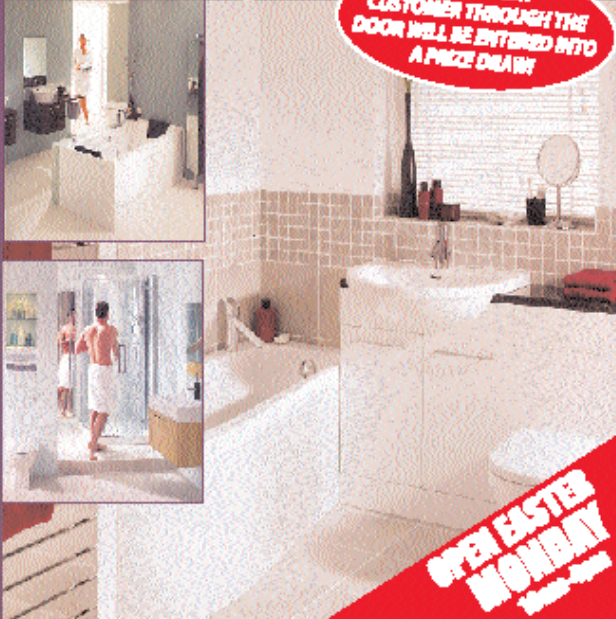


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The singing congregation follows Molly the donkey through Kempsey. Picture by Emma Attwood.11338301

Molly leads villagers to the church



Owner Darren Eden with Molly. 11338303

MOLLY the Romanian rescue donkey led 100 Kempsey parishioners singing through the village to a Palm Sunday service at St Mary's Church.

Brought to Kempsey by her owner Darren Eden, aged 32, of Broomhall, Worcester, she had been given a special grooming – then blotted her copybook by leaving a pile of manure in the aisle.

She had been led by Mr Eden at the head of the singing congregation from Kingshill down Main Road, along Church Road and through the lychgate. At the door of the church, Molly had second thoughts and had to be enticed in with a handful of titbits. She stayed throughout the short service led by the rector, the Rev Peter Holzapfel, who told the congregation Molly and daughter Milly had been saved from a miserable future in Romania.

Mr Eden said Romanian donkeys pulled heavy farm machinery and were treated as though they were tractors. Then, when they reached the age of about 10, they were either abandoned and left to die or slaughtered.

Molly, who is about 12, was pregnant with Milly when she came to England a couple of years ago in very poor condition and infested with lice.

Mr Eden was looking for a couple of donkeys to graze some land he cleared next to his home and heard that a man in Pershore had rescued Molly and Milly. He bought them for £850, which he considered a small price to pay for giving them a good home.

A health and safety training consultant, he was flying to Edinburgh when he read Mr Holzapfel's appeal for a donkey in Berrow's Worcester Journal and Worcester News.

Mr Eden said: "I had been thinking of ways of giving Molly a bit more to do than graze. She is a lovely lady with a great temperament who could live to more than 35. Mr Holzapfel's appeal came at the right time."

Mr Holzapfel said it was marvellous to have a donkey to lead the procession just as Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem on a donkey on the very first Palm Sunday. It was a wonderful way to mark the beginning of Holy Week.



Rosie Dyke and Darren Eden with Molly inside St Mary's Church, Kempsey. 11338304

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