

## Cavallo BHS TREC Championships of Great Britain 2013 Glangrwyney, Wales

14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Having qualified by coming first to fifth in competitions during the previous twelve months, our gang of six riders and horses, two husbands and a Chef d'Equipe set off for sunny Wales. Ee all just happened to be Keysoe Riding Club members and some of us also Central TREC Group members. The team consisted of Bain McLeod on Logic, Veronica Zwetsloot on Clyde doing level three pairs, Heather McLeod on Podd and Helen Dawson on Buggy doing level two pairs and Helen Daw on Benji and me, Sally Elliott, on Phantom, also level two pairs. Our Chef (camp mum) was Sue Squirrel. Neill Elliott was appointed photographer, and with Paul Zwetsloot, doubled up as poo-picker, horse holder, wheel barrow emptier, water carrier, you name it they did it!! We stopped off at a livery yard in Ross on Wye on the Thursday night and set off to our final destination in the Brecon Beacons on Friday morning after a very civilised breakfast of bacon sandwiches. Wales wasn't sunny that day!! We set up our corals and camp whilst it was still dry.



We then attempted a ride that was mapped out for us, which involved a kilometre or so on the busy A40. That was really hairy and that's when the rain started. We queued up for our vetting on Friday evening in pouring rain.



We walked the PTV course in the rain and checked out the scenery, wondering where we would be sent the next day and whether it would still be raining!!

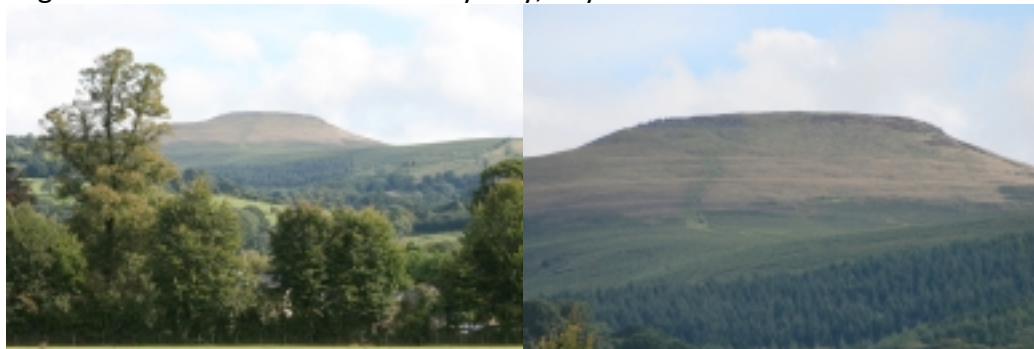
We also attended a competitor briefing on the Friday. Sue cooked us a beautiful meal that evening and we all went to bed a tad soggy!



Early Saturday morning, Bain and Veronica were the first to set off on the POR, (the orienteering phase). Competitors have to copy a route onto a map, then follow that route. Not always as easy as it sounds. We all have different levels of experience, some of us are natural map readers and have a good sense of direction, others haven't. Level three riders also have grids and bearings sections, which can be really tricky. Level two competitors have a 20 km ride and level three 30km (unless you get lost then it can be any distance!!) Helen Daw and I were the next to set off.



The A40 was quieter, but we also had to negotiate traffic lights at road works. Then it was lovely. The weather was perfect, sunny with a light breeze. We headed off to Sugar Loaf Mountain and had a very hilly, nay mountainous ride.



Our steeds were veritable mountain goats. There was one stretch, which was a long steep climb, and the poor boys were puffing a bit, but they soon recovered once we were on flatter terrain. They also managed the steep downhill slopes without too much slipping. The ground was actually very good. Helen Dawson and Heather were the last to go (I think they were helping with hanging all our wet clothes and equipment out to dry to while away the wait).



We all returned from our ride smiling and relieved to have not got lost.



That evening there was a huge social gathering and meal in the marquee where we found out how we had all done that day and we had all done well. Sunday dawned reasonably bright, but the clouds soon gathered and the rain started and stopped and started again. Sometimes vertical, often horizontal, the wind from zero to hurricane in sixty seconds, you know, Welsh weather!! We were all quite well spread out through the morning. First we had Control of Paces, which involves the slowest canter you can do within a 150 metre corridor and then back again at the fastest walk possible. The maximum score is 30 for each pace. If you break pace or go outside the corridor you get a big fat zero! After that is the PTV, which involves sixteen obstacles, based on what you could find whilst out hacking. It is often situated on a cross-country course, but in this instance the obstacles were set out over a couple of fields.





The most spectacular of the obstacles was the water crossing along a section of the River Usk! Benji and Phantom decided they weren't going to get their feet wet, but the other four all braved it. We all completed the course with varying success and then went back to our camp for a snack. (the last of many!)



As well as the championship for each level, pairs and individuals there were some other awards. We entered a KRC team, the Keysoe Cavaliers, made up of Bain, Veronica, Helen Daw and myself, and Bain and Veronica were also asked to represent England in the UK Nations prize. Keysoe Cavaliers came 9<sup>th</sup> and the England team came 3<sup>rd</sup>. Bain and Veronica also came 6<sup>th</sup> in the level three pairs and got a rosette. Helen Dawson and Heather came 14<sup>th</sup> in the level two pairs and Helen and I came 28<sup>th</sup>. Not a brilliant result for us, but our scores weren't bad for our level of experience.

Many thanks to Sue Squirrell for her dedication to us all. She arranged two PTV training sessions, which went better than the competition, at least for Helen and I, but ain't that always the way. She supported each and every one of us and stood in the rain and wind just being there for us. Her caravan and awning provided our camp HQ and mess tent.

Not forgetting our noble horses, who travelled a long way, stood out in the rain, tackled a mountain (when their riders just sat there!), when they live in the lowlands of Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, paddled in rivers, and were just super stars! Overall a great weekend. Lovely riding and fabulous company. Results can be found on the BHS website as can more information regarding TREC.

Why not have a go?

Sally Elliott