



Lions' president Keith Harris presents a gift to the day's hosts Robert and Tanya Lewis

Lions stage an Indian spectacular

ALMOST a year ago to the day, Farnham Lions decided to mark the 20th anniversary of its international twinning with the German Lions Club in Frankenberg with a special international project. The chosen target was to raise a minimum of £20,000 to build a new medical centre at the Chicks' Little Flower Orphanage in Kerala. And so the journey began.

With the enthusiastic support of Robert and Tanya Lewis, they were granted the use of their private motor museum and paddocks in Churt to stage the event. The event was then spearheaded by Keith Harris, president of Farnham Lions with a dedicated small team. What then could they do? Clearly the

influence of the Chicks' location demanded an Indian flavour to the event and gradually the theme took on a Bollywood character. The decision was taken to go big and the search for a marquee capable of seating 400 was decided upon, but at the time it was not known that a six-pole circus tent was the right answer. A supplier was found in Cornwall and a magnificent arrangement of tenting decided upon. Local outside event caterers Curries from Home was invited to provide the food and a number of last-minute undertakings were undertaken to determine the correct menu.

Bollywood dancers were next on the list for the entertainment along with accompanying drummers and sitarist. Lions were lucky to

retain the services of a Bollywood dance troupe that had been choreographed by the recent Second Best Marigold Hotel film choreographer who also performed. Later on a small troupe of Nepalese singers were added to the list of entertainers.

With the location, accommodation, food and entertainment in place Farnham Lions successfully negotiated sponsorship from Farnham Estates, the *Farnham Herald* and Riverprint. It only left the items like a charity auction, silent auction and grand draw to add flavour to the event and help raise additional funds.

Last Saturday 400 invited guests, many of them favouring traditional Indian

costume gathered in glorious weather for pre-lunch cocktails and Indian canapés as well as enjoying the magnificent displays of restored cars before moving inside for an excellent curry lunch.

Rapturous applause greeted the post-lunch entertainment with the 400 guests immersing themselves in the sub-continental atmosphere. Reacting to the request that a special appeal should be sought to help the Nepalese disaster fund, more than £1,200 was instantly raised.

The charity auction, conducted by Sholto Gilberstone from Bonhams, with some wonderful items raised almost £10,000, the silent auction raised £2,000 and the grand draw £4,500. The target had been reached.

not only for their bond of friendship, but showing that the two clubs can do meaningful work together to further the Lionistic cause.

Keith Harris' final words were again to thank the 400 guests for their generosity and to announce that the

estimated total raised on the day will result in a donation of almost £25,000 to Chicks, in addition to the £10,000 plus already presented to Chicks by Frankenberg Lions. The medical centre is now a reality.

Geoff Jeal