



SKILLS OF HORSE AND RIDER ARE PUT TO TEST

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The skills of a horse and rider in planning and executing a long distance ride in unfamiliar country are put to the test in TREC.

A new group – TREC IOM – has been set up in the island to develop the sport here.

The club's chairman, Jo Ralston, said: 'TREC is unlike any other equestrian sports, with the emphasis being on situations you may come across while out hacking e.g. opening gates and going over foot bridges.'

'It combines the skill of the rider as well as the fitness and responsiveness of the horse.'

The sport originated in France as a way of testing and improving the skills of trail ride leaders.

It consists of three phases:

- Orienteering – riders follow a set route (singly or in pairs) which they have copied onto a map themselves at a range of pre-determined speeds.

The routes vary in length from 10-40km and riders lose points for using an incorrect route or being too fast or too slow.

At the higher levels riders may be asked to navigate using grid references or compass bearings only.

- Control of paces – riders must demonstrate their control over their horse's paces by cantering as slowly as possible along a track and then returning in walk as fast as possible.

Points are determined by the time taken for each pace.

- PTV (obstacles) – riders complete a course of 16 obstacles which are designed to be formalisations of things that could be found on a ride.

Obstacles may be required to be completed ridden or led, and include things like riding through water, opening and closing a gate, jumping a small fence and riding or leading up or down a slope, over a bank or through a dip.

The group's 19 members include a number of mother daughter/son pairs who regularly compete.

Jo said: 'Our youngest members compete side by side encouraging and supporting other members with the younger ones regularly beating the adults.'

'We have built up quite a TREC community already and we are hoping to expand this in the future.'

TREC IOM is affiliated to TREC GB, the new national governing body for the sport in the British Isles.

Members already compete regularly in the island – and they are hoping to qualify to take a team to the TREC GB championships taking place in August 2015 near Edinburgh. They plan to hold a qualifying competition for the championships next year.

TREC IOM is holding monthly indoor competitions throughout the winter and will hold at least two full outdoor competitions next summer.

Regular training sessions and social events will be held between competitions.

Last month saw Julia McHugh, the North West representative for TREC GB, visit the island to hold a training session. Meanwhile Helen Wain, BHS AI, will be visiting the island this weekend to lead training sessions.

All the events are also open to non-members also as long as they are insured, but discount is given to members on fees.

Anyone interested in finding out more should visit www.treciom.com or contact Jo Ralston on 466535 or joralston@gmail.com



Gillian Newey on Moet