



Cullenagh Ride 8th October

We returned to Cullenagh on the 8th of October to have our last competitive ride of the season. This was our second trip to this great venue, however on this occasion we had access to new tracks which brought us up to new heights and gave fantastic views of the Laois and Carlow countryside. We would like to say a huge thank you to our host Barry Fingleton and family for allowing us to use their fantastic facilities on the day, at the Glamping Under the Stars glamping site.

Endurance Ireland Chairperson Paddy and Treasurer Anne, headed off on Saturday to mark the course, this was not without its problems, however it was soon sorted and ready for early the next morning.

First to arrive at the venue was Ann Clarke with her veteran mare, Jasmine, Ann and Jasmine, headed out bright and early and soon completed their loop.

Next to pull up, were Paddy and Aisling Doyle with their first season mares, Kala and Sally. The four headed out and undertook the course at a nice quick pace. With a view to taking on competitive mileage next year, Paddy and Aisling brought the two mares through the vetting, with our vet for the day, Jeanne Kennedy. Both mares were very cooperative with the checks and had they undertaken a CR would have been well within the parameters to pass. We are looking forward to seeing them in action next year.

Patrick 'Stretch' Byrne arrived with the pretty Amber Sky, to take on their Intermediate Final, which was a 60km course on the day. Amber was ably vetted by Jeanne and the duo headed out to undertake their mission. Ably crewed by Siobhan and Bobbie Ovington, Amber Sky quickly passed the vet at the midway point and after their 30 minute hold period, the pair headed back to looking as fresh as they were at the start of the day.

On their last loop of the day and close to home, Amber threw a shoe, however, demonstrating excellent preparedness, Patrick quickly put on a boot and although this did delay their return, completed the ride in good time. Then the nail biting wait to see if Amber would pass the vet and we are delighted to say she did. So a huge congratulations to Patrick and Amber on achieving their Intermediate grade, at just under 11kph, despite delays! This was a tough undertaking on this course and it is a fantastic result.

Next to arrive was our father-daughter duo Pat and Niamh Cooney with their mounts Ringo and Gypsy. Pat and Niamh bravely decided to take on their first Intermediate qualifier. This is a tough course to attempt this feat, with some very strong pulls on offer. The pair quickly completed their initial vet check and headed out to get started on their task. They soon arrived at the half way point and called

for vet, with an average speed of a little under 11kph. Both horses passed the vet and were then into their hold or rest period.

The foursome headed back out on course then to complete the second half of their ride. They then headed back out on course, this is the real difference to both horses and riders when they move up a grade when they have to tack back up and head out. However, this change of routine did not bother anyone on this team and they completed the second half without any issues. Crewed by veterans Evelyn and Terri, Pat was quick to present Ringo to the vet. In honour of Pat's dodgy knee, Evelyn undertook the trot up and Ringo sailed through the vetting. Gypsy was next to go and was also given the thumbs up. Well done to Pat and Niamh on achieving their first of two Intermediate qualifiers, at a speed of a little under 12kph. Onwards and upwards next year!

We had a very family affair at Cullenagh on Sunday, with our next pair of riders, sisters Lisa and Jill Regan. Jill was riding her horse Jessica, who was at her very first event and Lisa is bringing her mare, Sky, back into work after some maternity leave. All four enjoyed the course taking it at a sensible pace.

Susanne O'Rourke joined us, with the lovely Rio, and undertook the longest trail ride of the day. This is Rio's first season in Endurance and he looks to be getting the hang of the sport nicely. Having brought her other mare, Apache to Open level, Susanne is no stranger to successfully bringing on a novice horse.

Last to arrive were Terri and Evelyn Moore bringing the familiar Gales Hill Sabre and novice mare Slaney's Queen. This was a busy day for Evelyn who had spent the early morning, riding out racehorses. Terri and Evelyn headed out on the course, easily completing their trail ride.

Well done to all the competitors and indeed all who took part on the day. We would like to thank Barry Fingleton, the Foyle Family and William White for allowing us to use their facilities. We would like to say a special thank you to our vet Jeanne Kennedy who stepped in at the last minute to vet for us. Without Jeanne we would not have had as successful end to our competitive season.