

## **FESTIVAL PROGRAMME ANNOUNCED**

**10-19 SEPTEMBER 2009**

A truly stellar programme has been announced for this year's Speen Festival, the ten-day biennial celebration of the very best artistic and creative talent from the village and surrounding areas. To celebrate the 5th Festival, a host of brand new themes and events has been planned including SpeenFest Interactive! which is designed to inspire creativity before, during and after the forthcoming Festival.

Taking place this year between 10-19 September, Speen Festival 2009 will include many firm favourites from previous years including its highly popular community theatre production and the final night cabaret supper, both of which see many of the village's talented residents taking to the boards. Alongside the traditional themes of music, drama, arts and dance, also thrown into the creative mix for 2009 is a veritable cornucopia of exciting new activities including a whole-community singing extravaganza that aims to bring together hundreds of local residents in a grand celebration of singing; a stimulating open debate on a topical issue hosted by local scientists; a fascinating talk on astronomy by international broadcaster and writer, Dr Heather Couper, and the Festival's Food Fest featuring an array of local producers offering culinary demonstrations and tastings.

Other events planned are a photography exhibition and competition; a jazz concert by the Martin Hart Quintet showcasing the music and story of Irving Berlin; a classical music and poetry soirée plus a host of activities for children from bike competitions and wildlife fun to a riotous children's theatre company who will be coming along to raise the temperature of the Festival even higher! To complete the programme for Speen Festival 2009, Festival organisers have also unveiled a brand new look for the Festival – a classic feel with a highly individual twist that is designed to reflect the spirit of the Festival and help ensure its success for years to come.

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“At the heart of the Festival is the desire to provide local people with opportunities to participate in creative and artistic events, or to attend them at affordable prices. This year is set to be an absolute corker and I’m sure the best Festival yet. I am truly staggered by the enthusiasm and imagination of our local communities, many of whom have contributed wonderfully innovative ideas for this year’s diverse and exciting programme. I am enormously flattered to be Chairman of the Festival and take great pleasure in working with such a dedicated and hard working team,” says Jem Symondson, Festival Director and Chairman, Speen Festival.

To make sure Speen Festival 2009 continues in the spirit of previous festivals, the Committee is looking for a willing team of volunteers. So if you fancy joining in the fun whether on-stage, back-stage or front of stage, or would just like to lend a helping hand from time to time, take a look at our website [www.speen-festival.org](http://www.speen-festival.org). Alternatively, please contact our Festival Secretary, **Sue Taylor** at [secretary@speenfestival.org](mailto:secretary@speenfestival.org) or on telephone **01494 488 168**.

### **About the Festival**

Speen Festival is a celebration of the very best artistic and creative talent from the village and surrounding areas. At the heart of the Festival is the desire to provide local people with opportunities to participate in creative and artistic events, or to attend them at affordable prices. Showcasing art, music, dance, science, nature and photography including a full theatrical production, the Festival reaches out to all of the local communities and is a true platform for new and developing talent.

The inspiration for the Festival arose from the Speen Millennium Pageant of 1999, which demonstrated how the village could come together, using a variety of talents, to produce first-class entertainment. The original Festival in 2001, and those in 2003 and 2005, were developed under the unerring and professional leadership of Martin and Marjorie Stockley. In 2007, Catherine Haddon deftly took over the reins and succeeded in producing yet another hugely successful festival. While the events have always been chiefly organised and performed by members of the local community, on two occasions the BBC has chosen Speen Festival as the venue for its popular radio programmes.

**For further information on Speen Festival, please contact Marie-Louise Morley, Publicity Manager, Speen Festival 2009 T 0781 392 7918 E: [publicity@speenfestival.org](mailto:publicity@speenfestival.org)**