



Peggy Pacey with Snap Dragon, leading national show hack and one of her ponies on the British ladies polo team

Respected judge and breeder dies, 95

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Horsewoman, farmer and instinctive judge of many animals, Peggy Pacey, of Park Farm, Deddington has died aged 95.

Miss Pacey's birthday was officially April 28 – although her father's pauses at hosteleries to celebrate her arrival are thought to have possibly delayed registration of her birth for a day, or even two!

Peggy was winning shows in a double bridle at the age of four. At ten she travelled to France to represent England.

She won at all the major shows – Royal Windsor, Royal Highland, Bath and West, Olympia, Horse of the Year Show (HOYS), Richmond and Three Counties in classes for ponies from 11.2hh-14.2hh.

Peggy had a 12.2hh Thoroughbred – the horse being unusually small as a result of being a twin – with whom she won ridden showing and show jumping classes. Her other

best winning ponies included Puck, Snap Dragon, Rhew and Lapiz Lazuli.

Peggy moved on to horses and triumphed in polo as part of the winning British Ladies' team with the three Balding sisters at Hurlingham.

Snap Dragon (pictured) was leading national show hack and one of Miss Pacey's polo team mounts, bought at Banbury market for £18.

During the war she worked as a dispatch rider. The front wheel of her motorbike was once shot off by a German aircraft. She also tested all manner of machinery including amphibious personnel carriers, advising on appropriate care and driving techniques.

She was a Crufts' judge of West Highland Terriers, a breed her mother had dominated with nine champions.

She moved to Deddington to work alongside Jack Bletsoe (another widely respected judge of horses) at Park Farm.

When he died Miss Pacey began farming life with 'one large mortgage and one small cow'. She judged at Britain's

top shows and was internationally-acclaimed as an incredible judge. She even won best pen of cattle at Banbury Market.

She hunted all her riding life and then turned to breeding. She was Leading National Hunt breeder in 1983, with Arkle winner Ryeman and several winners at the same Cheltenham Festival. She also bred Star Traveller, Mr Entertainer and Noble Heir. In the months before she died, she sent her brood mare to leading national hunt sire Kayf Tara.

Jason Maloney, Miss Pacey's friend and 'cow-man' said: "Peggy's knowledge of horses was widely acclaimed, though she was extraordinarily humble. She remained a loyal and devoted friend of every employee who had the privilege of working for her during her 70 years in Deddington. Eternally gracious and ceaselessly generous, Peggy will be missed greatly."

Miss Pacey died on August 19. Her funeral will be held at Deddington Church tomorrow (Friday) at 2pm.