

RANDOM ROUTE IN THE TRAILS – FANCY A CANTER? PART 2

As I mentioned last time, there have been a few times over the last year when people have either said to me that the trails are “all hard tracks and forest roads” or have asked on facebook where the soft trails are. Well, I can tell you that there are plenty of softer tracks or ones with softer edges or growing in nicely in the middle.

So, again, instead of doing what we’ve done before and writing a piece describing a single colour route, I’m going to do a couple that include as many softer sections as I can. They may be linked by harder sections and they may not be the shortest – but you can do bits of it and I’ll try and keep it simple.

Also, remember, people and horses have different tolerances for different surfaces and the weather can affect the quality and nature of the surface – these will not be right for everyone or right all the time.

Route 2

From Penyffordd Car Park, out at post 2 to 3 and left with the field along your right hand side to post 4, go left and then immediately right on a relatively recently stoned short section to its end. There should be a gate and field in front of you. Turn right. You are on the Green/Lilac/orange route.

Follow this past post 11 all the way to post 10. You can canter quite a lot of this, I think it’s a lovely bit of the forest.

At post 10, turn right to post 9. At post 9 you bear right and do not double back.

At post 8 you have reached the top five-ways.

Turn left and left again, past post 32, past post 68, all the way to post 67 – this is forest road, but it’s quite smooth and if its been raining over a long time, you can canter, decision is yours.

At post 67 turn right. Now you can pelt it if it hasn’t been raining too much. Do watch out for ruts, wet patches and the left hand turn about half way along. As always, be careful. But I love this stretch.

Slight downhill to post 25 and turn left, back on forest road.

You will come to a sort of cross roads, go left (the red route goes right). This is a section marked with a white arrow on the signage and white dots on the map, it’s a short-cut/link.

On the right is post 65 with a sharp incline up, soft again. If your wee beastie is ever tempted to put in a buck or two at the start of a canter, I’m pretty sure this will stop it, it’s steep. Then levels out.

At the end of this section, post 59, turn right and then look for a left turn at post 61 (it’s the next left and is a soft track).

Take this one, take it when the heather is in bloom and you will ride through a purple dreamland. It is absolutely lovely.

All the way to the end, at post 60 turn right and then keep going to post 58.

Here you can short cut right and head for home, or you can go left to post 57, short canter. Right to 56, downhill (you could canter it the other way, but it can be slippery as the soil is clay). Round the corner to 55 and then 49 – check conditions and see if you think you can canter here. Straight over onto a forest track/road, not actually a Rainbow Trail, but takes you past post 36 and down to 35.

Past Hendre Dyfnant cottage and the ancient meadow. to post 21, keep going along the bottom or turn up Glyndwr's Way to get you back to the bottom section of five-ways. Along the bottom to 20 and turn right, nice track, check for ruts and wet, but have a blast, you know you want to.

All the way to the end at 29, then left along the forest road, then right down the track, down and then up a steep soft bit (if you have reached post 19, you've gone too far).

At 15 you can turn left down the forest road to post 28 and then right up there, soft all the way back to five-ways, or you can turn right and go back on the forest road to the bottom of five-ways.

Then you're on your way back, if you're at the bottom section of five-ways, turn uphill! Once at the top, you will find post 12 and/or 8 and head back along the road or back via 8, 9 etc again.

As with all these things, just be careful. If you're going faster, have poor brakes (me!) and don't know the track you need to be thinking ahead. I've done my best to describe where turns, dips and slopes are, but I can't guarantee not to have forgotten something – I am starting to get on a bit!

*** ENJOY THE TRAILS ***