

Disclaimer: Please note, the ideas below are suggestions and tips only. They are not part of the rules and regulations of the IHSGB and thus, the Society cannot be held responsible or liable in any way for any incidents occurring at an event organised as a result of reading this leaflet; nor are any such events covered by the IHSGB insurance.

How to organise a series of local rides

Complexity rating: easy

Most riders have a favourite hack or two in the locality they know, and with a bit of luck, some of these have adequate parking for a number of trailers and/or lorries. All you need is that carpark and a route (more or less) known to you.

Aim: to find an easy way of organising local rides, without one person having to do all the work - and getting very disappointed if after all that effort of organising something, only a few people turn up...

Ideally all participants have their own transport and regular access to email. If that is not the case, it might be best that nominated people feel responsible for keeping (no more than) *one* other person without transport or email in the loop.

Things to do *once*:

- set up an email address list or yahoo list of anyone who wants to be kept informed of local events; share this list with all;
- if appropriate agree on a regular pattern (i.e. every second Saturday in the month); this way it is easier to gain and keep a certain momentum;

Get going:

Start with your own favourite hack, and email the group that you will set out from there on a certain day at a certain time, inviting people to join you if they wish. No need to make phone calls, explore an unknown route, check with individuals or dither about suitable dates. If you do not have your own transport, start by suggesting a venue (with sufficient parking) you can ride to yourself.

→ Go and do that ride.

The worst that can happen is that no-one turns up. You still do your favourite ride. However, in our experience there is always at least one other party who joins you, sometimes 4 or 5. You might not always know in advance who will come – all the more fun, that.

Encourage someone else to show you their favourite local ride next month. The worst that can happen is that no-one comes forward. No worries, just tell everyone else that you will be there, doing your second favourite ride (or the first one again in the other direction).

→ Go and do that ride.

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In 2004 about 10 people, some from quite far afield, started with an initial meeting in someone's house, agreeing on the basic arrangements and sharing our email addresses. We have 8-10 rides a year now, usually with between 6-10 riders. I cannot remember a single instance when I regretted making the 'effort' either to post that email, or driving up to 90 mins to get to a venue suggested by someone else. The basic understanding is: whilst we would naturally support each other as needed, everyone is responsible for themselves – that includes paying one's own way (and no more), and having one's own insurance arrangements in place.

We all understand that (unfortunately) life is not just about enjoying our horses, so we will not take it as a personal slight if not everyone 'supports' all of the events, but rather see it as a bonus, if others join us on a ride that up until then we enjoyed doing ourselves.

Tips:

- **The single most important thing** – for keeping these events free of stress – **is not to get upset with each other**, either because the others are not turning up and doing their bit, or feeling guilty because by not coming, we let the others down.
- Think of yourself in terms of a **facilitator**, rather than an **organiser**. You initiate and make things happen in the first instance, but from then on, all participants look after themselves and are responsible for themselves and their horses. That way, you will probably do less work by way of preparation, are more relaxed, and do not feel let down or upset, if things do not turn out quite the way you envisaged it. Once it has started, all participants are equals in shaping the event.