



JANET AND ELLIE

**A very belated happy new year to everyone ! As some of you will know I had a rather traumatic Christmas day as did my family and mother in-law!**

After our road traffic accident on Christmas day, Ellie spent two and a half weeks in Leahurst Equine hospital, but then had to be put to sleep after infection set in, in the hock joint. I want to thank everyone for the lovely flowers, cards, e-mails etc, as it was an awful few weeks and I really needed and appreciated the moral support from all my fellow riders and friends.

My other mare April Primrose now aged 26, had started to have lameness problems in her hind leg in recent months. It was an off/on problem which we suspected was due to old age rather than an injury, and this proved to be true. Sadly, on 19th February, April was put to sleep. The night before, I re-rode the 3000 miles of rides we had done together instead of sleeping, and feel I have been very lucky to have owned 2 lovely mares...both very different but both loyal, kind friends. April had been on loan to Judy Robertson for the

last few years and had a lovely home with hacking out over Farleton Fell, away from the big traffic that she hated. In a sloping field she was kept fit and last year they did a 3 day riding holiday together!

Well what next? The number of people who have offered me a ride on their horses is overwhelming, and thanks to you all. I have been very lucky to ride out on the roads with Jenny Rand and Glenda Griffin, both of whom understand the problem I now have with cars coming up behind me. I have ridden a fell, a coloured cob, a new forest x, two haflingers, an IDx and a highland but definitely not an Arab....they bring up too many memories and I feel I need a change. I'm still looking but will have to be 100% certain the pony I get will give me the confidence I now need on the roads, as that's the only place I have to hack out.

**Hope to see you all this season at the rides, good luck to everyone for a safe and successful 2009 season.**

JANET BEBBINGTON



## STONETRAIL HOLIDAYS

We are a new business situated just north of Sedbergh, at the northern end of the new Pennine Bridleway. We provide trail riding - from 1 hour to a full day on our small team of sturdy cobs as well as accommodation for visitors who wish to bring their horse on holiday ( we can sleep up to 16 persons in 3 cottages ). We have stables and 40 acres. Ample parking and immediate access to a fabulous selection of off road trails.

We would also be keen to host a social ride. I suspect many members have not had the opportunity to ride the new Pennine Bridleway yet. Although the route from Settle to ourselves is not yet officially open, our northerly section is already well established and can be ridden. Web site : [www.stonetrailholidays.com](http://www.stonetrailholidays.com)

## NORTH LANCASHIRE BRIDLEWAYS SOCIETY

We are working for all riders in the area. You will benefit. Please support us! The membership fee is only £5 per year

To play an active part in the Society brings with it new friends and a chance to participate in many pleasure rides and social activities and a real sense of achievement in promoting safer riding for yourself and others. Even if you do not wish to play an active part in the Society your membership fee helps to provide safer riding facilities in our area for everyone.

Please join now by filling in the following form and returning it to the NLBS Membership Secretary:

**MRS B E HARTLEY**

The Cottage, Millhouses, Tatham, Lancaster LA2 8NF

Cheques should be made payable to:  
**North Lancashire Bridleways Society**

NAME:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

TELEPHONE:

E-MAIL [OPTIONAL]:

Please tick here if you are happy to receive minutes of meetings by e-mail

I enclose my membership fee of £5

SIGNATURE:

# ON THE RIGHT TRACK



NORTH LANCASHIRE BRIDLEWAYS SOCIETY NEWSLETTER | JUNE 2009

## PACKED NEWSLETTER THIS TIME - ENJOY

The following was written by Maisie aged 14, who has cerebral palsy and visited my arab mare Ellie in her stable, to groom her from her wheel chair. Maisie loves horses and riding and goes to the Calvert trust, near Keswick to ride. She also has an adopted horse at Penny Farm. For her English homework, Maisie was asked to imagine she was an animal.....This is what she wrote:



APRIL PRIMROSE, JUNE '08

Wouldn't you just love to live a life where humans adore you? You can have a relationship with a human that no-one else could ever comprehend! The way you can gallop through the ocean waves without a care at all, the way you can roll around in the mud, eat grass and make new friends in a field? Luckily for me, I can, I am a horse.

Some humans may disagree with me on this point that when I am ridden it can lead to injuries if I slip or fall. So humans can make mistakes and I can't? The emotional journey you take with your rider is unbelievable. The closeness you feel towards them. Whether you're a jumper or a race horse, the excitement of an arena, the roar of a crowd shouting the riders name and the wreath of roses lay on my shoulder. It's amazing!

Like the point I raised before, some may disagree and think I am a dangerous species, some may think I am a threat to humans but I can assure you I am not if you get to the heart and soul of a warm hearted horse. Knowing you have lived a life with that human is the most amazing feeling, how they loved you and how they loved every second riding you, running free on the beach, watching the sunset emerge into an array of colours is the most breathtaking of all.

The reason why I think I am the best animal of all is because I can communicate with humans in the most human way I can possibly achieve, and the way I speed down the racetrack with the effortless grace of all, the way my mane tosses around as I accelerate forwards. The way my feet move as I run, the way when you look into my eyes you feel something so.....real.

**Now don't you think that is something extremely beautiful?**

from JANET BEBBINGTON

## WILLIAM'S THINK TANK

William, my Dales pony, has had a very quiet winter. Apart from thinking 'it's jolly cold out here!' I expect he was just thinking life was rather boring. He was certainly very excited when I took him up to Greenhall stables for his summer grazing. However, with good summer riding in mind, I have been talking to a couple of our members about using boots on their native ponies.

Anne Wilson uses Boa boots from Easy Care if she is going to do a longer ride with a lot of road work. Her Fell pony, Cloud, is otherwise unshod as he has good feet and likes to be out in his field all year. She has found they work well but says that the boots need to be a good fit and put on as tightly as possible as Cloud has very round feet and they will twist round if at all loose.

Nadine Butler used Old Mac boots when her Icelandic pony was being treated for seedy toe. He had a section of hoof cut away so was unable to have shoes fitted. She found them quite stiff at first but once worn in they lasted well. She used them on long distance rides over varied terrain and through rivers with no problem. She also emphasised the need to measure the feet carefully to get the right sized boot.

HELEN WILKINSON



CLOUD



BOA BOOT

# A MID WALES JOURNEY



**New NLBS member Anne Wilson, now living in Tatham Fells, recalls her 1981 summer trek through the Cambrian Mountains with Cariad, a grey mare (out of a Welsh Section C x Arab by a Welsh Section D). A fuller version of this article - with more photos and route details, equipment list etc. - is available on the NLBS website at [www.nlbs.org.uk](http://www.nlbs.org.uk)**

## Day 1: Llanidloes to Dylife

I left home [just outside Llanidloes] at 4.30pm, with a send-off from my neighbour and her sister, who told me I must be mad. With the benefit of 27 years hindsight, I think she was probably right.

I set off at a gentle walk. Cari wasn't very fit, and the saddle bags (a borrowed pair of old motorcycle bags) were not too secure, though she quickly got used to them.

I used the shortest route to Staylitttle - a B road - but it was generally peaceful, and pleasant riding beside Clywedog reservoir. From Staylitttle, I took an old track north-west - lovely riding, with the ridge of Plynlimon visible to the south-west, and the steep-sided Twymyn valley to the north. I wound my way down to my first night's resting place, with Barry and Angela in Dylife.

## Day 2: Dylife to Bontgoch

We left Dylife at 8.30am, on the mountain road to Machynlleth. After a mile or so, I turned off, along a track which stretched past Glaslyn [lake] towards the heart of the Plynlimon mountain range.

Problems began at Bugeilyn (a remote abandoned farmhouse next to a mountain lake), where the rain set in, and I had to lift two successive padlocked gates off their hinges. I then continued along a stony track into the upper end of Hengwm, a long valley which leads to Nant-y-moch reservoir.

The path down Hengwm was not visible on the ground, and the mist was low, with the mountains completely hidden.

It was raining quite hard, but I ploughed on, leading Cari as we picked our way through the bogs.

Suddenly Cari started floundering, and was soon up to her belly in a bog. Knowing that the nearest help was 5 miles away, I tried to talk calmly to Cari, and waited until she had got her breath back. Luckily the ground a few yards from her was quite firm. I stood on this, talked to Cari, and pulled at the reins. She made a second effort, and eventually got herself out. The saddle was covered in dark mud, and I had had enough of Plynlimon.

But it got worse. Just beyond the bog, I came to a fence blocking my route, with only a stile to cross it. The fence stretched northwards, up into the mist; if I followed it, I might be able to reach another bridleway, 1.5 miles away. I set off up the steep, boulder-strewn slope until, ahead of me, I saw another fence across the hillside, with no visible gateway. There was nothing for it: I would have to go back!

At 1.30, I was back at Glaslyn. I had been there four hours before in high spirits; now I was wondering whether I could make it to Bontgoch in daylight. I decided to try, and set off along the bridleway leading under the southern flanks of Foel Fadian.

As I rode along this lovely grassy track, with a dramatic view of the steep-sided valley of the Dulas to my left, I forgot the morning's troubles. The rain had stopped, the wind was invigorating, and Cari had recovered from her fright.

[Anne's revised route continued on minor roads and bridleways via Forge and Glaspwll to the A487 road]

The A487 sounded busy, and I was dreading the narrow, winding two miles that I had to travel along it. But somehow I got safely to Furnace, leading Cari, and cursing motorists who didn't slow down. Fortunately we only encountered three coaches and one lorry, and managed to dive into gateways as they passed.

It was now 7 o'clock, and I knew I would have to hurry. I decided, since Cari was walking so slowly anyway, to take a direct but hilly off-road route, and to lead her if necessary.

We finally reached Plas Cefn Gwyn [at that time a trekking centre] with 5 minutes to spare before it became completely dark. I watered and fed Cari, and discovered that I had been reported to the police as "missing"!

Two cups of cocoa and a hot bath, and I felt almost human again. We had been travelling almost non-stop for 13 hours.

## Day 3: Bontgoch to Cwmrheidol

I awoke to find that it was raining again; just as well I didn't have far to travel. Cari trotted down the field to greet me, appearing none the worse for her ordeal yesterday, except a little thinner. I brought her in and fed her, and delayed my departure till after lunch, by which time the rain had stopped.

I had a lovely ride along to Craig y Pistyll, and then through forest to Llyn Blaenmelindwr. As we rode through Goginan and up onto the ridge overlooking the Rheidol valley, Cari realised she was near her old home, and we made good time over the last mile or so to Rheidol Park. Sheba was delighted to see her again, and they galloped off round the field. You would never have guessed that she had travelled so far the previous day!

## Day 4: Cwmrheidol to Tynddôl

Dick [of Rheidol Park] was to accompany me to Maesglas on Echo. We went by road and bridleway to The Arch, where we had lunch in mist and drizzle, then on to Cwmystwyth by road, and a quick stop at the Post Office for a welcome cup of tea.

From there we went by bridleway through Bwlchgwallter forest. This section was slow, due to a couple of wrong turns, and frequent stops to check the map. However, once out of the forest and on the track to Blaen Marchnant, our route was easy enough, and the mist cleared a little. Having reached Tynddôl, we left Cari and Echo grazing, and went back to spend the night at Rheidol Park.

## Day 5: Tynddôl to Maesglas

I woke to a cold but clear and sunny morning. We set off down a track to Frongoch, and then contoured round Craig Frongoch through bracken and bog, and led the ponies down the steep slope to the road by Tyncwm.

There should have been a bridgeway from here, but we did not find it. We led the ponies up a steep slope through tall bracken. At the top of the hill, there was no gate into the forest, so we unpicked some rusty wire and made our way through. Once on the drovers' road - a dirt track with alternating stretches in forest and moorland - the going was quite easy, and we had a pleasant ride to the Abergwesyn-Tregaron mountain road, then up over Gamallt to Maesglas [then a trekking centre] with a beautiful view of the Black Mountain and the Brecon Beacons.

## Day 6: Trekking from Maesglas

I decided to stay over for an extra day, and rode in the Doethie valley with the Maesglas trek. We had another clear, sunny day, and for Cari it was an easy one - four hours at a slow pace.

## Day 7: Maesglas to Tynddôl

[Anne returned by the same route she'd used on Day 5]

## Day 8: Tynddôl - Llanidloes

My route to Cwmystwyth was largely the same as before, but took two hours instead of four, because I knew the way. Cari was quite fresh, as it was cold and windy, and the saddle-bags were light, so I was able to canter.

I stopped again in Cwmystwyth for a cup of tea, then rode up the road to Blaenycwm. The farms to the south were all gathering, and I watched the dogs working as I went. The track from Blaenycwm over Yr Allt and down to the Diliw river gave splendid views back down the Ystwyth valley and across much of Mid Wales.

The route from there was all on surfaced roads. I had to lead Cari on the main road into Llangurig because of the heavy traffic, but the final back-road section to Llanidloes was better than I expected. Cari perked up once in sight of the town, and we were home in less than 8 hours.

## Post Script

The bridgeway which caused so much trouble on day 2 now has gates - and they open!

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# ULNES WALTON RIDE

## 22ND MARCH 2009

**The first Endurance GB ride we tackled in 2009 proved to be very good, despite the very blustery weather conditions. Luckily the rain kept away and we spent a very pleasant 3 hours riding round the roads, bridgeways and market gardens of Ulnes Walton.**

The venue was a car park but there was ample space which was a good job because there were about 80 horses and riders doing the 3 routes offered of 20, 17 and 13.5 miles. We were doing the shortest route as this was certainly far enough after a winter of not doing very much at all! I was riding with my mum, she was riding our friend's Connemara mare, Connie and I was on our skewbald gelding, Mowgli.

The ride sets off through a housing estate but we hadn't gone too far before we hit our first bridgeway, through a park. The going was a bit deep so we trotted along the path and had our photograph taken by the official photographer. (Still waiting for the results!) Then again there were more houses and roads, until we had another opportunity for some faster work through another small park.

Soon we took a long track leading up to and around the two prisons of Wymott and Garth, it was a bit rutted and stony so we walked most of the way and just watched the lambs playing in the fields. After going around the perimeter fence of the prisons, another track gave an opportunity for a canter so we pushed on and the horses enjoyed the quick pipe-opener. A long walk along a quiet lane led us eventually to the fields of Cocker Bar. Here the wind was directly in our faces and blowing strongly; a group of riders were walking in front of us so we stopped and sheltered under some trees until they were a suitable distance away so we could then have a canter. This was great; despite the wind making our eyes water a lot!! The track was not too boggy and we finally pulled up after a couple of minutes.

Here the riders doing the longer rides would go left to the track around the river, which is brilliant for a canter but just that bit too far away for us so early in the season so instead we turned right. Luckily the route carried on round the edges of fields and we pressed quickly on until we reached a road.

After another long walk we got to a track across some market gardens, in the middle of which was a cattle grid. The organisers had strung red and white tape across it to make sure we took the gap in the fence at the side but the wind was making the tape blow about so much the horses were very reluctant to go anywhere near any of it! In due course we persuaded them that it was safe to go through and trotted along the track at the other side. Then we were at Midge Hall and here the railway line across the road proved another very scary hazard so we stopped the traffic behind us while we convinced the horses it was safe for them to cross!

Following some more roadwork we took another trip through a park. My horse seemed quite tired by this stage but as we came back onto the road some riders trotted past and so I squeezed him on and he trotted merrily after them back to the venue.

Back at the venue we were given fluorescent hi-viz bibs to take home, free carrots for the horses and free chocolate for the riders, wow, triple bonus! After a warming coffee from the Burger Van we made our way home, but not before we had thanked the organisers for their great route marking and event organisation. It really was a good day and a ride worth doing if you haven't done it before, as many of the places you ride are only open for this event; there are no gates to open and close and the vast majority of the terrain is flat, so it's pretty easy going for the horses at the start of the year. There is quite a bit of roadwork though, so your horse needs to be good in traffic. As where we are stabled we have hardly any off road riding our horses are quite used to cars, tractors etc; it's when a bird flies out of a hedge or there is a change in the colour of grass that they jump sideways!!!

SARAH WEBSTER