



WILTSHIRE'S HIGHLIGHTS **FOR 2018 AND BEYOND!**

It's an exciting time for visitors heading to Wiltshire in 2018 and beyond, with the new Great West Way project getting underway, new accommodation, attraction news, grant projects, exhibitions and events, Wiltshire on-screen, plus food and drink news. Come and experience Wiltshire to write your chapter in our never ending story of Timeless Pleasures, Timeless Places, Timeless Wonders and Timeless Nature.

Great West Way

VisitWiltshire are working to create one of the world's premier touring routes between London and Bristol. This is one of a number of successful projects made possible by HM Government's £40m Discover England Fund, administered by VisitEngland (www.discoverenglandfund.org).

The Great West Way follows a 125-mile route - a quarter of which is in Wiltshire - based on one of the first Great Roads commissioned by the Kings of England. It offers an extraordinary variety of English experiences not found in any other part of the country.

Visitors will be able to explore by road (coach and car), railway, waterway or by walking or cycling. It's for curious and inquisitive travelers. Those who like to go deeper, to see, feel, do, try and taste for themselves. It's for seekers searching for the real, authentic essence of England.

The Great West Way will promote a range of product themes reflecting the route's tourism assets including history and heritage, food and drink, countryside, film tourism, gardens and luxury tourism.

This new tourism route will be launched in March 2019. For information about the Great West Way project including Round 1 activity and the progress of Round 2 activity, please take a look at www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/greatwestway.

New Accommodation

[The Three Diggers](#), Westbury, is opening Hillside Cottage & Spa – a new 6 bedroom exclusive-use luxury house with outdoor steam room, sauna, hot tub, plunge pool, spa and treatment centre. This new facility is the perfect place for corporate meetings and events, family celebrations, weddings and holiday getaways.

The Calf Shed, providing new accessible accommodation designed in collaboration with spinal injury patients and part of [Manor Farm Cottages](#) in Salisbury, is a modern, stylish luxury retreat that can sleep up to 5 people.

[Highway Hill](#), in Calne, is a new development set in the rolling downland of the North Wessex Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It offers quirky accommodation in a haven of natural beauty and outdoor experiences with three shepherd's huts and two bell tents.

Looking beyond 2018, [Longleat's](#) plans to build a new 240 room hotel, with water park and business conference facilities on the edge of its Estate near Warminster have been approved by Wiltshire Council.

Attraction news - something a little different

The [REME Museum](#), Lyneham, is now fully open to the public and the recently opened [Visit Hillbrush](#) welcomes visitors to this unique family-run attraction.

[Salisbury Escape Rooms](#) have a new theme called CSI Salisbury – where visitors are assisting a police investigation into art thefts, money laundering etc.

[Salisbury Plain Horseback Safaris](#) run by Salisbury Plain Safaris, will be fully operational in 2018. A riding experience departing only on Saturdays for up to 4 people, begins with a briefing and short warm-up riding lesson, before heading out onto Salisbury Plain for a 2-hour accompanied hack.

[Lacock Abbey's](#) new theme for 2018 will be 'Women of Lacock', featuring four different key women and their influence on the village, with interpretation and events throughout the year. They have also just opened a new upmarket tea room.

[The Merchant's House](#) in Marlborough will be opening the Marlborough Museum in 2018, which will feature items reflecting the town's social history over the past several hundred years.

VisitWiltshire has recently launched a new online shop - www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/shop – making it quicker and easier than ever before for visitors to plan and book their visit to Wiltshire by purchasing tickets for a variety of Wiltshire attractions, events and activities.

Heritage Lottery Funded Grant Projects

We are delighted to report that a number of Wiltshire businesses have been successful in their Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) applications, which will benefit natural, industrial, archival and architectural heritage across the county.

[Kennet and Avon Canal Trust](#) has been awarded £559,300 and are set to carry out essential restoration and conservation work on the Grade I Listed Crofton Beam Engines and the buildings in which they are housed. Access, facilities and interpretation at the site near Marlborough will be transformed.

[Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) has been awarded £814,100 and will be purchasing 34.54ha of land, doubling the size of the Coombe Bissett Down nature reserve, and restoring it to chalk grassland which is so important for many species of butterflies and birds. In addition, [Langford Lakes](#) will be renovating an old site building into a new visitor centre and creating a new raised pond with accessible viewing area.

[Trowbridge Museum](#) has been awarded £1,172,500 and will be conserving Home Mill, the historic building, expanding its gallery space and creating new facilities for visitors including a lift and a library and learning space. Displays will be reimagined and the textile heritage of other buildings in the town will be told through a new app. The Museum will close in June 2018 and re-open May 2020.

Anniversaries, key events, festivals and exhibitions

2018 is the centenary of the end of the First World War, so a number of attractions will be celebrating this anniversary. The [American Museum in Britain](#) will have a First World War exhibition focusing on America's involvement and it also has a renovation project of their Mount Vernon Garden.

The [Stonehenge Summer Solstice Music Festival](#) (18–22 June) is celebrating its 10th year in 2018. This event celebrates the summer solstice in spiritual style and the site is walking distance from Stonehenge World Heritage Site. Overnight bookings can be made at [Stonehenge Campsite & Glamping Pods](#).

[Longleat](#) are opening a Killer Animatronics exhibition (24 March-31 October) where visitors can see the big, the beautiful and the sometimes bizarre world of predators come to life. Exhibits include an actual size great white shark and a super-sized venus flytrap. In addition, Longleat's other events include Food and Drink Festival (23–24 June), Sky Safari (14–16 September) and the ever-popular Christmas Festival of Lights (selected dates from 9 November).

[Salisbury Museum's](#) Terry Pratchett exhibition continues until 13 January 2018 and from 27 January–12 May they will be opening a major new exhibition, 'Brian Graham: Towards Music'.

Don't miss VisitWiltshire's top pick events for 2018:

[Swindon Festival of Literature](#) (1–13 May), [Downton Cuckoo Fair](#) (5 May), [Chippenham Folk Festival](#) (27–30 May), [Daily Mail Chalke Valley History Festival](#) (25 June–1 July), [Marlborough College Summer School](#) (8 July–4 August), [Malmesbury Carnival & Festival](#) (5 July–3 September), [Royal International Air Tattoo](#) (13–15 July), [Edington Music Festival](#) (19–26 August) and [Marlborough Literature Festival](#) (28 September–1 October).

[Salisbury Christmas Market's](#) winter wonderland, with its authentic German Market-style wooden chalets and festive events, will be expanding into the Cathedral Close and Market Square. Open on selected dates throughout November and December.

Wiltshire on Screen News

Wiltshire has taken centre stage in a whole host of big screen movies and TV costume dramas over recent years.

BBC's Poldark series has been filming around the county so be prepared to spot some familiar Wiltshire locations in 2018. Previous episodes included the market town of [Corsham](#) and [Great Chalfield Manor](#).

[Wilton House](#) will be featured in the new Tomb Raider film, due for release in 2018, and a new series of White Princess was filmed at [Lacock Abbey](#), previously filmed in Bradford on Avon.

Food and Drink News

VisitWiltshire will be producing a new food and drink handy fold-out map in February 2018. This will highlight Wiltshire's food and drink offer to visitors and will include businesses such as local producers, specialist food and drink shops, food markets, cafes, food and drink festivals and foodie experiences.

[The Farm Cookery School](#) will be running a new 'Taste Wiltshire' event on 9 September. This will be a celebration of food and drink producers in Wiltshire with stalls and cooking demonstrations.

[The Red Lion Freehouse](#) in East Chisenbury won 'Inn of the Year' according to The Independent's good Hotel Guide 2018. [The Bell at Ramsbury](#) won the 'Pub of the Year 2017/18' from the AA Hospitality Awards and [Fisherton Mill's Gallery Café](#) won 'Best Cheap Eats in the West' from the Observer Food Monthly Awards 2017.

Less than a year after joining [Whatley Manor Hotel & Spa](#), near Malmesbury, executive chef Niall Keating has been awarded a Michelin star for the Dining Room, in the Michelin UK & Ireland Guide 2018.

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

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.

Recent press releases and a VisitWiltshire Press Pack including ideas for features can be found at www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/media.

Images from the following albums can be downloaded from our Flickr gallery via the links below:

Timeless Places – <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/3T518Y>

Timeless Wonders – <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/WT23px>

Timeless Nature – <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/eeUQac>

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