
ILDRA GENERAL NEWS SHEET for 2008

PRESS RELEASE

RESULTS – GLENARIFF ENDURANCE FESTIVAL – 9TH/10TH AUGUST 2008

ILDRA High Performance Programme

As part of the ILDRA High Performance Programme funding was sought from H S I to subsidise a team travelling to red dragon this year. In particular it was proposed to assist those entering either the two 160km race or a 120km race.

As there is no one day 120km race it is intended (subject to approval) to invite interested members to travel on a centrally hired lorry to compete in the two day 120km, or a one day 80km er .

Subject to availability combinations competing lower distances may be facilitated with limited supports. The level of support available is not yet clear but it is envisaged that transport (Lorry) and stabling will be covered and there is a possibility of some subsidy towards entry fees. Higher mileage combinations will be given preference.

If you are interested please forward name of rider, name of horse, distances covered this year together with a cheque or bank draft for €50 payable to ILDRA before the 1st of September to ILDRA Treasurer Larry O Neill.

Please note no combination will be considered unless the deposit and above details are received on or before the 1st of September.

Signed Edward Allen Chairman

PRESS RELEASE

Good Luck to the following members who have been selected for the Home International & Celtic Challenge teams to represent Ireland -

Judith Hyndman, Thomas Roche, Larry O'Neill, Terri Moore, Evelyn Moore, Cora Keary, Robyn Catterall, Hannah Catterall, Juliette Jobling-Purser or Linda Pullman, Kate Russell, Alison Sloan. Bronagh Kearney

PRESS RELEASE

It was with a certain amount of foreboding that competitors made their way to Slieveanorra Forest at the weekend for the ILDRA ride. The weather forecast had warned of cataclysmic gales, but the riders and horses were greeted with a rather sedate and mild atmosphere at the venue. The first part of the ride passed without incident, but at noon came the deluge. At least there was no problem with the horses overheating as they tackled the route which took in the surprisingly undulating forest, and the peak of Slieveanorra at 508 metres.

Slieveanorra will comprise the northern section of the planned route for the ILDRA hosted Home International and Celtic Challenge events on 9th and 10th August. The venue for that event will be at Glenariff Forest Park. These competitions allow for the serious side of endurance riding, and the social side, with teams comprising of riders and horses tackling a 100 mile ride over 2 days, down to novice riders attempting 25 miles. The competition, and camaraderie, is strong. The Home International sees the four home nations compete, and the Celtic Challenge sets Ireland against Scotland, Wales and Cornwall. If you always wanted to know what endurance riding was about, but were afraid to ask, this would be a good opportunity to find out. Friday 8th August will see the pre-ride vetting in the afternoon, followed by a parade of the teams, with the serious competition taking place over the following two days. Local riders will be able to participate throughout, and there will be a Pleasure Ride on the 10th August.



Congratulations must go to Dromore's Helen Perry and Bashir Kala-Sham for their 2nd place in the FEI Young Rider 120km (75 mile) race at Cirencester on the 21st June. This result will make Helen a strong contender for selection for the British Young Rider team for the Young Rider European Endurance Championships in Spain later this year.



Article: 24th June 2008

Slieveanorra Results: Judith Hyndman/Ardkill Mo – 40 miles; Helen McFarland/Just C'mall – 25 miles; Rosemary York/Crystal Crown of Destiny, Norah McCarron/Bey Shamunah, Patricia McCarron/Rasma, Robyn Catterall/Elleanor, Hannah Catterall/ Miss Elle; Kate Russell/Spike and Allison Sloan/Madison – 22 miles.



Galvayne's Groove June 2008

Read the latest edition of the ILDRA News Letter (pdf format)

Just Click on the image

PRESS RELEASE

Twenty six combinations enjoyed ILDRA's ride over the Baronscourt Estate near Newtown Stewart, Co. Tyrone at the weekend.

With the kind permission of the Duke of Abercorn, the ride used both the demesne lands and the surrounding hills. The venue was spectacular, lying in a basin of a tributary of the Derg River, with Baronscourt and the three lakes – Loughs Mary, Fanny and Catherine. The route commenced within the estate, with its imposing gardens. The earlier riders also met up with a herd of fifteen to twenty deer! After leaving the demesne, the route moved into the countryside to the west, before returning to the demesne and then to the east, climbing Bessy Belle, for spectacular views of the Sperrins to the north. The Pleasure route took in 11 miles, with competitive riders attempting distances of 20 miles, 30 miles and 50 miles. The hot weather and hard going did mean that speeds were reduced. Local vet, Bob Smith, passed 7 of the competitive riders, although Gemma McConnell riding Schoheen, was unable to finish the 50 mile route after the horse lost a shoe.

The full results were: 50 miles - Dorothy Heath riding Star 7.07 mph, Helen McFarland riding J St Jake 8.31 mph; 30 miles – Robyn Catterall riding Ellanora 6.21 mph, Hannah Catterall riding Charlie Four Socks 6.21 mph; 20 miles – Rosemary York riding Crystal Crown of Destiny, Patricia McCarron riding Rasma and Nora McCarron riding Bey Shamunah all 6.09 mph.

For the next ride, ILDRA moves to the East coast and Slieveanorra Mountain. This will be part of the Championship course for this year's Home International ride on 9th and 10th August, to be hosted by ILDRA Ulster Branch from Glenariff Forest Park. The ride, on Sunday, 22nd June is being organised by Richard York, and full details of the route and the venue can be obtained by contacting him on 028 70356661. Spectacular views may be seen from Slieveanorra, which is literally the high point of all the ILDRA rides in Ulster, and well worth the trip alone.

Article: 17th June 2008

PRESS RELEASE

Glenariff is not the **Queen of the Glens** without reason, and this weekend's ILDRA ride saw it resplendent in its glory. Organiser, Gail Baillie, was using the event to try out some new tracks and fields, use of which had been kindly granted by Ian and Roger Crawford, and Ann and James McHenry. Gail has been working with these and other local farmers and the forestry staff to expand existing routes, in advance of ILDRA hosting the Home International and Celtic Challenge events at this venue on the 9th/10th August, when the riders and horses from all parts of the British Isles will be riding up to 100 miles over Glenariff and further north to Slieveanorra.

Serious competition aside, it was particularly pleasing for the organiser, assisted by Rachel and Richard Lammey, to welcome 38 pleasure riders. The venue is becoming increasingly popular for pleasure riders, who after discovering that it is not as isolated as first appears, have been amazed by the spectacular route and the facilities on site at the forest park. (The next pleasure rides in the area will be at Slieveanorra on Sunday, 22nd June, and back at Glenariff on the Sunday, 10th August.)

Congratulations must go to Ian Gault riding his TB mare, Be Merry for achieving their Platinum Shamrock grading by completing a 60 mile ride, at 7 mph. Helen McFarland also rode her home bred Arab x trotter Just C'mall to his Gold Shamrock award over 50 miles at 8.5 mph. Dorothy Heath on Star and Emma McBurney on Schoheen, completed Gold Shamrock qualifiers over the same distance at 7.41 mph. Veterinary examinations were provided by Clough's Jereon Hannes. For these longer distances, two mid-ride vet holds were required to ensure that the horses were properly checked, and were given a rest period. With sensible riding, and dry, but cool, riding conditions, Jereon was happy with the condition of the horses during the ride, and at the end. With horse welfare a paramount concern, these vet holds form an essential element of ILDRA competitive trail rides, thus avoiding horses competing without proper preparation, the over-pressing of the horse whilst on the course, or metabolic or lameness problems developing during the ride. Sisters Hannah and Robyn Catterall riding Charlie Four Socks and Ellenora, and Philip Boyd on Adrastra all successfully completed shorter rides of 30 and 25 miles.

ILDRA moves to West Tyrone on Sunday 8th June, for another spectacular ride. By kind permission of the Duke of Abercorn,

the venue is the Baronscourt Estate and its environs, with the route running through the estate with its lakeside and demesne paths. **For further details contact** Kath Conly on 028 3752 4809. The venue is on the B84 (Newtownstewart: Drumguin road) and best approached from Newtownstewart.

Article: 26th May 2008

PRESS RELEASE

Dromore's Perry family scored a notable trio of successes in Lincolnshire recently, when they were competing in the 162km (101 miles) and 81km (50 miles) races, organised by Endurance GB, and held at RAF Cranwell.

Suzanne Perry (22 years) bettered last year's second place at the same race, when she won first place in the 2 day 162km endurance ride on her home produced part bred arab, Skylight Crusader, at a speed of over 16 kph (10 mph). She was closely followed by her **sister Helen** (17 years) riding her international partner, pure bred arab, Wesam. Not to be outdone, their mother Sharon riding Khazino was third in the 81km (50 mile) race held at the same event. Husband Ken spent a full weekend crewing the riders in their respective races. Benji is sired by the Perry's Sky Crusader stallion, Metallica, and the family has a number of his progeny doing well on the circuit.

The Perry family is no stranger to the world of endurance racing, Sharon and her daughters have all competed internationally, and Helen is a current member of the GB Young Rider Squad, with ambitions to compete in the YR European Championships to be held in Spain in September.

Endurance racing involves competing at speed over significant distances. What distinguishes this sport from many other equestrian activities is the degree of veterinary monitoring before, during and after the race. The completion of a 160km race is held to be the supreme accolade, in terms of both distance and fitness and usually involves veterinary monitoring on up to eight occasions in the course of the race. In the case of the 2 day 160km ride, the additional skills of overnight horse management play a large part in the outcome.

Article: 5th May 2008

Web Masters Choice

Its not often that I back charity events as there are usually so many deserving causes to choose from, but this one from a fellow pilot has struck a chord with me. It has nothing to do with horses or anything else equestrian but could happen to any of us or our children.

If you have a moment, please have a quick look at Oliver's web site and read his story.



Article: 2nd April 2008

PRESS RELEASE

Riding in Rostrevor can be a perilous business, with gale force winds, torrential rain and impenetrable fog all everyday occurrences. But not so on Saturday for ILDRA's trail ride in Kilbroney Forest Park. Both competitive and pleasure riders had the opportunity to enjoy spectacular views across Carlingford Lough in the balmy sunshine. Pleasure riders, in particular, appreciated the well marked and uncrowded tracks, which are so often a feature of ILDRA rides, and the spacious venue field ensured that reversing skills were not required to park lorries and trailers.

However, spectacular views can only be achieved at the expense of steep climbs and for this reason Rostrevor usually attracts only a limited number of higher distance riders. Well done to Amy Lennon, who completed 40 miles on Shaiman ably crewed by father, Frank. Another rider who deserves congratulations is Lucy McCracken who, encouraged and accompanied by her friends Kate Russell and Alison Sloan, completed her first 20 mile Bronze Qualifier. Her Welsh Cob Paddy, showed the stamina and determination which has made his breed so popular in this sport, in finishing the course at a very commendable speed, despite only being back in work a number of weeks!

It was also a worthwhile trip for Pleasure Rider Hannah Blakely who, as the 500th rider at an ILDRA event this year, was delighted to receive a prize kindly donated by Old Manor Mill of Newtownards. Hannah and mum, Mandy, enjoyed their ride so much that they extended it beyond the Pleasure route into the Competitive trail.

The situation of this ride makes it easily accessible from both sides of the border, and the Leinster competitors were impressed with both the ride and the superb facilities in the Park

Full Results – 40 miles : Amy Lennon/Shaimon 40 miles 7.28 mph; **30 miles:** Claire Sedgeman/Bedonia 30 miles 7.74 mph; 25

miles: Hannah Catterall/Charlie Four Socks 7.28 mph; Robyn Catterall/Holly 7.28 mph; Larry O'Neill/Jasione 7.54 mph; Thomas Roche/Flint 7.54 mph; **20 miles** : Linda Pullan/Rinka 6.76 mph; Juliet Purser/Turvinia 6.76 mph; Kate Russell/Spike 6.58 mph; Lucy McCracken/Paddy 6.58 mph; Alison Sloan/Madison 6.58 mph; Gail Baillie/Just C'mall 7.45 mph; Helen McFarland/J St Jake 7.45 mph.

Ulster riders are ambitious and have, in the past, achieved notable success in Britain and further afield. This year, young rider Robyn Catterall is hoping to represent Ireland at the Young Rider European Championships in Spain, and to this end she is shortly travelling to England for a qualifier held in Nottinghamshire. This will be a 75 mile (120km) FEI race against tough competition. Robyn will be riding Ellanonra, an arab mare bred locally and owned by her grandmother Kath Conly. Robyn, aged 15, is already a doyen of the endurance world, having previously achieved success in races with both Charlie Four Socks and Ellanora. This will be her first venture on the international scene and we wish her every success on Her progress can be followed on www.ponies.me.uk/dukeries/index.html.

Also travelling to England is Helen McFarland, with her experienced partbred arab J St Jake. Helen is making the long trip to Exmoor to take part in the 100 mile (160km) Golden Horseshoe ride. This is one of the toughest events on the endurance calendar and the high attrition rates in the competition validate the endurance motto – “to finish is to win”. This year the event will be covered by BBC 1's Countryfile, whose regular reporter Adam Hanson will be taking part in one of the shorter distances of 50 miles (80km). His next training report will be broadcast on Sunday 4th May at 11 am. The Golden Horseshoe website is <http://www.goldenhorseshoe-ride.co.uk>.

Forthcoming ILDRA rides rather nearer to home include the popular Shane's Castle Pleasure Ride on Sunday, 11th May. This lovely route through parkland and estate will be organised by Lorraine Giles, who can be contacted on 028 91883900 for further queries. A fantastic offer “Kids Go Free” will be available at Shane's Castle. Children must be 6 and over, and those under 14 (unless Bronze qualified) must be accompanied by a responsible adult, supervising no more than two children.

Another date for the diaries, and not to be missed, is Glenariff Forest Park on Sunday 25th May. The venue is easily accessible and only one hour's drive from Belfast with wonderful views over the Glens of Antrim and beyond. The uncrowded woodland tracks offer horse and rider the chance to enjoy a relaxing ride in beautiful surroundings, with superb facilities, including huge hard standing car parking, toilets and café. Contact Gail Baillie on 028 28278009.

PRESS RELEASE

NATIVES GO THE DISTANCE AT WOODBURN

Woodburn turned out to be a special occasion for three Ulster Riders when they achieved their Silver Shamrock Awards. Valerie McKie, Jane Bruce and Les Day completed their second 40 mile (64km) rides within approved parameters of speed and equine recovery; their mounts, all pure or part-bred connemaras, being more than equal to the task and proof that not only pure bred arabs can compete successfully in endurance. For Valerie, riding CV Kestrel and Jane, on Holy Smoke, both pure bred connemaras, this was a double achievement of Silver Shamrock completions for both horse and rider. Les's mount J St Jake, a part bred arab whose dash of connemara has stood him in good stead over many competitive miles, was able to give his rider the benefit of years of experience in following the route markers!



Helen Perry rode her sister Suzanne's Ishmal to a successful 50 mile (80km) completion. Suzanne is currently hors de combat and we wish her a very speedy recovery. For the Perry family this was a final preparation before travelling to Britain to compete at RAF Cranwell and in the FEI competition at Dukeries in Nottinghamshire. Ulster Branch wishes them every success in their endeavours.



The ride itself took in the two reservoirs at Woodburn. Organiser, Gail Baillie was able to put together an interesting route, with some new lanes and fields, and spectacular views throughout. Special thanks must go to the landowners, Mr & Mrs. David Boyd, the Wallace Family and Tommy Patterson, as well as the staff at the Water Service, and the Minister and Kirk session of Woodburn Presbyterian Church for the car parking and toilet facilities. Gail's willing assistants (Richard & Rachael Lammey, Alex Wallace and Ian Gault) stewarded a busy day, with 61 riders in all, 14 of whom completed the competitive distances. Flemish veterinary surgeon, Jereon Hannes, from the Oldstone

practice in Clough examined the horses, before, during and at the completion of their rides.

For young Hannah Blakely (9 years) a member of Killultagh Pony Club, riding her 13.2hh 8 year old pony Jamie, it was also a special day, being the 500th rider participating in ILDRA rides this year, and winning a prize kindly donated by Old Manor Mill, Newtownards, and a free entry to a future event.

Full Results

50 miles:

Helen Perry/Ishmal 9mph, Helen McFarland/Just C'mall 8.21 mph, Judith Hyndman/Ardkill Mo 7.12 mph, Hannah Catterall/Charlie Four Socks 7.12 mph, Robyn Catterall/Elleanorra 7.12mph, Amy Lennon/Shaimon 7.01 mph

40 miles:

Les Day/J St Jake 6.84 mph, Valerie McKie/CV Kestrel 6.54mph, Jane Bruce/Holy Smoke 6.54 mph

25 miles:

Rosemary York/Crystal Crown of Destiny, Patricia McCarron/Rasma, Dorothy Heath/Star, Emma McBurney/Sunny, Gemma McConnell/Lulu all ridden at 6.98 mph

The next ride is a Pleasure Ride this Saturday (19th April) at Cranford, Co. Donegal. This is a new venue for ILDRA with spectacular views and will be of interest to riders both in the north-west and beyond. For further details, please contact Rachel Carton 00 353 (0)74 9158945. We then move to the south east for the following Saturday's ride (26th April) at Rostrevor with both a Competitive Ride up to 40 miles, and Pleasure Rides. For further details contact Helen McFarland (028 90651751).

View some of the
Woodburn Ride on
YouTube



Article: 15th April 2008

FOR SALE



2 year old colt foal approx 16hh out of Diamond Cracker very quiet and well handled for sale.

Cracker is chestnut no markings.

Also a yearling filly lovely bay very quiet will make 16hh, Milly has a white face.

Details contact Maggie 07860664756



PRESS RELEASE

Raindrops keep falling on my head....

The Greek philosopher Aeschylus said 'Wisdom comes through suffering'. It's a fair bet that Aeschylus never got a chance to ride the Craigtantlet Hills in the teeth of a howling gale but if he had come to the ILDRA Pleasure Ride last Saturday, he would have been able to prove the truth of the saying (or not!). If he was right, then the 34 hardy souls who braved apocalyptic rainstorms and arctic winds will have acquired, in addition to their rosettes, sufficient wisdom to last them a lifetime! Perhaps they will avail of that newly acquired wisdom by taking heed of weather forecasts in the future!

However riders in general, and endurance riders in particular, try to maintain a positive outlook even in the face of adversity. One rider was delighted to have 'weatherproofed' her young horse, and another felt his mount had benefited from the progressive weight training regime. (Riders returned to the venue carrying about an extra stone in water!)

This ride, of course, had a serious purpose with all proceeds going to the ILPH's 'Make A Noise' campaign to abolish the long distance transport of horses for slaughter. The temporary discomfort of riders and their horses on Saturday was as nothing compared to the barbaric conditions which thousands of equines suffer every year in this cruel trade.



The generosity of the riders who supported the Pleasure Ride was remarkable, as many extra contributions were received. Of particular note was the £80 sponsorship raised by two of the youngest riders, Amy and Katie Lennon from Katesbridge, County Down. Amy (aged 12) has already progressed through the ILDRA grades, and is now gold shamrock qualified, having recently successfully completed her second 50 mile ride. Younger sister Katy (aged 10) is not far behind, with a silver qualifier of 40 miles already under her belt. ILDRA is also greatly indebted to Bailey's Horse Feeds, for its significant financial support in the 'Make A Noise' campaign, organised through local representative Judy Maxwell,

Thanks are due to the landowners for permission to ride over their land, the Blakiston Houston Estate, Jack McCracken, Jim McLoughlin, and John Ferguson, and to Lagmar Corporation for the parking facilities.

As the atrocious weather conditions on Saturday adversely affected the numbers of those able to attend, ILDRA has not yet 'closed its books' for the ride and will continue to receive donations until Saturday, 12th April. These can either be handed in at the Pleasure Ride at Woodburn on that date, or else sent to the campaign coordinator Helen McFarland at 46 Hawthornden Road, Belfast BT4 3JW (Telephone 028 90651751).

The next ride will take place on Saturday, 12th April at Woodburn, Carrickfergus, with car-parking at Woodburn Presbyterian Church. This is another lovely ride (weather permitting!) with a variety of forestry and farm tracks. Pleasure rides are open to all riders aged 6 years and upwards (children under 14 to be accompanied) with distances of 5 and 13 miles available, starting between 10.30 and 13.00. For the more ambitious, longer distances can be covered in Competitive Trail Rides. Contact Gail Bailie at 028 28278009 for details.

PRESS RELEASE

THE HOOFPRIENTS OF THE SAINT

It was clear to all those who attended St. Patrick's Ride on Sunday 16th March, that the saint's well-known antipathy for snakes did not extend to his relationship with equines, as the 56 riders and horses who travelled to the Co. Down venue enjoyed near perfect riding conditions.

The Ulster Branch of ILDRA was delighted to welcome a considerable number of newcomers to the grassy tracks and quiet roads around Saul, which, with its traditional links to St. Patrick, provided an ideal seasonal outing. Bright sunshine enabled participants to appreciate the stunning scenery, with views of Strangford Lough and the Mourne Mountains.

Riders unfamiliar with the area were pleased to find a well marked and easy to follow route which made it (nearly!) impossible to stray. The one rider who followed his own sense of direction, rather than the markers, confessed afterwards that the scenery had been so lovely, he didn't mind getting lost! An excellent meal, with adequate refreshment, at the Slaney Inn, was a perfect end to the day.

Organiser Dorothy Heath was delighted that riders of all ages and abilities were able to enjoy the day.

The next Pleasure Ride will take place at Craigtantlet Hills on Saturday, 29th March. The venue is at the junction of the Upper Newtownards Road, and Carrowreagh Road, in the disused TK-ECC factory site. This will be run as a Charity Ride with all proceeds going to the ILPH Make A Noise Campaign to end the suffering of horses transported for slaughter.

Article: 17th March 2008

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

One of the topics for debate at the recent AGM was a proposal to change the name of the organisation, to a re-branded "Endurance Ireland" (with presumably us following along in its wake as "Endurance Ulster").

Having re-branded, and re-launched, this publication with that masterpiece of aesthetic alliteration Galwayne's Grove, far be it from us to criticise, but the matter will require debate and further consideration, before a final decision is made at next year's AGM.

It has been a phenomenon of Bertie's Celtic Tiger and Tony's Cool Britannia that we are now driven by the obsession to re-brand. In the old days, organisations had their full description in the title – they did what it said on the tin – hence the Irish Long Distance Riding Association. For ease of reference this became shortened to a catchy acronym ILDRA.

It is possible that a new name may alter the image of the Association, and attract new members, but the essential elements of a thriving Association are not its name or perceived image, but rather its ability to promote its goals, maintain and advance its competitive standards, and retain its members.

A simple name change is rarely enough. And as for a competitive edge, we are reliably informed that it does not in any way assist in the reduction of a heart rate in a vet gate. Irish Long Distance Riding Association or Endurance Ireland?

Article: 4th March 2008

EARLY MISBEHAVIOUR AT ILDRA PLEASURE RIDE

We asked Kelsie Ersknie from Killyleagh, Co. Down to pen a few words about her horse Gemini.

"Just before Christmas I said a very sad and final farewell to my old friend. He had had a long and eventful life and together we had ridden more than 2000 miles at ILDRA events.



Gemini was home bred, born in 1977, the tenth and last foal out of our old Connemara mare, by thoroughbred stallion, Whistling Top. Broken at 5, his first public outing was when I entered him in the Small Hunter class at Saintfield Show with daughter Wendy on board. He behaved really badly before going into the ring and connections were sure it was all going to be an embarrassing disaster, but no! He pranced into the ring and behaved impeccably to win the class.

He always to the end of his days liked to give of his best in a competition. Wendy rode him on Dressage, Show jumping, Area Trials and Tetrathalon teams for the East Down Pony Club, winning the Senior Individual Class in the Area Trials at Rademon in 1986 finishing on an excellent dressage score. That year she also won the Girls Senior Area Tetrathalon and went on to be placed 9th at the finals in Stoneleigh. She also won the Irish Girls Championships in Tipperary.



In 1991 I started to attend ILDRA events. My older daughter Sally Burch and I went to an early ILDRA Pleasure Ride at Clandeboye. Gemini behaved so badly that it was decided it might be better to do a Competitive Ride on him, then he could get away on his own.

VICTORY AT KELSO IN HOME INTERNATIONALS

Rostrevor was his first CTR. It was the right decision he was in his element eager to go and tireless, Gemini and I were both hooked! These were the early days of ILDRA both of us had great fun and a lot to learn.

In 1993 encouraged by Charles Spence, it was decided to send a team to the Home International at Kelso in Scotland. Gemini and I were to do the 75 mile Race ride held over 2 days. The only trouble was at this stage we had not even completed a 50 mile ride! So Linda Lawrence and I rode our first 50 at Belcoo, without a crew. At the Home Internationals they covered the first 10 miles in less than one hour over rough and hilly terrain. Realising this was too fast for him with great difficulty I held him back to allow some others go ahead.

He finished his first day of 25 miles in fine form and set out as fresh as ever the next morning to do 50 miles over the Border hills, with more than 15 gates to do! Four of us were left at the end and the pace quickened and then quickened again I gave up trying to slow him down and the little fellow raced at a flat out gallop to the finish. The team competed again in 1994 in Yorkshire with Wendy and her husband coming to crew. Gemini lost a shoe after 40 miles, and had to pull up and wait for a blacksmith. He hated having to stop and was most upset.

We rode the last 10 miles totally on our own and I sang to him (he is the only one I know who enjoys my singing), he twitched his ears and got a new lease of life to finish within the time. He continued enjoying CTRs at home and in 2000 aged 23 he completed his last 50 mile ride. In 2004 he did his last CTR, but that did not stop him going to Pleasure Rides and enjoying the beautiful scenery in a more relaxed and leisurely way. He accompanied many of my grandchildren on their first rides and took great pride in setting a good pace at the front. He liked nothing better than to have two or three little ponies following him, but could still throw a big buck if they got past him!



In 2006 at the age of 30 he completed 187 miles of Pleasure Rides enjoying the fun at Castlewellan, Castleward, Florencecourt and Glenariff amongst other lovely rides. He was as full of life as ever, doing up to an 18 mile ride in fine style, even leaving a much younger horse struggling to keep up with him. He was a real fun little fellow and together he and I had 17 super years of riding at ILDRA events."

Thank you Kelsie for these thoughts. Gemini's name graces the annual Branch Trophy for the oldest competing CTR horse, so he will continue to ride on in our memories. He was a horse who would also attract admiring glances at any ride, and like all great equines— he knew it!

Article: 4th March 2008

PRESS RELEASE

The Gosford deer may not be in rutting season yet, but they were excited by the appearance of 60 odd horses and riders, pulling up beside their enclosure on Sunday, 24th February. With the walled garden no longer in the ownership of the Park, car parking was switched to a field adjacent to the deer and rare-breed paddocks. This was to provide an interested backdrop at the conclusion of the ride, as the riders and their families caught up with the craic.



With yet another bright sunny day, organiser, John Anderson just about managed to get everything packed up before a more seasonal sharp hail storm arrived. Newry veterinary surgeon David Neilham was able to check 9 Competitive Trail Riders, and 2 Pre-Novice Riders out and back, and all passed with flying colours to collect their rosettes.

The going was superb, with even, yet slightly yielding forest paths. Kate Russell on 'Spike' and Alison Sloan on 'Madison' were able to repeat their pre-novice successes of a fortnight ago. The Pre-Novice is a new scheme initiated this year to allow pleasure riders to dip their toes into the water, by trying a longer Pleasure Ride than usual, normally in the region of 12 – 18 miles, with

veterinary checks. The veterinary input is both reassuring for the rider, and the advice given can assist in making the decision to try a longer ride of between 20 – 25 miles.



Of the Competitive Trail Riders, 5 completed the 21 miles trail: Rosemary York riding Crystal Crown of Destiny, Emma McBurney riding Loulou, Gemma McConnell riding Star, Robyn Catterall riding Ellanora, and Hannah Catterall riding Charlie Four Socks; and 4 completed the 28 mile trail: Sharon Perry riding Khazino, Katie Lennon riding Topper, Les Day riding Just C'mall, and Helen McFarland riding J St Jake. Congratulations to Katie Lennon on completing the ride, and achieving her Bronze Shamrock Award.

ILDRA moves west in a fortnight's time (Sunday 9th March), with a full range of rides being offered at Florencecourt, including Pleasure Rides of 10 miles. For information please contact the organiser Kathy Conly on 028 3752 4809. For riders based in Antrim or Down, do not be put off by the journey. This is a very pleasant venue, with ample parking, brilliant going, and spectacular walks and scenery for the rider and the rest of the family. It is well worth the trip, particularly as this National Trust destination is not normally open to horse riders. (As you approach Enniskillen follow the road signs for Sligo then Swanlinbar, before picking up the National Trust signs for Florencecourt.)

Please also note in your diaries a Pleasure ride at Craigantlet on Saturday 29th March. This ride is in conjunction with the International League for the Protection of Horses, with all proceeds to the 'Make A Stop' campaign to alleviate the suffering of horses in the trans-European meat trade.

View some of the Gosford Ride on YouTube



Article: 25th February 2008

PRESS RELEASE

Our Pleasure (Rides) to Stop Their Pain

ILDRA announces Charity Campaign

The discipline of endurance riding has the welfare of the horse foremost among its aims. The Ulster Branch of ILDRA has decided to extend this principle to bring practical benefit to thousands of suffering horses and is adopting "Make A Noise" – the campaign against the long distance transport of horses for slaughter as its charity for 2008. The International League for the Protection of Horses (ILPH) highlighted the plight of 100,000 horses who suffer appalling conditions every year as they are transported thousands of miles across Europe to slaughter. The ILPH, which was prominent in the recent Amersham case, aims to put a stop to this practice and the "Make A Noise" campaign is aimed specifically towards this.

ILDRA will be actively supporting this campaign in Ulster in a number of ways – the proceeds of two of the Pleasure Rides (one in Spring and one in Autumn) will be donated to "Make A Noise" and a strong turnout of riders is particularly encouraged for these events. The first will be at Craigantlet on Saturday 29th March (organiser Helen McFarland – 90651751). In addition, riders are being invited to join the campaign by having their pleasure ride miles sponsored by friends, family and business colleagues. [Sponsorship forms](#) will be available at all ILDRA rides in Ulster, and can also be downloaded from our website (www.ildra.co.uk). The [sponsorship forms](#) can be used at any of the 18 pleasure rides organised by ILDRA in Ulster throughout 2008. The total number of pleasure rides miles ridden in Ulster throughout the year will run into many thousands – over 2000 miles have been completed in the first 3 rides in 2008!

A generous financial contribution for the campaign has already been pledged by Bailey's Horse Feeds. Local representative, Judy Maxwell says that Bailey's is delighted to be able to support this worthwhile cause. The company were notably among the first to provide assistance to the recently rescued Amersham horses, and have a significant profile in welfare issues. ILDRA would welcome any other financial initiatives to promote "Make A Noise", and would invite any interested parties to contribute by sponsoring a rider or an event. Co-ordinator Helen McFarland can be contacted at 90651751.

Over 100 riders took part in the ride at Tollymore Forest Park, and many of them are pictured on the website. Any who want to re-live the experience, or find out what they missed can see the ride on webcam with links from the website.

After disposing of business and social matters at the AGM on Saturday 23rd February, riders can enjoy woodland and lakeside paths at Gosford Forest Park on Sunday 24th February. The pre-novice CTR is also available. Please contact the organiser, John Anderson on 07771 886218 for details.

The ILDRA website is www.ildra.co.uk and the ILPH website is www.ilph.org

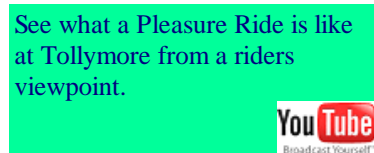
ILPH [Sponsorship forms](#)

Article: 22nd February 2008

PRESS RELEASE

Tollymore Forest Park upper car park could just about cope with the influx of horses and riders on 10th February when ILDRA held its inaugural competitive ride of 2008. Organisers, Susan Sedgeman and Winifred Burton were kept busy processing 105 entries for the Pleasure Rides, Pre-Novice Competitive Trail Rides, and Competitive Trail Rides. The weather was ideal with the early mist and cloud cover clearing to reveal mysterious views of the forest and Mourne Mountains beyond.

Riders came from far (Co.Derry) and near (Bryansford) to enjoy the tracks and the company. Favourable comments were passed on the state of the paths, some of which had benefited from recent resurfacing. Forestry work had also opened up new views on familiar tracks, taking both horses and riders by surprise on occasions!



ILDRA was delighted to welcome back founder members who had taken part in the first Tollymore ride in 1990, but even more delighted when one of those members was accompanied by the same horse he had ridden all those years ago! Both Enda Carolan and his mount Lucy were good advertisements for the long-term benefits of pleasure riding.

ILDRA was pleased with the first attempt at a pre-novice class. Pleasure riders had the option, within the pleasure ride format, of presenting their horses for veterinary inspection before and after the ride, thus ensuring that the horse is sound at the start, and has suffered no problems at the conclusion. Veterinary Surgeon Uel Orr, ably assisted by his nephew William, undertaking the scribe duties, was able to give the participants useful advice and comment. Three combinations completed the pre-novice ride over a 16 mile route, successfully – Kate Russell riding Spike, Alison Sloan on Madison and Eamon Cunningham on Chaz. Five members completed the 22 mile CTR – Hannah Catterall on Charlie Four Socks, sister Robyn Catterall on Holly, Judith Hyndman on Ardkill Mo, Les Day on Just C'mall. and Helen McFarland riding J St Jake.

If you were at the ride, visit the Ildra website – www.ildra.co.uk and follow the links to Pictures, and links beyond, to see plenty of photos.

ILDRA's AGM is this year hosted by Ulster Branch, and will take place on Saturday, 23rd February at the Cohannon Inn, (just off the M1 at the Coalisland Junction – follow the signs to Coalisland/Services),

and the next Pleasure Ride, together with pre-novice and CTR classes, will be at Gosford Forest Park, Markethill on Sunday 24th February. Contact John Anderson at 07771886218 for details.

Article: February 2008

PRESS RELEASE

ILDRA celebrates its 18th birthday this year with a variety of events designed to reflect the achievements of horses and riders over both the recent, and more distant past, and to look forward to the future development of the Association.

ILDRA began in Ulster in 1990, formed by a group of dedicated individuals, to meet a need for organised trail riding. The popularity of the rides spread to Leinster and today hundreds of equestrians throughout Ireland can benefit from the pleasures of trail riding. With the continued growth of the leisure market and the increase in recreational horse ownership, the need for organised pleasure and trail rides is, if anything, even greater now than in 1990.



ILDRA's programme of events this year caters for all standards – from pleasure riders who enjoy a leisurely hack in good company, to the competitors who admit to getting their masochistic thrills from long distance racing – one mile to one hundred – ILDRA will cover all eventualities in 2008!

Three of the founder members in 1990 are still competing actively in the Association – Rosemary York, Dorothy Heath and Patricia McCarron, all gold shamrock qualified riders, continue both to enjoy and contribute to the work of the Association. Rosemary and her husband Richard, hold a unique record of having been involved in the organisation of a ride every year since 1990.



ILDRA is keen to welcome both new and old members and would love to hear from anyone who was previously involved, particularly any other founder members, or others who took part in the inaugural ride at Tollymore Forest Park in eighteen years ago.

Article: February 2008

PRESS RELEASE



Mossvale Equestrian Centre was the venue for ILDRA's annual training day at the weekend. Members had the opportunity of a horse and rider MOT! Horses had their teeth, backs, feet, and general well being expertly assessed by Gemma Murdock (equine dentist), Joanne Jarden (equine physiotherapist), Karen Murdock (equine touch practitioner) Ian Gault (farrier), Crawford Jackson (Master Saddler) and Grainne Maguire (veterinary surgeon).



Representatives from Bluegrass, and Bailey's provided nutritional advice. Riders also had an opportunity to brush up on their riding and lungeing skills with Orla Sheenan and Joanne Evans.



All agreed that this was a very worthwhile exercise, and ILDRA is appreciative of the funding made available through Horse Sport Ireland.

Twenty two horses and riders meant a busy day for the experts, but they enjoyed dealing with horses and riders from pre-novice to international level.



It was an event perhaps unparalleled in the breadth and depth of assessment and training offered to grass roots members.

With four new members and three travelling from County Laois, organiser Lorraine Sloan was very pleased with the turn-out. She told ILDRA "This year the event was so popular, we were able to offer a wider range of help than ever before."

Article: January 2008

[All you need to know](#) about ILDRA. Faq's



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Last Update: Wednesday December 17, 2008

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