



Saran's Ride for Charity

Saran and her daughter Isobel (Whizz) managed to complete just over 700km charity ride over the summer of 2011, which was well over their 600km target. They also wanted to raise for the Microloan Foundation at least one pound for each kilometre. They were delighted to raise over £2,000 in total and the team at Microloan are really pleased.

The rides were so enjoyable and Saran and Whizz met lots of great people along the way and saw some amazing views. Saran's borrowed horse Willie Goat Scruff proved to be a real superstar and Saran was selected to ride for Wales in the Annual Home International Endurance Ride in September. The race moves around between England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and this year was based at the Royal Welsh Showground in Builth Wells and held during a heat wave, most unusual for mid Wales.

Scruff and Saran had to ride 45km at an optimum time of 11km per hour including going up and down some serious hills. Scruff needed to have a heart rate of below 48km per hour at the end to gain maximum points for the team. Both were the novice combination on the team with the others going further and some faster too. Saran was paranoid about getting lost or falling off and found it odd riding without Whizz to keep her company. It unsettled Scruff who was desperate to catch up with any horse he could see in the distance however far away; he bucked every time anyone over took them just to let Saran know he thought they should speed up!

All went well, they held it together and hit their target perfectly, with some help from the team and so his odd name will be added to all of the other serious names on a big silver plate for the best novice in the Home International. Wales won overall; and were the only team to manage to get all six of their horses' home within the limits. Saran thinks their experience of big hills was pretty useful!

Microloan Foundation

We also decided this year for the first time to make a donation to charity rather than send out Christmas cards. We used all the money saved to make a donation to one of our favourite charities, The Microloan Foundation.

Microloan is really special and appeals to the team here because of the way it recycles donations over and over again, and encourages extremely poor women in Africa to use self-employment to generate the income they need to feed and educate their children.

Tiny loans, often of just £20 are given to women to allow them for example; to purchase kit to mend fishing gear. They then have the means with which to earn enough to support their family and to repay the loan so the money can be used as a loan to another family. This is all done in the context of a group with lots of self-support, the results have been spectacular so far and the charities work is endorsed by many high profile individuals and companies. There is a lot more info on their website: www.microloanfoundation.org.uk

