

# Funfest draws the Crowds

Over 650 people attended the 2008 Lions Funfest held in Fleet. This is a Lions team effort run by the Lions of 105-D, Farnborough, Fleet, Hart, Hook and Odiham, Loddon Valley and Yateley. (The Lions of Hendon in District 105-A also help.)

This annual event, now in its 17<sup>th</sup> year, is free of charge and specifically for disabled people of all ages.

There were almost 30 different activities providing fun and games for all ages. Other popular attractions were the 'Cuddle-Me-Do' farm and attendance by the Hampshire Fire Brigade with their fire engine. A working model traction engine gave rides and a vintage fire engine fascinated all the young boys (and a lot of the girls). Music was provided by an Elvis impersonator and an Indian drummer band, Mistry Music, both of whom had the crowd up and dancing.

The Chairman of Hart Council joined in the fun, and Councillor Chris Axam, whose wife Sue is a Hart Lion, spent all day blowing up balloons for the balloon race with PID Philip Daubeney. As Chris says "This event is the essence of what Lions is all about, volunteers having fun, helping those in the community less fortunate than themselves".

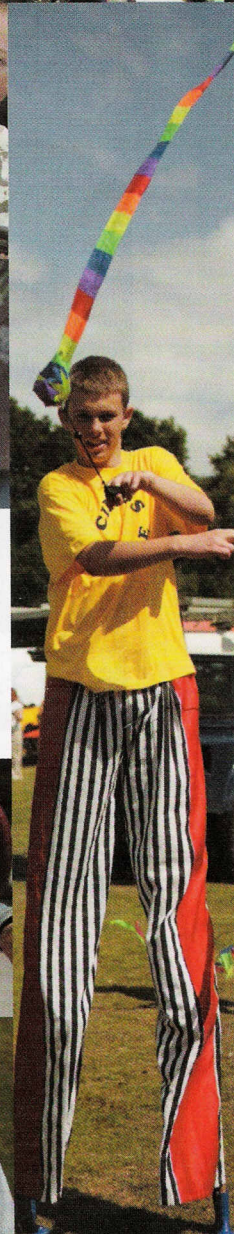
Many of the families attending say that is one of the best days they have every year, a fact that is borne out by the queues waiting for the start. Glenda Duffy, whose son Christopher is severely autistic, says that each year she sees him progress to activities he hasn't conquered before. This year it was the climbing wall. As she said "With an autistic child you don't know if they are going to take to something or not, and you can spend a lot of time and money trying things that they will not take to. Here we can try everything free and then we know what he may like to try the rest of the year."

Other comments from parents and carers included "We wanted to say a huge thank you to all the Lions. We have three children Samuel (Sam) 12, Thomas (who has Downs and Autism) 8, and Millie 5. Thomas especially loved the animal section. Animals just seem to help him get over some of his communication problems for a short while and so it just started the day off right that they were there at the first part of the field."

"Just thought I would quickly email you to thank you and all the Lions for putting on such a lovely range of activities. It was the first time we had been to this event and my three children thoroughly enjoyed themselves. For my little boy with autism it was great for him (and me) to be somewhere where 'anything goes' — people understood there could be difficulties. And for the other two it was great for them to be able to relax and do what they wanted without having to worry about their little brother, good for them to get some 'perks' from having a brother with a few differences!"

Brian Proctor of Fleet Lions, Chairman of the Funfest Committee, said "The day has been a great success, all the Lions, their partners and friends enjoyed the day and are looking forward to Funfest 2009".

**Lion Rita Daubeney**



**"... for a little boy with autism it is great to be somewhere where 'anything goes'"**

