

MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

ENDURANCE

ISSUE 03 *MAR 2026*

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY

*REBECCA PINDER -
STRENGTH IN THE JOURNEY*

SHUCKBURGH

CELEBRATES 5 YEARS

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

MOTHERHOOD AND COMPETING:

ALICE INGRAM

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CHAIR'S CORNER

WELCOME TO YOUR MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

Happy start to the Season.

By the time you read this, we will have had our first, or maybe first 2, national rides of the year – I am hopeful that they have gone ahead and are not called off due to the horrible weather that we have had throughout January and February.

As I write this, I really feel like we should change our sport to Endurance Snorkelling, or better still, Equestrian Mud Skiing. However, the weather will improve, indeed the forecast is for more settled weather as we move into March, and we are hardy folk who will get out and ride.

Whilst you have all been wishing for better weather, planning and attempting to get your training plans underway, your board has been busy recruiting and training our volunteers in all aspects of the background work that we riders need. We have trained Ride Organisers and both National and FEI Officials. We have recruited squad management teams and selectors, who have been in contact with some of you lucky riders. We are busy working on the website to improve its stability, navigability and educational content. We have run marketing campaigns that appear to be having an impact, and we are making sure that the welfare of both horse and rider is paramount. Feeling positive, I believe that we are in great shape for the 2026 Endurance Season.

As the season gets underway, remember it is our 25th Year of Endurance GB. Please enjoy the programme that has been put together, support our marketing campaigns, especially the anniversary celebrations in your local areas. Listen to your horses and ponies, Stay Curious, Stay Safe and together we can look forward to another 25 years of Endurance.

A portrait of Larissa, the Chair of Endurance GB. She is a woman with short, dark, wavy hair, wearing a light-colored sweater and a patterned scarf. She is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera.

Larissa

Chair of Endurance GB

BAREFOOT, BRAVE AND BUILT FOR THE LONG MILES

HELEN NEWTON ON ENDURANCE, EXMOOR AND TRUSTING THE HORSE BENEATH YOU

For Helen Newton, endurance riding isn't just a sport — it's a lifelong addiction. One she happily admits there's no cure for.

"I started endurance in about 1993 with my palomino mare Tequila," Helen recalls. "We both loved hacking and fun rides, but one pleasure ride with EHPS on the Wirral introduced me to the wonderful world of endurance — and I was hooked."

Several years of pleasure rides followed with her local Cheshire/North Wales group before Helen stepped up to competitive distances. When 30-mile rides came into view, her husband Steve was enlisted as crew — a role he's been performing ever since.



As Tequila neared retirement, Helen bought a young Arab, El Carmaal, so she could continue with the sport she'd fallen in love with. "There seems to be no cure," she laughs. "Two more Arabs, over 5,000 kilometres with Endurance GB, and 30-plus years later — I'm still addicted."

A rider shaped by terrain

Helen's calm confidence over tough ground is no accident. She learnt to ride on Dartmoor, hacking for miles over demanding terrain — including riding through a busy market town just to reach it.

"I encountered similar terrain when I moved to North Wales," she explains. "So the going in the South West doesn't faze me or my horses."

South West endurance, she says, offers extraordinary variety. "You can have flat disused railway lines, stony forestry tracks, wild hilly moorland — there's plenty to train for and genuinely something for everyone."

The moment everything changed

Helen remembers exactly when barefoot first entered the picture.

"El Carmaal — Carly — was bred for his looks rather than physical resilience. After a couple of seasons competing, he became lame. Check ligament strains in both forelegs were diagnosed, caused by hoof imbalance."



Shoes came off. Time, patience and a respected barefoot trimmer followed. Carly recovered, discovered a surprising aptitude for riding club dressage, and eventually returned to low-level endurance — much of it with Sport Endurance.

“From a horse I thought would never compete again, he became a barehooved star — in my eyes anyway,” Helen says. “He didn’t take another lame step and is still with us at 32.”

One moment still makes her smile. “Cantering along on an Endurance GB ride in Lincolnshire, someone shouted, ‘Your horse has lost a shoe!’ I called back, ‘He’s lost all of them — it’s amazing!’”

Learning the hard way — and getting it right

Barefoot, Helen says, is a steep learning curve.

“I made mistakes over the years, but I learnt from them.” She transitioned two Arabs from shoes before finding what she jokingly calls “the holy grail”: El Borann — Rocky — a youngster who had never been shod.

“The main thing to realise is that all horses are

different. There is no one-size-fits-all. All horses can be barefoot — just not all owners.”

Her non-negotiables are clear: patience, time, diet, trimming and movement. Grazing is managed to encourage movement, forage is fed year-round, bucket feeds are simple and mineral-balanced, salt is always included, and trimming is either done with qualified guidance or by an experienced professional.

“And movement,” she adds. “The more varied work a horse does, the stronger his hooves become. Don’t be afraid of boots — but don’t rely on them either. Tarmac is your friend.”

The result? “It’s a total gamechanger.”

Boots: tool, not a crutch

Helen always carries hoof boots on her saddle — just in case.

“They’re a useful tool in the barefoot endurance kit,” she says. “If I’m unsure, I’ll decide at the start and fit them properly. I’d rather discard them at a crew point than try to fling them on halfway round.”

Experience and preparation guide her decisions now,

“THEY’RE A USEFUL TOOL IN THE BAREFOOT ENDURANCE KIT,” SHE SAYS. “IF I’M UNSURE, I’LL DECIDE AT THE START AND FIT THEM PROPERLY. I’D RATHER DISCARD THEM AT A CREW POINT THAN TRY TO FLING THEM ON HALFWAY ROUND.”

, including studying maps and asking questions beforehand. Her top tip? “Use old boots for competition — ones you won’t cry over if you lose them.”

Rocky once shed an almost-new pair of Scoot boots mid-ride. “He redeemed himself by winning the class — but sadly the prize wasn’t a new pair of hoof boots.”

Still, she’s firm on one point: “If you always use boots, your horse isn’t truly barefoot.”

The Golden Horseshoe: where barefoot shines

Few rides inspire Helen quite like the Golden Horseshoe on Exmoor.

“I hold the horses and riders who complete the full 100 miles over two days in the highest esteem. It’s the truest test of horse and rider in England.”



Hills, rivers, gates, moorland, forestry tracks — and famously unpredictable weather — make it a ride that demands everything.

“There’s something about the Golden Horseshoe that really gets Rocky going,” she says. “From the 24km pleasure ride to the two-day 80km, he flies round barefoot, taking everything in his stride.”

One exception stands out when she was riding Rooster one year. After heavy rain forced route changes onto stonier ground, Helen opted for boots based on advice from another competitor.

“The boots rubbed and we were vetted out lame at the halfway vet gate. Lesson learnt: nobody knows your horse better than you do.”

Her verdict is clear. “From my experience, this is a ride best tackled barefoot. The terrain is so varied — boots and shoes can actually be a hindrance.”

Distance, limits and knowing when to stop

Helen has competed up to 80km in a day but never beyond — simply, she says, because life happened.

“Time, money, injuries — I’ve got every excuse,” she admits. “There are barefooters

competing very successfully above 80km. It's just not been me."

Barefoot hasn't limited her ambition. "In fact, if barefoot hadn't worked for Carly, I might have given up endurance altogether."

As for Rocky? "If he can't do it barefoot, he can't do it — end of."

Challenging the myths

"The biggest myth," Helen says, "is that barefoot endurance can't be done."

She remembers the early 2000s well. "There was huge prejudice — even from vets. I was once told to expect 'bleeding stumps' when we got back from a ride."

Instead, the horses trotted up sound — and better than many shod ones.

"To his credit, the vet admitted he was wrong and said he'd learnt something."

The results speak loudly. Rocky has completed 65 Endurance GB rides, covering 2,228km, with just one lameness vet-out. Rooster (Ley Lader) has 35 starts and two lameness fails. Once Carly lost his shoes for good, he never failed another ride.

Advice for those considering barefoot

Helen's advice is direct and uncompromising.

"GET HELP FROM A QUALIFIED HOOF PROFESSIONAL — IDEALLY ONE WITH ENDURANCE EXPERIENCE. USE BOOTS RATHER THAN RUSHING BACK TO SHOES. BE PATIENT. BE DISCIPLINED."

Horses unsuited to barefoot, she believes, are rare. "The bigger limitation is often the rider's knowledge and commitment."

Looking ahead

Attitudes have changed — and Helen believes they'll continue to do so.

"At the current rate of progress, I can see shoeing being considered a welfare issue one day. Perhaps even banned."

For Helen, endurance has given her far more than results.

"The horses, the countryside, the fresh air, the friendships — some of my best friends came through endurance. Competing barefoot for most of that time has been my greatest achievement."



FIRST STEPS TO 40KM

08

BY CINDY RUSSELL, MSC, UKCC
LEVEL 4 COACH & BHS APC SENIOR
COACH



What do you have to do to get started in endurance? Where do you begin? Who can you ask?

Starting out in endurance riding can feel a little daunting at first — but take heart. It really can be very simple. Endurance is one of the most welcoming equestrian disciplines, and with the right approach, you and your horse can build confidently towards your first 40km ride.

Below, Cindy Russell answers some of the most frequently asked questions from riders taking their first steps into the sport.

Can any horse do endurance?

In short, yes — more or less any horse can take part in the shorter rides.

Most people start with the horse they already own and gradually build up mileage over time. Certain breeds are more common in endurance, particularly Arabs and Arab crosses, and native breeds and their crosses also perform very well. But breed is far less important than enjoyment.

PHOTOGRAPH BY WEST
END PHOTOGRAPHY

**IF YOU LIKE
SPENDING TIME
WITH YOUR HORSE
— CARING FOR HIM
AS WELL AS
RIDING HIM —
THEN ENDURANCE
COULD BE FOR
YOU.**

A GREAT PLACE TO START IS BY LEARNING YOUR HORSE'S RESTING HEART RATE.



How do I know how fast I'm going, or how far I've ridden?

A simple method is to measure a regular riding route — ideally one kilometre. Time your horse in walk, trot and canter over that distance to learn what different speeds feel like.

Alternatively, you can use tracking apps such as Endomondo, MapMyRide, Equi-Lab, or a Garmin device. These will show pace, distance and average speed — again, record keeping really helps.

How fit does my horse need to be?

Most horses can cope comfortably with lower-mileage rides, but fitness does matter.

If your horse isn't in regular work, it will be harder for him to complete longer distances while staying sound, healthy and happy. Planning a sensible training programme is essential.

In endurance, horse welfare always comes first. Every decision you make — from training to tack — should be guided by what your horse needs to finish the ride feeling comfortable and well.

How do I monitor my horse's fitness?

Unless you already compete in another discipline, it's easy to overestimate (or underestimate) how fit your horse really is. The key is to get to know your horse extremely well — become the expert on your horse.

One of the criteria for competing at 40km is heart rate recovery. Your horse's heart rate is taken at the start and finish of the ride to assess how well he recovers from the effort.

A great place to start is by learning your horse's resting heart rate.

- Use a basic stethoscope (inexpensive and perfectly adequate).
- Stand quietly on the near side, just behind the elbow.
- Listen for the familiar lub-dub — that's one heartbeat.
- Count the beats for one full minute.

Once you're confident finding the heartbeat, you can start monitoring recovery:

- Take the heart rate before exercise
- Immediately after work
- 10 minutes after
- 30 minutes after

As fitness improves, you'll notice the heart rate returns to resting levels more quickly. Keep records — they're invaluable.

Do I need special tack?

Not at the start.

If your current tack fits your horse well and you're comfortable riding in it, then it's absolutely fine. If something isn't quite right, make changes early and use new equipment regularly before competing.

Never try new tack for the first time at an event.

As you gain experience, you may choose specialist endurance tack — lightweight saddles or synthetic bridles, for example — but start with what you know works.

What about shoes?

For you or the horse?

For riders: Comfort, stability and durability are key. Long or short boots, with or without chaps, are all acceptable. If you ride in trainers or footwear without a heel, use stirrups with cages to prevent your foot slipping through.

For horses: Good foot balance is essential. Make sure shoes are suitable for the distance you plan to ride — horses can't be fully re-shod at competitions. Barefoot and booted horses are also welcome in endurance.

How do I start training for 40km?

Begin with an honest look at what you're doing now.

- How often do you ride?
- For how long?

Fitness isn't just about speed and distance — it's also about how long your horse carries you.

The foundation of endurance training is long, slow distance at an aerobic level. This develops the horse's ability to use oxygen efficiently and builds muscle gradually.

As a guide:

- Walk: approx. 3–5 kph
- Steady trot: approx. 9–11 kph

Start with about an hour of active walking (around 8km). After 4–5 days, introduce small amounts of trot. Over 3–4 weeks, gradually increase the trotting.

By the end of the first month, you should be comfortably riding around 16km in two hours.

Add variety where possible — schooling sessions or lessons help develop suppleness, responsiveness and strengthen your partnership.

From weeks five to eight, introduce hill work if you can. Hills increase strength and cardiovascular effort without increasing speed.

Between weeks eight and twelve, begin adding short, controlled canters, reducing distance as speed increases. Avoid excessive speed work — it can increase injury risk and make horses overly excitable.



BY INDIE PICS
PHOTOGRAPHY

Building experience

Look out for Training Rides or Pleasure Rides run by your local Endurance GB group. These are ideal for building confidence, exposing your horse to new environments, travelling, and riding with unfamiliar horses.

All of this experience lays the groundwork for stepping up to your first 40km competition — calmly, confidently and with your horse's welfare always at the heart of the journey.

Endurance isn't about rushing to the finish line — it's about enjoying the miles you build together along the way.



Cindy Russell is a highly respected BEF-accredited Level 4 coach and BHS Stage 4 Senior Coach, specialising in endurance and performance management, with a career spanning coaching, education and equestrian media. A former Editor of Endurance magazine, Cindy has coached riders and horses across the UK and internationally, contributed to coach development with multiple equestrian disciplines, and played a key role within the BEF-led Coaching Action Development Team. Alongside her extensive competitive experience across endurance, dressage and other disciplines, she has recently been coaching the Endurance GB para endurance riders, bringing a thoughtful, welfare-focused and lifelong-learning approach that continues to inspire and develop others within the sport.

SHUCKBURGH HALL ENDURANCE RIDE CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS



This spring marks a special milestone for the Shuckburgh Hall Endurance Ride as it celebrates its fifth anniversary on the Endurance GB calendar. What began as a hopeful new fixture has grown into a much-loved event, with riders returning year after year for its flowing routes, welcoming atmosphere and memorable setting. For organiser Vanessa, reaching five years feels genuinely significant.

“FOR ME, THIS MILESTONE MEANS I’VE SUCCEEDED IN MAKING CHANGES BASED ON FEEDBACK THAT KEEP RIDERS WANTING TO COME BACK. I FEEL INCREDIBLY PROUD THAT I’VE MANAGED TO KEEP IT GOING AND BUILD SOME LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS WITH MY CORE OFFICIALS AND VOLUNTEERS.”

**PHOTOGRAPHY BY
DAVID SAUNDERS
PHOTOGRAPHY**

A route riders return for

For members who haven't yet ridden at Shuckburgh, the routes are very much the star of the show. The majority of the course runs over good-quality private farmland and set-aside land, linked by short sections of bridleway and minimal roadwork. The terrain lends itself to rhythmical canter work, with gentle ups and downs and far-reaching views across the Northamptonshire countryside. Riders may even spot deer out on course, adding to the sense of riding somewhere truly special.

Feedback from 2025 speaks for itself, with riders describing the route as "a lovely surprise," "an unexpected delight," and "very well marked with plenty of canter opportunities."

"When riders finish, most of them just talk about how much fun they've had," Vanessa says. "That's exactly what I want."

Flow, variety and something for everyone

One of the ride's real strengths is how the routes flow. By making use of private farmland, the amount of roadwork is kept to a minimum, allowing distances to be built creatively without compromising enjoyment.

"I CAN BUILD LONG-DISTANCE ROUTES USING AROUND 40KM OF MARKED ROUTE, BUT STILL ADD PLENTY OF VARIETY FOR EACH DISTANCE," VANESSA EXPLAINS. "SOME REPETITION IS INEVITABLE WITH CIRCULAR ROUTES, BUT I'VE NEVER HAD FEEDBACK FROM 100KM OR 120KM RIDERS SAYING THE ROUTES FEEL BORING."

For 2026, riders tackling the 24km will be

"NEARLY ALL OF THE OFF-ROAD WORK IS ON PRIVATE LAND, VERY GENEROUSLY GIVEN BY OUR LOCAL FARMERS," VANESSA EXPLAINS. "THAT ACCESS MAKES SUCH A DIFFERENCE TO THE RIDING EXPERIENCE."



treated to a completely off-road route, featuring exceptionally long canter stretches and stunning views of Newbold Viaduct and Shuckburgh Hall itself.

A ride that opens up early

The canter potential is clear almost from the off.

"As soon as you leave the main venue field, you're into fields where you can start to pick up the pace," says Vanessa. "Most people warm up over the first few kilometres, and once they reach Newbold Grounds they're really able to open up."

With a rolling profile rather than steep climbs, the ride offers an enjoyable early-season test without being overly demanding.

"IT'S NOT OVERLY HILLY - MORE OF A GENTLE ROLLERCOASTER," SHE ADDS. "PERFECT FOR BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND FITNESS."

MARKING FIVE YEARS WITH NEW OPPORTUNITIES



Marking five years with new opportunities

To celebrate the anniversary, two CER classes have been added for 2026 – a move prompted directly by rider demand.

“After the success of the 2025 event, a couple of riders asked whether I’d consider running CERs,” Vanessa explains. “Before I could secure a fully gate-free route, that wouldn’t have been possible. Now it feels like the timing is right.”

She hopes the new classes will appeal both to riders stepping up from longer GER distances and newly upgraded Advanced combinations looking for their first CER.

“I don’t compete in CERs myself, so I don’t quite know what to expect – famous last words!” she laughs.

A thank you for every rider

As part of the anniversary celebrations, every rider will receive a special memento, not just podium finishers.

“Many years ago, I received a plaque from the inaugural Concrete Cows Ride, and it still has pride of place on my bookshelf,” Vanessa recalls.

“A small memento can mean the world to someone, whether it’s their first endurance ride or they’ve been around the block many times. This is my personal thank you to everyone who supports the ride.”

Behind the scenes: gates, goodwill and graft
Keeping the routes largely gate-free takes careful planning, strong relationships with farmers and – above all – volunteers.

“GETTING VOLUNTEERS IS BY FAR THE MOST STRESSFUL PART OF ORGANISING A RIDE,” VANESSA ADMITS.

“Plans change, weather worries creep in, and you’re constantly juggling roles. But good communication

“I GENUINELY COULDN’T RUN THIS EVENT WITHOUT MY TECHNICAL STEWARD JOHN HUDSON AND MY RIGHT-HAND MAN ALLAN QUINNEY. AL ALLOWS ME TO FOCUS ON DIRECTING THE RIDE WHILE HE QUIETLY FIXES AND TROUBLESHOOTS BEHIND THE SCENES.”

and goodwill make it work.”

She is quick to credit her core team:

“I genuinely couldn’t run this event without my Technical Steward John Hudson and my right-hand man Allan Quinney. Al allows me to focus on directing the ride while he quietly fixes and troubleshoots behind the scenes.”

A perfect early-season test

With mostly off-road terrain, good going and gentle elevations, Shuckburgh has become a popular early-season choice for riders from across the country.

“It still amazes me how far people travel – Cornwall, Cumbria, Wales, the Isle of Wight,” Vanessa says. “But very few complain about the journey, which I think says a lot.”



Looking ahead

Five years on, Vanessa is already thinking about the future – from extending routes and developing CER opportunities to encouraging more Young Riders and collaborative events with local groups.

“I’d love to see more people giving special classes a go, and I’d really like to build stronger links with youth and community groups,” she says.

Thinking of riding Shuckburgh for the first time?

Vanessa’s message is simple:

“WE’RE IN A GREAT CENTRAL LOCATION, WE OFFER DISTANCES FROM 16KM TO 120KM, AND WE’RE A FRIENDLY, SUPPORTIVE TEAM. THE ROUTE SUITS EVERYONE - BAREFOOT, SHOD, NOVICE OR EXPERIENCED. I REALLY DO HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE.”

FROM THE WHITE BOARDS TO THE OPEN TRACKS



HOW SALLY SLOAN
DISCOVERED
ENDURANCE WITH
HER DRESSAGE-
BRED WARMBLOOD

Sally Sloan is living proof that endurance really is a sport for every horse. With a sharp, dressage-bred British Warmblood mare and no long-term plan beyond “escaping stressage”, Sally’s endurance journey started almost by accident – and quickly became something much bigger.

“I’ve always been into eventing,” Sally explains, “but somewhere in my 40s I realised the only bit I still enjoyed was the dressage.” She sold her event horse and bought Saffy, a just-backed four-year-old bred for the white boards. Sharp, talented and sensitive, Saffy had all the attributes of a flashy dressage horse – and all the tension that can come with it.

“We became stressed and tense together,” Sally admits. “So when she was nine, I started doing pleasure rides just to chill out.” Those early hacks weren’t about performance or progress – they were about enjoying being on a horse again.

That’s when endurance quietly entered the picture. Sally headed out with her new

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIMBERLY NGUYEN

neighbour, endurance rider Valerie Chaplin, and before long found herself persuaded to try a 20km ride at Lavenham – “on a ticket, just to see what it was like”.

Saffy, it turned out, absolutely loved it.

“She was awesome,” says Sally. “She just kept going, ears pricked the whole time. And I loved how friendly and welcoming everyone was. You don’t always get that in dressage.”

That one ride was enough. Sally joined Endurance GB – and never looked back.

Breaking the ‘Arab only’ myth

Like many riders, Sally admits she had assumed endurance was mostly for Arabs. Experience quickly changed her mind.

“At the lower levels especially, endurance is not just for Arabs. Any fit, well horse can do it – and why not? What’s more natural for a horse to do? Dressage? I don’t think so!”

In fact, Sally believes Saffy’s dressage background has been an advantage.

“THE SCHOOLING REALLY HELPED. SHE’S BALANCED AND RESPONDS BEAUTIFULLY TO SEAT AIDS. OUT HACKING SHE’S BRILLIANT - FIRST, LAST, NEVER STRONG OR BUCKY... THOUGH SHE STILL ENJOYS A GOOD SPOOK.”

Learning curves and lightbulb moments

The first year was, in Sally’s words, “a massive learning curve”. Understanding pace, fitness and how Saffy felt at different stages of a ride took time – and a few mistakes.

“She could be a handful at the end before vetting. I eventually realised she was just very hungry,” Sally laughs.

“Now I have all her feed ready the moment we finish.”

What really stood out was how Saffy changed as her fitness developed. “The second year she looked and felt completely different. I thought a Warmblood might struggle with the distances, but she’s proved me wrong.”

So far, Sally and Saffy have competed up to 40km rides, cruising along at 10–11kmph and finishing with heart rates comfortably under 40. “Her best was 34 – and she went out on 32!”



Confidence, freedom – and fewer maps disasters

Last season, Sally completed eight rides, covering 270km, with six Grade 1s along the way. But it’s not just the results she’s proud of.

“I’m proud of myself for doing it. I never thought I could – but you build up slowly. And I’m proud of Saffy for being incredible. I still can’t quite believe a flashy dressage horse can do this.”

There were some memorable moments too. “The first year I was terrible with directions. At Poplar Park I got so lost I retired on course. At Lion’s Tail I missed an exit route and instead of turning back... I did a massive 10km loop back to the checkpoint. Completely stupid – but all part of the learning!”

“EVERY PHOTO OF ME IN DRESSAGE TESTS, I LOOK TENSE. ENDURANCE GIVES YOU CALM AND FREEDOM. ALL THE TENSION OF THE WEEK JUST MELTS AWAY.”

BY HARUMI KOBAYASHI
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
KIMBERLY NGUYEN

“I TRUST SAFFY SO MUCH MORE NOW. AFTER HOURS AND HOURS IN THE SADDLE, YOU JUST KNOW THEM. I CAN TELL WHEN SHE’S GETTING TIRED OR WHEN SHE NEEDS A GOOD CANTER. I COULDN’T DO THAT BEFORE, EVEN THOUGH I’D OWNED HER FOR YEARS.”

Why endurance feels different

Ask Sally how endurance compares to life inside the white boards and the answer is instant.

“Oh, it’s so stress free. I remember my first competitive ride on my own. Another rider helped me through the vetting, then suddenly I was cantering along the top of a hill, completely alone, with the biggest smile on my face.”

She pauses. “Every photo of me in dressage tests, I look tense. Endurance gives you calm and freedom. All the tension of the week just melts away.”

She still schools twice a week and takes regular flatwork lessons – but has no intention of returning to dressage competition. “Endurance, for me, is what horse riding is really about.”



A partnership transformed

Perhaps the biggest change has been the partnership with her mare.

“I trust Saffy so much more now. After hours and hours in the saddle, you just know them. I can tell when she’s getting tired or when she needs a good canter. I couldn’t do that before, even though I’d owned her for years.”

Saffy, Sally says, looks better than she ever has. “Best of all – she loves it.”

A community that has your back

Like many endurance riders, Sally speaks warmly about the community. One moment in particular stands out.

“I had to retire on course last year when my riding buddy fell off and needed to go to hospital. I had two horses to get back to the venue. A lovely man offered to go and fetch my car and trailer and pick us all up. Where else would that happen? And when would you happily hand the keys to your three-year-old Discovery and trailer to a complete stranger?”

Thinking of giving it a go?

Sally's advice to newcomers is refreshingly simple.

"Start with local pleasure rides. If you can, buddy up with an experienced endurance rider. Don't get bogged down thinking you need masses of fitness – you build that as you go."

She also wants to bust another common myth. "I thought endurance was all about galloping for hours. It's not. At lower levels, trotting and cantering with walk breaks is absolutely fine. As you both get fitter, it just gets easier."

What's next?

This season, Sally is planning to go Open, with two-day rides firmly on her wish list. "Red Dragon is definitely on there – I was gutted to miss it last year." And for anyone still on the fence?

"If you like hacking – just do it. You don't have to ride big distances. A fairly fit horse can do 20km, and it's so much fun. The best bit is riding over private land and terrain you'd never normally get access to. Just give it a go."

One dressage-bred Warmblood, a chance 20km ride – and an endurance partnership that shows the sport really does suit every horse.



Endurance GB



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MOTHERHOOD AND COMPETING:

ALICE INGRAM ON FAMILY, ENDURANCE
AND THE LONG ROAD TO 160KM



For many riders, endurance is more than a sport — it's a way of life. Few embody that more fully than Alice Ingram, who has represented Great Britain since 2005, competed at World Championships as both a Young Rider and Senior, and continues to campaign her own horse, BEST OFF DU VALLOIS (known to everyone as Herbie), at the very highest level.

Ahead of Mother's Day, we caught up with Alice to talk honestly about motherhood, elite sport, and what it really takes to prepare for a 160km ride while raising two young children and running a business.

A New Lens on Ambition

Motherhood hasn't dampened Alice's competitive fire — but it has changed the way she frames it.



"I STILL HAVE THE SAME ASPIRATIONS AND PASSION TO COMPETE AT TOP LEVEL," SHE EXPLAINS. "BUT MY SHORT-TERM TARGETS HAVE TO BE MORE REALISTIC. THE BOYS COME FIRST, AND ALWAYS WILL. I WANT TO BE THE BEST MUMMY FOR THEM THAT I CAN BE, WHICH MEANS EVERYTHING ELSE BECOMES A LITTLE BIT OF A JUGGLING ACT."

That juggling act is made possible by a strong support network, particularly her husband Harry, who understands endurance inside out. "I'm incredibly lucky to have such a supportive husband and family who fully understand the commitment endurance riding takes."

Perspective Gained, Not Lost

If anything, Alice feels motherhood has added depth to her riding.

"Endurance is a great leveller," she says. "Harry and I live and breathe it — we're emotionally and physically invested — but having children makes you see the bigger picture."

She recalls a comment her own mother made years ago after an unsuccessful competition: 'So long as you and the horse are ok.'

"MOTHERHOOD HAS MADE ME UNDERSTAND EXACTLY WHAT SHE MEANT. THERE IS ALWAYS ANOTHER DAY TO RACE. IT'S PUT EVERYTHING INTO PERSPECTIVE."

Coming Back After Birth — Slowly and Honestly

Alice gave birth to her second son earlier last year, yet was already working towards top-level competition just months later. The key, she says, was patience.

"I live a very active lifestyle with horses, dogs and a five-year-old who never stops, so I didn't completely lose fitness. But I was patient and gave my body the time it needed to recover."

Herbie, meanwhile, followed a carefully managed plan. After a well-earned break, Harry brought him back with steady walk work before gradually progressing his training. In the early postpartum months, Alice often shared long rides, swapping off after the first 10km.

"The only issue was ending up with a horse who felt fantastic and a rider who was below par," she admits. "But gradually it got easier."

Doubt, Reality — and One Ride at a Time
Even for an experienced international rider, doubt crept in.

"Oh yes — most days!" Alice laughs. "I still had baby weight to lose and questioned whether I could do Herbie justice. He's the



horse of a lifetime, but he isn't straightforward. You need to be fit to ride him properly."

Her solution was simple but powerful: one ride at a time.

"If it didn't feel right for either of us, I would stop and make a new plan. That took the pressure away."

Training with Two Children: Timing is Everything

So how do you fit 160km training around two young children?

"Timing," Alice says without hesitation. "Harry was on paternity leave, so we actually had more time than ever — we just had to be clever with it."

Nap times became training windows, and longer sessions relied heavily on family support. "The moment Alfie went down for a nap, I'd be on Herbie."

Flexibility, she adds, is non-negotiable.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID SAUNDERS
PHOTOGRAPHY

“YOUR PRIORITIES SHIFT. YOU HAVE TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT WHAT YOU CAN ACHIEVE AND PLAN EVERYTHING – WITH SEVERAL PLAN BS.”



Social media comparisons can be tough, but Alice learned to trust her own system. “We had a really successful season. Sometimes you just need to believe in your own plan.”

Planning Without Losing Sensitivity

While organisation is essential, Alice avoids overplanning her season.

“I like to listen to the horses. When you’re rigid about entries, training can lose sensitivity. Stepping back, evaluating how everyone feels, and then deciding a plan is often far more effective — and far less pressured.”

A True Home Team

Alice and Harry are united in their approach to endurance, parenting and competition.

“We understand the commitment, the need to protect training time, and the emotional rollercoaster. It’s swings and roundabouts — when one of us is training, the other holds the fort.”

They also rely on an incredible wider support network. “Our family, and the endurance community, are everything. After Monpazier, the messages we received meant more than I can explain. When we finished the 160km, it felt like everyone back home was behind us.”

Herbie: A Partnership Built on Trust

Herbie’s journey has been anything but straightforward.

“When he arrived, he was insecure and scared of everything. Some days we just sat in his stable together. When you’ve built trust that slowly, every success feels even more special.”

That partnership delivered a standout 2025 season, including being the only GBR finisher in the CE3* at Thetford and winning the Talisman Award.

“EVERY MILE HE GIVES US IS A BLESSING.”

“I WANT TO SEE TEAM GB BACK ON THE PODIUM. THERE’S NO REASON WE CAN’T BE.”

PHOTOGRAPHY BY
KIMBERLY NGUYEN

Business, Belief and Giving Back

Alongside riding and family life, Alice runs Equiverse Pro, supplying innovative endurance equipment to riders across the UK.

“When you love what you do, it doesn’t feel like work. We use the products on our own horses — we genuinely believe in them.”

That belief extends to supporting the sport itself. Equiverse Pro raised over £3,000 for Endurance GB’s international squads through the 2025 Awards and Grand Prize Draw.



Looking Ahead to Al Ula

With qualification secured for the 2026 World Championships in Al Ula, the excitement is quietly building.

“It will be a true test of endurance — technical and challenging. That suits careful, tactical riders, and I think it plays into Team GB’s hands. But it’s a long way off. We’ll see how Herbie goes this season and plan from there.”

Advice for Other Mothers

Alice is refreshingly honest about the reality.

“It might look like I have my ducks in a row — but I don’t even know where half of them are!”

Her advice?

- Be realistic about what you can achieve
- Do the small things really well
- Marry someone who also has the endurance bug

“SOME DAYS, SUCCESS IS JUST BEING A GOOD MUMMY — AND THAT’S ENOUGH.”

Pride Beyond Results

So, on Mother’s Day, what matters most?

“Kids give you purpose. They’re the reason you’re riding at 4am with a head torch. You’re showing them that hard work matters, and that anything is possible.”

And if five-year-old Rupert’s enthusiasm is anything to go by, the endurance story might just be continuing into the next generation.

BOCONNOC ESTATE RIDE | 13- 14 JUNE 2026

PLAN YOUR MID-SUMMER
ADVENTURE NOW



If you're mapping out your 2026 season, there's one date in June that deserves circling in bold. The two-day ride at Boconnoc Estate is not just a fixture on the South West calendar – it's one of the most distinctive and much-loved events in the sport.

And in 2026, it carries even greater significance as an Area 2 Qualifier for the National Championships at Thetford (15–16 August).

A Ride with History – and Heart

The Boconnoc Ride began in 2005 when Vryan Barneby, then working for the Estate, persuaded the Fortescue family to allow endurance riders access to their extraordinary private land. Since 2013, Jo and Peter Claridge have organised the event on behalf of Endurance GB, establishing it as a permanent two-day ride – even keeping it alive through COVID, albeit in scaled-back form.

Access to Boconnoc is rare. Horse riding on the Estate is not generally permitted, even for

residents, which makes this annual opening of the gates a unique privilege. The Claridges have built a close and trusted relationship with Mrs Elizabeth Fortescue and her team, ensuring the ride continues in a spirit of mutual respect.

"We're very careful not to abuse the relationship," Peter explains. "They support us to the hilt – and they genuinely love having us there."

That support allows riders to experience rolling parkland, ancient woodland, private tracks and neighbouring farmland, all starting and finishing from a spacious venue overlooking the Georgian Boconnoc House.

Endurance in the Blood

Peter and Jo's connection to endurance stretches back 50 years, beginning with the BHS Long Distance Riding Group, then BERA, before Endurance GB. They competed to Advanced level, with Jo riding the Golden Horseshoe and the Arab Marathon at Windsor. Their daughters, Rachael and Amanda, were both members of the first Junior European Championship team, with Rachael going on to compete at a second Europeans and the World Championship in Dubai.

As their daughters progressed, the Claridges moved from saddle to crew – and eventually to organising. From their village ride at St Meubred's to PRs at Lanhydrock, and finally

“ENDURANCE IS STILL ABOUT HAPPY PEOPLE OF ALL AGES RIDING THEIR HORSES ACROSS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRYSIDE,” PETER SAYS. “THAT HASN’T CHANGED.”

“THERE’S HUGE SATISFACTION IN WATCHING RIDERS PROGRESS,” PETER REFLECTS. “FROM PR TO 24KM, TO 32KM, THEN INTO TWO-DAY CLASSES AND ONTO CER. THAT JOURNEY IS WHAT ENDURANCE IS ABOUT.”

Boconnoc, they’ve helped shape the sport in the South West for over a decade.

The Only Two-Day Ride of Its Kind in the South West

Boconnoc remains the only two-day ride in the region offering such a wide range of classes. In 2026, riders can choose from:

- Boconnoc Bowl 80km CER
- Boconnoc Stag 80km GER
- Boconnoc Hind 64km GER
- Two-day classes including:
 - Boconnoc Hart 120km (80+40km)
 - Deer Park Challenge 80km (40+40km)
 - Boconnoc Fawn 48km (24+24km)
- Plus GERs and Pleasure Rides down to 24km Foundation on both days.

The terrain offers everything in one event – woodland, pasture, quiet lanes and estate tracks. Devon and Cornwall riders are renowned for toughness developed on varied ground, and Boconnoc reflects that heritage. None of the terrain is extreme, but it’s never dull.

And then there are the moments riders talk about long after the weekend ends: the sweeping canter across Paradise Field, the view across rolling parkland, and glimpsing the estate’s beautiful herd of fallow deer in the Deer Park.



2026: An Important Step on the Championship Pathway

For riders targeting the 2026 National Championships at Thetford (15–16 August), Boconnoc offers a crucial opportunity.

The Championships follow a three-round structure:

- Round 1: Collect Performance Formula (PF) points
- Round 2: Attend an Area Qualifier
- Round 3: National Championships

At Round 2, riders must place 1st–3rd at an Area Qualifier at their chosen level to secure Championship qualification (Tier 1 members only).

Last year saw lower-than-expected entries at Area Qualifiers, partly due to the new format. With greater clarity and earlier planning for 2026, the hope is that more riders will step forward to test themselves.

Behind the Scenes – and the Spirit of the Weekend

Organising Boconnoc is no small undertaking. Over 100 volunteers are needed across the venue and out on course as checkpoint crews and gate stewards. The Trail Riders Fellowship assists with marking and demarking. Vets and farriers are secured well in advance. Sponsorship remains a challenge in difficult financial times, with the organisers often contributing personally to ensure riders receive the recognition they deserve.

Yet for Peter, the best part is simple:

“SEEING THE RIDERS OUT THERE ENJOYING THEMSELVES - THAT’S THE REWARD. APART FROM WHEN IT’S ALL OVER,” HE LAUGHS.

Despite occasional misconceptions that Cornwall is “the end of the world”, Boconnoc is only around 1½ hours from Exeter, with excellent access roads, ample parking, camping and corralling, stunning views – and, of course, pasties.

Why Plan Now?

With entries opening from 21 April 2025 (base rate) and premium entries from 29 April 2025, early planning will help riders build Boconnoc into their qualification pathway – or simply secure a place at one of the South West’s most special endurance weekends.

Whether you’re aiming for a Championship ticket, stepping into your first two-day ride, or enjoying a Foundation distance with friends, Boconnoc offers challenge, camaraderie and countryside in equal measure.

As Peter hints, the Claridges won’t organise forever. If you haven’t yet experienced Boconnoc, 2026 might be the year.

After all, how often do you get the keys to a private estate for the weekend?



AGAINST THE ODDS:

JOHN BLACK'S ENDURANCE JOURNEY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY INDIEPICS PHOTOGRAPHY



For many Endurance GB members, John Black needs little introduction. A familiar face on the track and at vet gates, John's 2025 season was nothing short of extraordinary. Completing more than 700km and finishing the year with a string of major awards, he achieved it all while managing severe kidney disease and awaiting a transplant. His story is one of quiet determination, deep partnership with his horses, and a refusal to give up on the sport he loves.

Finding endurance

John only began riding in 2008 and freely admits he never took a lesson. When friends introduced him to endurance, he decided to give it a try and joined Endurance GB. His first ride was the 32km Cheshire Frolic on his Anglo Arab, Harvey. He was "incredibly sore the next day," but completely hooked. What started as curiosity quickly became a passion, not just for the riding but for the people. Endurance, John says, has given him lifelong friends from all walks of life.

Looking back now, with more than 5,000km completed in competition, John still finds it hard to believe. He never imagined progressing far beyond the start line, let alone building the record he has today.

A season to remember

Last season stands out as a personal milestone. John completed over 700km and collected an exceptional list of accolades, including first place in the Mesaoud Trophy, Jeffmaur Trophy and Senior Grand Prix Trophy, alongside second places in the Senior Championship and Overall Champion (Manar Trophy).

OF ALL THE TROPHIES, ONE MEANS MORE TO HIM THAN THE REST.

For John, the season represents pushing himself further than he ever expected. He had assumed he would be limited to short rides but found himself digging deep, sometimes right to the edge of his physical limits, simply to get round and finish.

Of all the trophies, one means more to him than the rest. The Mesaoud Trophy, awarded to the pure-bred Arabian gaining the most points, belongs as much to his horse as to him. CA Jalmeer – known affectionately as “Jam” – was far from straightforward at the start. Behavioural issues meant daily unseatings, and many would have walked away. John didn’t. Over time, patience and persistence forged a remarkable bond. Jam has become, in John’s words, “my horse of a lifetime.”

Riding with serious health challenges

John’s achievements take on even greater weight when set against his health. Throughout the season he was managing just 18% kidney function while waiting for a transplant. Day-to-day life can be exhausting, both physically and mentally, with the constant uncertainty of what lies ahead.

Training and recovery are shaped entirely around how he feels. Rest is non-negotiable, particularly at weekends, and riding happens only when he has slept and has the energy to do so. Support has been crucial. John speaks warmly of the help he receives at home and from a close friend who assists with the horses when he needs it most.

Ride days require careful planning. Events are chosen around treatment schedules, and the physical toll can be extreme. After finishing

the 120km CER at Lavenham, John vetted successfully and then slept in the trailer until the following afternoon. At Wellvale, his crew were understandably concerned at the vet gates, yet he still completed the 102km CER and finished second. It is a balancing act that demands honesty, resilience, and trust in those around him.

Purpose and resilience

Asked what endurance has given him, John’s answer is simple but powerful: purpose, challenge, stability and fitness. The sport has helped him maintain a positive mindset when stopping would have been far easier.

There have been moments when retiring would have been the sensible option, even when his crew advised it. But stopping felt like giving up. He didn’t want to let his horse, his team, or himself down, and that determination carried him through.



The horses behind the miles

John currently owns two horses: CA Jalmeer (“Jam”) and CA Jalwizard (“Merlin”). They are full brothers, but could not be more different. Jam is now calm and dependable, while Merlin is bigger, stronger and full of energy, with the engine to go all day.

In 2025, John made the difficult decision to compete only Jam. With limited energy, he could not do justice to training two horses, and Merlin spent more time in the field than he deserved. It was a compromise forced by circumstance, not ambition.

Both horses compete barefoot, something that often sparks conversation. For John, it has simply always worked. Jam has

completed multiple 120km CERs and an 80km CER at Red Dragon, one of the tougher barefoot courses. Merlin has also successfully completed several 80km rides. Their hooves are strong, natural, and, as John wryly notes, they have never lost a shoe.

An inclusive sport

Although endurance in the UK is often perceived as female-dominated, John has never felt out of place. He describes the community as welcoming and supportive and is pleased to see more men discovering the sport.

What makes endurance truly inclusive, he believes, is that background and social status fade into insignificance once you are out on the track. What matters is your partnership with your horse, and that shared experience has helped him form friendships that will last a lifetime.



Looking ahead

As he continues to wait for a transplant, John takes each day as it comes. The uncertainty is challenging, but his kidney function is currently stable at 16–17%, and he remains grateful for that. His plan is simple: to keep competing for as long as he can.

For anyone reading who feels their own circumstances make endurance “impossible,” John offers calm, practical advice. Work within your limits, but don’t sit at home waiting for the inevitable. Get out, do what you can, and keep moving forward.

John’s story is a powerful reminder of what endurance riding can offer – not just miles and medals, but purpose, connection, and the strength to keep going, even when the odds say you shouldn’t.

STEPPING UP: THE ENDURANCE GB DEVELOPMENT SQUAD



PHOTO BY INDIEPICS
PHOTOGRAPHY

***SUPPORTING
RIDERS AND
HORSES AS
THEY TAKE ON
NEW
CHALLENGES***

For many years, the Endurance GB Development Squad was closely associated with the FEI pathway – a stepping stone towards international competition and, for some, championship ambitions.

That pathway remains open.

But the Development Squad has evolved.

Today, it exists to support all riders who want to progress – whether that means stepping up through longer national distances, tackling more technical rides, building confidence at 80km and beyond, or exploring the FEI pathway in time. Not everyone's goal is international competition – and that's absolutely fine. What matters is developing you and your horse in a healthy, sustainable and well-supported way.

From social riders beginning to stretch their horizons to combinations eyeing championship dreams, the Development Squad offers a structured, supportive environment to grow.

Who is the Development Squad for?

The Development Squad is open to Endurance GB (EGB) and Scottish Endurance Riding Club (SERC) members who have completed at least one 80km ride in 2025 and are looking to build on that experience.

If you haven't yet completed an 80km ride but are actively aiming to step up to this distance – or beyond – in 2026, we would still encourage you to submit an Expression of Interest. We recognise that progression looks different for everyone, and if you're preparing thoughtfully and building towards that next milestone, we'd love to hear from you.

You might be:

- Aiming to progress to longer national rides
- Considering FEI classes in the future
- Hoping to move towards Senior Squad level over time
- Simply looking for more structure, guidance and peer support

You don't need to ride an Arab. You don't need to be chasing podiums. And you don't need to have all the answers.

The squad is about partnership first – helping you strengthen your horse's long-term health, deepen your understanding of training and management, and build confidence as distances increase. Endurance is the sport that suits everybody and every horse, and that includes riders taking their next step into more challenging territory.

What does the Development Squad offer?

The Development Squad provides a framework of support that complements the professionals already in your corner – your vet, physio, farrier and coach. It's not about replacing your team, but about adding structure, shared learning and guidance as you move forward.

Opportunities include:

- In-person assessment days and training sessions
- Training weekends, designed to build knowledge and confidence
- A team environment, bringing riders, horses and crews together to share experience and encouragement
- Guidance from squad management, helping you work towards clear progression goals
- Additional support for horse health and performance, including professional evaluation and planning
- The chance to expand your endurance network, learning alongside like-minded riders

- Where appropriate, the opportunity to experience an overseas FEI ride for those exploring that pathway

We also aim to attend some of the larger rides throughout the season, offering on-the-ground support and identifying promising combinations who may not yet feel ready to apply.



At its heart, the squad is about learning in a supportive environment – asking questions, refining systems, and understanding how to develop your horse for longevity as well as performance.

A Two-Way Commitment

Being part of the Development Squad is a commitment – to your horse, to yourself and to the wider endurance community.

We ask squad members to:

- Communicate openly and honestly with the management team
- Stay engaged and responsive
- Be willing to try new ideas and complete required paperwork in a timely manner
- Act as positive ambassadors for endurance riding, Endurance GB and SERC
- Support fellow squad members both in training and at rides

As with any progression programme, much of what you gain will depend on what you put in. There is a time and financial commitment involved, and prospective members are encouraged to consider this carefully before submitting an Expression of Interest.



What Happens Next?

Once Expressions of Interest close, prospective squad members will be contacted in the following weeks. The aim is to build a structured programme that includes assessment days later in the year, targeted training opportunities, and support at key rides across the season.

Whether your ambition is to ride your first 100km, tackle a more technical course with confidence, broaden your support network, or quietly lay foundations for a future FEI start, the Development Squad offers a supportive place to grow.

Endurance riding is about partnership, preparation and progression. And from social rides to international championships, there is a place for you.

We look forward to receiving your Expression of Interest for the 2026 Development Squad – and supporting you and your horse as you take the next steps on your endurance journey.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

REBECCA PINDER - STRENGTH IN THE JOURNEY



As we approach International Women's Day on the 8th March, it's a moment to recognise the women who shape our sport — in the saddle, behind the scenes, and at home.

Rebecca Pinder embodies that balance.

Based in Spain, running an endurance stable alongside her husband Jairo, and mum to two young boys, Rebecca finished 2025 as the highest-ranking GBR rider in the FEI Endurance Riders World Ranking, placing 20th in the world. She has now represented Team GBR four times, most recently at the European Endurance Championships in Castiglione del Lago, where she rode her home-bred horse Mulfet AA 82 27 to an impressive 14th place.

But as Rebecca herself would tell you, the rankings and results only tell part of the story.

Building a Life in Spain

Rebecca is now based in Spain, running an endurance stable alongside her husband, Jairo Rodriguez.

"I MET JAIRO WHILE WE WERE BOTH WORKING IN DUBAI," SHE EXPLAINS. "AFTER A FEW YEARS OF MARRIAGE, WE DECIDED TO INVEST IN A FARM BACK IN SPAIN — INITIALLY AS A BASE TO RETURN TO DURING THE OFF-SEASON, BUT ALSO AS A PLACE WHERE WE COULD BEGIN BREEDING AND BUILDING SOMETHING LONG-TERM."

When her eldest son turned five, Rebecca faced a decision many professional riders understand all too well.

“I REACHED A POINT WHERE I HAD TO MAKE A REAL DECISION ABOUT WHERE TO SPEND MOST OF OUR TIME. I CHOSE SPAIN, AS THE BUSINESS NEEDED SOMEONE ON THE GROUND AT HOME, AND IT FELT LIKE THE RIGHT PLACE FOR OUR FAMILY AND FUTURE.”

Living and training in Spain has shaped her profoundly.

“I’m constantly competing alongside some of the best endurance riders in the world, which pushes me to improve every season. Being close to the French border also gives us access to a fantastic calendar of high-quality races each year, so the level of competition and opportunity here has really helped shape me both personally and professionally.”

Rankings Aren’t Everything

Finishing 20th in the world — and as the highest-ranked British rider — is no small achievement. But Rebecca’s reaction is characteristically grounded.

“I ACTUALLY DIDN’T REALISE I’D FINISHED IN 20TH POSITION — IT’S NOT SOMETHING I CHECK REGULARLY, TO BE HONEST,” SHE LAUGHS. “OF COURSE, IT’S A LOVELY ACHIEVEMENT AND SOMETHING I’M PROUD OF, BUT RANKINGS AREN’T THE MAIN WAY I MEASURE SUCCESS.”

For Rebecca, endurance is about the stage of the journey.

“In endurance, so much depends on where you are with your horses. Some seasons, like this one, we’re bringing through very young horses, so naturally my ranking may drop — but that doesn’t necessarily reflect the progress we’re making.”

What means more to her is seeing Britain rising collectively.

“It does mean a lot to see more GBR riders appearing higher up in the world rankings. It’s a proud moment, and I really hope we continue to see even more UK riders represented at the top level.”



A Championship Built on Trust

Her most recent championship outing at the European Endurance Championships was far from straightforward.

“Many people don’t realise that going into the championship, I wasn’t even sure we would make the start line,” she says.

In the two 3* rides beforehand, Mulfet wasn’t himself. His recoveries were unusually poor. Tests revealed the cause, but time was tight. Then, just weeks before departure, he went lame — the first time in his life.

“It really felt like everything was against us.”

It wasn’t until two days before the race that she finally saw real improvement. So Rebecca made a decision that reflects her maturity as a rider.

“I decided to ride very conservatively and just focus on getting him through in good shape.”

She spent much of the ride alongside fellow GBR rider Nicki Thorne, their horses travelling beautifully together.

“TO FINISH 14TH, AND TO HAVE THE VETS CONGRATULATE US ON THE CONDITION Mulfet FINISHED IN, WAS INCREDIBLY SPECIAL — ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING THE HURDLES WE FACED. AND THE FACT THAT HE’S A HOME-BRED HORSE MADE IT EVEN MORE MEANINGFUL.”

“WITH EVERY PASSING YEAR, PULLING ON THE GBR JACKET MEANS MORE TO ME,” SHE SAYS.

Pulling on the GBR Jacket

Rebecca has now represented Team GBR four times — and the pride has only deepened.

“The sense of pride has grown over time, and I think that comes from the relationships built along the way — with the management team, the support network, fellow riders, and the wider endurance community.”

“Representing your country isn’t just about individual performance; it’s about being part of something bigger than yourself.”

Motherhood and Mental Strength

Alongside international competition and running a business, Rebecca is mum to two young boys.



“BECOMING A MOTHER HAS CHANGED ENDURANCE FOR ME IN A DEEPER WAY,” SHE SAYS. “I’M MORE CAREFUL NOW BECAUSE I HAVE TWO LITTLE BOYS WHO RELY ON ME, AND BEING ON MY OWN MUCH OF THE YEAR WITHOUT FAMILY NEARBY BRINGS ITS OWN CHALLENGES.”

“BALANCE ISN’T ABOUT DOING EVERYTHING PERFECTLY — IT’S ABOUT PRIORITISING WHAT MATTERS MOST AND PLANNING INTENTIONALLY.”

But motherhood has also made her stronger.

“Endurance isn’t just something I train for — it’s something I live.”

She hopes her sons see more than rosettes.

“I love that my boys can see their mum working hard for something she believes in. I hope it teaches them that success isn’t only about trophies, but about resilience, learning from setbacks, and continuing to move forward.”

The balance is not always easy.

“The guilt is definitely real — children grow up so fast. But for me, it comes down to being fully present where I am. During the day I focus on the horses, but when the boys are home, they have my full attention.”



The Reality Behind the Results

Endurance at this level is far from glamorous.

Rebecca's day starts at 6:30am — school lunches, getting two boys out of the door, then straight into riding two or three horses for up to two hours each. Walkers, injury checks, yard management, emails in the evening.

"Winter definitely makes everything harder. The days are shorter, the blankets are heavier, and I usually end up with hay in places it shouldn't be, mud on my face, and frozen fingers that barely function," she smiles. "Glamorous is not the word."

But she wouldn't change it.

"The days are long and busy, but I genuinely wouldn't have it any other way."

Eyes on the World Championships

Rebecca now hopes to represent Team GBR at the FEI Endurance World Championships later this year.

"I think just having goals is exciting — the journey, the process, even the stress," she says.

She is currently qualified on two horses, with a third experienced mare close to completing her qualification. Two are already in desert training to prepare for the conditions.

"HORSES HAVE A WAY OF KEEPING US ON OUR TOES, AND PLANS DON'T ALWAYS UNFOLD EXACTLY AS EXPECTED — BUT SO FAR EVERYTHING IS HEADING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. THE FINAL PIECE, AS ALWAYS, IS SELECTION, AND I'M FOCUSED ON DOING EVERYTHING I CAN TO PUT OURSELVES IN THE STRONGEST POSSIBLE POSITION."

Her mindset remains steady.

"You can do everything right — plan perfectly, train well, show up ready — and still have setbacks. That's part of the sport, and part of life."

"If you've done the work and it still doesn't come together, sometimes it simply wasn't meant to happen in that moment. The long-term aim stays the same — you just keep moving forward."

What Strength Means Now

On International Women's Day, Rebecca reflects on how her understanding of strength has evolved.

"Strength means something very different to me now than it once did," she says. "It's not just about pushing through — it's about juggling the intense demands of sport and business while still holding a family together."

"IT'S BEING HONEST ENOUGH TO ADMIT WHEN IT FEELS HEAVY, AND VULNERABLE ENOUGH TO ACCEPT THAT STRUGGLING DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE FAILING — IT JUST MEANS YOU'RE HUMAN."



“For me, strength doesn’t have to be perfect. It just has to be real.”

A Message to Other Women

For women wondering whether life changes mean stepping away from endurance, her message is simple:

“Where there’s a will, there’s a way — and if endurance is in your heart, the horses will always find a way to pull you back in.”

“START SMALL. SET ACHIEVABLE GOALS. IT DOESN’T HAVE TO BE ALL OR NOTHING.”

The Journey She’s Most Proud Of

When asked what she’s most proud of, Rebecca doesn’t mention rankings.

“I’M PROUD OF THE JOURNEY ITSELF — OF THAT YOUNG GIRL WHO NEVER STOPPED DREAMING, EVEN WHEN OTHERS TRIED TO QUIET HER SPIRIT.”

“But more than anything, I’m proud of the example I’m setting for my sons — to chase what matters to you, to be brave, to be kind, and to keep going even when the path isn’t easy.”

Because in endurance — and in life — the greatest achievement isn’t just the result.

It’s the legacy you create along the way.



EMERALD GREEN FEEDS ENDURANCE GB WINTER LEAGUE

DON'T FORGET –
RESULTS DUE BY 7TH APRIL



Final Call for Results – Don't Miss Out!

As we head into March, the Winter League is entering its final stretch – and what a winter it's been. From arena sessions under floodlights to muddy training rides, webinars, clinics and a few brave ventures into new disciplines, you and your horses have been busy.

The Emerald Green Feeds Endurance GB Winter League runs until 31st March, and this is your reminder to make sure your results are submitted before the deadline.

The League was created to keep us connected, motivated and moving through the winter months. It's about staying fit, trying new things and enjoying a little healthy competition between Groups – all while keeping your horse ticking over ready for the season ahead.

Whether you've:

- Dipped your toe into dressage (in full competition kit or bright endurance tack – we don't mind!)
- Tried jumping, TREC, western or showing
- Attended webinars, conferences or training days
- Headed out on pleasure or training rides
- Focused on your own rider fitness and wellbeing

...there are points to be claimed.

Two Sections, Plenty of Opportunity

The League runs in two sections:

Section 1 – Dressage

Encouraging winter schooling at any level. Tests can be from EGB Groups, British Dressage, Riding Club, unaffiliated or even virtual competitions (with proof). It's about participation as much as performance.

Rosettes will be awarded down to 10th place for individuals, with prizes from Emerald Green Feeds for the top three in each section. Groups also compete for placings, and there's a special Top Supporter category too.



Section 2 – Performance Horse & Rider

Rewarding combinations who try different disciplines over the winter. From jumping and TREC to endurance training rides and webinars, there are points available for a wide range of activities.

Join the Conversation

To bring our Winter League community together, we've launched a dedicated Emerald Green Feeds Endurance GB Winter League Facebook group.

This is your space to:

- Share photos and updates from your winter journey
- Celebrate achievements (big or small)
- Encourage fellow members
- Swap ideas and inspiration

The Winter League is open to Tier 1 and Tier 2 members and reflects what makes endurance so special – it truly is the sport that suits everybody and every horse.

Let's finish the winter strong.

Submit your results, celebrate your progress and get ready to hit the trails.

Good luck – and thank you to Emerald Green Feeds for their continued support of this fantastic initiative.

How to Submit

Completed forms (one per section) must be sent to Julie Jones (jum1@aber.ac.uk) by midnight on 7th April.

All horse and rider combinations must have competed in at least one Endurance GB graded, competitive or pleasure ride in 2024 and/or 2025 to be eligible, and membership details will be checked when placings are decided.

If you've been quietly getting on with things this winter, now is the time to gather your sheets, totals and signatures.



RIDER STABILITY: POWER FROM THE INSIDE OUT

LIVE WEBINAR - WOMEN'S PELVIC HEALTH FOR ENDURANCE RIDERS

Endurance riding asks a lot of us. We train our horses carefully, monitor their fitness, manage their nutrition and recovery – but how often do we look closely at the rider's physical system?

On Wednesday 18 March (7.30–9.00pm), Endurance GB will be hosting a live online webinar exploring one of the most overlooked areas of rider performance: pelvic health.

Why pelvic health matters in endurance

Your pelvic floor is not an isolated muscle group – it is a key part of your riding system. It works in partnership with your breathing, deep core and postural control to create stability in the saddle. Over longer distances, small weaknesses can gradually become instability, fatigue, lower back discomfort or reduced control.

This session will explore how pelvic floor function, bladder health and breathing mechanics influence:



- Saddle stability
- Seat strength and control
- Endurance and fatigue resistance
- Comfort over longer distances
- Load through the hips and lower back

Importantly, this is not simply about being told to “do your squeezes.” Riders will learn how to train the pelvic floor correctly and integrate it into functional riding movement.

Led by someone who understands endurance

We are delighted to welcome Sarah Light MCSP, HCPC, ACPAT, Chartered Physiotherapist, to lead the session.

Sarah brings both clinical expertise and genuine endurance experience. She has ridden up to 80km in a day herself and has crewed multiple 160km rides, so she understands the physical demands of long-distance competition from first-hand experience.

She has also served as Team Physiotherapist for both the England Squad and the Endurance GB Development Squad, presented widely within the industry, and represented ACPAT at national equestrian events. Her insight bridges performance sport, rehabilitation and practical application for everyday riders.

Who is it for?

This webinar is open to everyone. Whether you are enjoying social rides, building up to longer national distances, or working towards championship ambitions, better rider stability benefits every partnership.

PHOTO OF SARAH CREWING FOR TEAM GBR RIDER,
LINDA COWPERTHWAIT, IN ERMELO, THE NETHERLANDS



Developing confident, educated riders is part of our commitment as your National Governing Body — supporting not only horse welfare, but rider wellbeing too.

Booking details

 Wednesday 18 March 2026

 7.30–9.00pm

 Online

 FREE for Tier 1 and Tier 2 members
£5 for non-members

The session is free for members as part of your membership benefits. When signing up, you will also see the option to make a £5 donation towards Endurance GB's general development funds. This is entirely optional, but any contributions help support ongoing education, squad development and opportunities across the sport.

To secure your place, please sign up via the Events page on the Endurance GB website.

We look forward to welcoming you online — and helping you build strength and stability from the inside out.

NEWS FROM THE SERC AGM AND PRIZEGIVING

BY ALISON SEGGIE



Some 70 SERC members attended the Club AGM and prizegiving on Sunday the 22nd of February at the Huntingtower Hotel, near Perth. The AGM was chaired by the incoming Chair Penny Hudson who gave a review of the year, prepared by the outgoing Chair Anita Gibson who unfortunately was unable to attend. The AGM also heard updates from various sub-committees – the PR group; the Championships Committee; and the Training Group; plus, an update on EGB from the SERC EGB Director Alison Seggie. Once the formal business was concluded; members congratulated the annual prize winners.

Introduction to our New Chair – Penny Hudson

Penny did her first Pleasure ride with SERC Dumfries branch in 2012 and from that first ride she was hooked. Over the years she has ridden all over Scotland and the North of England, covering thousands of kilometres with her. She was part of the Scottish Team in 2022 with her chestnut mare, Flossy and has a fabulous experience riding for her country.

She also organises rides in the Dumfries area, and this year will be the 10th year of her popular Tinwald 2-day event. This is a great event with distances from 12km up to a 2-day 80km. She enjoys exploring her local area

and finding new routes, which has resulted in additional routes for SERC.

Many riders across the UK will also know Penny through her business Dee's Designs designing and making colourful bespoke halters, lead ropes and many other equine accessories

She also enjoys supporting other riders. She crewed for several members at the Home Internationals at Three Rivers last September, the Team had a fabulous experience, learning loads and were looked after well by their English hosts.

Penny is delighted to take over from Anita Gibson as Chair of SERC and is looking forward to the next 2 years.



Major SERC rides with classes of 60K and over in 2026

- 22 March – Balgone, near North Berwick, Lothians branch
 - 19 April – Tentsmuir, near St. Andrews, Tayside branch
 - 1-3 May – Tinwald, near Dumfries, Dumfries branch
 - 17 May Ellands, near Forres, Highland branch
 - 5-7 June Scottish Thistle ride, near St. Boswells, Borders Branch (*incorporating EGB regional qualifier)
 - 7 June, Burghead, near Elgin, Highland branch
 - 21 June, Cawdor, near Inverness, Highland branch
 - 26-28 June – Deeside Challenge, near Dinnet, Grampian branch
 - 12 July – Sheeppark, near Inverness, Highland branch
 - 19 July – Irvine beach, Glasgow branch
 - 16 August – Tentsmuir, near St. Andrews, Tayside branch
 - 23 August – Kirkton Manor, near Peebles, Lothian branch
 - 4-6 September – Scottish Championships & Home International, near Perth
 - 20th September – Kinveachy, near Aviemore, Highland branch
- For further details and to enter visit www.scottishendurance.com

YOUR STORIES, OUR SPORT

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

PHOTOGRAPH BY
LRG PHOTOGRAPHY



Endurance is a sport built on people as much as horses. The early starts, the nervy first vetting, the quiet pride of finishing a distance you once thought impossible, the friendships formed at ride bases and across counties. These are the moments that make endurance, endurance.

That's why we'd love to hear your stories.

Our member's magazine is your space. Whether you're a long-standing competitor, a first-time pleasure rider, a volunteer, an organiser, or someone quietly enjoying the journey with their horse, your experiences help bring the sport to life for others. Your story might inspire someone to enter their first ride, volunteer for the first time, or simply feel reassured that they're not alone in the ups and downs of horse ownership and sport. You don't need to be a writer. We're not looking for polished perfection – just honest, real experiences. It could be a short reflection, a longer feature, a photo with a few words, or even an idea you'd like help turning into an article.

We're particularly keen to hear:

- Personal endurance journeys (first rides, big milestones, quiet wins)
- Horse stories – the good, the challenging, and everything in between
- Volunteer and organiser perspectives
- Youth, Para, or return-to-riding experiences
- Moments that capture the spirit of endurance and our community

If it matters to you, it matters to us – and chances are it will resonate with someone else reading it too.

To submit your stories or ideas, please email bellafricker@endurancegb.co.uk.

Whether you have a finished piece or just a spark of an idea, we'd love to hear from you.

This is your magazine, telling the story of our sport – and it's always better when more voices are part of it.



MEMBERS' NEWSLETTER

ENDURANCE

ISSUE 03 *MAR 2026*