

## THREE

12<sup>th</sup> April

Dear Sarah

As you know, it is coming up to the anniversary of the loss of our dearly loved son James. You are invited to join us at St. Francis Church (Wendover) on 12<sup>th</sup> May to celebrate his short life. Please arrive at 3pm. There will be a short service, followed by afternoon tea.

We hope you can join us.

Lucy and Julian.

13<sup>th</sup> May

Dear Julian and Lucy

I just wanted to thank you for allowing us to be part of your celebration of James's life yesterday.

We are still heartbroken for you all, and it was wonderful to be able to share the day and the beautiful happy memories with you.

The service was wonderful, full of joy yet sadness at the same time. Who would have imagined that a three year old child could have inspired and touched so many lives? The nurses who cared for him were so lovely, and what a beautiful tribute they gave to both James and other patients that they have cared for. I hope that the collection raised a good donation to the hospital, they are so deserving, and their dedication is obvious to see.

The most poignant moment for us was the balloon release. Three beautiful bright blue balloons, one for each year of James's life. I watched and watched as they flew upwards dancing towards the sun. Even through my tears I could see that they were travelling far into the distance, towards the heavens. I couldn't bear to take my eyes away until they had totally disappeared from view.

I'm sure that if James is watching down on you, he will be happy and proud of such a beautiful gesture showing just how much love he is being sent.

It is difficult to know just what to say to comfort you, but please know that you are in our thoughts every day, and in our prayers every night.

With much love

Sarah

16<sup>th</sup> May

Dear Editor

A few days ago, I lost my beautiful baby dapple-grey foal, Rascal.

He was so wanted and so loved by his horse and his human families. We watched the miracle of him being born and his first wobbly footsteps. We watched as he learned to feed from his mother. Then we watched as he took his last painful breath. We had no idea what had caused this tragedy, until the vet rang me this morning.

On the outside, Rascal looked totally healthy and in excellent condition. When they operated on him it was a different story. They found a deflated blue balloon, with string and message still attached. It was caught in Rascal's intestines; he didn't stand a chance. We believe that the balloon had landed in the horse's water trough.

Rascal was three weeks old, and that very morning had taken his first drink of water. Water is meant to be life giving, but not in this case. In this instance the natural curiosity of a young foal killed him.

Rascal's mother is pining, she is refusing to eat and will not be comforted. She is wandering around looking for her baby. As a family we are totally devastated.

I am hoping that you will be good enough to publish this letter, in the hope that it may educate people. I wouldn't want to stop anyone from wanting to honour their family members in a public way - but urge your readers to find a safer way of showing their love. Perhaps planting a tree, or lighting candles. Maybe hold an event or raise money for a charity in their memory.

I just pray that Rascal's life and death will help to raise awareness, and that this letter will make at least one person realise the dangers of releasing balloons.

I enclose a photograph of our beautiful Rascal with his mother. It was taken three minutes after his birth. I would be happy for you to publish the photograph with this letter.

Yours sincerely

Jodie Mercer