

## Launch of new App brings heritage to life at Shakespeare's New Place

Shakespeare's England has announced the launch of a new, free, augmented reality (AR) product that brings the story of William Shakespeare's New Place in Stratford-upon-Avon to virtual life. The ground-breaking AR experience transports the user back in time to discover the story of the man behind the works, with Shakespeare himself as their personal guide. It has been developed as part of a government-funded project to attract new audiences to 12 of England's most historic towns and cities.

The free app, *England's Historic Cities* invites users to explore the secrets of some of history's most fascinating characters through digital channels before, during and after booking their visits to 'England's Heritage Cities', a consortium of 12 towns and cities including Stratford-upon-Avon. Introductory videos set the scene for each destination and encourage visitors to download the app which they can use to access specially created AR content when they tour their chosen heritage site. At Shakespeare's New Place the app offers fresh insights into Shakespeare as the savvy investor, keen entrepreneur and expert social networker, and his rise to become the most recognised, and perhaps the wealthiest, playwright of his age.

The AR experience has been developed by 'England's Heritage Cities' as one of a number of projects to benefit from a £40 million Discover England Fund, a government-funded programme of activity administered by VisitEngland supported by match-funding from private and public partners. Each of the consortium's member towns and cities nominated one attraction for the app.

Helen Peters, Chief Executive at Shakespeare's England, the Destination Management Organisation for Warwickshire said, "Stratford-upon-Avon is renowned worldwide as Shakespeare's home town, so it is natural that the town and region are often seen in a traditional heritage context. This project enables us to show a more modern face and offer people in this digital age an exciting new way to explore history from a fresh perspective. In a rapidly changing and competitive tourist environment, the use of AR technology will help us attract new audiences and present return visitors with the opportunity of a new kind of experience. We wish to thank the Discover England Fund for their investment and making this project possible."

Shakespeare's New Place re-opened in August 2016 following the transformation of the site where Shakespeare had his family home for 19 years, and where he died in 1616. Glorious gardens, sparkling new sculptures by award-winning artists and a dynamic exhibition showcase Shakespeare the writer, family man and prominent businessman as never seen before.

Chloe Malendewicz, Manager of Shakespeare's New Place, said, "This is a new kind of cultural destination distinct from our traditional Tudor properties, and being part of this app will reinforce that point of difference. I look forward seeing the app in action as visitors delve into some of the unusual and lesser known aspects of Shakespeare's life here."

England's Heritage Cities includes the Destination Management Organisations representing Bath, Canterbury, Cambridge, Carlisle, Chester, Durham, Greenwich, Lancaster, Lincoln, Oxford, Salisbury, Stratford-upon-Avon and York. They offer diverse experiences and all of them are well-connected via rail, making it easy for tourists to travel to more than one at a time.

The app 'England's Historic Cities' is available to download for free in Google Play and on the Apple Store in the links below or at [www.historic-cities.com/stories](http://www.historic-cities.com/stories)

App Store: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/englands-historic-cities/id1215745809>

Google Play: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.hexdigital.ehc>

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For more information on Shakespeare's England please visit

[www.shakespeares-england.co.uk](http://www.shakespeares-england.co.uk) or call 01789 260 677

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#### **Notes to editors**

Shakespeare's England is the official destination management organisation for Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick Districts. It is a public-private sector partnership representing the leading tourism businesses and organisations in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, Royal Leamington Spa, Kenilworth and surrounding market towns and villages. For more information visit please visit <http://shakespeares-england.co.uk/about-us>

More information on Shakespeare's England can be found at [www.shakespeares-england.co.uk](http://www.shakespeares-england.co.uk) [www.facebook.com/ShakespearesEngland](https://www.facebook.com/ShakespearesEngland) and Twitter [@ShakespearesEng](https://twitter.com/ShakespearesEng)

### **About the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust**

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is the independent charity that cares for the world's greatest Shakespeare heritage sites in Stratford-upon-Avon, and promotes the enjoyment and understanding of Shakespeare's works, life and times all over the world. The charity runs formal and informal educational programmes for people of all ages. It holds the world's largest Shakespeare-related museum and archives open free to the public, a collection which is designated as being of international importance. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust receives no public subsidy or direct revenue funding; it depends on income generated through the support of visitors, donors, volunteers and Friends.

### **About the Discover England Fund**

- In November 2015, the Government announced a £40 million Discover England Fund; an unprecedented opportunity for English tourism. The Fund aims to deliver world-class bookable tourism products joined up across geographies and/or themes; including integrated transport solutions to provide an end-to-end customer experience.
- The Fund supports the growth of one of England's most successful export industries, inbound tourism. England has seen record tourism spend in the past year from both domestic and international visitors delivering economic growth and jobs across all the English regions.
- The Fund will support a number of projects and pilots in year one (2016/17) to test and develop product development approaches and a small number of large-scale collaborative projects that create a step-change in bookable English tourism product for international consumers (in years two and three - 2017-19). A smaller funding pot for new one year projects and pilots, and continuation funding for existing round one projects that can demonstrate early learnings, will also be available.

### **About VisitBritain/VisitEngland**

- VisitBritain/VisitEngland is the national tourism agency – a non-departmental public body funded by the Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)
- Working with a wide range of partners in both the UK and overseas, our mission is to grow the volume and value of inbound tourism across the nations and regions of Britain and to develop world-class English tourism product to support our growth aspirations. For further information and to access the latest in-depth market intelligence and statistics visit [www.visitbritain.org](http://www.visitbritain.org) or [www.visitbritain.com](http://www.visitbritain.com) and [www.visitengland.com](http://www.visitengland.com) for consumer information.

### **About England's Heritage Cities**

- England's Heritage Cities is a consortium of cities who work together principally focused on marketing, lobbying and research. The consortium includes the destination management organisations representing Bath, Cambridge, Carlisle, Chester, Durham, Greenwich, Lancaster, Lincoln, Oxford, Salisbury, Stratford-upon-Avon and York. More information is available on [www.heritagecities.com](http://www.heritagecities.com)

### **For more information, interviews and photo opportunities please contact:**

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*Shakespeare's* ENGLAND