

EUTHANASIA: PART 1

When to say goodbye to an

Old friend

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SAYING GOODBYE TO A MUCH LOVED FAMILY FRIEND CAN BE INCREDIBLY HARD - BUT GETTING THE TIMING OF EUTHANASIA RIGHT IS VITAL. IT IS IMPORTANT TO OBJECTIVELY JUDGE YOUR HORSE'S QUALITY OF LIFE TO HELP YOU TO DECIDE WHEN EUTHANASIA IS THE KINDEST OPTION.

Ask yourself:

- Is the horse still eating and not losing body condition?
- Is he showing normal behaviour in the field?
- Is he rolling as normal?
- Is he still able to get up from rolling or lying down without any real difficulty?

It can help to share your concerns with your vet as part of the decision making process.

The following can help:

- Keep photographs and a diary of his behaviour to track any changes.
- In the case of chronic illness put in place a timeline, in agreement with your vet, for significant improvement.
- If you feel time might be running out, make a euthanasia plan well before it is needed. This avoids having to make difficult decisions when you are emotional.

Deciding on a method of euthanasia

The two methods of equine euthanasia are shooting with a free bullet and intravenous injection. Both techniques are humane and result in rapid death. The injection can only be administered by a vet, shooting can be performed by a vet or licenced kennel man or fallen stock gatherer.

Where should it be done?

Somewhere private with a soft landing and good vehicle access.

What happens during the procedure?

Injection: The horse will usually be sedated and an intravenous catheter placed in his neck. After the injection there is a short

delay of up to 30 seconds and the horse will fall to the ground.

Shooting: The horse will be sedated so that he is unaware of the gun being placed on the front of his head. He will fall instantly and vertically to the ground.

Possible reactions

It is important to be aware that, while the horse will be unconscious almost instantly and so will not experience any distress or pain, some involuntary reactions can occur which may be unexpected, or distressing to the owner.

These can include:

- a sudden and/or uncoordinated collapse to the floor - this can be especially pronounced if a gun is used;
- twitching muscles, limb movements or sudden air intake;
- considerable blood loss from the nose and bullet hole if a firearm is used;
- the eyes usually remain open in death and the heart may beat for several minutes after euthanasia

Continued in November edition.



On the 8th of September I sadly had to say goodbye to my handsome Dartmoor Shilstone Rocks Riverman (Edward). His last outing was to the Ponies UK Summer Championships where like the little star he was he stood 1st Reserve Champion in the Dalkeith Young Riders Championship. I would like to say thank you to Mollie and Ashliegh Townes for showing him for me and to Sarah for turning him out so beautifully.

Angela Howe

Goodbye to one of Norfolk's longstanding equine heroines

By Pip's owner, Carla Magnus

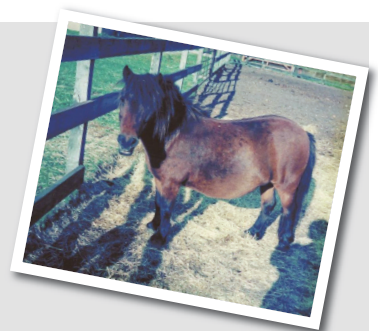
At 36.5", what she lacked in height, Shetland pony Pip made up for in personality and attitude.

Pip came as part of the fixtures and fittings when my parents bought Woodlands Riding Centre in Stratton Strawless in 1987. Used as an equine lawnmower, her previous owners often kept her in the garden at the riding school, where she'd chase the dogs off their food and let herself in to visit their bedridden Granny for treats. This diminutive pony taught hundreds of small children to ride on and off the lead rein, in some cases two generations of the same family. Over the years, she was dressed up as a jousting pony and Rudolph, and left many jockeys swinging off the arena slip rail when limbo-ing under it, to escape!

When she was in her twenties, I decided she should live out her retirement with me

and my other horse. We moved to a livery yard where her escapology reached new heights; she'd spend all day visiting everyone else's horses by limbo-ing under the fences... great for me, as I never needed to poo pick my field! Nine years ago, we moved again to her final home, the perfect yard to live out her last years.

Earlier this year, being around 45-years-old and having lost all her molars, she struggled to keep weight on. I knew in my heart at the end of the winter that this would be her last summer. As the months rolled on, I became paralysed with indecision. Do I wait for her to give in? Do I try and get her through this coming winter in ill health? Or do I give her a great summer, and put her to sleep before she deteriorates further? She had lost more weight, was sleeping more and was becoming a little wobbly. It's the hardest



decision I have ever had to make. I called my vet and made a date for two weeks ahead. I had two weeks to spoil her, and there were two weeks for her many human friends that she has met over her life to come and see her or to share their stories of Pip with me. It's the toughest decision anyone has to make, to end a life. I had to put her welfare before my feelings, and not let her suffer in her last weeks. Pip has now been laid to rest in her favourite field, and has left so many people with some very fond and beautiful memories.

DEATH COVER UNDER YOUR HORSE INSURANCE POLICY

We are all aware that purchasing a horse or pony is very expensive with prices having risen substantially over the past few years as more and more people are getting the equine bug.

Although we don't like to think that our beloved horse may die unexpectedly, we do need to think about the cost of getting the horse removed from your premises, having it cremated and also replacing the horse once you have come to terms with your loss.

This is why I strongly recommend that you take out horse insurance cover. This does not need to be expensive as you can just take out the Death Theft and Straying section of a policy.

When discussing your needs with your Broker they will ask you the purchase price of your horse. In the event of a loss Insurers will pay either the purchase price or the market value at the time of loss whatever is the lesser value.

The market value is generally what a buyer will be willing to pay the seller of a horse of the same age, breed, bloodline, sex and ability as your horse.

Insurers will also include up to £150 for loss of entry fees that have been paid in advance to event organisers.

If the unfortunate event does occur and your horse does die unexpectedly most Insurers will require a post mortem to be carried out to establish the cause of death.

This cost is not met by the insurers. The only time insurers will not want a post mortem is if your horse is being operated on and dies during the operation, or has to be put to sleep during the operation. The Vet will be able to confirm the cause of death. Most insurers will include disposal fees in the policy. This can be anywhere between £175 and £300 depending on the contract you have. This will follow once insurers have accepted the claim. This may cover the total cost or a contribution towards an individual cremation.

If in doubt about the way your policy will respond please contact your Broker and discuss this with them.

By Angela Bailey, First Insurance Solutions

First Insurance Solutions provide tailor-made cover for your horse, riding school and livery yard, all at **affordable premiums.**



Horse & Rider Insurance

We have 25 years' experience in equine insurance and know what you require. We search the market for the most competitive quotes - at no extra cost to you.

The policy provides the following covers:

- **Death, Theft and Straying of your horse** - this is mandatory.

Covers that can then be added to the policy:

- Vets Fees
- Saddlery & Tack
- Loss of use
- Public Liability
- Personal Accident

Riding School Insurance

We can guide you through your insurance requirements and provide you with the best possible quotes in the market, at no extra cost to you.

Covers we provide are extensive as shown below:

- Riding Schools and Livery Yards
- Stud Farms
- Horse Insurance
- Freelance Instruction
- Tack Shops
- Race Yards
- Natural Horsemanship



Why not give us a call for a no obligation quotation or advice. Please contact me, Angela Bailey on 01473 831056 or email abailey@firstins.co.uk



Photo courtesy Cubiq Design

Bill Phizacklea and his wife Margaret opened the Suffolk Pet and Horse Crematorium in 1999 after realising how important the loss of a pet can be.

Bill has ridden all his life and as the owner of many family pets realises how important it is to deal with the loss of an animal sensitively. For this reason Bill is keen to offer his services directly to pet owners making the cremation more personal and tailored to individual needs.

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