



■ **CHAMPIONS:** Stroud brick and rolling pin throwing champion of champions – Jamie Peart and Suzie Peart,

Another brick in the 4/8/01 fine family tradition

THE British are well known for their eccentricity. And one bizarre Stroud tradition can still raise a smile and a look of bewilderment.

It is the home of the annual brick and rolling pin throwing contest which is now an international event.

Every July the town's burly men line up to see how far they can lob a 5lb brick.

Not to be beaten, the ladies compete by throwing a 2lb solid wood rolling pin.

The competition takes place in Stroud and at the same time in towns that share the same name in the United States, Canada and Australia.

Then organisers consult over the telephone to see who are the outright winners.

Past winners take part in the champion of champions event.

And this year it was a family affair with electrical engineer Jamie Peart, 21, from Stroud, Gloucestershire, winning the brick throwing, while sister Suzie, 34, a coun-

cil worker, took the rolling pin throwing title.

Muscly Jamie managed to lob the brick 141ft 3ins despite an elbow injury.

And Suzie managed to throw her rolling pin a winning 115ft 1in, which she admits was far from her best.

The tradition of brick and rolling pin throwing tends to run in families. Jamie and Suzie's parents, Dave and Glynis, from Rodborough, are past champions and now heavily involved in organising the contests.

Glynis said: "It all started in 1960. The Mayor of Stroud, Oklahoma, was on a visit to England and decided to make contact with Stroud council.

"They told us about the brick throwing contest they had out there and as we were, like them, a brick producing area, we decided to hold the competition.

"After that the competition really took off and the other Strouds asked if they could also take part.

"The Australian ladies asked why women could not take part so the organisers came up with a more suitable missile for them to throw - the rolling pin.

"Now we hold the event on the third Saturday in July each year with a team of six men and six women. When you tell people about it they look at you as if you are stupid. But once you start the sport you cannot stop, it's good fun."

Suzie said: "Usually I can throw the rolling pin much further but I have just had a knee operation which affects my movement.

"We are very friendly with the Americans who take part and in fact they are coming over to visit us in a couple of weeks. I have also been out to Oklahoma a couple of times."

Jamie is a member of Stroud Athletics Club where he competes with the javelin and discus. He said: "I have been brick throwing since I was five. I think it is easier to throw than the discus."