

WARWICK CASTLE UNLOCKS FOUR CENTURIES OF SECRET STORIES IN FOUR NEVER-SEEN-BEFORE ROOMS TO KICK START HALF TERM

**ACCESS ALL AREAS UNTIL 22 MARCH WITH UP TO 40 PER CENT SAVINGS
– INCLUDING HALF TERM**

16 January 2013: In February 2013 – when visitors can save up to 40 per cent on walk-up entry fees by booking in advance online - Warwick Castle (www.warwick-castle.com) will unlock four rooms that have remained closed for generations to reveal secrets and stories across four centuries of the Castle's past. The four ancient rooms – Barbican Battlements & Captain's Room; a recently-unearthed bear pit in Bear Tower; Watergate Room; and The Guards' Room in Guy's Tower – will excite and delight visitors of all ages and unlock defining chapters in the Warwick Castle story to reveal tales of battle, siege, murder, power struggles and hauntings. Access to the four new rooms is included in Castle admission prices.

Visitors will have the chance to seek a shy ghost, explore a deadly bear's lair and smell foul mediaeval sludge from Saturday 16 February, when the four rooms open for the first time – ideal for keeping kids happy during half-term (16-24 February).

Tim Harrison-Jones, General Manager at Warwick Castle said: "We're blessed with over one thousand years of history at Warwick Castle and we're delighted to tell the ancient site's story as best we can. Each of the four newly-opened rooms will be permanently open to visitors at no additional cost and can be viewed in any order to add even more depth to our story. This is an exciting opportunity to be among the first people to see these rooms for centuries and makes a great value family half-term day out."

Barbican Battlements – The Fourteenth Century: Visitors will see and smell this ancient room - never before open to visitors - readied for mediaeval battle. Built in the reign of Edward III to protect the entrance to the Castle, the Barbican Battlements over the Portcullis include deadly murder holes through which boiling tar and human waste were poured on attacking forces.

Bear Tower – The Fifteenth Century: The county of Warwickshire and the heraldic crest of the Earls of Warwick are represented by a Bear and Ragged Staff, symbols whose history can be traced back to Warwick Castle including the keeping of a bear on site in the fifteenth century. In heraldry, a bear represents courage – but who is brave enough to venture into the never-seen-before Tower with its recently unearthed bear pit?

Watergate Tower – The Sixteenth Century: Reputedly haunted by the ghost of Sir Fulke Greville - playwright, poet, Member of Parliament...and victim of a gruesome murder - the Watergate Tower tells the tale of a notable life brought short by a disloyal, dagger-wielding servant. Fulke's restless spirit is said to roam the tower – just one reason few people in living memory have ventured inside.

Guards' Room – The Seventeenth Century: In 1642, during the Civil War, Warwick Castle - a stronghold for Parliamentary forces under its owner, Robert Greville - was besieged by Royalists stationed at St Mary's Church in Warwick. This Guards' Room at the top of Guy's Tower was remodelled to fire cannons rather than arrows: visitors can experience the musty, smoky living conditions endured by the guards as they awaited attack and bore the ultimately futile siege.

Warwick Castle is open every day (apart from Christmas Day) and offers fun for the entire family with its exciting daily shows* and engaging live-actor attractions, The Castle Dungeon; Merlin: The Dragon Tower; and The Princess Tower.

Daily shows include:

- Raising the Portcullis
- Flight of the Eagles Show
- The Sword and the Stone*
- Firing the Trebuchet*
- Warwick Warriors live combat*
- Actor-led Tours

Warwick Castle is offering these great value savings until Friday 22 March 2013, including school half term holidays in February with savings of up to 40 per cent** on walk-up admission prices available, with additional savings for advance bookings. A family of four (two adults, two children aged 4-11 years) can save over £31*** and secure all-day entry to the castle (10am-6pm) including the Warwick Castle Unlocked rooms plus access to the Castle Dungeon and Merlin: The Dragon Tower, all for £75.84 by booking online up to seven days in advance of their visit.

Please check www.warwick-castle.com for exact details of daily shows; subject to change; *some shows are seasonal.

Ends

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Notes to editors

Warwick Castle is easily accessible from junction 15 off the M40, just 40 minutes from Birmingham and 1 hour 40minutes from London. Warwick Castle is easy to reach by train from London in 86 minutes.

**40 per cent saving based on adult walk-up admission fee, applying Winter Pricing saving and additional advance online booking saving.

*** Based on £107.40 walk-up family of four Kingdom ticket, applying Winter Pricing saving and additional advance online booking saving.

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Resort, Warwick Castle, THORPE PARK, Chessington World of Adventures Resort, Blackpool Tower, Heide Park, Sydney Aquarium, WILD LIFE Sydney, Sydney Tower Eye and SKYWALK, Siam Ocean World and Busan Aquarium. All brands which are distinctive, challenging and innovative – and which have great potential for growth in the future. Visit www.merlinentertainments.biz for more information.