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Coming up on the Great West Way

From boutique hotels to bears in the wood, find out what's new on the path of England's new 125-mile touring route between London and Bristol.

Accommodation news

In May 2019, the Marriott's 'Luxury Collection' launches **The Langley** in Buckinghamshire, a new five-star hotel in a magnificent country manor house on the former estate of the third Duke of Marlborough. Set in a former royal hunting ground designed by Capability Brown, the luxury hotel will offer 41 rooms and suites and a world-class Langley Spa and wellness centre, complete with indoor and outdoor pools, thermal area and a fitness suite designed by celebrity trainer, Matt Roberts. Between Uxbridge and Slough (10 minutes) and close to Heathrow Airport (20 minutes). The Langley will be the perfect gateway to the Great West Way.

In Bristol, arty micro chain **Artist Residence** is due to open its fifth boutique hotel in May 2019. In a former boot factory in Portland Square close to the city centre, the new hotel will adopt the Artists Residence style – a bohemian fusion of art, design and vintage – with 28 bedrooms, a café and bar and events space. Its older sister hotels are in Brighton, Pimlico, Penzance and rural Oxfordshire.

Eight in Bath is Bath's latest independent boutique hotel, so named because there are eight stylish rooms and a modern British restaurant with eight dishes on the menu. Tucked away down a car-free side street in the heart of the old city (minutes from the station and the Roman Baths), it's a fusion of 15th century building and chic modern design.

Another addition to Bath's community of boutique hotels, is the forthcoming **Hotel Indigo** – due to open on South Parade towards the end of 2019. A mix of Georgian splendour and modern luxury, the new hotel will offer 166 rooms and suites, the Elder restaurant and a state-of-the-art gym.

Attractions

Just off the Great West Way, **Longleat Safari Park** near Warminster in Wiltshire, will introduce **Koala Creek** – a new home for a group of cuddly southern koalas (opening spring 2019). Part of an international breeding and awareness programme to help ensure koalas have a future in the wild, the collection will be the first in Europe where visitors can see these charming Australian bears. The koalas will be joined by close relatives, a pair of southern hairy-nosed wombats – in a new habitat that features a natural stream, glass-fronted wombat burrow and trees for climbing.

Opening in summer 2019, **Bear Wood** is the latest attraction for Bristol's 150-acre suburban conservation park at **Wildplace**. A walkway will wind through seven and a half acres of woodland where brown bears will share a home with the project's five European grey wolves. Lynx and wolverine will also

roam the woodland as they would have done centuries ago. A ranger station, classroom, interpretation space and café will also be built creating an immersive experience.

At the west end of the Great West Way, **The Wave** will be a new inland surfing lake – the first of its kind in Europe – when it opens in Autumn 2019. Using wave-making technology, up to 1000 waves will be generated per hour, with heights starting peaking at almost 2m. The 40-acre site, just north of Bristol, will include a sensory wave garden, activity areas, a natural swimming pool, café, shopping, accommodation and education centre.

Food and drink

In Bath, a branch of **The Botanist** – ‘a secret garden of food and drink’ – is opening in the Octagon in Bath next month (25 March 2019). The chain that claims to have reinvented pubs, will transform the Milsom Street building with its trade-mark blend of botany-themed décor, ‘unusual concoctions’, cocktail masterclasses and live music. The Great West Way already has a Botanist in Reading and Marlow.

Bath’s Abbey Hotel recently launched **Koffmann & Mr White’s** – an Anglo-French brasserie with Michelin-starred chefs Pierre Kaufman and Marco Pierre White at the helm. Pictures:

<https://flic.kr/s/aHsmyd1MxE>

And nearby Bradford-on-Avon (‘BoV’ as the locals call it), is soon to launch of the first ever **Bradford-on-Avon Food and Drink Festival** (1 June 2019). The Wiltshire town’s ‘scrumptious’ new festival is the love-child of Lotte Duncan (Ready Steady Cook, Countryfile, and *Lotte’s Country Kitchen*) among other local foodies and promises a feast of events from an artisan market, demonstrations from local and celebrity chefs, live music and a dog show.

Film and television

Filming for the much-anticipated movie version of **Downton Abbey** is on-going at key locations in and around the Great West Way including Bampton, which features as the village of Downton. A number of other locations in the area – Cogges Manor Farm in Witney (see above), Hampton Court Palace and the villages of Swinbrook and Shilton in the Cotswolds and Lacock in Wiltshire – all appeared in the Downton Abbey TV series.

Bristol’s Bottle Yard Studios has been confirmed as the filming location for ITV’s lavish version of Jane Austen’s last and unfinished novel **Sanditon**. The association with the 18th century English author will add another string to the Great West Way’s Jane Austen story (the Jane Austen Centre is Bath in just 12 miles away).

Tours and holidays

Canal holiday specialists **Black Prince** has launched a new royalty-themed canal break that links up with the Great West Way. A cruise along the Thames takes in Sonning, Henley-on-Thames, Marlow and Cookham before reaching Windsor Castle and finally Hampton Court where you can explore the home of Henry VIII, visit the grand gardens and famous maze. Staying in one of Black Prince’s comfortable narrowboats, a two-week cruising holiday from Lower Heyford in Oxfordshire to Hampton Court starts from £1424.

Anniversaries and celebrations

The 200th anniversary of the births of **Queen Victoria and Prince Albert** will be celebrated across the country and the Great West Way. Visit **Windsor Castle** (an hour outside London) where Victoria – like

the current Queen – spent weekends and getaway breaks. Both Victoria and Albert’s tombs are in the private grounds at Windsor. In the Orangery at **Bowood House and Gardens** – the magnificent home of the Marquis and Marchionness of Lansdowne – the **Victoria, Albert and the Landsowne’s** exhibition (30 March – 3 November 2019) draws on an archive of diaries, letters, photographs and paintings with a Victorian royal connection. There will also be special tours of the walled garden or the woodlands in spring.

2019 marks **50 years of Concorde**: made and developed in the Bristol, the supersonic aircraft takes pride of place at Aerospace Bristol and the Filton museum – which opened in 2017 – is planning a series of commemorative events to mark the occasion. Pictures: <https://flic.kr/s/aHskKSTvwR>

Find out more about the Great West Way at GreatWestWay.co.uk.

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For further information, imagery or to arrange a press visit please contact Florence Wallace, flowallace@GreatWestway.co.uk Tel: 07436588860. Find out more about the Great West Way at www.GreatWestWay.co.uk/media

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Note to editors:

About the Great West Way

The Great West Way is one of a number of successful projects to receive funding from the UK Government’s £40 million Discover England Fund, administered by VisitEngland. VisitWiltshire are the Destination Organisation leading the project. For further information go to www.discoverenglandfund.org or www.GreatWestWay.co.uk/StoryoftheGreatWestWay

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