

## **Biddenden Challenge & Biddenden Spectacular**

The weather was great, sunny and warm , really quite hot – not a cloud in the sky, there would have been trouble for Alex if any rain had shown up ! It was actually quite a safe bet as there had been four years without rain on 27<sup>th</sup> September, now it is 5.

### **The Challenge.**

As some of you will have seen in the various papers , we had 88 people do the 'drop', a couple of them did it twice. A very good achievement by all concerned – droppers, supporters ( basking in the sun ) and all of the helpers. We must not forget the KM team and the Avalon Adventure team and especially the Air Cadets who 'worked their socks off' on Tower duty, playing as the Pipe and Drum Band, and managing to find time for 4 of them to do the 'drop' as part of their training !!. Also David Leckie for playing the pipes at the church during the morning.

The Result.. We raised a total £6,600 for the church 70%, and The Walking Bus Charity 30%. The church share is approx £4,600 + Gift Aid bringing it to about £5,900. The Church 'Restaurant' team made a profit of £363.66 . This is a fantastic effort by all concerned.

We must thank all of our sponsors: Daniels Chilled Foods, Calcutt Maclean Standen and the Pierson Stewart Partnership, and a couple of private donors for their tremendous support which allowed us to run the event. Also of course the Kent Messenger Team of "The Walking Bus " charity for their support, advice and advertising which made things possible.

Also we must thank publically our VIP's, The Chairman of Kent County Council Peter Lake, The High Sheriff of Kent Richard Oldfield, The Deputy Lord Lieutenant Colonel Peter Bishop, Our local County Councillor Michael Hill , all of whom did the 'drop' . Very sporting and very supportive of our causes.

### **The Spectacular.**

The event was enjoyed by all those who came, though sadly not as many as we had hoped and planned for. Our participants ensured that there were lots of events and things going on all of the time. Two Bands – the Air Cadet Pipe and Drum band, and The "Samba Pelo Mar" Band from Whitstable each gave two half hour sessions in the main ring and around that area. There was the Dog show ably judged by Valerie Freeman, a Pony Club Gymkhana

Vintage, Veteran Vehicles and Motorcycles, a section of Military vehicles of various types, a good showing of old Tractors and a Static engines display. John Weedon had his family at work making delicious fresh apple juice with an old tractor driven machine (apples kindly donated by Julian Barnes of Biddenden Vineyards.) Most of the old vehicles were able to make a trip around the ring , to everyone's delight. The Fire and Rescue Service had two appliances , from Headcorn and Tenterden on

site and in conjunction with the Red Cross did a very good demonstration of what can happen when rescuing a trapped person from a car crash. The Army Recruiting Team had their Inflatable Obstacle course and Firing range on site, both of which were very popular with the young. There was a Fun Fair, bouncy castles, a Bucking bronco, many stalls, and a draw (for which we must thank the donors of prizes: Skybus Ballooning, Chart Hills Golf club, The Raja Restaurant, and Wattz International ). There was also Pony & trap or train rides for the young, The Kent Air Ambulance was also a great attraction, many people being able to view the helicopter and talk with the crew. The coconut shy and crockery breaking stalls were good attractions too. "Crazy" races kept parents and young on the move too, thanks to the school for arranging them.

To round off the afternoon's entertainment we were given a dramatic display of aerobatics by an old Tiger Moth aircraft and another smaller aircraft from Headcorn Airfield, and then a Parachute drop-in by 5 skydivers from Headcorn demonstrating precision landing techniques. We thank all at the Headcorn Airfield, especially Jamie Freeman for his help and arranging it all for us.

Finally we lit, or should I say that the Fire Service lit the Beacon eventually; when asked if they would light the Beacon, they said "We are not arsonists – we are usually requested to put out fires" ... still they managed to light it. So ended a very full and hopefully happy day for most if not all of the village, the participants and all of the helpers.

During the afternoon I was asked on many occasions "Are we going to have another Spectacular next year? if so please will someone let them know so that they can put the date in their Club's diary and get **all** of their members to come – they had enjoyed the day so much." I just hope that the members of the village felt the same way.

So who is able and willing to step up to the mark and run/organise a Spectacular in 2009? I shall be very pleased to pass on all of my notes.

The result: we made a profit, not too much, and a distribution will be made to Village Clubs and Organisations and some Charities, exactly as has been our intent from the outset, in November.

Finally I must thank all of the Committee, Helpers, and volunteers on the day, without all of whom the events could have been achieved. Thank you **all**.

*Tony Churton, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2008*