

The famous French writer Marcel Proust, whom Graham Greene called the "greatest novelist of the 20th century," was asked to fill out questionnaires at two social events: one when he was 13, another when he was 20. Proust did not invent these questions; he is simply the most extraordinary person to respond to them. Marcel Proust's questionnaire is one of the best-known interview devices used in the media nowadays. Fun, intelligent, and concise, it reveals much of the personality of those questioned.

Basha O'Reilly


Basha O'Reilly is a true European, as she was born in Switzerland, brought up in England, and educated in Belgium. A horsewoman from the age of three, she tried all branches of equestrian discipline, from Pony Club through foxhunting, dressage, and three-day eventing to endurance riding.



Basha and her Cossack stallion, Count Pompeii. Together they rode from Russia to England.

In 1994 she was cameraman and Russian interpreter for a scientific expedition to the High Altai Mountains of Mongolia, led by the famous British explorer Colonel John Blashford-Snell. In 1995 Basha bought three Cossack horses from the Volgograd region of Russia and rode them back to England, becoming in the process, the only person in the whole of the twentieth century to ride out of Russia. She was made a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society soon after her return. In 1999 Basha joined an expedition riding up the infamous Outlaw Trail from the Mexican border to Wyoming: the only woman to travel so far up the Trail. Basha is the author of "Count Pompeii - Stallion of the Steppes," the first book in the "Little Long Rider" series for children.

Basha and her husband CuChullaine are two of the Founders of The Long Riders' Guild, the world's first international association of equestrian explorers. The O'Reillys are preparing for the World Ride, the longest non-stop equestrian journey on record, spanning 22 countries and 25,000 miles. They plan to depart from the Eiffel Tower in Paris in Spring 2006 and return there in 2010, a feat that boggles the mind.

In the midst of planning for this incredible undertaking, Basha takes on the Equestriannaire with the spirit and intelligence of one who will succeed in riding around the world! 

- What is your idea of perfect happiness?
 Being with CuChullaine, my husband and best friend, and having achieved something, which we believe, is lasting and important in creating The Long Riders' Guild.
- What is your greatest fear?
 None. Someone wrote, "You can either have faith or fear, not both" and I believe that's true.
- Which living person do you most admire?
 Many spring to mind, none of them world famous. One is George Patterson, Long Rider and author, still writing and blazing with life at 85 years old.
- On what occasion do you lie?
 Never - integrity is very important to me. If I can't say something nice and truthful, I keep my mouth shut.
- When and where were you the happiest?
 Today and here.
- What do you most value in your friends?
 Loyalty.
- Which talent would you most like to have?
 An ability to draw or paint!
- What is your most treasured possession?
 CuChullaine and I are nomads - we believe that possessions own people, rather than the other way around!
- What do you regard as the lowest depth of misery?
 Being forced to witness cruelty.
- What is your present state of mind?
 Eagerly anticipating our forthcoming 25,000-mile World Ride.
- What do you consider your greatest achievement?
 Finding so many Long Riders, cataloguing their achievements and resurrecting so many important equestrian travel books.
- What is your greatest regret?
 That we didn't meet when we were younger.
- How would you like to die?
 By falling off my horse - but not yet!
- What is your motto?
 "The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page." St. Augustine. (354-430 A.D.)