

The Gardens of Herefordshire

Thursday 16th July – Sunday 19th July 2015

£315.00 (plus single room supplement)



Herefordshire has so many wonderful gardens. Also we were determined to avoid the extended daily travel of last year. We have spent several enjoyable hours choosing what we think is an exciting mix of visits. We hope you approve!



The holiday starts in mid-July and on a Thursday, because of a large event in Hereford, starting the following week.

Jean Turner & Phil
Broughton

Thursday 16 July 2015

We reach our first visit after around 2 hours in the coach - **David Austin Roses**. Here one of the most famous rose breeders in the country has created a large **rose garden** which many consider to be one of the most beautiful in the world. Over 700 different varieties of roses are planted here in an area now covering around 2 acres. The garden is divided into a number of smaller areas, each with its own style. The overall concept is to enclose the exuberant and rather informal growth of the roses within neatly clipped evergreen hedges. We also visit the **Plant Centre**, which is a little different from most others and attracts visitors from all around the world, many of whom travel thousands of miles to visit the home of the English Rose. Expert staff are always on hand to help and advise visitors in any way they require and you will be more than welcome to place an order should you wish to revitalize your own roses. Lunch is available here (not included).

Our first visit in Herefordshire itself will be to Sir Roy Strong's garden **The Laskett**. The garden was created not long after Sir Roy and his late wife Julia Trevelyan Oman married in 1973. They created a garden of sentiment; memories of people, places and events. There is a Rosemary bush that belonged to Julia's nanny and an area dedicated to their cats. The garden was very much divided into "his" and "hers" areas with Julia taking care of the kitchen garden and Roy with the architectural elements and the formal enclosures.

Following our visit we continue our journey into Herefordshire and our base for the next three nights, the comfortable **Green Dragon Hotel**, conveniently located in the centre of Hereford. All rooms are en-suite with TV, hairdryers and tea and coffee making facilities.

Dinner is served in the evening.

Friday 17 July 2015

Following breakfast this morning we will depart for **Stockton Bury Gardens** at Kimbolton. A true plantsman's garden, this four-acre site is divided into different areas by brick and stone walls and yew hedges. Thoughtfully laid out and beautifully cared for, it contains a wealth of unusual clematis, shrubs, climbers and herbaceous plants. The Dingle was created from an old quarry with clumps of marginal plants fringing the water's edge. Many cultivars of peonies, pulmonarias, lilacs and viburnums with rare and beautiful plants appear round many corners. Many of the more unusual plants are for sale, well-labelled, good size and reasonably priced.

Next we visit the gardens at **Hampton Court Castle**, a 15th century castle surrounded by 1000 acres of stunning parkland, pasture and woodlands with the River Lugg running alongside. The gardens were only recently completed and are one of the most ambitious garden creations of our time. Original Victorian garden walls enclose stunning new flower gardens divided by canals, island pavilions and pleached avenues. The kitchen garden is an ornamental garden of fruit and vegetables, supplying produce to the Orangery Restaurant for its seasonal menu. There is a maze of a thousand yews with a Gothic tower at its centre - climb to the top for a panoramic view of the gardens or descend underground to a tunnel that leads to a waterfall in the sunken garden. Beautiful herbaceous borders stretch out from a one hundred and fifty year old wisteria tunnel that leads to vast lawns and ancient trees beside the castle. Beyond the lawns are riverside and woodland walks. Lunch is available here (not included).

In the afternoon we visit **Lower Hope** at Ullingswick. This eight-acre garden is dazzlingly colourful and very varied. The bog garden boasts impressive gunneras and swathes of candelabra primulas, while the swimming pool garden feels positively Mediterranean with its palms trees and quiet seclusion. The many large island beds are sheets of bright flowers and coloured foliage with interesting sculptures dotting the grounds. The glasshouses contain a host of exotics while in front of it is an enclosed garden with English roses and lavenders.

We return to our hotel where dinner is served in the evening.

Saturday 18 July 2015

After breakfast, we begin today with a visit to **Montpelier Cottage**, the private garden of well-known garden designer and writer **Noel Kingsbury**. This lush and exuberant one acre garden features trial beds where English cottage style meets German parks and American prairie, and Noel's naturalistic approach to planting is evident throughout. There is a wide range of perennials, plus ponds, a vegetable garden and fruit. A further three acres includes a hay meadow habitat and an unusual wild flower-rich wet meadow.

We continue today to **Hergest Croft Gardens**, near Kington. Here we find an old-fashioned rose garden, a traditional fruit and vegetable garden and a kitchen garden with ancient apple trees; however the seasonal highlight is one of the finest tree collections in the UK, containing over 4,000 rare shrubs and trees, including massive cedars; a maple grove; the National Collection of birches; Himalayan exotics and over 60 champion trees. Lunch is available here (not included).

This afternoon we visit the garden at **Upper Tan House**, near Leominster, a south-facing garden sloping down to Stansbatch brook in an idyllic spot. There are deep herbaceous borders with informal and unusual planting, a pond and bog garden, a formal vegetable garden framed by yew hedges and espaliered pears. Reed beds and a wild-flower meadow support a diverse range of wildlife.

A short walk away is the garden of **Stansbatch Barn**, which was designed and planted by garden designer Catherine Janson. A third of an acre on size, the garden is densely planted with perennials, bulbs, grasses and also features a vegetable garden.

Dinner is served back at our hotel in the evening.

Sunday 19 July 2015

This morning, following breakfast, we have some free time here in Hereford, during which you may wish to visit **Hereford Cathedral & Gardens** (entrances not included). Here you have an opportunity to see the **Mappa Mundi** - an outstanding treasure of the medieval age which reveals how 13th century scholars interpreted the world in spiritual and geographical terms (entry not included). The map is undated but bears the name of "Richard de Haldingham e de Lafford", whom some historians have identified as Richard de Bello, Prebendary of Lafford in the diocese of Lincoln during the late 13th century. Together with evidence interpreted from the content of the map, a date of around 1290 is considered reliable. As part of this exhibition you can also see the world's largest surviving **Chained Library**, with over 1500 books dating from the 8th to the 19th centuries.

Later in the morning we head for home, breaking our journey with a visit to **Ashwood Nursery**, near Dudley. You can find inspiration in the beautifully maintained plant sales areas and glasshouses, wander through the garden shop and, if you need some friendly advice, the experienced Ashwood team are on hand to help. We also hope to see round the **private garden** of nursery owner John Massey, which includes informal borders, island beds and woodland dells. Set against the beautiful backdrop of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal, it is planted with an abundance of rare plants as well as many familiar favourites. Lunch is available here (not included).

Following this we continue our homeward journey and expect to arrive back in the early evening.

Included in the price

- Three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the Green Dragon Hotel, Hereford. All rooms have private facilities
- Comfortable coaching throughout
- Visits to the nursery and rose garden at David Austin Roses; the nursery and private garden at Ashwood Nursery and the gardens of The Laskett, Hampton Court Castle, Lower Hope, Stockton Bury, Montpelier, Hergest Croft, Stansbatch Barn and Upper Tan House
- Services of a Brightwater Holidays tour manager

Not included (per person)

- Single room supplement £45.00
- Insurance £18.50 (under 65); £37.00 (65-74); £55.50 (75-90)