



## **A Wiltshire Christmas**

Christmas in Wiltshire is a very special time, with a wealth of festive celebrations and activities for groups to enjoy. From mid-November onwards, as the Christmas lights are switched on around the county, our towns and villages receive an extra sprinkling of Christmas magic.

As well as late night shopping and the chance to meet Father Christmas and his reindeer, no Wiltshire Christmas would be complete without a generous helping of Christmas tree festivals, lantern parades, Christmas craft workshops, carol concerts, nativity plays, traditional pantomimes, Christmas lunches and – last, but not least – lashings of mulled wine and mince pies!

We have picked out a few Christmas highlights of particular interest to groups – for further details plus a huge array of other seasonal events please visit [www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/whats-on)

**Salisbury Christmas Market** will be open from 23 November to 22 December 2017. New this year will be the introduction of Artisan Row. It will feature 26 German-style wooden kiosks which will line the High Street and create a magical festive walkway solely dedicated to the best handmade products, from preserves and handcrafted delicacies to beautiful jewellery and lovingly made homewares. Salisbury Christmas Market welcomes groups of all sizes. For coaches please pre-book online [here](#).

**McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Swindon's** Christmas event launches on Saturday 11 November with indoor Christmas gift stalls and 'snowfall' throughout the day. Pre-book your group to receive a group pack including a 10% discount card and £5 gift card lunch voucher for coach drivers.

**Longleat's Christmas Festival of Light** theme for 2017 will be the magic of storytelling. Visitors will see the iconic Wiltshire estate transported to a whimsical fairy tale land of imagination, through a series of giant and awe-inspiring illuminated lantern displays. Walk among dazzling scenes of cherished tales including Cinderella, Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood, Rapunzel and many more. Great rates for groups of 12+. Open Fridays to Sundays from 10 November and daily from 1 December - 2 January (excluding Christmas Day). To pre-book contact [groups@longleat.co.uk](mailto:groups@longleat.co.uk)

The Made In **Bradford On Avon** Christmas Gift Fair will take place at St Margaret's Hall on Saturday 16 December. This voluntary event, run by local artists and makers, will offer visitors an array of work to purchase at the gallery. They are also happy to share ideas, resources and local knowledge.

A number of National Trust properties also join in the festive celebrations. From Saturday 25 November to Sunday 17 December, **Mompesson House** will be decorated for Christmas. Each room will have a different theme, focusing on a different period of history and the characters who lived at Mompesson at that time from, including the Georgian period in the large drawing room, and the Victorian era in the small drawing room. There will be mince pies and mulled wine in the garden tea room, and a festive trail for children.

The garden at **Stourhead** is open all year, but from late November until the third week in December, Stourhead House will open a selection of ornately decorated rooms showing how the Hoare family celebrated Christmas through the ages. Two- or three-course lunches can be pre-booked for groups.

**Avebury Stone Circle and Avebury Manor and Garden** are taking visitors back in time to see how people celebrated Christmas's past in Avebury Manor. 'Christmas Through the Ages' (preview event) is on 22 November (£8 with hot drink and mince pie) and also on 18, 19 and 20 December

(£15 with cream tea). Booking essential. There is also a Music, Lights and Merriment Christmas fair event on 9 December.

[Lacock Abbey, Village and Fox Talbot Museum](#) are inviting visitors to celebrate Christmas in the beautiful, historic abbey with their annual Christmas tree festival in the medieval cloister, a pop up Christmas shop, a festive trail around the village and grounds, and opportunities to meet Father Christmas this December. Of the abbey rooms, only the Great Hall with its impressive Christmas tree and traditional decorations will be open in December, Thursday - Sunday.

[Salisbury Cathedral's](#) famous Advent Procession **From Darkness to Light** takes place on Saturday 2 and Sunday 3 December. Starting with a single candle at the West end, the procession makes its way around the Cathedral, lighting candles as it goes until the medieval building is ablaze with nearly 2,000 candles. Or join the Cathedral choir for one of their special **Carol Services for Groups** on Tuesday 12 and Wednesday 13 December – sing along to your favourite tunes, then enjoy a glass of mulled wine and a mince pie afterwards in the Cloisters. Pre-booking is essential.

[Wyvern Theatre's](#) ever-popular annual pantomime takes to the stage from Saturday 2 – Sunday 31 December. This year it stars Adam Woodyatt as Captain Hook in the swashbuckling adventures of Peter Pan. Special group rates are available and the Wyvern also hosts a selection of festive hospitality events.

Why not shop till you drop with a fabulous array of gift shops available in [Salisbury](#) and at the nearby [Britford Farm Shop](#) where you can indulge in an array of high-class, homemade cakes, ice creams and chocolates. Alternatively, for a truly different type of gift, check out all the amazing activities that Marlborough College Summer School can offer and purchase gift vouchers for 2018 [here](#).

There is plenty of group-friendly accommodation, check out [Sarum College](#), [The Cathedral Hotel](#) and [Holiday Inn Salisbury-Stonehenge](#) in the south of the county, [Best Western Mayfield House Hotel](#) near Malmesbury and [Alexandra House Hotel](#) near Swindon.

[Discover Wiltshire](#) are offering Christmas packages featuring Longleat and Salisbury Christmas Market. Please visit the ['Book a Wiltshire'](#) Tour page for special group packages.

When planning your visit don't forget to check out the great group benefits, coach parking, itineraries and so much more – visit [www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/groups](http://www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/groups).

**For further information or to arrange a press visit please contact Florence Wallace, Travel Trade & PR Manager, [flowallace@visitwiltshire.co.uk](mailto:flowallace@visitwiltshire.co.uk) Tel: 01722 341309 or 07436 588860**

### **Notes to editors:**

*VisitWiltshire is the official Destination Management & Marketing Organisation for Wiltshire representing 600 partners. It is a public/private sector membership organisation with our main funder being Wiltshire Council. VisitWiltshire's priority is to grow the county's Visitor Economy by raising awareness of the destination and generating additional tourism visits and spend. Wiltshire's Visitor Economy currently generates an estimated £1.5billion and supports over 29,000 jobs.*

Images from our **Christmas** albums can be downloaded from our Flickr gallery via this link - <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/1v3esk>. Photos may be used in print and/or online for the promotion of tourism to Wiltshire and any photos used must be credited to [www.visitwiltshire.co.uk](http://www.visitwiltshire.co.uk), unless otherwise stated in the title of the photo. Full terms and conditions can be found [here](#).