

PROGRAMME of the 2008 SHAKESPEARE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS at STRATFORD-upon-AVON

Thursday 10 April – Friday 27 June

9.00am–5.00pm **Shakespeare's Flowers: an Exhibition of Calligraphy by the Oxford Scribes:** work Monday-Friday inspired by quotations from Shakespeare. The Shakespeare Centre Reception. Admission free.

Wednesday 23 April

Wednesday 23 April to Saturday 26 April: The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Stratford Public Library present: '**Post-a-Poem for Shakespeare**'. Poems by school students are published by being displayed on the railings of Shakespeare's Birthplace from 23-26 April: 'Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love.'

11.00 am **Stratford Town Walk.** Duration 1½ - 2 hours. Meet by Swan Fountain, Waterside. Adults £5, Over 65s & Students £4, Children £2. Also every Mon, Tues, at 1100

12.00 pm **Stratford Schools Shakespeare Lecture.** *Why Study Shakespeare* by Dr Paul Edmondson

6.30 pm **Waterstone's Bookshop.** Book Launch *History of King Edward VI School* with Michael Wood. Further information: 01789 203104

Thursday 24 April

2.00 pm **Stratford Town Walk.** For details see Wednesday

7.30 pm **Stratford Town Ghost Walk.** Duration 1½ hours. Must be booked in advance: 01789 292478 or 07855 760377. Also on Mondays

8.00 pm **Holy Trinity Church, Old Town. Organ Recital by Katherine Dienes,** organist at Guildford Cathedral. Tickets £8, concessions £6, children in full time education free

Friday 25 April

2.00 pm **Stratford Town Walk.** For details see Wednesday

3.00 pm Unveiling of statue of The Winter's Tale (sculpted by Greg Wyatt) in Great Garden of New Place

4.00 pm **Birthday Lecture: Janet Suzman** in conversation with Dr Paul Edmondson. The Shakespeare Institute, Church Street. Stratford-upon-Avon. Tickets £5, available from the Institute 0121 414 9500 or Birthplace Bookshop 01789 201820

5.30 pm **Beating Retreat** by the **Band of the Corps of Royal Engineers** in Henley Street. A concert by one of the best marching brass bands in the world

6.30 pm **Civic Reception** and cocktail party (by invitation) at the Town Hall hosted by the Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon, **Councillor Mrs Donna Barker.**

7.30 pm **Candlelit tour of the Birthplace** for International Visitors following above Reception (Invitation only)

7.30 pm **Stratford Town Ghost Walk.** For details see Wednesday

8.30 pm **The Shakes Comedy Club** at Shakesperience. Further information 01789 293678 or visit www.shakesperience.co.uk

Saturday 26 April

9.00am–4.00pm **Shakespeare's Flowers: an Exhibition of Calligraphy by the Oxford Scribes:** work inspired by quotations from Shakespeare, in the Shakespeare Centre. Admission free.

9.45 am **Reception** (by invitation) and assembly of distinguished guests at the Town Hall hosted by the President of the Shakespeare Birthday Celebrations, **Sir Donald Sinden.**

10.00 am to In Henley Street:

10.50 am **English folk dancing by children** of the Stratford area, organised by **The Willows School**
The Shakespeare Morris Men

10.00 am to In the streets:

- 11.10 am **The Band of the Corps of Royal Engineers** plays in Bridge Street
Strolling players, circus performers and musicians in costume entertain the crowds.
Shakespeare Live (groups of travelling players) moving through the streets with scenes from Shakespeare's plays.
- 10.40 am Distinguished guests leave the Town Hall to be marshalled in the Great Garden of New Place, in Chapel Lane, for the procession.
- 10.45 am Children in the processions assemble outside Birthplace
- 10.55 am The formal procession moves from Chapel Lane via Waterside, passing the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and banners for the Shakespearean plays in the 2008 repertoire, into Bridge Street
- 11.00 am Children in procession move to Market Cross to take up position
The Scouts and Guides will march up Bridge Street to celebrate St. George's Day and will take their places at the flag stations.
- 11.15 am **Ceremony of unfurling** flags together with the banners for the works in the Shakespeare canon takes place in Bridge Street, Henley Street, High Street and Union Street. Unfurling is signalled by a roll of drums followed by the fanfare composed by Guy Woolfenden played by the **Band of the Corps of Royal Engineers**. Immediately following the unfurling of the flags, the National Anthem is played.
- 11.20 am to 11.45 am The procession then reforms behind the **Band** and moves off to pass through the garden of Shakespeare's Birthplace, then via the Visitors' Centre where pupils from the Stratford High School and the Girls' Grammar School are assembled, to reform in Henley Street
- The Shakespeare Morris Men** entertain the crowds in Bridge Street
- 11.30 am to 12.30 pm **Shakespeare Live** present scenes from (and about) Shakespeare in Bridge Street;
Strolling players, circus performers and musicians in costume entertain the crowds in the streets.
- 11.35 am approx. When the main procession clears Bridge Street, parties of school children from Stratford primary schools, assembled at the head of Union Street, form into a procession behind the **Evesham Celebration Reed & Brass Band**, and move via High Street, Church Street and Old Town to Holy Trinity Church where the children line the nave of the church.
- 11.45 am The main procession, reforms in Henley Street, and walks the same route to Holy Trinity Church for the laying of floral tributes on the dramatist's grave. By tradition boys of Shakespeare's school (King Edward VI Grammar School) take up the lead as the main procession nears the school, and lay their floral tributes first.
- 11.50 pm approx. As soon as the main procession is clear, the follow-on procession forms in Henley Street behind the **City of Coventry Corps of Drums**. Groups and members of the public wishing to participate join in behind to follow the procession route to the church and lay floral tributes. The **Shakespeare Morris Men** bring up the rear of this procession.
- 12 noon to 3.30 pm **Reception** (ticket only) followed by Luncheon in the Birthday Pavilion on Avonbank at which **The Pragnell Shakespeare Birthday Award**, for outstanding achievement in extending the appreciation and enjoyment of Shakespeare's works will be presented to (**name embargoed** until mid-February). The toast to *The Immortal Memory of Shakespeare* will be proposed by **Yasmin Alibhai-Brown**, journalist & writer, and the toast to *The Theatre* by **to be announced**.
- 1.30 pm to 4.00 pm Strolling players, circus performers and musicians in costume entertain in the streets including Sheep Street, Henley Street, the Great Garden of New Place, the Theatre Gardens and near Holy Trinity Church. **The Shakespeare Morris Men** and many other troupes perform around

- the town. It is hoped to stage all the *Shakespeare Live* scenes from Shakespeare's plays near the Theatre and in Henley Street.
- 2.00 pm **Stratford Town Walk.** For details see Thursday
- 2.00 pm to 3.00 pm In Henley Street and various venues in the town: the **Stratford-upon-Avon Wind Band, Shakespeare Live and continuing and street entertainment**

Birthday Evening Entertainment

- 7.00 pm **Stratford Ghost Cruise.** Board at 7pm, sail at 7.30pm. Duration 1½ hours. Must book in advance: 01789 292478 or 07855 76-377
- 7.15 pm **Birthday performance of *The Taming of the Shrew*** at the Courtyard Theatre.

Sunday 27 April

- 0930 am **27th Rotary Shakespeare Marathon and Half Marathon.** Waterside start. Website: www.shakespearemarathon.org.uk contains all details. Correspondence: The Race Director, PO Box 3539, Stratford upon Avon CV37 7WQ. Email: info@shakespearemarathon.org.uk
- 9.30 am **Reception in Town Hall** for (by invitation) distinguished guests. Followed by:
10.30 am **Civic procession** (by invitation) with guests from Town Hall to Holy Trinity Church
11.00 am **Annual Shakespeare Service** in Holy Trinity Church. Sermon to be preached by Dr Paula Byrne.
- from 1.00 **Royal Shakespeare Company events** in the Birthday Pavilion. Details To Be Confirmed
- 2.00 pm **Stratford Town Walk.** For details see Thursday

Coming up:

- April 30 – May 3** **Stratford-upon-Avon Literary Festival** with Andrew Davies, Clarissa Dickson-Wright, Jodie Picoult.
- May 2-5** **Spring Sounds.** Orchestra of the Swan, with David Curtis, Tasmin Little, Martin Roscoe, Sarah Williamson, Viv MacLean, The Academy of St Martin in the Fields.

For further information:

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