



Press Release

19th September 2008

PENGE HOSTS PARALYMPIC HANDOVER & MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

The opening of the new Wilkinson store, the value home and garden retailer, in Penge was the talk of the town on Wednesday 17th September 2008, as residents turned up in their masses to the star-studded Paralympic handover and multicultural festival.

The celebration kicked off in style as Paralympic hero, Michelle Crunkhorn, conducted a special Wilkinson flag hand-over in honour of the official flag hand over from Beijing to London, which took place on the same day. Michelle is one of Wilkinson's long term beneficiaries in supporting her to help reach her potential and hopefully competing in the 2012 Paralympic Games.

Crowds of people started to gather outside the new Blenheim Centre store well before the 9am opening with cameras at the ready to witness the official ribbon cutting ceremony, performed by Michelle Crunkhorn. Michelle was joined by Wilkinson CEO, Stuart Mitchell, and Lisa Wilkinson, non-executive family director of Wilkinson and third generation of family owners.

The Deputy Mayor of the London Borough of Bromley, Councillor Brenda Thompson, was also in attendance and received a personal tour of the store, before mingling with the locals.

Teaming up with Penge Town Centre management, a mixture of colourful market stalls lined the High Street, selling everything from fashion and jewellery to fruit and veg, as locals indulged in the hustle and bustle of the festival.

As the sun shone over Penge, the all day DJ got the crowd going with old and new pop favourites, whilst the henna tattoo artist worked her magic creating fabulous

designs on the queues of locals to help raise money for local charity The Pineapple Club.

Hair braiding, face painting and balloon modelling added to the carnival atmosphere, as proud Penge families spent the whole day celebrating everything positive on offer in the neighbourhood

All donations from the hair braiding and the henna tattooing went to worthy charity, The Pineapple Club, which helps to enhance the social and cultural development of African Caribbean people in Bromley.

The festival line-up united the diverse communities in Penge, through multicultural music and dance, with performances from GMTV's, Jacqueline Chapman, bringing a touch of the Middle East to Penge with her internationally acclaimed belly dancing, and Salsa CD added some Latin American flavour to proceedings. The crowds went wild for the cool youngsters at Bright Sparks, who performed urban and street style dance.

The opening party was also joined by children from Crystals Early Year Centre, who designed the colourful countdown posters for the store's windows in the run up to the opening day. The nursery was presented with £100 worth of Wilkinson store vouchers by the store manager as a thank you for all their hard work.

Lucky shoppers also got chance to get their hands on a share of £500 of Wilkinson vouchers through South London FM's radio competition where they were to guess the total basket price of products on display.

Assistant store manager, Paul Brissenden, said: "The day was a real knockout! Local residents turned out in their hundreds to support the opening and have really made us feel welcome. Penge has a really strong community spirit and everyone who came into store was extremely friendly as they piled their baskets high. Wilkinson is keen to create strong links with the local community, so watch this space for future events!"

The residents of Penge were one of the first to see Wilkinson's exciting new homeware range, including mops, brooms and brushes, all with a trendy lilac and pink stripe pattern, which lets shoppers coordinate the laundry basket with the ironing

board. To complete the look they can even have a matching dustpan! There are even biodegradable cloths for those eco conscious shoppers.

Nicola Musto, Town Centre Manager said: "It was wonderful to see Penge vibrant and thriving. It is my aim as Town Centre Manager to work with the businesses and traders of Penge towards building a better Penge, creating a safe, clean and flourishing community. In turn visitors, residents and businesses will have a sense of pride for Penge Town Centre."

Still a family owned firm after 75 years of trading, Wilkinson is committed to the communities in which it trades and is an active supporter of local charities, community groups and care organisations, and will be sharing this support with the Penge community.

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EDITOR'S NOTES:

Founded 75 years ago in 1930 by JK Wilkinson, the company was created to deliver his vision of providing customers with extensive choice allied to the highest possible standards of service - but at the lowest possible prices.

Based at Manton Wood, Worksop, Nottinghamshire, Wilkinson opened a new state-of-the-art £60m distribution centre near Newport, South Wales, in September 2000 - the company's second in the UK.

Details of where to find Wilkinson stores and general information on recruitment and products can be found on the company's website at www.wilkinsonplus.com

For more information:

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