



Amanda Cooper Smith of Totsocks
GARETH WILLIAMS EE030208_GW03_14



Kelley Hann and Ali Hokings, of the Totnes
Nappy company
EE030208_GW02_06



Caroline Hewson of Holidayblitz.com
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Show visitors first to have babies snapped for Echo competition

BY JOHN FLETCHER

MUMS and dads flocked to a Baby and Toddler Roadshow, spurred on by a chance to enter their children in a popular Echo contest.

Infants at the event, held at Exeter Racecourse, were the first to be snapped for the 2008 Echo Baby of the Year competition.

The roadshow, sponsored by the Echo, was attended by hundreds of parents and grandparents, plus 40 exhibitors promoting everything for the baby.

It was organised by mother of four Caroline Sparks and her business Little Monsters and yesterday's event was the first of its kind locally.

"It has been so successful that I plan to make this an annual event," she said.

Exhibitors offered a range of goods and advice, and there were also demonstrations including Molly Moo Cow music for playgroups, Thula Mama, which provides CDs to help parents sing to their babies, and baby massage sessions and sing and sign classes.

Face painting and other activities for children provided entertainment.

Parents also seized the opportunity to enter the Echo's Baby of the Year contest by getting their children photographed.

It is hoped this year's will prove even more successful than 2007, when a total of 824 babies were nominated for the title and 39,154 votes were cast by Echo readers.

Last year's Baby of the Year



Polly Marsh of Cuddledry
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was Benjamin Simmons, aged 23 months, from Wonford, Exeter.

Once again, the competition is being run in association with Exeter-based Dawson Strange Photography.

To enter, children need to attend one of the special photo sessions being held at various venues between February 18 and March 1.

Among those snapped at yesterday's roadshow was Samantha Lalan's eight-month-old child Cody.

"This roadshow is a great event and I was particularly interested in the advice given on the water baby classes," said Mrs Lalan of St Thomas, Exeter.

Chris Grant was with her granddaughter, Amelia, aged six months, whom she entered for the contest.

"There's everything here for expectant mothers and existing mums," she said.

"We hope to do well in the baby contest."

Another mum, Georgie Perry, said her baby Alicia, aged



Two-year-old Joshua Waters-Higgins
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four months, had been photographed.

And mother-of-two Margaret Harrow, from Newton Abbot, said: "There's something for everyone here."

Proud dad Nigel Mills, from Chudleigh, said he had been at the roadshow for hours with wife Tracey and children Isobel, aged two, and three-month-old Matthew.

Helen Yeomans, who runs Thula Mama, said: "My singing groups are great fun."

Mother of two Nikki Povey sells kitchen utensils for toddlers helping mums to cook.

"My business supplies bowls, dishes and spoons and I've almost sold out," she said.

● Photographers will be visiting shops and shopping centres in Exeter, Exmouth, Sidmouth, Tiverton, Crediton, Cullompton and Honiton to take photographs for Baby of the Year.

All babies entered in the competition will appear in a special Echo supplement on March 17, before readers can vote for the winner.