



# peace in the park

## THE FESTIVAL OF SPIRIT

**Global Retreat Centre, Oxford, UK**

**June 23rd and 24th 2012**

**The second Peace in the Park Festival took place at the Global Retreat Centre, Oxford this weekend.**

Despite very English weather (*rain one minute, hot sun the next*), around 4,500 visitors came to see and experience what was on offer at this unique and beautiful venue over two days.



Building on the experience of last year's Festival, and adding more events for the public to enjoy, we have worked over the last ten months, with an emphasis on natural materials to make sure every detail of the event was elegant and beautiful as



well as fun, colourful and family friendly. Each aspect of the Festival was linked to spiritual well-being and insights, exploration of values and practical aspects of spiritual living.

Our focus was to offer a mix of relaxing, informative, creative and uplifting experiences, that anyone – young or old – would be able to enjoy, but to remain firm in the power of truth and to be generous and open to the needs of today's world.

The front lawn came alive with a children's area for creative work and spiritual



games showing how practising values can be fun. A giant game of Snakes and Ladder for exploring life's ups and downs, an electric buzzer game to explore the Power of Concentration and flat stones to balance one on top of the other offered a way for people to understand the Power of Balance.



In other areas of the garden, people could wander through a **Maze long lost and now found**, a **Labyrinth spiritual journey** and an

**Tea under the Trees**, ever popular, provided hot and cold drinks, with gorgeous fruit cake and snacks, made by the BK families of

something was going on around them that was very special and unique.

And as last year, the musicians in the BK family demonstrating their specialities: Violins playing in the Temple, Cello and Hang in the old Chapel, Flute, Sitar and Guitar in the Gardens.



**Earth Care** area, with workshops on caring for the Earth and **Meditation in Motion**.

Loughborough and Leicester. People sat under the trees, or wandered the park, with their drinks and snacks, informal and relaxed, aware that

A wonderful feature was one of our artists, who sketched in colour in various locations around the gardens, and people just stopped and watched him as he worked.





This year, the Festival hosted 5 meditation pavilions, providing experiences opportunities to learn about meditation on several aspects: Hope, God, Peace, Learn to Meditate, Love.



Huge beautiful white tents billowing in the breeze, comfortable chairs inside and an elegant stage, each pavilion had an experienced meditation teacher who provided commentaries and a chance for questions at the end. Sister Denise, Sister Maureen and Mike George were there, together with regulars from the retreat centre and other BK centres,



helping to deepen and hold the atmosphere. New visitors were fascinated and overwhelmed by the experiences they had and for the team, this year, this was one of the key elements of the festival: to provide an experience.

The Festival had its own specially created website at [www.peaceintheparkfestival.org](http://www.peaceintheparkfestival.org)

We posted on [facebook](#), [twitter](#), and fun short clips on [YOUTUBE](#).

With more and more people having easy access to technology and therefore being able to connect with the world quickly from anywhere, we also created

a web app called [meditation lounge](#) for audio versions of all the meditations from the festival ...and more.

The gardens and area around the retreat centres are Grade One listed, which means the team here are obliged to preserve them as they were since 1750, or as much as possible.

For English Garden enthusiasts, we were able to provide a tour of the gardens and the ancient and rare trees in the grounds, each one with its own speciality, all adding to the sense of silence, stillness and peace.



BK publications had a huge pavilion, with music, posters and gifts and books .



Inside the house were several taster sessions, repeating every hour, where people could spend time exploring self development ideas. **Self Esteem Booster, Letting Go of Anger, Being Positive** and **A Brighter Future** were the sessions on offer and were booked up very quickly.

As last year, the house was dressed with beautiful orchids, donated by the local garden centre.

Bliss, creators and performers of songs such as 'Om Shanti', '100,000 Angels' and 'Love, Peace and Wisdom', performed on stage throughout the weekend, providing uplifting and empowering music and a wonderful atmosphere.

This year, Sister Jayanti was with us for the weekend and



gave a **Master Class on Meditation**, as well as hosting the finale meditation at the end of the day.

This was a powerful and unifying opportunity for guests to sit down and feel connected to themselves, humanity and the world.

This finale event saw almost 2000 people in deep silence, sitting on chairs, lying on the lawn, standing still, all concentrating on peace, with 7 yogis, including Sister Jayanti, on stage holding the focus.



**And next year...?**

For the team in Oxford, there is a strong feeling that as the learning and unity grows and develops, then the outcome can only be more beautiful and more powerful for the rest of the world to benefit.

