

Viva Blackie!

SURVIVES

by Tim Brown

BLACKIE, the 10-year-old donkey who faced a cruel death at a Spanish fiesta, walked free today—not only very much alive, but almost unscathed.

And he probably owed his life to the furious anger of British animal lovers, voiced in uncompromising words, when they heard that Morenito, Blackie's Spanish name, was scheduled to be the victim of an animal Shrove Tuesday macabre ritual in the mountain town of Villanueva de la Vera, 150 miles west of Madrid.

Blackie would have been beaten and crushed almost to death as he was chased through the narrow medieval town by hordes of revellers, all determined to jump on his bony back and crush him to the ground.

In the event, although the chase did take place, Blackie emerged a little dazed but otherwise unscathed.

He was surrounded by young lads, many of them drunk, and men with bandoleros around their shoulders fired volley after volley of blanks from shotguns only inches away from his ears.

But, at least this time he was not kicked or beaten or pushed to the ground.

Spain's small, but growing, Association for the Defence of Animals Rights, picked on the fiesta to highlight their campaign for legislation which would result in the banning of dozens of traditional Spanish festivals in which cruelty to animals is involved.

The campaign quickly

WHILE the rest of the world has been reflecting on vital global issues, like the latest Gorbachev missiles offer, some sections of the popular tabloid Press have shown true Quixotic flair and concentrated on the fate of a single Spanish donkey.

Blackie the donkey has been bought by the Daily Star for £225 and it is planned to bring him back to Britain where he'll be put in a donkey sanctuary.

spread to Britain where animal lovers took up the fight. They included Vicky Moore, the RSPCA girl from Salford, who went to Spain intent on seeing fair play for Blackie.

"They were on their best behaviour today," she said after watching the gruesome fun.

"Yesterday when I came there was a lot of aggression, but that seemed to disappear.

NOT SO BLACK... the donkey that survived the festival with just pushes and shoves.