



STRAT > FORWARD

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

NEWSLETTER



Issue 50: 20th December 2017

STRATFORD BUSINESSES PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS FOR CHRISTMAS WINDOW COMPETITION

Stratford's businesses showed off their festive flair with an array of stunning displays for the annual Christmas Window Competition.

From polar bear snow scenes to a 'traditional cycle shop creation', peacock-inspired decorations and colourful creations, retailers and restaurants alike pulled out all the stops to bring a bit of Christmas spirit to their windows.

The annual contest, organised by Stratforward BID (Business Improvement District), involves all businesses in Stratford town centre with street-facing windows, who are automatically entered.

This year's theme was simply 'Christmas' and the competition was split into two categories - Independent and National - with judging criteria taking in 'creativity', 'engagement', 'experience' and 'impact and visual appeal'. Judges included Stratforward Events Manager Ruth Wood and Roy Lodge from the Stratford-upon-Avon Christmas Lights Company.

The winner of the Independent category was one of Stratford's newest businesses, award-winning hairdressers Nashwhite, which impressed the judging panel with a snow scene starring a local Pashley bicycle in its Sheep Street salon.

The salon, which opened on November 14th, is the latest addition to local hair company Nashwhite.

Owners Lee Nash-Jones and Rob White feel that paying attention and detail to their clients experience should include the environment they spend their time in and as well as their stunning Christmas window display, the space has been created with bespoke furniture throughout.

Rob said: "It was such an amazing surprise and honour to hear that we had won the Christmas Window Competition in our first year trading in Stratford. We wanted to bring a little Christmas magic to the town and think our collaboration with fellow traders 'The Traditional Cycle Shop' has done just this."



(Continued on page 2)

In this issue

- Christmas Window Competition
- Last Christmas Market
- Happy Christmas from Stratforward
- Stratford Top 10 Best Place to live
- Stratford Gallery Re-opens
- Shakespeare's Schoolroom Sign
- Independent Shop Award Winners
- Diary Dates

(Continued from page 1)

A close second with a 'Highly Commended' from the judges was The Salon on Henley Street with a polar bear snow scene while fellow Henley Street business, ladies clothing specialists Domino, created a "chic" peacock and gold-coloured display.

A special mention from the judges also went to Barry the Butcher with a dazzling ceiling display of tinsel.

The winner of the 'National' category was Bridge Street's Jo Malone, with an eye-catching colourful fun display.

Boutique Manager Lenka Sobotkova said: "Jo Malone London are delighted to have won this coveted award and thank Stratforward and the Christmas Lights Company for their recognition of our Crazy, Colourful Christmas window."



The Christmas Window Competition is just one part of 'Christmas upon Avon', which showcases Stratford-upon-Avon as the perfect place to visit over the festive season.

From the successful Victorian Market, which brought a 91% increase in footfall to the town on Saturday, December 9th, to Thursday evening markets and a glossy brochure showing off an array of local businesses, Christmas-upon-Avon helps put Stratford on the map as the perfect place to come for festive fun, gift shopping and all the magic of Christmas.

Stratforward events manager Ruth Wood said: "This year's Christmas Window Competition was a hard-fought contest. The Independent shops shone through and we were delighted by the effort and creativity of Stratford's shops."

"This is just part of our work to make Stratford a must-visit destination over the Christmas period."

LAST THURSDAY FESTIVE MARKET SET FOR SUCCESS

Tomorrow (Thursday) is the last of Stratford's successful Christmas markets.

The late-night markets, which moved to Bridge Street after feedback from businesses, are part of the great Christmas offering in Stratford.

Open from 10am to 8pm, they bring a range of stalls selling seasonal gifts, crafts, handmade and homemade items, fine foods, artwork, jewellery, seasonal accessories, vintage, fairtrade and ethnic products. There's also a selection of hot and cold alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks with entertainment including a live statue and walkabout characters such as 'Snowballs' the market Snowman.



Photo courtesy of LSD Promotions

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM STRATFORWARD

We'd like to wish a Merry Christmas to all of our members and thank you for your support, involvement and enthusiasm over what has been a great 2017 for Stratford's businesses.

The year began with a bumper crop of awards for BID members at the Touch FM Pride of Stratford Awards, including our very own Town Hosts, who scooped the Customer Care Award, and BID members followed up the success later in the year, taking home a haul of gongs at the Stratford upon Avon Online awards.

We ran our first online fashion campaign this year, beaming stunning images of 14 retailers and their staff across social media to showcase Stratford's independent shops as well as big-name brands.



Our festivals were as popular as ever, with the fifth annual Stratford Festival of Motoring featuring more than 300 cars on show throughout the town's streets, followed by the River Festival which saw footfall figures smash previous records, bringing 70 000+ people into Stratford over the weekend for live music, food and drink, stalls and plenty of fun and games. And let's not forget the Stratford Town Centre Food Festival, sponsored by Loxley's Restaurant & Wine Bar, which brought foodies from across the region to the town, attracting more than 60,000 visitors over the weekend.

This year also saw the launch of our Members' Benefits Scheme with Meercat, which is on course to save our members thousands of pounds. We're still encouraging people to look at this to take advantage of potential savings so if you haven't, you'll be able to pick up on this in the New Year.



And finally, it's been a great run-up to the end of the year with Christmas-upon-Avon. The town's first Victorian Market proved a great success with positive feedback, while the late-night Thursday shopping markets and the Christmas brochure have reminded people that Stratford is a great destination for everyone's festive needs.

It's been a good year but we know there's always more to do. We look forward to working with you all in 2018 to champion Stratford and all of its great businesses.

To all our BID members, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. We look forward to seeing you very soon!



STRATFORD IN TOP 10 PLACES TO LIVE IN THE UK

Stratford has been named as the 10th best place to live in the UK.

The town was included in a list of the 50 best places to live in the UK according to the Halifax Quality of Life Survey, coming in at an impressive number 10.

The survey, which saw Hart in North East Hampshire crowned the UK's best place to live, takes into account factors such as residents' health and life expectancy, wellbeing, earnings, employment, crime rates and weather.

Hart was followed by The Orkney Islands in Scotland in second place and Rutland in the East Midlands in third.

STRATFORD GALLERY REOPENING IN NEW HOME

One of Stratford's galleries has expanded into larger premises following the closure of Bards Walk.



Castle Fine Art has moved to a state-of-the-art outlet on Wood Street - the same address where it originally opened more than 20 years ago - and is set to open to the public on Saturday, December 30th.

Boasting 2000 square feet of prime retail space, the building has undergone six weeks of renovation work to offer the ultimate experience for visitors.

A bespoke lighting system has been put in place to complement the wide range of art on display, which includes work by artists including Bob Dylan, Ronnie Wood and Raphael Mazzucco.

The gallery will continue to be managed by Jason Lawson, who has worked for the company since it was first established, and it joins Castle Fine Art's portfolio of 36 galleries across the UK. Enjoying more than two decades at the top of its industry, Castle Fine Art is part of the Halcyon Group, one of the largest and most prestigious art groups in the world. Since it opened its first retail outlet in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1995, the company has succeeded in making fine art more accessible, bringing the art world's contemporary talents to the high street.

Consistently produced to the highest quality, every piece of art hanging on Castle Fine Art's walls is made by Washington Green, the UK's leading fine art publisher.

Ian Weatherby-Blythe, group managing director of Castle Fine Art and Washington Green, said: "Our gallery on Wood Street was the first site that we opened, so it's hugely coincidental that we have found ourselves moving back to the same location to open our brand new gallery.

"The old gallery was always extremely popular and we eventually outgrew the space, so the closure of Bards Walk presented a great opportunity for us to open an impressive new outlet. We look forward to welcoming customers to the gallery to enjoy the exciting programme of exhibitions and events that will be taking place year round."

Jason Lawson, gallery manager at Castle Fine Art's brand new Stratford gallery, said: "I'm extremely excited to be moving to the new site on Wood Street. The larger space will allow us to house even more work by some of the best artists in the industry and the impressive layout and design will make for a fantastic experience for both visitors and staff."



NEW SIGN FOR SHAKESPEARE'S SCHOOLROOM

Shakespeare's Schoolroom & Guildhall has unveiled a new sign on the side of its medieval building, representing its fascinating history.

The locally-designed and forged ironwork was the work of Master Restorer and Cabinetmaker Tim Ross-Bain, who has played a key role in the restoration of the Schoolroom, including the creation of benches and other decorative wooden forms.

The design features several significant elements connected to the history of the building, including the symbol of the Tudor Rose, the Guild cross, an image of William Shakespeare and a hand holding a quill.

Lindsey Armstrong, General Manager for Shakespeare's Schoolroom & Guildhall, says: "Tim Ross-Bain's sign is the finishing touch for Shakespeare's Schoolroom & Guildhall, with the majority of the restoration work having been carried out in 2016.

"And what a finishing touch it is, Tim has created a beautiful piece of artwork and craftsmanship that is a fitting tribute to this historic building."

Nadhim Zahawi's Independent Shop Awards 2017

Congratulations to all of our members who flew the flag for independent businesses in Nadhim Zahawi's Independent Shop Awards.

The Stratford MP's awards champion independent businesses across six categories and culminated with an awards ceremony at the RSC's The Other Place last Friday evening (December 15th).

Nearly 3,000 nominations were received in total with winners and two runners-up from each category chosen from the top five by an independent judging panel.

Our BID members scooped some of the awards, with The Arden Hotel, Box Brownie, Salt and The Stratford Alehouse winning Best Independent Hotel/B&B, Best Independent Cafe, Best Independent Restaurant and Best Independent Pub respectively. Barry the Butcher came second in the 'Best Independent Shop' category.



Mr Zahawi said: "It was a pleasure to host so many of the winners, runners-up, and nominees at The Other Place on Friday. As I have said before, I am always delighted to see the wide range of businesses my constituency has to offer and congratulate those who have been deemed the best by the public and an independent judging panel.

"I want to congratulate again all of this year's winners and runners-up for the sterling service they evidently provide for their customers".

Dates for your diary!

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

December

Now until 24th Feb	Twelfth Night, RSC
Now until 24th Dec	Father Christmas at Magic Alley
Now until 4th Feb	A Christmas Carol, RSC - a few tickets are still available
Now until 10th Feb	Imperium parts I & II at the Swan Theatre
14th - 7th Jan	Cinderella, The Attic Theatre
21st	Christmas Market on Bridge Street
22nd - 30th	Jack & the Beanstalk, Stratford Artshouse
25th	Bank Holiday - Christmas Day
25th	Christmas Day Town Walk 10.30am from the Swan Fountain
26th	Bank Holiday - Boxing Day

January

1st	Bank Holiday - New Years Day
3rd	River Festival 2108 trader application's open
4th to 6th	Tales of 1001 Nights at Magic Alley
10th	Stratford Jazz @ Stratford Artshouse
11th to 13th	Tales of 1001 Nights at Magic Alley
18th	Embrace @ The Artshouse supporting The Shakespeare Hospice
25th	Burns Night

February

9th	Touch FM Pride of Stratford Awards
14th	Valentines Day



6th & 7th May 2018

www.stratfordfestivalofmotoring.co.uk



30th June & 1st July 2018

www.stratfordriverfestival.co.uk



22nd & 23rd September 2018

www.stratfordtowncentrefoodfestival.co.uk

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

Stratforward 10-11 Sheep Street Stratford-upon-Avon	Main Line Joseph & Sandi 01789 292718	Events & Finance Ruth, Tor & Pauline 01789 299011	Town Hosts 07879 361735	info@stratforward.co.uk Visit us on the web at www.stratforward.co.uk
--	--	--	-----------------------------------	--