



COTTENHAM AND WILLINGHAM: MIDSUMMER FEN EDGE FAMILY FESTIVAL

23–26 JUNE 2011

The 2011 Fen Edge Family Festival takes place again at venues across Cottenham this year, over the midsummer weekend from 23 to 26 June. Held on alternate years, this year events are also taking place in Willingham for the first time, and there is involvement from the other villages of the Fen Edge area: Rampton, Landbeach and Waterbeach.

This year's FREE Festival is set to be the biggest ever celebration and has been a year in the planning, with events and activities for the whole family. Headlining the weekend will be the legendary medieval re-enactment group, The Knights of Skirbeck, who will be cooking, camping – and fighting their way through the four days, using traditional tools and weapons. Adding colour and a vibrant skyline will be up to half a dozen hot air balloons taking to the skies (weather permitting) for the first ever Cottenham 'balloon-meet'. And for excitement and more colour, a great opportunity to experience life inside a bubble – the great Zorbing inflatable ball. There are literally hundreds of exciting shows, community events, sports, craft and market, food and drink stalls, featuring the widest ever array of enthralling activities to enjoy throughout the whole weekend. The evenings feature a variety of live music and dancing and many of the numerous clubs and societies across all five Fen Edge villages will be taking part in displays and exhibitions, musical performances and sports activities. Cottenham and Willingham churches are involved in a number of activities. Whilst the vast majority of events and activities take place at venues throughout Cottenham, this year for the first time, Willingham is staging a performance by Keith Pearson's 'Coup de Grass' and also an 80s disco.

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In all there are nearly 200 different scheduled activities in this year's Events Guide which is currently being distributed throughout the five Fen Edge villages of Cottenham, Willingham, Rampton, Landbeach and Waterbeach.

The Festival kicks off this year on Thursday 23 June with special children's activities throughout the day and a disco for girl guides in the evening. Friday sees more organised children's activities during the day with the Cottenham Primary School PTCA dance in the evening, featuring the 'Mind the Gap' band, whilst in Willingham there's an evening of live music at Willingham Social Club. Saturday and Sunday see two packed days of family entertainment and events with concerts to round both evenings off. In Willingham, the great 80s disco takes place at the Ploughman Hall on Saturday evening. On Sunday morning, there's a return of the Sculpture Competition – this year the theme is 'flowers' and there are numerous prizes for entries in a wide range of categories. On Sunday afternoon, the ever-popular Cottenham Open Gardens show-off their beautifully manicured lawns and colourful flowerbeds, with free transport provided from 1pm to 6pm.

As if everything above were not enough, there will be dozens of market stalls, a busker's tent, junior quad bikes, an art exhibition, and musical entertainment from Barry Palser's Savoy Jazz Men, Mind the Gap, Keith Pearson's Coup de Grass, PLC, Alchemy and many local singing groups and bands. There was even legalised under-age driving on the playing fields at Cottenham Village College. With fine weather already ordered for the four-day weekend, record attendances are anticipated in excess of 10,000 people.

The Festival centres on Cottenham Green, Cottenham Village College and surrounding grounds and the new Cottenham Community Centre's new Coffee Shop (formerly the Methodist Church), but other venues include many Open Gardens throughout Cottenham on Sunday afternoon, All Saints' Church in

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Cottenham as well as Willingham Social Club and Ploughman Hall and finally Willingham's St Mary and All Saints Church.

The website at www.fenedgefestival.co.uk will be kept up-to-date between now and the end of the Festival, and late changes to the programme will be advertised.

ENDS / Wednesday 1 June 2011

Contact details

For further information please contact Brian Whitehead (press@fenedge.co.uk) or mobile (07545 262494).

Editors notes:

Cottenham which hosts the majority of this year's Festival events, is a village situated on the edge of the Fens, six miles north of Cambridge on the B1049 and has been designated a Rural Growth Settlement. Its population has more than doubled over the past 30 years, now standing at more than 6,000, but despite this rapid modern growth the village retains a distinctive character. Its landscape, settlement patterns and buildings show the marks of more than 1,000 years of history. Along the length of the High Street, its chapels, church and many substantial farmhouses are signs of an independent and democratic community. Overnight accommodation is available within Cottenham and surrounding villages as well as Cambridge is for visitors to the Festival. There are fast train links to the nearby main stations of Cambridge and Ely, and Cottenham is easily accessed by road some 4 miles north of the A14 junctions at Dry Drayton / Oakington and at Histon / Impington.

In common with other local Cambridgeshire villages, **Willingham**, which hosts some Festival events this year for the first time, has undergone considerable development and expansion since the 1970s,

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with the census of 1981 showing a population of 2,540, that of 1991 showing 3,350 and 2001 showing 3,436 – a figure which is thought to have continued rising through to the latest 2011 census. Despite this growth, nearly 30% work in, or within five miles, of the village and it is well served by shops and businesses.

Fen Edge Family Festival is an event promoted by Fen Edge Community Association (FECA), a registered charity number 293020. FECA was originally set up in 1985 and continues to promote events in Cottenham and across the surrounding villages of Waterbeach, Willingham, Rampton and Landbeach. This year's Festival will be the fourth, and is the biggest to date with events for all age-groups and family situations, across four days from Thursday 23 to Sunday 26 June 2011. The Festival is created, organised, programmed, marketed and staged by a team of volunteer workers. The overwhelming majority of events and activities are either free of charge or carry very low admission charges and entry to the Festival is completely free. A significant number of very generous sponsors – many of them small, local businesses – assist with funding or by providing materials and services free of charge or at specially-reduced rates. The generosity enables the Festival to take place every two years and to keep the costs to visitors to an absolute minimum. This year's sponsors include Arcam, B&C Motors (Cottenham), Blue Summer House, Cambridge Building Society, Cambridge Glassblowing, Cosworth, Cottenham Newsletter, Cottenham Parish Council, Donarbon, Durman Stearn, Giuseppe Piran, Kershaw Contracting, M2 Environmental, Mouchel, Polarglaze, Repeat Records, Screens and Graphics, Target Print, Travis Perkins, Voland Roofing and William Miller Associates.

Digital images of many events and activities are available in advance. Interviews and feature coverage can be arranged. Representatives of the media are invited to attend the event but prior notice would be appreciated in order to assist with any special arrangements.

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