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Warwickshire

ISSUE 413 SUMMER 2020

What's On

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inside:

THE FLOODGATE

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SUMMER MOVIE MAGIC

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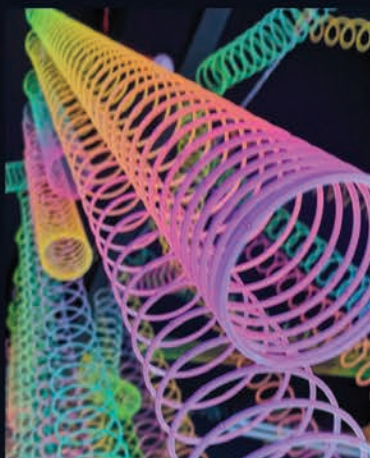
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Thank you.

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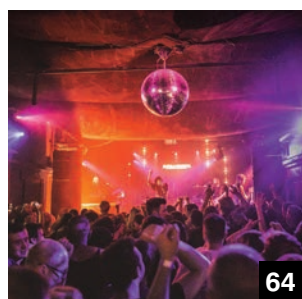
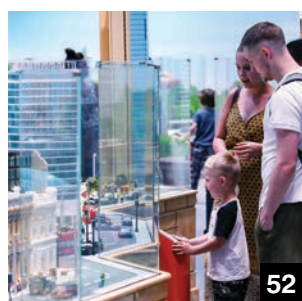
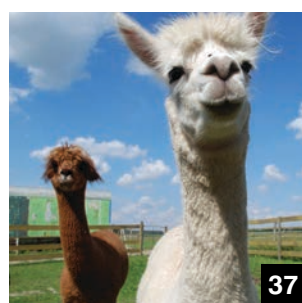


The Floodgate at 104-108 Floodgate Street
Birmingham, B5 5SR

Open Thursday 3pm - 11pm, Friday 3pm - midnight, Saturday 12noon to midnight, and Sunday 12noon to 10pm

www.thefloodgate.co.uk

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Midlands venues to host prestigious art show

Wolverhampton has been selected as the first UK city to host the biggest touring exhibition of contemporary art in the UK.

The British Art Show is renowned for attracting a high volume of visitors to its touring cities and is widely recognised as a significant marker of recent developments in contemporary art.

The exhibition introduces visitors to over 40 artists practising in Britain over the past five years, providing an insight into contemporary life at an extraordinary period in the country's history.

British Art Show 9 will visit Wolverhampton Art Gallery and the University of Wolverhampton School of Art from 6 March to 30 May. It will then go on display in Aberdeen, Plymouth and Manchester.

Human League DARE to come to Brum in 2021

The Human League will perform classic album *Dare* in its entirety when they play Utilita Arena Birmingham on 4 December 2021.

Stopping off in the city as part of a tour to celebrate the album's 40th anniversary, the synthpop sensations will also be performing other hits from their extensive back-catalogue.

Tickets for the concert are now on sale.



Midlands company to premiere new play online

Birmingham theatre company Stan's Cafe will premiere a brand new play for online audiences on Tuesday 11 August. Inspired by global call centres and the fleeting relationships between those seeking help and those attempting to supply it, *For Quality Purposes* forms part of Stan's

Internet Cafe - a season of digital performances - and will be free to access. For more information, visit stanscafe.co.uk



Summer school returns to the Coventry Belgrade

As lockdown restrictions lift, the Coventry Belgrade Theatre is throwing a lifeline to tired parents with the return of its annual summer school for kids aged eight to 16. Adapted to meet the latest Covid health & safety guidelines, the socially distanced sessions will run for four days each.

To manage numbers, this year kids will be divided into two separate groups, with the first summer school running from 10 to 13 August and the second from 17 to 20 August. For more information, visit belgrade.co.uk

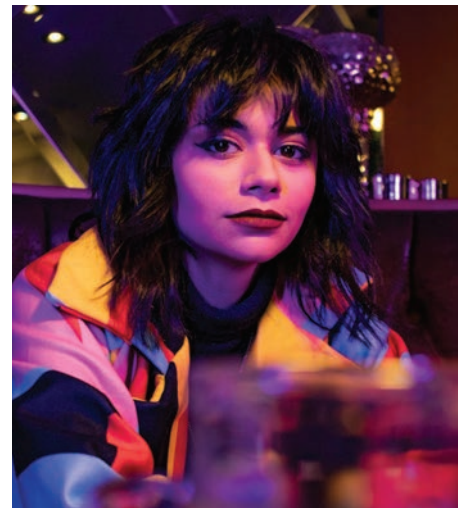
'Visual album' creates piece of lockdown history

A new 'visual album' featuring musicians and artists from across Coventry - including

Ace Ambrose (pictured below) - has been released to create a piece of lockdown history for the city.

Front Room Sessions was commissioned by the Coventry City of Culture Trust in April and has been created in just a matter of weeks under lockdown conditions.

A sonic and visual snapshot of the city, the album showcases local talent and a diversity of music genres, from alt-pop and indie-rock through to dancehall reggae and experimental electronica. It also features visual interpretations of the tracks from filmmakers, animators and visual artists. The full genre-bending album is now available to stream on Spotify and YouTube and can be purchased on iTunes, as well as other music platforms.



Wheel Meet Again!

Organisers of the Lancaster Insurance Classic Motor Show have announced their intention to host this year's event in the autumn - subject to government approval. Clarion Events has said plans are in place to run the show at Birmingham's NEC from 13 to 15 November. There will be mandatory temperature checks both for visitors and exhibitors, extended opening hours and wider aisles.



Photo competition offers snapshot of UK businesses in lockdown

Entrepreneurs all over the country are 'revealing themselves' to the camera in a national photo competition. PopUp Business School, which helps people from all walks of life to launch their own businesses, is asking people in the UK to take a photograph which illustrates their business or business idea.

The competition offers the chance to win £200 and some sure-to-be-useful publicity. If you'd like to enter, you can find more instructions and upload your photo into the onsite form at popupbusinessschool.co.uk/photo-challenge.html. Alternatively, post your photo on Twitter via the hashtag #PopUPPix, along with the tag @popUPbusiness, by midnight on 31 August.



New branding unveiled for Coventry Moves initiative

Coventry City of Culture Trust has unveiled a new brand for its upcoming year-long programme, Coventry Moves.

The creative vision is brought to life in a vibrant new brand design and website, as well as through a 'powerful' film telling the story of Coventry's history.

The film highlights Coventry as a welcoming city

'of activists and pioneers, a city of peace and reconciliation, a city of innovation and invention, and now a City of Culture'.

Two Coventry-born artists feature in the movie: Grammy and Golden Globe-nominated composer Clint Mansell, who provided the score, and actress Manjinder Virk, who provided the voiceover.

Artists sought for next year's Worcester Light Night

Organisers of a three-night event taking place next January, which will see Worcester city centre illuminated by a 'stunning' programme of light installations, are seeking to commission a selection of artists to create a number of projection-based works for the show.

Part of The Arches project, an initiative aiming

to 'place culture and creativity at the heart of Worcester', Light Night is 'inspired by the connections we have with each other and the world around us'.

Anybody interested in creating a work for the event can find out more by visiting thearchesworcesterevents.co.uk



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Writers announced for new digital TV series

The Belgrade Theatre in Coventry and Strictly Arts Theatre Company have named the six Midlands-based writers who will form the writers' room for the upcoming digital TV series, SeaView.

Selected from a pool of 106 hopeful applicants, the six successful writers are Daniel Anderson, Annabel Brightling, Sophie Griffin, Sam Kurd, Dave Payne, and Rory Rawson.

Over the next 15 weeks, these up-and-coming local creatives will work with script editor Sophie Ellerby and series creator Corey Campbell to develop stories for a six-part series, set to premiere in 2021.

Based on an original idea by Corey - the Belgrade Theatre's co-artistic director for 2021 and artistic director of Strictly Arts Theatre Company - SeaView is 'an urban science-fiction drama drawing on the experiences of working-class communities in the West Midlands'. Inspired by a true story, it follows the journey of Steven, 'a young man destined for great things, who finds himself trapped by the destiny of others'.

Coventry theatre reaches out to young people

The founders of the Coventry-based Theatre Absolute have used funds from Arts Council England and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to provide ongoing zoom and mentoring sessions for young people - to help them make sense of the impact of the coronavirus crisis as they start their careers in the creative sector.

Company co-founder Chris O'Connell said: "The creative sector is facing huge demands, and with the recent government support, there is a tangible sense of relief for some. Our goal here at Theatre Absolute, as always, is to reach out, connect and support where we can, and in doing so continue to demonstrate the positive impact smaller theatres and organisations can have for the future of theatre and the wider arts ecology."



Leamington Art Gallery Good To Go!

Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum has announced it will be officially reopening on Thursday 6 August. Commenting on the news, the venue's customer services manager, Martyn Darvell, said: "The trial opening was very successful, and it was fantastic to see visitors' reactions to some of the new and existing works on display, whilst ensuring we operate safely with social distancing in place."

As well as Covid-19 safety measures, the art gallery has introduced 'better methods' for viewing and experiencing the work on show. These include producing video content on its YouTube channel and creating a new audio tour.

For more information, visit warwickdc.gov.uk/royalpumprooms



New urban garden planned for popular city centre visitor attraction

A new £40,000 feature at Birmingham Botanical Gardens promises to showcase what can be achieved in a small outdoor space.

The Urban Garden scheme, which is being developed with the Friends of the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, will comprise three small gardens and a balcony on the site of the venue's Hampton Court Flower Show garden.

The project is supported by a grant of £10,000 from the Calthorpe Residents Society. A further donation of £7,000 has been made by The Property For Kids Trust.

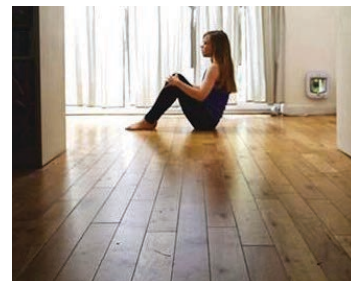
Thousands of pounds-worth of materials have also been secured by award-winning garden designer Martyn Wilson, of Wilson Associates Garden Design, who has been commissioned to design and build the new gardens.

BRB dancer helps students process lockdown period

Birmingham Royal Ballet's (BRB) Principal Dancer, Brandon Lawrence, has moved to stimulate dance students' creativity during lockdown by creating a choreography challenge in partnership with bbodance. In total, 151 students from across the globe answered the question 'What does lockdown mean to you?' by choreographing a dance to an original score commissioned from award-winning composer Andrew Kristy especially for the project.

Their work was assessed by Brandon, Julie Bowers - bbodance's director of artistic development - and BRB's former artistic director, Sir David Bintley, CBE.

Sir David also chose the overall winner of the challenge: Fraya Cowan, aged 11, a student of Emily Jade Theatre Arts school in London.





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Literary festival in collaboration with local charity

The Stratford Literary Festival and Kissing It Better healthcare charity have partnered to spearhead an inter-generational collaboration exploring experiences of isolation. In My Day - Memories Of Isolation will be a published collection of the memories of older members of the community, recorded by their grand- and great-grandchildren. Full details of the project and how to enter can be found at stratfordliteraryfestival.co.uk/inmyday

Famous Midlands flower show to go virtual for 2020

Shropshire Horticultural Society will be holding a 'virtual' version of the cancelled Shrewsbury Flower Show between midday and 8pm on Friday 14 & Saturday 15 August. The event will run on the Shrewsbury Flower Show social-media pages, predominantly on the main Facebook page and YouTube. The online programme will feature contributions from celebrity gardeners David Domoney and Penny Meadmore (pictured below). Links to videos, photographs and competition results will also feature on the show's website: shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk/virtual-shrewsbury-flower-show



Worcester Festival 2020 to go online in August

Organisers of Worcester Festival have announced that this year's event will take place online from Saturday 15 to Monday 31 August. The 17-day event will feature: a family prize quiz trail, taking audiences on a scout around Worcester to answer questions and be in with a chance of winning a 'fabulous' prize; a cake-decorating workshop with the Sugar Clouds & Crumbs (in association with Cookmate, Worcester); 'fun and historic activities' from Worcester Cathedral; and The Canal & River Trust Plastic Challenge, which aims to clear the

city's river and canal banks.

There will also be an opportunity to recreate some of the designs from festival favourites The Funky Face Painters.

Other events in the festival programme include: virtual zumba, dance and taekwondo sessions; singing and puppetry workshops for children; A Welcome View exhibition at Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum; and a specially recorded concert with 'local legend' Blobbie Williams. For further information on what's happening and when, visit: worcesterfestival.co.uk

Jazz festival set for October

The Birmingham, Sandwell & Westside Jazz Festival, held annually since 1985, will take place from 16 to 25 October. The 36th edition of the festival - known internationally for its mostly free programme of good-time jazz, blues, swing and rhythm & blues - will again feature performances in a number of unusual locations, including museums, libraries, shopping areas, public squares, canals and a furniture store, as well as in bars, cafes and hotels.

Floating boat cinema to sail into Brum

Floating Boat Cinema is on tour for one week only in the autumn and it's coming to Birmingham.

The 'cinema' will be made up of 12 to 24 mini boats, with each boat holding up to eight people. Participants will be required to purchase a whole boat, to ensure that groups will be seated with friends and family only.

The movie programme, which will mix golden oldies and new releases, will be announced when tickets go on sale. There will be free popcorn for everyone attending, and other movie snacks & drinks will be available to purchase before you set sail. Visit zip-tickets.com for more details.





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The Wind In The Willows to visit Aston Hall

A new production of Kenneth Grahame's famous family tale, *The Wind In The Willows*, will take place at Birmingham's Aston Hall (pictured) this summer holiday.

Telling the story of the irrepressible Toad and his loyal friends, Mole, Badger and Ratty, the show is presented outdoors by Attic Theatre and Tread The Boards Theatre Company on Sunday 23 August at 2pm & 5.30pm.



New date for rum festival in Brum

Along with many other events in 2020, the Birmingham Rum Festival fell foul of the Covid-19 pandemic. But organisers have wasted no time in publicising the fact that the popular one-day event will be making a return next year on 3 July. The fifth edition of the well-regarded get-together will be held at the Cuban Embassy in Moseley. Tickets for the festival will be fully transferable to 2021, so just keep hold of them and let the countdown begin...



RSC presents free-to-attend outdoor pop-up performances

The Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) has launched a series of free-to-attend and socially distanced pop-up performances. Taking place each weekend throughout August in the town's Dell Gardens, Shakespeare Snapshots run for 45 minutes at 1pm and 3pm each day. The high-energy family-friendly performances will be different every week, taking inspiration from well-known Shakespearean texts and themes and featuring actors from the RSC's postponed productions of *The Winter's Tale* and *The Comedy Of Errors*.

Members of the general public will be able to watch the shows on a first come, first served basis. The productions have space for up to eight household groups (maximum of six people in

each), plus some standing spaces.

Commenting on the pop-up shows, RSC Artistic Director Gregory Doran said: "We are delighted to be working with our current acting company, who would otherwise be performing in *The Winter's Tale* and *The Comedy Of Errors*, to deliver this unique scratch programme of socially distanced, outdoor Shakespeare. And though it may not have lights and costume, and the full bells and whistles of a normal RSC show, it's sure to be a welcome treat for anyone who, like me, has been missing live theatre these last few months."

The first Shakespeare Snapshots performances take place in Dell Gardens on Saturday 1 August.

Funding provides a lifeline for Warwickshire arts sector

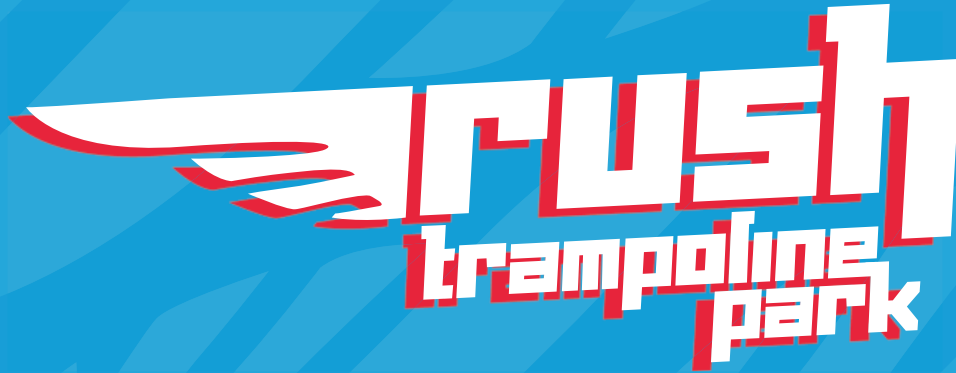
Heart of England Community Foundation and Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 have joined forces to award more than £56,000 to arts organisations and individual artists across Coventry & Warwickshire.

Commenting on the news, Tina Costello, chief executive at Heart of England Community Foundation, said: "The arts sector is one that has been so heavily impacted by the pandemic, with no real sign of a recovery period yet, so this fund has given a lifeline to organisations that provide culture, excitement and purpose to the people of Coventry & Warwickshire."

To find out more about the Heart of England

Community Foundation and the funding it has available, head to: heartofenglandcf.co.uk





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Rishi dishes up an early-week treat

If Covid cautiousness means you haven't visited a restaurant since the easing of lockdown, the month of August is certainly a good time to dip your toe in the eating-out waters.

As part of a multi-pronged initiative to get the UK economy up and running again, Chancellor Rishi Sunak last month unveiled the Eat Out To Help Out discount.

The deal was warmly welcomed by the hospitality industry and means that diners eating out on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays during August will get a 50% discount off their restaurant bill. The discount, which does not apply to alcohol or takeaways, can be used unlimited times during the month and applies to participating restaurants, cafés & pubs across the UK. The government will cover the other half of the bill, up to £10 per head.

Mr Sunak also announced that VAT on hospitality and tourism would drop to 5%, a reduction from 20% that will be in place for six months.

Commenting on the deal, the chancellor said: "I know people are cautious about going out, but we wouldn't have lifted the restrictions if we didn't think we could do so, safely."

He added: "Our Eat Out To Help Out scheme's number one aim is to help protect the jobs of 1.8 million chefs, waiters and restaurateurs by boosting demand and getting customers

through the door.

"More than 72,000 establishments will be serving discounted meals across the country, with the government paying half the bill. "The industry is a vital ingredient to our economy, and it's been hit hard by coronavirus, so enjoy summer safely by showing your favourite places your support - we'll pay half."

The Eat Out To Help Out deal hasn't been without its critics, however. Kick-starting just a week after the government pledged to tackle obesity, the scheme prompted Liberal Democrat health spokeswoman Munira Wilson MP to say: "We all recognise the need to support the high street through the pandemic, but the government should have been more discerning with this scheme.

"With a number of fast-food chains signing up to the scheme, it seems clear that public health did not factor into the government's decision. "The government must put public health first and exclude from the scheme meals and drinks proven to contribute to obesity. We cannot afford to risk lives as we reopen the economy."

To see which restaurants have signed up to the scheme, visit: gov.uk/guidance/get-a-discount-with-the-eat-out-to-help-out-scheme

Above image: The Almanack in Kenilworth



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THE CUBE

Located in the heart of Birmingham city centre, The Cube is home to a vibrant mix of restaurants offering a wide range of world cuisines, including a rooftop restaurant bar with panoramic views of the city, as well as an events venue overlooking picturesque waterways.

From boutique bowling complete with retro arcade games at Lane7, an interactive Japanese experience at Shogun, or a luxury ELEMIS spa and connecting gym, there is something for everyone at The Cube. If you're looking to make a weekend of it, then Hotel Indigo is the must-stay place for you and your friends.

Hidden beneath this 25-storey building is the UK's largest fully automated car park, which provides the easiest and securest parking in the city centre. Contract parking starts at just £140 per month, with a special offer of 12-month contract parking for the price of 9.

To keep up-to-date with the latest news and offers, search 'The Cube Birmingham' on social or visit www.thecube.co.uk

Please check with the individual venues on their opening hours before visiting.



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JAQKS Chicken + Chips at The Cube

The Cube in Birmingham has welcomed its latest food offering - JAQKS Chicken+Chips.

Now open on Level Seven and available both for takeaway and as an eat-in option, JAQKS Chicken+Chips is a 'fast food revolution offering a quality-focused menu featuring freshly fried chicken and hand-cut chips'.

Alongside its full menu, JAQKS has also launched two special opening offers - one-piece chicken & chips for £1.99, and a Jumbo Wings Meal with chips and a drink from £3.99.

JAQKS Chicken+Chips' extensive menu includes freshly fried chicken coated in its own-brand herbs & spices mix, spicy and original chicken wings, sides and bites, a range of regular & spicy handcut chips, and a selection of chicken and veggie burgers.

Its online ordering system means the food can be delivered straight to your door or can be eaten in the brand-new flagship store, where desserts and refreshments are also available.

The Cube is the latest franchise for JAQKS Chicken+Chips, which also operates in three high-street locations around Birmingham: Shirley, Moseley and West Bromwich.

JAQKS Chicken+Chips is open seven days a week: Monday to Thursday, 11.30am - 11.30pm; Friday and Saturday 11.30am - 12am, and Sunday 12pm - 10pm.



Warwickshire business launches food app with the backing of easyJet founder

A food app which will compete with the likes of Deliveroo has been launched with the support of easyJet founder Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou.

Empowered Restaurants, which trades as easyFood, is registered in Warwickshire and has built a track-and-trace function into the app, meaning that users can find out whether a venue has had an outbreak of Covid-19.

Commenting on the launch, owner Jeewan Sagu told insidermedia.com: "Our app will do so much more than other delivery apps. For instance, if you're eating-in at a pub or restaurant, you can browse the menu and order your food, which will be brought to your table and then you can pay on the app."

"Visitors to registered pubs, bars and restaurants will be able to use their smartphone

to scan an easyFood QR barcode at the entrance to the premises.

"This will allow customers to submit their details securely, which can then be used to alert them should there be a Covid-19 outbreak at that particular venue.

"It will also help bar, pub and restaurant owners, as we will be charging them less than the big delivery companies."

Sir Stelios added: "The government's social-distancing guidance makes many restaurant owners nervous about making it through this very difficult period.

"It's a great opportunity for those businesses that are being affected by the downturn to join easyFood and transition to a delivery-based operation."

New Foodie Awards for Coventry & Warwickshire

Coventry & Warwickshire's food & drink scene is to be celebrated via a new awards programme designed to support businesses as they re-emerge from lockdown.

The first Foodie Awards, in partnership with Visit Coventry, will culminate in a ceremony next May. This will follow on from a finalists' night on 25 January at the city's new Telegraph Hotel, which opens its doors for the first time later this year. Judges and public votes will decide on winners in several categories that focus on quality, service and innovation.

There will be an emphasis on 'farm to fork', with

awards categories for artisan food & drink producers, farm shops, independent food & drink retailers, newcomers and street food traders. A chef/cook of the year category will also be included.

Special awards will recognise the extraordinary efforts of businesses and individuals throughout the coronavirus pandemic. These include the Covid-19 Resilience Award, sponsored by Visit Coventry, and The Godiva Award, sponsored by Coventry BID.

For a full list of categories and more information, visit foodieawards.co.uk

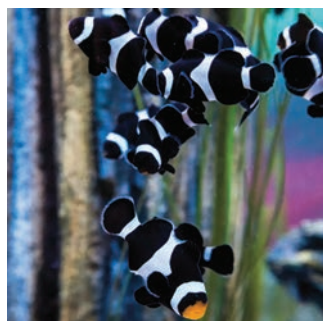
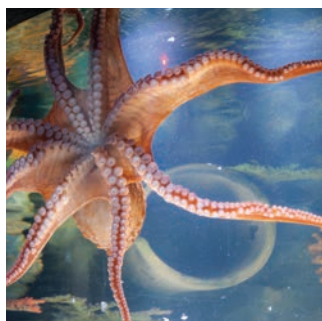




UNDER THE SEA

Discover what lies beneath the water's surface at
Birmingham's National Sea Life Centre





Located near the city's Brindleyplace, the National Sea Life Centre is home to more than 2,000 creatures (including a colony of gentoo penguins, black-tip reef sharks and a giant green sea turtle). Many of the venue's residents have been rescued or successfully bred as part of the global Sea Life breeding initiative.

Following a multi-million pound investment, the popular visitor attraction is now also home to a world-class rescue facility.

Earlier this year, the centre welcomed the arrival of the UK's first ever sea otters. Originally from Alaska, Ozzy and Ola are now permanent residents of Birmingham.

The centre's popular Penguin Ice Adventure is home to 18 gentoo penguins. As well as learning about the quirky antics of this Antarctic breed, visitors can also enjoy watching them dive, splash and generally goof around in the water.

A successful breeding season has seen the arrival of a new baby gentoo, born to Prince and Hyacinth.

Other Sea Life Centre attractions include the interactive Piranha Tunnel and Jelly Invaders. The latter features a variety of

breeds from across the world, including the moon jellyfish, the upside-down jellyfish and the ghost-like Atlantic sea nettles. There's also Octopus Hideout, where you'll meet Beverley, the venue's resident Giant Pacific Octopus.

Hugely popular with visitors is the UK's only fully transparent 360-degree underwater tunnel, providing spectacular views of 40-year-old Molokai the Giant Sea Turtle and a Bowmouth Guitar Shark, an attention-seeking diva called Beyonc-ray!

The centre dedicates a lot of time and hard work to its Breed, Rescue And Protect conservation project. This includes running programmes to help sustain endangered species, nursing sick creatures back to health before returning them to the wild, and campaigning to protect the marine environment from exploitation or destruction. There's currently a tank in the Jelly Invaders area which houses nothing other than a number of plastic bags. This is to highlight just how much these bags can look like jellyfish, and the danger they can cause to underwater creatures who mistake them for their food.

Other Sea Life Centre highlights include the 4D cinema, the zebra shark in Shark Lagoon, the Clownfish Kingdom tunnel - a favourite with children who like Disney's Finding Nemo - and the UK's only tropical Ocean Tunnel, featuring darting sharks, gliding rays and rescued turtles.

There's so much that goes into the upkeep of the centre. Every fortnight a fresh batch of sea water is brought up from the South Coast, and every three months, a new shipment of seaweed arrives. The cleaning and maintenance of the tanks happens sporadically during visiting hours. There are allotted feeding times during the day, so if you want to see the inhabitants dining, plan your visit with this in mind.

With so much to enjoy, families are advised to allow at least two hours to get the most out of their Sea Life Centre experience.

All tickets must be booked in advance in light of Covid-19 social-distancing measures.

For further information and to book tickets, visit [visitsealife.com/birmingham](https://www.visitsealife.com/birmingham)





TRAVEL BACK IN TIME

with a day out at Blists Hill Victorian Town

Located within the World Heritage Site of Ironbridge Gorge is the recreated Victorian town of Blists Hill - just one of 10 tourist attractions belonging to the Ironbridge Gorge Trust.

Blists Hill reopened its doors to the public on 4 July after England's national tourism organisation awarded the venue We're Good To Go status - a seal of approval confirming that the attraction meets current Covid-19 safety guidelines.

Visitor confidence is key, and the Trust has put in place numerous measures to ensure the experiences offered at Blists Hill are just as good as they were pre-lockdown.

Set over 52 acres, the attraction has plenty to offer visitors and remains very much an interactive experience.

The museum includes a general drapers, a blacksmiths and a well-stocked pharmacy with an adjoining and rather gruesome dentist room. Here, you can learn about different potions and poisons and their use in curing (allegedly) a wide range of Victorian illnesses.

There's also a bank, where - when not in the midst of a pandemic - visitors can exchange new money for old and try to manage with pounds, shillings and pence.

A trip to the nearby post office, meanwhile, reveals the daily workings of a service at the heart of a Victorian community.

Throughout your visit you will encounter costumed demonstrators and town characters,

all of whom are ready to take the time to tell you their personal story.

All the players are very knowledgeable about their particular roles and the circumstances their characters lived in. You'll always hear an interesting story or some gossip about another resident of the town!

One character sure to pop up on numerous occasions during your visit is Blists Hill's resident policeman. He will be roaming the town on his bike, keeping an eye out for anyone misbehaving.

The role of policeman is performed by Guy Rowland, who has taken on numerous guises at the museum over the past 15 years. Earlier this year, Guy came runner-up in VisitEngland's annual Tourism Superstar competition. Not that you'll hear him boasting about his accolade - he's more concerned with sharing tales about the town's most notorious criminals!

A trip to Blists Hill wouldn't be complete without a visit to the local fried-fish dealer, where you can enjoy traditionally cooked fish & chips. Just follow the aroma that wafts around the town...

Alternatively, pop into the New Inn to enjoy a tippie and some good old-fashioned entertainment.

And if you fancy something sweet, head for the bakers. Alongside the fresh baked bread there are tasty buns and biscuits to enjoy. Or drop into the sweet shop to grab a bag of tra-

ditional favourites.

Be sure to give yourself plenty of time to stroll through Blists Hill. There's so much to grab your attention, including the shire horses (horse & cart rides), blast furnaces, workshops, cottage gardens, the school room and a doctor's room with adjoining house.

Stop off and see the winding engine, too - an amazing example of Industrial Revolution ingenuity.

There's also a funfair to enjoy - complete with Victorian carousel, chair-o-planes and game stalls where you can have a go at winning a coconut. The nearby Forest Glen Refreshment Pavilion offers a variety of hot and cold food & drink and has an extensive outdoor space where you can sit and rest your feet before heading off to explore some more.

Blists Hill is a great experience that makes for a fun day out for all ages. And with so much to do - and many events programmed throughout the day - you'll more than likely find yourself wanting to go back for more.

On Saturday 8 August, the venue is hosting Dress Like A Victorian Day. Small prizes will be handed out to the best-dressed visitors. There will also be a host of costume-themed activities to enjoy.

Blists Hill is open Wednesday to Sunday, 10am to 7pm. All tickets must be pre-booked, even for annual pass holders.

For further information, visit: ironbridge.org.uk



Virtual Shrewsbury Flower Show

Fri 14 and Sat 15 August
12 noon - 8pm each day



There'll be flower displays, demos,
as well as some great surprises!

Follow the activities on our Facebook page,
or join the event at <https://bit.ly/VirtSFS>

VISIT: [shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk/
virtual-shrewsbury-flower-show](https://shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk/virtual-shrewsbury-flower-show)



Fun and educational...

Cadbury World

Linden Rd, Bournville, Birmingham, B30 2LU Website: cadburyworld.co.uk Tel: 0121 393 6004

This popular family attraction is a veritable wonderland of chocolate delights and activities. Start the chocaholic's dream journey in Aztec Jungle, where you'll travel back more than 1,000 years to the tropical rainforest of the Mayan Indians and discover the origin of the cocoa tree. Head for Europe next, to find out about the arrival of cocoa in England, then visit Bull Street, where John Cadbury opened his first shop.

Other attractions at the Bournville-located visitor attraction include a 4D Chocolate Adventure, Cadabra Ride, Purple Planet, African Adventure Play Area and the world's biggest Cadbury shop!



Hawkstone Park & Follies

Weston-under-Redcastle, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY4 5JY Website: hawkstoneparkfollies.co.uk Tel: 01948 841777

A magical place to discover, Hawkstone Park & Follies was created in the 18th century by Richard Hill, the then-owner of Hawkstone Hall. When the Follies' stone arches, bridges, walkways and grottoes were added to the natural drama of four wooded hills, the resultant Gothic 'fantasy land' became one of the country's most visited attractions of its kind.

A late-20th century restoration project breathed new life into the park & follies, which has now been designated a Grade I listed landscape by English Heritage.

Hawkstone is also considered to be a bird watcher's paradise, and is home to peregrine falcons, buzzards, green woodpeckers, mistle thrush and pied flycatchers.

British Motor Museum

Banbury Road, Gaydon, Warwickshire, CV35 0BJ Website: britishmotormuseum.co.uk Tel: 01926 641188

Home to the world's largest collection of historic British vehicles, the British Motor Museum tells the stories of the people and places behind the cars.

Themed trails, touch-screen exhibits, an interactive zone, costumed guided tours, and a varied programme of themed activities make for an inspiring day out.

The venue also hosts a range of major events throughout the year, including the Old Ford Rally (23 August), National Metro & Mini Show (6 September) and the Great British Model Railway Show (7 & 8 November).



THE COVENTRY MUSIC MUSEUM

The 2-Tone Village, Shops, Cafe,
Restaurant and Museum



The Ghost Town Car – now YOU can ride in it...

The Coventry Music Museum now boasts the ultimate 2-Tone exhibit, the actual Ghost Town car, lifted straight from the Ghost Town music video. Thanks to master mechanic Steve Kearns and his team, who not only found the car, but carried each section up bit by bit, finally creating the famous 1961 Vauxhall Cresta PA car complete with the 4218 R0 number plate. Special fans have been queuing up to get into the car for the ultimate photo opportunity, one Ghost Town Car rider said: "For just a moment we felt like we were starring in our own Ghost Town video". It has already attracted the likes of: Jerry Dammers, Neville Staple and Lynval Golding, Roddy Byers, Neol Davies, John Shipley, Trevor Evans and Paul Heskett. So now I guess it's your turn.

More information ring 07971171441
or email godivarocks@yahoo.co.uk
80 Walsgrave Rd, Coventry CV2 4ED



The Ghost Town Car

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place in World Music

Rude Boys Bedroom

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Black Country Living Museum

Tipton Rd, Dudley DY1 4SQ Website: bclm.co.uk Tel: 0121 557 9643

Get stuck into some old-school fun at the Black Country Living Museum this summer holiday. The award-winning venue boasts more than 30 period shops and houses to explore, while a host of famous characters help bring the region's fascinating history to life.

Visitors can also participate in some deceptively simple old-school street games outside the back-to-backs and learn their ABCs backwards in an authentic Edwardian school lesson.

Pay for one visit and the museum will give you a BCLM UnChained Annual Pass valid for 12 months.



Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre

School Road, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 9RS
Website: shropshirehillsdiscoverycentre.co.uk Tel: 01588 676060

Famous for its grass roof, Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre features a selection of fascinating attractions, including an interactive exhibition where visitors can use their senses to travel through time - from the Ice Age to the present day.

And with 30 acres of meadows to explore, complete with butterfly and dragonfly hotspots, the Discovery Centre really is a nature lover's paradise.

During the summer holidays, the Purple Prickles Meadow activity trail invites families to take a walk into the deep, dark wood and connect with characters from a much-loved children's book.

Royal Air Force Museum Cosford

Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8UP Website: rafmuseum.org.uk
Tel: 01902 376200

Telling the story of aviation history and housing one of the largest collections of its kind in the UK, RAF Cosford is home to more than 70 historic aircraft displayed in three wartime hangars on an active airfield.

The museum's other attractions include the interactive National Cold War Exhibition - which tells the story of the Cold War while highlighting the ideologies of both sides - and a collection entitled The War In The Air - an examination of the role of British, German and Japanese aircraft in the development of aviation.

Virtual tours, fun'n'flight hands-on activities and dedicated conservation and exhibition areas further add to the venue's impressive offer.



Coventry Transport Museum

Millennium Place, Hales St, Coventry, CV1 1JD
Website: transport-museum.com Tel: 02476 234270

This popular museum not only houses the largest publicly owned collection of British vehicles on the planet, it also tells the story of a city which changed the world through transport.

There are 14 fully accessible galleries to enjoy, featuring, among other attractions, pioneering bicycles, transport champions, innovative, memorable and luxurious vehicles from the last 200 years and (last but certainly not least) the world's fastest vehicle.

The museum is also home to the world's two fastest cars - the ThrustSSC and Thrust2.





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Places to visit across the Midlands

Days Out



Severn Valley Railway

Kidderminster: Station Dr, Kidderminster DY10 1QX
Bridgnorth: 2 Hollybush Rd, Bridgnorth WV16 4AX
Tel: 01299 401776 Website: svr.co.uk

Operating mainly steam-hauled passenger trains between Bridgnorth, Bewdley and Kidderminster, this much-loved railway transports visitors on a journey of about 16 miles along the beautiful Severn Valley. Whilst social-distancing measures remain in place, the railway will use compartment carriages to allow each group to travel separately. An all-in price of £75 per compartment will cover travel for up to six people. The journey will include a stop-off at The Engine House Visitor Centre at Highley, where visitors can enjoy a brand new exhibition telling the story of how the Victorians constructed the viaduct at Falling Sands. Those starting their journey at Bridgnorth will also have the option of stop-offs at Bewdley and Kidderminster, the latter of which boasts a railway museum.

Tudor World

Sheep Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6EE
Website: tudorworld.com Tel: 01789 298070

An independent award-winning museum set within a 16th century property in the heart of Stratford-upon-Avon, Tudor World explores what life was like during the time of William Shakespeare, Henry VIII, Elizabeth I and Sir Francis Drake - and even includes some nasty aromas from a bygone world! Pirates are very much at the heart of the venue's summer holiday programming. Young seafaring bandits will be able to take part in a specially themed quiz, picking up a prize from the treasure chest and a pirate certificate on completion.

Exhibits, interactive activities and numerous themed events throughout the year make this family-run attraction a great option for anybody wanting an entertaining and educational day out.



National Forest Adventure Farm

Tatenhill, Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, DE13 9SJ
Website: adventurefarm.co.uk Tel: 01283 533933

This family-run attraction provides 40 acres of safe outdoor space and comes complete with a new nine-acre dinosaur-inspired maze. The Maize Maze has been specifically designed with government health & safety guidance in mind. Visitors can explore the three-metre-wide paths in separate family groups, staying alert at all times for dinosaurs hidden deep in the maze.

Activities include a Raptor Run - to retrieve dinosaur eggs while evading the velociraptor hiding among the maize plants - and a chance to get 'in the picture' with an interactive velociraptor and T-Rex for a terrifying selfie.

Other attractions include: pedal go-karts; frisbee golf; Jurassic Canyon sand & fossil dig; tractor rides; a spacious animal barn with goats, chickens, pigs, horses, cows, rabbits and guinea pigs; JCB Big Dig Zone; and giant jumping pillows.

Fuel their imagination



We're open! Check the website for opening hours and visitor information, **pre-booking essential.**

Book tickets online at
britishmotormuseum.co.uk

**Lola, 9.
Future
Mechanic**

**J12 M40, Gaydon,
Warwickshire, CV35 0BJ**

Places to visit across the Midlands

Days Out



Birmingham Botanical Gardens

Westbourne Rd, Edgbaston,
B15 3TR
birminghambotanicalgardens.org.uk
Tel: 0121 454 1860

Set in 15 acres of landscaped greenery, Birmingham Botanical Gardens was established in 1829, since which time it's been one of the city's top attractions.

With four glasshouses - tropical, subtropical, Mediterranean and arid - there are plenty of unusual and amazing-looking plants to discover.

The site also has its very own playground, tearoom and garden gift shop, all of which are surrounded by some of the most beautiful gardens in the UK.

Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park

Warwickshire, CV35 9HZ Website: comptonverney.org.uk
Tel: 01926 645 500

Compton Verney is widely considered to be a gallery of international standing. The Georgian house is set in more than 120 acres of Grade 2 listed classical parkland, landscaped by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the most eminent landscape architect of the 18th century. Although the original estate was split up and sold a century ago, the 'pleasure grounds' still clearly reflect the sweeping grassland, ornamental lakes and Cedars of Lebanon for which Brown is famous.

Current exhibitions include the works of Renaissance painter Lucas Cranach the Elder - one of Germany's most successful ever artists - and a show called Fabric: Touch And Identity - an exploration of how clothes and textiles 'conceal, reveal and seduce through the lenses of art, design, fashion, film and dance'.



Shakespeare's Birthplace

Henley St, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6QW
Website: shakespeare.org.uk Tel: 01789 204016

Find out what life was like for the world's most famous playwright as he grew up in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The venue's attractions include numerous rare objects, one of which is an original folio of the Bard's complete works. Visitors can also hear stories of Shakespeare's family life, check out Will's father's glove-making workshop, and take a stroll through gardens which may well have inspired some of Shakespeare's most poetic writings.

The four other Shakespeare Family Homes & Gardens in the Trust's care - Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Shakespeare's New Place, Hall's Croft and Mary Arden's Farm - will not reopen before spring 2021.



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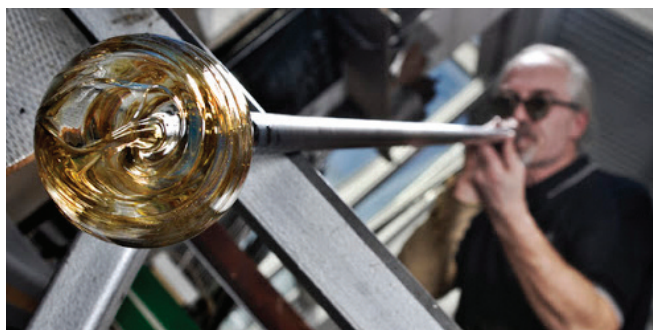
Days Out



Hatton Adventure World

Dark Lane, Hatton, Warwick, CV35 8XA
Website: adventure.hattonworld.com Tel: 01926 843411

An array of indoor and outdoor activities awaits visitors at this popular Warwickshire attraction. Youngsters are sure to enjoy participating in the venue's nature trail, watching Zoobee's Open Air Family Show, cheering the contestants in Hatton's Sheep Racing Grand National and marvelling as birds of prey take to the skies in twice-daily falconry displays. For older visitors, Laser Combat and the nearby Tulleys Escape Rooms & Games are sure to be a hit. The latter features two games - Mutiny and The Outfitters - both of which aim to test the skills of even the most experienced of escapees. If you fancy a retail fix, then check out Hatton Shopping Village, featuring a wealth of independent shops, a cafe, bar and plenty of outdoor seating.



Ruskin Glass Centre

Wollaston Rd, Amblecote, Stourbridge Postcode: DY8 4HF
Website: ruskinglasscentre.co.uk Tel: 01384 399419

Ruskin Glass Centre incorporates the Glasshouse Heritage Centre, a popular visitor attraction which uses video, photographs and artefacts to tell the 400-year-old story of glassmaking in the Stourbridge area. Along with the Heritage Centre, the venue also provides workshop spaces and retail opportunities for a number of glass artists and businesses. An on-site cafe serves an affordable menu using locally sourced organic produce.

Twinlakes Family Theme Park

Melton Spinney Rd, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE14 4FF
Website: twinlakespark.co.uk

Set within 70 acres of countryside, this all-action, all-weather family theme park, farm & water park features a variety of rides and rollercoasters, an indoor ice rink, an animal area, a maze, an indoor play option and numerous events and shows.

Attractions include Buffalo Stampede Rollercoaster, Bumper Boats, Rio Grande Train, Summit Plummet Toboggan, Dizzy Dune Buggies, Prairie Pete's City and Twinlakes' latest addition, Pilgrim Pedallers. Twinlakes' Labrynth Venture Zone is described as a day out in itself, with both indoor and outdoor rides, roller rink, bouncing pillows and Mystic Mirror Maze all featuring.



The British Ironwork Centre

Aston Way, Morda, Oswestry, North Shropshire, SY11 4JH
Website: britishironworkcentre.co.uk Tel: 0800 688 8386

The British Ironwork Centre boasts an impressive collection of beautifully decorative metal items for the home and garden, some of which are faithful reproductions of ironwork no longer seen today. There's also a collection of animal sculptures to admire, including a majestic silverback gorilla and, when not touring, the highly praised 'knife angel'.

Indoor show areas feature a treasure trove of trinkets and interior adornments. The centre also includes a large outdoor adventure play area and hosts numerous family fun days throughout the year.



A man and a woman are walking hand-in-hand on a stone path in front of a historic timber-framed house. The woman has long blonde hair and is wearing a black leather jacket over a pink top and blue jeans. The man has dark curly hair and is wearing a blue bomber jacket over an orange sweater and blue jeans. The house behind them is a half-timbered building with a tiled roof and a small dormer window with a diamond-patterned leaded glass pane. There are some plants and a flower bed to the left of the path.

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Places to visit across the Midlands

Days Out



Drayton Manor Theme Park

Nr Tamworth, B78 3TW

Website: draytonmanor.co.uk Tel: 01827 287979

This Staffordshire theme park welcomes over one million visitors annually and is home to the hugely popular Thomas Land attraction. There's also a 15-acre zoo to enjoy, where you'll find meerkats, Sumatran tigers, exotic birds, kangaroos, pandas, spider monkeys and many other species of animal from all over the world. Those looking for adrenaline-pumping fun need look no further than Drayton's four main white-knuckle rides - Apocalypse, Maelstrom, Shockwave and Pandemonium.

Stormforce 10 and Splash Canyon are other must-try experiences - as long as you don't mind getting a tad wet, that is!

Visitors wishing to extend their stay can do so at the Drayton Manor Hotel, complete with Thomas & Friends-themed rooms. Packages include overnight stay, breakfast, theme-park ticket and a free Thomas welcome pack for every child.

Hoo Farm Animal Kingdom

Preston on the Weald Moors, Telford, Shropshire, TF6 6DJ

Website: hoofarm.com Tel: 01952 677917

This award-winning attraction provides a great day out for all the family, especially for younger children. The site is home to a menagerie of creatures, including owls, binturong, racoons, skunks, badgers, lizards, snakes, lemurs, meerkats and alpacas. Boasting 32 acres of woodland and paddocks, Hoo Farm holds numerous seasonal events, hosts sheep racing and zoo-keeper experiences and provides the chance to feed the animals.

Visitors can stay overnight in self-catering accommodation in nearby Badger's Wood, where sightings of wild badgers, foxes, buzzards and owls are a regular occurrence. A stay in Badger's Wood includes admission to Hoo Farm.



Battlefield Falconry Centre

Battlefield 1403, Shrewsbury, SY4 3DB

Website: battlefieldfalconrycentre.co.uk Tel: 01939 210905

Offering a variety of activities, Battlefield Falconry Centre is home to over 30 different birds of prey, including species of owls, falcons and hawks. Recent additions include a steppe eagle and a great grey owl. Hawks On Walks is one of the site's most popular activities and involves a walk through woodland - accompanied by a falconer and Harris Hawk - on the neighbouring Albrighton Estate.

Battlefield also hosts bird handling and photography sessions, children's parties and corporate events.

Enthusiasts can spend a day at the centre learning the art of falconry. And when you're done with the birds, head to nearby Battlefield 1403, where you'll find a huge selection of delicious delights in the onsite delicatessen, or take some refreshment at the adjoining Sparrow's Cafe. There's even a nicely spaced out picnic area, should you prefer to take your own food.





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Days out for the more adventurous...

Days Out



Bear Grylls Adventure

Birmingham International Railway Station, Exhibition Way, Marston Green, B40 1PA Website: beargryllsadventure.com Tel: 0121 725 2616

Celebrity adventurer Bear Grylls has certainly pulled out all the stops with this indoor/outdoor visitor attraction.

Activities include high ropes, indoor archery, indoor climbing, escape rooms and a Royal Marines-inspired assault course. Most are suitable for visitors aged eight-plus.

For the 'more courageous' (as if some of the above didn't require courage!), The Fear Zone challenges you to 'sharpen your mind and find your inner strength' by taking on the challenge of navigating the area in complete darkness.

Alternatively, try venturing to the depths of the deep blue sea with Shark Drive. The site's tropical tank allows adventurers to get 'up close and personal' with black tip reef sharks and cownose rays. All dive and safety equipment is provided.

Fancy experiencing the thrill of free falling at 12,000ft without having to jump out of a plane? Then iFly is probably for you. This weightless adventure takes place in a wind tunnel and comprises two one-minute flights to get the adrenaline pumping.

Bear Grylls Adventure is currently offering up to 50% off different activities for the summer.

Alton Towers

Alton, Staffordshire, ST10 4DB Website: altontowers.com
Tel: 01538 704096

A theme park, waterpark and hotel complex rolled into one, Alton Towers features some of the country's best-known white-knuckle rides - including the UK's first wooden rollercoaster in over 20 years. Thrill-seekers can scream their way into Oblivion, experience the windswept exhilaration of Air and enjoy the turbulent and twisting frenzy of Nemesis.

There's also an impressive selection of rides and attractions for younger visitors to enjoy. These include Peter Rabbit Hippty Hop, Go Jetters Vroomsters Zoom Ride and Octonauts Rollercoaster Adventure. Youngsters wanting a more serene experience should check out the In The Night Garden Magical Boat Ride. Regular children's shows also feature at the venue throughout the day.



Alderford Aqua Park

Tilstock Road, Whitchurch, SY13 3JQ
Website: alderford.com Tel: 01948 665914

Forty-minute sessions spent climbing, jumping and bouncing at Alderford's inflatable playground on the lake is a fun way to keep kids entertained during the summer holiday.

Suitable for children aged six-plus, the aqua park features five inflatables, accommodates 15 people at any given time and is manned by a lifeguard. If inflatables aren't your thing but you still want to take to the water, the venue hires out paddleboards and canoes. Alternatively, you can take along your own. Wild swimming is also permitted on the lake.

There's much more to Alderford too, including the Maize Maze, featuring 12 areas of retro games, and a cafe (currently takeaway only). Market days and an outdoor production of The Wind In The Willows on 7 August further add to the venue's summertime appeal.

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Days out for the more adventurous...

Days Out



Go Ape Tree Top Adventure

Midlands venues include Cannock, Coventry, Sherwood Forest & Wyre Forest Website: goape.co.uk

With 'branches' (geddit?) in some of the UK's most spectacular forests and parks, Go Ape Tree Top Adventure comprises two to three hours of flying down zip wires, leaping from Tarzan swings and navigating obstacles, crossings and rope bridges. Tree Top Junior is suitable for 'mini Tarzans' aged six to 12 and offers an hour of tree-to-tree crossings with a zip line finale. The Forest Segway, meanwhile, is an option for those preferring to keep their feet on the ground (well, almost!). The hour-long activity is a great way to explore the terrain of the forest. Health & safety is a priority with all Go Ape Adventures, with age-related regulations in place for all activities.



The Edge Adventure Activity Centre

Newtown House Farm, Much Wenlock TF13 6DB
Website: theedgeadventure.co.uk Tel: 01952 727491

This popular visitor attraction is located within the picturesque landscape of Shropshire's Wenlock Edge and offers a wide range of activities for all ages and group sizes. The venue is particularly popular for birthdays, hen & stag dos, team building, corporate events and junior activity days. Adrenaline-pumping fun comes in the form of segway, a junior quad biking trek, mountain boarding, sniper shooting, clay pigeon shooting, archery, Jacob's Ladder and zip wire. Archery Tag has been added for 2020. A spin on paintball, it uses bows & arrows as an alternative to paint, with no mess or pain involved. Described as a game of honesty, participants have to head to a medical zone when hit, where they then wait to play again.

Ackers Adventure

Golden Hillock Road, Birmingham, B11 2PY
Website: ackers-adventure.co.uk Tel: 0121 772 5111

Ackers Adventure is a local charity offering a wide range of outdoor activities taking place within a green wildlife haven just two miles from Birmingham city centre.

Whether you're an individual or in a family or group, Ackers offers a host of options. You can scale the heights of the three climbing walls, explore the Grand Union Canal by canoe, kayak or bellboat, whizz down the 100-metre ski slope or 25-metre toboggan slope, aim for a hole-in-one on the woodland disc golf course, or test your team-working abilities with the obstacle course, team-building tasks or bushcraft survival skills sessions.

During the school holidays, the centre runs adventure-packed camps and accepts childcare vouchers. As part of the Covid-safe operating procedures, all activities must be booked online in advance.



Sky Reach Adventures

Telford Town Park, Hinkshay Road, Telford, TF3 4EP
Website: skyreach.org.uk Tel: 01952 382340

Four adrenaline-pumping activities await visitors to this Telford Town Council-run attraction. Located within the Town Park, Sky Reach Adventures comprises a climbing wall, Tree Course, Skyline Course and Quick Jump - all with different levels of challenge to suit different age groups.

The Sky Reach system allows participants to move at their own speed and make their own route choices... The climbing wall is 10 metres high, has four routes and uses two auto-belay systems to ensure climbers are always safe... The Tree Course takes visitors on a journey through the Town Park woods at squirrel height... The Skyline Course features 12 obstacles and requires balance, physical skill and nerve. Last but not least, Quick Jump allows visitors the chance to experience the sensation of free falling through the air.





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Zoos and conservation

Days Out



Trentham Monkey Forest

Trentham Estate, Stone Rd, Tittensor, Stoke-on-Trent
ST12 9HR Website: monkey-forest.com
Tel: 01782 659 845

Home to 140 Barbary macaques, Trentham Monkey Forest provides an enjoyable day out for families. From an easily accessible pathway around the forest, visitors can watch this endangered breed going about their business, just as they would in the wild. Knowledgeable guides and handily positioned information boards ensure you'll know far more about the macaques when you leave than when you arrive. Check out the feeding talks that take place on an hourly basis, and keep an eye open for the site's newest members - four baby macaques (two girls and two boys) who were born during lockdown. An adventure play area, meadow walk (seasonal), hidden trail and 'jungle shop' also feature, while those wanting a bite to eat can head to the Banana Cafe. There are also on-site picnic areas for visitors wishing to take along their own food.

Park Hall Farm

Burma Rd, Whittington, Oswestry SY11 4AS
Website: parkhallfarm.co.uk Tel: 01691 671 123

This all-weather visitor attraction in North Shropshire has plenty available to keep younger visitors entertained. Twice-daily pig racing is a highlight for many, as is the opportunity to enjoy an up-close encounter or several with a menagerie of farm animals. Other attractions include The Amazing Maize Maze, tractor rides, go-karting, an outdoor play area and onsite museums - where visitors can find out more about subjects including the workings of trench warfare, Victorian schooling and life in an Iron Age roundhouse. New for 2020 are the Dino Trail - with Dora the Dino making daily appearances throughout the summer holiday - and Burrowland, where you can 'see rabbits as you've never seen them before'.



Stratford Butterfly Farm

Swan's Nest Lane, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 7LS
Website: butterflyfarm.co.uk Tel: 01789 299288

Stratford Butterfly Farm is home to hundreds of the world's most spectacular butterflies. The popular venue features a 'discovery zone' inhabited by giant silkmoths and their cocoons, and the Minibeast Metropolis, home to snakes, reptiles, amphibians and other invertebrates. The latest arrivals to this particular part of the attraction are the pumpkin patch tarantula and red clawed crayfish. The Butterfly Farm's connections to the rainforests of Belize and the Maya civilisation are also in evidence, with more than 30 replicated ancient Maya artefacts on display throughout the attraction.

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Zoos and conservation

Days Out



Dudley Zoo & Castle

Castle Hill, Dudley DY1 4QF Website: dudleyzoo.org.uk
Tel: 01384 215313

As well as being home to 1,300 animals and nearly 200 species, the 83-year-old Dudley Zoological Gardens also features an 11th century castle, limestone caverns, 12 Grade-2 listed Tecton buildings and the country's only vintage chairlift. Much of the animal collection is linked to international conservation and breeding programmes. Endangered species in evidence at the venue include Asiatic lions, Sumatran tigers, Bornean orangutans, Tibetan red pandas, Rothschild giraffes, Madagascan lemurs and the UK's largest parent-reared colony of Humboldt penguins. The zoo recently welcomed a new inhabitant - an Asian palm civet named Connie, who has joined the venue's resident binturongs, Ellie and Elliot, in a new mixed exhibit.



West Midland Safari & Leisure Park

Spring Grove, Bewdley, Worcestershire, DY12 1LF
Website: wmssp.co.uk Tel: 01299 402114

West Midland Safari & Leisure Park offers a great opportunity to enjoy seeing animals roaming freely - and to do so from the safety of your own car! The 100-acre venue is home to a variety of exotic and unusual species, many of which you're sure to encounter during the course of the four-mile drive-through safari. Expect to see elephants, rhinos, giraffes, lions, wallabies, tigers, emus, camels, zebras, gnus, elands, ankole cattle, yaks, przewalski's horses, Asian buffaloes, wolves, llamas and all manner of antelope!

Cotswold Wildlife Park

Bradwell Grove, Burford OX18 4JP Website: cotswoldwildlifepark.co.uk
Tel: 01993 823 006

Set in 160 acres of parkland and gardens, Cotswold Wildlife Park now has one of the UK's largest zoological collections. Lions, giraffes, giant turtles and monkeys are among the species living there. The venue hosts numerous special events and provides lots of ways in which visitors can get involved with the animals.



Twycross Zoo

Norton Grange, Norton-Juxta-Twycross, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 3PX Website: twycrosszoo.org Tel: 01782 659845

This famous Warwickshire venue is one of Britain's major zoos, occupying over 100 acres and attracting more than 450,000 visitors per year. Twycross has one of the most diverse primate collections in the western world and is home to several endangered species, including two Sumatran tigers named Jahly and Sialang. Earlier this summer, the zoo hit the headlines when it made a public appeal to the government to be 'saved from extinction'. The plea followed a change in the law to deal with Covid-19 which looked like keeping the venue closed indefinitely. Thankfully the government changed track and the zoo is now back up and running, albeit with certain changes to its operating procedures - none of which are likely to stop visitors from having a great day out.





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www.worcesterfestival.co.uk

Heritage attractions across the Midlands

Days Out



Acton Scott Historic Working Farm

Church Stretton, South Shropshire, SY6 6QN
Website: actonscott.com Tel: 01694 781 307

Experience everyday life as it would've been lived on an upland farm one hundred years ago. Visitors to this popular Shropshire Hills attraction can see milking by hand and butter-making in the dairy. There are weekly visits from the wheelwright, farrier and blacksmith, and plenty of cows, pigs, poultry and sheep in the farmyard and fields.

Acton Scott has featured in numerous TV programmes across the years, including BBC Two's Victorian Farm, Ben Fogle's Escape In Time and Making Britain Count, presented by Phil Tufnell.



Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings

Stoke Heath, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 4JR
Website: avoncroft.org.uk Tel: 01527 831363 / 831886

Spread over 19 acres of Worcestershire countryside, England's first open-air museum covers in excess of 700 years of Midlands history.

The site includes a collection of 20-plus historic buildings, ranging in date from Worcester Cathedral's 14th century Guesten Hall roof, to a post-Second World War Birmingham prefab.

Visitors to Avoncroft can also enjoy a wildflower meadow, period gardens and a traditional cider & perry orchard.

And if checking out the aforementioned attractions works up an appetite, the museum also boasts an award-winning tearoom, complete with a selection of cakes and light lunches made with fresh, local produce (some of which comes from the venue's very own period gardens).

Dudley Canal & Tunnel Trust

501 Birmingham New Road, Dudley, DY1 4SB
Website: dudleycanaltrust.org.uk Tel: 0121 557 6265

The Dudley Canal Trust, created to protect and preserve the famous network of tunnels, runs regular guided boat trips. Informative and entertaining, the excursions are accompanied by historic recreations, impressive sound & light shows, and 'informative commentary delivered by your knowledgeable skipper'. The trips have been adapted to meet Covid-19 guidelines.

The Trust reinvests any trading surplus into the maintenance of the tunnels and their environment, to ensure that visitors can continue to enjoy and appreciate 420 million years of living history.



Attingham Park

Atcham, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY4 4TP
Website: nationaltrust.org.uk/attingham Tel: 01743 708123

Even with the 18th century Mansion House itself remaining closed due to Covid-19, there's still plenty to see and do at this popular National Trust property.

Walks around acres of woodland allow visitors to take in spectacular views of the River Roden and the landscape beyond, with many interesting areas to explore along the way. Keep an eye open for the animals of Attingham Wood along the Mile Walk!

A herd of fallow deer are a highlight for many visitors, especially during feeding time, while the Field of Play - complete with log piles, earth mounds and willow tunnels - provides plenty of space for children to enjoy themselves.



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www.hawkstoneparkfollies.co.uk



Heritage attractions across the Midlands

Days Out



Birmingham Back to Backs

Address: 55-63 Hurst Street, Birmingham, B5 4TE
Website: nationaltrust.org.uk/birmingham-back-to-backs
Tel: 0121 666 7671

A carefully restored courtyard of 19th-century workers' houses - the last of its kind in the Midlands - the Back to Backs offer an atmospheric glimpse into the lives of working-class people in Birmingham across a period of 130 years. Coming complete with crackling fires and pans bubbling away on stoves, the popular visitor attraction comprises four houses, each decorated and furnished to represent a different era: the 1840s, 1870s, 1930s and 1970s.



Wightwick Manor and Gardens

Wightwick Bank, Wolverhampton WV6 8EE
Website: nationaltrust.org.uk/wightwick-manor-and-gardens
Tel: 01902 761400

A visit to this country home on the outskirts of Wolverhampton offers a glimpse into the world of one of the city's most prominent families. Paint manufacturer and local MP Geoffrey Mander inherited the timber-framed house from his father, Theodore, in 1900. In 1937 he persuaded the National Trust to take on the house, with him and his wife, Rosalie, taking the role of live-in curators. Together they opened the house to the public and added to its contents.

Nowadays, Wightwick houses fine examples of work from William Morris and his arts & crafts contemporaries, as well as a remarkable collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings by Rossetti and Burne-Jones.

Kenilworth Castle

Castle Green, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, CV8 1NG
Website: english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/kenilworth-castle
Tel: 01926 852078

Among the largest and most impressive historic sites in England, Kenilworth Castle is a vast complex of ruined fortifications and palatial apartments. From medieval fortress to Elizabethan palace, the castle has been at the centre of the country's affairs for much of its 900-year history. Nowadays the venue forms part of the English Heritage portfolio and provides a varied programme of events throughout the year.

Currently running is the Summer Quest Adventure - a free activity with a historical twist - taking place daily throughout the holidays.



Ludlow Castle

Castle Square, Ludlow SY8 1AY Website: ludlowcastle.com
Tel: 01534 873355 Pricing: Adults £8, Child £3.50, Family £20

This ruined medieval fortification stands on a promontory overlooking the River Teme. The castle was probably founded by Walter de Lacy after the Norman conquest of 1066 and was one of the first stone castles to be built in England. Today, the castle is a popular visitor attraction, with tours and events programmed throughout the year.



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www.tudorworld.com
01789 298070

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Museum Ghost Tours—every evening from 6pm (now in its 20th year!)
Shakespeare Tour of Stratford—every Saturday at 2pm (now in its 9th year!)
Jack the Ripper evenings—check website for details
Victorian Seance evenings—check website for details

Activities for groups and parties

Days Out



Rush Trampoline Park

Unit 6 Avery Dell, Lifford Lane, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B30 3DZ
Website: rushuk.com

This state-of-the-art trampoline park has 11 zones in which to keep fit and enjoy jumping to your heart's content - regardless of age. Fancy having a go at Dodgeball? The rules are simple: grab a ball, pick a side and start jumping.

Or maybe you're a budding gymnast? In which case, the super-long tumble lanes will be just perfect for you.

Want to test your hand-eye coordination? Then check out Wipeout; ducking under or jumping over the rotating arms in this inflatable arena is certain to get the heart pumping.

And if you fancy taking things to the next level, you should give the Rush High Performance Area a try - ideal for tumblers, parkour experts and tricksters wanting to master fancy freestyle flips.



Telford Ice Rink

St Quentin Gate, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 4JQ Tel: 01952 382650
Website: telfordandwrekinleisure.co.uk/telfordicerink

Offering family fun for people of all skating abilities, Telford Ice Rink is set within the £250million Southwater development and is home to English Premier Ice Hockey League team the Telford Tigers. There's much more going on at the rink than just plain skating, with the venue hosting a programme of special events throughout the year. It's also a favoured destination for children's birthday parties. Expected to open from mid-August.

The Floodgate

104-108 Floodgate St, Birmingham B5 5SR,
Website: thefloodgate.co.uk Tel: 0121 227 2255

An 'experiential night out like no other', The Floodgate offers its visitors the chance to immerse themselves in a world of neon colour and graffiti art. And with the venue also serving up the latest on-trend cocktails, cold craft beer and tasty street food, what's not to like?

Making The Floodgate unique is its immersive and competitive offer, with three games from which to choose...

Bleachers Baseball Cage is a fast-paced experience where pitching machines deliver balls at up to 90kmph... Curl Club UV Curling allows players to test their sliding skills on one of three neon-lit lanes... Pit Pat Table-Top Golf - an 18-hole course - combines mini golf and billiards. Let the fun begin...



Flight Club

13 Temple Street, Birmingham, B2 5BN
Website: flightclubdarts.com Tel: 0121 312 4610

The Flight Club is seen as a key player in the experimental nightlife scene. The world's first 'social darts' venue uses patented dart-tracking technology to present a supercharged version of the sport.

Each oche allows 12 people to play at once, with instant scoring reimagining matches into fast-paced social experiences.

The venue also offers an extensive food & beverage selection, including craft beers, wines and cocktails.



whatsonlive.co.uk 45

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Three Little Pigs
 Monday 3rd - Friday 7th August &
 Monday 24th - Friday 28th August
 Can you build a house which will withstand the huff and puff test? Enjoy this traditional tale told from a different point of view and enjoy a toasted marshmallow on a campfire. 1pm-2.30pm.
 £4 per 3-11 year old. Booking advised.

Code Makers and Breakers
 Monday 10th - Friday 14th August
 Experiment with morse code, semaphore and braille, learn a Makaton nursery rhyme and watch smoke signals being made. 1pm-2.30pm.
 £4 per accompanied 4-11 year old. Booking advised.

Paper Making and Leaf Hammering
 Monday 17th - Friday 21st August
 Design and make your own recycled paper, adding grass and flowers from our meadows or bits of wool and coloured paper. Make the print of a leaf or flower of your choice on cloth to take home. 1pm-2.30pm.
 £4 per accompanied 3-11 year old. Booking advised.



WE'RE GOOD TO GO
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Activities for groups and parties



Timberjacks

Unit E, Green Street, Kidderminster, DY10 1RD. Tel: 01562 310041 & Unit 49, FlexSpace, Stafford Drive, Shrewsbury. Tel: 01743 624232
Website: timberjacks.club

With two of its UK venues here in the Midlands, Timberjacks offers a unique way in which to have fun with friends and family - by participating in the time-honoured lumberjack sport of axe throwing! The activity-based attraction provides a safe and controlled environment in which to take aim. Games include Target Posters, with 10 to choose from, and Apple Smashing - Timberjack's 'longest running in-game extra'.



Climbing The Walls

Unit 3, Market Place, Battlefield Rd, Shrewsbury, SY1 4AN
Website: climbingthewalls.club Tel: 01743 510238

Boasting 8,000 square ft of climbing space, this Shropshire venue is split into three zones, to cater for different ages and levels of experience.

Action Walls is perfectly suited both to beginners and more advanced climbers looking for a competitive challenge, while Bouldering is a fun way to learn without ropes. Featuring over 200 square metres and at a height of 4.5 metres with a one-metre overhang spread on two levels, it serves as both a workout and a problem-solving exercise. The venue's Tall Walls, meanwhile, is a 12-metre-high challenge for the most advanced of climbers. Climbing The Walls also hosts various clubs and is available to book for birthday parties.

Escape Live

18 - 24 Constitution Hill, Birmingham, B29 3LY. Tel: 0121 572 3131; Fargo Studios, 54 Grafton Street, Coventry. Tel: 02477 674646; 31 Greenhill Street, Stratford-Upon-Avon CV37 6LE Website: escapelive.co.uk

Sixty minutes is all you have to escape from a locked room before it's too late. With the clock ticking, there's no time to argue. Everyone must work together to find the clues and solve the puzzles so that you all make your way out in time...

Escape Live has venues across the UK, with three here in the Midlands. As escape challenges increase in popularity, so does the range of themes to choose from. Peaky Blinders-themed escapes are available in Birmingham, Shakespeare's Script in Stratford-upon-Avon and Armageddon in Coventry.

Escape Live also offers live video experiences and an online game.



Waterworld

Festival Park, Etruria, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs ST1 5PU Tel: 01782 205747
Website: waterworld.co.uk

Officially the UK's number-one aqua park, Waterworld features a wealth of zones and activities to ensure fun times are had by all who visit - whether that be families with young children or thrill-seeking teenagers and adults.

Rides for the more adventurous include Waterworld's longest - Stormchaser - which loops through dark black holes and a colour show of flashing lights. Cyclone, meanwhile, is the venue's fastest. The Staffordshire aqua park is also home to the UK's first ever trap-door drop water flume; Thunderbolt is not a ride for the fainthearted. Medium-sized flumes and toddler slides are perfect for younger 'waterbabies', while plunge pools, a jacuzzi and bubble pool are ideal for those wanting to relax.





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Days Out



Coventry Music Museum

80 Walsgrave Road, Coventry, CV2 4ED
Website: covmm.co.uk Tel: 07971171441

If you love music, revel in nostalgia and enjoy perusing all manner of memorabilia, a visit to the Coventry Music Museum is an absolute must.

Recounting the story of the city's musical heritage, the museum pays homage to the era of music hall, 1950s rock'n'roll, the 1960s Beat scene, the 2-Tone days of The Specials, The Selecter and Madness, the 1980s successes of Hazel O'Connor, The Primitives and King, and the Bhangra magic of the 1990s.

The museum's collection of memorabilia includes the Lennon Bench - commemorating the famous Acorns For Peace event - the actual car from The Specials' Ghost Town video, and a selection of items connected to the city's 21st-century hitmakers, Stereo Nation and The Enemy. A new arrival is an original drum kit that once belonged to Specials legend John 'Brad' Bradbury.

National Memorial Arboretum

Croxall Road, Alrewas, Staffordshire, DE13 7AR
Website: thenma.org.uk Tel: 01283 245 100

Although its official description as 'the UK's year-round centre of remembrance' perhaps encourages comparisons with a cemetery, the National Memorial Arboretum is actually a joyous place to visit and spend time. Planting at the site began in 1997, and there are now some 30,000 trees - as well as more than 300 memorials - around which to enjoy a relaxing and peaceful wander.

Contrary to what many people think, the Arboretum isn't solely focused on the military. There's also a large area devoted to police who have fallen while on duty, as well as other areas dedicated to the fire & rescue and ambulance services.

At the time of publication, the Arboretum has reopened for pre-booked visitors only.



Shrewsbury Prison Tours

The Dana, Shrewsbury, SY1 2HR Website: shrewsburyprison.com
Tel: 01743 343100

Although HM Prison Shrewsbury was originally built by Thomas Telford in 1793, the present building was constructed in 1877. In the wake of its closure in 2013, the prison became a hugely popular tourist attraction, providing visitors with the opportunity to learn about life behind bars for the thousands of criminals incarcerated there during its 220-year 'lifespan'.

The tour includes the chance to walk the wings, check out the solitary confinement and condemned-man cells, and step inside the execution room where sentences were carried out. Seven executions took place in the prison during the 20th century.



National Space Centre

Exploration Drive, Leicester, LE4 5NS Website: spacecentre.co.uk
Tel: 0116 261 0261

Who was the first person in space? Can you name a Mars rover - or even all of them? How long does it take for the Moon to orbit the Earth? These questions and others are the sort that a visit to the National Space Centre will help you answer. Reopening from August the 8th, the award-winning venue allows enthusiasts to get up close and personal to various aspects of Man's ongoing exploration of the 'final frontier'.

A winning combination of museum and educational resource, the centre features six galleries, including the iconic Rocket Tower and the UK's largest domed planetarium, crammed full of space suits, rockets, satellites and meteorites.

Visitors who fancy a relaxing break from travelling the universe can take one small step for famished explorers by visiting the cafe. As well as lunches and afternoon teas, the menu features freshly brewed coffee made with beans roasted a little closer to home than outer space (right on the venue's doorstep in Leicester, in fact!)





WARWICK CASTLE

A perfect family day out at Warwickshire's top visitor attraction...

One of the first Midlands venues to announce its reopening as lockdown rules eased was Warwick Castle. Boasting history tours, detailed exhibits, programmed activities and 64 acres of landscaped garden, the venue offers a combination of attractions that makes for a fabulous family day out.

The castle benefits from being run by Merlin Entertainments, a global company renowned for its wide range of visitor attractions. As might therefore be expected, a considerable amount of thought has gone into the challenge of bringing the venue's long and illustrious history to life.

Journey through the one-way system of the castle's Great Hall & State Rooms to uncover a wealth of historically significant artefacts. These include a weapons and armoury collection amassed by the Earls of Warwick through the centuries, famous Van Dyck portraiture, and the bed in which Queen Anne is said to have met her demise at Kensington Palace in 1714.

Meanwhile, the Kingmaker exhibit sees visitors being guided through an underground labyrinth, where they will learn about the preparations made by Warwick's army ahead of its battle in 1471. This interactive journey - complete with authentic sounds and smells - provides a real sense of medieval England. Along the way it also highlights the work undertaken not only by the castle's bowmen and soldiers but also by its blacksmith, stonemason, treasurer, seamstress and cobbler.

Make sure you allow plenty of time to marvel at the mannequins - so perfectly formed and

lifelike that they look as though they're going to leap into action at any minute!

Certain to capture the attention of younger visitors is the castle's Horrible Histories © Maze. An innovative way in which to trek back in time, the attraction guides families through England's often gruesome past - from the 'Stormin' Normans' to the 'Frightful First World War', with the 'Terrifying Tudors' and 'Slimy Stuarts' popping up in between. Again, a one-way system ensures everyone can access the attraction safely.

A day out at the castle wouldn't be complete without checking out its much-loved Birds of Prey Show - the biggest of its kind in the UK. Species of birds from across the world - the largest, heaviest and fastest - feature in a magnificent action-packed display of impressive acrobatics. New health & safety guidelines have meant changes to the structuring of all Falconer's Quest shows. Visitors will now be directed to an allocated space on the riverside viewing area. The 360-degree arena presents a perfect vantage point for all, so there's no need to worry about missing out. Show times are daily at 11.30am and 2.30pm.

Social distancing also means that the princesses will no longer be able to host their popular storytelling sessions in The Princess Tower. Instead they'll be wandering the grounds to share their magical tales with visitors.

Youngsters wishing to learn the skills required to become a knight can do so at Knight School. A sword and shield (which

can be purchased onsite or brought along from home) are needed to partake in this ever-popular interactive show. Knight School runs at selected times during key school holiday dates only, and is included with all entry tickets.

While the castle's extensive grounds very much lend themselves to the delights of a home-made picnic, there are also plenty of on-site places to purchase food & drink should you prefer. Check the castle website to see what's open ahead of your visit.

With staycations the preferred choice of many Brits this year, a family break at Warwick Castle is certainly worth considering. Tucked away in a secluded woodland grove, The Knight's Village comprises 28 themed lodges with views over the River Avon. Lodges sleep up to seven people and each is spaciouly separated by wooden walkways. Packages include overnight stays, two-day entry to the castle, themed evening entertainment, a cooked or continental breakfast, car parking and unlimited WiFi.

Warwick Castle has been awarded the VisitEngland We're Good To Go charter mark, demonstrating that all of the requisite health & safety processes are in place to ensure that visitors have a safe and enjoyable visit.

As part of the venue's enhanced safety measures, all tickets and stays must be booked in advance online at warwick-castle.com.



BRICK-TASTIC

There's so much fun to be had at **Legoland** this summer holiday





There's plenty of fun to be had at Legoland Discovery Centre, the Birmingham home of the nation's favourite construction toy.

A 10ft-tall, 30,000-brick giraffe installed outside the Brindleyplace attraction offers a preview of what's to come. There's no end to the impressive designs and creations dotted around the site - perhaps most notably the fully functioning clock tower, which takes centre stage.

Legoland Discovery Centre houses a city builder area, a duplo farm, two rides - Kingdom's Quest and Merlin's Apprentice Ride - and a 4D cinema. But perhaps the most impressive attraction at the venue is Lego Miniland.

Built from more than 1.5 million Lego bricks, Miniland is a replica of Birmingham. The model includes Lego constructions of the Library of Birmingham, Bullring, the BT Tower and The Mailbox. It also features interactive elements; children can entertain themselves by racing boats along the canal or getting stuck into a game of football at the 'mish-mash' of Aston Villa's and Birmingham City's stadiums.

Miniland took nine people nine months to

build - which is hardly surprising given the attention to detail. Tiny Lego figures can be seen eating inside some of the buildings, cars travel along the roads, and even the boats on the canal are attached to tethers, allowing them to float along the Canal Old Line.

The centre's brick pits are currently not in operation, in line with government guidelines. However, to ensure there's plenty of opportunity for imaginative play and adventure, each guest will be given their very own bag of Lego with which to build things during their visit. These bags are returned once the session ends and are then deep-cleaned before other guests are allowed to use them.

Over at the 4D cinema, screenings of Nexo Knights, Ninjago and a specially created version of Lego Movie show in rotation. All three films last between 20 and 30 minutes.

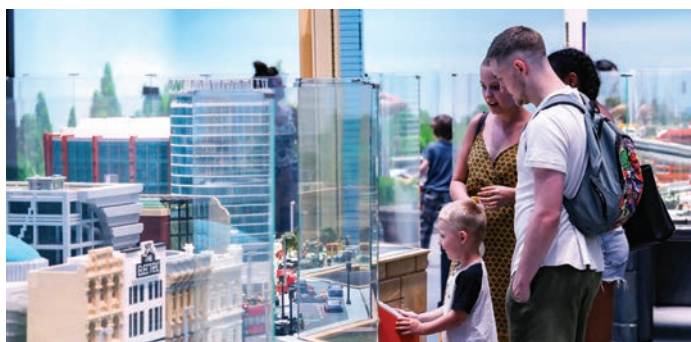
Legoland Discovery Centre is the perfect place to share creative play time with your little ones. Designed with children in mind, it's ideal for kids aged three to 12, and all adults must be accompanied by a child to enter. That said, the attraction is just as enjoyable for parents as it is for their children. Mums and dads are encouraged to

leave their phones in the lockers and get involved in play too; creating quality family time is an absolute priority for the centre.

The onsite Lego shop is the perfect place for lovers of the legendary toy to expand their collection. Located next door to the Legoland Discovery Centre, the retail outlet boasts a number of exclusive lines. Visitors from as far afield as London now travel up to the Midlands to get their hands on the merchandise. The 'pick a brick' wall is particularly innovative, allowing Lego fanatics to stock up on bricks of all sizes and colours in order to complete their creations.

To protect the safety both of visitors and staff, Legoland will run two daily play sessions, one from 10am to 12pm, and another from 1.30pm to 3.30pm. Entry will be from 9.30am and 1pm respectively. The entire centre will be completely cleaned before and after each event to ensure safe creative play for all guests.

.....
Advance tickets can be booked at birmingham.legolanddiscoverycentre.co.uk





National Sea Life Centre, Birmingham



Blists Hill, Ironbridge



Drayton Manor Theme Park

ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS

The Midlands is home to an abundance of enjoyable and exciting places to visit, catering for people of all ages and from all walks of life. Whatever you're looking for to keep the kids entertained this summer holiday, you're sure to find somewhere and something that fits the bill.

Our What's On directory features just a selection of the best places to visit across the region at this time of year. Be sure to check the latest information on each venue's website before setting out - especially as a lot of destinations are requiring visitors to pre-book!

Birmingham

BECKETT'S FARM The venue hosts a number of family events, including cookery classes for young and old, and has a farm shop and restaurant on site. Wythall, Birmingham B47 6AJ Farm Shop open Mon - Sat 7.30am - 5pm, Sun 10am - 4pm. Restaurant & Coffee Shop Mon - Sat 7.30am - 4pm, Sun 8.30am - 4pm

BIRMINGHAM BOTANICAL GARDENS The gardens span 15 acres, with four glasshouses hosting a variety of climates, from tropical rainforest to arid desert. Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 3TR Open 10am - 6pm. Pre-booking essential.

LEGOLAND DISCOVERY CENTRE Discover the ultimate indoor Lego playground, with three rides, 10 Lego build & play zones, a 4D cinema and much more... King Edwards Rd, Birmingham, B1 2AA Open daily, 10am - 4pm

CADBURY WORLD Discover the origin of everyone's favourite sweet treat, from the cocoa beans in the Aztec jungle to the making of Cadbury confectionery. Bournville, Birmingham, B30 1JT Open daily until 6 Sept and then every weekend from 12 Sept, 9am - 4.30pm. Pre-booking essential.

CANNON HILL PARK Opened in 1873, Cannon Hill comprises 80 acres of formal parkland and 120 acres of conservation and woodland plantation. Moseley, Birmingham, B13 8RD Open (see website for times of various attractions)

EASTSIDE PARK Birmingham's first central city park in over 130 years is situated just a stone's throw from the Bullring Shopping Centre and New Street Station. Birmingham City Centre, B4 7AP Open

LICKEY HILLS COUNTRY PARK Covering 524 acres, the park is a place for family fun, whether that be walking the dog, cycling, horse riding or maybe just enjoying the views and a cup of tea. Rednal, Birmingham, B45 8ER Open

NATIONAL SEA LIFE CENTRE The centre features over 2,000 creatures and 60-plus displays, including a million-litre underwater tropical tank, Nemo's Kingdom, turtle breeding and much more. Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HL Open Sat 9.30am - 6pm, Sun 9.30am - 5pm, Mon - Fri 9.45am - 4pm. Pre-booking essential.

RESORTS WORLD Boasting the largest casino in the UK, a shopping mall, restaurants and cinemas. Birmingham, B40 1PU Open, see website for details of various venues

Shropshire

ATTINGHAM PARK An elegant 18th century mansion house with Regency interiors. Set within an expansive deer park, there are riverside walks, a woodland sculpture trail and family events to enjoy. Shrewsbury, SY4 4TP Open: Café 9am - 5pm, Park 8am-6pm, Playground 8am - 5.30pm, Shop 10am - 5pm, Walled garden 9am - 5.30pm Pre-booking essential.

CARDING MILL VALLEY Covering almost 5,000 acres, with stunning views of the Shropshire and Welsh hills. An important place for wildlife, geology and archaeology. Church Stretton, SY6 6JG Open

CHOLMONDELEY CASTLE The Gothic castle - a product of the early 19th century - stands on a high rise above a lake. The castle is surrounded by lawns, a variety of mature trees and gardens. Whitchurch, SY14 8AH Castle closed, gardens open Wed, Thurs & Sun 10am - 5pm. Pre-booking essential.

IRONBRIDGE GORGE MUSEUMS The place where the Industrial Revolution was born is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with 10 award-winning museums to visit. Ironbridge, TF8 7DQ Open, see website for details of various venues. Pre-booking essential.

PARK HALL FARM Explore the great outdoors via the Maize Maze, The Barrel Train, Pig Racing, the Woodland Walk and, new for 2020, Burrowland - a rabbit enclosure that you can really explore. Plus a Dinosaur trail too! Park Hall Countryside Experience, Oswestry, Shropshire SY11 4AS. Open from 10am daily. www.parkhallfarm.co.uk

RAF COSFORD The museum houses one of the largest aviation collections in the UK. Over 70 historic aircraft are displayed in three wartime hangars on an active airfield. Shifnal, TF11 8UP Open from 10am daily. Pre-booking essential.

SEVERN VALLEY COUNTRY PARK An oasis of calm and beauty on the banks of the River Severn, this 51-hectare award-winning park is a place for quiet enjoyment of the countryside. Bridgnorth, WV15 6NG Open daily

SHREWSBURY MUSEUM & ART GALLERY Housed within the town's Grade II Victorian music hall and one of the country's rare 13th century mansions, the venue features a broad range of artefacts alongside a rolling programme of contemporary art. Shrewsbury, SY1 1LH Open: Mon-Sat 10am - 5pm, Sun 11am - 4pm Tickets are free but pre-booking is essential

THE BRITISH IRONWORK CENTRE The centre boasts a varied collection of beautifully decorative metal items, some of which are faithful reproductions of ironwork no longer seen today. There's also a collection of animal sculptures to admire. Oswestry, SY11 4JH Open Mon - Fri 10am - 4pm

Staffordshire

ALTON TOWERS Enjoy a mix of fantastic rides and attractions, offering unlimited fun for kids of all ages, families and thrill-seekers. Alton, ST10 4DB Open daily 10am - 6pm. Pre-booking essential.

BIDDULPH GRANGE COUNTRY PARK Originally part of the larger Biddulph Grange Estate, this is a 73-acre wooded hillside site with a large lake, ponds and meadows. Stoke-on-Trent, ST8 7TZ Open daily 8am - 9pm.

CENTRAL FOREST PARK Located in the heart of Stoke, Central Forest Park is a green space providing facilities for walking, cycling, dog walking, informal sports and skateboarding. Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 6AZ Open daily

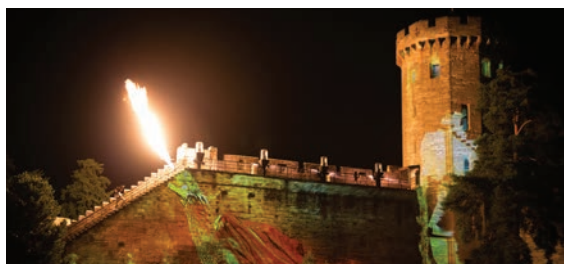
CHURNET VALLEY RAILWAY Take a journey back to the classic days of railway travel on a rural line that passes through beautiful countryside known as Staffordshire's 'Little Switzerland'. Froghall, ST10 2HA Open at weekends and Wednesdays throughout August and September. 1st train departs at 10.30am, 2nd at 1.30pm. Pre-booking essential.

DRAYTON MANOR THEME PARK A definite stop-off venue for thrill-seekers, featuring all manner of white-knuckle rides. Also offers a range of rides that are somewhat less challenging. And with a zoo on site, it's a venue that's got plenty for kids and adults of all ages to enjoy. Tamworth, B78 3TW Open daily until 31 Sept, Fri - Mon only until 28 Sept, Pre-booking essential.

HANLEY PARK Hanley Park and the adjacent Caudon Grounds are open to the public. Features include three play areas: toddler, sensory and adventure (including aerial slide). Shelton, ST1 4DX Open daily

PEAK WILDLIFE PARK Large walk-throughs allow you to come face to face with exotic and endangered animals from across three continents. Leek, ST13 7QR Open 9am - 6pm daily. Pre-booking essential.

TAMWORTH CASTLE From its origins back in Anglo Saxon times through to the Victorian era, Tamworth



Warwick Castle



Black Country Living Museum, Dudley

Days Out

THIS SUMMER HOLIDAY!

Castle boasts a wealth of history. Explore how the castle developed over the centuries and learn about the families who called it their home. Tamworth, B79 7NA Open: Wed - Sun 10.30am - 4pm. Pre-booking essential.

THE WEDGWOOD MUSEUM The home of one of the most interesting ceramic collections in the world. The galleries tell the story of Josiah Wedgwood, his family, and the company he founded over two centuries ago. Stoke-on-Trent, ST12 9ER Open: Wed - Sun, 10am - 5pm.

Warwickshire

BADDESLEY CLINTON A secluded estate set in the heart of the Forest of Arden. With guided talks, walks through the gardens and activities for children such as pond dipping and garden trails. Warwick, B93 0DQ Open daily, 9am - 5pm. Pre-booking essential

BRITISH MOTOR MUSEUM The museum features the world's greatest collection of classic, vintage and veteran British cars. Gaydon, CV35 0BJ Open daily throughout Aug, Fri - Mon in Sept 10am - 5pm. Pre-booking essential.

CHARLECOTE PARK This grand 16th century country house comes complete with deer park and is a National Trust property. Warwick, CV35 9ER Open: Park 9am - 5pm, Shop 10am - 4pm, Tearoom 9.30am - 4pm. Pre-booking essential.

COMPTON VERNEY The Georgian house is set in more than 120 acres of Grade II listed classical parkland landscaped by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, the most eminent landscape architect of the 18th century. Warwick, CV35 9HZ National Trust property. Warwick, CV35 9ER Open: Tues - Sun, 10am - 5pm. Pre-booking essential.

COTSWOLD WILDLIFE PARK Set in 160 acres of parkland and gardens, Cotswold Wildlife Park now has one of the UK's largest zoological collections. Burford, OX18 4JP Open daily, 10am - 6pm. Pre-booking essential.

COVENTRY MUSIC MUSEUM The museum offers activities to interest and delight youngsters, and a studio in which visitors can try their hand at composing and music-making. CV2 4ED Open: Thurs - Sat, 10am - 4pm, Sun 10am - 3pm. Please phone ahead on 07971 171441

COVENTRY TRANSPORT MUSEUM The museum houses the largest publicly owned collection of British vehicles in the world. Now fully open after a £9.5million redevelopment programme. CV1 1JD Open daily, 10am - 5pm.

HATTON ADVENTURE WORLD An attraction for families with children up to the age of 12. Hatton, CV35 8XA Open daily until 1 Sept, 10am - 5pm. Pre-booking highly recommended.

HERBERT ART GALLERY & MUSEUM A family-friendly museum, with activities that run throughout the school holidays. Coventry, CV1 5QP Open: Mon - Sat, 10am - 4pm, Sun 12pm - 4pm.

KENILWORTH CASTLE A vast complex of ruined fortifications and palatial apartments spanning over five centuries, CV8 1NG Open daily, 10am - 5pm. Pre-booking essential.

SHAKESPEARE BIRTHPLACE TRUST Six unique properties - Shakespeare's Birthplace, (open daily 10am - 4pm, pre-booking essential), Harvard House, Hall's Croft, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, Mary Arden's Farm & Shakespeare's New Place are closed until 2021

STONELEIGH ABBEY Visitors to the Abbey can learn about the house's history through a guided tour of the west wing, CV8 2LF Open: Sun - Thurs 10am - 5pm.

STRATFORD BUTTERFLY FARM A unique opportunity to watch hundreds of the world's most spectacular butterflies flying around. Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 7LS Open daily, 10am - 6pm. Pre-booking highly recommended.

WARWICK CASTLE Experience over 1,000 years of history. Aside from visiting the castle itself and looking at the battlements, towers, turrets and interiors, there are also jousting events, the Horrible History show and Time Tower to keep you entertained. CV34 4QU Open daily, 10am - 4pm. Pre-booking essential.

Wolverhampton & Black Country

BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM A tribute to the traditional skills and enterprise of the people who once lived in the heart of industrial Britain. Dudley, DY1 4SQ Open daily, 10am - 5pm. Pre-booking essential.

DUDLEY CANAL TUNNEL TRUST Enjoy guided boat trips through the tunnels, along with videos, lifelike reconstructions and stunning music & light shows. Dudley, DY1 4SB Open daily, 10.30am - 4pm.

DUDLEY CASTLE AND ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS Home to more than 1,300 animals, with up to 200 species. At the heart of the site sits the ruins of an 11th century castle. Dudley, DY1 4QF Open daily from 10am, last admission 3pm. Pre-booking essential.

HIMLEY HALL & PARK An 18th century building set in 180 acres of Capability Brown-landscaped parkland. Dudley, DY3 4DF Park open daily from 7am - dusk

WIGHTWICK MANOR & GARDENS A manor house filled with an important collection of Pre-Raphaelite and arts & crafts pictures and furnishings. Wolverhampton, WV6 8EE Garden & Tearoom open 10am - 5pm

Worcestershire

AVONCROFT MUSEUM A fascinating museum of historic buildings spanning seven centuries on a beautiful open-air site in the north of Worcestershire. Bromsgrove, B60 4JR. Shop & grounds open Wed, Sat & Sun 10.30am - 5pm

BERRINGTON HALL Created by architect Henry Holland, the hall is one of a small number of his buildings to survive intact. As well as being able to explore the family rooms and servant quarters, guests can take part in activities or relax by the lake. Nr Leominster, HR6 0DW Garden & park open 10am - 5pm, Stables café 10am - 4pm

BROCKHAMPTON ESTATE Set in 1,700 acres of estate, the romantic Manor House dates back to the late 14th century and is accessible via a small gatehouse and over a moat. Nr Bromyard, WR6 5TB Estate & grounds open 10am - 5pm, Granary food kiosk 10.30am - 4pm. Pre-booking essential.

CROFT CASTLE The castle is located deep in the heart of the Herefordshire countryside, surrounded by 1,500 acres of historic woodland, farm and parkland. Home to the Croft family for nearly 1,000 years, this castle has many intriguing stories to uncover. Yarpole. Nr Leominster, HR6 9PW Garden & park open 10am - 5pm, Tearoom 10am - 4pm. Pre-booking essential.

CROOME PARK Explore what remains of a secret wartime air base and discover how thousands of people lived and worked there during the 1940s. Worcester, WR8 9DW Park open 10am - 5.30pm, Restaurant 10.30am - 5pm, Shop 11am - 4.30pm Pre-booking essential.

EASTNOR CASTLE DEER PARK The castle is set within the dramatic beauty of the Malvern Hills and surrounded by a beautiful deer park, arboretum and lake. Ledbury, HR8 1RL Open Wed - Sun & Bank Holiday Monday, 10.30 - 5.30pm

HARTLEBURY CASTLE A Grade I listed building which was built in the mid-13th century as a fortified manor house. Kidderminster, DY11 7XZ Open: Fri 10am - 5pm, Sat & Sun 11am - 5pm

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY A full-size standard-gauge railway line which runs regular steam-hauled passenger trains, for tourists and enthusiasts alike, between Kidderminster and Bridgnorth, a distance of 16 miles. Bewdley, DY12 1BG Open - see website for train times

THE MALVERN HILLS A wide variety of walks, from short and gently graded slopes to more strenuous options. WR14 3EY Open

WITLEY COURT One hundred years ago, Witley Court was one of England's great country houses, hosting many extravagant parties. Today, it's a spectacular ruin, the result of a disastrous fire in 1937. Great Witley, WR6 6JT Open daily, 10am - 5pm. Pre-booking essential.



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CASTLE GROUNDS**



**DRIVE-IN
CINEMA**

TICKETS:
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Pre-booking essential



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9pm
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AT THE DRIVE-IN

Film

watching your cinematic favourites
outdoors is the latest craze...

Taking place in the great outdoors and with social distancing easy to achieve, the drive-in movie is experiencing a coronavirus-crisis boomtime as lockdown restrictions are eased. People can watch their favourite films from the comfort and safety of their own cars - or maybe even set themselves up in a pre-designated area next to their vehicle.

There's certainly no shortage of drive-in movie events to enjoy here in the Midlands this summer holiday, with some of the region's historical landmarks and sporting venues offering impressive backdrops against which to view your big-screen favourites.

Here are just three for your consideration...

Luna Drive In at Warwick Castle

From 4 to 16 August, Luna offers a unique

drive-in experience in the grounds of one of England's oldest castles. The eclectic programme of more than 30 screenings includes Finding Nemo, Frozen 2, Toy Story 4, Rocketman, Parasite, Joker and all-time classic Dirty Dancing. The Greatest Showman and Grease singalongs should tick the right box for those wanting a more interactive experience, while a screening of Puccini's La Bohème is perfect for opera lovers. Food & drink is available on site and hampers can be pre-booked at lunadriveincinema.com, where you can also find further information about the Warwick Castle screenings.

Great British Drive-in at Sandon Hall

Described as a summer festival of film, food and live entertainment, the Great British Drive-in runs until 13 September and claims

to have the UK's biggest drive-in screen, at 100sqm. In addition to a varied programme of big-screen classics for audiences young and old, the festival also features the Great Comedy Drive In, hosted by award-winning Jericho Comedy. Just make sure you honk and hoot to show your appreciation.

Drive-in cinema at Tamworth Castle

The films showing at this 14 & 15 August event are the award-winning The Greatest Showman and the iconic high school movie, Grease. Both were chosen via a social media public vote earlier this year and will be shown on a giant screen under the stars. Cinema-goers are invited to take warm blankets and a picnic, although food & drink will be on sale during both events.



Luna Cinema at Warwick Castle



Drive-in at Tamworth Castle

More outdoor cinema events to enjoy across the Midlands:

FROZEN 2 Sat 8 Aug, Himley Hall, Dudley (12noon)

TOY STORY Fri 9 Aug, Himley Hall, Dudley (12noon)

THE LION KING Fri 9 Aug, Himley Hall, Dudley (5pm)

THE LION KING Mon 10 Aug, Warwick Racecourse

GREASE Fri 14 Aug,

Grounds of Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire

THE GREATEST SHOWMAN Sat 15 Aug, Grounds of Tamworth Castle, Staffordshire

HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE Sun 16 Aug, Shrewsbury College, London Road, Shrewsbury

CINEMA PARADISO (1988) Sun 16 Aug, The

Kingsway Open Air Cinema, King's Heath, Birmingham

BLADERUNNER Mon 17 Aug, The Kingsway Open Air Cinema, King's Heath, Birmingham

LION KING Wed 19 Aug, Rocester Football Club, Uttoxeter, Staffs

AMÉLIE Thurs 20 Aug, The Kingsway Open Air Cinema, King's Heath,

Birmingham

SHREK! Fri 21 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Worcester Road, Shenstone, DY10 4BU

MAMMA MIA! Sat 22 Aug, Hare & Hounds, Worcester Road, Shenstone, DY10 4BU

THE GREATEST SHOWMAN Sat 21 & Sun 22 Aug, Chirk Castle

THE INCREDIBLES Sat 22

Aug, The Kingsway Open Air Cinema, King's Heath, Birmingham

HARRY POTTER AND THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE Tues 25 Aug, Wolverhampton Racecourse

THE LION KING (1994) Wed 26 Aug, Moseley Cricket Club, Shirley, Birmingham

HARRY POTTER AND THE

PHILOSOPHER'S STONE Thurs 27 Aug, Warwick Racecourse

THE GREATEST SHOWMAN Sat 29 Aug, Bomere Heath Cricket Club, Shropshire (8pm)

THE LION KING Sat 11 Sept, Powis Castle, Welshpool

BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY Sun 12 Sept, Powis Castle, Welshpool

Cinema releases coming soon...

Greenland CERT PG (180 mins)

Starring Gerard Butler, Morena Baccarin, Scott Glenn, David Denham, Brandon Quinn, Andrew Bachelor, Joshua Mikel

Directed by Ric Roman Waugh (USA)

With a planet-ending comet heading for Earth, what's a man, his estranged wife and their young son to do but make a desperate attempt to find a safe haven? But as the Garrity family do their best to stay alive while cities around the world are being levelled, they find themselves encountering both the best and worst aspects of human behaviour.

Released Fri 12 August



The New Mutants

CERT 15 (94 mins)

Starring Maisie Williams, Anya Taylor-Joy, Charlie Heaton, Blu Hunt, Alice Braga, Henry Zago, Colbi Gannett

Directed by Josh Boone (USA)



Learning how to control your special powers when you're a mutant is no easy task. Held in an isolated hospital for psychiatric monitoring, four young mutants are being taught how to rein in their abilities, in order to keep not only themselves safe but also society. But when they're joined by a newcomer - Danielle 'Dani' Moonstar - strange things begin to happen...

Released Fri 28 August

Bill And Ted Face The Music CERT PG (78 mins)

Starring Keanu Reeves, Alex Winter, Samara Weaving, William Sadler, Brigitte Lundy-Paine, Hal Landon Jr, Kid Cudi, Beck Bennett

Directed by Dean Parisot (USA)

They may be middle-aged now, but that doesn't mean Bill and Ted have given up on fulfilling their rock & roll destiny.

When a visitor from the future tells them that only their song can save life as we know it, the boys find themselves embarking on another 'excellent adventure', this time assisted by their daughters as well as a host of historical figures and music legends....

Released Fri 28 August



The Secret Garden CERT PG

Starring Dixie Egerickx, Colin Firth, Julie Walters, Edan Hayhurst, Amir Wilson, Isis Davis, Maeve Dermody

Directed by Marc Munden (USA)

Sent to live with her strict uncle, young Mary Lennox discovers a magical garden on his Yorkshire estate...

Frances Hodgson Burnett's 1911 novel has been made into a movie three times before and filmed on several occasions for the small screen.

Released Fri 12 August

Tenet CERT PG (180 mins)

Starring John David Washington, Robert Pattinson, Elizabeth Debicki, Kenneth Branagh, Michael Caine, Cl  mence Po  sy, Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Fiona Dourif

Directed by Christopher Nolan (USA)

Information about the exact storyline of Tenet is somewhat thin on the ground. Suffice to say that the movie's hero, an operative of the title organisation, finds himself embroiled in a battle to prevent the outbreak of World War Three.

Helmed by Christopher Nolan, the director behind the Christian Bale trilogy of Batman movies, Tenet has had its release date shifted around quite a bit as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Fingers crossed it finally lands mid-month...

Released Wed 12 August

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Peter Rabbit 2: The Runaway CERT PG (106 mins)

Starring Rose Byrne, Domhnall Gleeson, David Oyelowo, Elizabeth Debicki, Margot Robbie and James Corden

Directed by Will Gluck

With the lure of life beyond the garden proving too much for Peter to resist, the ever-adventurous rabbit finds himself in a world where his mischief-making is enthusiastically embraced. But when Peter's family go looking for him, our carrot-munching hero has some serious thinking to do about how he sees his future...

Youngsters may well leave the cinema, er, hopping-mad if this much-anticipated sequel fails to match the excellence of the first movie.

Released Fri 7 August



Mulan CERT 15 (95 mins)

Starring Yifei Liu, Donnie Yen, Li Gong, Jet Li, Jason Scott Lee, Yoson An

Directed by Niki Caro (USA)



Under threat from northern invaders, the Emperor of China decrees that one man per family must serve in the Imperial Army. With her father - an honoured warrior - now a pale shadow of his former self, Hua Mulan decides to masquerade as a man and join up. She soon finds herself embarking on an epic and challenging journey, one through which she will earn not only the respect of a grateful nation but also of a proud father.

Released Fri 21 August

Babyteeth CERT tbc (120 mins)

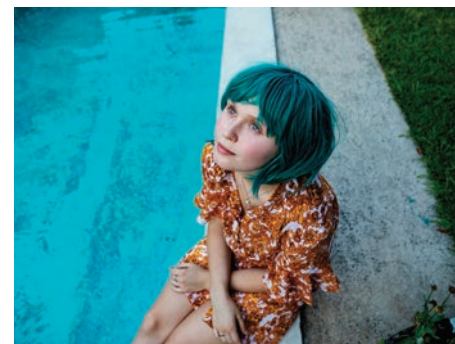
Starring Eliza Scanlen, Toby Wallace, Emily Barclay, Eugene Gilfedder, Essie Davis, Ben Mendelsohn

Directed by Shannon Murphy (USA)

How to live life like you have nothing to lose is the lesson that terminally ill teenager Milla teaches her family when she falls madly in love with a smalltime drug dealer.

With traditional morals discarded and the situation soon descending into chaos, Milla's feelings for Moses leave her parents staring at their worst nightmare. But you can't always judge a greasy ne'er-do-well drug dealer by his prison-style face tattoo...

Released Fri 21 August





BIRMINGHAM 2022

the countdown is on...

In just two years' time, Birmingham will be hosting the Commonwealth Games.

The eagerly anticipated event will see 6,500 athletes and team officials from 71 different nations flocking to the city and the West Midlands.

Birmingham 2022 is already proving to be a catalyst for transformation across the region. The Games is attracting new investment and funding, creating jobs and apprenticeships for local people and new opportunities for local businesses. It's also accelerating projects that will ensure the West Midlands is ready to host a world-class celebration of

elite sport and dynamic and innovative culture.

Ian Reid, Birmingham 2022 chief executive officer, said: "In two years' time, millions of people from across the globe will join us in celebrating the opening of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, which is why it will provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to truly put this vibrant city and region on the map."

Commonwealth Games Federation President Dame Louise Martin said: "Preparations are well under way for the delivery of a spectacular multi-sport event for the people

of Birmingham, the West Midlands, England and the Commonwealth."

Councillor Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council, said: "With just two years to go, we are at the point when everything about the Commonwealth Games is becoming much more tangible.

"Enthusiasm and interest in Birmingham 2022 is bubbling and will continue to grow as we get even closer to the staging of the biggest event in the city's history."

Sign up to get the latest info on the Games at birmingham2022.com

New city centre venue for basketball and beach volleyball competitions

With the Games coming to Birmingham in two years' time, Smithfield - previously the site of the city's wholesale markets - has been selected as the location for two side-by-side arenas in which the 3x3 basketball and beach volleyball competitions will be staged. The site is located at the heart of the city centre and will be a crucial Birmingham 2022 venue, creating an urban hub just a short walk from Bullring shopping centre.

Commenting on the news, Ian Reid, Chief Executive Officer for Birmingham 2022, said: "We're on track with our plans to host a spectacular event which will not only put Birmingham and the West Midlands centre stage but will also be an integral part of the region's recovery plan following the global pandemic, bringing jobs for local people and contracts for local businesses.

"Smithfield is a fantastic location for these two sports, allowing us to bring together thousands of local people and spectators from further



afield, and enabling us to create a key hub for the Games in the heart of the city centre. It's currently a blank canvas, which will allow us to transform the location into a vibrant venue for two exciting sports that will no doubt bring a festival atmosphere to the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games."



Children challenged to create Birmingham 2022 mascot

Birmingham 2022 is looking for children across the country to design their own Commonwealth Games mascot - and be in with a chance of winning family tickets to the Opening Ceremony on 28 July 2022.

The Birmingham 2022 mascot will be a global icon for the Commonwealth Games. It should represent the identity, heritage and culture of the Games, Birmingham and the West Midlands. It should also embody the city and region: 'youthful, diverse, dynamic and creative, always looking to innovate and move forward'.

The winning design will inspire the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games' official mascot.

The competition is open to children aged from five to 15.

The design could be a painting, drawing or collage. The mascot could be a character, animal or person. It's up to you. All you need is your imagination!

When your mascot design is ready, take a photo of it or scan it in, then submit it at: birmingham2022.com/mascot/entry-form

Games Village in Perry Barr to provide housing legacy for Birmingham

The transformation of north-west Birmingham will be significantly accelerated thanks to the housing legacy from the 2022 Games. The Games Village - which will house athletes and officials in approximately 1,000 new homes during Birmingham 2022 - will afterwards be converted and become available as a mixture of homes for sale and market rent, as well as for social and affordable rent. The Village will act as a catalyst for significant housing growth in Perry Barr, which in turn will make a crucial contribution to the city's housing needs. The council aims to build 50,000 new homes within the city's boundaries by 2031.

Councillor Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council and chair of the Birmingham 2022 bid team, said: "Our proposal to bring the Games to Birmingham had a number of key strengths, including our outstanding track record of staging major sporting events and having almost all of the competition venues in place.

"The development of the Village is therefore the largest new-build element of the Games. It will help rejuvenate Perry Barr and the wider



surrounding area, meaning there will be a meaningful and lasting legacy for the people of Birmingham, in particular those living near the heart of the action in 2022.

"We have a desperate need for high-quality housing in the city, and it would have been much trickier to meet that demand if we had not been successful in our bid to host the Games."



Talking about Jamie

Former Coronation Street regular Shobna Gulati and the man playing title character Jamie - Layton Williams - chat about the touring version of hit musical Everybody's Talking About Jamie, which visits Birmingham this month and returns to the Midlands in the summer...

Everybody's Talking About Jamie may have come from humble beginnings - it was inspired by a television documentary and premiered in Sheffield - but after only a matter of months it had transferred to the West End. Since then, the musical has enjoyed blockbusting success, with five Olivier nominations, an extensive UK tour and a forthcoming feature film version testifying to its incredible popularity.

The show follows Jamie New's quest for acceptance on his journey to becoming a drag queen...

"Jamie is a 16-year-old boy who wants to go to his school prom in drag," explains ex-Coronation Street star Shobna Gulati, who is touring with the hit musical having previously appeared in the West End version. "The musical follows the ramifications of that; on himself, his family and his small community in Sheffield."

Shobna's character, Ray, has a very important part to play in Jamie's upbringing: "Jamie is the product of an essentially single-parent household. Ray is the best friend of Jamie's mum, Margaret, and has been around to watch Jamie grow up; everybody thinks of her as the aunty or surrogate father figure. You always have to have that good cop, bad cop thing going on, and I think Ray and Margaret have often swapped those roles in bringing up Jamie. Ray doesn't go backwards to go forwards and she's very much into tough love, but she also spoils him rotten. I think every character's relationship to Jamie changes throughout the musical because Jamie himself evolves. From Ray's perspective, she's worried about Jamie's dream of being a drag queen because that's just the nature of family. She definitely supports him, but she also wants to protect him."

What does Shobna think has made Everybody's Talking About Jamie such a roaring success?

"I think the world as it stands likes to put people into boxes and divide us all up. The more you can gaslight somebody into believing they don't belong, the easier it is to control the masses. Considering these polemic times, Everybody's Talking About Jamie exists at exactly the right moment. The story is so popular because it gives everyone a chance to recognise that they can be a part of

something. Everybody can be recognised in their own individual right, which is really important for anyone who feels like they're different or just on the periphery.

"Everybody's Talking About Jamie is about creating a space in which everyone can be who they want to be. I really love being in Jamie because of what it represents, the different people it represents and how it does that. The inclusivity of the show is incredible. Jamie is so out there and so inclusive as a piece, which hasn't always been my experience over the course of my career."

As well as relating to the show's ethos, Shobna can also connect with one of its musical numbers: "My favourite song has to be Wall In My Head, which comes at the beginning of the show, where Jamie is considering his life, how to get over certain obstacles that crop up and move past some personal demons. I think I relate to that song on a personal level because it's all about getting over that next wall, which is a true situation for every single one of us; I don't think anyone has hurdles they haven't had to overcome in life."

Not only has Shobna played Ray on stage, she will also appear as the character in the film version, scheduled for release in October.

"I feel so lucky to have worked with all the different Margarets that I have - each one has been absolutely astounding in their own right. The same with each Jamie. I think a lot of my joy at doing Everybody's Talking About Jamie is because of the extraordinary opportunities I've had to work with people. I've been lucky enough to tag along!

"The production has certainly given me an insight into myself. I've been in so many different renditions of the story, and what it brings to me is a sense of belonging."

Joining Shobna on tour is Layton Williams, who played Jamie in the West End. "Things be changing," he says. "People are waking up and realising that stories like Everybody's Talking About Jamie is what we want to see. We want to see everyone represented. This is a moment in history - a movement. I'm so proud to be a part of that! I'm a prime example that yes, we are absolutely moving in the right direction in terms of representation. I'm a non-white gay actor playing a part that was

once white - and now another mixed-race man has been cast in the West End version too.

"This musical tries to tell people to stay true to who they are, to be proud of themselves, and that if they're different or feel like they don't fit in, then there's a place for them in the world anyway. It's all about having hope.

"When we're young, we doubt ourselves, but it's just about knowing that things will get better. It's about surrounding yourself with your friends, family and people who you love. It also sends the message that people can change their minds! People's minds can definitely be opened. I hope that people think about all these things when they come to see the show."

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Everybody's Talking About Jamie visits Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 26 to Saturday 30 January; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 26 April - Saturday 1 May



#LETTHEMUSICPLAY

Lyle Bignon looks at the devastating impact
Covid-19 is having on Midlands music venues...



Visiting Birmingham, London and Paris over the last week, the impact of Covid-19 on the live-music scene was painfully apparent.

It's easy to call to mind the buzz of walking into a bustling bar, cafe, music venue or club. The difference now is that the doorways of many of those venues are catching leaves and litter, while old flyers and posters advertising DJ sets and line-ups sit fading in the windows.

That might sound a little dramatic, but there's no escaping the brutal reality; for those who earn a living in music or the nighttime economy - as well as for those in secondary and tertiary industries in the supply chain, such as music journalists and photographers - the impact of lockdown has been utterly devastating.

These industries rely heavily on multi-skilled freelancers, self-employed riggers, sub-contracted lighting specialists, solo musicians-turned-engineers, independent promoters who help to develop new artists, and venue owners and festival directors who provide opportunities for small labels and collectives.

The West Midlands is home to an intricate, complex and interdependent live-music community numbering thousands. This army of experts provides the infrastructure that attracts around 750,000 music tourists to our region each year. They, in turn, help to generate £211million towards the UK economy annually (UK Music, 2019).

Research by the Birmingham Live Music Project, which measures the impact of major global events on the city's live-music landscape, tells us that before Covid-19, the total music venue capacity in Birmingham was an estimated 98,000 across 197 venues.

Now, following the abrupt change in circumstances in March, the city has seen a huge loss of income, thousands of redundancies, and an immeasurable reduction in artistry and creativity - all of which threatens the very ecosystem that has taken decades to build and develop.

And it has affected everyone - from the cavernous Utilita Arena and grand Town Hall and Symphony Hall, to smaller grassroots venues like The Sunflower Lounge and Hare & Hounds.

Various government initiatives - grants and loans for the self-employed, the national furlough scheme, and the recent £2.25million Emergency Grassroots Music Fund - have helped to address the crisis facing live music. However, there are still major challenges to be met around the issues of access, eligibility, compliance, accountability and distribution of financial support, as well as the significant obstacle of social distancing.

Given that most small to medium music businesses operating in the Midlands will likely have between 12 and 16 weeks of financial reserves, many will either have folded or will now be under immediate threat of doing so. And the loss of these businesses

will have destructive real-life consequences.

Despite the bleak economic outlook, innovation and collaboration within the industry is flourishing. Independent promoters like Supersonic Festival and Moonshine Collective in Birmingham have launched bespoke merchandise ranges and alternative events to generate income in an effort to ensure their survival beyond 2020.

In addition, major campaigns like UK Music's #letthemusicplay, Music Venue Trust's #saveourvenues and the Night Time Industry Association's #letusdance have inspired a monumental show of support from music fans across the Midlands.

As the recent postponement of a green light for indoor performances has demonstrated, the weeks and months ahead for our brilliant and exciting live-music sector are perilous and uncertain.

Live music is doing absolutely all it can to stay afloat right now. We need the public to continue supporting artists, venues and the music community. And as a default, we demand business leaders and politicians fight to preserve jobs, creativity and spaces - before it's too late.

Find out more about the #LetTheMusicPlay campaign - and ways to show your support - by visiting: concertpromotersassociation.co.uk/let-the-music-play/

**Drink to
show your
support**

Beer brand expands range on behalf of grassroots music venues

Music Venue Trust's official beer partner, Fightback Brewing Company, is to sell bottled drinks online in support of the #saveourvenues campaign. Fightback Lager is stocked in over 60 grassroots music venue bars across the UK. A 5p donation to Music Venue Trust is made from every pint sold. In a move to grow the fundraising initiative and substantially build the level of donation

to the Trust, the lager has been joined in Fightback's online stable by Fightback Cider, Fightback Berries and Fightback IPA. With gigs across the UK remaining on hold for the time being, music fans can now enjoy the new 330ml bottles at home. In so doing, they will be helping the survival chances of music venues which are struggling because of the pandemic. To order, go to shop.fightbacklager.com

Win!

WIN!

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