



Picture: MATTHEW UGHER

**POPULATION BOOM:** A problem with moles, an ace skateboarder and a lonely scarecrow's hunt for Mr Right were all captured in the displays.

# Scary? No, but clearly lots to crow about . . .

By NICK WALKER

The cost list is impressive to say the least.

From kids' TV stars Bob the Builder and Bill and Ben to Norfolk's snarling hero Ilkerton Nelson, a colourful array of characters has gathered in the gardens of a small village in West Norfolk.

But those hoping to grab an autograph may be disappointed. The "stars" of this show are the dozens of scarecrows lovingly constructed and put on display by the residents of Wollerton, near King's Lynn, as part of their third fundraising Scarecrow Weekend.

Almost every village has played a part in the biennial event, which features an imaginative collection of scarecrows of all shapes and sizes, from a trick-pulling skateboarder to a woman bungee jumping.

Others include men fixing cars, visitors on the Wollerton train station, a couple marrying at Ormeau Green, penguins, fairies, a policeman, a bishop and even Nelson complete with his flagship Victory.

Months of effort went into preparing the event which, it is hoped, will raise around £10,000 for good causes.

And the enthusiastic villagers were even given the opportunity to take part in a special "design school" at Marsh Fairs, where they were taught the art of making the perfect scarecrow.

Organiser Peter Jones said: "The second time we held the event we could not believe how many people took part - it went crazy, and I would say the same numbers are taking part this year."

"I think, generally, the whole village takes part. There are 220 houses in the village and almost all have at least one scarecrow in their garden. Last time, we raised £10,000 from it and hope to raise around the same this time."

He added: "It does take a lot of planning. The committee has been meeting for a number of months organising it."

It is hoped that over the weekend,



**SUMMER HOLIDAY:** A family of scarecrows wait patiently for the train to take them to the seaside while another scarecrow showed a more alternative lifestyle (right).

more than 5000 people will visit the village, on the Queen's Scarecrows Estate, with the proceeds going a number of charities including the parish church and social club.

Among the visitors on Saturday was five-year-old Kieran Douglas, of nearby Sedgeford, and his nan, Gussie Skinner and dad, Paul Douglas. The youngster said: "They are all really good."

His nan added: "We came the last

time it was on, and we have been very impressed."

Also among the hundreds of visitors was Graham McDermid, from London, and his two sons, Adam and Elliot.

Mr McDermid said: "You can tell everyone has put a lot of effort into it. It's nice to see all the scarecrows and to have a walk around the countryside."

The village is closed to traffic for the weekend, to enable visitors to

walk round the mile-long route. Cakes from the Sandringham detachment of the Norfolk Army Cadet Force, provided traffic and car park management.

A free bus service has been provided by Norfolk Green for visitors unable to walk the route.

The scarecrows remain on display today. As well as the festival, the village is staging a vintage country show, a church fete, pony rides and welly throwing.

