

**PRESS RELEASE – 19<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

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**OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF SWINTON PARK BIRDS OF PREY AVIARY**  
**17<sup>th</sup> JULY 2008**

Swinton Park has announced the official date for opening its new Birds of Prey Aviary, which has been built within the walls of the Orangery in the grounds surrounding the castle hotel.

The launch date will be 17<sup>th</sup> July, and the gardening celebrity and RHS Harlow Carr curator, Matthew Wilson (who is also tipped to be the next BBC Gardener's World presenter), will be carrying out the official opening ceremony. As a gardener, Matthew has a particular interest in wildlife and conservation.

The Open Day starts at 10.00am with flying demonstrations for invited local residents and businesses, children from Masham school, and press. This then leads into the Opening Ceremony at 11.00am.

The Orangery is a listed building and careful consideration had to be given to the style and design of the aviary to ensure that it passed planning requirements and was suitable for the requirements of the birds. It is now home to between 10 or 12 birds at any one time, with owls, eagles, falcons and hawks in residence. "This is a project that we have really enjoyed working on" commented Mark Cunliffe-Lister, proprietor of Swinton Park, "It is always so rewarding to see a redundant building being put into commission again, and the birds of prey have already settled in really well in their new home."

Hotel guests can now enjoy the spectacle of watching the birds being flown every day. Owl experiences, hawk walks, falconry days and hunting days are also available to both hotel guests and non-residents and will be run by the falconer, Sophie Abbott.

Sophie has been the mastermind behind the creation of the aviary, having worked with birds of prey for many years. She lives on Swinton Estate and her father is the Head Gamekeeper. "It is now nearly two years since I approached the Cunliffe-Listers about the idea of opening the Bird of Prey centre at Swinton Park, and I am so excited now that it has all finally come together. I can't think of a better place for it to be", commented Sophie.

Bookings for a falconry activity can be made via the hotel, [www.swintonpark.com](http://www.swintonpark.com), or at Sophie's website [www.birdsofprey.me.uk](http://www.birdsofprey.me.uk)

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