselves on the first loop.



Taking advantage of a gap in the rain

Ride day was almost upon us & the weather was beautiful but someone had obviously been doing a rain dance and Sunday brought constant drizzle, the sort which soaks you through. But, as one rider said to me afterwards, we are “endurance” riders and it was wonderful to see so many happy smiling faces despite the weather.

My long suffering but very supportive partner, and crew, had asked me a few weeks before the ride whether I thought organising a ride could be done if working full time. The answer obviously is yes because so many ROs do but I can see the added stress it must bring. So why do they do it? Because they love endurance, want others to enjoy it too, to give something back to the sport and there's a real sense of satisfaction when all the planning and work involved comes together & there are many happy smiling riders, irrespective of the weather.

If you are interested in running a ride, then there are numerous experienced people around to help & guide you. And if you want something to “fill your time”, it's a great job! In my old job, one of the buzz words was “self-development”. Well I have learnt so much from organising Bonham & it's been a pleasure doing so with a great team around me.

My year as an Associate Member – Ella Hooper



Ella Hooper was the winner of last years prize draw at the South West Equine Fair, Exeter.

Ella and Leela at this years Golden Horseshoe ride.
Photo courtesy of David Saunders

Hello my name is Ella Hooper and my horses name is Shiny little cowgirl or Leela to her friends. Our introduction to endurance was by chance and a little bit of luck!

Keeping this in mind I was keen for us to find something we could enjoy doing together. I came across the Wessex endurance stand at the equine fair last December and had a lengthy chat about endurance. The ladies were very helpful and supplied me with lots of information and encouraged me to enter a competition to win free associate membership for a year. To my delight an email a few weeks later confirmed I had won! Our endurance journey began!

Leela and myself set off for the snow drop pleasure ride. I was feeling excited and nervous as I wasn't really sure what to expect. Everyone I met was very friendly and I instantly felt at ease. I set out alone as I didn't know anyone but met Jill White and her lovely cob Blue on course. On our way around Jill answered all my questions and we even made plans to ride together next time! We had made an endurance buddy!

Sadly as it is with horses things didn't go to plan. Leela missed Hardys ride and then Jill's Blue had to have time off. I set off for Cerne Giant ride on my own. Luckily for me I parked next to Sally Rowe and Rabbit. Sally was also riding alone so we decided to join forces. It was great to have someone to ride with. I was given an idea about paces and how to read the map. It was also great for Leelas confidence to have another horse to ride with. We completed in a good time and Leela felt full of running so I was so pleased! Sally agreed to ride with me again at the next ride which put me at ease.

Our next two rides were fantastic and I really enjoyed both of them for different reasons.

The Golden Horseshoe was incredible and the going was varying from place to place it really kept you on your toes. We rode with Sally and Rabbit again and discovered that our mares are very well matched pace wise. We finished in a good time again with a better average speed then our last ride together. Jill came along to crew for me and encouraged us the whole way!

Three rivers was completely different again. It was our longest distance so far at 34km and was much quicker to ride compared to Golden Horseshoe because of better going. We had to ride it alone. Thankfully leela had grown in confidence and was a super star the whole way round. We finished well within the time I was aiming for with a cracking average speed and heart rate. Jill came with me again to crew and as always was a great help

After everything I have learnt over the last six months and all leela and myself have achieved together I wish we had taken endurance up along time ago.

Not only have we had a lot of fun together we have also met some lovely people along the way.

I just want to say thank you to the ladies on that fateful December day at the equine fair. To Sally for riding with me and helping me read a map! Jill White. What can I say?! Thank you for being moral support on the day as crew but also for being there at the end of the phone! You have been brilliant.

Leela has earnt herself a well deserved break now. She is only young and I hope to have many more years of fun doing endurance with her. I am 100% hooked and I will be upgrading my membership to full next year! Our aim? All being well a few novice graded rides!

Cerne Social Ride

Sunday 29th October, Start times between 9.30-11am

Higher City Farm, Sydling St Nicholas (near Cerne Abbas), Dorset, DT2 7FF

Come and enjoy a choice of routes 10 or 15 miles across grassy bridleways, with minimal roadwork.

Entry fees £20 (£15 EGB Members) Plus £1 bib donation on the day.

For more details please contact Ride Organisers Jane Perrett or Geraldine White

Tel: Jane 07976 295462 or Geraldine 07973 602046

Or

Entries Secretary Sarah Davenport wessexendurance@gmail.com

Closing date for entries 23rd October (Please note entries are limited)

To book online and for more details

<http://www.wessexendurancegb.com/16-10-16-cerne-social-pleasure-ride>

Wessex 2017 Season Trophies & Awards update

At the start of the year some changes were made to the Wessex Trophies and Awards criteria for the new season, with some trophies to include rides from outside of the Wessex region. The committee hoped these changes would give more members an opportunity to be eligible for awards whilst also helping out at Wessex rides.

Unfortunately due to the very wet weather in August we lost two Wessex Rides (Phoenix and Barbury Castle), and the committee have now revised the trophy criteria for this year to account for this.

Please note this is for the 2017 season only!

- Trophies where the best 8 Wessex rides would be counted have been revised down to 6 Wessex rides
- The Wessex Novice trophy which required the best 6 Wessex rides to count has now been revised down to 5 Wessex rides.
- The Wessex Season Rosette now requires successful completion of 5 GERs or CER's in order to qualify
- The Druid Achievement Award remains at 4 Grade 1's in GER's or 1st place in CER's
- Criteria for trophies including 'all national rides' remain the same

Terms and Conditions for Wessex Trophies – these remain the same

- You need to be a Wessex (Full or Associate) Member when you do the first ride to count for an award. Point are NOT backdated from when you were a non-member, or belonged to another Group.
- You must have helped (AND registered your help) at a Wessex Ride or Event during the season*
- So you can help, the maximum number of rides counting is set at EIGHT (for trophies including national rides) SIX (for trophies for Wessex rides only) and FIVE (for Wessex only Novice trophies)
- High Point means your best total trophy points from EIGHT (including national rides) and SIX (Wessex rides only) of the qualifying rides.
- 'Horse' means horse or Pony (except Melinwynt and What Now which apply to ponies)

*The rider must inform the results secretary of the ride they have helped at by email or via the form below this paragraph, WITHIN 2 WEEKS following the event, unless returning a completed Ride Log with official signature from the Ride Organiser, Technical Steward, or Secretary of the ride helped at. Ride Logs must be returned by 30th November 2017.

Rather than Juniors (aged 8-13) themselves having to help at a ride to be eligible for trophies they can nominate someone else (e.g. parent) to do so. This is on H&S/Safeguarding grounds.

New for the 2017 season is the Wessex Wanderer trophy, presented by Kathy Friday. It is awarded to the female rider, with the most points in graded rides nationally on one horse/pony combination with the best 8 rides to count, one of which must be a Wessex ride.

For full details of the Wessex Trophies available for the 2017 season please see the website.

Please note all trophies should be returned to Jane Perrett by the 11th Nov or may be brought may be brought to the BAM or Cerne Social.

Wessex Branch Annual Meeting

Sat 11th November. 6.45pm for 7pm
Marston Magna Village Hall
Marston Magna
Nr Yeovil
BA22 8BY

Speaker - Nikki Malcolm of Stride Ahead

Tickets £8 (This only applies if you are eating)

Please let us know if you are planning to attend, form will be on website soon!

<http://www.wessexendurancegb.com/>

Awards Dinner

Northover
— MANOR —

Ilchester, BA22 8LD

Sat 13th January 2018

Speaker – Sally Toye, telling us about her Mongol Derby Adventure

Further details will be released shortly, tickets will be available from the Wessex website

<http://www.wessexendurancegb.com/>