

STRAT > FORWARD

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER

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Big crowds enjoy a slice of Stratford's town centre Food Festival

Food glorious food was the order of the weekend as big crowds enjoyed a taste of Stratford's Town Centre Food Festival.

The free event – organised by Stratforward Business Improvement District (BID) and sponsored by Loxley's Restaurant & Wine Bar - stirred up big numbers on both Saturday and Sunday (September 23 -24th) with footfall figures of more than 60,000 over the weekend.

That was in addition to an evening at Stratford ArtsHouse on Friday night (September 22nd) with highly-acclaimed chef Yotam Ottolenghi, in partnership with Stratford Literary Festival.

Top of the menu were all things local; a festival to showcase Stratford as a premier food and drink destination.

At its core was a bustling producers' market, in partnership with Cotswold Markets; around 80 stalls filling the town centre, crammed with local traders selling and showcasing their finest - from gin to gelato.

The Waterside Cookery Theatre was also packed, people making the most of free demonstrations by the cream of the crop.

Also cooking up a real storm for 2017 were the festival Taste and Ale Trails, taking festival-goers on a stroll around Stratford with regular stops for samples of fine food or drink.

"We were delighted with every aspect of this year's event," Ruth Wood, Events Manager for Stratforward, said.

"People came from all over and in really big numbers to enjoy it. Some traders were reporting a 50 per cent increase in sales compared to last year, while our local producers and our town had the opportunity to showcase Stratford as a premier food and drink destination, far and wide."

Stratford Town Centre Food Festival will be back on September 22 & 23 in 2018, with plenty more of the same!



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Trading up!

Business was booming across town, with a surge in sales both at the producers' market and back on the shop floor too.

Andy Irvine, owner of **Roly's Fudge Pantry**, was one of those hailing this year's Food Festival a huge success all round.



"We were delighted with the weekend – the weather was kind, which meant people came out and stayed out and that resulted in a big boost to sales compare to last year," he said.

"Our town centre shop was up 40 per cent over the weekend and the stall on Bridge Street was up by around 15 per cent on last year."

He added that there was a really good standard of producers at this year's event and that the Taste Trail was a real hit with around 200 people each day sampling his fudge.

Andy also led a fudge-making workshop in Bell Court and a demo in the Waterside Cookery Theatre, which was attended by around 40 people – even though he had an early 10am slot.

"I was delighted by the number of people who turned out and who were trying to prize my fudge-making secrets out of me – but I only gave them a couple of teasers!"

"All-in-all it was a fantastic weekend for Stratford," he said.

Trade was up for Hoorays British Gelato Kitchen too, as Sara Young says:



"It was a brilliant festival with a really great atmosphere. It was certainly busier than last year, I think we had the weather to thank for that, trade was up on last year definitely."

That trade was from the Hoorays van on Bridge Street and from the shop in High Street too.

"We did a demo in the theatre as well and that was really great."

And the team from Barry The Butcher were flat out too.

"It was just a brilliant weekend – and what was great was the number of people who had been last year, who came back for more," Adam Lucock said.

"They were from all over, as well as the locals a lot of people told us they were staying in hotels in Stratford for the weekend for the festival. One lady from Birmingham in fact told me she had some of our sausages last year and they were the best she ever had – so she went home with 8 packs this year!"

Adam and his team thought they were well-prepared with 12 different sausages made up, and 100 packs of each variety ready to be sold. But by lunchtime on Saturday, they had to quickly make some more.

"We made another 50 packs of each of the 12 – and we still sold out by the end of the weekend. We were selling hot dogs too – and we sold more than 2,000 of those. I had to clear Sainsburys out of hot dog rolls – and then go onto burger rolls!"

It was all go in **Carluccio's** – with staff reporting a boom in trade throughout the festival:

"Trade was significantly up over the weekend, with 400 individuals taking part in the trails held over Saturday and Sunday. The annual festival is the perfect chance to showcase our seasonal dishes - at one point there was a queue out the door and around the corner!"

Cooking up a storm

Chef Mike Robinson was one of the big names giving a tasty lesson inside the Waterside Cookery Theatre.

One of Britain's leading authorities on wild food and game and co-owner of London's only Michelin-starred pub The Harwood Arms, he's a regular face on national TV.

He is now also executive chef at The Woodsman restaurant, due to open in 2018 at the newly-revamped Falcon Hotel in Stratford, and gave festival-goers a sneak preview of what to expect when it opens, showcasing dishes that will feature on the menu.

He said: "The festival was a really wonderful event and we were blown away by the positive response from residents to our new enterprise. We can't wait to open The Woodsman next year."

Another famous face was Paul Foster, chef owner of Salt in Stratford, former Great British Menu contestant and a regular on Saturday Kitchen, who was cooking seasonal dishes from his menu.

There were plenty of other local 'stars' taking to the food theatre stage as well – from Master Butcher Adam Lucock of Barry The Butcher, to Loxley's Sous Chef Chris Butler, and Andy Irvine of Roly's Fudge Pantry.



Ready, set, BAKE!

This year's festival was proud to support Sue Ryder, with donation buckets outside the cookery theatre throughout the weekend to fundraise for the charity, which provides hospice and neurological care for people facing a frightening, life-changing diagnosis.

Staff from Stratford's Sue Ryder shop also organised the festival's very own Bake Off to coincide with the festival, with the winners judged on Saturday by Chris Butler from Loxleys.

Winning first prize in over 16s category was Mirka Serafin with her perfect celebration bake, while cooking up a storm in the under 16s was 8-year-old Sophie Mansell and her amazing chocolate cupcakes. Mirka won a two-course Sunday lunch for two at the Baraset Barn, while Sophie won a family ticket to Stratford Butterfly Farm.

Alex Clarke, manager at the Sue Ryder shop in Greenhill Street, **said: "It was a fabulous weekend and we managed to raise a wonderful £310, which is a tremendous amount for us and will help us do so much good for the people we support.**

"A huge thank you to everyone who helped and supported us throughout the festival – and to the Baraset Barn and Butterfly Farm for their really generous prizes too."



Getting on the trail!

A big festival highlight was the Taste and Ale Trails – leading those taking part on a gentle walk around the town centre, stopping off at some of the 30 participating venues along the way to sample their food or drink.

There were separate Trails organised for each day.

Festival-goers completing them were then asked to score their samples, with **Carluccio's** and **Crowne Plaza** winning Saturday's Taste Trails, the **Arden Hotel** and **Vigour Café** winning Sunday's Taste Trails, and **Stratford Mosaic**, brewed by the Stratford-upon-Avon Brewery and served at Stratford Alehouse, taking the Ale Trail crown.

Just two of those enjoying the Trails were Stratford mayor Victoria Alcock and her husband Gary.

"The Taste Trail really was brilliant – and such amazing value at just £5 per person," Councillor Alcock said.

"Not only was the food we were served fabulous, but the restaurants all did everything they could to make us feel so welcome and provide us with wonderful selections of their food.

"The best part about the Trail is that we discovered some real hidden gems – restaurants that for one reason or another we have not been to before – but will certainly be going back to very soon.

"We were so impressed by the whole festival. The stalls lining the streets were full of absolutely wonderful things and such a great variety – as the sheer number of people and queues proved.

"What a wonderful event for the town – we were proud and delighted to be a part of it."



TRAIL WINNERS !!

Many congratulations to the winners of the trails as voted by members of the public.

- Saturday taste trail red - Crowne Plaza
- Saturday taste trail blue - **Carluccio's**
- Sunday taste trail red - Arden Hotel, Waterside Brasserie
- Sunday taste trail blue - Vigour Café
- Ale trail - **"Stratford Mosaic" brewed by the Stratford upon Avon Brewery** and served at Stratford Alehouse



A buzz in Bell Court

It was all flowing in Bell Court on Sunday – from wine to chocolate!

Festival-goers could enjoy a series of free workshops, from a creative canape class run by Stratford College, to wine tastings with Veenoo and Vin Neuf. There was plenty to keep little (sticky) fingers amused too with a special kids class run by Abigail McFarlane. She helped the youngsters to make their very own fruit kebab – which they could then dip in the chocolate fountain and enjoy!



Star turn for new ale!



Another highlight was the national launch of Hop Star – a brand new ale by the award-winning Silhill Brewery, choosing to link up with Stratford's Golden Bee to launch its latest tipple because of the festival's profile.

"The launch went fantastically and the feedback we have received, directly and through social media has been that this is our finest ale yet," brewery owner Mark Gregory said.

"Even the Mayor of Stratford, who isn't an ale drinker, gave it her approval!"

"Stratford Food Festival is a fantastic event with some wonderful contributors and we were delighted to be involved and to have been welcomed with open arms by the festival's ale lovers.

"There were many jealous pubs wanting to secure it for their customers."



Thank you to our sponsors!

Last but certainly not least – a huge thank you to Loxley's, our event sponsor for the third year.

Sous chef Chris Butler was busy all over town all weekend – from Bake Off judging to cookery theatre teaching, never mind helping to serve up the finest food and drinks from the Loxleys stall on Bridge Street alongside general manager Jonathan Lea, who said:

"Everybody was just happy and really enjoying themselves, as far as we're concerned it was definitely the most successful food festival to date. We were serving roast beef baps as well as wine and prosecco and we had such a queue of people. We met many regulars but also a lot of people who said they had never set foot in our restaurant – but now would."

"We're so grateful to Loxley's for all of their support," Ruth Wood, Events Manager for Stratford, said.

"The food festival is all about showcasing Stratford and all of the amazing venues and producers we have locally. To have Loxley's once again as such a supportive sponsor with an amazing restaurant right here in Stratford was a real asset to our event. Thank you."



All quiet at Shakespeare's New Place



Shakespeare's New Place will be going quiet on Monday (October 2nd) when it takes part in the very first UK-wide Autism Hour.

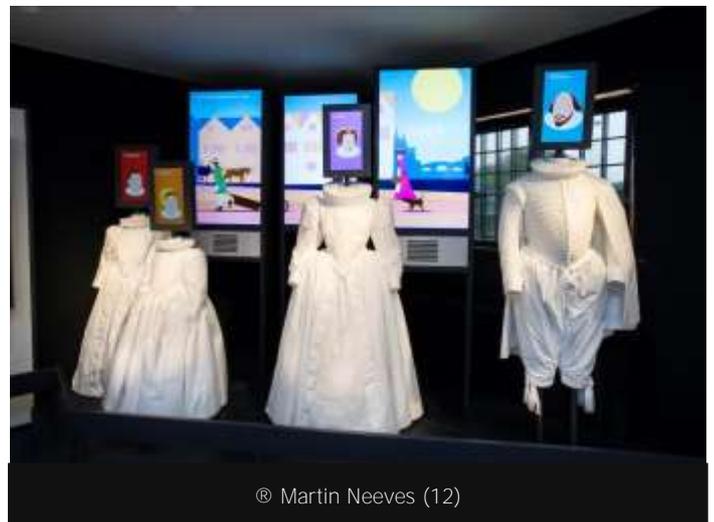
From 10am to 11am, the exhibition centre will become autism-friendly, with the lights dimmed and audio-visual elements turned down in an effort to create a welcoming environment for autistic visitors and their families.



Autism Hour is organised by the National Autistic Society to raise awareness of autism. More than 1 in 100 people are on the autism spectrum which means that someone sees, hears and feels the world in a different, often more intense way to other people. Autistic people often find social situations difficult and struggle to filter out the sounds, smells and sights they experience, feeling overwhelmed by 'too much information' when out in public, and sometimes avoid public spaces all together.

Chloe Malendewicz, Manager of Shakespeare's New Place, said: "We're delighted to take part in the first national autism hour. Our staff and volunteers already receive training to provide a welcoming and accessible experience for all visitors, regardless of their background or ability. We hope that by taking small steps we're able to provide an enjoyable and enriching experience for autistic visitors who may often become overwhelmed by loud sounds or overly-stimulating environments."

Cared for by the [Shakespeare Birthplace Trust](https://www.shakespeare.org.uk), Shakespeare's New Place re-opened last summer as a major new heritage landmark and cultural destination created to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. The £6m re-presentation of the site of Shakespeare's family home is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Historic England, the Wolfson Foundation, and through public donations. Over the past 12 months over 150,000 visitors from all over the world have walked through the grand oak and bronze gatehouse to explore the site where Shakespeare's home once stood, admiring



© Martin Neeves (12)

the gleaming contemporary artworks, beautiful gardens and discovering the story of Shakespeare's adult life through daily talks and trails, and in the exhibition centre.

Shakespeare's New Place is fully accessible to the physically disabled, with gradient landscaping, wider footpaths to accommodate wheelchair and buggy users and a lift in the exhibition centre to access the second floor. It is also a Dementia-friendly venue.

Stratford-upon-Avon residents (CV37) can visit Shakespeare's New Place for free with proof of address. For more information and to plan your visit, see www.shakespeare.org.uk

And the award goes to...

Champagne corks have been popping – with the winners of the prestigious Coventry & Warwickshire Tourism & Cultural Awards now announced.

Taking home the sought-after title of 'Best Visitor Attraction 2017' was Stratford's very own Shakespeare's Schoolroom & Guildhall.



The awards shine a spotlight on the world-class visitor attractions, venues and businesses that make the region one of the country's leading cultural destinations.

Lindsey Armstrong, General Manager for Shakespeare's Schoolroom & Guildhall, said it was an honour to win.

"We are completely delighted to win the award for Best Visitor Attraction 2017. This result reflects the realisation of the King Edward VI School Trustees' ambitious vision for Shakespeare's Schoolroom & Guildhall, the efforts of our remarkable team to deliver an outstanding visitor experience and the amazing role that our volunteers and staff perform in bringing to life the fascinating story of this extraordinary building.

"The region is privileged to have so many outstanding cultural attractions, to be amongst this company and to win this award is absolutely marvellous."

There were other Stratford winners celebrating too – the RSC won the History and Heritage Award for its exhibition, the Play's The Thing, Avonlea guest house on the Shipston Road claimed the coveted best Small Hotel/B&B/Inn award, while In2Cultures picked up the Cultural Education Award.

For the second year running Shakespeare's England, the Destination Management Organisation for Warwickshire, scooped the Business Tourism category.

Helen Peters, Chief Executive of Shakespeare's England, said: "We are delighted to have won this prestigious award and to see so many Shakespeare's England Members also celebrating and winning awards. Winning the Business Tourism award is particularly exciting as having a specific Business Tourism focus and strategy is something Shakespeare's England only started in 2016. This is therefore a fantastic acknowledgment of how hard the team have worked in promoting business tourism for the region over the last year".

The awards ceremony took place on Thursday 21 September at Coombe Abbey Hotel, organised by Touch FM and Rugby FM.

Jo Billings, their Regional Events Director, said: "It was a wonderful celebration of Coventry and Warwickshire's outstanding mix of cultural and tourism businesses, organisations and individuals. Every winner, every finalist and everyone who entered, attended or sponsored the event can be extremely proud of the part they play in what this region has to offer."



Additional Project Argus and Project Griffin dates for Stratford

BID members and town centre businesses are being invited to additional **Project Argus and Project Griffin exercises that are being organised by the Shakespeare's Birthplace**. To book a place, please email hr@shakespeare.org.uk

The dates are:

Tuesday 17th October: 10.00 – 12.00 - Full Griffin

Tuesday 31st October: 11.00 – 12.00 - Refresher Griffin

Friday 24th November: 10.00 – 13.30 - Project Argus.

Victorian Christmas Fair: 8th – 10th December

Stratford District Council and Stratford Town Council are inviting businesses that are within the area of the Victorian Christmas Fair to take **part in this year's event**. **The Council's and their market contractor are** encouraging businesses to get involved and make the most of the expected high footfall generated by the Victorian Christmas Market.

To do this you would need to register with the market contractor and you must only promote or sell your normal stock or service. Those manning the stall must be dressed in Victorian dress (for the chaps this **isn't a Victorian dress – some of you haven't got the legs for it!**). You **must be confident that you comply with the Town's regulatory standards**, trade within their agreed licenses, and have all the necessary insurance, safety documentation and equipment as these stalls will not fall under the umbrella of permissions and insurances in place for the main event.

The aim is that the Stratford-upon-Avon Victorian Christmas Market will benefit the whole of Stratford-upon-Avon in a variety of ways, in particular by bringing in additional visitors and a boost to the run-in to our trading run-in to Christmas.

If you would like to know more about how you can be part of this event please contact LSD Promotions (Marketplace) Ltd on 01384 877336 or email customerservice@lsdpromotions.com



Bodycare Closure, Bell Court

John Stacey, Asset Management Director at UK & European Investments, said: "Sadly, last week, Bodycare closed its shop all Bell Court. We've been in discussions with Bodycare for many months about the closure and the closing date was by mutual agreement.



"A lease for the former Bodycare unit has now been agreed with another retailer which will be announced very soon.

"We've had a good relationship with Bodycare over the past three years and wish them the very best for the future."

The BID team and I'm sure, all the businesses of Stratford, will wish all the Bodycare staff well.

Digital Skills Training

The Warwickshire Towns Network is running and funding a series of digital skills workshops for retailers in Stratford-upon-Avon. The workshops which were a huge success for Alcester and Shipston businesses earlier in the year, are being made available to Stratford businesses.

If you want to learn how social media can increase your businesses profitability, make your business more discoverable online and maximise the use of different social media channels – Facebook, twitter, Instagram then book on!

Places are limited, and the courses are being run by Xav Anderson of Clockwork City.

For more detailed info – see below.



Digital Business Skills for Retailers

Key Benefits for Retailers:

Increased Profitability

Promoting your business effectively using Social Media

Understand uses of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc

Increased discoverability of your business online

Course Delivery:

The training course will consist of six sessions over a 7 week period with additional support in between.

Training Location:

Venture House Business Centre, Avenue Farm Industrial Estate
Birmingham Road, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 0HR

Mondays 09:30– 13:30

16th Oct, 30th Oct, 6th Nov, 13th Nov, 20th Nov and 27th Nov

To check availability and to book your place on the 6 week course please contact Warwickshire County Council via our email

towns@warwickshire.gov.uk

For more detailed information about the course content

Training Provider – Xav Anderson

Web: <http://clockworkcity.co.uk/>

Email: xav@clockworkcity.co.uk

Mobile: 07920 884231

Dates for your diary!

If you have an event you would like us to list here please email Sandi - sandi@stratforward.co.uk

September

26th to 3rd Oct Stratford Music Festival

October

1st to 31st Stratford Halloween Festival @ [Magic Alley](#), Henley Street
4th Edinburgh Woollen Mill Fashion Show - 7pm Bridge Street store
6th & 7th For Something Different 18th Birthday Celebrations 10am to 7pm
11th & 12th Stratford Mop
16th - 27th Nov WCC Digital Training workshops
17th **Advertising deadline for Christmas brochure**
17th Full Project Griffin 10am
18th Closure of nominations for DIY SOS Rebuild Initiative
18th to 21st **Hey Li'l Man @ The Bear Pit Theatre**
19th Vinegar Hill Decadent Evening 6pm
19th & 20th Stratford Runaway Mop
21st to 29th 1/2 Term Fun @ [Shakespeare Family Homes](#)
23rd to 27th Warwickshire & Birmingham Schools 1/2 term
25th Ian Doescher book signing @ The Shakespeare Centre 17:30 - 19:00
31st Refresher Project Griffin 11am

November

10th Project Argus - NOTE NEW DATE
11th The Social Secrets of Fashion @ The Shakespeare Centre
18th Carriage ride with Father Christmas
23rd Christmas Lights Switch On outside Town Hall
23rd 1st Christmas Market on Waterside
24th Project Argus 10am



6th & 7th May 2018

www.stratfordfestivalofmotoring.co.uk



30th June & 1st July 2018

www.stratfordriverfestival.co.uk



22nd & 23rd September 2018

www.stratfordtowncentrefoodfestival.co.uk

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

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