



### THREE ROYAL SHAKESPEARE COMPANY PLAYS

Stratford-upon-Avon

10-13 June 2020

What connections could there be between the plays chosen for this year's annual expedition to Stratford: Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and *A Comedy of Errors*, and Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*? All the plays have elements of the supernatural: Leontes in *The Winter's Tale* stunned to find a statue of his wife Hermione coming to life; the twins in a *Comedy of Errors* so confused that they ascribe events to witchcraft and employ a conjuror is to exorcise them; *Peer Gynt* shifting between the real and the surreal, the conscious and the unconscious. All of the heroes of these plays are egotists who make fools of themselves and are finally reconciled to their folly. All of the plays criticize blind individuality pursued at the expense of relationship.

Our expeditions outside Stratford this year are to destinations which are not without drama, and, themselves play with time and space. Warwickshire's **St Peter's Church of Wootton Wawen**, an 'extravagant' church, is over one thousand years old and is notable for having the most pronounced Anglo-Saxon work in the country. Simon Jenkins describes it as 'an atmospheric jumble of walls and windows, vistas and secluded corners, run-down but not dejected and filled with the impedimenta of Wootton citizens over the centuries.' Packwood House represents the *Peer Gynt*-like fantasy of one man, Graham Baron Ash, who between 1924 and 1932 created his own private world of Tudor history at **Packwood**, enveloping himself in the warmth of nostalgia and creating a sepia tinted world all of his own. In this dream-like world he threw great parties for the county and Packwood House became a stage where he could live out his primly perfect version of country house hospitality and offer an environment in which, as he said 'Shakespeare could have sat'. Geoffrey Jellicoe wrote of it as having 'worldliness combined with a curious, vague, indefinable mysticism.'

### WEDNESDAY 10 June

- 10.10 London Marylebone: recommended train departs, change Solihull
- 12.06 Arrive Stratford station and minibus transport to hotel
- 1.00 Opening Drinks reception followed by Group Lunch in Arden Hotel
- 2.30 Nicholas Friend Lecture 'Folly, Betrayal, Repentance and Resolution in the Winter's Tale'
- 4.00 Tea in Hotel. Rest
- 5.45 Pre-Theatre group dinner in hotel
- 7.15 Shakespeare's 'The Winter's Tale' in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre

### THURSDAY 11 June

- 10.30 Coffee in hotel
- 11.00 Lecture 'Peer Gynt's Odyssey: the interaction between Ibsen's drama and Grieg's music'
- 12.30 Lunch in hotel
- 2.00 Leave for Wootton Wawen church
- 2.15 Arrive Wootton Wawen
- 3.15 Leave Wootton Wawen
- 5.30 Pre-Theatre dinner in hotel
- 7.15 Ibsen's 'Peer Gynt' in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre

### FRIDAY 12 June

- 10.30 Coffee in hotel
- 11.00 Nicholas Friend Lecture 'Identity and Confusion in A Comedy of Errors'
- 12.00 Lunch in hotel
- 1.30 Leave for Packwood House
- 2.15 Visit Packwood House
- 3.45 Return to hotel and rest
- 5.45 Pre-Theatre dinner
- 7.30 Shakespeare's 'Comedy of Errors' in the Globe Theatre.

### SATURDAY 13 June

- 11.00 Checkout
- 11.30 Discussion session on the three plays
- 12.30 Lunch in hotel
- 2.15 Minibus to Stratford Station
- 2.40 Suggested train from Stratford to London departs
- 5.06 Arrive London Marylebone (direct train)



## THE ARDEN

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Stratford-upon-Avon,  
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Located in the heart of historic Stratford-upon-Avon, directly opposite the world-renowned Royal Shakespeare Company Theatres, The Arden Hotel is an elegant and sophisticated hotel in the birthplace of Shakespeare. Located beside the River Avon and close to the town centre, it is unquestionably the best and most convenient hotel in town. Many actors stay at the Arden and the walls are covered with photographs of past greats and modern actors.

An elegant 45-bedroom hotel, its recent multi-million pound refurbishment addressed every detail. The rooms are light and spacious and beautifully appointed. All have sitting areas. The bathrooms are huge with large baths and double showers. The Arden Hotel has won a host of awards including four AA silver stars for the levels of comfort and hospitality, alongside two AA Rosettes for its creative cuisine served in the Waterside Brasserie or on the terrace. Its proximity to the Royal Shakespeare Theatres will allow us to pop back for interval drinks.

£1395 members, £1445 non-members, £95 single room supplement, a £300 deposit includes all lectures, tuition and pastoral care, three plays, special visits and transportation during the tour, three nights with breakfast, all lunches and dinners with wine, all coffees and teas: (NB : the deposit for this tour must be received by 15 December 2019 for ticket purchase and hotel deposit). **Please note that this cost excludes train tickets to and from Stratford.**