

Sleipnir

Issue 151 Spring 2020



Newsletter of the Icelandic Horse Society of Great Britain

Introduction

From the Editor



Given the advice of the British Equestrian Federation I have made the decision not to ride for the time being. I believe the risk is low, but I can't reconcile taking the extra risk, particularly when I am on the Board of a local hospital, and acutely aware of the building pressure, and risks to those working there. So I am walking in hand, and doing more ground work, which is good for me and the horses! I miss the deep breath out and relaxation that I

experience when I do get in the saddle, but I feel very lucky to live where I do, and to have my horses on my doorstep. I know that for many you are not able to visit your horses at all.

I am thankful that social media keeps me connected to people, but being on my own is hard, and no amount of distance chat is the same as the close presence of another person from time to time. For now, I will have to rely on my cats and horses for that physical connection!

Update on 'The Little Viking Horse' book. It was amazing to have FEIF publicise my book, right before the London Book Fair - where it was to be pitched to agents and publishers. Sadly the Fair was cancelled, and with the publishing industry adjusting to the lockdown, there is unlikely to be any progress with my book before the autumn. As soon as I have any news you can be sure I will share it with you!

Catherine Holland



Icelandic Horse Society of Great Britain

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Official IHSGB news and announcements are marked with the logo:



Contents

<u>Front Cover</u>	Photo Competition - Best Front Cover Winner - Peter Heathcote	
<u>Introduction</u>	From the Editor	2
<u>IHSGB News</u>	From the Chair	6
	From the Youth	7
	From the Treasurer	10
	From Membership Secretary	14
	From Education	15
	From Communications	17
	From the Breeding Team	
	Studbook News	19
	From the Breeding Team	21
	From Leisure	23
	Photo Competition Results	26
<u>Sport & Training</u>	From the Sports Trustee	28

	A Message from Far and Ride Horse Riding Holidays	30
<u>IHSGB Education</u>	Improving Your Rider Leg Strength	31
<u>Member News</u>	Highland Happenings by Liz Kraft	32
<u>Favourite Rides</u>	Longrigg Fell by Nadene Butler	35
	In Ancient Hoof Prints by Bethany Frear	40
<u>Horses for Courses</u>	Review of IHSGB first Webinar by Bethany Frear	45
<u>Events Calendar</u>	Events under review due to Covid19 Restrictions. Please refer to Website for details	



Photo Competition: 1st Place Horses in Landscape

IHSGB News and Business

From the Chair

May I start by thanking those who have sent me their details volunteering their services to members and non-members alike that may need help with the care of their horses due to a need to self-isolate. If you feel you may be able to help then please email me at chair@ihsgb.co.uk.

As a Society we are trying to ensure we keep you updated with official statements from the British Equestrian Federation through our membership of the Showing Council.

I would like to thank all of you who are taking part in webinars, whether as hosts or participants, as well as judge training phase two, which is being extended to allow the continued training of regional judges for brighter times ahead.

It is very encouraging to see members and non-members on social media supporting and encouraging each other, and finding ways to communicate with those they know are more isolated through various reasons.

As a society we have many things to look forward to in the coming months and I feel it's important to focus on those to get us through these uncertain times. Details of events will be updated on the members Facebook page and the website. Our communications team are working hard to ensure these will be updated depending on current government advice.

Peter Heathcote



From the Youth Trustee

Youth Report from the FEIF Conference 2020, Annual Youth Work Meeting - Summary of Discussions (Minutes are available on the FEIF Website)

Reports from the countries

We split into smaller groups of 3-4 so that we could have more in-depth discussions. How do we get more young people interested in the Icelandic Horse? And how do we continue to encourage those who are? In smaller countries most horses are privately owned so have little access to school horses and riding facilities, and bigger countries have too many events and little place for new initiatives.

During these conversations we exchanged ideas, problems and ways to solve them, and discussed the impact and use of social media and online activities, volunteering, financial impacts, insurance and safeguarding.

FEIF Youth Events

- Reports/presentations of FEIF Youth Events 2019: Camp in Iceland and Young Leader Seminar in Netherlands
- The future and aims of Camp and Cup
- Possible rebranding of Camp, with the aim to better explain the different aims of the Camp and the Cup
- Possible guidelines for rebranded Camp organisers, may focus on the national horse culture of the host country as well as the Icelandic Horse
- Managing expectations and the costs of Camp
- Planning and preparations for the 2020 Youth Cup in Denmark
- Ideas for the next Young Leader Seminar, 22nd-24th January 2021 in Vienna.

Inclusion

We ended our meetings with a discussion on Inclusion, the importance of inclusion for the future direction of Youth Work, and what we need to do to ensure inclusion on both a national and international level.



FEIF Youth Events

Youth Cup 2020 – Denmark, 18th– 26th July

Young Leader Seminar 2021 – Austria, Vienna, 22nd- 24th January

Youth Camp 2021 – Finland

Youth Cup 2022 – Switzerland

Becca Hughes





Photo Competition: 1st Place Furry Friends

From the Treasurer

No standard Finance report this time, instead this article written before Lockdown...A New Horse

'I need more articles,' said our Newsletter Editor. 'Yes Catherine,' we duly replied. 'Favourite rides, new horses, words of wisdom and more photos,' she added, threatening us with the spectre of LVH photo-bombing Sleipnir once more (well he is very handsome - I think we can forgive him and Blondie their exposure.)

So, (and I have been a bit cagey about this so far, as who knows how things will work out,) at the grand old age of, well a number where I should know better, another horse has been acquired. With chocolate you normally know when you have had enough; seemingly this does not apply to Icelandic Horses!

Luckily for me you can no longer look for horses in WorldFengur using owner as the search string - therefore my shopping spree remains between me and my (now empty) bank! However, in December a large truck rolled up at Connegar Farm. Seemingly very chilled, a mouse dun mare strolled off and into her stable (for a few weeks 'getting to know you' livery,) having endeared herself to the transporter crew by being super cute and cuddly. She had travelled across land and sea from Denmark, but originally stems from Iceland. Her name is now Sol. Some of you will know that her original name sounded somewhat ruder in English. Okay, okay, so I have heard all the jokes now, and am still not sure that I trust Andrew Nickalls to behave as Speaker, if I ever make my way onto an oval track with her – but with Freija's help (our esteemed IHSGB Studbook Registrar) we changed her name to something more PC in our native tongue.

A good decision? A wise purchase? It is early days, and getting a new horse is always exciting, but with a fair bit of 'OMG what have I done?' thrown in, especially as we get older! Then buying unseen

and untried adds to the 'excitement!' At the end of the day though, you can ask for advice, you can listen to opinions but, ultimately, you need to make a decision based on gut instinct. I wobbled a bit during purchase – I almost had too much information despite never having seen her – but it is amazing how the Icelandic community come together to help you. I had friends, and friends of friends, in four different countries commenting on videos, sourcing information from when Sol was a youngster, training histories etc. So if you are thinking of a purchase never be afraid to ask for help!

Wobble over I pressed the 'send money' button and Sol arrived in the UK. I was so fortunate in being able to get to know her a bit at Jem's and, with her dulcet tones ringing in my ears, we attempted to find the gears in the gearbox. More wobbling ensued on my part; the gear box was necessitating some double declutching and, maybe, even new syncromesh for me - counting up to seven in neutral (reminiscent of our old moggy van!) Jem, of course, breezed through the gears as though she had paddle shift, and showed what could be possible. Should it be this hard? Was this the horse for me?

Well she was, and is, super cute, and I like her enough as a horse to keep trying. Her gaits, when I find them, are super clean and whilst I am not planning to use 5th, it's there and fast! I also know I am not the most confident of riders, and to ride effectively I need to know my horse and be able to trust her. The next step therefore was to repatriate to Devon. Leaving Oskadis (H's horse) at boot camp in Dorset for a few weeks, we headed home.

A month later and, touch wood, so far so good. I am taking things VERY slowly and just getting to know my horse. We started by walking out in hand and, just, doing lots of normal day to day things. With my first import absolutely everything, especially the high Devon hedges with life on the other side and pheasants erupting from them, was a learning opportunity. Sol seems a little more au fait with life in general.

We have progressed to riding out, always an event, what with the roadwork required and the incredibly busy Devon lanes, but by timing our rides, and starting with H and her other trusty steed Blue (the bike,) we ventured forth. Now we have built up to around 10km. The gearbox is starting to feel a little more familiar but, no doubt when I return it to Jem's for routine servicing I will find that I should have changed the filters or done an oil change by now! Always learning. The non-stop rain, wind and fog have hampered progress (and inclination!) but we are in no hurry. Courses are booked throughout the summer months, so I will need to get fit enough to keep both Roka and Sol in work.

So buying a horse is disturbingly easy, and there are many out there that will help and advise you on your choice. Similarly the import process just happens, as long as the 'send more money' button keeps working! If you have the facilities, confidence and knowledge to have your new purchase home straight way then do so. If not then a halfway house, with support and experience, is invaluable. But go with your gut, do not take things faster than you are happy to, and do not put yourself under any pressure with what you hope to achieve by when. It is good to have goals but, at the end of the day, we do this for fun! There is definitely a honeymoon period after which your 'real' horse starts to emerge. I am hoping things will continue to go the right way with Sol, but I am also realistic enough to recognise if and when this partnership is not meant to be. The jury is out as to whether she becomes my Oval Track horse, or indeed if, having got a horse whose tölt is great (when found!) I still have sport ambitions. In the meantime it's both fun, and scary, to be pushing myself a little bit more.

I know I am incredibly fortunate to be able to have these horses and the 'send money' button (it no longer works and is decommissioned!!) I don't want to be in a position, in a few years time, to be saying "If only..." But it is also not possible without the continued support of friends in the Icey community - we are so lucky to have more opportunities to train/learn/educate ourselves

in gaited riding so if you can, GO FOR IT - be it buying the horse or signing up to learn or participate!

Post script: Roka struggles with tölt. Having now acquired number x Icelandic, Jem and Roka, post boot camp, have demonstrated that she can tölt – it has taken us several years to find it but, when you (well Jem!) gets it right, it looks pretty good, and is a clean four-beat. She lifts up in front, you can see her knees and she looks and feels amazing. Typical!

So, confined to the fields for the foreseeable future, I debated with myself whether it is okay to ride and have decided on walks out in hand for now. The lanes are so much quieter, but riding a horse is never safe and the impact of things going wrong, for me, the horse, the NHS and others is probably too great. The horses will still be there when we emerge from this, albeit their waistlines (and mine!) may not be quite so trim!

Debbie

Photo Competition
2nd Place
Horses Together



From the Membership Secretary

Before the close down of life as we knew it, this leisure rider had been trying to improve her horse's tölt and attention. Anyone seeing me riding our lanes might think I'd been drinking, with all the leg yields. To help with this, I signed up for one of the IHSGB Education courses.

The recent course with Baddi (Baldvin Ari Gudlaugsson) in Wales - thank you Peter Heathcote for hosting - was excellent, with the training targeted at exactly what each horse and rider combination needed. Baddi had a wide variety of abilities to cope with, from an old woman that has problems getting on her horse, to the 'youngsters' (in their 30's!) who are GB team hopefuls. Each and every one of us learnt a lot in the 4 x 30 minute lessons, taking home so many tips to work on, I fear that I might have forgotten most by the time we can ride again.

If you have a chance to go, and the only thing holding you back is 'I'm not good enough' put your name down, go, challenge yourself and enjoy the enabling instruction. Even if you don't know anyone, everyone is welcoming and supportive. You and your horse will be tired mentally and physically, but the results will be worth it.

One of Baddi's last comments to me was, 'you ask for 50% and she, my trusty steed, gives you 30%.' Honest I suppose.

Back to more mundane matters. I've not bored you with any membership waffle recently, but with everyone looking forward to mid, maybe late summer, when hopefully we might be able to get out and about riding again, your membership will be due for renewal (in August.) Why not, whilst stuck in the house, set up a standing order, easy to do with online banking, then I don't have to chase you.

Lloyds Bank, Ringwood, Dorset

Sort Code: 30-84-87

Account No: 35482968

Or the conventional way, of a cheque to: 2 Coastguard Cottages, Soar, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 3DS



Good luck with the imposed isolation.

Stay healthy, and see you around once this situation resolves itself.

H Ashford



From Education

In early March, the 2020 IHSGB Education Courses kicked off in Wales, hosted by Peter and Katherine Heathcote, with Baldvin Ari Gudlaugsson. In hindsight, we were very lucky to manage to get the course in before COVID-19 truly kicked off, however things weren't quite as easy on the trainer, who had to commit himself to self-isolation for two weeks upon returning to Iceland. so while I feel a little bit responsible for this, I hear he is now back to shoeing and riding with a vengeance, having luckily not displayed any symptoms! Once again, the feedback on this course was 100% positive which is great to hear.

Understandably, while we have a number of courses booked up around the country a bit later in the summer, these events are going to have to be organised with a little care based on the current Coronavirus situation, we will endeavour to keep you up to date as much as possible.

So while a lot of us are possibly now not riding, minimising riding, doing ground work or maybe even resting our horses, what can we do to educate our horses and ourselves? There is a wealth of information out there – from articles, books, videos, podcasts and even lots of now free (or reduced) online courses for riders, so here is a short list of some that may be of interest to you while you have time at home!

- Check out the Hrimnir educational videos at <https://www.hrimnir.shop/community/>
- Nattfari Podcasts – some episodes are in English
- <https://www.islandshastpodden.se/en> podcasts
- Educate yourself with the FEIF rules at <https://www.feif.org/Service/Documents.aspx>
- Five Gaits TV free to stream
- Horse and Country free to stream
- Five ways to improve your riding, even when you can't ride <https://www.facebook.com/RitterDressage/>
- www.listeningtothehorse.com

Other education news - We are still working hard on getting the young rider badges scheme finalised, and we are happy to announce that it is not far away from release! You can read more about it on the dedicated webpage at

<http://ihsgb.co.uk/training/young-rider-badges/>. Watch out for the updates via the usual communication channels.

The GB Ranking 2019 winners have been calculated and your awards have been sent out, so watch for your postie! We hope that this will be a little something to keep you going at this unusual time.

Jemimah Adams



From Communications

What's happening in the IHSGB, and how do you get to hear about it?

Can you help narrow the gap? We all know the challenges we have:

- we are far from another Icelandic owner
- we feel others are doing more
- there seems to be groups who meet all the time or to be more energy and events in other areas of the country
- restricted access to anything that resembles something other than an untarmaced schooling area (Road, or grass verge if you're lucky!)
- being able to travel requires investment and confidence
- being alone with your horse with no-one to offer on the ground support
- feeling you're not the right level, or in a community, to join in with the activities of IHSGB.

If you feel this is you then we warmly invite you to re-look at what we have to offer and see where you can take the step in taking part - as we really do offer something for everyone. A webinar or the Coffee Corner Virtual meeting is a great place to start, as you can do this from the comfort of your own home. No riding or travel involved.

We have a great core of members who join in but would love to see new names taking part. Armchair activities include Photo competitions, 'horse stalking' (Bethany!) which includes finding your horse's history on World Fengur, the Judge Training Programme is ongoing, and we have the fun, educational webinars too to expand your Icelandic Horse knowledge. Depending on whether riding is allowed, you can review the different ways of joining in when normality returns. We have something for those who hack, or school, or join in with organised rides and events, and those developing as a rider with virtual coaching.

Unsure of how you can keep up to date with ongoing and new IHSGB activities? See a list below of our official communication channels and ensure you sign up or follow them.

What can you expect from us during these changing times?

As part of our commitment to mental welfare we are organizing a Coffee Shop Chat Online for all who are interested in the Icelandic Horse. To bring together friends, old, new and yet to be made. Date and Time will be announced but we are looking at 16th or 17th April, 11am or 4pm.

Throughout a 'normal' period the IHSGB team keeps members regularly up to date across FaceBook daily, IHSGB website updates, fortnightly Email Bulletin, and quarterly Newsletter, Sleipnir. During this health outbreak we have ensured we follow Government or Authorised Equine Bodies to bring you the facts, and not incorrect or emotionally angled media. It's important for us, the Board, to ensure we keep an unbiased view so members can take the information and make their own informed decisions on the actions they need to take.

Where can you find the latest updates?

Did you know that even if you don't have a Facebook account or regularly check your email that you can keep up to date with all our news here www.ihs.gb.co.uk. You can scroll through the Facebook section (without needing to login) to see the latest public posts. We do have a members forum too - let us know if you don't have access.

You can also keep up with latest events on the website at <http://ihs.gb.co.uk/news-events/events/> or on FaceBook at <https://www.facebook.com/pg/IHSGB/events>

Karen Smith



Studbook News

Foals:

Alsviður from Dry Drayton

F: Vaðall frá Akranesi M: Gjósta from Ardechive
to Julie Baker

Mánadís from Dry Drayton

F: Mjólnir vom Lippertshof M: Salka frá Helgatúni
to Julie Baker

Transfers:

Hjalti from Thordale	from Frances Taylor to Maria Score
Ólafur from Solva	from Mandy & Smári Slater to Rowena Gordon
Sólfaxi from Salisbury	from Mandy & Smári Slater to Kate Longson
Venja frá Grund 2	from Mandy & Smári Slater to Jennifer Hemberg

Imports:

Sól frá Syðri-Reykjum	from Denmark to Debbie Ede
Sólbrá frá Gaul	from Iceland to Charlotte Day
Viti vom Auschnippetal	from Germany to Alexandra Angenoort
Kafli frá Pulu	from Iceland to Helen Morris
Plútó frá Eystra-Fróðholti	from Iceland to Helen Morris
Diljá frá Árbakka	from Iceland to Marie Lichtenegger
Náttar frá Blesastöðum 1A	from Denmark to Kay Munro

Pokkadís frá Hrafnkelsstöðum 1 from Iceland to Cristina Edwards

Kjartan frá Lóumóa from The Netherlands to Jemimah Adams

Deceased:

Hektor from Mill Lane 2001 – 2020

Glóstjarna frá Neðra-Vatnshorni 1996 – 2020

Ari from Salisbury 2002 – 2020

Detailed instructions on all studbook procedures can be found at

<http://ihsgb.co.uk/breeding-studbook/how-to-guide/>

If you have any other questions please feel free to get in touch.

Correct address:

Freija Glansdorp, IHSGB Studbook Registrar, Sunny Lawn,
Tweentown, Cheddar, BS27 3JE.

Email: studbook@ihsgb.co.uk

Freija Glansdorp



From the Breeding Team

I wish I could be writing about the progress we've made in planning our breeding assessment, but of course now we all have a very different day-to-day life to what we have been used to so far, and the assessment has been postponed.

I'll therefore give a personal perspective on something else which might interest you...discussions about rider weight and horse height. You will all remember Icelandic horses from many years ago when they were smaller and more sturdy than today's taller and more elegant Icelandic horses. Right from the start, there were many voices that suggested Icelandic horses should only be ridden by children, but not by adults.

In 1976 a group of Icelandic horse enthusiasts had the idea to promote the breed and prove the critics wrong by taking part in a special race unlike any other, organised to celebrate the 200 year anniversary of America.

It was called the **Great American Horse Race**, and it would span nearly 100 days and 3,500 miles, starting in Saratoga on the East Coast, heading to Missouri, and then following the Pony Express route to Sacramento in the West, crossing the whole of the United States.

About 200 riders signed up, amongst them Johannes Hoyos from Austria (well known to many of us as a frequently visiting breeding judge,) Walter Feldmann jr, one of the pioneers of Icelandic horse riding in Germany, and a couple of others from Germany and France.

The race was poorly organised and the Icelandic horse group decided to split up after a couple of days, with Johannes and Walter continuing with the Great American Horse Race, whilst the other three riders participated in the legendary Pony Express race.

Out of 105 horses that started the Great American Horse Race, 53 made it to the finish about four months later, amongst them Johannes and Walter. They became 13th and 21st in the overall ranking. One of Johannes's horses was the only horse in the race that never had to be treated by a vet during the entire race.

The other four riders that took part in the **Pony Express race** over approx. 1900 miles, were very successful, too. Their tally at the end of the race was: 13 times - winner of the day, 26 times - second, 15 times - places 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the daily results. One of the Icelandic horses became the overall condition winner of the whole Pony Express race, unmatched by any other breed that took part in the race.

This massive success was hailed in all horse magazines and the recognition as a horse that could be ridden by adults, and not only children followed suit. Without doubt it helped to establish the Icelandic horse in Germany and Austria in the years to follow.

This brings me back rider weight compared to the horse weight. Some studies suggest that the rider should weigh no more than 25% of the horse weight, but should we not look at the condition of the horse, its level of training, and so on, and take those factors into consideration too?

A well trained horse, well-muscled and with a good stamina, but perhaps lighter and on the smaller side, will always be more capable of carrying a heavier rider than a taller horse which is not so well trained and conditioned. In order to have a healthy and sound horse, the training must be considered, too, and not just the weight ratio between horse and rider. I hope I've given you some food for thought in the coming times.

Stay healthy and I hope better times are not too far away.

Ellen Brimble

From Leisure

It has been a busy period for Leisure since the last Sleipnir, with the introduction of the webinars programme plus the March Photo Competition in readiness for the Day of the Icelandic Horse on 1st May.

In these troubling times it can help to focus on what we can do rather than what we can't. My thanks go out to Mic Rushen for hosting our inaugural webinar on 26th March on Considerations for Importing Icelandic Horses, followed by her second on 9th April on managing Sweet itch. If you attend a live webinar, make sure to include this when calculating your points for this year's Icelandic Horse Challenge Cup.

I am aiming to offer a regular webinar on the last Thursday of every month, although I have been working to temporarily increase their frequency in order to provide a welcome distraction from current events. You must register for separately each webinar and at least 48 hours in advance in order to participate. These sessions are recorded in order to be made available as an online resource on the member's only section of the IHSGB website. Full details of the webinars can be found on the Leisure page of the IHSGB website, and this will be regularly updated as more dates are confirmed.

If you have an area of interest on which you would like to host a webinar, or have any appropriate contacts you can persuade to be future hosts, please email leisure@ihsgb.co.uk. Finding willing hosts is the limiting factor to the amount of webinars I can offer, so we are reliant on members helping to get more hosts involved to make this a continued success!

The Leisure page of the IHSGB website contains full details of the 2019-2020 Leisure programme. Inevitably some of these initiatives have been affected by the Covid 19 restrictions, but now could be a good time to sit down with a cuppa or a G&T to familiarise yourself

with what is on offer and unaffected by the restrictions, as well as planning ahead for a time when the restrictions are lifted.

For those of you not on social media, the website and eBulletins are especially important resources to ensure you are not missing out on what's on offer.

I must highlight that I have made a number of tweaks to last year's Leisure programme. These include an updated scoring matrix for the Icelandic Horse Challenge Cup (IHCC) to include our new initiatives, and in direct response to the feedback I have received from members. I have also removed the requirement for qualifying points from the IHCC in order to be able to enter the leisure leagues. So please, take a look at the leisure page on the IHSGB website to find out more about:

- IHSGB Webinars
- IHSGB Photo competition
- TREC league
- Endurance League
- Distance Challenge
- Tölt Online
- Showing
- The FEIF equivalents to the mainstream equestrian sports
- IHSGB Icelandic Horse Challenge Cup
- and the FEIF Riders Camp and Virtual Ride.

I am very grateful to all those who have so far taken time to share their thoughts. It is this feedback which has directly led to the changes I have made so far and has helped to shape the IHSGB Leisure programme for the future. I would like to reiterate that it is my role to represent you, and that I can do this more effectively if you take the time to email me your ideas.

In no particular order my thanks go to Rona Frame, Maria Freestone, Bethany Frear, Linda Rivad, Kim Willoughby, Nadene Butler, Rebekah Spowage, Delia Marriott, Charlie Day, Catherine Holland, Philippa Pringle, Gundula Sharman, Liz Kraft, Natalie

Dingle, Dorothy Sales, Mic Rushen, Kathryn Wogan, Faye Litherland, and Barry Laker, and I apologise to anyone I may have forgotten. These members have helped me enormously. I hope many more of you will follow their lead by emailing leisure@ihsgb.co.uk with your ideas and feedback for the ever evolving Leisure calendar.

Finally, given so many of us consider ourselves to be Leisure riders/owners, Leisure needs to be well represented in Sleipnir so I need your help. I need more articles and photos to be submitted for Sleipnir to reflect the importance that the leisure activities hold for you. For example, it would be great for 'Your Favourite Ride' to become a regular feature; I have already shared mine in a previous issue. You could also share your story of how you came to Icelandics and your first Icelandic Horse. Please, have a think about what you could contribute for the next issue and send it to Catherine Holland at newsletter@ihsgb.co.uk. Thank you.

Thalia Colyer



Photo Competition: 2nd place - Horses in Landscape

Photo Competition Results

The IHSGB March 2020 photo competition, in honour of the Day of the Icelandic Horse on 1st May 2020, remained unaffected by CV19, and certainly captured the imagination of budding photographers and breed enthusiasts alike. The challenge was to capture what the Icelandic Horse means to you, in a photograph. This gave a broad remit for IHSGB members to express what they most value in the Icelandic breed and an opportunity for their photograph(s) to be included in Sleipnir and IHSGB promotional materials. Participants could submit as many entries as they wished and with more than 70 entries, all very different in character, our judge was certainly spoilt for choice! Our thanks go to all those who supported the competition by submitting entries. Congratulations go to: -

Best Front Cover photo	1 st	Peter Heathcote (this edition's front cover)
	2 nd	Jean Sinclair (page 47)
Furry Friends	1 st	Karen Milne (page 9)
	2 nd	Jean Sinclair (page 29)
Best Horse Portrait	1 st	Elaine Pomp (page 27)
	2 nd	Mic Rushen (page 44)
Best Horse in Landscape	1 st	Nadine Butler (page 5)
	2 nd	Nadine Butler (page 25)
Horses together	1 st	Kath Wogan (page 45)
	2 nd	Bethany Frear (page 13)

Editor's favourite Debbie Ede (back page)

New initiatives are constantly being added to the IHSGB website. The Leisure page can be found at <http://ihsgb.co.uk/activities/leisure-riding/>

Arts and crafters, start planning for the next competition coming in the second half of 2020 in which pieces inspired by the Icelandic Horse using any medium can be submitted.



Photo Competiton: 1st Place - Best Horse Portrait

Sports & Training

From the Sports Trustee

Any sport is all about people meeting together, talking to each other and encouraging each other and of course, having a go at competing. Then there is the recalling of better, and worse performances from days gone by, funny stories, disasters, gossip and so on. Happy days!!!

Sadly, the July IHSGB Summer Show and the FEIF MEM is unlikely to take place on the advertised dates. We will be watching the present situation to see if there is a possibility of an Autumn event, and once things have got to the state where horse-riding is deemed to be 'okay' again, we will look at an online competition to keep our riders focussed and put some fun back into things. The IHSGB website will keep you posted.

The Judges' Training Programme is still in full flow and we thank Fi for providing this opportunity to concentrate on future achievements. We still hope to have some new National Judges before the year is out, but the lack of competitions is proving a setback.

In the meantime, **the IHSGB Sports Group is looking to replace two long standing and hardworking team members. This would interest committed IHSGB members who wish to be part of development of sport riding and sport riders in Icelandic Horse competitions as defined by FEIF.** The Sport Group terms of reference are on the IHSGB website. If you are interested please contact me, Mike Adams at sport@ihsgb.co.uk

So, all we can do is keep ourselves and our horses fit, using every available means open to us; for example working from the ground – there are some good exercises available, using lunge ropes and

long reining, particularly in tolt, will keep the horse (and the rider) in peak condition as long as the horse is actually working. If you want more information on how to do this, let us know.

Stay safe and look forward with confidence to better days.

Mike Adams



Photo Competition: 2nd Place Furry Friends

A Message from our World Championships Sponsor

As equestrian tour operators Far and Ride team members have been fortunate to ride across the world, exploring a range of countries on horseback. Riding different breeds is always part of the adventure and often a chance to fall in love from the saddle, but nothing can compare with that first tölt on an Icelandic Horse. The athleticism and power of this mighty breed often catches one off-guard and the sensation of riding an Icelandic Horse cannot be compared to that of riding any other. They seem to possess both a strength and a softness too, the ability to carry a man across all manner of ground but an appealing temperament and a kind eye... although they are not without their own spirit which simply adds to the allure!

When valued customer Peter Heathcote (IHSGB Chairperson) mentioned that Team GB would be representing the nation at the World Championships for Icelandic Horses 2019, Far and Ride were delighted to be able to sponsor the team jackets for the event, firmly believing that all efforts to promote this magnificent breed should be supported. The event served to highlight the qualities of both the horses and their talented riders. Whilst the company is accustomed to sending riders to Iceland to try the horses in their native landscapes, WC2019 was a rare opportunity to endorse the Icelandic Horse on an adventure of a different sort.

Holly Anthony

Far & Ride Horse Riding Holidays



IHSGB Education – Improve your rider leg strength

While we might all be spending more time at home than usual, the following article and exercises from 'Dressage rider training,' is something we can all try.

Like humans, horses tend to have a weaker side and as we train them we should be working on their symmetry and straightness to help even them up and allow them to have good posture when we ride. This is to allow them to build strength correctly which helps protect joints and ligaments. Poor posture and poor muscle development can create undue forces and imbalances which can lead to problems later on.

Now when it comes to us as riders, the same principles apply. When you get into the saddle you want to have good posture and alignment. This helps your joints hinge correctly and allows even pressure and work through both sides of your body. We all tend to have a weak or more dominant side and over time our daily environment and habits can create imbalances in our body. This can result in certain twists and torque that pulls our posture out of correct alignment. All this then, when applied to the saddle and forces of the horse, can create undue forces through our body as well as making it harder to make clear communication with our horse through independent leg aids.

So as a rider it makes sense that as much as you are working on your horses training to ensure they are building strength evenly and symmetrically, you would want to do the same for yourself. Training yourself off the horse isn't about lifting huge heavy weights or running marathons. Instead, it's about ensuring your body is optimized with good posture and alignment. This is about building a foundation of good strength and alignment to keep your joints and ligaments working smoothly and correctly so that over time you can continue to do what you love and not have any preventable injuries hold you back from riding. This requires the use of exercises that help improve your posture and balance so that it is even on both sides of the body and that helps you perform at your best when you're back in the saddle.

Use the 6 leg exercises to help improve your rider leg strength and stability. These exercises work on each side independently, so are great for bringing awareness to certain areas that may be tight and/or weak and helping you bring more balance into your body.

You can read the full article and find the exercises at <https://dressageridertraining.com>

Member's News

Highland Happenings by Liz Kraft

It is always challenging to organise an event in Highland for Icelandics. The challenges are coordinating the following:

- organising a trainer
- hiring a suitable venue
- getting enough people together to make the event viable.
- Finding somewhere for visiting horses to stay.
- Keeping all of the above within a reasonable coast.

I have organised a couple of events over the years but usually lose sleep worrying about the trainer, travel, venue, participants, as well as other things like insurance liability.

Over the last couple of years I have been working with Kirsteen McGhee, resident instructor and manager at Chapelton Equestrian Centre, where I have Magnus on livery. Kirsteen is a very experienced rider and instructor and has spent some time researching the breed and the gaits.

The yard also runs several 'camps' each year, for adults who want to improve their riding skills and generally have some fun. These started as the kids camps, then the grown ups wanted part of of the action and so the adult camps started.

They consist of two group lessons, morning and afternoon, lunch and coffee provided and ample time for chat, questions and stable management.

Magnus had made so much progress with Kirsteen, that the idea formed about asking the yard to run a camp style event for Icelandic horses. This meant no stress for me with organising a trainer, finding venue, stables for visiting horses and any issue around liability, as the event would be the responsibility of the yard.

All I had to do was advertise the event. There was a lot of interest however for some it was just too far to travel and in the end we had just five participants. Four from Highland, and one from Aberdeen. The weather was kind and so we were able to use the bigger outdoor school. There is a smaller indoor that could have been used in the event of poor weather.

The focus of the two days was on tölt, with Kirsteen working with each horse, aiming to engage the hindquarter and encouraging the horses to step under. She did this by working firstly on the seat and positioning of each rider. This alone made a visible difference to the horses.

She also introduced some pole work. First on the ground, then slightly raised. Initially slightly further apart, then closer together. The difference was quite remarkable, with all horses coming out of the poles into lovely tölt, working the hindquarters and stepping under.



We also worked on speed changes, moving from collected to faster tölt. The stars of the event Rachel and Lyskra worked on tölt /trot transitions. They also worked on canter poles which was amazing to watch, as Lyskra found her “uphill” canter.

Those of us that wanted to also popped a wee jump.

Kirsteen had planned to offer a sheath cleaning session, however to my relief there was a question about poulticing (thank you Frances,) and so sheath cleaning was abandoned...phew!!

The final session was a Tölt in Harmony test.

Rosettes were then issued to Rachel and Lyskra for best Icelandic

horse, and to Victoria and Ossian as Best Newcomers. Although Ossian is nineteen, he demonstrated new and hidden talents with trot, improved tölt and beautiful outline in walk.

All in all the event was a success with all riders improving and going away with more exercises to work on.



Kirsteen rode all the horses, becoming more enthusiastic with each one. Her comment after riding Shona's mare was "there is more power there than in my Irish draught horse."

The yard is happy to host similar events in the future. They are also happy to run an Icelandic class alongside their regular dressage league, all we need is a judge!

Kirsteen is keen to learn more about the breed and is potentially interested in undertaking Judge training.

So watch this space for future Highland events. It's all happening here!

Favourite Rides

Loughrigg Fell by Nadene Butler

I always like to think my favourite ride will be one I am yet to enjoy. When Thalia asked me to write an article on my favourite ride this one is pretty high up on the list. With eight miles of steep climbs and descents it takes us around Loughrigg Fell in the Lake District. We are able to enjoy views of three lakes, a tarn and an abundance of fells along the way.

The ride starts from White Moss Common car park on the west side of the A591, between Rydal Water and Grasmere. An early start is required as this car park gets very busy later in the day. We commence the ride by crossing the metal bridge over the river Rothay and climbing up through the woods to the bridleway signposted Rydal caves. High above us is the top of Loughrigg Fell.



Within 200 yards we arrive at the bridleyway which runs along the fell side. We turn left and ride down to the shore of Rydal Water.



From the lake shore the path climbs up to a wooden gate, which we go through onto a tarmaced track and carry. We follow the road straight down the hill to Pelter Bridge where there is an opportunity to purchase a Lakeland ice cream.



After enjoying our treat we turn right through the gate next to the cattle grid and along the road following the course of the river and past the stepping stones. Along this road there are some beautiful houses and gardens to admire. After 1.5 mile we arrive at a bridleyway sign on the right.

We access a narrow gate next to the cattle grid which is followed by a very steep climb up a winding track where we are provided with views down onto the town of Ambleside. At the end of the steep track we have arrived on the top of high open moorland below the back of Loughrigg Fell. From here Lake Windermere can be seen in the distance.



We ride on over the moorland track for approximately half a mile to where the well marked trail becomes stony and descends to Tarn Foot Farm. We dismount and walk down the steepest part of this track. At the bottom we remount and access another bridleyway through a gate on the right next to the cottages at Tarn Foot.

This smooth surfaced bridleway provides good opportunities for tölting. Given we are just above the pretty Loughrigg Tarn with good views over the Langdale Pikes we allow ourselves a moments stop to take in the beautiful view.



The bridleway comes to an end through a gate onto the road which heads over Red Bank and down into Grasmere. We turn right up the hill past the arboretum of High Close, which is a National Trust property. At the top of the hill there is a metal gate with a bridleway sign. We follow this stony trail through the woods and onto the start of Loughrigg Terrace. This part of the ride is narrow and clings to the open fell side. At around 175 metres it has amazing views onto Grasmere and beyond. Though it might prove a challenge for those who are afraid of heights! I have to say the horses have been over the terrace many times and we have never encountered any problems on this path despite the sharp dropoff to the side.



Soldis looking through the bluebells down onto Grasmere and the fells beyond

After an entertaining three quarters of a mile along the narrow stony track negotiating our way past groups of surprised walkers we reach the end of the terrace. Here we take a left hand fork back down through the woods and across the river and return to White Moss Common car park.



We hope you enjoyed joining us on this ride!

In Ancient Hoof Prints by Bethany Frear

With the TV show 'Last of the Summer Wine' filmed not far away, I'm sharing one of Stjarni's and my favourite summer hacks. Our starting point is the convergence of track and road which is where we begin a steep descent. In the morning there are usually few cars. There is nothing better to us than an empty road and the air filled with morning birdsong.



As the hill temporarily peters out, we turn onto a bridleway. It has long been my favourite. It is a short, narrow track meandering between house and fields. The house has been restored but once it was a mysterious, derelict building, behind tall hedging and with broken red roof tiles. It has changed beyond recognition but still proudly displays a plaque reading, 'Birthplace of John Foster, the essayist born 1770.' His essays can still be read online. Another highlight of this track is that it's flat, perfect for tölt. Faster tracks are rare here, and we make the most of them. At the end we pass a house which enjoys the whimsical name 'Stray Leaves.'

Then, turning we descend steeply down the road. A steady march is best along the first stretch as it's narrow and cars need to wait for us or vice versa.



Soon we squeeze behind a pretty white cottage and row of old weavers's cottages. We walk through quietly so as not to disturb anyone; this path is a privilege, not a right. It's wooded, with a river tumbling over rocks, at the bottom of a twelve-foot drop. We take care near the edge! Once across the bridge, Stjarni puts in a burst of energy to climb the cobbles on the other side. It's narrow again and I have to avoid getting caught in tangled brambles; this was

never an issue with big horses as my legs were above the vegetation, but our height comes into its own as we pass without thought under low branches above.

We emerge on a residential street. The houses have a fine view of the towns below, rows of stone terraces built back to back into the hillsides. The terraces continue down into the valley where river and canal compete for space with cafes, pubs and shops. It is not unusual to see a person offering 'free hugs' in town, or high schoolers trying to make their voices heard as advocates for the environment. Once in a while, a long rider can be spotted too, horse tethered to the park railings - we're not far from the Pennine bridleway.

However, we're not passing directly through the towns today, only skirting the edge by crossing the main road leaving the valley. We pass houses not dissimilar to Scandinavian ski chalets. Trees are abundant for a while and there are squirrels and deer. We pass through woodland which runs parallel but below the road, waving to alpacas as we tölt past. Re-joining the road we're taken, a field apart from the river, to the Craggs.



The Craggs are well-loved, after becoming a holiday spot for Victorians. On foot there are spectacular river and woodland walks surrounding the old water mill. The bridleways head away from the mill, out to farm land. Along the riverside we pass benches for snackstops and, in the spring, carpets of vibrant bluebells. We take the low steps at a rhythmic canter; Stjarni much prefers the ups to the downs. He shows his endurance on the next climb up the estate road. It is hard but he just stretches and walks, steady, strong and consistent. The dappled shade of the trees keeps us sheltered from the sun's gaze.

By the top we are at a farm, and navigate gates diverting around cattle grids. It gives us chance to admire the view which opens up over the valley. We enjoy gazing out, searching the skies for birds. There was a European Roller spotted here but unfortunately we didn't see it, and wouldn't have appreciated its rarity if we had. We would have admired its beauty though. *Editor's note: I recommend you look it up, what a beautiful bird!* From here, we proceed through fields. Half way we pass a derelict barn and wonder at its past glory. We often see cyclists; it's a well-used ancient packhorse route.



Crossing a stream, which runs blood-red with minerals, we appear on a lane. Often I dismount and we stroll together here. Every lamppost has 'toads in the road' notices, but I have yet to see one. At the end is a busy road, depending on how we are feeling I remount or we walk side by side; nothing is as scary when walked together.

Soon, we have to choose; take the bridgeway right emerging at the crossing which will set us on our way home or go left along gravel tölt tracks. For now the question is simple, there are cheeky Shetlands who set Stjarni into high-tailed excitement to the right.

One day they won't even warrant a thought, but for now we enjoy the long tölt home.





Photo Competition: 2nd Place Best Horse Portrait

Horses for Courses

A round up of courses, clinics, and training

A members review of the first IHSGB Webinar - by Bethany Frear

With lockdown commencing in the UK this week, there really was no better time for the new Webinar series organised by IHSGB, and hosted by generous volunteers, to begin.

It was a 7:30pm start so having hurried back to the house after checking the horses, trying not to look like I had let myself go a week into home working, and crossing my fingers that the Zoom link I had just set up was going to work, I sat down at my laptop in the quietest place I could find in the house.

The night's webinar was hosted by Mic Rushen, and was to be on the topic of importing Icelandic horses to the UK. For those who haven't used Zoom on the computer, which I hadn't until last night, it was really easy! I am becoming much more au fait with these video chat things since lockdown! It was really good to visually see and chat with people attending from right across the country. The instructions sent out by email before the event for those who had registered were clear and gave details of the different ways you can join if you are not able to use a computer.

Mic was a great host, and the talk was informative and interesting. It was invaluable to learn about both the official procedures for importing horses, the impending changes which will come into play in January 2021, with our exit from the EU, and also insider tips that can only be gained through first-hand experience. I hadn't even thought about the things that horses coming from Iceland would have been unlikely to have seen or experienced before, for example tall trees, being caught from the field, and umbrellas - and of course the very obvious fact that you can't 'send a horse back' if you don't get on! There was plenty of opportunity for questions and for people to share their experiences too, which made it a sociable and relaxed experience.

It was certainly eye-opening for someone like me who wouldn't have even dreamed of importing a horse previously, and who had signed up purely out of interest and to develop my knowledge. If I was looking for another Icelandic, which I am not, I promise, importing would certainly be something I would consider now. I am really looking forward to, and have already signed up for, the next Webinar which will be on the topic of managing sweet itch in Icelandic horses.



Photo Competition: 1st Place Horses Together



Photo Competition 2nd Place Best Front Cover



Editor's Favourite Photo - "Great portrait, and most like Little Viking Horse!"