



Gallic flair: Mark Walton, from Wokingham, above, took part in the Wokingham Bikeathon in the guise of a French baker. Below, Henry Brooks, from Henley, on a penny farthing. **PHOTOS: ABI TURLEY 131106**



A record turnout at bikeathon

A RECORD-BREAKING number of cyclists showed off their pedal power as they took to the streets of Wokingham.

More than 600 keen bikers of all ages massed at Shute End before the start of the charity ride on Sunday.

The participants ranged from serious cyclists to those out for a scenic ride, with many coming dressed up in wacky costumes.

Mark Walton, president of Wokingham Chamber of Commerce, dressed as a French baker.

He said: "The chamber is an industrial unit and supports retail and I thought what better way to support the markets, and especially the Sunday markets, than to come dressed like this.

"It's all about the locality, the market and the community. I've got a pencil and I can even take orders as I go around so it'll either take me two hours or two days to get around. I've lost two strawberries to the potholes of Berkshire already!"

Others were taking part to raise money for charity, including Stuart Moore from the charity Limbicare, whose right leg was amputated two years ago because of medical condition.

He said: "We're trying to raise awareness and money for the charity which has only been about three years so we're just trying to get out there and raise awareness.

"This is the first time I've got

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on this bike let alone been here so it's going to be an adventure - I'm a bit worried about the hills around here."

Every rider received a goodie bag including a medal when they returned to the town centre, and the entry fees will be split among a number of local charities.

Some riders also gathered sponsorship to support other charities close to their heart.

Olivia Deaville, from Woosehill, was raising money with her family for the Ollie Young Foundation, in memory of the Wokingham youngster who died aged five of a brain tumour. She said: "All the children attend Hawthorns Primary school and we're here to raise money for the charity.

"My daughter was in Olly's class and my son is in his brother's class so there's a real link for us. We're hoping that we can raise the profile of the charity by doing this and if we can raise a lot of money for them then that's a bonus."

Richard Knight, part of the organising committee, said the event - which started in 2009 - is going from strength to strength.

He said: "It was really successful - the most successful we've had. We had lots of people taking part for the first time and there's been lots of positive feedback on Facebook. You're always hoping for that."