

War of the Roses guide for newcomers

On the Saturday

1. When you arrive at the venue, which will be very well signposted, park up your trailer as directed by the parking steward.
2. Check your horse is OK then book in at the secretary's office and get your numbered bib and rider/horse identification tags (one goes on you, one goes on him, just in case you part company, but please don't, it's very bad for our nerves!)
3. You can then tack up and get yourself ready to go (with your map which you will have been posted). If your horse is a kicker, please put a red ribbon in his tail. You can also put a green ribbon in to signify that you are a novice or your horse is young or inexperienced.
4. You leave the venue at the 'start' vehicle where the timekeeper will make a note of your bib number and the time you leave.
5. The route is well marked with white arrows on the ground so you should be able to manage without referring to your map, but it is always good to keep looking at the map in case you miss an arrow en route. There are stewards to help you cross the busy road.
6. When you get to the moorland part of the ride before the woods, follow the orange marker sticks to keep you on the right track until you meet the made path and go on into the woods. There are some gates, most of which can be opened from horseback. We will endeavour to have stewards on the more difficult gates, but you may still need to jump off your horse for the odd gate if you can't open it.
7. Make sure you read the ride risk assessment before you go which points out any possible dangers/risks. They are all things that you would/could meet when out riding anywhere, but we have to point them out to you.
8. Look out for the ride photographer and give him a happy smile. He will be positioned somewhere where you are probably having a good old canter so it should make for a good photo as a souvenir.
9. When you finish the ride and return to the venue, go back to the 'start' vehicle so that the timekeeper can record you as having returned. There will be other stewards on the route checking you off as well to make sure we don't lose anybody.
10. Un-tack and sort your horse out then bring your bib back to the secretary's office. You will then be the proud owner of a 'pleasure ride' rosette!

11. If you are just riding on the Saturday you can then head home whenever you are ready, or stay for a coffee and cake from secretary's van and have a chat with us if you would like to know more about endurance and what we do.

If you are staying over for the night ...

12. Get together your corralling gear and leave it by your trailer then come and find one of us (wearing yellow hi-viz waistcoats) and we will come and help you set up the corral, with or without pony in tow, if you haven't done this before and need our help. You will need about 12 electric fence posts, a reel of electric tape and an energiser.
13. Once you have got your horse settled and the corral is electrified you can sort his water bucket out and give him some hay if you want to – although I think there is quite a bit of grass in the corralling field so he will probably want to eat that first.
14. Leave the headcollar on your horse in case he gets loose and someone needs to catch him. We usually leave a lead rope by the corral for convenience.
15. You will need a corral tag from the secretary's office so that we know who the horse belongs to if there is a problem. You can fasten this to your energiser. We will be checking that the corrals are electrified for health and safety reasons.
16. You can then sort out your tent/trailer sleeping arrangements and RELAX! You will need a camping tag as well for your tent/trailer so we know where you are sleeping in case of emergency.
17. Fish and chips will be served at around 6.30 if you have booked for that, so you have plenty of time to get organised. It will be in the barn in the farmyard, quite near the toilets/showers. There will be straw bales to sit on but you might want to bring folding chairs. You don't need any plates/cutlery. You can bring a bottle of wine if you like! If you are bringing your own food you are most welcome to come and sit with us in the barn if you wish.

On the Sunday

18. The Sunday will be very busy as we have a lot of riders coming. The longer rides will set off first, so you don't need to rush to get up and sorted if you stayed overnight. If you rode on Saturday you will have been given a bib and you can keep that until Sunday. Otherwise, you will need to go to the ride secretary when you arrive to book in and get your bib and rider/horse stickers. Please check to see whether there have been any last minute route changes or notices that you need to read. It would probably be a good thing to watch what other people are doing so you get an idea of what happens for longer rides too. You will be given a time to take your horse to be vetted. All the horses on Sunday have to be vetted before setting off. For pleasure riders such as yourself, this simply means trotting your horse up for the vet to watch to

make sure he is sound. The vet can stop you from riding if your horse is not sound, so check him before you leave home just in case. Watch how other people do this so you know what to do. You can trot up with your horse in a bridle or head collar, but no saddle or boots (although they can wear hoof boots for vetting).

19. For competitive riders (maybe you next year!) the vet will take the horse's heart rate, watch him trot up and give him a more thorough check over before declaring him fit to set off. The same thing happens again on the return from the ride. Before you see the vet on Sunday you will go to the farrier who just checks that your horse's shoes (if worn) are OK or your hoof boots are in good condition (don't put hoof oil on prior to the ride please). He doesn't check again on your return, just the vet.
20. You set off again via the 'start' vehicle, the same as Saturday. As there are different distance loops you will need to watch the arrows to see which way to go for your particular loop – and follow your map more closely this time. Don't be worried if you see riders going a different way to you, they might be on a different loop altogether. There are stewards to ask along the way if you get lost, but on this ride it would be quite difficult as it is fairly straightforward and will be very well marked.
21. It is the 'done thing' to ask a rider ahead of you if it is OK for you to pass them what ever speed you and they are going. Don't go past them without asking first. It is also the 'done thing' to thank road crossing stewards/gate openers, as we are all volunteers and it makes us happy people ☺.
22. When you finish the ride and return to the venue, go back via the timekeeper as before so he can record that you have returned and at what time.
23. Then un-tack and sort out your horse. You then need to take your horse to trot up for the vet again within half an hour of your recorded return time. You can see how the queue is going if there is one, and go across when there is a lull in that half hour period. It can get busy at times if a lot of riders come back at once so please be patient.
24. You can then relax and you can put your horse back in the corral if you have one so he can rest too and have a roll and a munch. If not, just wander him in hand or tie him up to the trailer with a hay net. There may be a bit of a wait for your rosette this time as there are so many riders to process through the system, but not usually more than an hour. Please be patient though as sometimes there is a glut and we get a bit bogged down! This gives you time to have a butty from the van and take down your tent if you camped over or get your things sorted before you go home.
25. Once you have your rosette you can go, or you can hang around and watch if you like, it's entirely up to you – you are more than welcome to stay till the bitter end, cheer the longer distance horses and riders home, and find out who has won the 'War of the Roses'. There is no rush to get off if your horse is

happy in his corral or by the trailer. You can always find somebody to chat to and ask more questions of.

26. It's amazing what you can learn just from observing – things like how people cool their horses down afterwards, what constitutes a good trot up for the vet (and what does not). If you really get into endurance these are good things to know. You will see people with boxes of fabric conditioner bottles full of water – these are our 'sloshes' we use them to cool the horses when they are doing longer distances. The riders have a 'crew' who meet them at various crew sites and give the horse and rider a drink and slosh the horse to cool him down. If it is very hot at the weekend of the ride we will be putting water out on the course for your horse, but you need to bring your own bottle of water with you – you can get bottle holders that attach to saddles quite easily.
27. The most important thing is to have fun with your horse and enjoy the beautiful countryside (and come back next year!).