

Discover the magic of Shakespeare's England in 2017!

Discover Shakespeare's England in 2017 and enjoy a host of exciting events and activities for all the family. See four of Shakespeare's great political thrillers by the Royal Shakespeare Company, have a go at wake-boarding at a new purpose built track, wander around new exhibitions and take part in a variety of festivals including the 10th Stratford-upon-Avon Literary Festival. Make 2017 the year you discover the magic of Shakespeare's England.

The **Royal Shakespeare Company** marks 2000 years since the death of Ovid, announcing their new season of Shakespeare's four political thrillers set in and around ancient Rome. *Julius Caesar* runs from 3 March to 9 September, *Antony & Cleopatra*, runs from 11 March to 7 September, *Titus Andronicus*, runs from 23 June to 2 September and *Coriolanus*, concludes the season. The season is accompanied by a new free exhibition from March to September looking at 200 years of British political cartoons inspired by Shakespeare. In the Swan Theatre the RSC presents a new version of the Chinese drama, *Snow in Midsummer*; the world premieres of new plays by Richard Bean, *The Hypocrite*, and *Vice Versa* by Phil Porter; Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*; and Christopher Marlowe's *Dido, Queen of Carthage*.

The **Shakespeare Birthplace Trust** will celebrate their 170th anniversary on 16 September when it was formed in 1847 following the purchase of Shakespeare's Birthplace. Discover how Charles Dickens spearheaded the campaign to save the Birthplace in this temporary exhibition. A new exhibition will take place at **Hall's Croft** in March to explore Jacobean medicine in relation to working practises of Dr. John Hall. To coincide with the UK - India Year of Culture, SBT will present '**Shakespeare in South Asia**' from May - September celebrating Shakespeare's influence in South Asia. The **Shakespeare Film Festival** takes place in September with film screenings to appeal to all audiences. '**Shakespeare Week**' runs from 20 - 27 March to celebrate Shakespeare in primary schools and the 64th **Stratford-upon-Avon Poetry Festival** runs from 11 - 18 June with a line-up of readings, performances and workshops, mixing the talents of poets with actors and musicians.

Visitors are invited to celebrate the first anniversary of **Shakespeare's Schoolroom & Guildhall**, which opened its doors on 23 April, exactly 400 years after the death of its former pupil, William Shakespeare. The programme will feature a series of events around the April anniversary including special tours, an author event and new family focused activities.

Stratford-upon-Avon Literary Festival will celebrate its 10th birthday from 23 - 30 April, with a week in schools from 27 - 31 March. The Festival is the highlight of the regional calendar and one of the most significant literary festivals in the UK, attracting thousands of

people who share one passion: a love of books, writing and reading. Speakers include Terry Waite, Sir Roy Strong, Lord Richard Dannett, The Oldie Lunch, Biographer Richard Holmes, Poet Simon Armitage, Alison Weir, William Sitwell (Waitrose Editor), Horrible Histories Barmy Britain's Show and Historian Tracy Borman.

Compton Verney will host three major art exhibitions. Starting with *Creating the Countryside*, a look at how the countryside has influenced painters from 1600 to 2017, then an exhibition examining Optical Art in the summer followed by a celebration of the work of one of the world's most important and best-loved illustrators, Quentin Blake in the autumn. There will also be *The Clearing*, a project which will create an evolving encampment, including a geodesic dome in the shadow of Compton Verney's mansion house, where people can come together to learn how to live completely off-grid.

Wootton Park opens their new Wakeboard Park in the spring with three lakes. The purpose built facility will have two electric cable winch systems which will pull participants up and down the lakes. There will be a variety of ramps and jumps to suit all abilities. Wootton Park is also expanding their glamping pod business with private hot tubs.

The **British Motor Museum**, following on from its successful refurbishment and re-branding in 2016, will host a major exhibition which will run from 19 May. '*The British Motor Car in Fifty Objects*' will showcase the depth and variety of its nationally Designated collections by telling the story of Britain's motor industry and the cars it built using 50 key objects.

The hugely popular **Stratford Festival of Motoring** returns for its fourth consecutive year, over the first May Bank holiday. The town centre streets will throb with the sound of over 300 high performance motors and classic cars. The award winning 9th **Stratford River Festival** returns to the banks of the River Avon on the 1 & 2 July. It is the largest family friendly free event held in Stratford with over 70,000 visitors expected to enjoy events on and off the river, market stalls, entertainment and fireworks display. The **Stratford Food Festival** is planned to take place from 22 - 24 September with over 100 stalls across 3 town centre areas.

The **Market Hall Museum** in Warwick will re-open in February following a major renovation and upgrade over the past 18 months. The **Kenilworth Show** takes place on 10 June featuring a fun filled, action packed day out for the whole family. The **Peace Festival** takes place in Leamington Spa in July along with the **Thai, Beer, Folk and Ukele Festivals** in Warwick. **The National Bowls Championships** in Leamington takes place in August for a month as teams from across the country compete. Entry is free every day.

Stratford Town Walk will celebrate their 15th anniversary and remain a great option for groups and individual visitors to Stratford-upon-Avon who are looking to explore the town and its attractions. Since then, they have won a Coventry & Warwickshire Godiva Award for Best Visitor Attraction, were chosen as one of only 10 UK finalists in the Visit England/Daily Mirror Tourism Superstar competition, won a Pride of Stratford Award for Tourism Initiative of the Year and a Luxury Travel Guide Award 2017 for Unique Experience of the Year.

Batsford Arboretum will open a new outdoor children's play area in the spring. The play area will feature a mini adventure playground with wooden climbing frames.

Warwick Race-Couse, one of the oldest in the country, has renovated its bars and made improvements to its track. Race-goers can kick the season off with some thrilling horse-racing on 14 January with the Betfred Classic Chase Day.

Playbox Theatre's theme for 2016/17 is '*extraordinary journeys*' which is inspired by the writer Jules Verne. The programme includes new writing, original creations, re-imagined classics and a unique strand of work for young children in a year-long festival to be based at The Dream Factory in Warwick.

Orchestra of the Swan celebrates its 21st season in 2016/17 bringing together worldwide talents from the youngest ever BBC Young Musician winner Jennifer Pike to the world renowned cellist and conductor Julian Lloyd Webber. OOTS will also tour New York for a concert at the Carnegie Hall on 26 February.

After a £250,000 renovation in 2016, new toilet facilities will open at **Stratford Butterfly Farm**. The *Maya*, an ancient rainforest civilisation, is now on display at the Butterfly Farm which is one of only a few resources available in the UK to schools studying the Maya as part of the National Curriculum.

Shakespeare's Sisters Soap will host three new workshops on Aromatic Distilling, Traditional Cold Process Soap Making and Elizabethan Perfume Making. Contemporary Arts Fair *Discover:Gather:Give* will be held on 3, 4 & 5 November at Stratford-upon-Avon Town Hall showcasing the best local and regional artists.

Warwickshire Open Studios will run three events, the first being a new Artist's Car Boot Fair in late January. The Annual Spring Exhibition takes place at Easter and the Open Studios event takes place across 200 artist's workshops and homes. Held from 17 June – 2 July, the event is regarded as Warwickshire's largest and liveliest free visual arts event.

The Old Slaughterhouse will launch its new Heritage project *The Lost Garden of Avon*, exploring the gardens that were once within the site. The venue will offer an innovative arts trail complemented by a new digital storytelling website. Exhibitions will include *Yesterday & Today*, featuring photography of Stratford's townscape with future exhibitions exploring Stratford's Toll House and riverside industry, Marie Corelli, one of Stratford's best loved Patrons and Stratford Rail Heritage.

The Battle Proms will return to **Ragley Hall** on 12 August for an evening of music paired with spectacular aerial, cavalry, cannon and firework displays. The Battle Proms concerts remain the only place in the world where you can see Beethoven's 'Battle Symphony' performed with 193 live firing Napoleonic cannon providing a thunderous percussion.

Leamington Spa Art Gallery will host an exhibition "*Dictionary of Silences*" by Colin Hitchmough until 8 January. Colin returns to Leamington to showcase new works and key pieces from the 1970s to the present day. *Ruby Wax*, the US born comedian, actor and writer will perform at the **Royal Spa Centre** on 17 February.

Bicester Village will be offering pop-up boutiques, seasonal entertainment, and food pop-ups. In December 2016 Chiltern Railways will celebrate the extension of the current London Marylebone to Oxford Parkway railway line which will run directly into Oxford city centre. This will improve travel links between Bicester Village and the centre of Oxford, as guests can arrive by train from the city for the first time.

Shipston-o-Stour will host its Woolly Weekend from 27 - 29 May featuring various activities including a Craft Market, French Jazz Concert, Rotary Songs of Praise Concert and Wool Fair celebrating Shipston's woollen heritage with rare breeds, shearing demonstrations, lambs, stalls selling wool/sheep related products and all day stage performances.

For more suggestions and information on accommodation please visit

<http://shakespeares-england.co.uk/>

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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 www.facebook.com/ShakespearesEngland and Twitter @ShakespearesEng

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