

Plein Air Painting Weekend at Anne Hathaway's Cottage

Brochure · 2-3 May 2026



Plein Air Painting Weekend at Anne Hathaway's Cottage

Brook Arts Hub, Shottonery

Quick Overview

What: Two-day plein air painting retreat exploring landscapes and flowers in watercolour, acrylics or oils

When: Saturday 2 May & Sunday 3 May 2026, 10:00–17:00 each day

Where: Brook Arts Hub, Shottonery (adjacent to Anne Hathaway's Cottage), Stratford-upon-Avon

Led by: Lizzie Bentley, professional artist and tutor

Group size: 10–12 participants

Price: £260 per person (non-residential)

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is this retreat for?

This retreat welcomes painters of all levels – complete beginners, improvers, and more experienced artists. Whether you've never painted outdoors before or you're looking to develop your plein air practice, Lizzie will tailor guidance to your experience level and chosen medium.

You don't need to be fit or able to stand for long periods – we provide easels and chairs, and you can work seated or standing as suits you.

What is included in the £260 fee?

Your retreat fee covers:

- Two full days of tuition with Lizzie Bentley (10:00–17:00 each day)
- Live painting demonstrations and structured exercises
- Individual feedback and guidance tailored to your level

- Use of Brook Arts Hub studio space
- Easel for your use during the retreat
- Visit to Anne Hathaway's Cottage and gardens during the retreat weekend, including the possibility to paint there during its opening hours
- Tea, coffee, snacks and lunch on both days
- A donation to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust of at least 15% of the proceeds of this retreat.

What's NOT included?

- Travel to/from Stratford-upon-Avon
- Accommodation (you will need to arrange this directly with B&B or hotel of your choice - see suggestions below)
- Evening meals
- Your personal painting materials (brushes, paints, paper/canvas, etc.)

What painting materials do I need to bring?

You'll need to bring your preferred painting supplies. After you register, we'll send you an online pre-retreat questionnaire in which we ask which medium you usually work in (watercolour, acrylics or oils). We will send you a tailored materials list based on your preference.

Essential items all painters need:

- Paints in your chosen medium
- Brushes (at least 2-3 in varying sizes)
- Paper, canvas boards, or panels appropriate to your medium
- Palette for mixing
- Water containers (if using watercolour or acrylics)
- Paper towels or rags
- Apron or painting clothes you don't mind getting messy

We provide:

Easels, chairs, some basic shared materials, water access

Don't worry if this feels overwhelming. We'll send you a detailed, medium-specific packing list when you register.

Where will we be painting?

We'll work in the beautiful gardens of Anne Hathaway's Cottage and at Brook Arts Hub adjacent to it in Shottery.

What does the daily retreat programme look like?

Saturday, 2 May

09:45 Arrival and registration

10:00 Welcome circle and introductions

10:30 Go to Anne Hathaway's Cottage & Gardens

11:15 Optional demo by Lizzie in the gardens

11:45 Outdoor painting session with individual support

13:00 Lunch (provided)

14:00 Extended painting session with individual support

16:00 Pack up materials

16:15 Cream tea at Brook Arts Hub

16:30 Group sharing and reflection

17:00 Close

Sunday, 3 May

10:00 Arrival, welcome, settling in

10:30 Go to Anne Hathaway's Cottage & Gardens

11:00 Optional demonstration by Lizzie or start painting

11:30 Outdoor painting session with individual support

13:00 Lunch (provided)

14:00 Extended painting session with 1:1 guidance

16:00 Pack up materials

16:15 Cream tea at Brook Arts Hub

16:30 Group sharing and reflection

17:00 Close

There will be a good balance of instruction, painting time, and rest.

What about food and dietary requirements?

Lunch and refreshments (tea, coffee, snacks) are provided on both days. We can accommodate most dietary needs including vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and dairy-free – just let us know in the pre-retreat questionnaire.

Evenings are free for you to explore Stratford-upon-Avon's wide variety of restaurants, pubs and cafés at your leisure.

Where should I stay?

Accommodation is not included in the retreat fee, giving you flexibility to choose your preferred lodging and number of nights.

We recommend staying in central Stratford-upon-Avon (short taxi/bus ride or drive to Shottery). Options include:

- B&B guest houses in Evesham Place (Guide price £100/night single room, £110/night double room)
- Other hotels in Stratford-upon-Avon town centre

Many participants arrive on Friday evening and depart on Sunday evening or on Monday.

How do I get to Brook Arts Hub?

Address: Brook Arts Hub, Cottage Lane, Shottery, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 9HH

By train: Stratford-upon-Avon station, then taxi (approx. 5 minutes) or local bus

By bus: Local buses run from Stratford-upon-Avon town centre to Shottery

By car: Paid parking available nearby (See <https://en.parkopedia.co.uk/parking/near/anne-hathaways-cottage/>).

Detailed directions and parking information will be provided in your welcome pack after registration.

What if the weather is poor and what should I wear?

English weather in May is generally pleasant, but we're prepared for all conditions!

- Light rain: We'll continue painting outdoors with waterproof clothing
- Heavy rain: When visiting Anne Hathaway's Cottage, participants will need to take photos or sketch the views they would like to paint. We will then work in the indoor studio space at Brook Arts Hub.
- Mixed conditions: We'll adapt flexibly throughout the retreat

We recommend bringing layers and waterproof clothing just in case - comfort is key for creative work:

- Comfortable, layered clothing suitable for indoor and outdoor work
- Clothes you don't mind getting paint on (or bring an apron)
- Comfortable walking shoes with good grip
- Hat and sunglasses for sunny weather
- Light waterproof jacket

What's the minimum/maximum group size?

The retreat is designed for 10-12 participants, ensuring plenty of individual attention while maintaining a warm group atmosphere.

Minimum participants: 6

If fewer than 6 people register by 20 April 2026 (14 days before the retreat), we may need to postpone or cancel. You'll receive full refund of retreat fees if this happens.

What's the cancellation policy?

We understand plans can change. Here's our policy:

- More than 30 days before (ie, before 2 April 2026): Partial refund minus £50 admin fee, or transfer to future retreat

- 30 days or fewer (ie, after 2 April 2026): Fees are non-refundable unless your place can be filled from a waiting list
- If we cancel: Full refund of all retreat fees paid

We recommend taking out travel insurance to cover your retreat fees, accommodation, and travel costs.

Can I come on my own?

Absolutely! Many participants attend solo and find it a wonderful way to meet like-minded creative people in a supportive, friendly atmosphere.

Will there be opportunities to buy art supplies locally?

Stratford-upon-Avon does not have art supply shops so we recommend bringing everything you need as shopping time during the retreat is limited.

What will I achieve over the weekend?

By the end of the retreat, you can expect to have:

- Completed several plein air studies and at least one more developed painting
- Developed confidence in setting up and painting outdoors
- Learnt practical techniques for simplifying complex scenes
- Developed colour mixing and compositional skills
- Created a personal action plan for continuing your practice at home

Most importantly, you'll feel refreshed, inspired, and part of a supportive creative community.

What's Lizzie's teaching style?

Lizzie's approach is warm, encouraging, and practical. She believes in clear demonstrations followed by plenty of doing, with individual feedback tailored to your level and goals.

There's no pressure or judgment – the focus is on learning, experimenting, and enjoying the process of painting outdoors.

What about photography and social media?

You're welcome to photograph your own work and the landscape. We ask that you get permission before photographing other participants or their work.

We may take a few group photos for future retreat promotion – we'll always ask your consent first.

Is there WiFi/phone signal?

There is WiFi and some mobile coverage.

What happens if I have specific accessibility needs?

Please contact us before registering to discuss your needs. We want to ensure the retreat is accessible and comfortable for you.

Brook Arts Hub: Our spaces have been adapted to be welcoming to people with disabilities.

Anne Hathaway's Cottage: AccessAble offers a detailed [Access Guide](#) of Anne Hathaway's Cottage.

How do I register?

Complete the [registration form](#) on the Brook Arts Hub website.

After registration, including payment, you'll receive:

1. Confirmation email
2. Welcome pack with detailed information
3. Pre-retreat questionnaire
4. Tailored materials list for your chosen medium

Still have questions?

Email us at brookartshub@gmail.com – we're happy to help!

About As You Like It Creative Wellbeing Retreats

The As You Like It Creative Wellbeing Retreat programme, as well as The Tempest Climate/Crisis Leadership Retreat programme, are inspired by the rural reconstruction approach of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore and Leonard Elmhirst from the 1920s, initially in Sriniketan, India and subsequently in Dartington, Devon, UK. They are based on a concept proposed by Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Advisory Council member Obhi Chatterjee and Kaberi Chatterjee, who have been leading the celebrations of Tagore's birth anniversary in the gardens of Shakespeare's Birthplace for several years.

Announcing the launch of the programme in March 2026, Rachael North, CEO of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, said: "The As You Like It Creative Wellbeing Retreat Programme brings together our commitment to preserving Shakespeare's legacy with opportunities for creative exploration and personal wellbeing. By partnering with Brook Arts Hub and talented artists like Lizzie Bentley, we invite people to experience these places not just as visitors, but as active participants in a living creative tradition."

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust receives at least 15% of the retreat fees from As You Like It Creative Wellbeing Retreats in the form of a donation.

