In August 2015, I was fortunate enough to be invited to exercise the Icelandic horse of a friend of a friend. Although I have always had a love for Iceland and had visited a couple of times, I’d never had the opportunity to ride one of these beautiful horses. Well this was the event that changed my life! I just loved riding this beautiful, unique horse. In fact, by December, I had decided that I needed one of my own!

I started investigating on where I could find one to buy, then, one evening I came across a video on Facebook. It showed a beautiful young icelandic horse that was for sale. He was calm and quiet, just the sort of horse I needed as I was a nervous rider. However, he was in Iceland. I spoke to my friend about it and she suggested that we flew out there to try him out. After discussions with his owner, we arranged to fly over there for a couple of days in February 2016, stay at the owners house and try him out. How mad is that?

Well, that is what we did! I fell in love with this beautiful, 5 year old icelandic gelding called Siður frá Kópavogi. He was a very gentle, sensitive young boy and within a week he arrived in the UK!

His journey was quite a long one. He flew from Iceland to Belgium, then was transported by land to the UK. It took about 5 days in total. Once a horse leaves Iceland it can never go back and, although I was going to give him, what I thought, was the best Home he could ever have, I felt very sad that I was taking him away from everything he had ever known. The UK is obviously so different to Iceland. The language, the landscape, the water, the feed, so much busier…….

When he arrived in the UK with me I was able to put him in a large field with 2 other Icelandic’s, which I hoped would help settle him. He stayed there for a couple of months and after resting him for a few weeks, to help recover from the journey, we started doing some work. It was all going really well. I was so happy to have my Viking horse!

We then had to move him to another yard, with the same horses, so at least that was some consistency for him. At this time I had 2 other horses on a DIY livery yard elsewhere, so I was having to travel between the two yards to look after my 3 boys. In July a space became available on the DIY yard so I was able to take siður to join the others. Looking back on it, he had had so many changes in such a short space of time. From February to July 2016 he had moved from Iceland to the UK and to 3 different yards. At least I was the one constant through all this time.

It’s now 2018 & Siður has been with me for almost 3 years and, as I said before, this horse has changed my life! We do so much together and have such fun! He has given me so much confidence.

In September we were introduced to a lovely lady, Jo Shaw. I had taken Siður to a weekend camp & on the Sunday we were all introduced to Jo. I had never met her before but I had the most emotional experience I’ve ever had!

Jo is an Energy Health Therapist & I had no idea what to expect from her session with my horse. In my mind, Siður was a very happy little horse. Everyone who saw us together commented on what a great partnership we had. I expected the session with Jo to last about 20 minutes &, I believe this is what Jo thought too! We were so wrong!

I will leave Jo to give a more detailed description of what happened, but basically, he was holding onto tension & really didn’t want to let go. On the surface he wanted everyone to think he was happy and ok but, deep down, he was so tense. Such a stoical little horse! After about 40 minutes Jo still hadn’t won his trust and he still wouldn’t let go.

This was when she decided to change what she was doing and tried to communicate with him, heart to heart. She shuffled next to his heart, he shuffled away, she shuffled next to him again, he shuffled away. Then suddenly he lifted his head, then lowered it to the ground and released all the tension! It was palpable! You could see the tension flying from his body. It was an amazing thing to experience and so, so emotional. I cried, Jo cried……..My little horse had been holding onto this for so long and he needed to trust someone enough to release it. He then spent the rest of the afternoon yawning away! You could tell that he was so relaxed. It was wonderful to see.

I believe that it stemmed back from his journey to the UK from Iceland and all the changes that happened to him in such a short space of time. I was so upset that I hadn’t known how he was feeling and that I had put him through such a traumatic experience. But, together we had found Jo and she has made such a difference to both of us.

Prior to his session with her, I was finding it difficult to find canter on him. He is a 5 gaited Icelandic, so he has 2 additional gaits, tölt & flying pace, but canter was so difficult to find. A couple of days after the session, I was riding him in the ménage and for the first time ever, we managed to canter round the whole ménage on both reins! I believe that, through releasing the tension in his body, he was able to find canter!

I am so happy to have found Jo, she will always have a special place in both mine & Siður’s hearts ❤️