

EVENT: neighbours lunch together Pleased to street you

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PEOPLE right across Reading tucked in together to celebrate the Big Lunch at the weekend.

Families living in eight streets in the borough organised road closures on Saturday or Sunday to make sure their street parties went off safely.

The eight official parties were in Newport Road, Central Reading; Carnarvon Road, Newtown; Matlock Road, Morcambe Avenue and Oakley Road in Caversham; Baker Street, West Reading, and Talfourd Avenue and St Peter's Road in East Reading.

The Big Lunch is an idea from the Eden Project, aiming to get as many people as possible across the whole UK to have lunch with their neighbours annually on the first Sunday in June, in a simple act of community, friendship and fun.

Since it began in 2009, thousands of Big Lunches have taken place in communities across the country.

Last year, 3.65 million people took to their streets, gardens and community spaces

The Newport Road party was organised by the Bell Tower Community Association and 150 people took part with a free barbecue provided by local pub, The Moderation.

Vice-chairman Jonathan Dart said: "So many local residents and businesses coming together to make such a successful event certainly fulfils our mission statement of 'bringing local people together'.

"With the help of high visibility jackets provided by Drews the Ironmongers, we even solved the problem of locating a Bell Tower volunteer when one was needed.

"It is very gratifying to see other businesses joining street party



BAKER STREET



GREAT BRITISH FUN: An egg and spoon race

CHEERS: Mary and David Neale and Roy Johansson Pictures: JON MUKOL (Ref BK201410997)

stalwart Andy Becalik and his team at The Moderation in supporting the event.

"Partygoers not only enjoyed the fruits of others' generosity - they also donated £113 to a participant in the Pretty Muddy race for cancer research who went to the party."

Talfourd Avenue Big Lunch organiser Rachel Helsby said: "This year was the biggest yet - we invited our neighbours we back on to, so either Melrose Avenue or Green Road.

"We also asked people to bring a tin to donate to our local food bank Readifood.

"We had a tug of war and silly games as well as a homemade coconut shy and live musicians playing in the evening and even a bit of barn dancing.

"Thanks to my neighbours Andrew and Jan Clarke, we've been organising a big lunch in Talfourd



NEWPORT ROAD



WHEEL GENIUS: Above, Bike expert Steve Bale. Left, Mizuki Brown, four, enjoying the children's activities

Avenue since 2009. Very sadly, Andrew passed away a couple of years ago just before the Big Lunch but Jan was keen we went ahead and I'm sure that Andrew would be proud of the tradition he started."

Reading Borough Council's lead

member for strategic environment, planning and transport Councillor Tony Page said: "I am very pleased to see residents from streets across Reading come together to celebrate this year's Big Lunch. I hope that everyone has a wonderful time."