



Rain storms add to Stratton Festival fun

Freak showers sent people racing for shelter on an otherwise warm and enjoyable day at the Stratton festival on Saturday. The skies opened for a matter of minutes on more than one occasion, leaving the many stalls crammed with people sheltering from the downpour. People from all over Stratton and further afield came to enjoy the variety of stalls and events, including football pitches, performances, dog shows and raffles. At the entrance to the Grange Leisure centre was Jason Howard, showcasing his 1923 steam roller to the children. It's 91 years old but still going strong, he said. It lives down in Lotmead at the moment. It worked up until 1964. My late father bought it for £374, which was a hell of a lot of money back then. The kids have really enjoyed it. We get them up there and show them how it all worked, and they love the smell of the smoke and all the levers. Jane Craven, of the Woodland Trust, had a stall offering arts and crafts to the hundreds passing by. We have got various activities for the children using natural materials, she said. We are doing little things like leaf crowns and clay faces. We have also just had some new literature produced, because we are working to link Stratton Woods and Stanton Park together. It's a great opportunity, and they are great complimentary green spaces. The more we link areas together the better it is for wildlife because we can create habitat corridors. Mark Turner, 51, from Stratton, came along with his dog Merlin, who received a rosette in the dog show organised by Drove Vets. They have got a stand here today and they are doing some micro chipping for dogs, because apparently it is now illegal not to have your dog micro chipped, said Mark. Alongside that they are doing a bit of an impromptu dog show. The whole day has been great and Stratton has been really well represented. There has been a great local turn out. Alli Benton-Jones, of Liden, was coming for the second year running. It is a great deal wetter than last year, she said. We are waiting around for the children, who are drumming in the main arena. Our children, Levi and Jack, are part of the Grange Junior School, and a group of them are putting on a performance with some bongos and drums. We are not local but this is a great community thing. It brings a lot of the community together. We live in Liden but there really is something for everybody here. Laura Kerry, 34, was at the festival for the first time with three-year-old daughter Lola. I grew up in Stratton but this is my first time coming here, she said. It has been good, the weather has been quite exciting, having such extremes from rain to sun. They have got a bit of everything for the kids, and everyone seems really friendly. I might bring Lola here every year. There is not a great deal to do in Swindon on the nice days, but I will definitely do this more often.

Evening Advertiser 21st July 2014