

## Le Marche 2009 – Heathfield's famous Anglo/French market

August Bank Holiday Monday was the date for the 13<sup>th</sup> consecutive Le Marche and what a day it was!! The number 13 turned out to be very lucky for Heathfield after all - the weather was perfect – overcast but warm in the morning and brilliant sunshine in the afternoon. There were bigger crowds, a greater variety of stalls, of which approximately 50% were French, and thrilling displays of skating and BMX riding at the skatepark. Thousands of visitors thronged through traffic free streets, browsed around over 100 stalls, listened to a huge range of music, watched belly dancers and magicians and sampled the many different foods on offer. Many also found time to shop in the High Street where more businesses than ever before had opened for the day. The park and ride system worked like clockwork, ferrying visitors to the High Street from the Market car park at the top of town.

The annual window dressing competition was judged by Valerie Chidson, founder of Le Marche, and Ronnie Thorpe, a committee member – the winners of the prizes, donated by Martlet Wines of Waldron, were 1<sup>st</sup> Cancer Research UK, 2<sup>nd</sup> Halo and 3<sup>rd</sup> Heathfield Delicatessen.

At the other end of the High Street the firemen of Heathfield staged exciting demonstrations of their fire fighting equipment and treated the children to rides on a vintage fire engine, complete with bell.

In short, there was something for everyone at Le Marche and it was all free; the running costs coming from the local traders who took adverts in the Le Marche 2009 booklet and the stall holder's fees. A huge thank you must go to them all because without their support it would not happen.

The main objective of Le Marche is to promote the town of Heathfield and encourage visitors to return to the town time and time again. Although Le Marche was never intended to be a moneymaking venture we have, over the years, made donations to local groups and organisations totalling in excess of £15,000. Our policy is to only retain sufficient funds to enable us to start planning next year's event.

Sadly, we are losing Phil Marr and Anne Faulkner from the organising committee. Phil has, for the past three years, carefully planned and organised all of the entertainment each year adding a new very professional approach to that part of Le Marche. Anne has been a regular contributor to the committee for some years now and has fulfilled a number of tasks very well – both of them will be missed.

As you can imagine, it takes a lot of hard work by a team of volunteers to organise such an event and we are always looking for new members to join the group to help before and on the day. If you are interested to hear more then please contact Mike Woodhouse on 0770 353 0111 or email [michael.woodhouse6@btopenworld.com](mailto:michael.woodhouse6@btopenworld.com)

Finally and most importantly, thank you to all you visitors for coming into Heathfield for Le Marche 2009 and we hoped you enjoyed the day and that you plan to revisit our town - you will be more than welcome.