



East Grinstead & District Lions Club

**(International Association of Lions Clubs)
District 105 SE England.**



24 April 2007

HISTORY OF THE LIONS' MAY FAIR

[Contact](#) PRO

On Bank Holiday Monday - 7th May East Grinstead Lions will be hosting their 28th annual May Fair. This event keeps alive an entitlement to hold a street fair originally granted to Peter of Savoy in 1247 during the reign of King Henry III, unfortunately this ancient custom fell into disuse after 1910. An attempt to revive this attraction in the late 1960's saw the introduction of the August Bank Holiday Carnival, which very successfully ran for a number of years.

In 1979, East Grinstead Lions Club decided to revive the May Fair in the High Street, with an Olde Worlde theme- all the stall holders dressed in appropriate costumes even the three policemen on duty that day were dressed in Victorian uniforms from their museum at Lewes.

The May Fair proved a great success; some 13,000 people attended throughout the day, street wrestlers vied for attention with Morris and Maypole dancers. £2,500 was raised which was presented by Lion President Don James to Mr Peter Williams, Warden of Sackville College for their roof repair fund. Encouraged by this success it was agreed to build on and repeat the event in subsequent years and for the medieval theme was retained.

In 1995 the May Fair coincided with V.E.Day celebrations and this was reflected throughout the day. Most of the proceeds that year were donated to the Heatherly Cheshire Home in Copthorne. The following year the theme was the 60's, with many of the Lions doing their best to look like hippies!!

Over the years The May Fair has grown and developed with many new organizations and charities taking part. In recent years the introduction of Health and Safety regulations have curtailed some of the more adventurous entertainments, but we have endeavored to provide new and varied attractions each year.

The May Fair remains the Lions primary fund raising event, and thanks to the support of the people of East Grinstead and surrounding areas we have raised in excess of £150,000 for appeals within our community so please come and support us again on the 7th May in the High Street. The festivities begin at 10 am. In the 28 years we have been running the May Fair, it has only been wet on four occasions, so we look forward to another fine, enjoyable and profitable event to enable us to help others who are not so fortunate.

**Incorporating East Grinstead & District Lions Club Charitable Trust
Registered Charity No. 295908**