

# Harvest is paused for festival lift-off

LIFT-OFF has been given the go-ahead for this summer's Midlands Air Festival in Alcester - thanks to local entrepreneurs who have agreed to suspend their annual harvest, insisting 'the show must go on.'

It will be all eyes to the skies on the Queen's Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend in June - but only after William and Kelsey Seymour agreed to halt the harvesting of their elderflower liqueur brand St Maur midway through a short elder blossoms picking season.

Between the end of May and early June each year William and Kelsey, The Earl and Countess of Yarmouth, collect blossoms in the Ragley Woodlands.

But this year the couple will be allowing for an interruption to the work following a safety request by show organisers to clear the festival display area during the Jubilee Bank Holiday weekend (June 2-4).

Trevor Graham, the director of aviation for the Midlands Air Festival, said: "The Festival is a very exciting but complex event and public safety is our primary concern. Being able to have safe, designated low flying areas within the Ragley Estate is an important element of the show.

"We are grateful for the continued co-operation shown to us from the Earl and Countess of Yarmouth and St Maur who allow us access to their picking forest, which ensures we can continue to stage this stunning event



**St Maur's William and Kelsey Seymour take a break from the Elderflower Harvest in Ladies Wood.**

for the people of the Midlands."

William, who is the eldest son of the Marquess of Hertford and grew up at Ragley Hall, the family's seat since the 18th Century, said: "At St Maur we are absolutely delighted to be able to support and facilitate another local success story and a great show, with the Midlands Air Festival, even if it does interrupt our busiest time of year."

Kelsey added: "Having this event taking place at Ragley would inevitably disrupt our business, but watching this and other different events going on makes you realise how important they are for our local economy and for everyone to be able to enjoy and share the experience."

Visit <https://www.midlandsairfestival.com/> for more information about the air festival.



**Louise Bennett.**

**BUSINESSES** in Warwickshire have been urged to build on the success of the region in the latest round of Queen's Awards.

Eight companies from the area were successful in the awards and others are now being urged to follow suit.

Louise Bennett, chief executive of the Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, said: "It is great to see so many of our companies achieving what is the highest recognition possible for the work they have done.

"In the past we have been a bit backward in coming forward in terms of celebrating our successes, but that is changing.

"The Queen's Award is recognised the world over as a sign of ultimate commercial achievement and quality, and we know there are far more companies in Coventry and Warwickshire who regularly achieve the requisite standards in their day-to-day activities.

"I would really urge them to look

at the possibility of applying to a Queen's Award. A lot of awards are a "nice-to-have" but the Queen's Awards have real currency at home and abroad. We have had some very fine companies win in previous years and they have gone on to great things."

Companies interested in applying or finding out more about the Queen's Awards can attend a masterclass next month.

The Warwickshire Lieutenancy, working in collaboration with The Coventry and Warwickshire Chamber of Commerce, The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Warwickshire County Council and the University of Warwick, has organised the session which will take place at Woodland Grange Conference Centre & Hotel in Leamington on the afternoon of May 12.

Visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/queens-awards-for-enterprise-masterclass-tickets-303407729687> to book tickets.