

Bruce

His gentle nature, smooth chestnut fur drew me to him. His eyes had a deep warm feeling. He was caring, he knew how pain felt and wanted to rescue me. It was immediate. The feeling when I first set eyes on him was overwhelming. This tall handsome horse in front of me was to change my life. Every minor improvement built into a major step forward. He walked towards me head bent, we came closer slowly, instantly I felt safe. He rubbed his head on me, invading my space but not making me fearful. I was at peace. How could such a large animal project such a gentle secure feeling? That's Bruce for you.

Butterflies in my stomach but with a calm aura. I set out to take my first ride on Bruce. I tentatively approached him slipping his head collar on; he gave me an affectionate snort and instantly put me at rest. I walked him slowly towards the block, his large hoofs teetering along. He had poorly feet. He understood pain. Gently I coxed this giant over the cobbles tacking him up, preparing myself for my mount. As I climbed on he stayed very still, he reassured me that he would be my protector. This first riding encounter was to be the beginning of an amazing journey.

Ever since that first meeting Bruce has brought calm to my life. He encouraged me to speak openly whilst keeping me safe and calm. As I lay on his back I can feel his love seep through me. His ears listen tentatively to my every word, obediently following my every command.

I didn't ride Bruce I was Bruce. Never once when I sat upon Bruce's back did I feel I was his rider. I was always part of him I guided him through speech and movement I learnt to communicate without fear. I began to understand emotion and how my behaviour can and does affect others. He allowed me to lie on his back he trusted me too not hurt him and I trusted him to care for me. I began to see a point in life and realise I had people who loved me and wanted to help me. Bruce taught me that threw patients and gentleness I could succeed and fight my fears. He showed me that I could have a life.

21 years old