



Would you be prepared to sponsor, or part sponsor an event in this year's Pilton Festival, or one of the fixed costs such as insurance, public address or advertising or do you know someone who could ?

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**PILTON  
 FESTIVAL**



**GREEN MAN DAY**

**SATURDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> JULY**

**2001**

## What is the Pilton Festival about?

Back in 1982 the first Pilton Festival was planned as a recognition of the long history of the community, which stretched back well over a thousand years. This was a Mediaeval Festival, with over twenty events covering a period of a month, from mid-June to mid-July, ending with a street market, quite an ambitious project. The Vicar of the time – Anthony Geering – was the enthusiast who headed the organisation, and prophetically dressed himself as the Green Man for the street market, although at that time this was not the theme of the Festival. Further similar events were held at two year intervals with a less elaborate programme, initially each with a different time theme – Tudor, Victorian – but gradually this became a Green Man one, and from 1995 it has been held annually, usually on the third Saturday in July, with minor events on the Friday night and Sunday. The stalls in the street are occupied by charities and others, where £2,000/£3,000 is raised in total for their respective causes.



The Festival itself is not a profit-making event, but merely an opportunity for fun and fund-raising on the part of others. Local sponsors and a grant from the North Devon Marketing Bureau combine with the small income from letting of stalls to cover the modest expenses of the week-end, which involve insurance, street closure, hiring of professional entertainers, etc., and local people give their time and expertise freely to ensure a high standard of entertainment for the big day.

## Why the Green Man?

There are Green Men depicted in many of the ancient parish churches and cathedrals of Britain and Europe, including Pilton. Sometimes he appears carved in stone, peering down from the capital of a pillar or from a boss far above in the roof, and perhaps as often in wood, peeping out from the ornate carving of a typical Devon The Pilton Green Man is no exception. His rather grumpy face appears on the screen in the Raleigh Chapel there, and it has been suggested that he was anciently linked with Raleigh Woods, which once stretched for miles eastwards from Pilton bordering on the River Yeo.

In the annual pageant he comes to Pilton Street, clothed in green leaves, surrounded by dancing maidens and garlands of flowers, there to be met by the Prior and the monks of the Priory, who take him to the church. No script accompanies this pageant, the story is in the mind of the beholder. Some express a wish to be told what is happening and why, but so far this has been resisted – in order to retain an air of mediaeval mystery and uncertainty in a twenty-first century of technology and established facts. No apology is made for this. If our ancestors did not know for certain who he was or where he came from, should we not accept him in the same light?



## How the Festival works

The Festival Committee commences their meetings in early spring each year, gradually accelerating in activity as summer approaches. Much has to be arranged, costumes made, new entertainers approached, and lessons learned from previous years. We like to think that it is different from any other event held in North Devon – mainly because it is! Naturally this does not happen by magic, even if it is linked to the Green Man, and a great deal of thought goes into each new venture.



The inhabitants of Pilton and people from much further afield have come to look upon the Festival as their opportunity to come with their families and have a good time in a street devoid of traffic, where the accent is on simple enjoyment and spectacle for all ages. It would, therefore, be much appreciated if more people could come forward to offer their skills and talents to ensure the continuation of this now well established tradition, whether it be dress-making, artistic genius, carpentry, organisational know-how, or helping with leaflets, posters and the like.

Albert Linacre is our 'Link Man'. At his pottery at 19 Pilton Street he is the man who knows just what is needed, and seeks the person to do it – in fact we think he is the real 'Green Man' in disguise. He certainly gets people involved.

**If you think you could help, even if only on the day, do call in, or give him a call on 01271 375776. He will be really pleased to make you feel welcome and valued.**