

Worldwide curse of the horse 'ripper'

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Hampshire

to happen and she called after me with a whimny. It's going to haunt me for the rest of my days. We don't have children, but Millie was like a child to David and me,' Mrs Gray said.

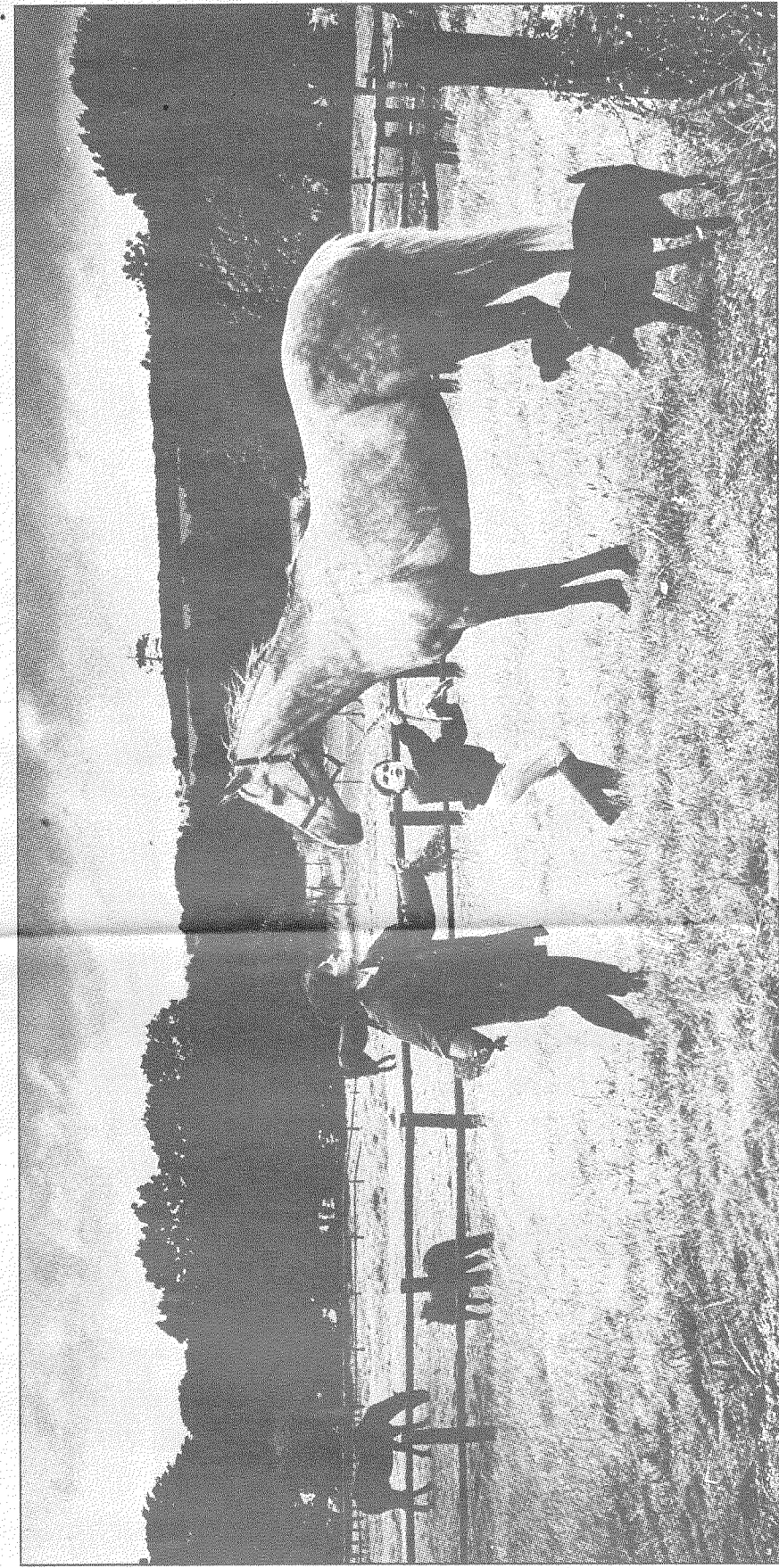
These attacks, which police say cause as much distress among victims as they have ever seen, have been repeated in the past nine months 22 times in Hampshire, twice in Buckinghamshire and five times on the outskirts of Hull.

Stallions, too, have been interfered with. Hampshire vet Andrew Kennedy, who practices in the Meon Valley, which has borne the brunt of attacks, says he has treated horses whose genitals have been shocked with electricity.

'They've had wire round their penises and there was some evidence that electrical fittings were involved,' he said. Other stallions and geldings have been rectally assaulted, flogged and stabbed. One had a rubber band wound so tightly around his testicles that they became blue.

The sadism of these attacks has angered rural communities. The police freely admit they are baffled. So too is a battery of psychiatrists, psychologists, vets and equine experts, each of whom has a different theory as to who is to blame.

The worldwide phenomenon stretches back hundreds of years. A celebrated case at the



Ordeal: Anita Jones's mare Chrissie was slashed and sexually assaulted with a long blunt instrument./Photograph by John Voos, Independent.

claims attacks tend to occur at full moon. When a full moon passes without an attack, he suggests it is because a cult has moved on or has found another victim. 'When the animals are not being attacked you some-

times get reports of people going missing,' he said. Professor David Canter, who heads Surrey University's Psychology Department and is at the forefront of profiling sexual offenders sought by police, dis-

misses the cult theory. 'Belonging to a cult, however bizarre its practices, requires an intellectual framework and an ability to relate socially.'

He said the animal attacker 'will be mentally, psychologi-

cally and educationally disadvantaged'. He would 'almost certainly' be male and young. In his childhood he may have shown signs of cruelty to animals and have had a predilection for arson. He was likely to

be a menial worker with animal skills. Because he was equipped with knives and other instruments and had clearly stalked his prey beforehand, the attacks were likely to recur. 'He obvi-

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Horses after an because A vet's Mrs Jones think it c up in a h stabl w tions we on injur negative.

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