

BUSINESS NEWS

Stratforward Newsletter

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STRATFORD BUSINESSES MOVE UP A GEAR TO WELCOME WOMAN'S CYCLE TOUR

Cycling fever is set to hit Stratford this week as the town prepares to welcome some of the world's finest women cyclists.

The gruelling second leg of the Aviva Women's Tour comes to Warwickshire for the first time next Thursday (June 16), with the finish line in the heart of Stratford.

The town's businesses look set to embrace the event, taking the chance to champion the town as it comes under the spotlight again.

They include Bright Ideas Gifts on Henley Street, one of the shops that is selling Warwickshire Bears donned in Aviva Tour kit to mark the arrival of the prestigious event to the town.

The bears are being given to winning riders and schoolchildren as prizes but are also being sold in shops around the town.

Proprietor Jo Sainsbury - a triathlete herself - **can't wait for the prestigious event** to hit Stratford for the first time.

"I just think something like this is amazing for the town," she said. "If it kindles an interest and people see the lovely image of cyclists going through the Warwickshire countryside and Stratford and think, 'I want to visit there', then that's great."



Cllr Butlin & Jo Sainsbury

Mrs Sainsbury, 54, who took up sprint triathlons five years ago, added: **"I wanted to do just one triathlon in my 50th year, but now I do about four a year."**

"When I heard about the chance to get involved in this by selling the bears I thought it was a great way of getting involved in a sporting event that's good for the town."

This year is the first time the Aviva Women's Tour has come to Warwickshire, with thousands of followers expected to descend on Stratford's Bridge Street to catch a glimpse of the finish line.

There are plenty of ways for businesses to get involved on the day, from considering opening early to welcome support crews, media, and fans arriving in Stratford early in the morning to taking a picture and tweeting it using the hashtag #avivawt2016

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Councillor Peter Butlin, Deputy Leader of Warwickshire County Council and Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, said: "We're excited about what this will do for Warwickshire, especially after it was recently recognised as one of the top 10 locations in Europe to visit."

The 140km Warwickshire leg on the second day of the five-day tour will start in Atherstone, working its way down the county before arriving in Stratford in the afternoon.

The longest leg of the event, it will include gruelling climbs and is expected to be an early indicator of who could take the Aviva Yellow Jersey.

Among those taking part are World Champion Lizzie Armitstead and reigning **Aviva Women's Tour Champion Lisa Brennauer.**

The Great Britain national team, who continue their preparations for the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, will ride alongside teams from the USA, Germany, France and the Netherlands. Other high-profile teams include Rabo Liv, **who won the 2014 race with Marianne Vos, and Britain's own newly-formed Drops Cycling Team, who will be making their tour debut.**

Other local businesses getting into gear for next week include The White Swan in Rother Street who yesterday put out a specially decorated bike and Something Different in Meer Street who have put in a themed window



For Something Different



The White Swan

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING SPECIAL PLANNED TO WELCOME THE TOUR NEXT WEEK - LET THE STRATFORWARD TEAM KNOW



Stratford-upon-Avon in Bloom

Making Stratford come alive!

Stratford businesses are being urged to get involved with Stratford in Bloom as part of its ongoing work to keep the town adorned with stunning floral displays.

Hundreds of hanging baskets are being put up across the town this week, with glorious displays set to adorn Stratford throughout the summer.

They will decorate streets and businesses until late summer, peaking in July when the town will get a visit from judges from Britain in Bloom, who will be **judging its entry in the contest's Heart of England region.**

Steven Felix, proprietor of Blenheim Nursery, which supplies the baskets, said they have prepared nearly 300 displays in total- 220 for various places in the town as well as 70 for local businesses.

The mammoth project began in January with meetings with the Stratford in Bloom committee, then growing started straight after so the baskets would be ready to be hung when summer arrives.



Mr Felix said: "It's about using the right sorts of plants that will tolerate the conditions - there's things like a lot of traffic and full sun, so they have to be wilt resistant."

Continued.....

The baskets require four hours of tending each day with staff spending two hours each morning and evening checking they are on top form.

Stratford in Bloom deputy chairman Richard Vos said the organisation is always looking for local businesses to get involved, whether by sponsoring hanging baskets, joining the committee, or entering its own competition.

The Stratford in Bloom competition has a range of categories open to businesses, schools and residents, with trophies, certificates and Blenheim Nursery vouchers up for grabs as prizes.

Speaking as the first of Stratford's hanging baskets went up yesterday Mr Vos said:

"Despite the fact people often think they are going up late but they need to last until September or October. They've also got to peak for the Heart of England in Bloom judging, which is July 27."

But local businesses and residents are as important to the contest as the flowers themselves, he said.

"We're not just judged on the baskets, it's about the community involvement."

"Although we're the engine behind it, this isn't about Stratford in Bloom, it's about Stratford."

"Stratford in Bloom has a direct impact on the sense of pride, belonging, welfare - all the things that make people feel good," he said.

"When the Christmas lights and the hanging baskets go up, they give that 'wow' factor."

Mr Vos said Stratford in Bloom is pursuing various initiatives in a bid to be more outward-looking and inclusive.

Anyone who wants to get involved in Stratford in Bloom is encouraged to check the website for details on www.stratfordinbloom.org.uk

This year's categories for Stratford In Bloom are:

- ◆ Nursery Schools
- ◆ Primary Schools
- ◆ Community Award - Sponsored by The Rosconn Group
- ◆ Allotments
- ◆ B&Bs and Guest Houses - Sponsored by Bloomning Marvellous Events Ltd
- ◆ Businesses - Sponsored by Murphy Salisbury
- ◆ Hotels
- ◆ Public Buildings
- ◆ Restaurants, Coffee Shops & Pubs
- ◆ Religious Grounds
- ◆ Shops - Sponsored by The Stratford-upon-Avon-Herald
- ◆ Tourist Attractions
- ◆ Rear Gardens
- ◆ Front Gardens Borders
- ◆ Front Gardens Containers - Sponsored by Blenheim Nursery
- ◆ Overall Gardens
- ◆ Bee Friendly - Sponsored by Friends of the Earth
- ◆ Chairmans Cup



STRATFORWARD MEMBERS RAISE THEIR GLASSES TO BEER FESTIVAL

Stratforward members are gearing up to get involved in this year's Stratford Beer and Cider Festival.

The 10th annual festival takes place at Stratford Racecourse this weekend (June 10 & 11), with more than 70 real ales and 30 ciders and perries on offer.

Around half of the ales will come from Wales and the West Country, in keeping with this year's theme of 'Wales, The West and the Best'.

The event is organised by the Shakespeare branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) and several Stratforward members are getting on board, including White Swan Hotel on Rother Street, which is owned by Fuller's, one of the sponsors of the festival.

As a preview to this weekend's festival, the White Swan is hosting its own 'Meet The Brewer' event tonight (Wednesday), where beer enthusiasts will be able to meet head brewer John Keeling and taste some of the beers on offer.

General manager Sol Yepes said:

"With the beer festival coming to Stratford, we decided to put on this evening where people can taste the beers and meet John."

Admission to the event at the White Swan, which starts at 7pm, is free but booking is essential. Call 01789 297022.

The Festival is also being supported by Stratforward member The Bear Free House, which supports the event financially, while landlord Simon Taylor also takes part in the sampling.

Mr Taylor said:

"We're very proud to support the festival, we've been supporting it for years and it's great for the town."

The Stratford upon Avon Beer and Cider Festival, which officially opens on Friday evening, will also include live music and food, as well as camping facilities for people who want to stay overnight.

A free minibus is also laid on between the racecourse and Stratford-upon-Avon train station.

The event supports the Shakespeare Hospice and between 2007 and 2015 the festival has raised a total of £8,449 for the charity.



TERRY AND TEAM TAKE STRIDES TO IMPROVE TOWN PAVEMENTS

Stratford's pavements have been getting a make-over thanks to the efforts of Stratforward's Town Hosts.

The hosts, who are the most prominent public-facing part of Stratforward, have been passing on details of any damaged pavements to Warwickshire County Council's highways department in an effort to get them in tip-top condition for businesses, residents and visitors to the town in time for the main summer season.

Town Host Terry Jones has been leading the initiative.

He said: "It's an ongoing effort. There may have been times someone's tripped over or someone's spotted a damaged pavement.

"What we try to do is if there are any problems the team tell me and I get in touch with the highways department at the county council, then they come out and fix it."

Town Host manager Dianne Shirley added: "

Our diligent team are always looking to help and improve our wonderful town. You will see them around town working on potential hazards.

"Terry is the Host who is in constant contact with Warwickshire County Council Highways Manager Dave Elliston and his team.

"It's an ongoing situation, but if any shops or business spot a problem, then report it to a Town Host."

Helping improve Stratford's pavements is just one of a range of services the Town Hosts provide, from helping tourists to passing on feedback and concerns from businesses.

Mr Jones became a Host a year ago, attracted by the challenge of something new each day and working with people.

"I wanted to do something that I believed in," he said. "This can involve anything, from checking the pavements to dealing with the CCTV, crime, and helping tourists.

"The main thing is visiting the businesses. We try to visit 10 business a day and communicate with them so they can tell us any problems they might have.

"It's fantastically rewarding. There's times where businesses are really grateful. That's the rewarding part of it, we're getting something done.

"If you can help in little ways like the pavements or the tourists or people trying to find somewhere, that's really really important."

Contact Us

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

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www.stratforward.co.uk



Terry Jones - Town Host

STRATFORD CAN COUNT ON SWANS IN THE FUTURE



The ancient tradition of 'swan hopping' returned to Stratford at the week-end. **More than a century after the custom died out, Stratford's Mayor Juliet Short took to the water** to count how many swans are currently on the River Avon in the town, a revival of the tradition organised by Stratford member Nick Birch, of Avon Boating.

Swan Hopping started in 1867 when Holy Trinity's retiring vicar gave his private flock of swans to the town.

Each year thereafter, the Mayor and leading members of Stratford society would take to the water to capture and mark the swans on the Avon. They would assemble at Bridgefoot or the Unicorn dock then row along the river, starting from Lucy's Mill as far as Tiddington in search of the birds.

By the 1890s the tradition had died out.....until this year, that is, when Avon Boating's Nick Birch decided it was time to bring it back.

Saturday's resurrection of the historic event wasn't just aimed at counting the swans but also helping teach people more about the beautiful birds and raise money for the charities that help care for them.

The Mayor was joined by: John and Jan Harrigan from Wychbold Swan Rescue; swan aficionados Cyril and Roxanne Bennis; Maureen Beckett from Geesepeace; Karen Williams from Escape Arts; and Nick Birch from Avon Boating, who supplied the boat.

In all the team counted 75 swans on the river, including four signets, with one female still nesting. One swan was returned to the river by Mr Harrigan, who also caught two more which looked likely to need treatment at the **Wychbold Swan Rescue's sanctuary near Droitwich.**

In keeping with the centuries-old tradition - which would end with a large picnic on the river bank - tea and cakes were served under the marquee on Avon Boating's riverside lawn, where Escape Arts supplied materials to help children make their own versions of the elegant birds.

Saturday's event raised nearly £200 to help look after Stratford's swans, and Mr Birch now plans to make it a regular event.

He said:

"This was a tentative step to see how we could do it this year and the Mayor agreed that it would be great to have it as an annual event. Next year what we're hoping is to make it an official civic ceremony with even more events on the riverside after the counting. "



Photos courtesy of Avon Boating

LAST CHANCE TO WELCOME SHAKESPEARE HOME

Don't forget.....the competition to design a housewarming card for **Shakespeare's New Place** closes this weekend.

Stratford businesses, staff, families and friends still have time to take part in the competition - being run to mark the re-opening of the historic site in Chapel Street on 1 July.

The multi-million pound revamp by The Shakespeare's Birthplace Trust is one of the highlights of **this year's Shakespeare 400th anniversary** celebrations.

The house was William Shakespeare's family home from 1597 until he died in the house in 1616 and it is thought he wrote several of his later plays, including The Tempest, there.

It was demolished in 1759, but when the popular tourist destination **reopens visitors will be able to follow in Shakespeare's footsteps** through a new entrance, on the site of the original gatehouse. Then through commissioned artworks and displays throughout the site it is hoped to evoke a sense of family life and a connection to **Shakespeare's major works written during the 19 years he lived there.**

The housewarming card competition closes on Sunday (12 June). Prizes include Annual Family Passes for the Shakespeare Family Homes and Shakespeare goodies..... and shortlisted entries will form part of an exhibition at the site.

The contest is divided into three categories: Under 11; 12 to 16; and over 16. Designs for the card - A5 portrait - can be submitted via email to competition@shakespeare.org.uk or by post to New Place Competition, Marketing, The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, Henley Street, Stratford upon Avon CV37 6QW. Please include your name, age, email address and telephone number.



MOONLIGHT WALK A GLOWING SUCCESS

Around 300 walkers who took part in the Shakespeare Hospice's Let It Glow Moonlit Walk on Saturday.

The late-night walk around Stratford town centre is expected to raise around £14,000.

As part of the event, walkers completed five or ten kilometres, each paying £10 to take part (£5 for children). On top of that, they were asked to raise a minimum of £20.16 each to mark this year being **Shakespeare's 400th anniversary year.**



Congratulations to Ian from Stratford-upon-Avon who won £5 in the weekly Geotask draw.

Visit www.geotask.co.uk for more information or to register for the draw.

FATHER'S DAY - 19 JUNE - NO JOKE!

Here's one way of attracting attention to your business.....

The Lamplighter on Rother Street is keeping drinkers and tourists entertained with its imaginative chalk board jokes.

This week was a price list for its 'Wives' Answerphone Service', from 50p for a 'not seen him all day' to £2.50 for 'don't know who he is love'.

Manager Linzi Toon said: "We do this every week, we've always got people taking photos and it's gone on Facebook quite a lot.

"We have all the tourists taking photos every day and we have one lady who comes in and she laughs her socks off about it.

"We did one for Shakespeare's Birthday saying, 'Shakespeare used to drink here but he's bard' and that went down well too."

The Lamplighter's wives' answerphone service might come in useful in the run-up to Father's Day on June 19 if dad wants to be a bit elusive.

The pub will be open as normal and is likely to organise a barbecue which it does most years.



Dates for your diary!

10th June to 10th July - Euro Championships

10th & 11th June - Stratford Beer Festival

11th & 12th June - Queens 90th Birthday

14th June - Stratford Races

16th June - Avivia Cycle Tour

18th June - Stratford Regatta

19th June - Father's Day

25th June - Armed Forces Day



25th June - Escape Arts Exhibition Launch

27th June to 10th July - Wimbledon

28th June - Stratford Races

1st July - Reopening of New Place

2nd & 3rd July - River Festival

23rd July - Warwickshire Summer Holidays

24th July—Lions Raft Race

Stratforward wants to hear from any Stratford businesses
planning special events for Father's Day.

Get in touch with your plans.



A Party to Celebrate the 90th Birthday of
Queen Elizabeth II

*Saturday, June 11th with High Tea and Live Music 1.00 - 4.00pm.
We will also be having 'Family Fun' activities from 11.00am - 12.30pm
with Royal hobby-horse making & the Horse Guards' Parade at 12.45pm.
(£4 charity donation towards the cost of refreshments and craft activities.)*

Dress code: Fancy Hats  *Everyone welcome!*

The Old Slaughterhouse, The Yard, Sheep Street, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6EE

