



East Grinstead & District Lions Club
(International Association of Lions Clubs)
District 105 SE England

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News Release

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Crowds flock to enjoy town May Fair fun

THE SUN shone on bank holiday Monday as crowds flocked to East Grinstead's annual May Fair. Last year visitors stayed away and the event closed early after a day of downpours.

But this year's fair, organised by East Grinstead Lions Club, was a roaring success.

The event was declared open by town mayor Cllr. Christine Mainstone, who thanked the Lions for their tireless work organising the day.

She urged visitors to spend money on the charity stalls and have a "splendid day".

Stalls in the High Street included local organisations and businesses - the Town Twinning association, East Grinstead Society, the Council for Voluntary Services, East Grinstead Dial A Ride (EG-dart), Chequer Mead Friends, Guide and Scout Groups.

Ready to Run models had a busy day on its stall and although owner Adrian Harrison was not selling, he had plenty of interest in his West Street shop.

Anne Stevens, featured in the East Grinstead Courier last month, manned a stall highlighting her challenge to climb Mount Kilimanjaro and raise money for Cancer Research.

Among the various stalls and sideshows stood two army vehicles restored by enthusiast Nick Hobbs. The 30-year-old from Turners Hill Road, a member of the Invicta Military Vehicle Preservation Society (IMPS), wanted to raise awareness of V-E Day. He allowed people to sit in the vehicles for a small donation to the town's Royal British Legion branch funds.

There was also fun for the children with fairground rides and games.

At midday Rob Holwell, president of the East Grinstead Lions, town mayor Cllr. Christine Mainstone and East Grinstead Courier editor Faith Lee judged the competition to find this year's May Queen, while last year's winner Nicole d'Urban Jackson looked on. After much deliberation seven year old Saria Alderson, a pupil of Estcots Primary School, East Grinstead, was crowned May Queen by Cllr. Christine Mainstone. The runners up were five year old Amber-Rose Phillips, of Crawley and Milli McQuade, four, a pupil at Greenfields School, who lives in Cantelupe Road, East Grinstead.

The East Grinstead Courier sponsored May queen will appear at a number of events throughout the year including the town's Christmas shopping day and a lunch for senior citizens in January next year.

Throughout Monday live music was provided by groups including youth group the Menagerie and East Grinstead Concert Band.

Town councillors David and Beverly Heasman braved the sweltering heat dressed as Henry the eighth and one of his six wives, Katharine Parr. The couple, who spent hours wandering the High Street in costume, were raising awareness of the town's Access Group.

Mrs Heasman said: "It is nice to dress up for the town, for the people of East Grinstead. It makes it a bit more fun, it has been a brilliant day, it is so nice to see so many people here."

Mrs Heasman added: "We were going to walk around in a camel outfit, but David got the hump because he couldn't see where he was going."

Other entertainment on the day included John Ricardo, a Covent Garden street performer, who wowed the crowds with his juggling and tricks.

As the event drew to a close, Lion Jim Miller said: "We started out with it pouring with rain which is where we left off last year."

Mr Miller said it had appeared there would be a shortage of stalls but on the day he said it was "fully subscribed".

"We should have a good record by the end of the day," he added.

The Lions are hoping to use £2,000 of the money raised on the day to add to their savings for a new caravan for use by families who otherwise would not be able to afford a holiday.

Mr Miller said: "The caravan is eight years old and we are only allowed to keep it for 10 years."

"Caravans cost a lot of money and we have been saving up."

Mr Holwell added: "It was excellent. We had a good turn out - it was busy all day."

"It was very enjoyable with the crowds still there right to the end. Fortunately we had the weather for it."

"Lots of people watched the entertainment and were obviously pleased with what was on offer. It was a thoroughly good day all round."

With acknowledgements to the 'The East Grinstead Courier'.