



**IRISH LONG DISTANCE
RIDING ASSOCIATION
ULSTER BRANCH**

THE NEWSLETTER OF
ILDRA
(ULSTER BRANCH)

GALVAYNE'S GROOVE

MARCH 2008

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ULSTER BRANCH YEAR OFF TO FLYING START

2008 has started with a bang for Ulster Branch. We have had over 320 combinations for our first four rides, and a well attended Horse MOT at Mossvale. The season started with the traditional New Year's saunter round Castlewellan. Newly elected Chairman, Liz McKimm, welcomed 68 riders in what were perfect riding conditions. The snow and ice that had virtually brought Northern Ireland to a halt a few days earlier had gone, and many made the journey to be rewarded with excellent weather. This was then followed by Castleward, when 90 riders took part. This was a record for the early season ride at Castleward. Again the weather was wall to wall sunshine, and a good

reward for Kath and Kirtsen Conly who had organized the ride. The first competitive rides were at Tollymore and Gosford, with figures again up on last year. Improved weather and better publicity has assisted in getting members and friends out with their horses, to enjoy the undoubted benefit of our spectacular venues. Please visit the website—www.ildra.co.uk for details of future rides.

St. Patrick's Way (Pleasure Ride)

15th March 2008 (Sunday)

Craigantlet (Pleasure Ride)

29th March 2008 (Saturday)

All proceeds from the Craigantlet ride will be donated to the

ILPH's 'Make A Noise' campaign. For more details visit www.ilph.org/campaigns.asp



Castle Ward, venue for the record attendance on 27th



Why not get personal sponsorship to help the ILPH.? Download a form from www.ildra.co.uk or use the form on page 6.

MAKE A NOISE!

Over 100,000 horses travel across Europe each year. We generally consider eating horse meat as inappropriate, but it is a recognised dish on the continent, and we have to respect that. This however is no excuse for the conditions suffered by many of these horses on their last journeys. It is time to **MAKE A NOISE**.

SAMUEL GALVAYNE

Samuel Galvayne was an Australian of Irish descent, and came to England near the end of the 19th century. He learnt his trade and skills working with the stock horses in the outback, and became a popular horseman, very much the Monty Roberts of his day. He gave over 300 demonstrations of horse training techniques in

England, and was invited by Queen Victoria to demonstrate his skills in a private audience. He was the author of two famous books – 20th Century Book on the Horse, and Equine Dentition. It was his interest in dentition that has perhaps earned him his place in history, and even today, his technique of ageing horses,

essential then and now to circumvent the wily craft of many a dubious horse dealer, is as accurate as ever. Hence the title of this publication—Galvayne's Groove. Younger readers (and the not so young) are invited to turn to page 4 to learn more.

EARLY SEASON PLEASURE RIDES

Castlewellaan 6th January

The heavy snow on the Thursday night would have appeared to put paid to any plans for a weekend's riding, but the early thaw and some perseverance from organiser Liz McKimm, saw the Pleasure Ride on the 6th January go ahead. In fact, the ground conditions were perfect and some of the riders were even seen to peel off one or two layers of clothing as the sun shone uninterrupted on the 8 mile circuit around Castlewellaan Forest Park. The participants had Raffrey's Lorraine

Sloan riding Manning to thank for going out first to check and mark the route, and in all, 66 combinations took part. For Liz McKimm, it was one of her first duties as the incoming chairman of ILDRA Ulster Branch.

Castle Ward 27th January

The ninety riders who converged on Castle Ward Estate last Sunday enjoyed an unseasonably warm, Spring-like day, with sunshine and snowdrops in equal measure. While organisers Kath and Kirtsen Conly could not claim any personal responsibility for the magnificent

setting with the imposing backdrop of Castle Ward House, they had marked an interesting route through the woods and paths of the estate, which gave riders plenty of opportunity to admire the wonderful scenery, including glimpses of Strangford Lough and the rolling countryside surrounding the estate.



Castleward Pleasure Ride

TOLLYMORE 10TH FEBRUARY

Tollymore Forest Park upper car park could just about cope with the influx of horses and riders on 10th February. Organisers, Susan Sedgeman and Winifred Burton were kept busy processing 105 entries. 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!

We were 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.

Veterinary Surgeon Uel Orr, ably assisted by his nephew William, undertaking the scribe duties, was able to give the participants useful advice and comment to the three combinations completing the pre-novice ride over a 16 mile route – Kate Russell riding Spike, Alison Sloan on Madison and Eamon Cunningham on Chaz.

The Pre-Novice CTR has been piloted at 2 rides now, and has worked well. If you are a Pleasure Rider and want a slightly greater challenge, try it!

GOSFORD 24TH FEBRUARY

The Gosford deer may not be in rutting season yet, but they were excited by the appearance 59 horses and riders, pulling up beside their enclosure. 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 interesting 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 vet David Neilham checked the 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 earlier.

CTR Results

Tollymore—22 miles – Hannah Catterall/Charlie Four Socks, Robyn Catterall/Holly, Judith Hyndman/Ardkill Mo, Les Day/Just C'mall, and Helen McFarland/J St Jake.

Gosford— 21 miles: Rosemary York/Crystal Crown of Destiny, Emma McBurney/Loulou, Gemma McConnell/Star, Robyn Catterall/Ellanora, and Hannah Catterall/Charlie Four Socks

28 miles: Sharon Perry/Khazino, Katie Lennon/Topper, Les Day/Just C'mall, and Helen McFarland/J St Jake.



Ulster Branch award winners at ILDRA AGM

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 Clondeboye. 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.



Gemini and Wendy Erskine in his showing days

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

“He was a real fun little fellow and together he and I had 17 super years of riding at ILDRA events.”

LAST 50 MILER COMPLETED IN 2000 AT 23

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!



Representing Ireland at the Home Internationals

WHAT AND WHERE IS GALVAYNE'S GROOVE? - FOR THE YOUNGER (AND NOT SO YOUNGER) MEMBERS

Galvayne noticed that nearly every horse had something strange happen to it at about 10 years of age. On the upper two corner incisors a groove started to appear, and slowly grow in a downward direction. When about half way down the horse was 15 years old, and when it was completely down, it was 20 years old. But it did not end there. The groove started to recede from the gum, and a horse is about 30 when it is gone completely. As a result, it is possible to give an approximate age to a horse, just by looking at the teeth. With no groove, the horse is either under 10, or over 30,

and we hope that other tell tale signs would assist you to make the right choice. Even a quick glance at the teeth will show you—hence the expression—"a bit long in the tooth".

A few words of caution:

The method can only determine an approximate age. In many cases the groove can be easily seen because of discolouration of the tooth. Sometimes the tooth is clean, and you may need to run your hand over the tooth to feel it. In some horses, you may not even have a groove at all. (If the

near side tooth is different from the off side tooth, apply an average.)

Have a look at your horse's teeth. It is always better to approach a horse from the side, when you are working around the head. Peeling back the upper lip will be sufficient. Estimate the age, and ask your parents, or the horse's owner, if there is any recorded date of birth.



You won't need a gag like this to look for the groove!

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 - Galvayne'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?

MAKE A NOISE @CRAIGANTLET SATURDAY 29 MARCH

This year Ulster Branch has chosen the ILPH 'Make A Noise' as its nominated charity. The idea that long distance riders can help long distance equines has a certain ring to it, and given our own commitment to veterinary surgeon, as opposed to lay, inspection of our horses, we hope to assist the ILPH in its cam-

paign. The Committee have decided that the Craigantlet Ride, organized by Helen McFarland will be the a ride specifically designated for this purpose, and all ride profits will go to the campaign. Please plan to attend this ride, and encourage your friends to come as well. The location is convenient (just outside Dun-

donald Village) and takes place with the permission of 3 landowners—Blakiston-Houston Estate, Jack McCracken and Jim McLaughlin. The views are stunning. Please consider personal sponsorship by using the form attached, for the 5 and 11 miles on offer. Contact Helen (9065 1751) for more details



Eamon Cunningham with Chaz await the Tollymore Pre Novice vetting.

SUN 9TH MARCH—FLORENCE COURT

PR, CTR 80KM (KATHY CONLY—028 37524809)

SUN 16TH MARCH—ST. PATRICK'S WAY, DOWNPATRICK
PLEASURE RIDE (DOROTHY HEATH 028 40631834)

SAT 29TH MARCH—CRAIGANTLET

PLEASURE RIDE (HELEN MCFARLAND 028 90651751)

SAT 12TH APRIL—WOODBURN

PR, CTR 64KM(GAIL BAILLIE 028 2827 8009)

**SUN 20TH APRIL—CRANFORD, CO. DONEGAL PLEASURE RIDE
(RACHEL CARTON 00 353 749158945 **NEW VENUE**

SAT 26TH APRIL—ROSTREVOR

PR CTR 64KM(HELEN MCFARLAND 028 90651751)

SUN 11TH MAY SHANE'S CASTLE, ANTRIM

PLEASURE RIDE (LORRAINE GILES 028 92 883900)

SUN 25TH MAY GLENARIFF

PR CTR 80KM (GAIL BAILLIE 028 2827 8009)

ILDRA AGM, COHANNON INN, 23 FEBRUARY 2008

The meeting opened with tributes to Bill Buller and Margaret Montgomery, both of whom were influential contributors to the development of ILDRA.

The awards ceremony after the AGM saw Ulster Branch riders and their horses much to the fore, with well over half the trophies finding their way northwards. The Catterall sisters were very successful in 2007, with Hannah winning the Novice Junior and Shamrock Achievers trophies and older sister Robyn, who hopes to

represent Ireland this year at the Junior European Championships in Spain, taking the Jackson's Pride and Open Championship trophies and the Zara Junior Cup. The Marina Gold trophy was won by Kerry Burch. Margaret Gilpin and Melanie Clarke jointly won the Hussar Pleasure trophy. Dorothy Heath's stallion took home the Boss trophy and Kathy Conly's mare Ellanora won both the Bint Eastern Zaphire and Enterprise trophies. The Fairview Gypsy Gold award went to Rosemary York's veteran, Akiel.

The support given to horses and riders by their crew was recognized in the Carrig Dancer Trophy awarded to father and son, Carson and Mark Hyndman.

In 2007 Emma and Henry Greer were the youngest recipients of the Horseshoe award; Amy Lennon, Gemma McConnell, Emma McBurney and Hannah Catterall all received Silver Shamrock Awards; Robyn Catterall and Judith Hyndman received Diamond Shamrock Awards.



Chairman Edward Allen presents the Jackson's Pride Trophy to Robyn Catterall, marking her performances in ILDRA race rides in 2007

Check out

www.ildra.co.uk

for more details

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CUMULATIVE MILEAGE AWARDS

In 2007 the following milestones were reached:

100 Pleasure miles: Susan Sedgeman, Katie Lennon, Melanie Clarke, Margaret Gilpin, William Morecombe;

300 Pleasure miles: Hannah Catterall

400 Pleasure miles: Ros Morecombe;

500 Pleasure miles: Claire Sedgeman;

750 Pleasure miles: Robyn

Catterall;

250 Competitive miles: Amy Lennon; Gemma McConnell; Emma McBurney

500 Competitive miles: Hannah Catterall

1250 Competitive miles: Judith Hyndman

1500 Competitive miles: Robyn Catterall

6500 Competitive miles: Helen McFarland

VOLUNTEERS

Ulster Branch depends on a few volunteers to maintain its Ride Calendar—25 rides in all. We need to expand the number of members who can assist. Please ask at any ride for details.

You can also help our organisers by cleaning up your own droppings, rather than leaving it to him or her!



Maggie and Melanie share the Hussar Pleasure Trophy. Will 2008 be the year one makes a break to win it outright?!