

## The joy of Connection

An article by Hayley Howells, CR Practitioner from the UK

Chris and I co-owned Spring a beautiful Irish Sport Horse who all of the UK Connected group will know well. Sadly, we lost a few months ago. Chris spent some time away from the yard to regroup and mourn. He wasn't sure if he was going to ride again.

But as the weeks went on he missed us all and tentatively booked a lesson.

Chris has arthritis in his right knee, ankle and elbow which gives him pain and he has restricted movement in all three areas. He said they had become stiffer since he'd stopped riding.

When Chris arrived, he wasn't sure about how he'd feel about being on the yard without Spring and apprehensive about riding a different horse since he knew Spring inside and out. They had a great bond, she would follow him anywhere.

In his first lesson he was tense and it took some time for his body to habituate to the new size and feel of Molly. Molly wasn't moving forwards, she was on the forehand, leaning on the bit and no activation from behind.



But by the second lesson he'd relaxed and started to put his Connected Riding head on. The difference was amazing. Practically the whole lesson Molly was moving freely. She was more engaged and lifted through her shoulder and you can see some length of neck. She looks altogether happier in the next 2 pictures.



Chris is a man of few words so I was happy to get a text.

"Wasn't sure how I was going to feel when I came down but you (and Molly) were great. I really enjoyed it! Thanks Chris!"

I'm pleased to say Chris is back to riding twice a week.