

Wolverhampton & Black Country

ISSUE 415 AUGUST 2021

What's On

FILM | COMEDY | THEATRE | GIGS | VISUAL ARTS | EVENTS | FOOD

wolverhamptonwhatson.co.uk



EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT
JAMIE

A group of seven people, including a man in a blue suit and red cape, a woman in a black dress, and a man in a green shirt, are posing for a photo. The man in the blue suit is in the center, looking up and pointing. The woman in the black dress is to his right, looking at the camera. The man in the green shirt is in the foreground, lying on the ground and looking up.

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GRAND
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inside:

CAPTURING CULTURE

dancer Jaivant Patel talks about celebrating identity



OMID DJALILI

sharing The Good Times interview inside...



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05



10



13



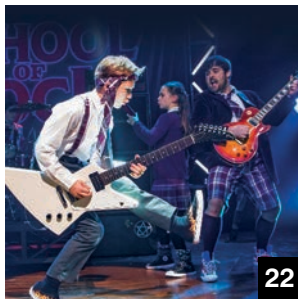
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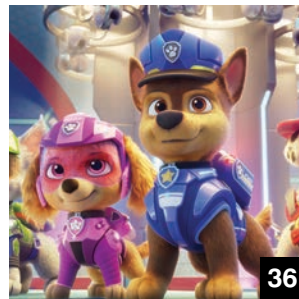
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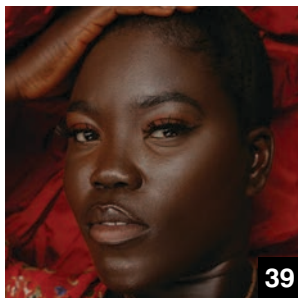
22



27



36



39



43



53

INSIDE:

First Word

4

Food

13

Festivals

17

Theatre

24

Film

36

Visual Arts

38

Events

43

Places to Visit

53

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What's On

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Gangsta Granny back at Wolverhampton's Grand next year

David Walliams' Gangsta Granny will make a welcome return to the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre next year. The show is joined in the venue's Spring 2022 line-up by a Russian State Ballet of Siberia triple bill, West Bromwich Operatic Society's presentation of Calendar Girls The Musical, and Clive Webb, Danny Adams and Mick Potts in A Fright In The Museum And The Curse Of The Ancient Custard Pie. For more information about these and other shows at the Grand, visit grandtheatre.co.uk

Summer fun at New Vic Theatre's woodland camp

The New Vic Theatre's school summer holiday activities for young people are this year being hosted in the immersive setting of an outdoor woodland camp.

Run by the New Vic Education team, the programme of activities includes the opportunity for children aged 10 to 15 to rehearse a play and prepare to perform it outdoors (Monday 9 to Friday 13 August). Children aged four to nine, meanwhile, can use their imaginations during two days of activities, drama games and crafts (Thursday 5 & Friday 6 August).

For more information, send an email to lparry@newvictheatre.org.uk.



Severn Valley Railway's festive favourite returns

Following sell-outs in 2019 and 2020, Severn Valley Railway's festive-season Steam In Lights will again return this Christmas. Featuring a ride on a steam train covered by thousands of lights, and the chance to enjoy

'amazing displays of magical creatures and mystical auroras only seen from the train', the event runs on selected dates from Friday 19 November until Thursday 23 December. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit the website: svr.digitickets.co.uk



Children's book raises awareness of important part of Ironbridge history

An Ironbridge business established during the pandemic has joined forces with a local author & illustrator to raise funds for a charity working to preserve the history of coracles in the Ironbridge Gorge. The Bolthole Store, an interiors shop, café & studio, has allocated one of the windows at its premises on The Wharfage in Ironbridge to the promotion of a new children's book, Colin In A Coracle. The book tells the story of an English Bull Terrier and his adventures on the River Severn. Written by local author & illustrator Cal Westbrook, and funded by the Heritage Fund, the book has been developed to raise awareness of coracles and their place in Ironbridge's history.

Maureen Nolan to star in Snow White in Stafford

Maureen Nolan will be joined by CBeebies' Rebecca Keatley and Any Dream Will Do star Keith Jack in this year's Stafford Gatehouse pantomime production of Snow White.

The show will see Maureen taking the role of the Wicked Queen, with Rebecca starring as the title character and Keith Jack playing the handsome prince.

Commenting on the news, Maureen said: "I'm thrilled to be doing pantomime at the newly refurbished Gatehouse and terrorising all the Staffordshire audiences, who, I hope, will be in the mood for dancing!"

The show runs from Friday 10 to Friday 31 December. For more information and to book tickets, visit staffordgatehousetheatre.co.uk

Women and bikes...

Staffordshire's Tutbury Castle is this month hosting a Women In Motorcycling exhibition (21 August).

Speaking about the event, its organiser, Lindsay Atkinson, said: "Listen to inspirational speakers, ask those pressing questions on our panel talks, check out the gallery of women riders, join a workshop and learn new skills, get advanced tips in the learner zone, shop at our carefully curated stalls or just relax and absorb the atmosphere at the bar." For more information and to purchase tickets, visit womenmoto.co.uk

Russell Watson brings anniversary tour to Shropshire

Russell Watson will perform at three Midlands venues in the autumn and winter, as part of a nationwide tour to mark 21 years since the release of his debut album, *The Voice*. Russell stops off at Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, on 22 October, Birmingham Symphony Hall on 14 November and the Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton, on 14 January. Visit each venue's website for further details.



Marvellous! New play tells story of a local hero

The world premiere stage production of *Marvellous* - the life-affirming tale of one-time clown and Stoke City Football Club kitman Neil 'Nello' Baldwin - will be presented at the New Vic Theatre in Newcastle-under-Lyme from Friday 1 to Saturday 23 October.

The show is one of many highlights in the venue's autumn-season line-up. For full information, visit newvictheatre.org.uk



Stafford theatre reopens following a major upgrade

Stafford's Gatehouse Theatre has re-opened with a dramatic new look.

The popular venue, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year, has undergone a radical £350,000 upgrade. The entire ground floor of the

building has been redesigned and rejuvenated, with suspended ceilings having been removed to allow much more light into the Gatehouse's new theatre bar, new coffee shop and hugely improved box office facilities.

Search on for Young Musician of the Year

The search has begun for the next Gregynog Young Musician of the Year.

Musicians from throughout the UK can enter the event, with the finals being held at Gregynog Hall, Tregynon, near Newtown, Powys, on 13 November.

The competition is open to any student who plays an orchestral instrument, including the harp, piano, classical guitar, recorder, saxophone, brass band instrument and percussion. Applicants must be 18 years of age or younger on the date of the competition.

The closing day for entries is Sunday 10 October. For information about how to enter, visit gregynogymc.co.uk

Two shows to get you laughing at Newhampton Arts Centre

Newhampton Arts Centre's (NAC) summer of theatre continues this month - in the venue's outdoor and undercover New Horizons performance area - with Spiltmilk Dance's *Desert Island Flicks* (Thursday 19 August).

The show sees two leading ladies reimagine, remake and spoof 90 of the most memorable movie moments of all time. And what's more, they'll be doing it in a period of just 90 minutes!

Early next month, NAC hosts comedian Kevin Tomlinson's *Seven Ages* show (2 September), which aims to explore two important questions: Why am I here? and What's important in my life?... For more information about these and other productions at the venue, visit: newhamptonarts.co.uk



B:Music Jazz



bmusic.co.uk/jazz-fest

23.08 - 28.08

New dates for Harris & Baker

A rescheduled tour featuring broadcasting legends 'Whispering' Bob Harris and Danny Baker will visit the Midlands next year. Harris & Baker's Backstage Pass stops off at Birmingham Town Hall on 29 March and the Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, on 17 April. Commenting on the news, Danny Baker said: "After decades of freewheeling access to all of the major names and noises of popular culture, Bob & I will be cutting loose about our extraordinary time in and around the music industry." For more information, visit Harrisandbaker.com



Renowned toy brand arrives at Merry Hill

Merry Hill has welcomed renowned toy brand Hamleys - the world's oldest and largest toy retailer - to its shopping centre. Situated on the lower mall near Waterstones, the new store will give families the chance to meet an array of Hamleys characters - including the famous Hamleys Bear - whilst taking part in interactive toy demonstrations and enjoying special appearances.



Shrewsbury Flower Show to go online this month

Shrewsbury Flower Show will this month go online (Friday 13 & Saturday 14 August) for a second consecutive year as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The event will run on the Flower Show's social-media channels, predominantly on its Facebook page at facebook.com/ShrewsburyFlowerShow. Links to all the entertainment, exhibitors and show offers, along with Pony Club showjumping

and competition results, will feature on the show's website at shrewsburyflowershow.org.uk. Commenting on the 2021 version of the long-established event, Shropshire Horticultural Society's Amanda Jones said: "We are still fine-tuning the itinerary for the two days. Those interested should keep an eye on our Facebook page so that they don't miss out."

Beat The Street...

Popular physical activity game Beat The Street is once again available to enjoy in Wolverhampton this month. The walking, running, rolling, wheeling, cycling and scooting challenge will take place across the city until Tuesday 17 August, encouraging friends and families to get active together.

The game forms a key part of the City of Wolverhampton Council's Yo! Summer Festival, which is making available hundreds of events - many free of charge - to keep children, young people and their families active and entertained throughout the school holiday.

Popcorn and planes at Cosford

The Royal Air Force Museum Cosford's Outdoor Cinema is back this month (13 - 15 August).

Commenting on the return of the popular event, RAF Museum Cosford Public Events Manager Ulrike Stuebner said: "Over three days we will be showing family films in the afternoons, in addition to evening movies for our older audiences. Families visiting us during the school summer holiday can enjoy everything the museum has to offer during the day, plus a movie before they head for home. Our family films include The Lion King, Trolls World Tour and Inside Out."

To check out the Outdoor Cinema programme, visit rafmuseum.org/cosford



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John Martyn Project (The Hub at St. Marys)
Kathryn Roberts & Sean Lakeman
(Wade St. Church)

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Saturday 16th
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Kiki Dee & Carmelo Luggeri
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Friday 12th
Saturday 13th
Saturday 27th

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West Midlanders invited to join new dance project

Young people aged from 16 to 30 from across the West Midlands are being invited to join a dance project called Critical Mass 2022. The project provides participants with a unique opportunity to be involved in some of the biggest events of next year, including the Birmingham Commonwealth Games opening and closing ceremonies. Participants will learn new dance styles, meet other young dancers and work with professional dancers to create and take part in a wide variety of performances. For more information about the project, visit criticalmass22.org.uk.

Wolverhampton Grand's Intro To Panto returns



Wolverhampton Grand Theatre's hugely popular Intro To Panto tour will make a welcome return in the autumn. A Theatre In Education initiative produced by the venue, the annual two-week tour visits around 20 primary schools and features a 30-minute interactive workshop led by four performers and the Grand Theatre's regular panto Dame, Ian Adams. The workshop is then followed by a 50-minute performance of Cinderella.

Nature at the heart of Staffs storytelling day

A fun-packed day of storytelling and craft activities is being held by Tamworth Borough Council and Tamworth Library this month, as part of this year's Summer Reading Challenge with a nature theme. The free event takes place on Tuesday 10 August in the Tamworth Castle grounds. It includes an appearance by award-winning children's book author Ben Davis, who will be sharing real-life stories which have inspired him to write.

Artist Maggie Carney will also be on hand, inviting families to paint and design their very own birdfeeders to take home.

Heritage project to bring Staffs history to life

Over a thousand years of Staffordshire's history is to be brought to life via a new heritage project. The Staffordshire History Centre project will bring together three collections - from Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Archive Service, the County Museum and the William Salt Library - in order to provide 'exciting and imaginative ways to connect Staffordshire people and their stories'. Staffordshire County Council and its partner, the William Salt Library Trust, has received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £3,964,000 towards the project.

Peaky Blinders Nights back at museum for the autumn

Get set to grab your flatcap, don your finest threads and step into the smoky underworld of the 1920s - Peaky Blinders Nights are returning to the Black Country Living Museum next month! The hugely popular event offers visitors the chance to explore the museum's streets and alleys, hear tales about Birmingham's most notorious gangs, and enjoy the roaring nightlife of the interwar years, with music and entertainment around every corner. Peaky Blinders Nights take place on Friday 10 & Saturday 11, Friday 17 & Saturday 18, and Friday 24 & Saturday 25 September, then

make a return on Friday 12 & Saturday 13 November.

For more information and tickets, visit bclm.co.uk

Indie band Cast to play Shrewsbury

Indie band Cast will play Shrewsbury superclub The Buttermarket on Friday 20 August. Labelled 'The Who of the 1990s', Cast's live shows have been described by Noel Gallagher as "a religious experience". For more information and to purchase tickets for the event, visit thebuttermarket.co.uk



Courteeners return to Hanley venue

Indie-rock band Courteeners are returning to Victoria Hall, Hanley, on Tuesday 21 September. One of the most successful UK bands of the last 15 years, the guitar group formed in Manchester in 2006 and were lauded by Q Magazine as 'one of the world's biggest underground acts'. The three-man band will be joined by Zuzu as support.

MORE THAN JUST A GHOST STORY

The stage adaptation of Susan Hill's *The Woman In Black* has been delighting audiences for decades. What's On catches up with leading man Robert Goodale to find out more about the production's enduring appeal...



First opening in Scarborough in 1987 and in London two years later, Stephen Mallatratt's adaptation of *The Woman In Black* is one of the longest-running plays in West End history.

Now, the hugely acclaimed production is coming to the Midlands - and leading man Robert Goodale couldn't be more excited to be back on stage: "I don't like to use the word surreal, but it did feel slightly unreal to be back on stage post-lockdown. I couldn't quite believe that it was really happening, but we've had such a wonderful reassurance from the audience. It feels like everyone in the building is in it together and delighted to be back in the theatre again, so it's a bit like a celebration that life is beginning to go back to normal."

In *The Woman In Black*, Robert takes the part of the protagonist, Arthur Kipps, a role he previously played during the 2019/'20 tour of the show.

Adapted from Susan Hill's acclaimed novel of the same name, the stage production has been tremendously successful, and Robert is under no illusion as to why: "It's such a beautiful piece of storytelling, and that's what I love about it. It has the ability to emotionally engage the audience in a way that I don't think any other theatre production has been doing. Stephen Mallatratt, who originally adapted it for the stage, had such a fantastic vision of how to make it work."

A primary appeal of the play is what Robert calls the 'fright night element': "It knows how to terrify you. It's all done by the power of suggestion and what you can't see, so a lot is left to the imagination. But I wouldn't say that you have to bring your imagination with you; I think what the show does is seduce you into using your imagination in ways which you may not necessarily have thought of doing."

If the play is truly as terrifying as Robert promises, do the cast hear many screams from the audience?

"People are terrified to different degrees. Schoolkids will scream their heads off, which we love! Adults will usually sit there quietly and grab each other's arms."

The Woman In Black is more than just a ghost story, though - as Robert is quick to point out: "At the beginning of the play, Arthur Kipps has written down this story about what happened to him 30 years ago, and the play is all about

how he's trying to find a way to communicate it to his family, because he's kept it bottled up for so many years.

"He asks an actor to help him read the story, but they end up performing it. So, within the play is a performance of the story itself, going between the actor and Arthur Kipps. I think it's the simplicity combined with the intensity that makes it so appealing."

“People are terrified to different degrees. Schoolkids will scream their heads off, which we love! Adults will usually sit there quietly and grab each other’s arms... ”

Even those who may not be familiar with the stage play have likely heard of the 2012 film adaptation of *The Woman In Black*, starring Daniel Radcliffe. However, despite the movie's popularity, Robert confesses he's never seen it: "I've watched the beginning of it, but the film differs from the play in that Arthur is portrayed as having his breakdown before the story really begins. But actually, in the original narrative, he starts off as being very gung-ho, and he doesn't believe in ghosts. I'm sure the film is great, and I love Daniel Radcliffe, but I didn't want to watch any more of it because it was so different to the story that I know."

In fact, Robert suggests that being familiar with only the play is an advantage to him on stage: "I think the play really enables its audience to engage with the story much more because of how it plays on the imagination, which is something that films can't really do. Our imaginations are so powerful, and are always much stronger than what we're given."

Robert has a genuine love for the play, and taking on the role of Arthur Kipps has been a real pleasure for him: "Arthur is a man who's very on-edge and going through a bit of a breakdown, so I love the fact that the play is a cathartic journey for him. It's a lovely

challenge for an actor and a great part to play."

That said, the role isn't without its challenges: "You obviously throw yourself into the part and attempt to do it in the way you think is right, but sometimes you're hitting the wrong emotional note and getting the characterisation wrong. Because of what the character is talking about, I was playing it in a sort of traumatised way, but actually that's not how it should be, because he's not indulging, he's just carrying on."

"It's also very important to make sure the characters of Arthur and 'the actor' have a rapport, because the performance needs to be raw. So those were a couple of the challenges that cropped up in rehearsals - but all surmountable I hope!"

Robert is joined on stage by Anthony Eden, who plays the part of the actor, a young man who's hired by Arthur to dramatise his story. "Anthony is just wonderful to work with, and I think we connect on stage, which is so important, of course."

No doubt the pair will put on a stellar show, having already amassed an impressive list of theatre credits between them.

However, Robert confesses he hopes to take a short break from the stage after he finishes in *The Woman In Black*: "Our tour goes on until October, and having done quite an intense stage role for a long period of time, I wouldn't really want to go straight into another. I like the variety of going off to do a bit of television or filming - so I think that's what I'd like to do next. A nice period drama!"

For now, however, Robert is focused only on the current tour. Having performed in Cambridge and Bath so far, he's eager to become more familiar with the Midlands region: "I've been to Cambridge and Bath many times before, but I don't know the Midlands nearly as well, and I'm excited for it because that will be a new venture. I'm really looking forward to coming your way!"

.....
The Woman In Black shows at Malvern Theatres, Mon 9 - Sat 14 August; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 16 - Sat 21 August; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 27 September - Sat 2 October.

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Charity food trail comes to Shrewsbury

The Chewsbury Trail is coming to Shrewsbury (Saturday 21 August)! The self-guided trail will lead participants to six independent food & drink venues around the town, with coffee, cake and savoury snacks available to enjoy. All proceeds go to the Self Help Africa charity, to combat hunger and poverty. Tickets are £25 per adult (children's tickets are available too) and can be purchased at selfhelpafrica.org or by calling 01743 277170.

Pink emporium Tonight Josephine comes to the Midlands

The Adventure Bar group has officially launched its newest bar in Birmingham - Tonight Josephine.

Already a hit in London, the pink emporium - located in the city centre on Stephenson Street - boasts extravagant bottomless brunches, a lavish cocktail menu and Instagram-worthy interiors.

Venue highlights include a nostalgic trip back to the noughties courtesy of an event dedicated to Britney Spears. The It's Britney Brunch features 'divalicious live performances, epic lip-synch battles, an hour of bottomless prosecco or beer, food and outrageous giveaways'.

Other brunches include Mamma Mia and Burlesque. There's also an afternoon tea offering, which features 'bottomless Pornstar Martinis alongside delicious lip-smacking treats - from mouthwatering macarons to scrumptious sweets'.



New dining experiences at Churnet Valley Railway

Staffordshire's Churnet Valley Railway has announced a new enhanced 'dining train experiences' collection for 2021. Breakfast, lunch & dinner menus have been carefully designed to encompass the railway's passion for seasonal and, where possible, locally sourced quality ingredients. Meals are prepared and cooked onboard the train and served by a waiting team. The Moorlander Breakfast Train, which departs from Froghall, offers menu options including

eggs benedict, while The Bombay Express celebrates Britain's second favourite dish - curry.

Weekend visitors can book a three-course lunch on Saturday or tuck into a traditional Sunday lunch aboard The Moorlander Limited. Foodie feature evenings include the Bombay Express and the classic Staffordshire Cream Tea, a long-time bestseller that's ideal for special occasions... For more information, visit: churnetvalleyrailway.co.uk

New all-you-can-eat Pan Asian restaurant opens at Merry Hill

Merry Hill is celebrating the opening of its largest-ever restaurant: Bon. Spanning over 12,500 sq.ft, Bon brings the authentic flavours of Pan Asian cuisine to its diners in a relaxed and stylish environment. The all-you-can-eat restaurant features a fixed-price buffet boasting a selection of more than 150 Pan Asian dishes, each expertly prepared using the finest and most authentic ingredients. The menu includes sizzling grills, curries and teppanyaki dishes, as well as a plentiful choice of cakes, desserts and sweets, giving foodies a huge variety from which to choose. Bon is located on the upper mall near TK Maxx.





Image credit: Matthew Cawrey

Capturing Culture

Wolverhampton-based arts organisation Jaivant Patel Dance turns 15 this year. Artistic & Creative Director Jaivant Patel talks to What's On about how the Company is celebrating identity and heritage through dance...

For Jaivant Patel, dance is his life.

"I've always wanted to dance," he says. "I'm Wolverhampton born and bred but given the limitations of the infrastructure in the Black Country, dancing wasn't really an option I could pursue. When I left school, I auditioned at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. I had no prior training, but they saw my potential and I got in."

Though Jaivant may have started his training later than most, he was able to forge a trailblazing career. Now, his award-winning company, Jaivant Patel Dance, is celebrating 15 years of enriching communities and exploring identities through South Asian dance forms.

It was from Jaivant's frustration with the lack of opportunities for dance in the Black Country that his company was born: "I didn't want to go outside of Wolverhampton and feel the pressure of travelling to Birmingham or London or places like that. I wanted to develop a space for myself, my ambitions, and ultimately my company."

Continuing creative practice drives Jaivant Patel Dance, but the Company is also motivated by celebrating the heritage of the South Asian community in the Black Country and beyond: "The Company grew out of a desire to increase representation, and a need for Wolverhampton to take ownership of its own diverse community."

A virtual tour of an exhibition titled *Nritya Black Country* does just that. It is a collaboration between Jaivant Patel Dance and Wolverhampton Art Gallery to celebrate the Company's 15th anniversary. Featuring stories, photos, film and objects, the 3D show explores the heritage of Indian dance in the Black Country between 1960 and 2000.

"Jaivant Patel Dance looks at capturing the culture that the South Asian community brought to the UK and specifically the Black Country, and that's really evident in the *Nritya Black Country* exhibition."

Jaivant Patel Dance is committed to producing pioneering work, and its anniversary is certainly cause for celebration. Alongside *Nritya Black Country*, the Company will be programming *Diwali* at Wolverhampton's Arena Theatre and MAC

Birmingham as part of its birthday celebrations, as well as presenting (at the Arena) its first live curated performance of 2021 - *Samarpan Mahotsav: A Celebration Of Indian Classical Dance*. The Company's new production, *Waltzing The Blue Gods*, which looks at the heritage of the Indian dance form of Kathak through a South Asian queer lens, will also form part of the anniversary celebrations.

Waltzing The Blue Gods is a continuation of Jaivant Patel Dance's ground-breaking production, *YAATRA*, which cast light on the narratives of LGBTQ+ members of the South Asian community: "YAATRA was the first production of its kind in the UK. Beforehand, no work in that area had taken place in dance."

The production was a 2020 finalist for Eastern Eye's ACTA Award in Dance, the only South Asian arts awards currently recognised nationally in the UK.

Jaivant Patel Dance has a number of accolades under its belt. The Company was recognised at the National Diversity Awards as a 'positive role model' in the LGBT category, and received the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service for its non-profit arm, *Jai Jashn Dance*.

"*Jai Jashn Dance* means 'to celebrate dance'. Reaching the community with art is where the drive of Jaivant Patel Dance lies, and we've been working for a number of years now with an inter-generational community group. Everyone is welcome as long as you want to dance - there are no barriers."

Inclusivity is very much at the core of the organisation: "The root of what we do is very specific in wanting to explore and demonstrate the rich heritage of Indian dance, but what's really important in the work we create is that there is an access point, regardless of your experience and understanding of dance and South Asian art forms.

"A lot of people who joined us as novices are now performing confidently on stage with us every time we go out and do a performance. We've always been open to and driven by people who have never danced but want to dance, and we support them in finding their

own dance identity and vocabulary.

"If anyone wants to come along and see South Asian dance but feels hesitant, I would encourage them to be as open as we are in our invitation."

Jaivant is equally as devoted to enriching the community as he is to developing bold and unique work, and this commitment has won him roles as an associate artist at both the Arena Theatre and MAC Birmingham. The Company has recently been working with the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre as well, to support its development of South Asian audiences.

"My relationship with the Arena was organic and built up over time. I was assisting them with programming, so Jaivant Patel Dance was quite instrumental in their development of diverse audiences and reflecting communities and their backgrounds within the cultural landscape. So it felt quite natural for me to be made associate artist.

"My relationship with MAC was slightly different. I was invited to be an artist-in-residence there for a couple of projects, and then, when Deborah Kermode took over as artistic director, she saw it as a natural fit for me to be an associate artist.

"Jaivant Patel Dance has been quite trailblazing in a number of ways, and I think that was what was so attractive to these organisations. They'd never seen work like ours before, and naturally they wanted to support something that they knew would go far."

With its annual celebrations proving to be a firm favourite in the Black Country, alongside the success of its local community programme, Jaivant Patel Dance has certainly come a long way in the last 15 years - and praise for the innovative work the Company produces continues to flood in. For Jaivant himself, however, the biggest achievement is also the one of which he is proudest - that Jaivant Patel Dance is leading the dialogue around South Asian LGBTQ+ identity in dance: "It's ground-breaking work, and I'm so proud to be a part of that."

To find out more about the Company, visit its website: jaivantpateldance.com



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1 August, 7.30pm
**Strictly Ann -
An Evening with
Ann Widdecombe**
Tickets: £21



4 September, 8pm
**Elvis -
The Songbook**
Tickets: £10



29 September, 2pm
Neil Sands Productions presents:
**Bringing Back
the Good Times**
Tickets: £12



7 October, 7.30pm
**George Egg:
Movable Feast**
Tickets: £14



11 October, 7.30pm
**Simon Yates:
My Mountain Life**
Tickets: £15 & £10



15 October, 7.30pm
**Superstars of
Wrestling
at the Town Hall**
Tickets: £10



6 November, 11am & 1.30pm
**Half Moon Theatre
& Full House
Big Red Bath**
Tickets: £10



12 November, 8pm
**Mark Watson:
This Can't Be It**
14+
Tickets: £20



13 November, 7pm
**Floyd in
the Flesh**
Tickets: £18 & £16



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STORY BAZAAR: WING, TALE AND FOOT

SAT 21 AUG AT 1PM FAMILY STORYTELLING
£4.00, Family of four £12.00

**STORY BAZAAR: FAMILY TREE
BY JAN BLAKE & PETER CHAND**

SAT 21 AUG AT 7.30PM ADULT STORYTELLING
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STORYTELLING FROM RENOWNED LOCAL
STORYTELLERS PETER CHAND AND JAN BLAKE.



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SHOW HIGHLIGHTING THE ACHIEVEMENTS AND
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AND FLASHES THROUGHOUT.
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Festival previews from around the region



Shrewsbury Folk Festival

Greenhous West Midland Showground,
Fri 27 - Mon 30 August

A highlight of any folk fan's calendar, this four-day fest brings together centuries of musical tradition in one picturesque setting. Steeped in history, the border town of Shrewsbury makes an ideal backdrop for the festival's mash-up of modern and medieval and everything in between, where grassroots cultures collide in dynamic fusion styles.

This year's festival celebrates British-based folk bands and features three open-air stages - The Cuckoo, The Skylark and the Purity Village - meaning that the festival can accommodate everyone at a safe social distance.

Sadly there's no dance tent, though.

Line-up includes: Kate Rusby, Oysterband, Show Of Hands, Afro Celt Sound System, Seth Lakeman, The Christians, Dervish, Lindisfarne and The Young'uns and Calan (pictured)

Lichfield Blues & Jazz

Various locations in Lichfield,
Wed 18 - Sun 22 August

A local independent charity organisation run mainly by volunteers, Lichfield Arts is back for its 30th year, presenting three days of exceptional jazz and blues performed by some of the region's - and indeed the country's - finest musicians. For jazz fans there's everything from traditional gypsy jazz to swing plus funk and big band, whilst blues fans can revel in the magic of rocky, good time, soulful and acoustic.

Line-up includes: Some Kinda Wonderful, Climax Blues Band, Brass Monkeys, Dennis Rollins, Robert Jackson Trio, Apex Jazz & Swing Band, Alex Clarke Quartet and Walsall Jazz Orchestra

Fuse Festival

Beacon Park, Lichfield, Fri 13 - Sun 15 August



Founded in 2001, Lichfield Arts' annual free-to-attend music & arts community festival is this year taking place a month later than usual.

The event features a tremendous line-up of music that spans genres as diverse as rock, afrobeat, RnB/soul, ska, pop, folk, jazz and reggae.

Commenting on the event, the festival's organisers said: "We want to make Fuse broader and even more inclusive, offering more people more opportunities to perform, play, dance, sing, share, laugh, enjoy and celebrate."

Line-up includes: The Social Ignition, The Ronaldos, Magnalium, Kissmet (pictured), Thomas Atlas, Translucent, Nick Dewhurst Band and Fred Zeppelin

Witcombe Festival

Brockworth, Gloucestershire,
Fri 27 - 29 August

Taking place on a beautiful site in Gloucestershire, and one of the fastest-growing festivals in the UK, Witcombe has previously featured, among many other talented artists, Dizzee Rascal, Plan B and Faithless.

The festival came into being back in 2012, when founder Joe Pointon started making his own organic cider and suddenly found himself with way too much for one man to drink! The rest, as they say, is history... Now attracting in excess of 22,000 people, Witcombe has enjoyed a rebrand but remains fully committed to providing excellent ciders and an impressive line-up of musical talent.

Line-up includes: Basement Jaxx, John Newman, Andy C, Tinie, Annie Mac (pictured), DJ Luck and MC Neat, DJ Ez, Joel Corry, Artful Dodger and Raye



Relight Festival

West Park, Wolverhampton,
Fri 20 August - Sun 5 September

Award-winning comedians, music icons, Wolverhampton Wanderers football legends, children's TV favourites and animatronic dinosaurs all feature in the line-up at this brand-new summer festival.

Organised by Wolverhampton City Council and taking place inside a giant big-top-style marquee, Relight aims to offer something for everyone and cater for all ages.

And judging by its inaugural programme, we reckon it has every chance of doing exactly that.

Line-up includes: Boyzlife, Soul II Soul, Katrina And The Waves, Sonia, Brother Beyond, Bill Bailey (pictured), Shappi Khorsandi and Gary Delaney





“ We want to provide support in a way that means emerging artists can see their careers blossoming in Birmingham and the West Midlands, without feeling they need to set their sights on London. ”

Leading the way...

The newly formed West Midlands Music Board is aiming to help the region's music sector recover, grow and prosper. What's On chatted to its chair - B:Music CEO Nick Reed - about the challenges that lie ahead...

Already backed by local venues, labels, promoters, producers and festivals - and championed by artists including Lady Leshurr, Tony Iommi and Joan Armatrading - the West Midlands Music Board (WMMB) aims to lead the region's music sector through the post-lockdown period of recovery and towards growth and prosperity.

"It's about providing a unified voice for music in the region," explains Nick Reed, who, as chair of WMMB, speaks for the high-profile industry insiders who make up the board. "We've got an incredible music history in the West Midlands, and it's one that's never been represented before. We're known for so many musical genres: from being the birthplace of Heavy Metal and Two-Tone, to an emerging Grime scene. We're really leading the field, but we've never before been able to articulate that in one place. The thing that makes music in the West Midlands so unique is the diversity. But there's this unique characteristic of Birmingham in particular that means it seems to live in the shadow of other cities. But in spite of that, there's a great emerging music scene. There's this work ethic and range of talent that continually fights against being an underestimated region."

Nurturing talented individuals - and giving them the platform and opportunity to succeed right here in the West Midlands - is one of the main goals of the WMMB.

"We want to provide support in a way that means emerging artists can see their careers blossoming in Birmingham and the West Midlands, without feeling they need to set their sights on London. This means we need to be at the table where decisions are made in the region, making sure the support services, night transport, funding and artist-management opportunities are available.

"There's a pro-London attitude in music, and we need to change that. We need to show

that we can provide the training, support and infrastructure to nurture talent right here in the region where these artists grew up. I want to see music at the heart of strategy, policy and investment for the region."

“ We’re such a representative team of people, working with everyone from those at grassroots level to venues who see millions of people at their gigs each year. ”

Nick hopes that the nationwide 'levelling-up' agenda will provide a helping hand: "The government responded, albeit belatedly, to the pandemic crisis with the Cultural Recovery Fund, which *did* recognise the value of the entertainment and arts sectors. We hope that kind of attitude will extend into this period of lockdown-easing and nationwide recovery. At the start of the pandemic last year, I can remember that there was this very quick coming together of all people from the sector. We all came together in the same space and behind the same message, which was that we needed and deserved support. The music industry started to represent itself better, and that dialogue has become more effective at a national level. But now that also needs to translate into dialogues at a regional level.

"If we look back in a year's time, I want to see that WMMB has made a difference.

What's amazing about this board is the broad range of skill sets we have available from everyone involved. We have everything from independent producers and promoters, and leading broadcasters in British Asian music, to representatives from the likes of the O2, the NEC Group and MADE Festival. We're such a representative team of people, working with everyone from those at grassroots level to venues who see millions of people at their gigs each year. There's a huge number of people who work in our industry beyond the artists themselves - whether that's technicians, other freelancers, musicians, and more - who've had to find other work. There's been plenty of challenges for the sector during the pandemic, which is what has prompted this board to come together."

Whilst there's been streaming and other online opportunities for artists and venues over the last year or so, there's an overwhelming desire for live music to make a return.

"There are great things happening regionally, with Coventry City of Culture 2021 and the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. Live music will have its part to play in that. Music will really bring people back together after this period. People need to be together and to interact with others."

It's this hunger to get back out there that makes Nick so optimistic about the future of live music in the West Midlands: "We absolutely can't wait to resume full-capacity gigs and concerts. There may still be challenges for us - particularly with advisory rather than mandatory advice from the government, which makes a lot of things unclear - but our community of musicians and venues is ready to go. Our diaries at B:Music are looking pretty full all the way through the autumn and into next year. There are plenty of exciting things coming up."

Omid Djalili

Talking about The Good Times



Omid Djalili's energetic, silly and often provocative stand-up has seen him become one of the biggest names on the UK comedy circuit. His latest show, The Good Times, is currently touring the country, stopping off at numerous Midlands venues along the way. We recently caught up with the award-winning British-Iranian actor/comedian to find out more...

Tell us about The Good Times?

The Good Times tour is about the reinvention, the rebirth and the recalibration of my stand-up comedy for the new normal. Hopefully it'll be a joyous explosion of comedy that splatters an excited audience like Jackson Pollock when he's had too much to drink.

And what's been good for you in the past 16 months?

Everything is good when you walk with Jesus.

For somebody who's never seen you 'live on stage' before, how would you describe your act?

Exquisitely crafted satire you can eat in-between meals without ruining your appetite.

How do you develop a stand-up show?

Stand-up comedians are an ancient and deeply secretive society. Asking me to divulge its secrets is like asking the government where the £37billion for track & trace went. Or how an App can cost that much? I downloaded Angry Birds the other day - it was free.

You often joke about the 'culture of comedy' and the difference you find in audience reactions as you tour your shows... what would you say about those subjects in terms of Midlanders?

Midlanders? What a Netflix sci-fi show that was, starring Berm Ingham & Dudley Studley. Not something I expected to like. But I loved it.

Is there anyone who has consistently influenced your material?

I'm currently being influenced by world events and comment on them. Over the years, I've been breaking away from the Middle Eastern pigeonhole that you people (journalists) have unfairly put me in. I'm a citizen of the world, and I will not be defined by cultural stereotypes. I have a specific viewpoint which many call 'Djalili-esque', and I think my material reflects that now. Would you like a carpet? Visit my website. I also sell fried

chicken, mayonnaise, motorcycle insurance and viagra, very fine price.

Who made you laugh most growing up?

My father. Before visiting the Bahá'í world centre in Haifa when I was 18, my dad told me that if I met an important person called Mr Furutan, just to say my name was Omid and not mention that I was a Djalili. Apparently Mr Furutan was his Sunday school teacher in Iran in the 1940s. I met Mr Furutan. He asked me my name. I said my name was Omid. He did a double-take and looked at me very carefully and said, "Djalili?" I said yes. He said, "are you Ahmad's son?" I said yes. He said, "are you naughty like your dad?" I said yes. He laughed and gave me a little slap. "Good. Keep it up. He's hilarious."

Away from stand-up, you have an impressive acting CV, having worked with some major Hollywood names. Who's been the most fun to work with and why?

Of all the great actors I've played alongside I would say Russell Crowe was the least litigious. Johnny Depp's lawyers are less aggressive than Brad Pitt's, and with Robert Redford I didn't stand a chance after I called his film, The Legend Of Bagger Vance, the most boring film of all time. I'm not legally allowed to mention Mike Myers, but on the upside, Sarah Jessica Parker has now revoked the restraining order she placed on me in 2010 after the lavish compliments I made about her choice of Manolo Blahniks at the Cannes Film Festival.

What's the funniest joke you've heard another comedian tell that you wish had been yours?

Colin Quinn's observation in his Netflix special on the fact that in America the political system is still only the Democrats and the Republicans: "America. Two parties. Still. All these years later. Still two parties. There's 350 million people and there's still

two parties. There are 15 genders, but still two parties."

You've previously said that you like to find something to make you happy before you fall asleep. Along those lines, what do you think are the key ingredients to living a happy life?

Good food. A happy family and a problem-solving mindset.

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS:

Best heckle you've ever received?

"No one likes you. You should've known that from school."

Worst moment on stage?

I'm hoping it's yet to come. The sooner the better. Then I'll have an answer to this question. When it happens, I'll get back to you.

Favourite place to perform?

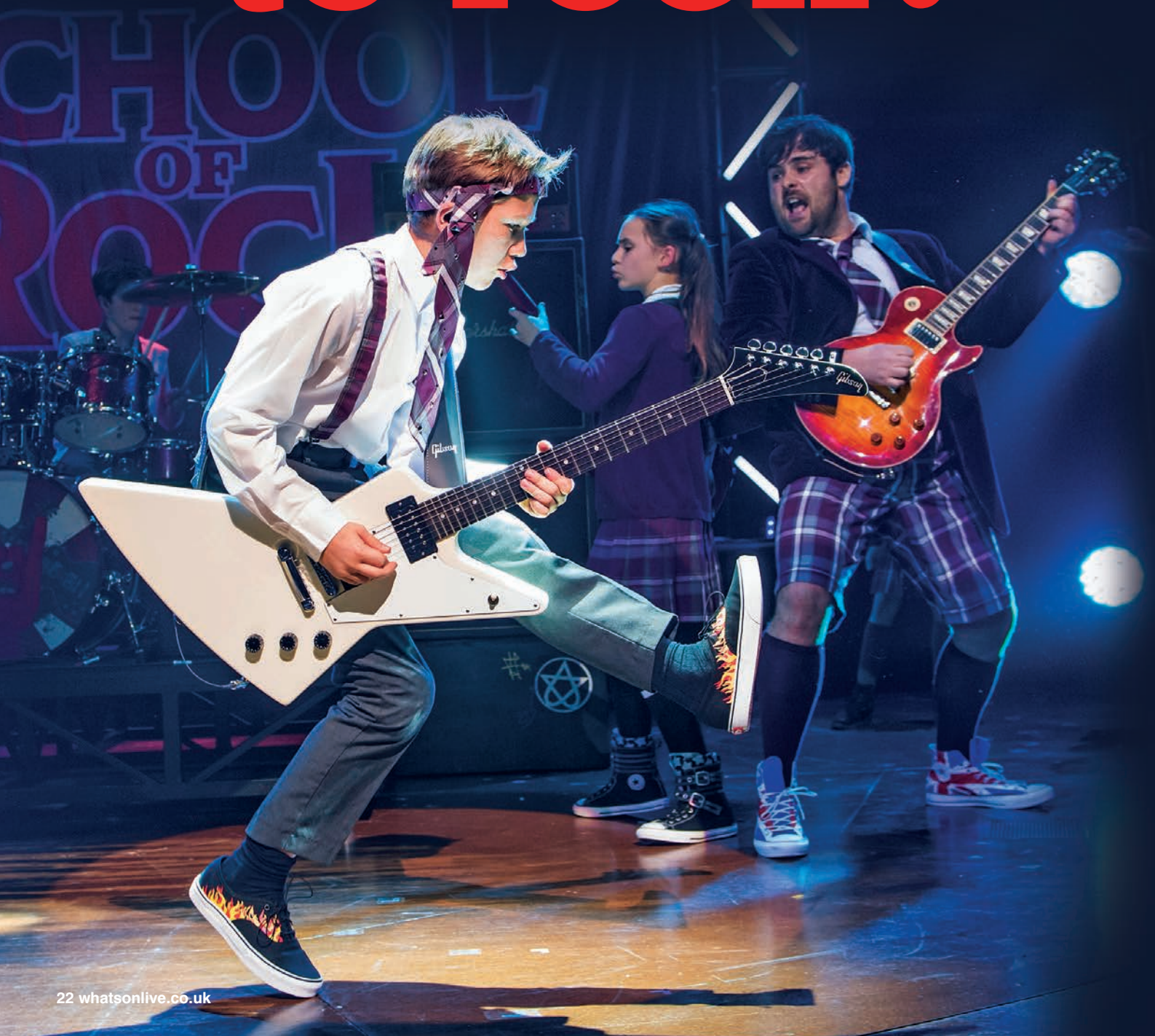
Slightly to the left of the centre of the stage.

Which fellow comedian would you pay to see?

None of them. They're all bloody awful. Except Boothby Graffoe. It's not even a question of *would* I pay to see him. He's my support act, so I actually *do* pay to see him. Every night. And I pay way more for the privilege than the audience.

Omid Djalili visits The Place, Telford, Wed 22 September; Huntingdon Hall, Worcester, Fri 22 October; Palace Theatre, Redditch, Fri 11 November; The Roses Theatre, Tewkesbury, Thurs 2 December; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sat 22 January; Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry, Thurs 17 February; Symphony Hall, Birmingham, Sat 21 May

Ready to rock?



Are you ready to rock? Hit musical School Of Rock comes to Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre next month as part of its first-ever UK tour. What's On recently caught up with the show's associate director, Midlands-born Christopher Key, to find out what audiences can expect...

The highlight of school music lessons for this writer was the communal singing of Beatles songs - and while you can't beat a bit of the Fab Four, the idea of studying the works of rock behemoths like Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath and AC/DC would have been incredible.

Not so at Horace Green prep school, the setting for School Of Rock The Musical, Andrew Lloyd Webber's adaptation of hit 2003 movie School Of Rock.

The plot of the show revolves around Dewey Finn, an unfulfilled but passionate guitarist who poses as a substitute teacher and is inspired to form a rock band from the class that has been assigned to him.

As the Wolverhampton Grand Theatre prepares to welcome the show in September, Christopher Key, the production's associate director, sees the hit musical as a welcome tonic at a time when, all being well, the UK will be adapting to a post-Covid normality.

"It's a celebration of music," Christopher told What's On a couple of days before England faced Italy in the final of Euro 2020, "a real feelgood musical, a great cast, and one of those shows that you can't help but leave either humming the tunes or knowing that you've had a great night at the theatre."

As a football fan, Stourport-born Christopher has noticed how the return of supporters has boosted morale after almost 18 months of mostly empty stadiums. He's confident that this enthusiasm will also spread to theatregoers.

"Looking at the Euros, you can see it's been a relief for a lot of people - that opportunity to celebrate sport again. When, finally, our regions can open fully and people can start seeing the standard of show that they could see in the West End, I think it's going to be

great for everyone."

While the School Of Rock movie was sprinkled with classic rock anthems, the musical includes 14 tunes by Lloyd Webber (with lyrics by Glenn Slater), as well as original songs from the film. However, Christopher notes that there was a conscious decision to remain faithful to the screen version: "You don't want to move too far from what people are used to. I think the original creators, Laurence Connor as director, Andrew Lloyd Webber and writer Julian Fellowes - it's quite a departure for Julian from Downton Abbey to School Of Rock! - were very loyal to the movie. Andrew complemented that story with a number of new songs, because the only real song that you know from the film is Teacher's Pet, which the band play at the end, and it's in our show. Andrew's written a great score for the rest of the show, where he's really back to his rock roots."

While Dewey might be the protagonist of the drama, Christopher feels that the young musicians in the cast will leave a lasting impression on audiences: "The joy of the show is that the kids play these instruments live, so when you watch this small boy picking up a guitar that's almost as big as he is, and then playing it to an extremely high standard, it's quite remarkable.

"The power of music, and particularly music amongst children, is something that Andrew's so passionate about; for the arts to be free and readily available within schools and encourage children to pick up an instrument."

According to Christopher, School Of Rock The Musical appears to have been an inspiration for quite a few youngsters who have sat in the audience: "Since it opened in 2016, we've heard about so many children who've seen it

and picked up an instrument since, and I think some of those children are probably now going to be touring the UK in the show."

Following the announcement by the government that theatres would be allowed to reopen without restrictions this summer, Christopher is aware of the Covid-shaped shadow that remains a potential threat: "We won't be worrying about social distancing when we're staging the show, but of course off stage we'll continue to test and social distance as much as possible. We've got 48 children in the room who we'll make sure are not all congregated together, so there's going to be a logistical operation in place to make sure we are as safe as possible."

For anyone who's only aware of School Of Rock on the big screen and needs any persuading to check out the musical adaptation, Christopher has an important message...

"If you love the film, you're going to love the stage show, because it's very true to the story, but it adds that extra dimension. It focuses a lot more on the children's stories - it's the one bit that we don't get to see in the movie. What goes on in the kids' homes? What is it that makes them frustrated? What is it that Dewey Finn needs to get out of them? There's another layer to this production - it's the film *and more* - so I'd encourage anyone to come along and witness it."

School Of Rock plays Wolverhampton Grand Theatre from Tuesday 21 to Saturday 25 September; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tuesday 19 - Saturday 23 October; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Monday 31 January - Saturday 5 February



Priscilla Queen Of The Desert

Birmingham Hippodrome, Mon 30 August - Sat 4 September

Based on the movie of the same name, Priscilla the stage show has wowed both West End and Broadway audiences, picking up a coveted Olivier and an equally prestigious Tony Award along the accolade-

strewn way. At its heartland is an uplifting story of the friendship shared by three pals, who hop aboard a battered old bus and head off across Australia in search of love and romance. The hit show is co-produced by Jason Donovan and comes complete with a dazzling array of costumes and a glorious selection of dancefloor favourites.

Looking Dead Good

Malvern Theatres, Mon 30 August - Sat 4 September; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 7 - Sat 12 February

Bestselling crime writer Peter James has scored major successes on stage as well as in print, with adaptations of his books having played to appreciative audiences at venues across the UK. This latest offering features Detective Superintendent Roy Grace, the Brighton-based policeman who's headed up murder investigations in a number of James's most popular novels. On this occasion, Grace is called in when a man who finds a USB memory stick on a train inadvertently becomes a witness to a vicious murder... EastEnders stalwart Adam Woodyatt (Ian Beale) and Emmerdale & Coronation Street actress Gaynor Faye star.



Hungry

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Sun 1, Wed 4, Fri 6 & Sun 8 August



Telling a story about food, love, class and grief 'in a world where there's little left to savour', Hungry features in Paines Plough theatre company's Roundabout festival - an initiative bringing together new plays and community-led activities as part of Coventry's City of Culture celebrations. Focusing on the characters of Lori - a professional chef - and Bex - who waits tables to make ends meet - the play covers challenging subject matter that includes eating disorders and the death of a parent. Containing strong language, it's been deemed suitable for audience members aged 12-plus.

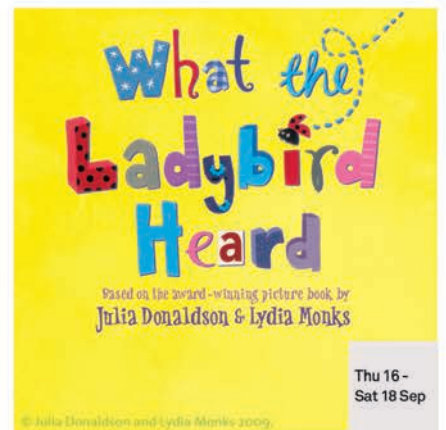
Grease The Musical

Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Mon 30 August - Sat 4 September; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 2 - Sat 6 November

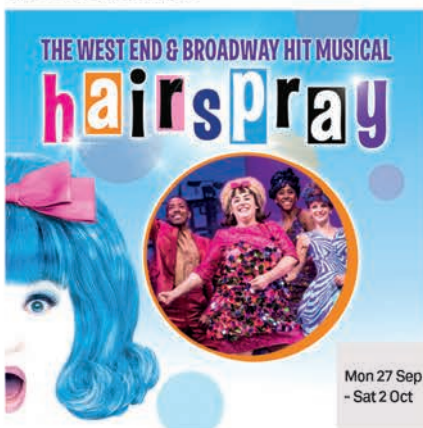
Dust off your leather jackets, pull on your bobby-socks and get ready for the most fun-filled high-octane rock'n'roll party of them all. Grease is the original high-school musical, featuring all the unforgettable songs from the hit movie, including You're The One That I Want, Grease Is The Word, Summer Nights, Hopelessly Devoted To You, Sandy and Greased Lightnin'.

The cast includes singer Peter Andre (pictured), who plays Teen Angel and Vince Fontaine in selected performances.





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Rock Of Ages

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Thurs 19 - Sat 21 August; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 2 - Sat 6 November; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Tues 29 March - Sat 2 April

Cinema-goers who caught the 2012 movie version of Rock Of Ages, starring Tom Cruise, Alec Baldwin, Russell Brand and Catherine Zeta-Jones, will know exactly what to expect from this feelgood musical. For those who didn't and therefore don't, it focuses on the romance between a small-town girl and a big-city rocker, and is packed to its proverbial rafters with classic 1980s numbers. So if you're someone for whom the decade of Glasnost, yuppies, Miami Vice and mullet hair-dos took place against a soundtrack of pounding rock anthems, this is the show for you. Songs include We Built This City, Here I Go Again, I Want To Know What Love Is and The Final Countdown.

The Cat And The Canary

NEW DATE: The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 4 - Sat 9 October

Erstwhile sex symbol, former Mrs Peter Sellers and one-time 'Bond girl' Britt Ekland heads the cast of this famous murder-mystery, a story that's been adapted for the cinema on three separate occasions, most famously with Bob Hope taking top billing. When the descendants of the late Mr West gather at a remote mansion to find out who will inherit his fortune, events take an unexpected and deadly turn... Presented by the Classic Theatre Company.



Blackadder II

Crescent Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 25 August - Sat 4 September

The Crescent Theatre Company present a stage production based on the much-loved 1980s television comedy show starring Rowan Atkinson and written by Richard Curtis and Ben Elton. Blackadder lasted for four series, but it's the second season - first screened in 1985 and set in Elizabethan England - which is widely considered to be the best, offering the Crescent ensemble plenty of high-quality humour to sink their teeth into.



Coppelia: A Mystery

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme, until Sat 7 August

On a wintry Victorian street, a young girl is determined to discover the curious secret of the mysterious Doctor Coppelius' magical toyshop... Inviting its audiences on a journey 'across an enchanting Victorian world, from outdoors and indoors and back again', this hour-long production was originally scheduled to show at the New Vic late last year.



The Comedy Of Errors

The Place, Telford, Shropshire, Thurs 26 August

Zany funsters Oddsocks make a welcome return with Shakespeare's much-loved 'laughter-fest'. And actually, by comparison with a number of the bard's other comedies, this one really does have the capacity to tickle a modern-day audience's collective funnybone. As indeed do Oddsocks, who've been touring the Midlands and beyond for 30 years. "Our inclusive approach means that varied communities across the UK are able to engage with theatre," say the company's founders and husband-and-wife team, Andy Barrow and Elli Mackenzie. "We aim to tell good stories in a fun, informative way, gently challenging people's perceptions and the way in which they react to theatre."

Avenue Q

The Old Joint Stock Theatre, Birmingham, until Sat 21 August

This Tony Award-winning musical focuses on subjects including dating, racism, being gay and finding your purpose in life. At the centre of the story is Princeton, a bright-eyed college graduate with a tiny bank balance who, as he sets out on a voyage of self-discovery, finds himself being easily distracted by a busty blonde and a plethora of weird and wonderful friends.

The Woman In Black

Malvern Theatres, Mon 9 - Sat 14 August; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Mon 16 - Sat 21 August

Adapted by Stephen Mallatratt from Susan Hill's same-titled book, The Woman In Black is a classic ghost story first performed in 1989.

It has since become one of the West End's most successful plays. Solicitor Arthur Kipp believes that his family have somehow been cursed by a mysterious woman in black. In an attempt to tell his story, and to exorcise the evil curse which he's convinced hangs over him, he hires a young actor to assist him in recounting his experiences...



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The Comedy Of Errors

Lydia & Manfred Gorvy Garden Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sun 26 September

This brand new Royal Shakespeare Company production of one of the bard's most popular offerings is being presented in the RSC's new garden theatre.

Shakespeare's forerunner to modern farce, Comedy is a superbly crafted catalogue of mistaken identity, adulterous liaisons and slapstick humour. Two sets of identical twins are separated during infancy. When their paths cross again later in life, all manner of confusions ensue. Matters are then further complicated by the involvement of an irate courtesan, an insistent jeweller and a mad exorcist!

Read our 5 star review at whatsonlive.co.uk

Tell Me On A Sunday

Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 24 - Sat 28 August

One of the minor constellations in Andrew Lloyd Webber's firmament of shows, Tell Me On A Sunday has some real gems hidden in its score, the most memorable among which is the plaintive Take That Look Off Your Face. Charting the course of an optimistic English girl as she arrives in New York seeking love and success, the show combines British wit with American sass, running a gamut of emotions in the process. Jodie Prenger makes a welcome return, having previously starred in the show five years ago. Read our interview with Jodie at whatsonlive.co.uk



Romeo & Juliette

Albany Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 5 - Fri 6 August

Emerge Production House is the company serving up this bilingual, reimagined and modernised version of Shakespeare's tragic love story. The play's set-up envisages a situation in which every country around the world has adopted Brexit-like policies and closed their borders. It's a volatile and unpredictable time, not least for the English

and French, who stand on the brink of taking their conflict onto the battlefield. At a summit between the two countries' leaders, the son of the British prime minister and daughter of the French ambassador meet for the first time, and love soon blossoms amid the talk of war...

Charlie & Stan

Malvern Theatres, Mon 16 - Sat 21 August

A little-known fact about silent-era Hollywood movie star Charlie Chaplin and his fellow Englishman, Stan Laurel - who found fame as one half of a legendary double-act with Oliver Hardy - is that they were both members of the famous Fred Karno music-hall troupe that set sail for New York in 1910. Stan, who understudied Charlie on arrival in the US, returned home shortly afterwards - his big break alongside Hardy lay several years ahead of him. Chaplin, by contrast, had become a global name within five years of setting foot on American soil... The award-winning Told By An Idiot here reveal the fascinating story of two of Britain's greatest ever comedians... a potentially brilliant double-act that sadly never saw the light of day...



Riverdance

The Alexandra, Birmingham, Tues 31 August - 2 September; Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent, Tues 26 - Thurs 28 October



When a show's been seen by millions of people across thousands of performances, it's fair to say it's one mother of a hit. Such are the statistics behind the mesmerising Riverdance, Michael Flatley's breathtaking dance extravaganza that's been wowing audiences around the globe for nearly three decades.

Riverdance started out as a seven-minute interval piece at the Eurovision Song Contest in 1994. Within a couple of years, it had become the brand-new craze, not only bringing traditional dance to a contemporary audience but also inspiring slick'n'sexy spin-off shows such as Spirit Of The Dance and Lord Of The Dance. If it's been a while since you last sampled its delights or, perish the thought, you've never before witnessed its magnificence, this is the perfect time to find out what all the fuss has been about this last quarter century.



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Dragons And Mythical Beasts

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Thurs 5 - Sat 7 August; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Thurs 1 - Sat 3 September

From the creators of West End favourite Dinosaur World Live comes this brand-new puppet extravaganza featuring a veritable smorgasbord of magnificent and mythical monsters, including a unicorn and a griffin. But wait, there's more... the colossal Stone Troll, the mysterious Indrik and the Japanese Baku are also present and correct, as indeed is the somewhat unpleasant Tooth Fairy. And as the title of the show makes clear, there's a dragon in attendance, too - although word has it he's busy enjoying a well-earned kip, so wake him up at your peril...

Zog

Birmingham Town Hall, Tues 24 - Sun 29 August

With previous shows including Tiddler And Other Terrific Tales and Tabby McTat, it's fair to say that Freckle Productions know a thing or two about presenting stage adaptations of Julia Donaldson & Axel Scheffler stories... Zog is at Madam Dragon's school and is determined to win himself a gold star. He's so determined, in fact, that he tries a little bit too hard and finds himself bumping, burning and roaring his way through years one, two and three...



The Dinosaur Show

Blue Orange Theatre, Birmingham, Wed 4 - Sun 29 August

Fun, facts, laughter, puppetry and a bonanza of big beasts all feature on the magical menu being promised by the producers of this 60-minute-long immersive world premiere. Children aged four-plus are invited to join Hunter and Shelly as they step back 200 million years on their mission to

rediscover the lost land of the dinosaurs. Great family fun seems a certainty... but be sure to stay mindful while you and your kids are enjoying yourselves - rumour has it there may be a T-Rex on the loose...

Stones And Bones

Teenage Amphitheatre, Telford Town Park, Shropshire, Sun 15 August

"Our new show is a marvellous mix of history and mystery," explain Squashbox Theatre, as they invite audiences to join them on a journey to "a land of fiery volcanoes, strange prehistoric creatures, myths, legends, giants and druids'...

Or, as it's otherwise referred to - Ancient Cornwall.

Squashbox are always good value, and look set to deliver yet another dose of high-quality family entertainment with this latest touring show. Expect 'thrills and spills, songs and slapstick, lots of laughs, plenty of puppets, tall tales, crazy characters, erupting volcanoes, and maybe even the odd glimpse of a dinosaur or two...'

Horrible Histories

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Thurs 26 August; Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, Sat 28 - Sun 30 August

If you love the Horrible Histories series - and why the heck wouldn't you?! - then this two-for-one presentation is a show well worth catching. Featuring both Gorgeous Georgians and Vile Victorians, the production asks such searching questions as: Are you ready to swing with a Georgian king? Can you see eye

to eye with Admiral Nelson? And does the Duke of Wellington get the boot? All will be revealed in a show that advertises itself as 'a horrible history of Britain, with all the nasty bits left in!'.



Spy School 2021

The REP, Birmingham, Mon 2 - Fri 6 August

If your youngsters have shown any interest in James Bond and Her Majesty's Secret Service, then you should definitely make it your mission to get them enrolled in this week-long immersive theatre adventure.

Spy School is this month returning for a sixth year, operating in line with Covid restrictions and focusing as usual on saving the world!

And with strange signs appearing across the globe and a mysterious villain on the loose, this year's field operatives will certainly have their work cut out for them! The event is suitable for children aged between seven and 12.



Outdoor theatre across the region this summer

A Dog's Tale

Mikron Theatre Company explore the extraordinary world of heroic hounds, pampered pedigrees and naughty nobblers through the halls and history of Crufts.

Showing at: Raphael's Restaurant, Evesham, Sat 7 August; Bishampton Village Hall, Pershore, Sun 8 August; The Folly, Napton on the Hill, Warwickshire, Thurs 19 August; Calcutt Boats, Southam, Fri 20 August; Rowington Village Hall, Rowington, Warwickshire, Tues 24 August; Tontine Gardens, Stourport on Severn, Sun 29 August; Bantock House Museum & Park, Wolverhampton, Wed 1 September; St Thomas & St Andrews, Stafford, Fri 3 September



A Midsummer Night's Dream

Shakespeare's tale of tangled lovers, warring fairies and hapless human-beings takes its place in Heartbreak Productions' summertime line-up of shows. This particular production sees the company focusing on the importance of the environment and the need to make sensible use of the earth's resources. The costumes and sets are all made from recycled materials.

Showing at: Warley Woods, Smethwick, Wed 4 August; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Thurs 2 September

A Midsummer Night's Dream

Set in a forest, Shakespeare's best-loved comedy is a perfect play for the great outdoors... Lysander and Demetrius both fancy Hermia, Helena's sitting on the shelf, Titania and Oberon are up to no good, and mischief-making Puck's got his fairy finger in more pies than Mr Kipling. Add in a group of rude

mechanicals, and the recipe for success is guaranteed...

Presented by Quantum Theatre.

Showing at: Bowring Park, Wellington, Wed 11 August; Beacon Park, Lichfield, Sun 22 August

Alice In Wonderland

Attic Theatre in association with Tread The Boards Theatre Company present a 'faithful' retelling of Lewis Carroll's classic tale using music, song and dance.

Showing at: Wethele Manor, Coventry, Sun 1 - Tues 3 August; Cox's Yard, Coventry, Wed 4, 11 & 18 August plus Wed 1 Sept; The Swan Theatre, Worcester, Sat 7 Aug; Aston Hall, Birmingham, Fri 6 Aug; Snitterfield Sports Club, Coventry, Sun 8 Aug; Talton Mill, Coventry, Thurs 12 & Fri 13 Aug; Castle Bromwich Gardens, Birmingham, Sun 22 Aug; Tiddington Home Guard Club, Coventry, Tues 24 - Mon 30 Aug; Stoneleigh Abbey, Nr Coventry, Fri 3 - Sun 5 Sept

Atalanta Forever

Join Atalanta FC as they tackle new football skills, master the offside rule and kick back at the doubters...

New show presented by Mikron Theatre.

Showing at: The Wharf Inn, Southam, Warwickshire, Sun 15 August; The Two Boats Inn, Southam, Warwickshire, Sat 21 August; Camp House Inn, Nr Worcester, Sun 22 August; The Bridge House, Solihull, Wed 25 August; Springfield Park, Kidderminster, Tues 31 August; The Navigation Inn, Stafford, Thurs 2 September

The Comedy Of Errors

Shakespeare's fairytale farce of everyday miracles and mistaken identity is here presented by the RSC...

Showing at: Lydia & Manfred Gorvy Garden Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, until Sun 26 September

The Further Adventures Of Doctor Dolittle

Award-winning theatre troupe Illyria presents a brand-new musical adventure featuring Jip

the Dog, Dab Dab the Duck, Gub Gub the Pig and Polynesia the Parrot.

Showing at: Sunnycroft, Wellington, Sun 29 August; Hanbury Hall, Droitwich, Mon 30 August

HMS Pinafore

Gilbert & Sullivan's comic opera cheerfully mocks the British class system, the concept of patriotism, and the Royal Navy. Presented by Ilyria.

Showing at: Church Stretton Festival, South Shropshire, Sat 31 July

The Jungle Book

Immersion Theatre's adaptation of Rudyard Kipling's family favourite is being hailed the company's 'wildest show to date'. Expect original music and plenty of opportunities for audience participation.

Showing at: Alderford Lake, Whitchurch, Shropshire, Fri 27 August



Little Red And The Big Bad Wolf

Join Little Red as she sets off through the forest to visit Grandma, aiming at every step to outsmart the hungry wolf who'd very much like to make her his next meal... Presented by Folksy Theatre.

Showing at: Biddulph Grange Gardens, Staffordshire, Sat 7 August; St John's House Garden, Warwick, Sat 14 August

Little Red Riding Hood & The Three Funky Pigs

Theatre2U puts a modern spin on two classic fairytales... A show packed with fun and songs for all the family to enjoy.

Showing at: Beacon Park, Lichfield, Sun 8 August

Macbeth

Supernatural magic and unbridled ambition combine in Shakespeare's no-holds-barred examination of the dreadful consequences of one man's insatiable lust for power.

Presented by all-male theatre company The Lord Chamberlain's Men.

Showing at: Shrewsbury Castle, Tues 3 August; Alderford Lake, Nr Whitchurch, Shropshire, Tues 17 August; Haden Hill House, Cradley Heath, Sat 21 August; Bantock House & Gardens, Wolverhampton, Fri 27 August

Merry Wives Of Windsor

Three Inch Fools fuse live music and 'vibrant' storytelling in a fast-paced presentation of Shakespeare's raucous farce.

Showing at: Shrewsbury Castle, Thurs 5 Aug

Robin Hood

Join Three Inch Fools for a brand-new version of the famous Sherwood Forest folktale.

Showing at: Coventry Cathedral, Wed 25 August

Romeo & Juliet

The world's best-known love story gets the Three Inch Fools treatment. Performed with live musical accompaniment and numerous costume changes along the way.

Showing at: Acton Scott Historic Working Farm, Church Stretton, Shropshire, Thurs 4 August

Mr Stink

Leamington-based Heartbreak Productions presents its version of David Walliams' bestselling children's book. Packed with fun and humour, this touching tale not only delivers a heart-warming message but also provides plenty of great family entertainment.

Showing at: Shugborough Estate, Stafford, Wed 4 August; Bosworth Battlefield, Nuneaton, Thurs 5 August; Bowring Park, Wellington, Tues 10 August; Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens, Thurs 12 August; Coventry

Cathedral Ruins, Tues 24 August; Attingham Park, Shrewsbury, Thurs 26 August; Kingsbury Water Park, Sutton Coldfield, Fri 3 September; Tamworth Assembly Rooms, Sat 4 September; The Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Sun 5 September

The Tale Of Peter Rabbit And Benjamin Bunny

Renowned for touring new adaptations of classic texts, London-based Quantum Theatre bring to life Beatrix Potter's much-loved tale of two mischievous rabbits and their adventures in Mr McGregor's garden.

Showing at: The Wolseley Centre, Wolseley Bridge, Stafford, Sat 7 August; Bowring Park, Wellington, Shropshire, Wed 11 August; Beacon Park, Lichfield, Sun 22 August



The Tempest

Folksy Theatre's multimedia adaptation of Shakespeare's final play fuses live performance, music and puppetry. Expect an evening of shipwrecks and supernatural magic.

Showing at: Biddulph Grange Gardens, Staffordshire, Fri 13 August; The Dorothy Clive Garden, Market Drayton, North Shropshire, Sat 14 August; Martineau Gardens, Edgbaston, Birmingham, Tues 17 August; Wightwick Manor Gardens, Wolverhampton, Thurs 19 - Fri 20 August

Three Men In A Boat

Join in the fun as Giles Shenton expertly takes the helm and pilots you through the ridiculous tale of men behaving badly while messing about in boats!

Showing at: Beacon Park, Lichfield, Sun 8 August

The Three Musketeers

Described as a 'swashbuckling adventure of epic proportions', Immersion Theatre's action-packed adaptation of Alexandre Dumas' classic tale combines 'excitement, danger and comedy'.

Showing at: Shrewsbury Castle, Sun 1 August; Alderford Lake, Whitchurch, North Shropshire, Mon 2 August; Birmingham Botanical Gardens, Wed 11 August

Treasure Island

Quantum Theatre's swashbuckling new adaptation of the classic pirate tale promises an action-packed adventure for the whole family.

Showing at: Shrewsbury Castle, Tues 10 - Wed 11 August; Forge Mill Needle Museum, Worcestershire, Sat 28 August

She Stoops To Conquer

Held in high regard for their outdoor renditions of classic comedies, Rain Or Shine Theatre Company here present Oliver Goldsmith's much-loved masterpiece.

Showing at: Honeybourne Village Hall, Evesham, Wed 4 August; Severn Valley Country Park, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, Fri 13 August; The Elms Hotel & Spa, Worcester, Thur 26 August; Evesham Golf Club, Worcestershire, Sun 29 August; Wenlock Priory, Shropshire, Fri 3 September; Stokesay Castle, Craven Arms, South Shropshire, Sat 4 September; The Dodington Lodge Hotel Lawn, Whitchurch, Shropshire, Sun 5 September

Wonder With Grimm

An evening of 'enchanted' storytelling full of magic, puppetry and music, this Heartbreak Productions show takes audiences into the fantastical world of the Brothers Grimm - complete with altered endings and modern twists.

Showing at: Coventry Cathedral Ruins, Fri 6 August; Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Fri 3 September



The Three Musketeers

Get set for some serious swashing of bucklers as three of literature's finest rapier-thrusting heroes comically cavort in the great outdoors this month, courtesy of the always-amusing Morgan & West.

Showing at: Coventry Assembly Festival Garden, Fri 13 - Sat 15 August; Sat 4 & Sun 5 September

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Austentatious

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Fri 8 October

Austentatious once again visits the region, and Midlands theatre-goers are certain to welcome its return. Splendidly lighthearted and delightfully throwaway, the show has garnered plenty of praise since hitting the big time at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2012. The long-form improvisation sees its performers utilising audience suggestions in order to develop a play that not only pays homage to Jane Austen but also generates plenty of laughter along the way. No two shows are ever the same, with previous 'lost' masterpieces including Double o Darcy, Game Of Scones, The Wickham Man, Mansfield Shark and Strictly Come Darcy.

Spontaneous Potter

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 10 October;
The Glee Club, Birmingham, Mon 17 January

The Spontaneous Players are back with another evening of improvisation inspired by the wizarding world of Harry Potter. Building their show around a suggestion from the audience of a fanfiction title, the company are old hands at creating Harry magic. Previous improvised comedy plays include: Harry Potter And The Chamber Of Commerce; Harry Potter And The Neville Wears Prada; Harry Potter And The Rise Of The Planet Of The Snapes; and Harry Potter And The Struggle For A Decent Mortgage In This Economy.



Cluedo

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Tues 15 - Sat 19 March; Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury Mon 11 - Sat 16 April; The Alexandra, Birmingham, Mon 2 - Sat 7 July; Malvern Theatres, Mon 20 - Sat 25 June; Wolverhampton Grand Theatre, Mon 11 - Sat 16 July 2022

Miss Scarlett, Professor Plum, Mrs Peacock, Reverend Green, Mrs White and Colonel Mustard are all present and correct in this fun theatrical endeavour based on the hugely popular boardgame of the same name (and the hit 1985 movie, Clue). The show's action unfolds at Boddy Manor, to where each of the characters has been invited, separately from one another, by Lord Boddy. Assembling at the manor on a dark and stormy night, it isn't long before confusion about their invitation gives way to unbridled fear and hysteria, as the dead bodies begin to mount up... Mark Bell, the director of the award-winning The Play That Goes Wrong and A Comedy About A Bank Robbery, is the man at the helm for this UK premiere.

The Play What I Wrote

Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Sat 27 November 2021 - Sat 1 January 2022

This world-famous celebration of Morecambe & Wise was co-written by Birmingham Rep Artistic Director Sean Foley and debuted in Liverpool in 2001. Later that same year it hit the West End, with none other than Kenneth Branagh in the director's chair. Taking its inspiration from Eric & Ernie but paying homage to comedy double-acts in general, the production is probably best known for featuring surprise celebrity guests. The London run included appearances by, among others, Ralph Fiennes, Ewan McGregor and Bob Geldof. Its later Broadway run saw Kevin Kline, Alan Alda, Jeff Goldblum, Daniel Radcliffe and Roger Moore treading the boards.



Bumper Blyton

Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury, Sun 27 March

Marketed as 'Enid Blyton for grown-ups!', this brand-new show is an improvised parody inspired by the legendary writer and her bestselling children's books. As such, it's chock full of innuendo, features lashings of puns and boasts no small amount of ginger beer. There are cheeky tongue sandwiches to sample too, not to mention the definite possibility of lips being wrapped around a nice spotted dick... Presented by the brilliant improvisers behind hit stage production *Austentatious*, the show is performed 'on the hoof' and comes complete with vintage costume, music and songs.



Crimes in Egypt

Stafford Gatehouse Theatre, Tues 7 September and Royal Spa Centre, Leamington Spa, Thurs 16 September

The award-winning New Old Friends theatre company's previous on-stage successes include the much-loved *Falcon's Malteser* and the Agatha Christie, Noel Coward and PG Wodehouse-inspired *Crimes On The Coast*. So if you caught either of those critically acclaimed productions, you'll no doubt be looking forward with eager anticipation to *Crimes In Egypt*.

This latest comedy adventure features Belgian 'detective extraordinaire' Artemis Arinae, who finds himself investigating a gruesome murder or several while taking a holiday cruise on the river Nile. Along the way, a versatile cast of four brings to life all manner of quirky and curious characters, from lascivious lawyers and crooked captains to fastidious physicians and feuding femme fatales. Expect a fast-paced and funny evening of absorbing theatre and dastardly crime.

The Play That Goes Wrong

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, Mon 13 - Sat 18 September: Birmingham Hippodrome, Tues 26 - 30 October 2021

Mischief Theatre Company's much-loved show makes a welcome return to the region. For those not in the know, the play focuses on the Cornley Polytechnic Drama Society's attempt to put on a 1920s-set murder-mystery. The only trouble is, the bumbling thespians are more than a little accident-prone - so much so that it can't even be guaranteed they'll reach the curtain call!...



Films released in August...



Paw Patrol: The Movie

CERT U (88 mins)

With the voices of Iain Armitage, Will Brisbin, Ron Pardo, Marsai Martin, Yara Shahidi, Kim Kardashian West, Daw Shepard, Jimmy Kimmel, Tyler Perry
Directed by Cal Brunker

Fans of pre-school television show Paw Patrol should brace themselves for a bumper

helping of their favourite marvellous muts this month, when this much-anticipated movie version hits the big screen.

The ever-popular TV show focuses on the character of a young boy named Ryder, who leads a crew of search & rescue dogs as they endeavour to keep safe the shoreside community of Adventure Bay and the

surrounding areas. But all is not well in Adventure City, where the evil Humdinger has become mayor and is determined to wreak havoc on the bustling metropolis. Armed with exciting new gadgets and gear, it falls to Paw Patrol - ably assisted by a savvy dachshund named Liberty - to save the day.

Released Fri 13 August

The Green Knight

CERT 15 (125 mins)

Starring Dev Patel, Alicia Vikander, Joel Edgerton, Sarita Choudhury, Sean Harris, Katie Dickie Directed by David Lowery

Slumdog Millionaire star Dev Patel heads the cast in this cinematic version of late-14th century poem Sir Gawain And The Green Knight.

Marketed as an epic medieval fantasy, the movie follows King Arthur's headstrong nephew, Gawain, as he heads off in search of a gigantic and emerald-in-colour tree-like creature - the Green Knight of the title - who has issued a bizarre challenge to all the knights of the kingdom... Director David Lowery previously helmed The Old Man And The Gun, Robert Redford's final film before announcing his retirement.

Released Fri 6 August



Minamata

CERT 15 (115 mins)

Starring Akiko Iwase, Johnny Depp, Katherine Jenkins, Bill Nighy, Minami, Tadanobu Asano
Directed by Andrew Levitas

The Minamata of the title is a town on Japan's south-western coast, where the Chisso corporation's dumping of mercury waste into the water not only poisoned the fish but also the people who subsequently ate them, causing terrible disfigurements.

US wartime and Life magazine photojournalist W Eugene Smith determined to capture on camera the suffering of the town's blighted citizens. Most famous among

the photos he took is 1971's Tomoko Uemura In Her Bath, a black-and-white image showing a mother cradling her severely deformed daughter in a traditional Japanese bath house.

Johnny Depp takes the lead role of Smith, presenting him during his declining years as a washed-up creative ripe for redemption. Depp does a good job of it, too.

While the movie never hits the greatest of heights, it has more than enough muscle and style to ensure that its real-life story of toxic-chemical pollution lives long in the memory.

Released Fri 6 August



Free Guy CERT 15 (115 mins)

Starring **Ryan Reynolds, Jodie Comer, Taika Waititi, Lil Rel Howery, Joe Keery, Utkarsh Ambudkar** Directed by **Shawn Levy**

Killing Eve star Jodie Comer joins Deadpool's Ryan Reynolds in this sci-fi action comedy about a bank teller named Guy who

discovers he's actually a non-player character in an open-world video game. Not content with a bit-part, he decides to become a hero in his very own story, and soon finds himself in a race against time to save the world...

Released Fri 13 August

The Courier CERT 12 (112 mins)

Starring **Benedict Cumberbatch, Merab Ninidze, Rachel Brosnahan, Vladimir Chuprikov, James Schofield** Directed by **Dominic Cooke**

The Courier is based on the fascinating real-life story of how a British businessman played his part in helping to avert the dreaded nuclear-war outcome of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Benedict Cumberbatch plays engineer Greville Maynard Wynne, whose regular trips to Eastern Europe saw him being recruited by MI6 to transport top-secret information to London from Soviet agent Oleg Penkovsky. Cumberbatch gives a solid and impressively nervy performance as the out-of-his-depth Brit, in a movie that very much holds its own when it comes to period spy thrillers.

Released Fri 13 August



Reminiscence CERT tbc (148 mins)

Starring **Rebecca Ferguson, Hugh Jackman, Thandiwe Newton, Natalie Martinez, Angela Sarafyan, Cliff Curtis** Directed by **Lisa Joy**



Writer Lisa Joy's feature directorial debut is a science-fiction thriller set in a near-future Miami and starring Hugh Jackman as Nick Bannister, a hard-as-nails war veteran who specialises in providing clients with the chance to access lost memories.

Life suddenly takes an unexpected turn for Nick when he meets a woman named Mae (Rebecca Ferguson), and a passionate love affair ensues.

But when Mae is implicated, by a client's memories, in a series of violent crimes, Nick finds himself having to delve deep into the past to find out the truth about his mysterious new lover...

Released Wed 18 August

Candyman CERT 15

Starring **Yahya Abdul-Mateen II, Teyonah Parris, Nathan Stewart-Jarrett, Colman Domingo, Kyle Kaminsky** Directed by **Nia DaCosta**

This supernatural slasher pic is a direct sequel to the 1992 movie of the same name, and the fourth film in the Candyman franchise.

With his painting career on the brink of stalling, visual artist Anthony McCoy embarks on a dangerous exploration of a word-of-mouth ghost story about a supernatural killer with a hook for a hand. The Candyman can easily be summoned by those who dare to repeat his name five times into a mirror - but is Anthony about to unleash dark forces that will lead to an unravelling of his own sanity?...

Released Fri 27 August



The Nest CERT 12a (107 mins)

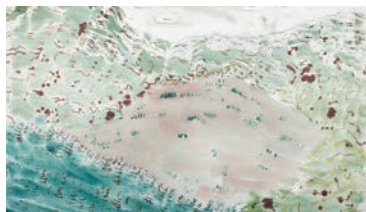
Starring **Jude Law, Carrie Coon, Oona Roche, Charlie Shotwell, Tanya Allen, Tattiawna Jones** Directed by **Sean Durkin**

Jude Law and Carrie Coon both impress in this slow-burn 1980s-set movie from director Sean Durkin, whose debut feature - 2011's psychodrama, Martha Marcy May Marlene - scored a massive hit at Sundance.

Law plays Rory, a British commodities broker who convinces his American wife, Alison (Coon), that a move to the UK would enhance their financial clout. Alison is unsure but agrees to take the plunge, relocating the family to a country mansion in Surrey. But as time moves on, she finds herself increasingly concerned that her money-focused husband may have bitten off more than he can chew...

Released Fri 27 August





Mary Newcomb: Nature's Canvas

Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park, Warwickshire, until Sun 5 September

The most extensive-ever survey of Mary Newcomb's work, *Nature's Canvas* shows at Compton Verney 99 years after the artist's birth. Self-taught and, for the main part, living in rural East Anglia, Mary was also a natural scientist, a farmer and a writer, with her written output being closely aligned with her art. Focusing, in her beautifully subtle paintings, on the rituals of the unfolding seasons and the countryside around her, she was

eager for people to take time to stop and appreciate the natural world. "In our haste," she once wrote in her diary, "in this century, we may not give time to pause and look - and may pass on our way unheeding."

The exhibition features more than 50 of Mary's works, presented alongside extracts from her writing and works by artists who inspired her.

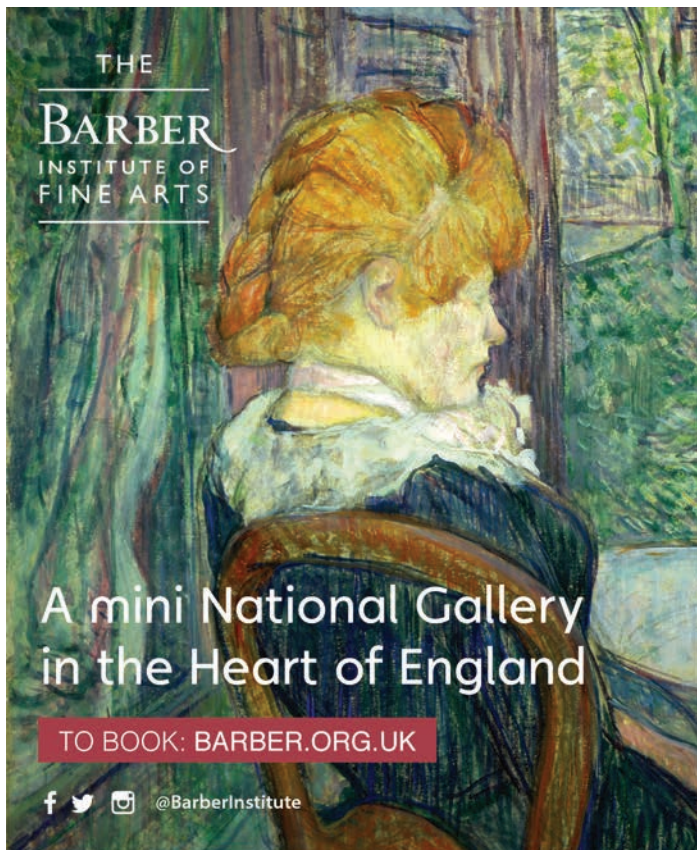
Living Memory Project: The Black Country

The New Art Gallery, Walsall, until Sun 26 September

"To talk on record, to tell our life's story and give meaning to one's personal and treasured photographs is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," says Geoff Broadway, director of the Living Memory Project. The exhibition follows on from a four-year engagement with residents of Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton which has seen everyday life stories and personal photographic collections being recorded, archived and celebrated.

"The experience can be at once emotional, cathartic, enlightening and ultimately life-affirming," continues Geoff. "To share these stories and photographs with others - online, in print, and through exhibitions - is to make the personal public, and to invite empathy, understanding and connection. These private stories and treasured images become part of our collective, cultural memory."

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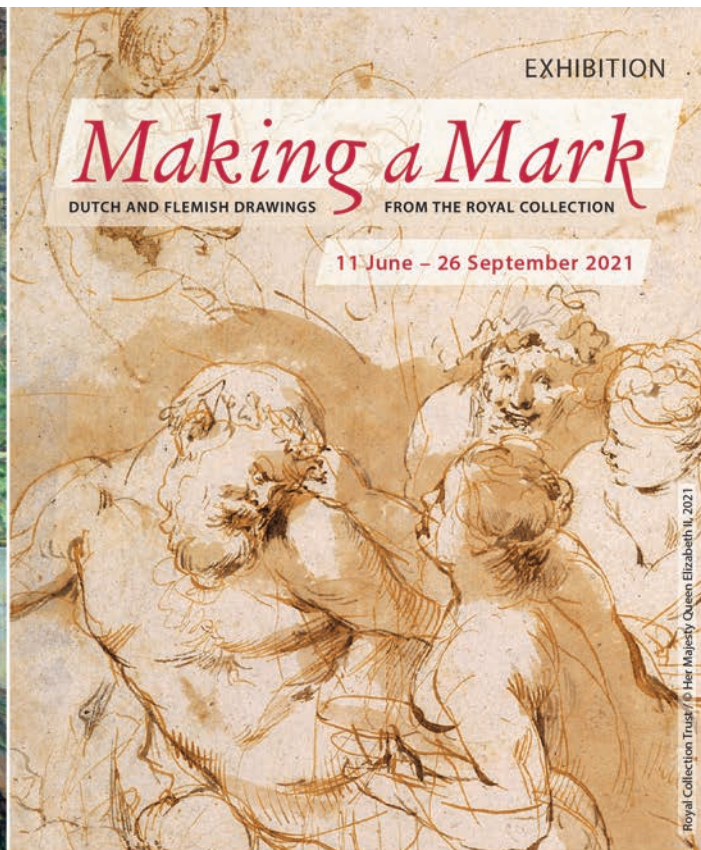
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EXHIBITION

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11 June – 26 September 2021



Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2021

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The Viewer And The Viewed

The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham, until Sun 19 September

The development in the 18th and 19th centuries of Britain's tourist industry, allied to the opening up of national landscape for people other than just landowners to enjoy, led to an increase in popularity of paintings featuring picturesque views.

This summertime show, which includes works by Gainsborough and Turner,

invites viewers to explore some of the landscape paintings of the period from a socio-political perspective.

The exhibition takes a look at how compositional elements of the featured paintings either reinforced or, at times, questioned who was given access to the land and, consequently, to political power.

Fantasy Or Reality? Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 26 September

The connections between fantasy and art are explored in this sure-to-be-popular exhibition, which takes its inspiration from another current installation at the art gallery (Fantasy Kingdom, showing at the venue until early next month).

Witches, spirits, knights, dragons, deities

and demons abound in a display that features a wide selection of artwork, the genesis of which can be found in folkloric tales, fantasy writing and the famous legend of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.



UKBFTOG: We Are Here

Midlands Arts Centre, Birmingham, until Mon 30 August

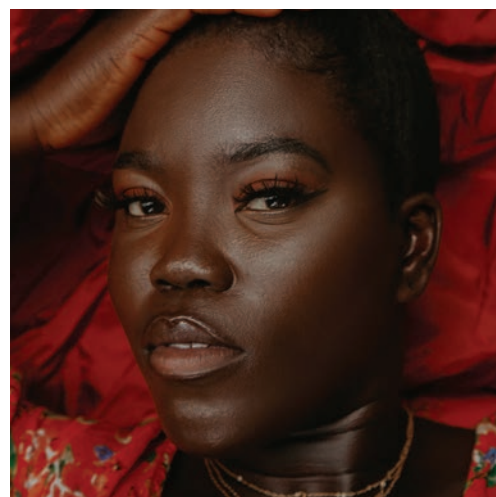
Black female identity, Black Lives Matter protests and isolation & freedom during lockdown are just three of the subjects under consideration in this touring exhibition by UK Black Female Photographers (UKBFTOG).

Featuring work by both emerging and established creatives, the exhibition is built around the theme of 'a colourful celebration of life'.

The UKBFTOG community has been nurtured by Gemella Binns, who decided four years ago to put out a social-media call to other black female photographers, inviting them to get in touch. The group now has more than 300 members.

"The photography industry is dominated by men," says Gemella, "so it was extremely difficult to find other individuals like myself who could relate to the experiences of black women."

"Being the only black female photographer in a room of your peers can feel very lonely and intimidating, but we no longer have to feel like this because of the UKBFTOG community."



Schrecker 3 Generations Exhibition: A Retrospective Art Show

Granary Art Gallery, Weston Park, Shropshire, Mon 2 - Tues 31 August

Work by three generations of a family of artists is brought together in this retrospective.

Oil paintings, drawings, giclees and greetings cards by the late Dorie Schrecker - to whom the exhibition is dedicated - are presented alongside sculpture by her son, Jeremy.

Oil paintings and photographs by the son of Dorie's first husband Bruno are also included, as is a small selection of portrait photographs by 91-year-old Bruno himself.



FUN 4 KIDS

FOUR GREAT REASONS TO VISIT IRONBRIDGE THIS SUMMER

If you're looking for ways to keep your youngsters entertained over the school summer holidays, then check out what's on offer at four of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust's family-friendly venues...

BLISTS HILL VICTORIAN TOWN

Set over 52 acres, Blists Hill is the biggest of the Trust's 10 attractions and is very much an interactive experience. There's a general drapers, a blacksmiths, a pharmacy (also home to a particularly gruesome dentist's room!), a bank and a pub, not to mention a fried fish dealer, a baker, a sweet shop, a funfair, a funicular train and a clay mine ride!

A new addition for 2021 is the **Madeley Wood Company Outdoor Adventure** - an open-air woodland space where youngsters can let off steam. Inspired by the area's rich mining past, the outdoor adventure features wheelchair-accessible multi-level themed buildings, immersive play areas, a toddler zone with a faux mine-cart track, play buildings, a slide and a miniature zip-line. Elevated walkways above the woodland floor, a log-style basket swing, a seesaw and a lookout tower with a coal chute slide also feature.

In addition to the themed day-to-day activities taking place in the Town, Blists Hill also hosts an eclectic programme of weekend events throughout the year.

Coming up in August is: Steam Weekend (7 & 8 August); Victorian Dog Show (14 to 22 August) and Dress Like A Victorian Weekend (28 to 30 August).

ENGINUIITY

The Trust's science & engineering centre has been given a 'massive refresh'. Packed with new interactive exhibits that respond to movement, and featuring heaps of table-top experiments, the family-friendly attraction also boasts a brand-new sensory room themed around the subject of 'industry'. There's also a new storytelling space, where you can learn more about the history of the area, while a new interactive wall reveals the history and personal stories of people who worked in the Gorge in bygone eras. Budding architects can follow in the footsteps of Abraham Darby by creating their very own replica of the famous Iron Bridge, while an early-years activity area features a huge floor map of the Gorge, to assist younger visitors in building bridges and structures.

Enginuity's ever-popular water feature and steam loco still form part of the immersive family offer.

JACKFIELD TILE MUSEUM

Available to enjoy this month, Tile Decorating Workshops have been a staple of Jackfield's activity programme for many a year. Visitors of all ages can take inspiration from their favourite artist, or use one of the many templates provided, to create a work of art using the Victorian tube lining technique - a bit like icing a cake. Add a glaze and leave at the museum to be fired. Finished works can then either be collected or posted. Tiles cost between £5 and £20 each.

A tour around Jackfield's galleries is a must. As well as items produced by some of the

very best designers, the museum also boasts numerous set-ups, including a recreated pub, a tube station and a church, each showcasing fine examples of tiles in situ.

COALPORT CHINA MUSEUM

There's a new interactive trail to enjoy at Coalport this summer. Magic Teacups aims to encourage young children to engage with the site's historically important exhibitions. To help them do so, the information being presented to them is delivered in the form of rhyme or song, using language specifically aimed at children aged seven and younger. Coalport also features a new family gallery, complete with a roleplay Victorian corner, where little ones can play with a period washing set - including a washboard and a Victorian-style kettle.

A range of activities linked to the site's collections is also available in the gallery. Children can create their very own Broseley Dragon out of paper, design a light box and, at certain times, make models out of clay.

The six other museums in the Trust's portfolio are: **Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron, Museum of the Gorge, Darby Houses, Tar Tunnel, The Ironbridge Toll House and Broseley Pipe Works.**

Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust offers a great-value Annual Passport Ticket, allowing multiple return visits to each of the museums during a 12-month period. Single-entry tickets are also available.

For further information on all of the Trust's venues, visit: [ironbridge.org.uk](https://www.ironbridge.org.uk)





BIGGEST SUMMER IN HISTORY



BOOK ONLINE



Lego Ninjago

Legoland Discovery Centre, Birmingham,
until Sun 5 September

Celebrating 10 years of Lego Ninjago, Legoland Discovery Centre Birmingham is this month hosting an exclusive AR digital experience, giving

children the chance to enter Ninjago and complete exciting challenges alongside their favourite characters.

Other Ninjago attractions at the venue include a special 4D cinema experience, the chance to build your own Ninjago creation, and meet-and-greets with Ninjago hero Lloyd.



Dino Summer

National Forest Adventure Farm, Staffordshire,
until Wed 1 September

Dinosaurs are once again taking over the National Forest Adventure Farm this school summer holiday. The dino-themed family event

sees interactive dinosaurs, from triceratops to T-Rex, roaming the land, with the farm's famous maize maze also following the dino theme. And as a special bonus, little ones can even learn how to train a jurassic creature - although keeping one at home as a pet afterwards may prove to be more than a little tricky!

BBC Gardeners' World Live

NEC, Birmingham,
Thurs 26 - Sun 29 August

For the first time ever, BBC Gardeners' World Live steps outdoors for a 'special edition'. Highlights include show gardens, the BBC Good Food Market, live entertainment, and appearances by numerous special guests, including Monty Don and Adam Frost.



Battle Proms

Ragley Hall, Warwickshire,
Sat 7 August

Taking place on the lakeside at Ragley, Battle Proms brings together music, Spitfires, cannons, cavalry and fireworks. Led by Douglas Coombes MBE and compered by BBC presenter Pam Rhodes, New English Concert Orchestra will perform a full two-hour programme of classical music. There's also a spectacular freefall demonstration by The Red Devils, a dazzling Spitfire display, and groundshaking live fire from more than 200 cannons to enjoy. The night ends with a firework display and a singalong, providing festival-goers with the opportunity to wrap their vocal chords around time-honoured Proms favourites Jerusalem, Land Of Hope And Glory, and Rule, Britannia!.





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War Of The Roses Live

Warwick Castle, until Sun 5 September

Perilous stunt riders, fearless jousting and state-of-the-art special-effects bring the iconic history of the War of the Roses to life this month at Warwick Castle.

It's the year 1455, and rival houses the House of Lancaster and the House of York are set to clash for the coveted prize of the throne of England... Featuring horseback battles and sword fighting, this action-packed live show is sure to entertain the whole family. The big question is, though... which house will you side with?



Summer Family Activities

British Motor Museum, Gaydon, Warwickshire, until Thurs 2 September

The British Motor Museum is inviting visitors to explore the subject of nature this school summer holiday.

With many car designers and engineers having taken their inspiration from the natural world, the venue has devised a special 'nature trail' aimed at allowing families to explore all manner

of fun facts. Along the way, visitors may well encounter Annie and Alex, two enthusiastic costumed explainers who'll be on hand with plenty of fascinating information about cars which have been involved in jungle adventures or travelled to exciting parts of the world. Visitors can also check out Factor Us In, a new exhibition telling stories not only about the motor industry itself but also about the people who've worked and lived around it.

Ta Very Much!

Black Country Living Museum, Dudley, until Sun 5 September

This entertaining and educational event sees the Black Country Living Museum paying tribute to individuals from history who made an impact on society. From big changes brought about by reformers and philanthropists, through to smaller acts of kindness in people's everyday lives, the event is a celebration of the way in which Black Country communities have come together to support each other across the centuries.



The Wonderful Water Show

Thinktank Science Museum, Birmingham, until Tues 31 August

Available to enjoy on Monday to Friday throughout the summer holiday, Thinktank's Science Garden offers families the chance to submerge themselves in the subject of 'water'. From blowing bubbles to mixing things up - and making plenty of splashes along the way - this H₂O-happy drop-in show is suitable for all ages.



THE GREAT BRITISH STAYCATION

July and August

A promotional poster for 'BBC Gardeners' World Live Special Edition'. It features three hosts (a woman and two men) standing in front of a lush garden. The text includes 'BBC Gardeners' World Live Special Edition', 'Sponsored by: LEXUS', '26 - 29 August Birmingham NEC', 'Adapted outdoor layout!', and 'Featuring the good food Market'. A pink banner in the top right corner says 'Book early to avoid disappointment!'. The entire poster is framed by a border of colorful flowers and foliage.

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Special Edition

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26 - 29 August
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Book in confidence knowing that, should the event be unable to go ahead, tickets can be transferred to a future BBC Gardeners' World event or refunded.

*10% off advance adult/Over 65s standard tickets. Offers not valid on Saturday tickets or with any other offer. Ends 03/08/21. £3.50 transaction fee per e-ticket order and £4.50 per postal ticket order.
**Refunds exclude the transaction fee and See Tickets Refund Protection cost. Details correct at time of print. The Gardeners' World logo is a trademark of the BBC. © BBC. The Good Food trade mark is used under licence from Immediate Media Company London Limited. Organised by Immediate Live (trading name of River Street Events Ltd).



Victorian Dog Show

Blists Hill Victorian Town, Ironbridge,
Sat 14 - Sun 22 August

Visitors of the four-legged and barking variety are in the spotlight at Blists Hill this month, as the popular Victorian Town hosts a week of dog-themed activities for furry friends and their

families to enjoy.

Visiting dogs can take part in an assault course, enter a mini dog show - complete with the chance to win a prize - and participate in plenty of other canine-related fun across the site. Indeed, there could well be so much going on that paws-ing to catch their breath may not be an option...

Historic Rally Festival

Weston Park, Shropshire,
Sun 22 August

Weston Park plays host to the first Historic Rally Festival of its kind in the UK this summer.

Famous rallying stages will return to the park featuring Group B rally cars. The fastest, most powerful rally cars ever built, Group Bs were banned from competitive racing in 1986.

The demonstration drive will see 80 specially selected vehicles taking on the famous stages around the 1,000-acre estate, including the ever-popular water splash.



Staffordshire County Show

Staffordshire County Showground,
Wed 25 & Thurs 26 August

This two-day agricultural show includes competitions for livestock & horses, 400-plus trade stands, and a 'country pursuits' area featuring everything from falconry displays to a ferret roadshow. Although agriculture is very much at the heart of the event, there's plenty else available to enjoy too, including a motorcycle display team, showjumping, a craft show and live music.



BRICKLIVE Fantasy Kingdom

Wolverhampton Art Gallery, until Sun 5
September

Medieval characters and mythical inhabitants abound in this fun family show recounting the gripping tale of a gallant quest. Featuring life-size models created by brick artists - using in



excess of 500,000 toy bricks - and an accompanying audio story, the journey starts in a grand castle, moves through an enchanted woodland and finally deposits visitors in the lair of a none-too-friendly dragon... The chance to build your own model and decipher magical runes further adds to the show's considerable appeal.





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Website: www.wythall.org.uk

Email: enquiries@wythall.org.uk

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NEW FOR 2021!



Woodland Tribe

Compton Verney Art Gallery & Park, Warwickshire,
Wed 11 - Sun 15 and Wed 18 - Sun 22 August

Kids can get hands-on with adventure play in Compton Verney's woodland this month.

The UK 'masters of constructive play', Woodland Tribe, will be helping families to co-create structures and play-spaces using real tools, coordinating the sessions with the aim of encouraging children's imaginations to run wild.



The Great Exhibition

Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire,
Thurs 19 - Mon 30 August

Making a welcome return to the cathedral, The Great Exhibition this year explores ways in which science has shaped the past and is likely to

influence the future. The exhibition has been created by award-winning art company Luxmuralis and features internal son-et-lumiere. The multisensory experience will transport visitors through elements, molecules, DNA and the greatest discoveries of humanity.

Geronimo Festival

Arley Hall, Northwich, Cheshire,
Fri 20 - Mon 23 August

Described by one national newspaper as 'Glastonbury for kids', Geronimo Festival features a wide selection of activities and attractions for youngsters of all ages to enjoy, from tree climbing to graffiti workshops.

Special guests include TV's Dr Ranj and Sam & Mark, with musical entertainment provided by Craig Charles, Bez and Clint Boon. If you fancy the full weekend experience, camping and glamping options are both available.



Science Week

Park Hall Farm, Oswestry, Shropshire, Mon 16 - Sun 22 August

Grandolph the Wizard has plenty of fun experiments under his hat - and he'll be sharing a good few of them with sure-to-be-awestruck youngsters during Park Hall Farm's educational and entertaining Science Week event.

The chance for families to conduct their very own experiments in the science lab also features, as does the opportunity to join a rocket-making class - surely a perfect pastime for kids with an eye on the heavens.

And given that Science Week tickets include admission to the farm as well, visitors can also spend some of their day meeting and greeting the farm animals and exploring the on-site play areas.

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Summer Of Fun'n'Flight

RAF Museum, Cosford, until Mon 30 August

The sky's the limit with this action-packed programme of summertime entertainment at RAF Museum Cosford.

High-flying attractions include a climbing wall, trampolines and bungee trampolines. Each item will be available for 10 days before being replaced by the next one. This means that

families who fancy stopping off at the venue more than once during the month can plan their return visit(s) in a way that ensures they have a brand-new experience to sample. Budding explorers can have a go at caving in a different and unexpected way too, by virtue of the Cavebus, while other attractions at the venue include a nine-hole miniature golf course, a flight simulator and a virtual reality zone.

Legendary Joust

Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire, Sat 7 & Sun 8 August

The legendary knights of Kenilworth Castle here compete for honour and glory in a weekend of serious jousting! Visitors can also explore the encampment, listen to medieval music, meet the castle's jester and learn about cookery and crafts from centuries ago.



Pirate Summer

Tudor World Museum, Stratford-upon-Avon, until September

Visitors to Tudor World Museum can certainly expect a swash-buckling experience at the venue this month, courtesy of a whole host of pirate-themed activities. Not only will each young pirate be given a treasure map to help them find all the contraband before the other pirates, they will also receive some booty and an official pirate certificate at the end of their quest.

And that's not all... Visitors can explore the exhibits too, not to mention try on hats, lie in a bed, write with a quill and sample some of Elizabethan England's most frightful aromas!



The Great British Staycation

Severn Valley Railway, until Sun 5 September

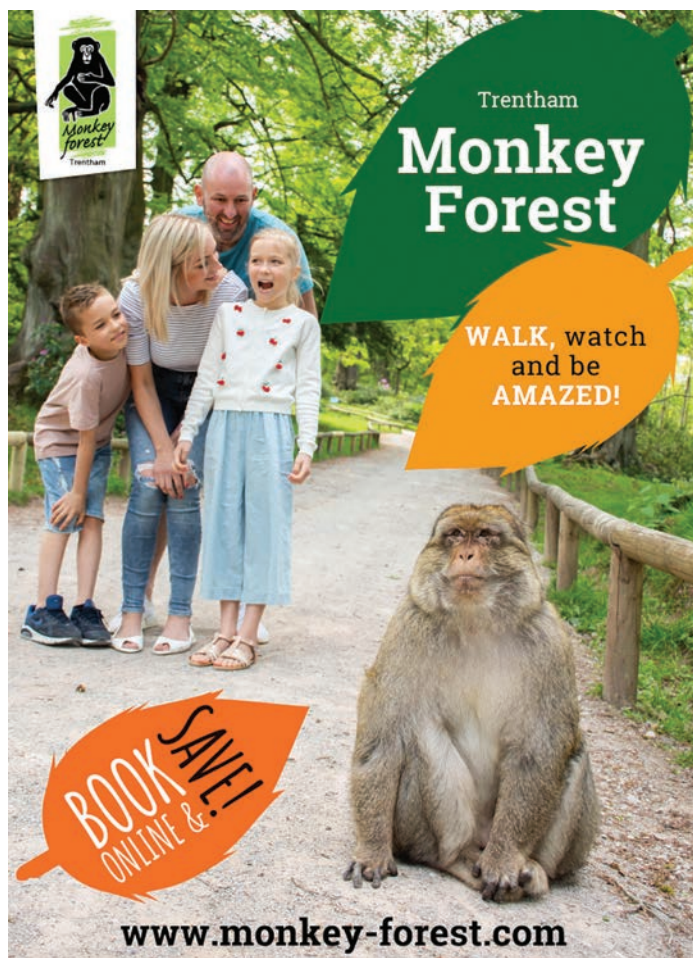
You can sample an old-style summer holiday when you visit the Severn Valley Railway this month.

Start your journey at Kidderminster or Bridgnorth and step back in time for a full day

of family fun.

Attractions include a huge indoor beach, donkey rides, Punch & Judy shows, crazy golf and interactive summer stage shows.

The Engine House will be open throughout the month for visitors to explore, providing a fantastic opportunity to check out the railway's reserve collection of full-size steam locomotives at close quarters.



Trentham

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22 July - 2 Sept

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britishmotormuseum.co.uk
J12 M40, Gaydon, Warwickshire, CV35 0BJ



WARWICK CASTLE
& KNIGHT'S VILLAGE

BOOK ONLINE

BIGGEST SUMMER IN HISTORY

© Orange Eyes Ltd. 2018.



National Sea Life Centre

The Water's Edge, Brindleyplace, Birmingham, B1 2HL
Website: visitsealife.com/birmingham

As well as featuring more than 2,000 creatures - including a colony of gentoo penguins, black-tip reef sharks and a giant green sea turtle - National Sea Life Centre Birmingham is now also home to a world-class rescue facility. As part of a pioneering education & conservation project, the centre welcomed the UK's first ever sea otters, Ozzy and Olain, early last year. Other Sea Life Centre highlights include the 4D cinema, the zebra shark in Shark Lagoon and the Clownfish Kingdom tunnel.

The centre also boasts the UK's only 360° Ocean Tunnel, in which visitors can marvel at hundreds of underwater creatures swimming both overhead and underneath, as they enjoy the truly unique experience of 'walking through the sea'!

PRICES: £20.65 advanced booking, £18 parent & toddler ticket

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 wild 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. An adventure theme park - Land Of The Living Dinosaurs - and an Ice Age attraction also feature.

PRICES: Adults £25, concessions £22, children £20, under-threes go free

NEW FOR 2021: The park has opened eight exclusive safari lodges and two premium cottages, designed to provide visitors with 'an immersive overnight wildlife experience like no other'. For more information, head to safari-lodges.co.uk



National Forest Adventure Farm

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

This family-run attraction boasts 40 acres of safe outdoor space to explore. Visitors can take a stroll around the outdoor paddocks and barns, get up-close and personal with a range of animals, or hop on board a tractor for a ride around the site. There are plenty of animal demonstrations to check out, too - everything from pony grooming to egg collecting - as well as a host of other attractions to enjoy, among which are pedal go-karts, crazy golf, water splash-out and a JCB Big Dig Zone.

PRICES: £14.99, under-twos go free, senior citizens £11.99

SUMMER EVENTS: Dino Summer is back at the venue, complete with meet & greets, dino training and plenty more. Check out page 43 for more information.



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 all the family. 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.

Check out the feeding talks that take place on an hourly basis - and keep an eye out for the nine new babies who've been born at the site this summer.

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.

PRICES: Adults £9, children £7, under-threes go free

NEW FOR 2021: A brand-new interactive monkey-themed play area for little ones, featuring monkey bars, a climbing wall and balance beams.



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 to this popular 100-acre Warwickshire attraction.

Youngsters are sure to enjoy participating in the venue's nature trail, watching Zoobee's Family Theatre, or cheering the contestants in Hatton's Sheep Racing Grand National.

For older visitors, Laser Combat and the nearby Tulleys Escape Rooms & Games are sure to be a hit.

If you fancy a retail fix, then check out Hatton Shopping Village, featuring a wealth of independent shops, a cafe, a bar and plenty of outdoor seating.

PRICES: £16.95, under-twos go free

SUMMER EVENTS: The attraction is hosting Dinosaurs Alive for the first time this summer, providing children with the chance to enjoy a dinosaur show.

54 whatsonlive.co.uk

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.

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).

PRICES: Adults £10, children (aged five to 17) £6, concessions £8

SUMMER EVENTS: Avoncroft has a variety of events running throughout the summer holidays, including a Vintage Seaside (Mon 16 - Sun 22 Aug) and a Games & Models Week (Mon 23 - Sun 31 Aug)





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, brave the 14 loops of The Smiler and speed to 100kph on Rita.

There's also an impressive selection of rides and attractions for younger visitors to enjoy. These include Peter Rabbit Hoppity 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.

PRICES: £34 advanced day pass, £16.50 advanced waterpark day pass

NEW FOR 2021: Guests can experience a nostalgic spin-back to the 1980s with the arrival of Mixtape, Roller Disco and Funk'n'Fly, which make up the Retro Squad. The trio of rides will give guests a blast from the past as they bounce, slide, fly and enjoy funktastic thrills.

Magic Alley

Unit 23a Bell Court Shopping Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6EX
Website: magicalleystratford.com Tel: 01789 290969

Magic Alley is two visitor destinations in one - a large retail emporium and a 'magical attraction' called The Enchanted Manor. The emporium sells everything from magic spells and steampunk figurines to incense, candles, puzzles, quirky books, board games and curious gifts. There are fairies and fairy houses, unicorns and dragons, vintage toys & games and Harry Potter wands. In The Enchanted Manor, meanwhile, visitors can explore the magical world of dragons, fairies, wizards, time travel and pirates. And who knows, you may even meet the odd unicorn...

PRICES: It's free to browse and shop in the emporium, and £8 to experience The Enchanted Treasure Trail.

NEW FOR 2021: Solve magical riddles and puzzles as you move through all the different themed rooms, finding treasure along the Enchanted Treasure Trail. The trail is available to enjoy until next month.



Warwick Castle

Warwick, Warwickshire, CV34 6AH
website: warwick-castle.com Tel: 01926 406610

Boasting history tours, detailed exhibits, programmed activities and 64 acres of landscaped garden, Warwick Castle offers a winning combination of attractions that makes for a thoroughly enjoyable family day out. Highlights include the Horrible Histories Maze, the medieval rebuchet, and the Falconer's Quest birds of prey show. Brand-new for 2021 is Zog And The Quest For The Golden Star.

PRICES: £20 one-day entry, £18 parent & toddler ticket (online only)

SUMMER EVENTS: Live-action show Wars Of The Roses can be enjoyed throughout the school summer holiday. Head to page 45 to find out more.



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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.

The journey includes a stop-off at the Engine House Visitor Centre at Highley, where visitors can check out massive locomotives, enjoy themed exhibitions of unique railway vehicles and meet Gordon the Blue Engine. 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.

PRICES: Reserved table for one or two people, £50. Family compartment - any family combination up to six people, including children aged four to 15 - £100.

SUMMER EVENTS: Families can enjoy a trip to the Great British Staycation over the summer holidays (see page 51 for more information). Grown-ups can sample the special Gin Train and Wine Train events taking place across the summer.



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.

PRICES: Adults £14.50, children £9, under-fives go free

NEW FOR 2021: Discover the fascinating stories of West Midlands' motor-industry communities in the new exhibition, Factor Us In. The display takes a look at the impact which factories had on the surrounding landscapes, people and businesses.

Transport Museum Wythall

Chapel Lane, Wythall, Worcestershire, B47 6JA
Website: wythall.org.uk **Tel:** 01564 826471

With an extensive collection of vehicles from yesteryear, Transport Museum Wythall provides visitors with the chance to learn all about the history of public transport across the West Midlands. The museum is home to over 90 buses from Birmingham, Walsall, West Bromwich and Wolverhampton, and more than 30 electric milk floats and bread vans from operators such as the Co-op, Midland Counties and Birmingham and Handsworth Dairies. You can also take a trip on the free vintage bus service - open-top on sunny days - and there's a miniature railway to ride on, too.

PRICES: Tickets start at £5 for adults and £2.50 for children





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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 popular visitor attraction.

Activities include high ropes, indoor archery, indoor climbing, escape rooms and a Royal Marines-inspired assault course.

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 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.

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

PRICES: Activities start from £20pp with online advance tickets

Alderford Aquapark

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

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

Suitable for children aged seven-plus, the aqua park features four islands, accommodates 80 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, kayaks and canoes. Alternatively, you can take along your own. Wild swimming is also permitted on the lake.

PRICES: Chill Out & Paddle tickets start at £8. Paddleboard, kayak and canoe hire starts from £20, wild swimming at £5.50pp. Aquapark admission is £20.50pp.



Jump In

Henley Way, Arlington Way, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 4YQ & Tachbrook Park, Hermes CI, Royal Leamington Spa, CV34 6NW
Website: gojumpin.com

Although trampolines are undoubtedly the name of the game, there's plenty more to put a spring in your step at Jump In.

Why not start with the basketball court, where sports stars can reach for a slam dunk? If teamwork is more your thing, then the dodgeball court is a great place to dip and dive.

While tricks and flips are welcome, there's also plenty of space for burgeoning bouncers to practise their moves. And there's even a toddler area for tiny tots to join in the fun.

PRICES: Open jump sessions begin at £12.70pp

SUMMER EVENTS: Jump In is hosting a number of events in its Summer Jumpcation: jumpers can expect a daily Tik Tok Takeover hour; there's Tots Superfest, filled with toddler fun every Monday to Saturday morning; and a new Friday Night takeover - Jumpbiza - features 'the latest tunes and summer slushes to devour'.

Shakespeare's

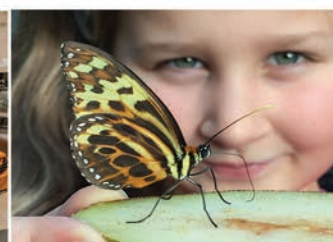
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Sunday 19th September 2021



11am Start

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Legoland Discovery Centre

Utilita Arena Birmingham, King Edwards Road, Birmingham, B1 2AA
Website: legolanddiscoverycentre.com/birmingham

Legoland Discovery Centre is a great place to share creative play time with your little ones.

The venue houses a city builder area, a duplo farm, two rides - Kingdom's Quest and Merlin's Apprentice Ride - and a 4D cinema. Perhaps the most impressive attraction at the centre, though, 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, with children able to entertain themselves by racing boats along the canal. Alternatively, they can get stuck into a game of football at the 'mish-mash' of Aston Villa's and Birmingham City's stadiums.

PRICES: £20.65 online off-peak, £22.95 online peak, parent & toddler £14 (online only)

SUMMER EVENTS: Enter the world of Ninjago and 'complete exciting challenges alongside your favourite characters' as part of a brand-new AR experience. There will be chances to meet Lego Ninjago hero Lloyd, and also to build your very own Ninja creation from Lego.



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' 1981 Ghost Town video, and a selection of items connected to the city's 21st-century hitmakers, Stereo Nation and The Enemy.

PRICES: £24, concession £2, children £1

NEW FOR 2021: New exhibition Ghost Town 2 Host Town celebrates 40 years of iconic Specials song Ghost Town and explores Coventry's influence on global music.

Sarehole Mill

Sarehole Mill, Cole Bank Road, Hall Green, B13 0BD
Website: birminghammuseums.org.uk/sarehole

Dating back to the mid-18th century, Sarehole Mill is one of only two working water mills in Birmingham.

The mill has connections with Matthew Boulton, who leased it between 1756 and 1761, using it as a 'flattening mill' in which to produce sheet metal for button manufacturing.

More famously, the mill is associated with Lord Of The Rings author JRR Tolkien, who lived nearby during his childhood. Later in life, Tolkien revealed that the mill and its rural surroundings had inspired his writings about Middle Earth.

Sarehole Mill is now home to a modern-day bakery serving freshly baked treats.

PRICES: Adults £6.60, children £3.30, under-threes go free

SUMMER EVENTS: The Wine Events Company is hosting two pizza & wine evenings (Sat 7 Aug & Sat 4 Sept) featuring five wines expertly paired with stonebaked pizzas baked on site.

If history is more your thing, enjoy a guided two-mile walk (Thurs 5, Sun 15, Sun 22 Aug), introducing the scenery that inspired Tolkien when he lived near Sarehole Mill as a child.





Image credit: Daniel Remyard Photography

Shrewsbury

A town of flowers, history, and so much more...

Nestled amongst the breathtaking Shropshire Hills and within the loop of the River Severn, the picturesque town of Shrewsbury is often referred to as the Town of Flowers. This is due not only to the award-winning floral blooms which adorn streets and shop facias during the spring and summer months, but also to the famous Shrewsbury Flower Show. The annual two-day event has taken place in the town's Quarry Park for more than 130 years - albeit with breaks during World War Two and the recent pandemic.

Packed to its medieval rafters with history, featuring a wealth of independent retailers, restaurants and pubs, and boasting an impressive programme of events & activities, Shrewsbury is a fantastic destination for families to visit this school summer holiday.

Here's just a taste of what the county town has on offer...

Wander up the Wyle Cop - a fairly steep street leading into the centre of the town - and you'll find yourself marvelling at the overhanging timber-framed Tudor buildings which house some of Shrewsbury's most notable independent retailers - as well as one of its oldest pubs. A popular watering hole with locals, The Nag's Head is worth popping into just to see the remains of Gibbons Mansion at the rear. Dating back to 1570, the house features in the 1984 version of *A Christmas Carol*, filmed in Shrewsbury and starring American Oscar winner George C Scott.

A little further along the Cop, to your left, you'll find Henry Tudor House (HTH). One of the town's oldest half-timbered buildings, it's documented that Henry VII sought refuge there while on his way to the Battle of Bosworth in 1485. HTH is now a popular restaurant, bar & live-music venue, hosting well-known comedians and musicians. Pop by and see the imposing art works commissioned by the current owners, Graham and Claire. The sight of Freddie

Mercury, George Michael and David Bowie dressed in Tudor attire is something to behold!

Venture along the top of the Cop and the High Street and you'll arrive at The Square - an open space dominated by the Old Market Hall, which now houses an intimate council-run cafe bar and cosy cinema. Flanked by coffee shops, restaurants and retailers, The Square is a popular meeting place which regularly hosts local maker markets and events. It's here that you'll find the Tourist Information Centre, housed on the ground floor of Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery, a destination widely admired for its collection of fine art, ceramics and natural history. Unlocking The Severn, a major exhibition exploring the underwater world of the River Severn, shows at the venue until the end of August.



If in need of a beverage or a bite to eat at this point, then check out STOP Cafe, sited at the rear of the Museum & Art Gallery's ground floor. One of the town's many wonderful coffee shops, STOP serves delicious cakes and reasonably priced light lunches.

Nearby, quirkily named alleyways - known locally as 'shuts' - harbour secrets of bygone years. One of the most infamous shuts is Grope Lane, which apparently got its name due to the fact that prostitutes used to frequent it.

Just five minutes' walk away from The Square is Shrewsbury Market Hall. Don't be deceived by the underwhelming 1960s facade of this mighty building, because inside, a veritable cornucopia of food and retail delights awaits. From authentic Indian street food, delicious Chinese tea & dumplings, seafood specialities, tasty Thai dishes and a bar featuring a rotating menu of 140 gins, craft beers, wines and spirits, through to unusual and quirky gift, craft and speciality stores, Shrewsbury Market Hall is a must-visit destination.

A stone's throw away from the market is the Quarry Park, a recreational hub near to the town centre. A favourite with families, dog walkers, runners and cyclists, the lime-tree-lined park also houses The Dingle Garden, a showcase of ornamental flowers, rockeries and water features which also includes the stone statue of Sabrina, the Goddess of the River Severn, donated to the people of Shrewsbury by the Earl of Bradford in 1879.

Sabrina is also the name given to the boat that takes visitors along the Severn. Operating daily between 10am and 4pm, Sabrina sails from the Welsh Bridge to the English Bridge, along the way taking in views of The Quarry, the statue of Hercules, Kingsland Bridge, Shrewsbury School, the Old Brewery and Town Walls. The boat docks right outside three bars/eateries: The Armoury, The Riverbank and Hickory's Smokehouse - all of which are popular with diners. If you fancy sitting in a pub garden, then head back into The Quarry and over the Kingsland Bridge to The Boathouse, one of two town-centre pubs with views up the River Severn. The Crown in Coleham, a 15-minute walk along the footpath, is the other.

Head back into town via Claremont Hill, where you'll find popular purveyor of sweet treats, Planet Doughnut. Forget that well-known brand you find in supermarkets and service stations - nothing comes close to the

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Shrewsbury: A Town Of Flowers...

mouthwatering offerings available at this quickly expanding Shrewsbury-based business.

Meander up nearby Pride Hill and you'll arrive at Shrewsbury Library, to the left, and the town's castle, to the right. Perched on a slight hill overlooking the railway station and River Severn, the Grade I sandstone building is home to the Soldiers of Shropshire Museum, which houses a collection of uniforms, weapons, medals and silverware. Within its manicured grounds stands Laura's Tower. Built by Thomas Telford in 1790 as a summer house for the daughter of Sir William Pulteney MP, this Grade II listed building affords panoramic views across Shrewsbury, the winding River Severn and the countryside beyond. Sadly, the spectacular red brick building is now only open to the public one day a year, as part of the nationwide Heritage Open Day Festival in September.

Next, make your way to St Mary's Place, where you'll find the town's only completely medieval church. Boasting one of the largest spires in England, St Mary's is home to a

world-renowned collection of stained glass (pictured). No longer used for worship, the venue is now a popular visitor attraction and comes complete not only with interpretation panels but also informed and enthusiastic stewards, on hand to share their expansive knowledge of its wealth of history. You'll also find the independently run River View Cafe on site, serving locally sourced produce. This is another highly recommended destination for refuelling.



At the rear of St Mary's lies The Parade Shopping Centre. This Grade II listed building, with its Georgian facade and main entrance flanked by four hugely impressive stone pillars, was once Shrewsbury's infirmary. Now housing more of the town's independent and specialist retailers, it's definitely worth a visit, if only to get a peek of the River Severn and beyond from the rear of the building.


Out of St Mary's, head across the road to St Alkmund's Place, home to another of Shrewsbury's five churches. To your right, you'll find the Bear Steps Gallery and tea rooms - both fine examples of the town's timber-framed buildings. Local legend has it that this area was home to one of Shrewsbury's bear pits. Allow yourself time to soak up the history before maybe indulging in a tipple at one of the nearby traditional pubs: The Three Fishes on Fish Street; The Bull on Butcher Row; or The Wheatsheaf on the corner of High Street. If you fancy a cocktail, check out Libertines or House Of The Rising Sun.



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Shrewsbury: A Town Of Flowers...

Fancy a retail fix?

Shrewsbury is full of wonderful independent places to shop - you're almost certain to find something to tempt you to part with your cash. One of the best places to start is Wyle Cop. Here, you'll find one-off clothing brands at Ella Ecu and Oberon, recycled cashmere accessories at Turtle Doves, and beautiful gifts at Lovely Little World. Check out White Lotus Living and Number 8 (St Mary's Street) for interiors big and small, and Wyld Home for faux flowers and foliage. The latter also stocks a mean line in kitsch cushions.



Every day is Christmas Day at Christmas Perks, with festive decorations on sale all year round. You can also pick up Shrewsbury-related momentos, including baubles, magnets, local prints and paintings.

Wyle Blue World is a unique retail space selling gifts and homewares from around the globe. At the back of the shop is a 'secret garden', where you can kick back and indulge in blueBAR gin and sharing platters.

At the corner of Fish Street is Work Shop. Here you can pick up bespoke gifts ranging from reasonably priced contemporary jewellery and prints, to candles and homewares.

And of course, there's always Shrewsbury Market Hall.

Shrewsbury's Most Famous Son

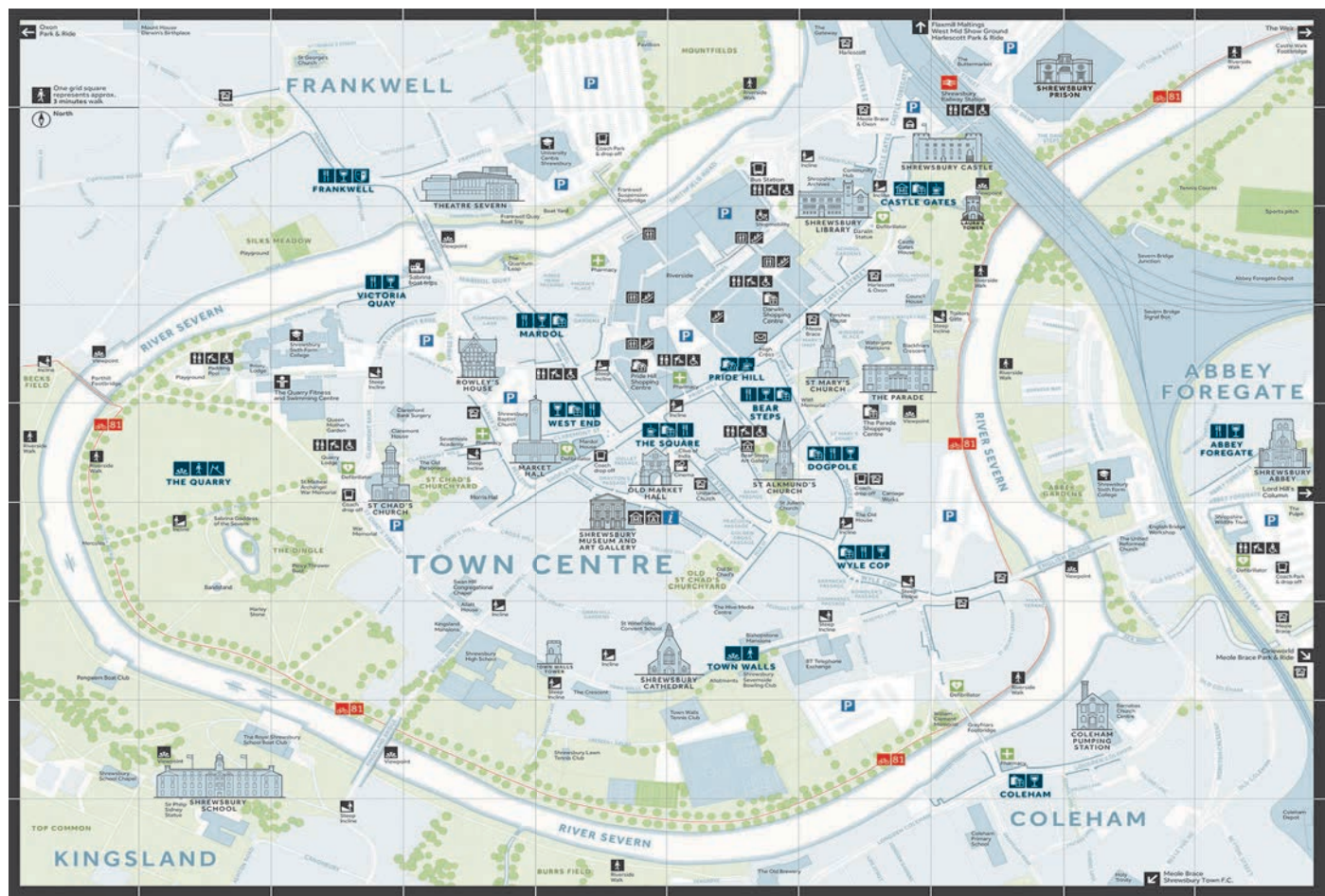
It's said that Charles Darwin's liberal upbringing - together with his education at Shrewsbury School - helped nurture his inquisitive mind and sow the seeds for his famous book, *On The Origin Of Species*.

A bronze statue of Darwin takes centre stage

outside the imposing facade of Shrewsbury Library on Castle Gates. Built in 1550, the premises was originally home to Shrewsbury School - where Charles would have spent his formative years - before transforming to its current use in 1882.

Today, the life and work of the world-famous naturalist is celebrated with the annual Darwin Shrewsbury Festival and a visitor trail around the town. The latter highlights buildings and locations that played a pivotal role in Darwin's early life. The town's main shopping centre, a boutique hotel (Darwin's Hotel) and a restaurant/bar (Darwin's Kitchen) also pay homage to Shrewsbury's most famous son. Quantum Leap - a must-see 40ft-high sculpture at Mardol Quay - was unveiled as part of the town's Darwin Bicentenary celebrations in 2009.

Find out more at originalshrewsbury.co.uk



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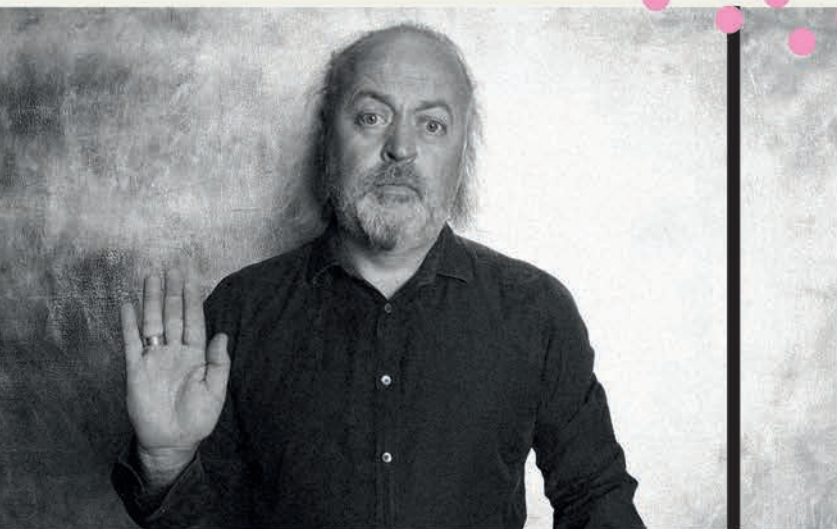
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