

Stratford-upon-Avon thrives on Shakespeare's legacy

By: Karen Dabrowska

Shakespeare is everywhere in Stratford-upon-Avon, his birthplace. His house in the town centre is one of the most frequently visited tourist places in the UK. There are five Shakespeare houses in total which offer a unique experience of the Stratford world in which the famous dramatist and poet was born, lived and died.



Clocktower

Open all year round, these Tudor life, are on display, all set in attractive gardens and rare period furnishings and grounds. They are preserved by domestic items. Aspects of the Shakespeare organisation.

The half-timbered house where William Shakespeare was born in 1564 is Stratford's most cherished historic place. Descendants of the dramatist lived there until the nineteenth century, and it has been a place of pilgrimage for over 250 years.

Open daily, tours start in The Birthplace which contains an acclaimed exhibition of the poet's life, William Shakespeare: His Life and Background They

house, is furnished in period style with many historic manuscripts and books. Finally the tour ends outside in the celebration garden.

New Place, Shakespeare's home from 1597 until his death in 1616, was pulled down in the eighteenth century but its foundations and grounds can be seen, including a beautiful Elizabethan-style knot garden, created eighty years ago.

Shakespeare Centre

The Shakespeare Centre
& Shakespeare's Birthplace Entrance

Groups

Reservations & Enquiries



Garden of Shakespeare's House



The site is approached through Nash's House adjoining, which contains exceptional furnishings of Shakespeare's period. The rooms on the lower level include some early seventeenth century oak furniture. Upstairs, there is an exhibition dealing with the history of Stratford-upon-Avon before and after Shakespeare.

This impressive house is where Shakespeare's eldest daughter (Susanna), lived with her medical genius of a husband. It is near to Holy Trinity Church, where Shakespeare is buried.

On display are outstanding sixteenth and seventeenth-century furniture and paintings, and an exhibition about Dr Hall and the medicine of his time. It has an enchanting garden. Herbs and perennials are for sale here and refreshments can be enjoyed on secluded seats and in the intimate tea room.

Exquisitely picturesque - the second favourite Shakespearian property is Anne Hathaway's cottage. Before marrying William Shakespeare in 1582, Anne Hathaway lived in what is

justifiably described as one of England's most famous buildings. Part of the building dates from the mid-fifteenth century, and some of the furniture belonged to the Hathaways and their descendants. The garden is outstanding. There is also a fairy's grotto where wishes can be made. The locals are finely dressed in period costumes, tell the story of the house and describe the many weird and wonderful cooking utensils, including plates which were licked clean and not washed.

From Anne Hathaway's house the pathway leads to the Thatch Restaurant and the Cottage Tea Garden.

Three and a half miles outside Stratford and still retaining its country setting in Wilmcote, there is a timbered Tudor farmhouse where Shakespeare's mother, Mary Arden, grew before marrying John Shakespeare and moving to Henley Street.

It is also home to the Shakespeare countryside museum, two historic farms, displays of farm implements,





daily demonstrations by the Heart of England falconry, a blacksmith's forge and a duckpond.

The town centre also has a fascinating occult museum and many charming cafes which serve delicious home cooked food and hot soups to ward off the winter chills. The Food Of Love Cafe opposite Shakespeare's House is the place for home cooked pastries.

As well as it's literary

connections, there is much to see and do in and around a Stratford-upon-Avon home to some of the finest historic buildings and glorious gardens dotted throughout the centre among the black and white timber framed buildings.

The Butterfly Farm sits just across the river and children can enjoy making their own rubbing at the Stratford Brass Rubbing Centre. There is also a mini golf course.

Continuing on the sport theme, Stratford also has its own Racecourse situated south of the town centre. Racing takes place regularly between March and the end of October, with many of the top jockeys riding here.

Old and young alike will also enjoy a visit to The Falstaffs Experience, a living museum where history is brought to life with theatrical and atmospheric settings.

There is also the opportunity to

take a boat out on the River Avon with Avon Boating or Bancroft Cruisers, and to see the town by hop-on, hop-off sightseeing buses. A number of walking tours and trails also operate in the town to help visitors explore all that Stratford has to offer and is possible to hire a bike and go on a cycling tour.

Shopping in Stratford is a delight, with a choice ranging from gift shops to department

Anne Hathaway's House



Cottage tea garden



stores, jewelers to antique Snitterfield, Long Marston, shops, and boutiques to Ettington, Alderminster, Aston bookshops. There is a weekly Cantlow, Loxley, Ashorne and market on Fridays, as well as a Newbold Pacey, and Hampton Lucy to name a few. A visit to craft market in the summer. Shakespeare's birthplace can easily be combined with a tour of nearby picturesque villages and the delightful English hamlets such as Temple countryside: unspoiled Britain at Grafton, Welford-on-Avon, its best! Dormston, Clifford Chambers,