

Dame Judi Dench tucks in for charity at Priory Farm

Dame Judi Dench tucked into a traditional British ice cream sundae during a visit to Priory Farm at South Nutfield near Redhill, Surrey. Sitting in the September sunshine against a backdrop of sunflowers, the Oscar-winner declared the Knickerbocker Glory “magical”. The dessert was dreamed up by Sarah Long, manager of the farm’s coffee shop, using local ingredients from Priory Farm Shop and is being sold to support Surrey and Sussex-based St Catherine’s Hospice, with 50p from every sale being donated to the charity.

During Dame Judi’s visit to the farm, which took place on Friday September 2, she presented St Catherine’s with a cheque for £2073.22. The money has been raised by the farm and its customers through a range of fundraising ventures, including collecting coins thrown into a wishing well on The Discovery Walk, a countryside trail that was officially opened by the actress in June 2008.

Michael Beasley, Corporate Fundraiser, who received the cheque on behalf of St Catherine’s, said: “Two thousand pounds will make a big difference to the hospice and we are extremely grateful for Priory Farm’s long term support, and of course to Dame Judi. Around 70 per cent of the funds needed to provide our care come through voluntary sources such as this.”

Said Dame Judi, “My involvement with the charity goes back a long way, when the hard work and vision of many local people enabled it to succeed. Priory Farm is such a great place and I am delighted that customers and staff continue to support the hospice.”

The distinguished actress is a long-standing customer of the farm. “I love Priory Farm and have been shopping here for years, in fact the farm shop has helped me out with many a dinner party when I have pretended I have made the food myself,” she declared, confessing a particular passion for the chicken liver paté which she regularly buys from the delicatessen.

Melanie Bushe, whose parents John and the late Wendy Shinner bought Priory Farm in 1957, hosted the visit. She pledged the farm’s continued support of the hospice and promised they would come up with even more creative fundraising methods in the future. The Knickerbocker Glory is on sale until the end of September 2011.