

## Seventeen Authors Speak at the 8th Peak Festival in One Evening



Some of the 17 authors that spoke at the Festival on Friday night. From left to right back row first: Steve Holmes and John Hemmingham, Trevor Snow, Michael Anson, Chris F Coley, Martin Weinbren, Robert Alan-Haven, John Butcher, and front row, Zoe Speakman, Lyndsey Bradley, Jackie Toaduff, Andrea Jane Finney, Philip Algar, Dr Paul McDonald and Ray Dafter

Two minutes each, were the instructions given. Were they serious? Authors instructed to talk about their favourite subject for only two minutes!

Well, they more-or-less managed it, three minutes being the average. Members of The England Band gave a fanfare to call everyone to attention and start the proceedings (and no-one could miss that call to order)! This was the launch of the Peak Festival on 27th November 2009.

They each gave a synopsis of their work, some as a taster for their full evening event later in this year's festival or the Spring festival next year. A wide range of topics were talked about and it was indeed a very interesting and lively evening and enjoyed by everyone attending.

There was wine and food aplenty and Friends of the Festival were able to interact with most of the 2009 Festival authors and they also had the

chance to meet with many other authors with books to be published next year.

Other authors attending and speaking at the launch, not pictured above, were Stafford Hildred, John Firth and Chris Farrow (he took this photograph).

Geraldine Rose said, "The evening was indeed very entertaining and the audience left looking forward to coming back to hear their favourite authors give a longer version of their story".

On Saturday Philip Algar spoke about his very interesting book, 'Goodbye Old Chap, a life at sea in peace and war'. For anyone interested in stories from the war, in stories of the Merchant Navy or extra-ordinary stories of ordeals that people endure, then they would have enjoyed hearing about this true account from the diaries of Philip Algar's father, Stanley, who was a Captain of a Merchant Navy Oil Tanker and a prisoner of war in a German POW Camp for over 4 years and met his son for the first time when he was five years old. Philip's book is a fascinating insight into a century fast fleeing into history. All of Philip's royalties from sales of this book will be donated to the Red Cross, who provided an invaluable service to the prisoners of war.

Trevor Snow organised tours of France for many years, and has now put eight of his favourite themed tours into a book for self-drive tours. His tours cover, The Magic of Brittany; Treasures of the Riviera; Cathar Country; Houses, Gardens and Artists; the Heart of France; etc.....and he is a mine of information on all of these areas, including where to stay and eat, tours to take, what not to miss, and lots of interesting information about the area. Trevor spoke on Saturday evening, and Jean Claude of the "Wine People" was there to offer his expertise with a French Wine tasting.

Chris F Coley, who spoke at the Festival, has written a black comedy about a group of characters at Laburnham School and especially about Bob Pike, the devious and ambitious assistant head with designs on the position of head teacher and Chris knows what he is taking about as a

former headteacher himself. It is a very funny story but is, however, a book that Ofsted may wish to ban!

On Wednesday Robert Alan-Haven, gave an illustrated talk on his book about self exploration through his analogy, 'Boji' a story of a Bottlenose Dolphin. Robert has spent many years swimming with dolphins and had a hoard of fascinating stories to tell about these wonderful creatures and their apparent kinship with human beings.

Local author, Cynthia Ramsden, spoke about her book, 'Garden Tales'. Cynthia and John Ramsden's garden at Fanshawe Gate Hall is the subject of her book 'GardenTales' The book tells the stories of the people who have created, work in, and visit the beautiful garden on the edge of the Peak District National Park.

Andrea Jane Finney, spoke about her book based on the diary of her great, great grandmother, Elizabeth Gore (1844 - 1923) and her story of her hard life and the loss of her son in the Pretoria Pit Disaster at Westhoughton in 1910, when 344 men and boys lost their lives on the 21st December. Andrea has worked closely with the Editor of the Bolton News and through her research on the pit disaster has gathered and recorded valuable information printed word by word as it was in 1910.

Also speaking was Lyndsey Bradley, who has collected stories from breast-feeding mums from around the world and put their experiences together in a book, 'Just Call Me Daisy'. Donations from the sales are going to the non-profit organisation, 'Baby Milk Action'.

John Firth spoke about 'I Hate Football' that follows the fortunes of a group of football fans since the early 1970's. John has been an ardent Sheffield Wednesday supporter for over 4 decades and has hundreds of stories to enthrall any football fan, for this could be a diary of any fan of any team, John just happens to support Sheffield Wednesday. His book is a perfect gift for that really difficult market to buy for - men!

The final author to speak at this year's Autumn festival was Jackie Toaduff who was reminiscing, with an illustrated talk, about his life in entertainment. Jackie's story, 'Coaldust to Stardust', is the inspirational

real Billy Elliot story. Jackie was born in the 1930's in County Durham, the son of a coal miner, and was a coal miner himself for 13 years but always dreamed of being a dancer and dance he did.

He became the British Clog Dancing Champion and has been credited with reviving clog dancing in the late 20th century and making it into a spectacle. His dancing influenced Frederick Ashton, of the Royal Ballet, to introduce clog dancing into ballet for the first time in 'La Fille Mal Garde'.

He later became part of a double act with Roy, entertaining in theatres and clubs worldwide and finally, after retiring, they agreed to entertain on the QE2 for two weeks but they continued for twenty years. Jackie has many stories to tell from dancing with Princess Margaret to offers of marriage from Ginger Rogers.....

The Festival organisers are now putting together the Spring Festival programme for May 2010.

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