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Donkey derby brings in cash for coach trips

DONKEYS swapped sandy beach walks for cross-country racing at an annual derby day in West Oxfordshire on Monday.

Youngsters put them through their paces at the Bampton Donkey Derby, which drew hundreds of spectators.

This year's event benefited from much sunnier weather after a wash-out in 2015.

Cash raised will go towards a day trip to the coastal town of Swanage, in East Dorset, for senior citizens in the village.

Aidan Harris, from Langford, came first in one race, riding the donkey Jenny.

The seven-year-old said: "It was really fun and very bouncy."

Little brother Mason, five, said: "Donkeys are really nice and soft."

Their mum Rowan Harris joked she should have had more faith in her children.

The 42-year-old added: "I didn't put a bet on them and I'm regretting that now."

"It has been a really lovely day."

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Six donkeys were brought down from Weston-super-Mare, Somerset, where they are more used to sand than the grassy pastures of Bampton.

Organiser and MC Don Rouse, from Bampton, said he had been running the event since it started in 1969.

Mr Rouse, 79, said: "It's a unique event. Other places do things like this but this one has been going on for longer."

"People love it because it's something a little bit different and the atmosphere is brilliant."

He added: "The most important thing is that it raises money for SPAJERS so our senior citizens can go and have some fun as well."

"We have got two coachloads going on Wednesday to Swanage and both will be full, which is fantastic."



Youngsters enjoying the thrill of donkey racing at Bampton on Monday

Weather wish for donkey derby event

THE annual Bampton Donkey Derby will be taking place this August Bank Holiday Monday to raise money for a fun seaside trip for the village's elderly residents.

This year the senior citizens of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Junketing will be going to Swanage in Dorset for some seaside relaxation.

And on August 29 at 2pm in

Sanford's Field, off Church View, the Donkey Derby will be attempting to raise money for the pensioners.

MC for the event for 47 years Don Rouse said: "Bampton is steeped in tradition and the tradition surrounding this event is that we make sure that we raise enough money from it to be able to send two coach loads of our senior citizens to the seaside.

"Let's hope that this year, after two consecutive years of extremely wet weather that the sun will shine on us all." The first event was held in 1969 and has been thrilling spectators and riders ever since. Adults and children used to race donkeys in the derby, but health and safety regulations means people over eight stone or under the age of six cannot compete.

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