

August 2009

## **ASPARAGUS PUTS SPEAR IN FOR WORCESTERSHIRE TOURISM**

This year's asparagus celebrations in the Vale of Evesham focused media attention on Worcestershire which attracted enormous interest and a notable increase in the numbers of visitors to the area.

Launched on St George's Day with the Great English Asparagus Run, the celebrations are a joint effort between many Worcestershire businesses, Wychavon District Council, Destination Worcestershire and Malvern-based marketing company, Mad As A March Hare.

The activity brings the whole community together - just a few examples include Abbey Butchers in Pershore who created the UK's official asparagus sausage - The Vale Porker, Wayside Farm Shop, Wickhamford who offered a twist on the traditional cream tea with asparagus jam on asparagus and parmesan scones and Spot Loggins' Supernatural Dairies who created asparagus ice cream.

As well as the Asparagus Run, events throughout the month include The Fleece at Bretforton's famous asparagus auctions and the Asparagus Festival itself at the end of May. Asparagus Tours, appearances by Gus the Asparagus Man and a host of themed activities bring the celebrations alive throughout the region.

BBC Breakfast spent the morning at the Great English Asparagus Run broadcasting regular bulletins nationally. The celebrations were also filmed by Midlands Today, SKY News together with articles as far reaching as The Sun newspaper and The Times. Angela Tidmarsh, marketing officer for Wychavon, was kept busy with radio interviews with stations in the UK and abroad.

A total of some £500K media coverage was achieved which attracted thousands more people into the county. Commenting on the success, Wychavon's Phil Merrick said:

"We are delighted with the way that our partnership with Destination Worcestershire has helped raise the profile of the Asparagus Festival and highlight the importance of local produce and visitors to the local economy over the last two years. Plans are already being made for next year's Festival which we intend to be even bigger and better".

Rod Nipper, manager of Destination Worcestershire, said:

"The success of the British Asparagus Festival in the Vale of Evesham in attracting prime time national media interest is a perfect example of how, working together in the destination marketing partnership, we can significantly raise the profile of Worcestershire, encourage more visitors to spend more locally plus support local jobs - that's what Destination Worcestershire is all about."

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For further information and images, please contact Sara Stewart on 07833 467774. To find out more about the Festival, visit [www.britishasparagusfestival.org](http://www.britishasparagusfestival.org) or visit <http://twitter.com/AsparagusFest>

Destination Worcestershire is the official public/private partnership promoting the county of Worcestershire as a tourist destination. For more information including What's On, Where to Stay, and places to visit go to: [www.visitworcestershire.org](http://www.visitworcestershire.org).