

## SUMMER FAIR 2010

*Alan Hay*

Once again, the season of our annual Summer Fair is upon us. As of this week, posters have already started appearing on the trees and fences of the parish and we urge all to put the date in your diary now, and bring this fun family day out to the attention of your friends and neighbours.

As I write, on the morning of what we are promised will be the hottest day of the year so far, the forecast indicates the weather on the day may be kind to us, and might help us surpass even the magnificent result of last year, when around 700 people made their way to the glebe field in Church Path to join in what has become truly a highlight of the Merton Park social calendar.

This is an important day for our church, and one to which all can make a critical contribution. The several thousand pounds it raises is key to enabling us achieve our financial commitments, which do not reduce with the passing years, particularly in light of the challenges that go with maintaining our lovely, 900 year old church and the charitable contributions by which we do our bit for the wider community and for those less fortunate than we are in Merton Park.

Furthermore, this is a cornerstone of our outreach work in our own parish, a valuable opportunity not only to showcase what we do as a church, but to bring others in the parish into the community of St Mary's.

There will be plenty to entertain visitors of all ages and tastes. We will be joined, once again, by the Merton Youth Brass Ensemble whose contribution to the entertainment in previous years has been such a highlight, and for whose continuing support we are very grateful. The young people of the Karen Forbes School of Dance will be performing in the church hall at 2.15 pm.

There will be three Punch and Judy shows, that most English of entertainments, to amuse children of all ages. And Bruce Robertson and his team will be manning their magnificent working model steam railway, powered by real, gas fired steam boilers, a working model of the old Linton and Barnstaple railway.

Food and drink will be in plentiful supply, with a licensed bar and separate Pimms bar run by Richard Price. Graham Mason, the undisputed barbecue king of south London, already has his well oiled machine in motion to deliver his customary excellent fare. Janet Gout and her team will be providing lunches.

Stalls include Books, Plants, Toys, China & glass, Bath & beauty, Good as new, Jewellery, Bric a Brac and many more. Parish Players have once again challenged the men of the choir to a tug of war, a contest in which we are trying (with limited success, so far) to encourage the bell ringers to offer up a challenge. And on the subject of Parish Players, they will again be on site providing a range of activities, games and challenges for children.

This is an event that shows St Mary's at its absolute best. Putting the fair together involves more than 60 members of the congregation taking an active role, whether as organisers, stall holders, helpers, those who come to help set up and many more performing behind the scenes roles that are necessary to the fair's success.

And whilst we're on the subject, spare a thought for the three chaps who spend the whole day locked away counting the takings, so we can have an early indication of the financial result. But this means nothing without the visitors who come along and make this such a wonderful day out, so we urge all to make a special effort to come and enjoy this very special day.