

Stratford Heritage Exhibition


2025

The Two Hughs

There were two men called Hugh Clifton, whose ancestral home (see the image below) was Clifton House, just outside Stratford. In the 1480s, the first Hugh (c.1440-90) built a 'gentle house' on the site we now know as New Place, Chapel Street, Stratford.


This was later renovated by William Shakespeares, keeping many original Clifton features. After the last of Shakespeare's direct descendants died in 1570, and after further owners, the house was finally owned again by the Clifton family.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century the Clifton/Shakespeare house was demolished and a new house was built on the site by Sir John Clifton, whose son Hugh, later Sir Hugh (d.1672), lived at the house until his death in 1751. John Clifton's house was demolished in 1759 by the Rev. Francis Gastrell.



Above: Clifton House, once home of the Clifton family, in Stratford-upon-Avon. ©2016 Photo: Elin Hesterman

Annie Justins




Above: Annie Justins, 20 September 1928. Photo: Ernest Darwin

Marie Corelli


Marie Corelli was the best-selling author of her day. She outdid Charles Dickens, HG Wells and Wilkie Collins combined and even Queen Victoria was a fan. She moved into a house called Mason Craft in Church Street, Stratford, in 1911.

Corelli was a conservationist before anyone knew what that was and, from her early days in Stratford, she was involved in controversy, including the draining of the Barcroft Basin which had been a popular paddling pool for the town's children, and the proposed string of a public library in place of cottages associated with Shakespeares.


In 1905, Corelli became interested in converting a sixteenth century property at 26 High Street, known as the Ancient House. This later became known as Harward House.



Left: Portrait of Marie Corelli's home, Mason Craft (and Trinity Catholic Church) Street, c1910-1911



Below: Photo of the Shakespeare Hotel, Chapel Street. c1900



Right: Mason Craft, home of Marie Corelli, and one of her studios. ©2016

©2016-2025. Images courtesy of Dr. Helenwyn Sutcliffe. Text and design by me!

Stratford Heritage Exhibition 2025

Achievements

A **free** exhibition in Harvard House, showcasing the town's history for local people and visitors:

- 7,526 visitors over 48 days
- Donations of £1,435 (includes a small amount of gift aid)
- Net sales of books, artwork and cards of £421
- 528 visitor feedback forms completed and approx. 1,400 entries in our visitor book



Image by Ellie Stevenson

Stratford Heritage Exhibition 2025

What we Delivered

- **Nine interpretation posters** and an original drawing of *The History of a Bridge*
 - A selection of **objects** (artefacts) in four display cases
 - **Several** maps for viewing the town's streets
 - **Ten** information leaflets on different themes to take away
 - A **video** on Harry Cowan's canal basin model for people to view
 - A **children's colouring corner** and in-house quizzes for families
 - **Distribution of 2,000+ publicity flyers**, a banner & an A board
 - A small sales area selling relevant books, artwork and cards
 - **Twenty-seven trained volunteers**, 9 of whom were first-aiders
- Feedback forms and a visitor's book

Stratford Heritage Exhibition 2025

Visitors and Engagement

'Lovely exhibition – it would be wonderful to have a permanent museum dedicated to Stratford's history and people.'

- 79% of visitors were over 45 and 65% were over 55
 - 90% identified as white or white/British
 - 88% were from the UK and 42% of those were from the CV37 area
- ❖ The average number of visitors was 156 per day
 - ❖ Saturday was the most popular day
 - ❖ The most popular week was that of Thursday 14th August
 - ❖ Going onto the street to encourage people in worked well



Image courtesy of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.
Watercolour of the Shakespeare Memorial theatre, by
William Wells Quatremain, c1924

Stratford Heritage Exhibition 2026

This year's themes


- Various anniversaries including the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre fire, the Stratford and Moreton Tramway, Concorde, Pashley Cycles
- More on Tibor Reich
- Little known but significant women including Hephzibah Harris who made patchwork pictures and lived in Church Street
- Suffragists and suffragettes
- Clopton House hospital
- The heritage lamp posts of Stratford
- And much more!

The Two Hughs

There were two men called Hugh Clopton, whose ancestral home (see the image below) was Clopton House, just outside Stratford. In the 1400s, the first Hugh (c.1440-90) built a 'grate house' on the site we now know as New Place, Chapel Street, Stratford.


This was later renovated by William Shakespeare, keeping many original Clopton features; after the last of Shakespeare's direct descendants died in 1670, and after further owners, the house was finally owned again by the Clopton family.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century the Clopton/Shakespeare house was demolished and a new house was built on the site by Sir John Clopton, whose son Hugh, later Sir Hugh (b.1672), lived at the house until his death in 1751. John Clopton's house was demolished in 1759 by the Rev. Francis Godwin!



Below: Clopton House, once home of the Clopton family, is now apartments, 2018. Photo: Sile Steneman

Annie Justine




Below: Annie Justine, 21 September 1928. Photo: Ernest Dettam

Annie Justine's parents owned the Shakespeare Hotel in Chapel Street. After the death of both of her parents, Justine ran the hotel alone until 1920 when she sold it.

A month later, she was elected to Stratford-upon-Avon borough council as a councillor for the New Town ward and later to the Housing Committee. In 1926, she was elected Stratford's first woman mayor and then again for a second term in 1929.

Justine was the first woman to become Chief Magistrate of the Borough and Justice Avenue was named for her.

When this passionate believer in the town and its people died in 1925, aged 63, the town lowered its blinds, flew its flags at half mast and lined the streets in her honour.




Below: Photo of the Shakespeare Hotel, Chapel Street, c.1900

Marie Corelli


Marie Corelli was the best-selling author of her day. She outdid Charles Dickens, HP Wells and Wilkie Collins combined and even Queen Victoria was a fan. She moved into a house called Mason Craft in Church Street, Stratford, in 1901.

Corelli was a conversationalist before anyone knew what that was and, from her early days in Stratford, she was involved in controversy, including the draining of the Bancroft Basin which had been a popular paddling pool for the town's children, and the proposed siting of a public library in place of cottages associated with Shakespeare.

In 1905, Corelli became interested in conserving a sixteenth century property at 26 High Street, known as the Ancient House. This later became known as Harvard House.



Left: Portrait of Marie Corelli's home, Mason Craft (and Trinity College), Church Street, c.1910-1911



Right: Mason Craft, home of Marie Corelli, and one of her Bedford jennets, c.1900