



Events Calendar

From confetti battles to music festivals, canoe races to country shows and big-ticket exhibitions, there's a packed calendar of events along the Great West Way for 2019. Here are some top picks:

January

Slapstick Bristol Old Vic Takeover, Bristol – 18-20 January 2019

14 unique events, curated by comedian Richard Herring and featuring a reunion of Little & Large and improv-king, Tony Slattery, this is a precursor to the bigger annual festival in February and is the perfect cure to the January blues

slapstick.org.uk

February

Leonardo da Vinci: A life in Drawing, Bristol – 2 Feb-6 May 2019

To mark the 500th anniversary of Leonardo da Vinci's death, Bristol Museum and Art Gallery will be displaying 12 of his finest drawings as part of a national celebration of history's greatest geniuses.

bristolmuseums.org

Slapstick Festival, Bristol – 10 February 2019

Bristol's silent comedy festival is a city institution and features 25 events over four days and in five venues. In 2019, a highlight is a screening of Chaplin's, *Modern Times*, set to a live orchestra and hosted by Marcus Brigstock.

slapstick.org.uk

March

Tattoo: British Tattoo Art Revealed at M Shed, Bristol - 16 March-16 June 2019

A genuinely ground-breaking and comprehensive history of British tattooing, this exhibition is the largest gathering of original artwork ever assembled in the UK, featuring over 400 original pieces, photographs and historic artefacts.

bristolmuseums.org

Bristol International Jazz and Blues Festival - 21-24 March 2019

Bristol's jazz history dates back to the 50s when the likes of Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald regularly played to sell-out audiences at Colston Hall. Now in its 8th year, the festival is one of the city's biggest events and has something for everyone from aficionados to novices.

bristoljazzandbluesfest.com

Bath Comedy Festival - 27 March-14 April 2019

With a coveted Newcomer award, which attracted 120 contenders last year, this is a great chance to check out some new talent, as well as some established acts.

bathcomedy.com

April

Devizes to Westminster International Canoe Race, Wiltshire - Easter 2019

This is the world's longest non-stop canoe race, which follows the Kennet & Avon Canal from Devizes Wharf and joins The Thames to continue on to Westminster, a distance of some 125 miles.

dwrace.co.uk

Howard's Day at Castle Combe, Wiltshire – 22 April 2019

Easter Monday is the traditional start to the motor racing season at Castle Combe circuit and is marked by this popular race day.

castlecombecircuit.co.uk

May

The Bath Festival – 17-26 May 2019

Having recently celebrated its 70th birthday, this 17-day festival celebrates music and literature, bringing prominent writers, musicians and cultural figures to the city.

bathfestivals.org.uk

Let's Rock the Moor, Cookham – 18 May 2019

This family-friendly festival is a veritable celebration of the 80s and 2019's line-up will feature Erasure's Andy Bell, Jason Donovan and Marc Almond.

letsrockthemoor.com

Highclere Country Show – 26-27 May 2019

The estate better known as Downton Abbey, Highclere hosts one of England's best country shows, with falconry, gundog displays and the chance to have a go at clay shooting.

highclerecountryshow.co.uk

June

Afghanistan v Australia – 2019 ICC World Cup Games at the County Ground, Bristol - 1 June 2019

Australia launch their title defence against Afghanistan in this crucial match in the Cricket World Cup, taking place at The County Ground in Bristol, one of 11 venues to feature in the 46-day tournament.

icc-cricket.com

Royal Ascot – 18-22 June 2019

Arguably England's most famous – and grandest – horse racing event, with four days of races each kicked off by a royal carriage parade. This is your chance to wave at the Queen – and wear a fabulous hat.

ascot.co.uk

Stonehenge Summer Solstice – 20-21 June 2019

The Summer solstice is one of the rare occasions that English Heritage open up the stones for public access and people gather in their thousands to welcome in the year's longest day.

english-heritage.org.uk

Pub in the Park Marlow – dates TBC

Still new to the foodie festival scene, Tom Kerridge's Pub in the Park has been a sellout in its first 2 years, with people clamouring for tickets to enjoy pop-up pubs and great live music in this stunning riverside park.

pubintheparkuk.com

Forest Live Concerts at Westonbirt, The National Arboretum – dates TBC

Forest Live gigs are well known for their eclectic range of international artists, amazing atmosphere and their stunning locations. Each summer, open spaces within our forests are transformed into fantastic concert arenas. You can experience the unique atmosphere of these concerts at Westonbirt Arboretum. www.forestryengland.uk/westonbirt-the-national-arboretum

July

Henley Royal Regatta – 3rd-7th July

Established in 1839, this annual regatta attracts rowing crews from around the world to its five days of head to head knockout competitions and is regarded as an integral part of the English social season. hrr.co.uk

On Set with Aardman: Making Early Man, Bristol - 6 July-29 September 2019

Early Man is the most recent Aardman feature film, released in February 2018 and starring Eddie Redmayne and Tom Hiddlestone, and will be celebrated in this new exhibition. Visitors will see the original drawings and extraordinarily crafted sets, from tiny exquisite character models to the latest VR technology. bristolmuseums.org

Kew the Music – 9-14 July 2019

Kew Gardens hosts six nights of laidback picnic concerts, from big names in every genre of music from pop and rock to classical and jazz. The first headliner to be announced is Craig David. festicket.com

Bristol Harbour Festival – 19-21 July 2019

Bristol's largest annual event fills the harbour from SS Great Britain to the city centre with tall ships, music stages, dance areas and food markets. Expect water displays and circus acts too. bristolharbourfestival.co.uk

Royal International Air Tattoo, Fairford – 19-21 July 2019

The world's greatest airshow, fresh from celebrating the centenary of the RAF, will return to mark the 70th anniversary of NATO. Over 300 aircraft typically take part in the flypasts and aerial acrobatics. airtatto.com

WOMAD, Malmesbury – 25-28 July 2019

Global fiesta of music, dance, art and food that started in Charlton Park, Malmesbury and has since taken the party to more than 27 countries worldwide including Australia, Chile and Spain. womad.co.uk

Bath Carnival – dates TBC

Bath's biggest party features a procession of more than 1,000 dancers and musicians through the city plus plenty of world music on the sound systems and at Party in the Park in Sydney Gardens. Bathcarnival.co.uk

Devizes Beer Festival – Dates TBC

Long-running local beer festival at Devizes Wharf with 100-odd beers to try, some from the Wadworth brewery just along the canal. Local music too. devizescamra.org.uk

Upfest – Dates TBC

Europe's largest street art and graffiti festival brings together talented artists both local and international to paint live in locations around Bedminster and Southville in Bristol. There's affordable art for sale too. Upfest.co.uk

August

Festival of British Eventing, Gatcombe Park – 3-5 August 2019

The Festival of British Eventing takes place at Gatcombe Park in Gloucestershire, the spectacular home of the Princess Royal and her family and incorporates the British Open, Intermediate and Novice Championships, as well as the Amateur Championship, The Corinthian Cup. As well as a weekend of top-class eventing there will be a shopping village and arena attractions with entertainment for all the family.

www.festivalofbritisheventing.com

Bristol International Balloon Fiesta – 8-11 August 2019

Europe's largest annual meeting of hot air balloons brings colour to the sky above Bristol with twice-daily mass balloon launches and the chance to take a ride yourself.

bristolballoonfiesta.co.uk

Reading Festival – 23-25 August 2019

One of England's biggest and best-loved music festivals, featuring big-name acts from around the world – think Kings of Leon and Wolf Alice.

readingfestival.com

Devizes Carnival Confetti Battle – Dates tbc

Nobody knows why it started, but Devizes Carnival's Confetti Battle is surely the most fun you can have with torn up bits of coloured paper. Get stuck in to the battle in the marketplace and stay for the fireworks.

docadevizes.org.uk

September

Jane Austen Festival, Bath – 13-22 September 2019

Get your top hats, bonnets and lace out for this 10-day celebration of all things Austen. Highlights include a costumed Promenade through the city, and the Regency Costumed Masked Ball, with dancing in the Pump Rooms of the Roman Baths.

janeaustenfestivalbath.co.uk

Heritage Open Days – 13-22 September 2019

This national event sees normally hidden and closed places throw their doors open to the public over two weekends. Highlights along the Great West Way include Reading Synagogue, Sevington Victorian School in Wiltshire and the Rolls-Royce Heritage Trust in Bristol.

heritageopendays.org.uk

Henley Literary Festival - 28 September – 6 October 2019

Last year speaker's included Irvine Welsh, Judith Kerr, Sebastian Faulks and Michael Morpurgo, so expect an equally diverse and stellar and line up for 2019.

henleyliteraryfestival.co.uk

Cliveden Literary Festival – Dates TBC

Famous for its literary salon which has inspired writers from Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, George Bernard Shaw and Lord Tennyson, Cliveden hosts an annual literary festival every September and in the past has attracted writers from the world of TV and film (Stephen Frears, Armando Iannucci), publishing (Tina Brown), non-fiction (Sir Simon Schama, Alain de Botton) and fiction (Sarah Waters, Kier Kreishi).

clivedenliteraryfestival.org

Encounters Film Festival, Bristol – Dates TBC

The UK's leading short film festival brings you the best in international short film, animation and virtual reality.

encounters-festival.org.uk

October

Legoland Fireworks Spectacular, selected dates in October

Make your visit to Legoland even more spectacular by timing it to coincide with the annual fireworks spectacular, part of the theme park's spooky Halloween season.

legoland.co.uk

November, December and Christmas

The Festival of Light, Longleat Selected dates from 10th November - 6th January 2019

Stunning Chinese lanterns will light up Longleat once more as they take you on A Fantastic Voyage. Marvel as you and their heroes discover wondrous scenes, from the exotic to the glacial, filled with astonishing creatures, magnificent scenery, stunning structures and sensational modes of transportation, as you embark on this epic adventure.

<https://www.longleat.co.uk/festival-of-light>

Bath Christmas Market, Dates TBC

Bath Christmas Market, one of the country's biggest, sets up shop at the end of November. Consisting of 180 stalls, set amongst Bath's Georgian streets, the market sells hand-made ceramics, glassware, jewellery and local produce.

bathchristmasmarket.co.uk

Christmas at Kew, Dates TBC

A show-stopping trail of festive light installations runs through Kew Gardens from late November until early January. More than a million teeny pea lights are installed along the route and there are festive treats such as spiced cider and toasted marshmallows.

kew.org

Windsor On Ice, Dates TBC

From mid-November until early January Alexandra Gardens in Windsor plays host to two ice rinks – one indoor and one outdoor. You'll also find the UK's biggest dodgems and plenty of other fairground rides, plus the chance to visit Father Christmas.

windsoronice.com

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

Ends

For further information, imagery or to arrange a press visit please contact Rebecca Lowe, Head of PR, rebeccalowe@GreatWestWay.co.uk Tel: 07444 601421

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

Further information and link to The Story of the Great West Way booklet, a guide for businesses and destinations, is available at www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/greatwestway

The Great West Way Ambassador Network gives access to a wide range of additional Great West Way consumer, travel trade and media marketing activity; connecting businesses and destinations along the route

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For further information on or to join the Great West Way Ambassador Network please contact Claire Margetts, Head of Ambassador Network, ClaireMargetts@GreatWestWay.co.uk Tel: 07850 080679

For further information or to find out more about becoming an Official Tour Operator please contact Florence Wallace, Head of Travel Trade, FloWallace@GreatWestWay.co.uk Tel: 01722 341309 or 07436 588860

About VisitBritain/VisitEngland

VisitBritain/VisitEngland is the national tourism agency – a non-departmental public body funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). Working with a wide range of partners in both the UK and overseas, our mission is to grow the volume and value of inbound tourism across the nations and regions of Britain and to develop world-class English tourism product to support our growth aspirations. For further information and to access the latest in-depth market intelligence and statistics visit www.visitbritain.org or www.visitbritain.com and www.visitengland.com for consumer information.

About Discover England Fund

In November 2015, the Government announced a £40 million Discover England Fund; an unprecedented opportunity for English tourism. The Fund aims to deliver world-class bookable tourism products joined up across geographies and/or themes; including integrated transport solutions to provide an end-to-end customer experience.

The Fund supports the growth of one of England's most successful export industries, inbound tourism. Tourism is an industry that delivers jobs and economic growth across the English regions – contributing some £106bn each year to the economy and supporting 2.6 million jobs.

The Fund supported a number of pilot projects in year one (2016/17) that tested product development approaches. In years two and three, 2017-19, the fund will support:

- A number of large-scale collaborative projects to be delivered over the two-year period 2017-2019 that will create a step-change in bookable English tourism product for international consumers,
- 2 rounds of smaller funding for piloting new ideas (in year two), and delivering on new themes/ target markets (in year 3)
- There have also been opportunities for existing smaller projects to receive support in each following year to upscale their activities