



### **IDHBA Ride 12<sup>th</sup> April 2015**

While all of our riders who rode at both The Heath and Cullnagh thought nothing could top the bad weather at those venues along came Sunday the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, with super weather on the days coming up to the event and riders beginning to worry about how much water to bring and if their horses doing the higher mileage maybe needed to be clipped out along came Saturday with a prelude to the Sunday morning.

As the course was being measured and marked on Saturday in what can be only described as the beautiful setting that is Stradbally Hall, to which we must thank most gratefully Thomas Cosby and his family, the clouds started to settle around the village of Stradbally with heavy rain and sleet coming across the estate.

Sunday morning saw the worst of the last three rides weather wise, but first riders to turn up were mother and daughter team Terri and Evelyn Moore and their crew followed by Sam Linton and Madison Flaherty. Our vet for the day was Barbara Fonzo and what a day to have a first outing with us.

First up to vet were our 80km riders with Evelyn and Galeshill Boffin, this gelding has successfully competed at FEI 2\* level(120km) and today was taking on the 80km course. Sam Linton taking on her first ever 80km was second to vet followed by Terri with Sabre, this was Sabre's second ever 80km ride and the duo were hoping to achieve his open final. Madison attempting her first Novice qualifier also vetted at this stage and all four started out on course at 8.30am with the rain coming across the estate at a 45° angle and high winds hitting our riders face on.

The horrendous weather continued throughout the first 32km which put a lot of pressure on the combinations out on course and that of their crew. Terri and Evelyn's crews were headed up by Anne Kinsella and Michael Moore who have crewed both riders for a long number of years and as most riders will tell you "No crew, no ride". This group of crew members had their work cut out for them as their horses came in off course to the first vet gate. Sam's crew, husband and son, Anthony and James are new to crewing at this level and they stepped up to the mark with Sam and her mount Cecil. It was great to see the endurance spirit kick in with WEG finisher Emer Lennon giving a helping hand to Sam's crew and after all isn't this how we all learned the art of crewing by someone else giving us a dig out.

The first vet gate saw all the 80km horses pass the vet and also saw Madison and her pony Bobbie achieve the first of their Novice qualifier after passing the vet with ease. It is super to see the younger riders start to progress through the distances. For Madison and Bobbie this was a great first CR as she got to ride in experienced company and have a taster for the slightly higher speed that this course could offer.

As mentioned before this was the IDHBA Laois Branch Event day and we had some super examples of one of our most important native breeds out on the Endurance course which was only one of the sections of the day. The first of our Irish Draughts out on course was Murieann O'Toole Brennan. Muireann along with her friend Eva Brennan headed out just as the rain began to ease off a little, this was both Muireann and Eva's first day out at an endurance event and both riders took on the TR course with no problem at all. Murieann also collected first place in the ID endurance section on the day.

Next out on course was Sheaffe Monteith while this was Sheaffe's first day out a lot of people would know her from Trec. Sheaffe and her horse Mason also took on the TR with ease but was unfortunate to have had to come on such a day but we can't control the weather.

Debra and Gerry were back with us again which was great to see with their mounts Pippis and Topaz, both riders took on the upper trail ride distance of 25km which was an increase on their mileage in Cullnagh which is great to see. Debra and Gerry's horses have taken to endurance like the proverbial duck which given the weather seemed appropriate on the day. The Doyle family also took on the trail ride course, again this was their first time out on an endurance course. It was great to see Jane Stanley out on her new TB whom she only has about 3 weeks, Jane and her new mount covered the tracks with ease and both came in with a smile on their faces.

It was next the turn of the 80km riders to present their horses to Barbara for the second vetting of the day. In an 80km ride horses are vetted before hand, twice during the ride and a final vetting on completion of the course. The vet monitors the heart rate, soundness, gut sounds etc and a vet will fail a horse if they feel the horse is not fit enough to carry on as it is the horses welfare that comes first. Our 80km riders once again went through the vetting and took their 30 minute break while crews refueled both horse and riders. The riders had 16.16km left to do at this point and spirits were high as the rain had stopped and it looked like the sun may actually shine down on the riders.

While our higher mileage riders were out on course, our next riders out on course were Ray Shore and Deirdre Gleason with Arya and Apollo with both combinations entering the Irish Draught class. Both Ray and Deirdre would be well know in the Hunting circles so it was nice to see them both out supporting the Irish Draught class with Ray on a young horse and Deirdre on her hunting

horse Apollo. This duo hit the tracks in great fashion and looped around the TR track. Deirdre picked up 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the ID endurance section and Ray took 3<sup>rd</sup> place on his young horse.

While Deirdre and Ray were out next to hit the course was Deirdre's Sister Jennifer Haverty on Billy the Kid along with Mike Kenneally on Pegasus and Tim Wilson Jnr on his young ID gelding Bobbing Along. Jennifer, Mike and Tim took on the 24km track on offer and also managed to miss most of the rain. These riders were all new to endurance and it is super to have riders coming out to experience the joys of endurance riding. We look forward to seeing them out on course again with us.

After a long, wet and cold day the Gods looked down on our 80km riders and they gave them a calm dry finish to the day and even the sun came out. As the riders crossed the finish line it was super to see so many people there cheering them. It was also fantastic to see the camaraderie amongst the riders and crew. It is moments like this where everybody on the ground is there to help and support makes one proud to be part of an endurance group.

The wait then came for our vet Barbara as crews got to work on the horses to preset them to the vet, this is always a tense few moments as one waits for the horses to present to the vet.

First to present was Sam Linton and her Irish Draught gelding Ballycoolen Hero or Cecil as he is know to Endurance Ireland members. This was Sam's first ever attempt at an 80km and she has set her sights on competing in an FEI 1\* with him. His trot up saw a sound, happy move up and down the trotting lane and after Barbara had finished her vetting a delighted Sam got the nod from the vet that she had passed. A lot of whooping and hugging finished off a long hard day for Sam, it was super to also see Cecil's breeder Gordon Bradley of the Laois Branch (IDHBA) there to clap them over the finish line.

Next up to Barbara was the ever experienced Terri Moore on her homebred gelding Sabre, this horse is an Anglo Arab by the only FEI 4\* stallion in Ireland, Dantean and by the looks of Terri's mount he may well follow in his fathers hoof prints. Terri presented him to the vet and his trot up can only be described as an effortless floating trot even after a hard day out on course. Vet Barbara gave the nod to a pass for Sabre. This now has Sabre qualified to open which gives Terri's yard more options for the up coming FEI 1\* event.

Evelyn then presented her horse Boffin, unfortunately Evelyn already knew the result before presenting as Boffin had taken a skid out on course and sadly trotted up slightly lame behind. This is the other side to the celebrations but as Evelyn said "he is a bit tight behind but we will work on that over the next few days and he will be ready to go again. He has his rides done for the FEI ride and he is able to compete again and isn't that the main thing". While it is tough to get a fail it is great to see Evelyn with such a positive attitude to the situation.

It was some achievement for all the riders out at Stradbally with special acknowledgement going to our 80km riders. To achieve the qualifying speeds in the horrendous weather of the first 48km is no mean feat and as one rider said "hey that's life, suck it up and ride on"