

Spend a sizzling summer in Shakespeare's England!

Spend a sizzling summer in Shakespeare's England with a host of special activities and events for all the family. Hire a boat for the day from Avon Boating or relax with a guided tour with Bancroft Cruisers or Canal & River Tours. See classic Shakespeare titles playing in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. The historic town of Warwick welcomes back Warwick Folk Festival and Warwick Castle hosts two special concerts from big name acts in the awe-inspiring surroundings of the castle.

Enjoy two of Shakespeare's most popular plays performed by **The Royal Shakespeare Company**. *The Merchant of Venice*, directed by Polly Findlay, will run until 2 September whilst *Othello*, directed by Iqbal Khan, with Hugh Quarshie in the title role and Lucian Msamati as Iago, will run from 4 June – 28 August.

'*Sounds in the Grounds*' is a new event hosted in the spectacular grounds of **Warwick Castle**. This two-day extravaganza will see an incredible line-up of artists resonating with both the crowd and the historic setting. On Friday 10 July, *Kaiser Chiefs*, *Professor Green* and *Ella Eyre* will perform, whilst on Saturday 11 July, *The Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra* featuring star of "The Voice" *Lucy O'Byrne* will play to the crowds. The evening will come to a grand crescendo with a fantastic firework display.

The **Shakespeare Birthplace Trust** presents a season of outdoor theatre performances. See *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on 10 & 11 July, *Twelfth Night* on 31 July & *Much Ado About Nothing* on 1 August at **Mary Arden's Farm**, *Robin Hood the Musical* on 19 July & 1 August at **Anne Hathaway's Cottage** and *Henry IV* on 22 August and *As You Like It* on 23 August at **Hall's Croft**. Celebrate the 62nd year of *The Poetry Festival* from 1 July – 2 August with events and special recitals including Ashley Hutchings, 'The 52 project', Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, free poetry events and readings plus workshops from the poet in residence, Sally Goldsmith. Pack up your picnic and relax in the beautiful gardens at **Anne Hathaway's Cottage** on 25 July with free musical entertainment and activities.

Take part in **The MAD Museum's** competition from 18 July – 7 September and design a new piece for the Marbles wall. The best piece will be made into a real part and go on the wall. The winners name will be printed on their piece so visitors will know who concocted it plus they will receive a bag full of prizes. The MAD Museum exhibits mind-blowing artwork from some of the world's most pioneering inventors, so join the illustrious list this summer!

Enjoy two special outdoor performances at **Hill Close Gardens**. *Midsummer Music in the Gardens* takes place on 21 June and *Love's Labour's Lost* on 28 July. Children can make

their own scarecrow on 23 July whilst the Teddy Bear's Picnic is on 27 August. The *Lammas Harvest Weekend/Food Festival* takes place from 1 – 2 August. See vegetables and fruit growing alongside the flowers in the 16 working plots. Enjoy demonstrations by local chefs whilst visitors can share a Lammas loaf.

Discover more about Moths at a special evening on 23 July at **Batsford Arboretum** with expert Bob Cox. See demonstrations of trapping techniques in the arboretum followed by inspections and recordings of the moths found. Tickets cost £5 for adults & £3 for children. The *Big Batsford Bug Hunt* takes place from 1 - 31 August. Find the creepy crawlies, mark their location on the map and pick up a goodie bag! Costs £2.50 per child.

Knights will compete for victory, skills will be tested and history will spring to life at the Medieval Festival at **Kenilworth Castle** from 18 – 19 July. Feel the thrill of a live action joust as knights on horseback do battle; immerse yourself in pomp and pageantry with music, falconry and jolly jesters and soak up the sights and sounds as the knights' supporters set up camp. Tickets: Adult £13 /Child £7.80 /Con £11.60 /Family £34. On 30 & 31 August witness the Castle under siege as the forces of Simon de Montfort fend off the attack of Prince Edward. Expect flaming siege machines and ranks of attacking troops!

Enjoy interactive family activities that will help you explore the collection of over 200 classic cars at the **Heritage Motor Centre**. Every day become a curator of your own mini museum with a puzzle trail and decide what cars you would like in your motor museum. With fortnightly themes, discover three of the major collections, Land Rovers (21 – 30 July), Minis (4 – 13 August) and Jaguars (18 August – 3 September).

Warwick Folk Festival celebrates its 36th year from 23 – 26 July. The Festival brings together leading names from around the world for a 4-day music and dance extravaganza and has something for everyone from dedicated folk fans to music lovers with a wide range of tastes and styles including blues, rock, country and funk.

Enjoy a magical adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice* performed at **Stoneleigh Abbey** on 28 & 29 June. Relive the romance between Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy. Doors open 7pm. Tickets £25 for Adults, £20 for Concessions. Pre-booking is essential.

'*Sing-a-Long-a-FROZEN*' on 20 June at the **Royal Spa Centre**. Watch a full screening of Disney's FROZEN with lyrics on screen to help you sing along with Anna and Elsa. Introduced by a live host who will show visitors how to use the free prop bag, warm up their singing voices and teach them some hand actions and heckles. Age recommendation 5+

Cost: £15/ Conc £10 (under 16's only) £46 family (2 adults, 2 children) £33 family (1 adult, 2 children).

Barbara Dickson, Scotland's best-selling female artist of all time, is bringing a special acoustic performance to **Stratford ArtsHouse** on Thursday 23 July. Accompanied by pianist Nick Holland, Barbara will be drawing on her full catalogue of songs to present a range of material reflecting on her folk roots, her exploration of the songs of Gerry Rafferty and some of her classic hit records. Tickets cost £22 each.

Celebrate the **Stratford Butterfly Farm's** 30th birthday in July with a visit to see thousands of exotic butterflies. Running until the end of October, the Farm is staging an exhibition of old photographs when it was first opened by David Bellamy in July 1985. This will give visitors a fascinating insight into the history of the Farm and what it looked like 30 years ago.

From 27 June – 13 September visit **Compton Verney** to see *The Arts & Crafts House: Then and Now*. The exhibition traces the origins, legacy and appeal of the Arts and Crafts Movement and its fascination with the creation of the home. Through the work of John Ruskin and William Morris, it will explore how designers created ways of living and working.

Take part in *Paper Flower Family Workshops* at **Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum** on 5, 12, 19 & 26 July. Learn how to create paper flowers and make one to take away and one to leave, to be displayed in the Royal Pump Rooms Café. Celebrate *Brilliant Bees* on Saturday 18 July and learn about bee-friendly plants, make a bee mask plus meet staff and volunteers from the RSPB, inspiring everyone to give nature a home.

Enjoy special Afternoon Tea dates at **Hathaway Tea Rooms** in Stratford-upon-Avon from 5pm – 8pm. Join Soprano Victoria Wilson on Saturday 11 July, Big Band Singer Betsy Harmony on Saturday 8 August and Live Tudor Music on Saturday 22 August.

Attend a garden party at **The Arden Hotel** in Stratford-upon-Avon on 30 August. Enjoy a Pimm's or Champagne in hand and listen to live music. £2.50 per cover from any meal taken will be donated to Shakespeare's Hospice. Throughout August enjoy a picnic on the terrace at **The Kings Hotel** in Chipping Campden. Cost is £35 for 2 people and £8.50 per child.

Indulge in a quintessentially English afternoon tea at the **Riverside Bar & Restaurant** for £14.95 per person or include a glass of Prosecco for £19.95 per person. Valid Monday - Friday, 2pm – 5pm until 30 August. Or take a family of four out for a day and enjoy 4 main meals for £29.95. Valid Monday - Sunday, 12pm - 3pm and 5pm - 6.30pm until 30 August.

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Enjoy a family break at The **Ardencote Manor** with free dinners for up to 2 children on one evening, free children's ticket to a Midlands attraction and free access to the Family Zone. A 2 night break costs from £215 per family or £500 for a 5 day break.

For more suggestions and family friendly accommodation in Shakespeare's England 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](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, Chief Executive 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