

Enjoy a fun inspired May half term in Shakespeare's England!

Enjoy a fun inspired May half term in Shakespeare's England from 25 to 31 May with plenty of family activities and special events. Design a carnival mask at the Royal Shakespeare Company, listen to Tudor tales at Anne Hathaway's Cottage, visit a medieval encampment at Kenilworth Castle or make a collage about your life at Compton Verney. With so much to see and do, there is something for everyone to enjoy and experience!

The **Royal Shakespeare Company** (RSC) is offering visitors the opportunity to design their own carnival mask inspired by traditional costumes from *The Merchant of Venice* at free special drop-in sessions. Plus check out the brand new exhibition, *Sea-Markings*, and find out more about the world of 16th century Venice plus explore a selection of rarely displayed props, costumes and accessories from the RSC Collection.

Activities at all **Shakespeare Houses** run from 12 - 4pm every day and are included as part of normal admission. It's Woolly Week at **Mary Arden's Farm** with traditional sheep shearing and craft demonstrations. **Anne Hathaway's Cottage** has a brand new nature-themed family activity marquee. On 30 and 31 May, children can step into the medieval story tent for Tudor tales. At **Harvard House**, play the '*Rough Seas or Plain Sailing*' game to find out if you would have survived the setting off across the Atlantic to discover the New World.

Warwick Castle is challenging the nation to get historical, get on camera and get on stage to see if they've got what it takes to claim '*The W Factor at Warwick Castle*'. '*The W Factor*' offers an opportunity for budding stage stars and history lovers of any age to 'audition' for a cameo in a performance of 'Wicked Warwick'. Anyone entering must present their favourite short gory stories to a panel of judges on Wednesday 27 May. The panel will select 4 entrants to perform in live shows on 20 & 21 June. One overall winner will receive a woodland family sleepover in the Medieval Glamping Village.

Visitors to the **Stratford Butterfly Farm** can see the stunning *Parides Childrenae*, a rare butterfly, plus a *Corn Snake* and *Ball Python* and some of the world's largest Tarantulas including the *Mexican Red Fire*, all safely kept behind glass! For the younger visitors there will also be *Meet the Mini Beast* handling sessions held daily at 11.30am and 1.30pm and a new *Jungle Explorer Trail* where children can discover interesting facts about the Farm.

See a family performance of *Tree Fu Tom* on 26 May at the **Royal Spa Centre & Town Hall**. Live on Stage! Premier Stage Productions Ltd & FremantleMedia bring a spellbinding new show starring the world's smallest superhero, direct from the smash hit CBeebies

series. This brand new show, packed with adventure, fun, music and participation, sees Tom take to the stage in his first nationwide tour – be part of the magic!

See a performance of '*Wind in the Willows*' at **Batsford Arboretum** on Monday 25 May at 12pm and 1.30pm. Enjoy outdoor theatre as Dreamshed Theatre return to perform.

On Thursday 28 May children can take part in a *Boggling Bug Hunt* workshop at **Hill Close Gardens** in Warwick to discover more about the creatures that live in the gardens.

The *Knights Tournament* at **Kenilworth Castle** takes place from 24 – 25 May. Swords will be wielded and archery skills tested as the Knights are put to the test. Soak up the sights and sounds of life in a medieval encampment and smell the food cooked on an open fire.

Create a collage about your life, family and community from 23 – 29 May at **Compton Verney**. Take inspiration from the work of Italian Master, Canaletto and contemporary photographer Martin Parr. From 9 May – 21 June see a display of The National Galleries Masterpiece Tour *Canaletto's A Regatta on the Grand Canal*, one of the nation's major artworks.

Visit the **Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum** to see The OPEN exhibition from 15 May – 12 July. Entries are welcome from a wide range of media including painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, photography, digital media and craft. The Young Curators Club takes place on 26 May for visitors to discover what goes on behind the scenes in the museum.

From Lego to paper, young visitors to the **Heritage Motor Centre** can get hands on and design, BUILD and test their own car. On the Tuesday they can test their Lego Technic machines, take part in the Lego Speed Build challenge on the Wednesday, build their favourite car on the Thursday and build a Jaguar E type on the Friday.

The *Classic Car & Transport Show* returns to **Ragley Hall** on 24 & 25 May. In its 23rd year, the show is expected to attract thousands of visitors as over 600 vintage, classic, American, kit and custom cars as well as motorcycles and commercial vehicles reunite for this popular event. On the Sunday visitors will be able to view over 50 Lotus cars whilst on the Monday they can see American cars from the past and present.

Visit the **Riverside Bar and Restaurant** in Stratford-upon-Avon for a traditional riverside party on 25 May. Enjoy a great family day out with a Hog Roast, BBQ, bar and fun activities.

Book 2 or more nights in April or May at the **Avonlea Guest house** in Stratford-upon-Avon and receive a £10 discount off your total bill. Offer subject to availability and ends 31 May.

Join in with the *Snow Sisters Tea Party* at **The Arden** on 31 May from 12:30pm - 3pm. The party includes an arrival drink, meet and greet The Snow Sisters, bouncy castle, soft play area (*Under 5's only*), face painting & glitter tattoos (*additional charge*), Afternoon Tea plus a mini disco. The cost is £14.95 for children and £21.95 for adults.

Enjoy *Jazz in the Braz* at **Mallory Court** on 28 May from 6:30pm for the latest in a series of swinging jazz events in the Brasserie. Stay at **The Arden Hotel** in Stratford-upon-Avon over half term. Children under 12 can stay free of charge when sharing their parent's room or half the adult price when staying in their own room. Rates are from £199 B&B when taking 2 interconnecting rooms. Subject to availability, terms and conditions apply.

For more suggestions and family friendly accommodation in Shakespeare's England visit <http://shakespeares-england.co.uk>

-ends -

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 www.facebook.com/ShakespearesEngland and Twitter [@ShakespearesEng](https://twitter.com/ShakespearesEng)

For more information, interviews and photo opportunities please contact:

Tanya Aspinwall at Marketing Aloud on 01503 272579/07810 118074 or tanya@marketingaloud.co.uk

Or Robin Tjolle, Destination Manager at Shakespeare's England on +44(0)7801 891429 or robin@shakespeares-england.co.uk

Or Gemma Goddon, Marketing and Communications Consultant at Shakespeare's England on 01789 260 677 or gemma@shakespeares-england.co.uk