

# The Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations

23rd April to mid May 2009

## NEW THIS YEAR

Colourful displays and entertainment

Introducing Shakespeare's Birthday Party

Play Sonnet Sleuth!

And much, much more...



Great things to see and do in  
Stratford-upon-Avon

# The Shakespeare Birthday

# Celebrations

A celebration of Shakespeare, man of Stratford,  
by the people of Stratford and their guests

## Marking the 445<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's birth

Welcome to the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations, a unique event that's been taking place in Stratford for nearly two centuries. The tradition brings together the local community,

professional and amateur performers and artists and ambassadors from around the world in a vibrant celebration of the life and works of Stratford's favourite son.

This year marks an even bigger and better birthday party for Shakespeare. The customary Saturday processions feature a host of exciting new displays and

entertainments. Be prepared for a colourful collision of the traditional and contemporary where brass bands march alongside a samba band, Morris Dancers meet skateboarders and costumed Shakespearian actors mingle with circus performers!

Stratford's streets will overflow with pageantry, music and theatre and you can be part of it! Why not organise a Party for Shakespeare's birthday or become a Sonnet Sleuth? Full details on pages 5, 6 and 15.

Over the birthday period you can enjoy a packed programme of special celebratory activities - great days out at Shakespeare's historic houses, poetry, literary and music festivals and amazing theatre.

So, whether you're a fan of Shakespeare's works or not, there promises to be something for everybody. Bring along your family and friends - one and all can join in the fun and spectacle commemorating the birth of Stratford's famous literary genius!



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## Shakespeare's birthday – past celebrations

Since the mid-seventeenth century, visitors have been travelling to Stratford-upon-Avon to see the place where the great poet and playwright was born. However, it was **David Garrick's Shakespearian Festival** held in the Autumn of 1769 which really established the town as a place of literary pilgrimage. In 1824 the **Shakespeare Club** marked the birthday itself (23rd April) with a procession through the streets to Holy Trinity Church and a ceremonial dinner.



Over the years the tradition has grown to include many of the unique features which are still part of today's Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations: the boys from King Edward VI Grammar School leading the procession, the rosemary worn for remembrance, the unfurling of flags and the laying of flowers on Shakespeare's grave.

In 1896 the American Ambassador was invited to Stratford and so began the custom that linked this annual event with the Court of St James. To this day the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations see many international Ambassadors and High Commissioners joining the people of the town and their guests from the worlds of theatre, literature and learning.



## Present celebrations



This year sees a dramatic injection of new events and activities into the 200-year old tradition of marking Shakespeare's birthday. Thanks to support from Advantage West Midlands, Stratford can now expect to see more entertainment, more colour and more people taking part!

The festivities begin on Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, the dramatist's birthday with the opening of an exhibition of a newly discovered portrait of Shakespeare at the Birthplace. Sir Donald Sinden, President of the Birthday Celebrations Committee, reopens the Bancroft Gardens on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> April. Plus there are exciting additions to the traditional processions on Saturday with a bigger line-up of street performances from local creative groups and many opportunities for visitors and audiences of all ages to join in the festivities and express what Shakespeare means to them.

2009 is the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Shakespeare's Sonnets and we acknowledge this with a number of special events including RSC actors reading *Sonnets on the ferry* and a game for all the family to play called the *Sonnet Sleuth*.



'Red Ladies' Clod Ensemble.  
Credit: Red Ladies Paparazzi

Shakespeare's Birthday Party is an open invitation to local people as well as visitors to devise fun and imaginative ways of recognising the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. You can be sure to find a birthday activity to watch or join in between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> April.

In addition, there is a host of performances and events around the town and poetry, literature and music festivals extend the celebrations into May. With something for all ages, we do hope you enjoy commemorating Shakespeare's birthday with us.



# Shakespeare's Birthday Party

How will **you** celebrate Shakespeare's birthday?



The world over, communities commemorate Scotland's National Bard with Burns Night parties of all descriptions. This year, we challenge the people who live, work and have businesses in Stratford to put Shakespeare's birthday well and truly on the cultural calendar with their own celebration, tribute or party.



## How to take part

Simply tell us what you are doing.

Email [birthdaypartychallenge@worldclasstratford.net](mailto:birthdaypartychallenge@worldclasstratford.net) with details of your event or complete and return the registration form at the back of this booklet. Closing date for enrolment is 15th April. Then **remember to take lots of photographs on the day** - images that capture the spirit of your birthday idea - and post them on [www.shakespearesbirthday.org.uk](http://www.shakespearesbirthday.org.uk) or make a short film and put it on [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com). All entries will be showcased on the 2009 Shakespeare Birthday Party website and some may be featured in the local press.

## When to hold your party

Events must take place **between Thursday 23rd April** (Shakespeare's birthday) and **Sunday 26th April**. The traditional public celebrations, which attract thousands of visitors to Stratford, will be on Saturday 25th April so, if you hope to reach a wide audience, that's the date for you! And should you need any public space in the town centre contact us at [birthdaypartychallenge@worldclasstratford.net](mailto:birthdaypartychallenge@worldclasstratford.net) and we'll help you find a suitable location.

## Promoting your event

If you'd like people to join in or watch your celebrations on the Saturday, let us know and we'll try and include your details in the programme for the day. In addition, the Shakespeare Birthday Party Website will showcase everyone's party activities, events and projects.

\*Participation in the Shakespeare Birthday Party is done at the individual's or groups' own risk and the organisers take no responsibility for loss, damage or personal injury.

## Where to start?

How about a **private dinner**, a **public picnic**, a **tea dance** or even a 'Romeo and Juliet' **speed dating** session? Restaurants and cafés could offer a **special birthday menu** and schools might consider a Shakespeare **fancy dress day** or setting a world record for the **biggest ruff ever worn!** And there's lots of scope for **creative projects** too such as song, dance, film, sculpture and happenings.

Hold your celebration wherever you want: in a house, restaurant, phone box, up a tree, in the Bancroft Gardens - anywhere! It's your responsibility to organise the event, invite the guests and book any entertainment. Just make sure it's legal and, if the public is involved, complies with Health and Safety standards\*.



# What's happening and when

Four-day diary of Celebrations

**Thursday 23rd April**

## Shakespeare Found: A Life Portrait

The Shakespeare Centre, Henley Street

Opening of a groundbreaking exhibition! Come and see the Cobbe Portrait, the first and only painting of Shakespeare created in his lifetime. This important find represents the dramatist as he appeared to his contemporaries, including his friend and patron, the Earl of Southampton, who may well have commissioned it. **'Behold and wonder!'**



## George Chakravarthi's Ode to a Dark Star

Inspired by the portrait and the Sonnets, the internationally acclaimed artist George Chakravarthi has created a new living portrait that depicts the Shakespearian themes of reflections, mysteries, legitimacy, love, loss and ambiguous identities.



Courtesy the artist - George Chakravarthi

A co-commission by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Exhibitions run to 6th September at the Shakespeare Centre. Open 9.00am to 5.00pm daily. Tickets from [www.shakespearefound.org.uk](http://www.shakespearefound.org.uk) or Shakespeare's Birthplace, see page 13.

## Family Fun with the Sonnet Sleuth

A literary scavenger hunt around Stratford celebrating the 400th anniversary of the publication of Shakespeare's Sonnets. See page 15. Runs from 23rd April until the end of December.

A co-commission by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

## Organ recital at Holy Trinity Church

With Kerry Beaumont of Coventry Cathedral  
8.00pm, tickets £8, concessions £6, children in full-time education free

**Friday 24th April**

## Bancroft Gardens bloom again!

President of the Birthday Celebrations Committee and Shakespearean actor Sir Donald Sinden reopens Stratford's famous gardens following a period of refurbishment. The ceremony includes:

- ★ The first opening of the new canal lock gates and pedestrian bridge linking the gardens to the River Avon
- ★ The unveiling of a commemorative plaque
- ★ The switching on of the Swan Fountain by local schoolchildren

Throughout Friday afternoon and all day Saturday, visitors can enjoy a programme of artistic events and entertainment in the grounds.



## Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Tribute

Between 2.00pm and 3.00pm Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service enact a tribute in the Bancroft Gardens. The colourful ceremony features the Band of the Corps of Royal Engineers (one of the best marching bands in the world) Beating Retreat and is staged to recognise the invaluable role of the fire service and celebrate the four fire-fighters who lost their lives in the Atherstone-on-Stour fire of November 2007.

## Linking Birthplace to Grave

Historian Michael Wood explores the town's historic spine.  
10.00am start at Shakespeare's Birthplace

## The Shakespeare Birthday Lecture by Michael Wood

New Light on Shakespeare's *Cardenio* (in association with The University of Birmingham).  
4.00pm The Shakespeare Centre. Tickets £10 available from the Shakespeare Bookshop. Tel. 01789 292176



**Saturday 25th April**

## Procession through the town and a fun-filled day of entertainment and celebrations!

Join the pilgrimage from Shakespeare's Birthplace to his grave to commemorate and celebrate his life. See next page for everything that's going on!

**Sunday 26th April**

## 28th Rotary Shakespeare Marathon and Half Marathon

9.30am Waterside. Website: [www.shakespearemarathon.org.uk](http://www.shakespearemarathon.org.uk) for more information

## Holy Trinity Church: Annual Shakespeare Service

11.00am. Readings and music by the RSC. Preacher: Reverend Lord Leslie Griffiths



## Transforming Our Theatres - The Next Stage

An RSC Event (See page 16). Find out more about the ongoing transformation of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.  
2.00pm. The Courtyard Theatre. Free. Tel: 0844 800 1114

More information on activities and procession timings will be available in the week of the Birthday Celebrations.

**Saturday 25th April**

## Morning

### Merry-making in Bancroft Gardens

Enjoy traditional English Country dancing and the Shakespeare Morris Men

#### Town centre comes alive!

- ★ Hear the **Band of the Corps of Royal Engineers**
- ★ Wander amongst strolling players, circus performers and musicians in Tudor costume
- ★ Let *Shakespeare Live!* entertain you with scenes from the dramatist's plays



## Afternoon

### Come to a birthday party with a difference!

- ★ **Over 30** local theatre, music and dance groups celebrate on the streets of Stratford
- ★ Admire **local artists'** work at exhibitions both indoors and out!
- ★ Take part in public workshops and learn **period dancing and stage combat!**



### Town centre and Theatre & New Place Gardens

Relax to the sounds of the **Stratford-upon-Avon Wind Band** and watch *Shakespeare Live!* weave their theatre magic.

Visit The Falstaff's Experience where the **Earl of Oxford's Men** perform abridged Shakespeare plays.

Adults £5, concessions £4 and children £2.50. 1.00pm, 2.00pm, 3.00pm and 4.00pm. Also Tudor Ghost Tours at 7.00pm, 8.00pm and 9.00pm. Tickets £7.50 (includes a souvenir scroll).

### Romantic Sonnets on the River Avon

Listen to **RSC actors** recite Shakespeare's Sonnets aboard the chain ferry.

12.00pm to 4.00pm. Board from the Theatre Gardens, Southern Lane or other side of river. Fare 50p each way

### Birthday Luncheon

Speakers include **Sir Donald Sinden**, **Michael Billington** (The Guardian) and **Professor Stanley Wells**.

12.00pm. Avonbank Pavilion. Tickets £58 from the Celebrations Office, The Shakespeare Centre. Prior booking essential. Tel. 01789 415536

**Eat and drink** at Stratford's fantastic range of cafes, restaurants and pubs!

## Evening

Don't miss the special RSC birthday performance of **As You Like It at The Courtyard Theatre**.

7.30pm. Box Office Tel 0844 800 1110 or order online at [www.rsc.org.uk](http://www.rsc.org.uk)

### Get spooked on the Stratford Ghost Cruise!

7.00pm. River Avon. Adults £10, children £7. Must book in advance. Tel. 01789 292478 or 07855 76377

### Enjoy more *Shakespeare Live!* performances

7.30pm. The Shakespeare Centre. Booking Tel. 01789 415536



## Procession from birthplace to grave

Old favourites, new route, new look!



### Children's Procession 11.30am

Local schoolchildren join the celebrations and parade behind the **Evesham Wind Band** to the church (a shorter route via Southern Lane)

### International Visitors' Procession 10.45am

Starts at Shakespeare's Birthplace, Henley Street

International Visitors, led by **Sir Donald Sinden**, congregate at the Birthplace.

#### Bridge Street 11.00am

Following the **Band of the Corps of Royal Engineers**, International Visitors' Procession moves to Bridge Street.

- ★ Age-old ceremony of unfurling the flags of the nations
- ★ National Anthem
- ★ Local community groups and performers make their entrance – **the party begins!**

### People's Procession 11.40am

Everyone is invited to take part in the final Henley Street march and put flowers on Shakespeare's grave. This is a fantastic gathering so **please be there** – you'll be in good company! The **Coventry Corps of Drums** heads the procession with the **Shakespeare Morris Men** bringing up the rear.

Throughout the processions and well into the afternoon, an exciting line-up of street entertainment and family activities can be found in Henley Street, Bridge Street, Waterside and Bancroft Gardens.

### Facilities for wheelchair users

Space is reserved exclusively for wheelchair users to watch the procession and flag ceremony. The designated area is located at the end of Wood Street between Austin Reed and Barclays Bank.

Times are approximate.

### Waterside, Sheep Street and Chapel Street

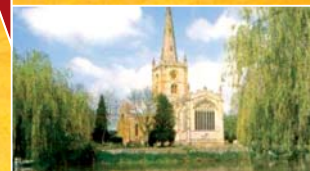
A kaleidoscope of dancing, theatre and music erupts in the streets!

### Church Street

Staff and pupils of **King Edward VI School** take up their traditional role to lead the procession

### Finishes at Holy Trinity Church

Customary laying of flowers on Shakespeare's grave. By lunchtime the vast array of floral tributes creates a stunning living testament to Shakespeare's life and legacy – well worth a second look!



# At-a-glance calendar of events over the Birthday Celebrations period

Wednesday 1st April  
Opening of 'Open Book' art exhibition

Sunday 19th April  
Poetry – In the Springtime of the Year ..... 7.30pm

Monday 20th April  
My Pick of Poems: Jan Morris ..... 7.30pm

Wednesday 22nd April  
Poetry: An Audience with Oxfam ..... 7.30pm

Thursday 23rd April  
Opening of Shakespeare portrait exhibition Shakespeare Found: A Life Portrait including a living portrait 'Ode to a Dark Star' ..... 2.00pm  
Stratford Town Walk ..... 4.00pm  
My Pick of Poems: Michael Wood ..... 7.30pm  
Stratford Town Ghost Walk ..... 7.30pm  
Beijing Performing Arts School: *Hamlet* ..... 8.00pm  
Organ recital. Holy Trinity Church ..... 8.00pm  
Launch of Sonnet Sleuth  
Special events at Shakespeare's Houses and Gardens

Friday 24th April  
Reopening of the Bancroft Gardens  
Linking Birthplace to Grave ..... 10.00am  
Stratford Town Walk ..... 2.00pm  
Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Tribute ..... 2.00pm  
The Shakespeare Birthday Lecture with Michael Wood ..... 4.00pm  
Beijing Performing Arts School: *Hamlet* ..... 7.30pm  
Stratford Town Ghost Walk ..... 7.30pm  
Special events at Shakespeare's Houses and Gardens

Saturday 25th April  
Dancing in Bancroft Gardens ..... 10.00am  
Three Birthday Processions – from birthplace to grave ..... from 11.00am  
Birthday Luncheon ..... 12.00pm  
Sonnets on the River Avon ..... 12.00pm to 4.00pm  
Music, theatre, art and dance. Town centre ..... 1.00pm to 5.00pm  
Stratford Town Walk ..... 2.00pm  
Earl of Oxford's Men perform Shakespeare ..... 1.00pm to 5.00pm  
Stratford Ghost Cruise ..... 7.00pm  
RSC birthday performance of *As You Like It* ..... 7.30pm  
Shakespeare Live! ..... 7.30pm  
Beijing Performing Arts School: *Hamlet* ..... 7.30pm  
Special events and birthday cake at Shakespeare's Houses and Gardens

Sunday 26th April  
Rotary Shakespeare Marathon ..... 9.30am  
Annual Shakespeare Service. Holy Trinity Church ..... 11.00am  
Stratford Town Walk ..... 2.00pm  
Transforming our Theatres – the Next Stage ..... 2.00pm  
The Best Will in the World. Poetry and song ..... 4.00pm Et 7.00pm  
Special events at Shakespeare's Houses and Gardens

Monday 27th April  
Shakespeare's Sonnets and Sex. Talk by Stanley Wells ..... 7.30pm

Tuesday 28th April  
Opening of Stratford Artists' Forum exhibition  
Opening of 'Living Memories' exhibition

Wednesday 29th April  
Storytelling with Sandy Chapman ..... 10.30am  
Pam Ayres ..... 7.30pm

Thursday 30th April  
Ragdoll storytelling. Festival Marquee ..... 10.30am and 12.30pm  
Writing Workshop ..... 2.00pm  
Talk by Andrew Davies, David Nicholls and Mary Cutler ..... 3.00pm  
An evening with Felix Dennis ..... 7.30pm  
Candle-lit late night organ recital. Holy Trinity Church ..... 9.00pm

Friday 1st May  
Talk by local writer Jill Fraser ..... 11.30am  
Writing the Bard ..... 6.30pm  
Julian Clary presents his new novel ..... 6.30pm  
Orchestra of The Swan ..... 8.00pm  
Melvin Bragg talks about his latest book ..... 8.00pm

Saturday 2nd May  
Be a Ballerina for a Day! ..... 10.30am  
Coffee with Tasmin Little and David Curtis ..... 11.00am  
Piano recital with Martin Roscoe ..... 1.00pm  
Football Special with Dan Freeman ..... 2.00pm  
'Warwickshire's Murderous Women' ..... 3.00pm  
Afternoon Tea with poet Wendy Cope ..... 4.00pm  
Gyles Brandreth on his Oscar Wilde Murder Mysteries ..... 7.30pm  
Smetana Piano Trio ..... 8.00pm

Sunday 3rd May  
Music Festival Service. Holy Trinity Church ..... 10.30am  
A taste of Dahl ..... 12.00pm  
Music Festival Lunch with Tasmin Little ..... 1.00pm  
Libby Purves on her new novel ..... 3.00pm  
Orchestra of The Swan ..... 3.30pm  
Stuart Maconie presents his latest book ..... 4.30pm  
Has the Glass Ceiling even cracked? ..... 5.00pm  
Gloria Hunniford on her book 'Always with you' ..... 6.30pm  
Tasmin Little with Martin Roscoe ..... 8.00pm  
Diana Quick talks about her career and autobiography ..... 8.00pm

Monday 4th May  
Art Workshop ..... 10.00am and 2.00pm  
Storytelling with Nikky Smedley ..... 11.00am  
Afternoon Tea with Helen Fry. Author of 'Music and Men' ..... 2.30pm  
Orchestra of The Swan ..... 4.30pm  
Family Matters. Monologue by Ginny Davies ..... 6.00pm  
Lord Roy Hattersley on 'Borrowed Time' ..... 7.30pm  
The Effect of Shakespeare's Sonnets. A talk by Paul Edmondson ..... 7.30pm  
Swan Unbuttoned ..... 8.00pm

Tuesday 5th May  
Local Poets' Evening ..... 7.30pm

Saturday 9th May  
Shyama: Celebrating Rabindranath Tagore ..... 2.00pm

Sunday 10th May  
We're going on a Bear Hunt! ..... 2.00pm  
The Land of Lost Content ..... 7.30pm

# Shakespeare's Houses & Gardens



## Have some cake on us!

Visit any of the houses on **Saturday 25th April** and enjoy a slice of **Shakespeare's Birthday Cake**.

## Shakespeare's Birthplace

**Life, Love and Legacy Exhibition**  
A new introduction to Shakespeare. An unmissable exhibition comprising visual theatre, sound and light. See real treasures and artefacts – such as **Shakespeare's First Folio** – literally brought to life.



**Shakespeare Found: A Life Portrait**  
This groundbreaking exhibition presents compelling evidence that the featured Cobbe painting is the **first and only portrait of Shakespeare painted in his lifetime**. Be among the first to share this important moment in our understanding of Shakespeare and find out for yourself how handsome and alive Shakespeare now seems after 400 years!

**George Chakravarthi's Ode to a Dark Star**  
A dramatic living portrait by internationally acclaimed artist George Chakravarthi.

**Shakespeare Aloud**  
Watch scenes from Shakespeare performed in the birthplace gardens. Talented actors in period costume entertain audiences with scenes from the dramatist's plays.

Visit this delightful Jacobean house with its Elizabethan Knot Garden and remains of New Place, Shakespeare's final beloved home. View the **Web of Life** exhibition and listen to **specialist talks** on the dramatist's life, the imagery in his plays and the house's paintings. Outside visitors can admire the **giant flower sculpture** of Shakespeare's Coat of Arms and children are invited to dress up as Shakespearian characters for a photo opportunity under the famous Mulberry tree.



Where the Shakespeare story ended

## Hall's Croft



The Jacobean Doctor's House

## Mary Arden's Farm



A real working Tudor farm

## Anne Hathaway's Cottage



The most romantic Shakespeare House

Following the Easter Holiday theme of 'Growing Pains' Hall's Croft provides some grisly insights into being a Tudor Tot in its latest exhibition '**Gory and Ghastly**'. Children can discover the perilous path of childhood in the 16th and 17th centuries through a range of fun activities.

**Create your own birthday card** for Mr William Shakespeare and post it on the 'Bard's Birthday line'! Learn to play Tudor games in the beautiful garden and seek out hidden childhood treats and necessities throughout the house – things that a Tudor Tot would have had to live without!

Saturday 25th April sees costumed re-enactors putting on a **Mummers Play** in Henley Street with a repeat performance at the farm on Sunday. Any child visiting Mary Arden's Farm over the celebratory period gets a slice of **Shakespeare's Birthday Cake** and a **balloon** to mark the day! Birthday festivities incorporate singing, dancing and Tudor games for youngsters. Plus there're all the regular attractions, with the working Tudor kitchen, friendly animals and resident Birds of Prey being firm favourites.

Over the Birthday Celebration weekend **readers in Shakespearian costume** entertain visitors in the grounds. And on Saturday 2nd May the estate presents its very own '**Gardeners' Question Time**' with The Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust's Head Gardener, Barry Locke. Guests can also enjoy the Shakespeare's Flowers tour – an extended walk that takes in all the flowers in bloom.

All tickets are valid for 12 months from date of purchase, so you can visit time and again for free.

Tickets: Save 33% on a five-house ticket which includes one entry to the portrait exhibition. Admission on the door or save another 10% by booking online: [www.shakespeare.org.uk](http://www.shakespeare.org.uk)

## TOWN TRAILS

### 23rd April to the end of December Sonnet Sleuth

Shakespeare's Sonnets come alive with Sonnet Sleuth, a literary scavenger hunt that tests everyone's detective skills. Find the 14 special locations around Stratford town centre and discover the clues hidden in the Sonnets. This promises to be great family fun and an ideal activity for school groups too. Compete with each other to find answers that connect Shakespeare's enduring Sonnets to the modern world. All young players receive a souvenir of Stratford.

The New York poet and performance artist Nicole Blackman has created Sonnet Sleuth as part of a planned series of commissions of contemporary artists by the RSC aimed at reinterpreting the work of Shakespeare for today's audiences.

Starting on Shakespeare's birthday, 23rd April, Sonnet Sleuth runs throughout the year. To take part and find out where the hunt starts, pick up instructions and maps between 10.00am and 4.00pm from the RSC's Courtyard Theatre\*, Southern Lane or Shakespeare's Birthplace, Henley Street. Sonnet Sleuth is free and the game takes about two hours to complete. \*Closed on Sundays

### 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th April Stratford Town Walk

2.00pm. Duration 1½ - 2 hours.

Meet Waterside, opposite Sheep Street. No booking required. Tickets £5, over 65s and students £4

### 23rd and 24th April

### Stratford Town Ghost Walk

7.30pm. Duration 1½ hours. Must be booked in advance.

Tel. 01789 292478 or 07855 760377. Tickets: Adults £5, children £3. Also on Mondays



## THEATRE

### Royal Shakespeare Company

### Sonnets on the Ferry

25th April, 12.00pm to 4.00pm.

Take a trip across the river from the theatre gardens and enjoy the sound of Shakespeare's sonnets spoken by RSC actors reading from the RSC Individual Works edition of The Sonnets and Other Poems, published in late April. Fare 50p.

### As You Like It – Birthday Performance

25th April, 7.30pm. The Courtyard Theatre.

Box Office: 0844 800 1110 or [www.rsc.org.uk](http://www.rsc.org.uk)

The official birthday performance by the Royal Shakespeare Company is *As You Like It*, directed by Michael Boyd, RSC Artistic Director.

*As You Like It* runs in repertoire in The Courtyard Theatre from 18th April until 3rd October. Other productions in the RSC's repertoire this year are *The Winter's Tale*, *Julius Caesar* and two new plays, *The Drunks* and *The Grain Store*. More details at [www.rsc.org.uk](http://www.rsc.org.uk)

### Transforming Our Theatres – The Next Stage

26th April, 2.00pm. The Courtyard Theatre. Tickets – free.

Contact 0844 800 1114 to book

Creating the RSC's new home on the banks of the River Avon.

As part of the Birthday Celebrations, everyone's invited to join Vikki Heywood, RSC Executive Director, and Peter Wilson, Project Director, to hear the latest news from behind the hoardings about the ongoing transformation of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. If you've never been in The Courtyard Theatre, this is your chance to take a look at the prototype for the new Royal Shakespeare Theatre auditorium and find out more about the RSC's plans for their future new home.

### Stand up for Shakespeare

In 2008 the RSC launched a manifesto for Shakespeare in schools called 'Stand up for Shakespeare'. The RSC want children and young people to experience Shakespeare's plays in ways that excite, engage and inspire them and over 12,000 people have signed up in support of the on line campaign that finished on Shakespeare's birthday. Watch out for street theatre performances by students from Stratford and Warwickshire schools on 25th April. Representatives from Stratford primary schools will also be carrying Stand up for Shakespeare banners in the birthday procession. For information on the manifesto – [www.rsc.org.uk/standupforshakespeare](http://www.rsc.org.uk/standupforshakespeare)



### Shakespeare Aloud

Watch performances of Shakespeare in the garden of Shakespeare's Birthplace.

### Beijing Shengji Performing Arts School and Stratford-upon-Avon College *Hamlet: Sword of Vengeance*

23rd to 25th April, 7.30pm. Civic Hall.

Tickets £8. Concessions £5

A must for any Shakespeare fan! Stratford-upon-Avon College, in collaboration with the Beijing Shengji Arts School, presents an adaptation of *Hamlet* in Mandarin Chinese (with English surtitles).

Tickets are available from the Civic Hall on 01789 207100 or [www.civichall.co.uk](http://www.civichall.co.uk).

For more information, email: [college@stratford.ac.uk](mailto:college@stratford.ac.uk).



# POETRY

## The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust presents the 56th Stratford-upon-Avon Poetry Festival 2009

A celebration of poetry in the hometown of the world's greatest poet. Diverse and inspirational recitals and lectures from leading poets, actors and historians.

Shakespeare Centre, Henley Street, Stratford upon Avon

Sunday 19th April, 7.30pm.  
Tickets £12

### In the Springtime of the Year

Poetry and prose to celebrate the new season devised by Roger Pringle. Cast includes Alex Jennings, Jeffery Dench and Jane Lapotaire.

Monday 20th April, 7.30pm. Tickets £10



### My Pick of Poems: Jan Morris

Travel writer Jan Morris discusses her favourite poems with Paul

Edmondson. Readings by actor Ian Hughes.

Wednesday 22nd April, 7.30pm.  
Tickets £10

### An Audience with Oxfam

Joining forces for the first time, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Oxfam present a special fundraiser comprising an evening of poetry from some of today's finest lyricists. Audience members may also read a favourite poem (please book in advance).

Thursday April 23rd, 4.00pm.  
Tickets £10

### My Pick of Poems: Michael Wood

Historian and television presenter Michael Wood discusses his favourite poems with Paul Edmondson. Readings by actor Sunday Ormonde from The Archers.

Friday 24th April, 4pm. Tickets £10  
**The Shakespeare Birthday Lecture**

New Light on Shakespeare's *Cardenio* a lecture by Michael Wood. In association with The University of Birmingham.

Sunday 26th April, 4.00pm and 7.00pm.  
Levi Fox Hall. King Edward VI School.  
Tickets £15.00

### The Best Will in the World

Shakespeare meets showbiz in this sparkling entertainment which celebrates the dramatist in poetry, prose and song.

Monday 27th April, 7.30pm. Tickets £12  
**Shakespeare's Sonnets and Sex**

In an exciting collaboration with Shakespeare's Globe Education, Stanley Wells presents a talk supported by readings by actor John Hopkins.

Saturday 2nd May, 4.00pm. Tickets £15



### Afternoon Tea with Wendy Cope

This award-winning poet offers an entertaining afternoon of recitals, discussion and a book signing. Ticket price includes afternoon tea. "...the most fun you can have sitting down in public!"

Monday May 4th, 7.30pm. Tickets £12  
**The Effect of Shakespeare's Sonnets**

A talk by Paul Edmondson supported by readings by actor Emma Fielding. In association with Shakespeare's Globe Education.

Tuesday 5th May, 7.30pm.  
Free admission

### Local Poets' Evening

Any writer is invited to take part and read their work as is anyone who just wants to listen. Those who wish to recite should arrive by 7.00pm.

Saturday 9th May 2.00pm. Tickets £5  
**Shyama: Celebrating Rabindranath Tagore**

A celebration of the Indian writer, poet, philosopher, artist and musician on the anniversary of his birth. Includes introductory talk, film screening and live performances.

Sunday 10th May, 7.30pm. The Shakespeare Centre. Tickets £15.00  
**The Land of Lost Content**

A celebration of the music of AE Housman.

For details of Children's Festival events, see page 21

# MUSIC



## Orchestra of the Swan Spring Sounds International Music Festival 2009

Five days of celebratory concerts from some of the world's top musicians including Tasmin Little and Martin Roscoe.

Thursday 30th April, 9.00pm. Holy Trinity Church. Tickets £7.50

### Candle-lit late night organ recital

Atmospheric musical evening with Andrew Jones.

Friday 1st May, 8.00pm. Civic Hall. Tickets £11.50 to £21.50

### Orchestra of the Swan

Tasmin Little plays Mendelssohn. "Tasmin Little can justly be regarded as Britain's finest violinist" The Independent

Saturday 2nd May, 1.00pm. Civic Hall. Tickets £10 to £12.50

### Piano Recital

Martin Roscoe plays a programme including Beethoven's magnificent 'Pathétique Sonata'.

Saturday 2nd May, 11.00am. Alveston Manor Hotel. Tickets £10 (includes coffee)

### Coffee with Tasmin Little and David Curtis

"What does it take to be a Maestro?"

Saturday 2nd May, 8.00pm. Civic Hall. Tickets £11.50 to £21.50

### Smetana Piano Trio

Czech Genius!

Sunday 3rd May, 10.30am. Holy Trinity Church

### Festival Service

Sunday 3rd May, 1pm. Alveston Manor Hotel. To book Tel. 0844 879 9138

### Festival Lunch

Join Tasmin Little and other artists for Sunday lunch.

Sunday 3rd May, 3.30pm. Compton Verney Tickets £15.00. Concessions £11.50. Tel. 01926 645500

### Orchestra of the Swan: French Impressions

Sunday 3rd May, 8.00pm. Civic Hall. Tickets £11.50 to £21.50

### Tasmin Little plays Partners in Time with Martin Roscoe.



Monday 4th May, 2.30pm. Alveston Manor Hotel. Tickets £10 (includes afternoon tea)

### Afternoon tea with Helen Fry

Author of *Music and men: The life and loves of Harriet Cohen*.

Monday 4th May, 4.30pm. Civic Hall. Tickets £11.50 to £21.50

### Orchestra of the Swan

An English Celebration.

Monday 4th May, 8.00pm. Alveston Manor Hotel. Tickets £10.00

### Swan Unbuttoned

Popular quartet plays Bach to The Beatles.

Box office: 01789 207100  
[www.springsounds.co.uk](http://www.springsounds.co.uk)



For details of Children's Festival events, see page 21

For details of Children's Festival events, see page 21

Box office: Tel 01789 292176

[www.shakespeare.org.uk/poetryfestival.html](http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/poetryfestival.html)

# LITERATURE

## A celebration of words, books and writing.

Famous names from the literary world entertain with readings and talk about their varied and interesting works.

1st April to 13th May. The Gallery, Stratford Leisure Centre. Free admission

### Open Book

Exhibition of artists' handmade books, illustrations and book cover designs using traditional and contemporary methods and materials. Entry forms available from The Gallery notice board.

28th April to 4th May. Civic Hall and Festival Marquee. Free admission

### Stratford Artists' Forum

Exhibition of local artists' work and includes Escape Exhibition 'Narrative from Memories'.

28th April to 4th May Civic Hall. Free admission

### Living Memories

A unique exhibition put together by local schoolchildren featuring recollections of Stratford people in words and pictures.

Wednesday 29th April, 7.30pm Civic Hall. Tickets £17.50, £16.30 and £15.30

### Pam Ayres

The popular poet weaves her magic.

Thursday 30th April, 6.00pm Festival Marquee. Tickets £8

### Andrew Davies, David Nicholls and Mary Cutler

The art of adaptation – exploring the adapter's work from book to broadcast.

Thursday 30th April 10.00am to 3.00pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets £30

### Writing Workshop

With Sophie King, Oxford University Creative Writing Tutor.

Thursday 30th April, 2pm. Stratford Library. Tickets £8

### Writing Workshop

How to get published with Sara O'Keefe from the Orion Publishing Group.

Thursday 30th April, 7.30pm. Civic Hall. Cabaret style: Tickets £12. Tables of ten £100

### An Evening with Felix Dennis

Poetry and humour with this very entertaining entrepreneur.

Friday 1st May, 11.30am. Civic Hall. Tickets £8

### Jill Fraser

Local author talks about her book, *More Tea, Less Vicar*.

Friday 1st May, 6.30pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets £8

### Writing The Bard

Professor Jonathan Bate, Ben Crystal and Chris Rush discuss fresh angles on writing about Shakespeare's extraordinary life.

Friday 1st May, 6.30pm Festival Marquee Tickets £10

### Julian Clary

Talks about his new novel, *Devil in Disguise*.

Friday 1st May, 8.00pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets £10

### Melvyn Bragg

Presents his latest novel, *Remember Me*.

Saturday 2nd May, 3.00pm. Falstaff Experience. Tickets £6

### Nick Billingham

Local author on his book, *Warwickshire's Murderous Women*.

Saturday 2nd May, 7.30pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets £10



### Gyles Brandreth

The entertaining writer and broadcaster on the latest of his *Oscar Wilde Murder Mysteries*.

Sunday 3rd May, 3.00pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets £8



### Libby Purves

Columnist and broadcaster talks about her new novel, *Shadow Child*.

Sunday 3rd May, 4.30pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets £8

### Stuart Maconie

The BBC broadcaster on his new novel, *In Search of Middle England*.

Sunday 3rd May, 5.00pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets £8

### Has the Glass Ceiling even cracked?

Libby Purves, Asian writer Jasvinder Sanghera and playwright Zoe Lewis question whether women have reached anything close to equality.



# STRATFORD-UPON-AVON LITERARY FESTIVAL

Sunday 3rd May, 6.30pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets £10



### Gloria Hunniford

Popular broadcaster discusses her book, *Always With You*.

Sunday 3rd May, 8.00pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets £8

### Diana Quick

On her shining career and autobiography, *A Tug on the Thread*.

Monday 4th May, 6.00pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets £8

### Family Matters

One-woman monologue by Ginny Davies.

Monday 4th May, 7.30pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets



### Lord Roy Hattersley

Talks about, *Borrowed Time* – the story of Britain between the wars.

For details of the Children's Festival events see page 21 or go to [www.stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk](http://www.stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk) Concessions of £1 are offered to those aged 16 and under and over 60



## MORE FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

Lots of fun and educational events to captivate our younger audiences.

### Written Word

Wednesday 29th April, 10.30am.  
Stratford Library.  
Tickets on door

#### Storytelling with Sandy Chapman

A delightful morning of make-believe for the under fives.

Thursday 30th April, every half hour from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Festival Marquee. Free admission.

#### Ragdoll Storytelling

Meet your favourite characters from The Night Garden.

Sunday 3rd May, 12.00pm. Festival Marquee. Tickets £5

#### A taste of Dahl

Anthony Pedley performs the life and works of the famous children's author.

Monday 4th May, 11.00am. Festival Marquee. Tickets £3

#### Storytelling with Nikky Smedley

Tall tales for the under sevens!

Sunday 10th May, 2.00pm. Stratford Library. Tickets £1

#### We're Going on a Bear Hunt

Unmissable under-fives poetry event – songs and rhyming stories all about Teddy Bears. Includes a Teddy Bear hunt.

Plus a programme of educational activities for schools. Tickets £2 per child. Public tickets available at £4.50

For full details of the school programme including authors: Philip Reeve, Philip Ardagh, Julia Golding, Dan Freedman, Chris Rush, Jill Lewis and Angela Woolfe, go to [www.stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk](http://www.stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk)

### Dance

Saturday 2nd May, 10.30am. Festival Marquee. Tickets £6.50. Family ticket £15  
**Be a Ballerina for a Day!**

Join author Angela Woolfe, meet real life dancers and have your face painted to play the part.

### Art

Monday 4th May, 10.00am to 12.00pm and 2.00pm to 4.00pm.  
Festival Marquee

#### Art Workshop

Come and make a book!



### Music

Saturday 2nd May, 3.00pm. Holy Trinity Church Hall. Family Ticket £5

#### Family Opera Workshop

An interactive Creative Workshop for adults and children.

### Sport

Saturday 2nd May, 2.00pm.  
Festival Marquee. Tickets £6.50.  
Family Ticket £15

#### Football Special

An afternoon of 'footie fun' with football author Dan Freeman. Includes a football skills workshop and special appearances.

## Shakespeare's Birthday Party

### Registration Form

Title Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other.....

Name .....

Organisation or business (if applicable) .....

Address .....

Contact telephone number .....

Email address .....

Brief description of proposed party or activity

Date of event..... Time .....

Venue .....

Number of people involved .....

If Saturday 25th April, do you wish to promote your event in the town's birthday celebrations guide? Yes/No. Do you require public space in the town centre? Yes/No

I agree to be bound by the conditions of entry

Signature .....

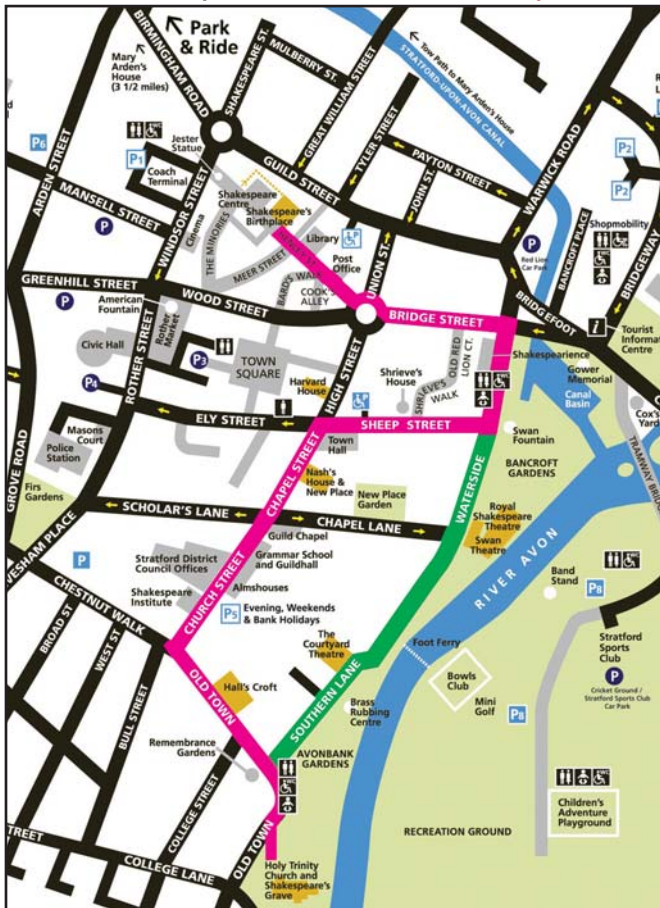
Send to: **Shakespeare's Birthday Party, World Class Stratford Project, Stratford on Avon District Council, Elizabeth House, Church Street, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 6HX**

Conditions of entry

1. All activities should take place between 23rd and 26th April 2009
2. Activities must be legal and, if the public is involved, comply with Health and Safety standards.
3. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust reserves the right to use any images submitted for its promotional material
4. Closing date for entries is 15th April and for inclusion in the celebrations programme 12th April
5. Participation in the Shakespeare Birthday Party is at the individual's or groups' own risk and the organisers take no responsibility for loss, damage or personal injury.

Remember to take up to five photographs of your activity or party and add them along with your name and title of event to [www.shakespearesbirthday.org.uk](http://www.shakespearesbirthday.org.uk)

# Stratford-upon-Avon town map



 Birthday Celebration Procession route

 Children's route

Reproduction of this map is forbidden without the written consent of Stratford-upon-Avon District Council. (Tel. Legal Services 01789 267575)

The Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations Committee is supported by:



*The heart of England*  
The West Midlands Region



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