



Information for media

TIMELESS WILTSHIRE: NEW FOR 2017

Shrouded in mystery, steeped in legend, Wiltshire has been a special place for a very long time. Its strong connection with the past makes it the perfect place to enjoy the present. The World Heritage Site of [Stonehenge](#) and [Avebury](#) has a magnetism that has drawn people to it for centuries, so let time stand still and enjoy the beauty of our ancient landscape.

The county offers a wide range of accommodation, award-winning restaurants, pubs and cafés plus major attractions, events, arts, culture and entertainment, all are at the heart of a Wiltshire experience. All this, yet only an hour and a half, or less, from London

Wiltshire is timeless wonders, timeless places, timeless pleasures and timeless nature. Now it's your time to come and see for yourself. It's time to write your chapter in Wiltshire's never ending story.

Exciting New Project

The Great West Way will be a new long distance touring route between London and Bristol, with approximately a quarter of the route in Wiltshire. See the recent press release – [VisitWiltshire secures Discover England Funding to Develop a New Touring Route – The Great West Way.](#)

New Attractions

[REME Museum](#), based in Lyneham, the REME Museum displays the proud history of the Corps of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. The Museum's unique collection includes an extensive weapons display, historic repair and recovery vehicles, uniforms, medals, tools and test equipment. The collection is enhanced by interactive and immersive displays and will be running a programme of events and temporary exhibitions alongside the main collection. Opening spring 2017 – in time to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the REME Corps.

[Hillbrush](#), Norwood Park, Mere, is soon to become a brand new, state-of-the-art manufacturing facility with a purpose built Visitor Centre, café and shop. Opening 2017.

New Escape Room opening December 2016 – [Live Escape Salisbury](#) is an interactive team game where you must escape a locked room in 60 minutes by solving puzzles that will test you to the limits!

[Text Quest](#) – a newly opened, unusual visitor experience. Visitors receive 21 clues with directions, as they are taken around the charming medieval city of Salisbury. It takes two hours to complete and costs £16 per team with texts being sent to up to 4 phones.

New or Quirky Accommodation

[Buttle Farm](#), Compton Bassett has two new luxury barn conversions which can be combined to offer self-catering accommodation for up to 8 people. This is situated on a rare breed, free range native British pig farm where they make a range of award-winning charcuterie including bacon, salami and air dried ham – all in a converted barn on the farm. This meat is sold to leading Michelin-starred restaurants as well as direct to the consumer via mail order.

[Manor Farm Cottage](#), near Salisbury have recently opened a new contemporary luxury single story barn conversion with a romantic spacious bedroom, designer wetroom and stunning rural views. The Calf Shed is fully accessible and is being marketed specifically to visitors with limited mobility, recuperation and respite as a peaceful retreat.

[Mill Farm Glamping](#) will be opening a new treehouse to sleep 6 people at their luxury glamping site near Devizes.

Have you always wanted to be Lord of a Manor? Then why not holiday in Wiltshire and stay in a Grade II Listed Mansion:

[King John's House](#), Tollard Royal, is set in superb grounds on the Rushmore Estate within Cranborne Chase. This extraordinary historic mansion is deeply atmospheric and contains many fine examples of period features including a medieval entrance hall, and guests can dine in style in the Tudor panelled dining room. Sleeps 15 people and exclusive use hire of the whole house is available from £2,991 per week.

[Prince Hill House](#) in Worton, dating from the 1640s, is of considerable architectural and historical interest, as it is believed to have played host to Prince Rupert when he fought on the side of the Royalists during the Battle of Bristol. Sleeps 18 people which includes a penthouse apartment and carriage house. Prices range from £90 - £120 per room per night based on a two-night stay.

New Cookery School and Restaurant

[The Farm Cookery School](#) which has recently opened, is part of Netherstreet Farm, Bromham, an arable and beef farm set in 696 acres of beautiful Wiltshire countryside. The ethos of the school is to teach practical cooking for everyday life, offering courses for everyone aged 5+ including children's holiday courses and adult courses.

A new [Rick Stein](#) restaurant has recently opened in an attractive Grade II Listed building on Marlborough's historic high street.

New Specialist Tours and Exhibitions

The magnificent [Salisbury Cathedral & Magna Carta](#) home to the tallest spire in Britain and the best preserved original 1215 Magna Carta manuscript – is a masterpiece of medieval architecture. For the first time the Cathedral is opening up its 15th century Library for specialist tours. The Library contains over 10,000 books dating as far back as far as 9th century. Visitors will be shown a range of books specially selected to illustrate the variety and importance of this unique collection. Tours start at 2pm and last approximately 45 minutes and include a delicious cream tea. Tours are subject to availability. £210 per group (max 12) or £22 for individuals.

A variety of exhibitions will open in 2017 including one celebrating the 40th anniversary of the National Trust re-decorating, furnishing and opening [Mompesson House](#) to visitors (Sat 11 March-Sun 5 November); The 3rd Battle of Gaza and the advance to Jerusalem at [The Rifles Berkshire & Wiltshire Museum](#) (2017 dates tbc); British Art: Ancient Landscapes at [The Salisbury Museum](#) (Sat 8 April-Sun 3 September 2017).

Just over the Wiltshire border, Joyce Petschek: Breaking the Pattern at the [American Museum in Britain](#) (Sat 18 March-Sun 29 October); Lace and Fashion at the [Fashion Museum](#) in Bath (Sat 4 February 2017-Mon 1 January 2018); 'Recent Conflicts Exhibition' (2017) and 'Women's Royal Naval Service Exhibition' (2018) at the [Fleet Air Arm Museum](#).

There are many Wiltshire events happening in 2017. These are searchable by date and location, please visit www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/whats-on and keep checking back as more will be added throughout the year.

For further information visit www.visitwiltshire.co.uk

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

About VisitWiltshire

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.

Value for Tourism - Economic Impact Highlights 2015

- 2015 was another record year for Wiltshire tourism, the fourth record year in a row. Staying visits, visitor spend and economic impact are all at record levels.
- Wiltshire's visitor economy is worth £1.53bn (+4%) per annum and supports over 29,000 jobs.
- Tourism contributes £860m GVA per annum to Wiltshire's economy.
- Mainly driven by a reduction in the number of short-stay day visitors, the total number of visitors to Wiltshire in 2015 was down 1.5% to 19.6m visitors.
- Wiltshire attracted a record 1.84m staying visitors in 2015 (+5%), spending a record £368m (+4%).
- Total annual tourism business turnover and GVA have increased by 35% since 2011 to £1,530m and £860m respectively.
- Wiltshire's 17.7 million day visits generated £668m in day visitor expenditure.
- At similar levels to previous years:
 - UK staying visitors stay for an average of 2.7 nights, spending £175 per person per visit.
 - Overseas staying visitors stay for an average of 6.0 nights, spending £326 per person per visit.
 - Day visitors spend an average of £35.50 per person per visit.

Fun Facts

- Did you know another series of Poldark is being filmed this year at Great Chalfield Manor? Other filming includes The White Princess in Lacock and Bradford on Avon and Transformers at Stonehenge. Look out for Wiltshire on your TV/Cinema in 2017!
- Did you know that Wiltshire has a Grade II Listed Sticke tennis court at Hartham Park, Corsham?
- Did you know that the Wiltshire Cycleway, Regional Route 20, is 160 miles and takes in some of the county's most spectacular scenery? It's best to do in an anti-clockwise direction. There are also two National Cycle Routes passing through South Wiltshire, Numbers 24 and 45.
- In Cricklade, just off the high street, there is a sign that says "In 1832 on this spot nothing happened!"
- Wiltshire has some strange named places; Lover (pronounced Lowver), which is famous for its visits by romantics near Valentine's Day; New Zealand which can be found just off the A3102 south of Lyneham; and Tiddleywink, which is situated just outside Castle Combe.
- The Kennet & Avon Canal is a total of 87 miles and links London with the Bristol Channel. The Caen Hill Locks are a flight of 29 locks between Rowde and Devizes with a rise of 1 in 44 gradient or 237 feet in 2 miles.
- Did you know that Salisbury (in 2012) and Chippenham (in 2016) have been awarded purple flag status, meaning that they offer a 'gold standard' night life with lower crime and anti-social behaviour?
- Did you know that Stonehenge attracts over 1.3m people of year? The massive sarsen stones came from Marlborough, 20 miles away, the smaller bluestones from the Preseli Mountains of South Wales, a distance of almost 200 miles. They offer a limited number of stone circle access visits outside normal opening hours.

- Salisbury Cathedral is unusual in that it was built within a single century, has the tallest spire (123m/404ft), largest cloisters and largest cathedral close (80 acres) in Britain.
- The mound in Marlborough College grounds used to be known as Merlin's barrow and was supposedly where the wizard was buried. We now know that it dates from the same period as Silbury Hill between 4,500 and 4,000 years ago. The old outdoor swimming pool at the college was fed by an underground spring and once formed part of the Norman Castle's moat – it was freezing at any time of year!

Major Achievements, Awards and Investment in Wiltshire

Accommodation Investment

- New high end leisure operator working to secure planning permissions for a Wiltshire site to build new luxury self-catering holiday properties, as a direct result from VisitWiltshire accommodation study in 2014
- Brokerswood Country Park have had plans approved for a new luxury holiday park with 90 wooden lodges, 20 touring units and 10 campsites.

2016

- VisitWiltshire secures Discover England phase 1 funding to develop a new long distance touring route - The Great West Way.
- VisitWiltshire win TravelMole Best Tourist Board Website Award (Jan 2016)
- VisitWiltshire launches new drone videos which to date has reached around 800,000 people
- Salisbury Reds introduce brand new Stonehenge Tour buses with commentary in 10 different languages.
- Salisbury Cathedral were nominated in the 3rd annual LandLove Magazine Awards for Britain's favourite cathedral!
- Whatley Manor Hotel and Spa – Executive Chef Martin Burge retains second Michelin Star for the ninth consecutive year.
- Koh Thai Tapas, Asian restaurant in Salisbury voted as finalists for the Asian Curry Awards' Restaurant of the Year
- The Merchant's House awarded Coach Friendly Visitor Attraction status by CPT
- The Royal Oak at Swallowcliffe has been voted Newcomer of the Year Good Hotel Guide (for 2017)
- Salisbury's application successful to join the England's Heritage Cities consortium

2015

- VisitWiltshire puts South West England firmly on the map for international visitors, whilst leading on the travel trade strand of VisitEngland's South West Tourism Growth Fund.
- Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2015 recognised Salisbury as one of the Top 10 Cities in the World to visit.
- New Tourism website for Salisbury launched – www.visitsalisbury.co.uk
- VisitWiltshire wins English Tourism Social Media Index
- STEAM Museum of Great Western Railway's Kevin, shortlisted for VisitEngland's Tourism Superstar Award 2015.
- The International Magna Carta Press event run by VisitWiltshire with support from Salisbury BID, Salisbury City Council and Salisbury Cathedral secured in excess of £560k AVE and reached over 68 million people.
- VisitWiltshire develops its new Timeless brand positioning
- VisitWiltshire developed its new Wiltshire Association of Visitor Attractions (WAVA) group

2014

- VisitWiltshire hosted the GTOA annual conference in Swindon
- VisitWiltshire developed its Travel Trade group and expanded its activity
- Devizes and Salisbury secured coach friendly status with CPT
- The new Stonehenge Visitor Centre opened for its full visitor season (opened Dec 2013)