

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. See an outdoor theatre performance, enjoy a picnic at Anne Hathaway's Cottage, experience the new Wars of the Roses Live at Warwick Castle, stay overnight in a tree pod, listen to live music or take part in one of many exciting Festivals!

During the summer month weekends, the **Royal Shakespeare Company's** outdoor theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, 'The Dell', will play host to a range of student, community and semi-professional productions. Performances kick off on 3 June and continue until 27 August. The Dell is situated on the banks of the River Avon in Avonbank Gardens. Entrance is free.

Pack a picnic and bring the family to the annual Big Picnic celebrations at **Anne Hathaway's Cottage** on 29 July. Enjoy garden games, musical entertainment and browse stalls filled with goods. Free entry for CV37 residents. Madcap Theatre Productions return to **Mary Arden's Farm** with their new production of *As You Like It* from 14 – 15 July from 6pm – 10pm. Oddsocks Theatre also returns to the farm with *Macbeth* on 28 July and *Romeo and Juliet* on 29 July. Doors open 6.30pm, performance starts at 7.30pm.

War is coming to **Warwick Castle** from 22 July - 3 September with an all-new horseback jousting spectacle. Families must pledge allegiance to either the House of York or the House of Lancaster and join a 2,000-strong cheering crowd in the jousting arena as the pummeling of horses' hooves and the splintering of lances reverberates throughout *Wars of the Roses LIVE*. The spectacle is included in castle admission at no extra cost

Stay overnight in a Tree Pod with a private hot tub at **Wootton Park**. The 2 Tree Pods, named *Heavens Above!* and *Over the Moon*, are ensuite and self-catering and sit 10 feet up on stilts in the trees. The price is £175 per night (Sunday - Thursday) and £195 (Friday & Saturday) with a minimum 2 night stay. Take advantage of an offer in the summer from Sunday – Wednesday. Get the second night half price at just £262 instead of £350. Each pod includes a bed, bedding, shower, toilet, wash basin, sofa, TV, kitchenette with hob, fridge, microwave, toaster and kettle, plus crockery, cutlery, glasses and pans.

The Victorian gardens at **Hill Close Gardens** in Warwick provide the setting for a weekend of Arts & Crafts from 19 – 20 August. Artists and craftspeople will demonstrate their talents and run workshops. Visitors of all ages can appreciate the skills of painting, poetry, music, literature, ceramics, printing, woodcarving, spinning and weaving, textiles and quilt-making. Entry is £4 for adults, £1 for children (free for under 5s, HCGT and RHS members).

Visit the **Lord Leycester Hospital** in Warwick on 28 August for its Garden open day. The gem of this 500 year old garden is open from 10am – 5pm. Residents of Warwick are admitted free of charge. Normal cost for garden entry is £2. Enjoy cream teas served on the lawn (extra charge).

Taste Stratford Gin from the **Shakespeare Distillery**, an artisan producer based in Stratford-upon-Avon. Shakespeare Distillery will be at the Leamington Wine Co Gin Festival on 23 June, at Burford Market (Upton Smokehouse) on 17 June, at the WI Lite Fashion Show (Artshouse) on 12 September and the Stratford Town Food Festival on 23/24 September.

Experience the sights and sounds at **Kenilworth Castle** in the interwar years with a celebration of 1930s style and technology inspired by motoring pioneer Sir John Siddeley, the former owner of Kenilworth Castle on 22 July along with all the fun of a vintage fair. *Clash of the Knights* takes place on 27 August. Experience this all-action contest as knights on horseback and on foot battle it out in a test of strength and skill.

Celebrate Jane Austen's 200 year celebration on 18 July at **Stoneleigh Abbey**. Tours of the house will take place at 11.30am, 1pm, and 2.30pm when guests can find out about her connection to the Abbey and the Leigh family. Local Historian Sheila Woolf will also be giving a talk. The cost of entry to the grounds is £5 per adult and £1 for children over 4. The tours and talk is offered free of charge.

Enjoy a classical evening with Karl Loxley, star of 'The Voice' on 2 September at **Stratford Artshouse**. Celebrate songs from Musicals such as 'Bring him home' and 'The Music of The Night'. Karl shot to fame after appearing in season 4 of The Voice singing the famous opera aria 'Nessun Dorma' to over 9 million viewers. Tickets cost £20.

See the *Bowie Experience* on 30 June at 7.30pm at the **Royal Spa Centre**. This spectacular concert features David Bowie's hits from Space Oddity through to Let's Dance. *NT Live: Peter Pan* takes place on 10 June at 2.30pm. Captured live at the National Theatre this is a recorded performance of JM Barrie's much-loved tale screens in cinemas this summer. *Katy Brand: I Was a Teenage Christian* takes place on 16 June at 8pm. Her hit Edinburgh Festival show is a fascinating and funny exploration of her conversion in evangelical Christianity.

Oxford's Creation Theatre returns to **Bicester Village** to present a new adaptation of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. 'Alice' will be performed as a series of standalone scenes every Thursday from 26 May - 31 August. Visitors can also enjoy musical

performances every Friday from 26 May - 1 September with '*Metropolis Rising*' – a series of performances from the very best upcoming talent signed to London recording studio, Metropolis Music. A performance by singer-songwriter Zak Abel will take place on 23 June.

Discover the new *British Motoring Treasures* Exhibition and enjoy a treasure trove of summer activities at the **British Motor Museum**. Every day visitors can become a treasure hunter and seek out hidden treasures in a family trail or join in on a family costumed tour. Every Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 4pm are themed family crafts where visitors can make their own motoring treasure out of junk. A photo will be taken of their creation and displayed on the cool wall.

The UK stages of the **Women's Tour**, the cycling extravaganza which sped through Warwickshire last June, will see the county host a leg of the race on 9 June. Warwickshire County Council with the University of Warwick will welcome a stage of the race with Atherstone and Royal Leamington Spa hosting the start and finish.

Watch the **Bowls England National Championships** in Royal Leamington Spa from 5 August - 3 September which attracts 30,000 players and supporters. Players have competed in events across England to reach the final stages, with more than 30 national titles up for grabs. Spectators are invited to see some top-class bowls plus there will be an opportunity for those new to the sport to participate in various coaching sessions. Free entry.

In celebration of its 20th anniversary *Battle Proms* returns to **Ragley Hall** on 12 August. This year the Red Devils, the British Army and Parachute Regiment's official display team will perform their spectacular freefall demonstration. The concert takes place by the lake, creating breathtaking pyrotechnic effects with cannon fire and fireworks. *Camper Calling* returns from 25 – 28 August and will be headlined by Cast, Reef and The Lightning Seeds. This family festival offers a multitude of activities to keep everyone entertained.

Warwick Folk Festival takes place from 27 - 30 July featuring contemporary and traditional folk arts from the UK and beyond. The line-up includes the entertaining Australian *Spooky Men's Chorale*, the mighty *Oysterband*, award winning *Goitse* (Ireland) and *Gaelica* (Venezuela), the first folk-comedy night and an evening with DJ & war correspondent *Andy Kershaw*. There are also ceilidhs, more for families with circus skills, storytelling, theatre and crafts, plus a programme of workshops spanning music, song, arts and even star gazing! Tickets cost from £19 for a concert or from £107 for the weekend.

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** will place from 23 - 24 September with over 100 stalls across 3 town centre areas.

The **Leamington Food & Drink Festival** is on the 9 & 10 September at the Pump Room Gardens. Experience the best of Leamington's food and drink in this immensely popular event. 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.

Visit the annual **Wool Fair** in Shipston-on Stour on 29 May from 10am - 4pm. With its 'Sheep Exhibition,' live sheep shearing demonstrations, children's activities and wide range of stalls, the event is hugely popular with locals and visitors alike.

Wander around the fabulous monthly Sunday market in **Alcester** on 6 August and 3 September which boasts stalls selling everything from food and local produce to crafts, household goods, plants, clothing, antiques and more.

Join Master Thomas Jenkins at **Shakespeare's Schoolroom & Guildhall** as he recreates school life as it would have been for William Shakespeare over 400 years ago. Visitors can take the opportunity to put themselves into the shoes of young William; dress up in Tudor clothes and have a go at quill writing. Classes will begin each day from 10am and run throughout the day, with last entry at 4:30pm.

Enjoy lunch or dinner at **Mallory Court Country House Hotel & Spa** throughout July & August. Available Monday to Friday in the Brasserie, it includes a 3 course meal with a glass of Prosecco for £22.50 per person. Or relax in the sun with afternoon tea for £25 per person throughout July & August. Visit **The Arden Hotel** in Stratford-upon-Avon for a jazz Sunday Lunch on 20 August. 2-courses costs £20.50 per person.

For more suggestions on things to do plus recommended accommodation and restaurants in the area see www.shakespeares-england.co.uk

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>

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More information on Shakespeare's England can be found at www.shakespeares-england.co.uk
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