

Report on NMRC team endurance event 12th June 2011

At one point we didn't think we'd have a team, with Ellie's horse unfortunately out of action and then the morning of the ride Ros' lorry not starting! But with a lot of help and support we got the lorry going and managed to get there not too late. A bit of a rush to vetting and rather excited horses meant that Skippy and Whisky had rather high heart rates, which we'd later realise wasn't a good starting position.

The ride started off lovely with slight drizzle, but still bright and warm. The Wimpole Hall parkland was amazing, with lovely long canters between avenues of trees, although it was hard to convince Skippy and Whisky that we had 34km to do and it wasn't a race! As we reached the farm land the drizzle turned to driving rain and the hills became slippery, but we still managed to make good time and thanks to Glynis and Ros' brilliant map reading and my arrow spotting we didn't get lost once.

Thanks to Glynis' partner's help, our support crew was fantastic and we really realised how much we needed then, with sloshing for the horses and food for us. It was amazing how organised and well equipped support crews are. Although by the end of the ride both us and our support crew were finding it hard going, as we were all very wet, tired and cold. The sight of the lorry park was then a very welcome sight, although on this home straight all the horses seemed to get even more energy! 34km in 3 hours 12 minutes was not bad for a first attempt.

After a quick wash down of the horse and revive of us, although dry clothes seemed a bit pointless in the still heavy rain, we headed back to be vetted. This time Whisky and Skippy were a lot calmer, so their heart rates were lower than the starting ones! Warm rugs for the horses and hot tea for us was very welcomed. An even bigger boost was to find out we had won best turned out team! Thanks to Barbara, Linda and Sally for the loan of the NMRC sweat and polo shirts, as with the matching numnahs and hat silks we obviously looked the part. Glynis got Grade 1, Ros ungraded due to the very high starting heart rate and I got Grade 4.

It was a great day and my thanks go to everyone who helped us get there and on the day especially to Glynis for showing us the ropes. Also to the organisers and stewards who were still there in the cold and driving rain when we left.

Dawn Grocock, NMRC Endurance Team Leader