

BUSINESS NEWS

Stratforward Newsletter

Issue 23 - 15 June 2016

River Festival Today (well 2/3 July) - Gon-Dola to Venice tomorrow!

A unique gondola will be one of the highlights of Stratford's River Festival this year.

The 6.5m gondola - made entirely of cardboard - will make its maiden voyage at this year's festival before heading off to Venice... via Birmingham!

The creation is half the length of a real gondola but made in exactly the same way - only using cardboard instead of traditional materials.

The eighth annual Stratford upon Avon River Festival, organised by Stratforward, is taking place on July 2 and 3 and is expected to attract tens of thousands of visitors to the town.

Ahead of the festival, renowned 'cardboard' artist Will Alexander has spent weeks constructing the gondola at a secret location near Stratford. He will take the helm of his cardboard creation for its maiden voyage at the River Festival to practice his gondoliering skills.

After that, he will take it to a festival in Birmingham before heading off to Venice, where he plans to show it at international exhibition, the Venice

Biennale, and also hopes to work as a gondolier carrying passengers on the Italian city's famous canals.

Stratford-born Mr Alexander, 40, studied fine art at the University of Central England (UCE) - now Birmingham City University - but now lives in London.

The gondola is not his first cardboard construction. Previous work includes a cardboard ice cream van called 'icecreamvanman', and 'Reinventing the Wheel', which is currently part of the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition.

He first dreamed up his gondola project five years ago and enlisted the help of Stratforward member and River Festival sponsor Avon Boating, which has its own fully-restored gondola originally owned by Marie Correlli. Mr Alexander has been given space by Avon Boating to work on his creation, as well as advice and training from managing director Nick Birch.

Continued.....



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Speaking at his hidden workshop, Mr Alexander said: "Ideally I want to take it to Venice and work as a gondolier with it, that's my crazy dream.

"It looks lovely just as a framework, and if I wanted to I could just put it in a gallery as it is. But the dream is to put it in the water and that's what we're going to do."

Mr Alexander is internationally known for his work with cardboard. He was first inspired to work with it while studying in Birmingham and went on to make a cardboard car that he 'drove' down the city's Broad Street on a Friday night.

"A couple of years later a group of us went to Zurich and we took a cardboard tram that we actually on the tracks in Zurich," he said.

"What I realised is if you make anything out of cardboard people love it because they remember sitting in cardboard boxes when they were children. It makes people feel like children again. With the ice cream van it makes people feel like they are having their first ice cream again. With the gondola it might remind people of what their first imagining of Venice was."

The 2016 Stratford River Festival will see around 80 narrow boats moor up along the banks of the Avon. It will feature a huge firework display, dozens of charity, craft and food and drink stalls. There will also be performances from world-class acts on two stages, including six-piece party band **Mister Shakes**, featuring **Brian Ferry's sax player**, and one of the UK's leading **Glenn Miller tribute groups**, the **Ashby Big Band**.



River Festival brochures are now out. 50,000 brochures, packed with information about this year's event have been printed, with 40,000 set to be delivered direct to households throughout South Warwickshire and a further 10,000 being distributed to Stratfordward members through the Town Hosts. If you're a Stratfordward member and haven't received any brochures yet but want some, please email sandi@stratforward.co.uk



AVIVA

Women's Tour

15-19 June 2016



The Aviva Women's Tour comes to town tomorrow (Thursday), with crowds expected to pour into the town to see some of the world's top female cyclists.

The 140km Warwickshire leg, which forms the second day of the tour, starts in Atherstone and works its way down the county before arriving at the finishing line in Stratford's Bridge Street in the afternoon.

With thousands of followers expected to descend on the town, Stratford's businesses are reminded that road closures and parking restrictions will be in place.

Road closures will operate at varying times in town centre streets including Bridge Street, High Street, Sheep Street, Waterside, Wood Street and Henley Street. Parking will also be suspended in locations including Shipston Road, Bridge Street, High Street, Sheep Street, and Waterside. (see map on next page for further info)

There are plenty of ways for businesses to get involved in the buzz of the race, which is being shown on ITV4, from opening early to taking a picture and tweeting it using the hashtag #avivawt2016.

A promo zone will be set up on Waterside where Stratford will have a stand manned by a Town Host and Stratford staff to promote the town's businesses.

If you're a Stratford member and haven't yet sent any leaflets or promotional material to be distributed by the stand, drop by the Stratford offices on Sheep Street to drop it off or call a town host before the end of today (weds) and they will collect it. Alternatively, you can deliver it to the stand in the promo zone on Thursday morning at 10.30am

Other activities on Waterside tomorrow will include British Cycling's 'Breeze' programme to encourage women to take up bike riding and Warwickshire Road Safety Group will be giving people road safety guidance and live demonstrations with qualified cycling instructors.

Before the professionals arrive, primary schools grasstrack cyclists will ride on the finishing straight before being presented with medals, and there will also be a toddler event, the 'Strider Bike Challenge', which is open to children aged 18 months to five years.

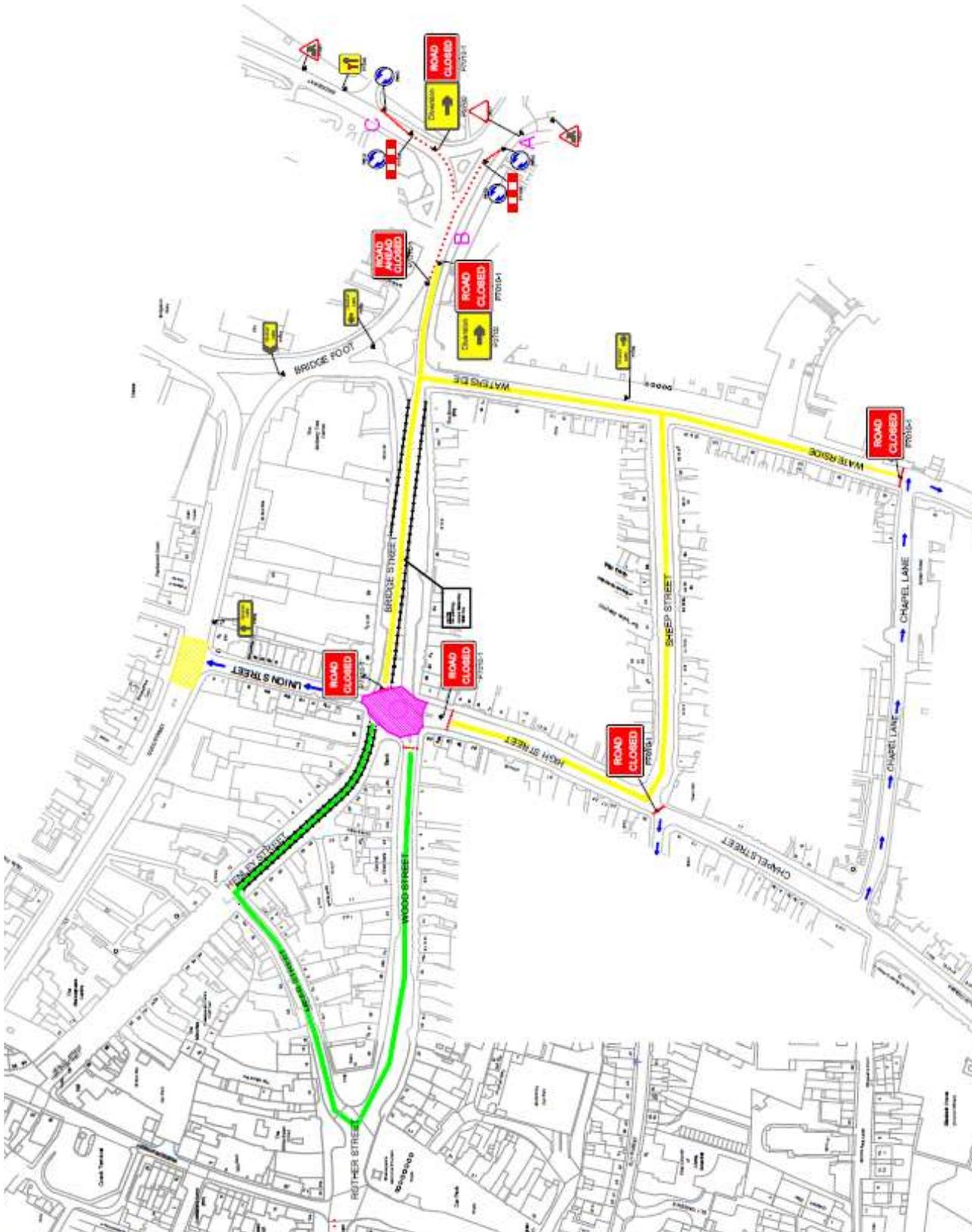
STOP PRESS

Watch out for CWR's Phil Upton arriving in Stratford this afternoon after cycling the whole of tomorrow's route. He should arrive outside the RSC/Arden Hotel at about 4.30. His ride is being featured on CWR throughout today. Well done Phil!



ROAD CLOSURES

The roads indicated will be closed between 11am and 4pm on 16th June. See www.warwickshire.gov.uk/womens-tour/womens-tour-road-closures for more information



Stratford Means Business in the Light of closures

Efforts are underway to keep Stratford's town centre a thriving hub for businesses amid fears that a clutch of the town's most prominent shops will soon disappear in the light of news that some of the UK's most famous high street names are under serious threat nationwide.

After the news that BHS, Austin Reed, Country Casuals and Viyella - all of which feature in Stratford - look set to close across the country, Stratford-on-Avon District Council and its partners are looking at a number of options to attract businesses into the town centre.

In an effort to attract more businesses to the town centre, the District Council is offering free planning advice to new potential occupants of empty shops, as well as business rates relief.

Retail relief is available retrospectively for any retail property with a rateable value of up to £50,000 for 2014/15 (£1,000 relief) and 2015/16 (£1,500 relief). Applications can be made up to September 30 this year.

Reoccupation relief of 50% can be awarded for 18 months for businesses that moved into previously empty retail premises between April 1, 2014 and March 31, 2016.

Businesses can also apply for Hardship Relief, a discretionary relief available for any business suffering financial hardship. Full details need to be provided on the application including the last two year's audited accounts.

Other support for businesses wanting to set up or relocate to Stratford includes inward investment opportunities, new business start-up advice, access to funding and finance, apprenticeship opportunities and mentoring.

The Council's new business centre, Venture House, on the Avenue Farm Industrial Estate, also provides office units and hot-desking opportunities for new business start-ups and existing small businesses.

Businesses can take advantage of a deal on offer at Venture House, with the opportunity to try five days for free then buy five days for £60 and get an extra five days for free. The offer is valid until September 9.

Cllr Chris Saint, Leader of Stratford-on-Avon District Council, said: "It is terribly sad to see major High Street brands closing down, particularly national institutions such as BHS and Currys.

"The main concern now must be for the staff and what can be done to help them secure alternative employment. We are keen to attract new businesses to empty town centre shops to sustain our shopping offer.

"Changing shopping habits and increased use of online shopping have created a whole new set of challenges for every town centre.

"Despite these closures our town centre remains active with business, leisure, retail and employment opportunities through new redevelopment schemes such as Bell Court and Red Lion Court.

"Whilst these closures are to be regretted, Stratford-on-Avon District retains a lively and varied retail offer and this council will continue to work with partners to create an environment where our High Streets prosper, creating job opportunities and vibrant places to shop for our residents."



Stratford Ready to Rock and Row this Saturday



Preparations are nearly complete for Stratford upon Avon Boat Club's Fine Boat Regatta this weekend - which always attracts crowds of competitors and spectators to the town.

The regatta, which has been taking place in Stratford since 1879, sees crews race on the town stretch of the Avon from Holy Trinity Church to the rowing club's grounds by The Tramway Bridge.

Saturday's event, which is sponsored by Stratford based (and Stratford member) property developer The Rosconn Group, attracts interest from across the UK. There are 162 entries this year.

The event draws able-bodied and adaptive crews from far and wide. In addition to the many Stratford crews there will be others including: Bewdley Rowing Club; Cardiff & Vale Schools Rowing Association; Evesham Rowing Club; Nottingham & Union Rowing Club; Royal Grammar School Worcester; Stowe Sculling Club; and Warwick Boat Club.

Crowds are expected at Bancroft Gardens and the Recreation Ground where they can enjoy the racing right the way through from 8.30am until around 6.30pm.

Club President Paul Stanton said: "The Stratford upon Avon Boat Club looks forward to welcoming competing crews, VIPs and guests and especially Stratford and Warwickshire residents and visitors to the town down to watch and enjoy what is going to be an action-packed day."



Established in 1879, Stratford upon Avon Boat Club is the home of Paralympic Gold Medallist James Roe and Junior World Champion Camilla Hadland.

The club also hosts a Fun Regatta, set to take place on Saturday, July 9. Racing, which goes from the Chain Ferry to the finish line at the boat club, will take place from 8.30am to 5.30pm.

Paul Hazelwood, Stratford Boat Club's Treasurer, said: "The regatta and also the Fun Regatta in July are very weather dependent events and without our sponsors, we couldn't risk holding the regattas."

"We are also amazingly lucky to have help from other river organisations such as the Avon Navigation Trust, the Sea Cadets, Avon Boating, the Environment Agency, Bancroft Cruisers, Canal & River Tours, the Countess of Evesham and also the co-operation of those who make their living on the river."

The Stratford upon Avon Fun Boat Regatta is on Saturday 9th July.





Have a "Fairy" nice time in Stratford next week

If you look closely, you might just see some fairies in Stratford next week.

In what Shakespeare saw as the most magical time of the year, Midsummer, the RSC has teamed up with Slung Low Theatre Company, which specialises in theatre in unusual spaces, to create a unique event in the town.

The RSC has commissioned Slung Low, together with Rash Dash, the School of Night and a group of artists, to create a 'Fairy Portal Camp' in the theatre gardens.

The 'pop up' camp hosting free public activities opens on Sunday in the Avonbank Gardens; open all day through until Saturday, June 25.

Within the camp, audiences can take part in free activities including willow-work, poetry classes, improvisation, cooking, costume making, singing, dance classes and writing workshops – as everyone joins together to celebrate the return of the RSC's touring production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The camp comes in the 400th anniversary year, but also at the magical time traditionally thought to be when a portal between our world and the world of the fairies opens up allowing spirits to cause mischief and mayhem.

The Fairy Portal Camp will include regular silent disco 'fairy raves' around the bonfire, and a chance to help cook dinner for everyone present and watch that evening's performance under the trees.

Celebrations culminate on Saturday 25 June with the attempt to 'open the portal' between the two worlds with a theatrical immersive ceremony of feast, fire and song - complete with mechanical dolphins travelling down the River Avon.

All events are free. Tickets for the ceremony on Saturday June 25 are bookable via the RSC ticket hotline on 01789 403493 and www.rsc.org.uk/fairyportalcamp

FAIRY PORTAL CAMP SCHEDULE:

Sunday 19 June

From 7pm, the public is invited to welcome Slung Low, Rash Dash, The School of Night and the artists taking up residence on the site of the Fairy Portal Camp.

Monday 20 – Friday 24 June

The Camp, 11am - 5pm

Everyone can drop by the camp during the day and join activities including willow-work, poetry classes, band jam, improvisation, cooking, costume making, singing, dance classes and writing workshops.

Rash Dash Fairy Rave, 5.30 - 6.30pm

Part dance class, part physical abandon. The public is invited to come and dance with Rash Dash around the bonfire. Dance hard and recover by **staying for dinner with us. If dancing isn't your thing, come and help us**



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cook dinner.

Camp Dinner, 7pm

Come dine with the company. Each night they'll serve a homemade dinner to all comers. Over dinner discuss ideas for the Ceremony, chat fairies with the gang or just enjoy the food.

Evening Performance, 8pm

Each night after dinner the company will perform under the trees. Part cabaret, part development for the ceremony on Saturday night, each evening will be different. Featuring song, dance, drama, poetry and a mechanical dolphin.

Saturday 25 June – The Ceremony



'Shake it Purple' for The Shakespeare Hospice.

Stratford businesses are being urged to come up with ideas to 'Shake it Purple' next week for the latest fundraising event for The Shakespeare Hospice.

The charity is holding a purple-themed fundraiser next Friday (24 June) with local companies, shops and pubs, as well as schools and community groups, encouraged to get involved.

Several local businesses and schools are already signed up with activities planned for the big day, and some companies are 'shaking it purple' in the run-up to 24 June.

Whether it's baking purple cakes to dressing in purple, or simply shaking one of the hospice's purple collection buckets, the charity is keen for people to get involved.

There's the chance to get involved in 'purple bingo', retailers can run 'purple raffles', and car dealerships can organise events like filling cars with purple balloons. People can also get involved by sharing their 'purple selfies', tweeting them to @thebardshospice with the

hashtag #shakeitpurple.

All of the cash raised will go to support the award-winning Shakespeare Hospice, which provides care and support across Warwickshire and the North Cotswolds to people with life limiting illnesses and their loved ones. It is also the only provider of a fully registered nurse-led, 24/7 Palliative Care Service for patients in the area.

Matthew Price, corporate fundraiser at the Shakespeare Hospice, said: "This year we have a new fundraiser called Shake it Purple, we're asking businesses and schools to get involved in some purple-themed fundraising on 24 June!

"We have lots of easy ideas including bake it purple, dress in purple or quiz it purple.

"A few businesses have signed up but we need lots more to raise funds and awareness for The Shakespeare Hospice so we can continue to provide care to those who need it most in our local community."

Bancroft Gardens Awarded Certificate of Excellence

Stratford's Bancroft Gardens has earned international recognition after scooping a Certificate of Excellence from review website TripAdvisor.

The district council-owned park has been heaped with praise by visitors, earning it the prestigious certificate.

Now in its sixth year, TripAdvisor's Certificate of Excellence celebrates hospitality businesses across the world, from accommodation to attractions, that have achieved consistently great reviews on TripAdvisor over the past year.

According to the site, Bancroft Gardens is rated 21st out of 95 things to do in Stratford, with 109 visitors rating it as excellent or very good.

Recent TripAdvisor reviews describe the park as a: "nice place to take a walk", "a riverside refuge", "a great place to stop & rest", and a "lovely space".

The accolade for Bancroft Gardens comes just weeks after Warwickshire was recognised as one of Europe's top destinations to visit this summer.

The county was ranked number six in Lonely Planet's Best in Europe 2016 list, with travel guide experts describing it as "brimming with beauty" and praising its "bucolic hills, sublime castles and historic market towns".

Bancroft Gardens, on the bank of the River Avon and in front of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, attract over a million visitors every year.

The site was originally an area of land where the townspeople grazed their animals, and the Canal Basin formed the terminus of the Stratford-to-Birmingham canal, completed in 1816. The Gardens also occupy the site of former canal wharves, warehouses and a second canal basin which was built in 1826 and refilled in 1902.

Cllr Mike Brain, Technical and Community Services Portfolio Holder at Stratford-on-

Avon District Council, said: "Bancroft Gardens is a super green space in the heart of Stratford-upon-Avon for locals and visitors to enjoy all year round.

"Receiving an accolade like this is a real source of pride for us, and reflects the excellent work the District Council does in partnership with our contractors to make Bancroft Gardens the fantastic attraction that it is.

"There is no greater seal of approval than being recognised by our visitors, and we'd like to thank all of our visitors who took the time to write a review on TripAdvisor and we look forward to continuing to welcome visitors to Bancroft Gardens."

Heather Leisman, Vice President of Industry Marketing at TripAdvisor, added: "With the Certificate of Excellence, TripAdvisor honours hospitality businesses that have consistently received strong praise and ratings from travellers.

"This recognition helps travellers identify and book properties that regularly deliver great service. TripAdvisor is proud to play this integral role in helping travellers feel more confident in their booking decisions."



Cheers as annual Beer Festival Hits Town



The event, which was organised by the Shakespeare branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), was held at Stratford Racecourse over Friday and Saturday.

More than 100 types of ales, ciders and perries were consumed by festival goers at the event and with the theme of Wales, the West and the Best, visitors could try tipplers from Wales and West Country breweries and producers as well as their local favourites.

The festival was supported by several Stratford members, including White Swan Hotel on Rother Street, **which is owned by festival sponsor Fuller's and The Bear Free House, which supports the event financially and whose landlord Simon Taylor takes part in the sampling.**

Stratford Mayor Juliet Short opened the festival and Shakespeare Hospice was presented with a cheque for £510, raised from donations of unused drinks tokens at last **year's event. More than £1,000 was also raised by** volunteers from their stall through the sale of scratch cards, tombola tickets and donations. The amount adds to £8,449 that the event has already raised for the charity between 2007 and 2015.

To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the event, the winning breweries of the 'Beer of the Festival' award for the previous nine events were invited back, while several commemorative ales had also been produced. 'Beer of the Festival' was voted as Gower Power from Gower Brewery, and 'Cider of the Festival' - for the second year running - was Cuckoo Spit, produced by two members of the Shakespeare CAMRA branch, Dave and Karen Wilson, from Harvington.

A spokesman for the Shakespeare CAMRA branch said the festival had also seen another 30 new members signed up, adding to more than 400 current local branch members. He said the committee organisers would like to thank all the sponsors and volunteers who helped make the festival such an enjoyable and successful weekend.

Stratford flies Right Royal Knees Up for Queen's 90th

Stratford joined the nation in a celebration of the Queen's 90th Birthday at the weekend.

Street parties took place across the district while Escape Arts held a special party at the Old Slaughterhouse in Sheep Street on Saturday.

Ahead of the party, the charity's arts programme Paper Moon had made Royal hobby horses for a Royal Trooping of the Colour but the event had to be postponed due to the weather.

Escape Arts Artistic Director Karen Williams said while rain had stopped play for the morning of the party, it brightened up as guests started to arrive.

She said: "We laid on live music from All Strings and Things, served vintage teas, with high tea consisting of sandwiches, scones and homemade cakes made by our mums and guests, and strawberries and cream – a real feast.

"The party was attended by those attending Escape Arts workshops and our veterans and their families. A jolly time was had by all, including guests and tourists who all got involved."



Town Centre - Performance Data

Day	Total Visitors	+/- Prior Week	Av Stay	New Visitors	Repeat Visitors	Busiest Time
Sunday 29th May	21347	35.77%	70 mins	4577	17857	15:00
Monday 30th May	20557	28.30%	67 mins	4799	16820	14:00
Tuesday 31st May	17828	9.19%	51 mins	2790	15950	14:00
Wednesday 1st June	17000	0.92%	51 mins	Not Avail	Not Avail	14:00
Thursday 2nd June	19169	10.47%	54 mins	3347	16980	14:00
Friday 3rd June	19636	4.90%	57 mins	3373	17476	13:00
Saturday 4th June	19181	-8.90%	62 mins	3489	16907	15:00
Total or Average	142365	+10.3%	59 mins	3729	16998	16:00
Sunday 5th June	17571	-16.83%	69 mins	3984	14674	14:00
Monday 6th June	17232	-15.23%	52 mins	2733	15594	14:00
Tuesday 7th June	16094	-8.67%	47 mins	2294	14821	17:00
Wednesday 8th June	15727	-7.17%	50 mins	2161	14548	14:00
Thursday 9th June	19613	2.04%	52 mins	3206	17535	17:00
Friday 10th June	20268	2.67%	49 mins	2730	18675	14:00
Saturday 11th June	19833	3.08%	55 mins	3298	17726	16:00
Total or Average	133979	-5.9%	53 mins	2915	16225	14:00

Dates for your diary!

10th June to 10th July - Euro Championships

16th June - Aviva Cycle Tour

18th June - Stratford Regatta

19th June - **Father's Day**

20th to 25th June - Fairy Portal Camp (RSC)

25th June - Armed Forces Day

25th June - Escape Arts Exhibition Launch



27th June to 10th July - Wimbledon

28th June - Stratford Races

1st July - Reopening of New Place

2nd & 3rd July - River Festival

9th July - Fun Regatta

23rd July - Warwickshire Summer Holidays

24th July—Lions Raft Race



BID Member Spotlight - Il Moro

Established in 2009, we are a husband and wife team from Sardinia and Liverpool (!) respectively.

We specialise in Italian cuisine and wine with a 'Sardinian twist' – artisan pastas and bread, hand-stretched pizzas, fresh-as-can-be seafood and incredible desserts all inspired by the homeland and made to order in-house.

Back in the day our smaller starting point was at Greenhill Street with husband Massimo doing the cooking and wife Christine looking after the guests. Over the years business steadily grew and we found ourselves wanting more space to accommodate not just diners but requests for functions and events.

In 2014 with the arrival of our first child imminent the timely opportunity to expand the business presented itself in the form of 27 Henley Street, formally known as The Island Café, Bernadettes and the Flat Chicken. The fact that previous ventures had not succeeded made the prospect all the more intriguing and after our first viewing we were in love.

Set over three floors we now have dining and bar for up to 40 guests on the ground floor with a further 35 seats on the first floor. Upstairs is also ideal for group bookings and events – **we've hosted wine tastings, canape parties and buffets in the past year** and welcome requests for all types of private functions.

Our crowning glory this year though has to be the roof terrace – recently refurbished with a brand new bar, beautiful dining tables and stylish gazebo, it is fully stocked and ready to go for alfresco dining and drinking! In May we officially opened it for the summer season and kick started proceedings with a DJ Lounge event, which we are hoping to re-create at the end of August for the bank holiday, to mark the two year anniversary of our opening!

So things have changed a little since we first started seven years ago...Massimo now looks after the front of house and oversees the kitchen with Christine bringing up the rear with daughter Sofia in tow – often onsite and nearly always causing mischief. But **we're the same really** – still passionate about what we do, committed to providing only the freshest and finest of foods and wine and very, very proud of our hardworking team that have helped us make all this possible.

With new offers for the summer aimed at BID members and locals, if you haven't already eaten here, now is the time to give Il Moro a go!



Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and products

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Visit us on the web at
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Our profile page is an opportunity for you to promote your business. Send up to 400 words on your business – including a few quotes if possible – together with two or three pictures and we will try and use it in one of our weekly newsletters over the next few months.