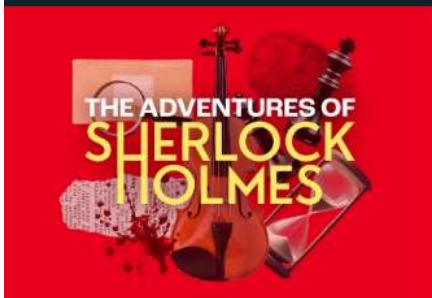


STORYHOUSE
PRESENTS

GROSVENOR PARK
OPEN AIR
THEATRE 2025

4 JULY –
31 AUGUST



About Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre

The award-winning Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre, located in Chester, is a purpose-built venue with an annual summer repertory season produced by Storyhouse.

Founded in 2010, it is the only full-time, site-specific professional open-air theatre company outside London.

The open-air theatre designed by the company is built each summer in Grosvenor Park, a public park in Chester. Performances are staged 'in the round,' with the audience seated on all sides of a central stage.



Photo Mark McNulty

The venue and site takes just over two weeks to build, using sixteen members of staff. A great deal of the site infrastructure (fencing, Portaloos, Portacabins, Trakway etc) is hired, but the venue itself is stored in Storyhouse's Ellesmere Port store (six miles away) and is transported using two 18t Urban curtain side trucks (a total of eleven runs between the two trucks).

At the end of the season, the theatre venue, technical equipment and FOH kit is returned to the stores. Toilets, portacabins and so forth are collected by the hire companies and the site fencing is left up for a further month to allow Chester City Council to rotovate and reseed areas where the grass has been damaged. Staff conduct a rigorous litter pick and check of the site before leaving and any waste is taken away by a local skip supplier (Nick Brookes) who then sorts and recycles whatever they can.

Storyhouse and Sustainability

storyhouse in the environment

- we have **3 colonies of bees** (you can buy their delicious honey from The Kitchen at Storyhouse)
- The Kitchen's meat, dairy, produce and bread suppliers are all **LOCAL**
- we have **reduced** our annual gas usage by **40%**
- Our **solar panels** have generated enough power this year to **light over 100 shows**
- ZERO** waste goes to landfill
- our annual carbon offset is the equivalent of planting **50 TREES**
- we're a member of Chester Zoo's **Sustainable Palm Oil City** conservation campaign
- 100%** of our food waste is converted into energy
- all our staff and customers are encouraged to **travel using greener options**
- we **no longer use** single-use plastic cutlery, polystyrene, sauce sachets or plastic straws at any of our venues

we have a long way to go but every day we are working harder to be more sustainable

Storyhouse is committed to sustainability through a number of initiatives, including the installation of solar panels on its roof (this project was funded by the Theatre's Trust Theatre Improvement Scheme, Cheshire West and Chester City Council's Climate Emergency Fund and the Wolfson Foundation). All bulbs and fittings (once they reach the end of their life) are replaced with LEDs and the building is aiming for 100% LED by 2028. Operational changes to reduce the usage of electricity, water and gas have been introduced and annual gas usage is already down by 40%. Storyhouse runs creative sessions in schools that focus on sustainability and is currently developing a new Forest School initiative. A series of events are programmed for November 2025 under the banner of Storyhouse Futures. Many of these events are free and include

a 'Creative Clothing Repair Workshop,' 'Why We Believe in Going Green: Cooking Demo and Q&A,' and 'Adult Craft Workshop – Recycled Decorative Notebook,' along with a number of films, talks and workshops.

Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre 2025

A total of 2,8254 tickets were sold for this year's three Storyhouse produced shows: 'Pride and Prejudice', 'The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes' and 'Alice in Wonderland'. In addition, the site hosted a Street Food weekend, Moonlight Flicks (Storyhouse's outdoor cinema), additional events from visiting companies, activities for children and adults, comedy and live music. In all, the actual visitor number is likely to be in excess of 30,000.



Photo Mark McNulty

'Pride and Prejudice' and 'The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes' were both designed by Jessica Curtiss. The central planked dais and walkways came from Storyhouse's Ellesmere Port store and had been used for previous GPOAT seasons. The astroturf was bought from an online supplier with the intention of it being used for future GPOATs. The other main element in terms of flooring was the chipped bark, which came from a local supplier. Local company, Centre Stage Scenery, built a doorway flat and two removable doors. Thirty-two live, box hedging balls (*Buxus Sempervirens*)

in pots were bought from a local nursery and planted in the ground or potted on to larger, decorative pots.

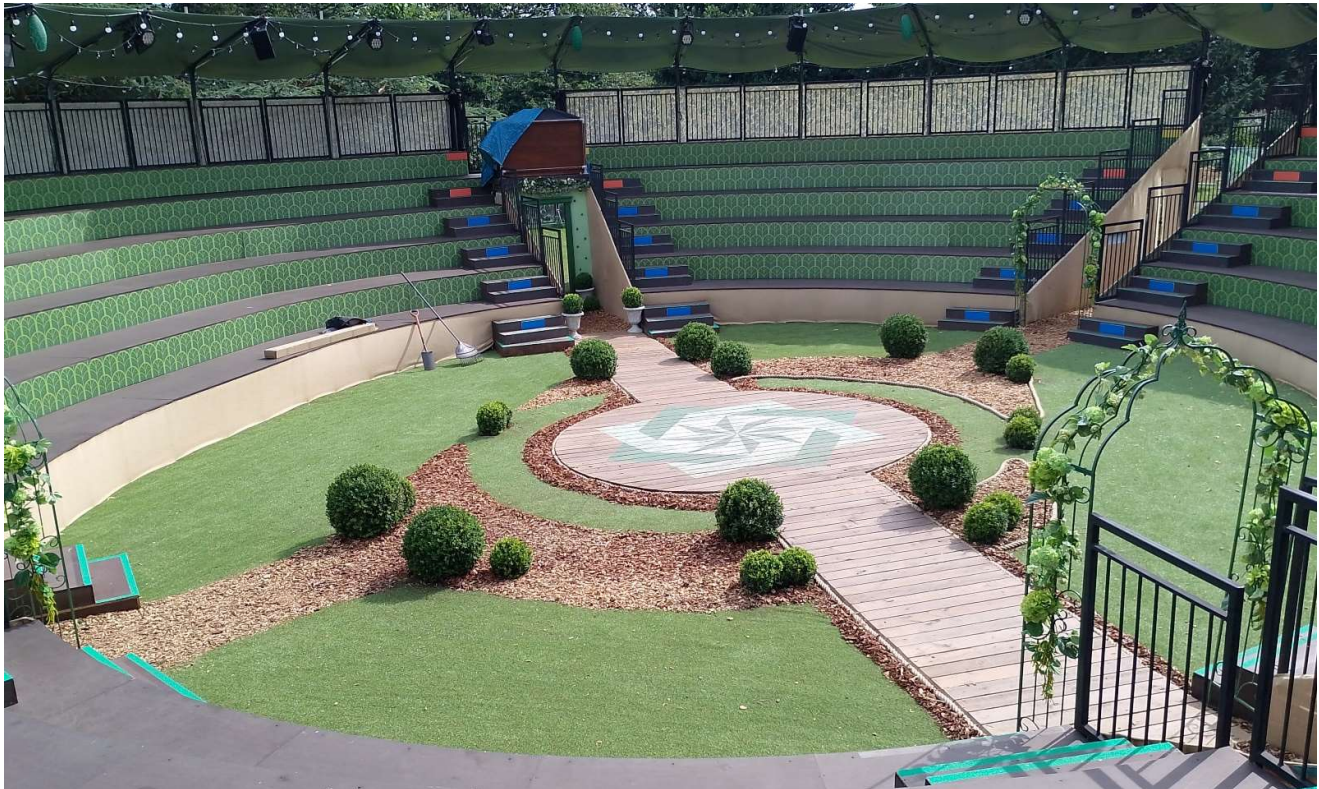


Photo Jim Davis

Props and furniture were mostly from the Storyhouse store, with the addition of a few borrows, hires and buys.

Costumes for both shows were largely borrows, hires and buys from second hand or charity shops. The women's costumes for 'Pride and Prejudice' were made in-house using printed fabrics from North Wales based company, Slubbed. These fabrics are wood block printed by hand using natural dyes and imported directly from the makers in Kutch, Gujarat, India.

'Alice in Wonderland' was designed by Helen Redcliffe, using the main set, augmented with two door flats built by Centre Stage Scenery and large 'Wonderland' letters from a Jessica Curtiss designed production at Storyhouse in 2017. The costumes were a mixture of stock from the store, borrows, hires and some new buys.



Photo Mark McNulty

At the end of the run, the bulk of the set was transported to the Ellesmere Port store for use in future productions. The remainder was either recycled (chipped bark and hessian) or taken away by Storyhouse staff and volunteers (box hedging plants). Costume, props and furniture that were hired or borrowed were returned and everything else went to the store.

TGB Production Calculator

I began the Production Calculator imagining we would comfortably achieve 'Basic.' After all, it was an outdoor event, played in the round with designs that would lean heavily on costume, the picture created by the venue and its audience and minimal props and scenery. What I wasn't prepared for was how practiced and committed Storyhouse is as an organisation to working sustainably and the willingness of the designers and directors involved to put together beautiful designs that made brilliant use of stored set, props and costumes, along with natural and recycled materials.

The end result was a season of three productions that reached 'Advanced' standard for 'Sets and Scenery' and did very favourably in 'Costumes' and 'Props and Furniture.' A real achievement and hopefully the pattern for future Grosvenor Park Open Air Theatre seasons.