



Great Castles, Country Houses & Gardens of Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Wales

28 MAY – 16 JUN 2019

Code: 21922

Tour Leaders **Richard Heathcote, Margaret Heathcote**

Physical Ratings 

A fascinating tour through the dramatic landscapes of northern England and Wales, visiting medieval towns, castles, gardens and grand country houses, many by private invitation.

Overview

Tour Highlights

- Join Richard Heathcote (Director of Benefaction at Carrick Hill, Adelaide, and National Chair of the Australian Garden History Society), and conservation architect [Margaret Heathcote](#) on a fascinating cultural garden tour of England & Wales, through dramatic and picturesque districts that are not on main tourist routes, to explore the ways in which British identity was formed through the impact of history and landscape.
- Stay in several heritage hotels including the [Old Hall Hotel Buxton](#); the 5-star [Chester Grosvenor](#), a half-timbered Grade II listed building; [Portmeirion village](#), designed by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis; and the National Trust's [Bodysgallen Estate](#) in Conwy county.
- Begin with an evening reception at Fairfax House in York, one of the finest Georgian houses in England.
- Spend a day at the grand Whig Chatsworth House, visiting the house and enjoying an afternoon at the [RHS Chatsworth Flower Show](#).
- Take a private out-of-hours tour of Castle Howard.
- Enjoy a special tour of the Sitwell family's library and book collections at Renishaw Hall.
- Explore the region's greatest historical homes and monuments – Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal, York Minster, Markenfield Hall and Newby Hall.
- Stroll through the beautiful York Gate Gardens and explore the contemporary Walled Garden at Scampston.
- Tour the Peak District National Park and visit Lyme Park with a local specialist.
- Visit James Bateman's Victorian garden at Biddulph Grange, and the timber-framed moated Tudor Little Moreton Hall.
- Explore the genesis of industrial England at fascinating sites like water-powered Quarry Bank Mill.
- Spend a day in revitalised Liverpool, with its fine art collection at the Walker Art Gallery and associations with the Beatles.
- Journey through the wild beauty of North Wales, including a trip on the cogwheel train to Snowdon's summit to enjoy a spectacular view over the region.
- Tour Edward I's magnificently preserved castles at Conwy, Harlech and Caernarfon.

Testimonials

The tour delivered everything it promised. It stands out from its competitors because of its sheer diversity and number and quality of the sites that are visited. I really think I have had an in-depth experience! Jenni, NSW.

This was a wonderful tour, giving an in-depth view of the history of English and Welsh gardens with beautiful examples. The tour also covered stunning examples of castles and grand houses, encompassing the history in an entertaining and enjoyable way. Congratulations, ASA! Sue, QLD

Brilliant organisation by leaders and the ASA office. The itinerary was very well thought out to give us wide coverage across the region, ranging from stunning landscapes to opulent great houses and precious remnants of castles and Tudor houses. A garden lover's delight. Michelle, VIC.

20-day Cultural Garden Tour of England & Wales

Overnight York (6 nights) • Buxton (4 nights) • Chester (3 nights) • Portmeirion (3 nights) • Conwy (3 nights)

Overview

Richard Heathcote (Director of Benefaction at Carrick Hill, Adelaide, and National Chair of the Australian Garden History Society) leads a tour through dramatic and picturesque locations to explore the ways in which British identity has been moulded by her histories and landscapes. We visit medieval castles, country houses and gardens, many by exclusive private invitation, from the late Middle Ages, Tudor, Elizabethan, Jacobean, and Georgian periods to the Arts and Crafts Movement. Dales and vales frame picturesque villages, spa towns and historic cities as we travel through more than half a dozen counties. History, laced with eccentricity, will be explored in our travels to the Sitwell family home at Renishaw, grand Chatsworth House, spectacular Fountains Abbey, Newby Hall, Castle Howard and Harewood House. We experience richly timbered Elizabethan dwellings like Little Moreton Hall; York's finest Georgian townhouse, Fairfax House, and its sublime Minster. In Derbyshire we explore the stunning Peak District and James Bateman's amazing Victorian garden at Biddulph Grange; unearth the genesis of industrial England at Quarry Bank Mill; dine in style at Michelin-starred Fischers at Baslow Hall; and explore charming villages attached to grand stately homes. From medieval- and Roman-walled Chester we visit the revitalised port city of Liverpool, home to a world-class fine art collection at the Walker Art Gallery. Our journey through the wild beauty of North Wales includes a cogwheel train to the summit of Mount Snowdon and Edward I's magnificently preserved castles at Conwy, Harlech and Caernarfon. It is no surprise that so many great BBC series, including *Pride and Prejudice*, *Brideshead Revisited* and *All Creatures Great and Small* were filmed in places we visit, for this tour offers a stunning visual feast of the best of England with a dash of delightfully dramatic Wales. We stay in several heritage hotels, including the Old Hall Hotel in Buxton, the 5-star Chester Grosvenor, a half-timbered Grade II listed building, Portmeirion village, designed by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, and the National Trust's Bodysgallen Estate in Conwy county.

Leaders



Richard Heathcote

Director of Benefaction at Carrick Hill house and garden, National Chair of the Australian Garden History Society, author & ABC presenter, graduate of the Attingham Summer School & member of Royal Collections Studies group, Richard introduces his Britain to ASA travellers.

Richard Heathcote is currently Director of Benefaction at Carrick Hill historic house and garden in Adelaide, after holding the position of Director for several years. He previously managed, for a decade, Rippon Lea Estate, the National Trust's flagship property in Melbourne. He is also National Chair of the Australian Garden History Society. He presented for ABC TV's *The New Eden* – a six part series tracing the evolution of the Australian garden, and has broadcast and published on heritage buildings and gardens. The fine collection of British and Australian paintings at Carrick Hill has provided rich material for Richard to create exhibitions and associated publications, using his particular talent of making art accessible to everyone. As a graduate of the prestigious Attingham Summer School for the Study of the English Country House, he has an extensive knowledge of architecture, collections and social history. Awarded a Churchill Fellowship, he was able to visit places in Canada and Britain looking at interpretation of heritage sites. Richard joined the prestigious 2011 Royal Collections Studies group that is granted permission to inspect the Queen's collection at Windsor Castle and other Royal palaces. Richard first joined ASA in 2006, as co-leader of ASA's tour run in association with the National Trust of Victoria, entitled *From Great Houses to village Greens: the Making of the English Landscape*.



Margaret Heathcote

A conservation architect and also an Attingham scholar. Her wide knowledge of heritage buildings will help you understand the history of the castles, halls and houses we visit.

Margaret Heathcote studied architecture at Sydney University, and assisted with artist Christo's wrapping of Little Bay. While completing her studies at the University of Westminster in London she sang with the Philharmonia Chorus of London, and had holiday jobs in Lyon, France and Michigan, USA. Margaret met Richard in London, and they returned to Sydney, later moving to Melbourne, where she worked in commercial architectural practices. A change of professional direction took her into the heritage field, working with historic civic buildings, residences and even lighthouses. Completing a Master's degree in Cultural Heritage at Deakin University included a study trip to heritage sites in Vietnam and Cambodia, and

a semester at the University of Leuven, Belgium. Now in Adelaide, Margaret works as a conservation architect with the SA State Heritage Unit, and attended the 2014 Attingham Trust Study Programme visiting heritage sites and collections in Belgium. She joined ASA as a tour manager in 2012.

Combine this tour with

Gardens of Italy: The Italian Lakes, the Piedmont, Tuscany, Umbria & Rome 2019

29 APR – 21 MAY 2019

Classic & Contemporary Gardens of England: A Designer's Guide. Including the Hampton Court Palace Flower Show

20 JUN – 4 JUL 2019

Landscapes, Art & Gardens of the Côte d'Azur, Provence & the Cévennes

5 MAY – 25 MAY 2019



Itinerary

The following itinerary describes a range of castles, country houses, museums and other sites which we plan to include. Many are accessible to the public, but others require special permission which may only be confirmed closer to the tour's departure. The daily activities described in this itinerary may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours, flight schedules and confirmation of private visits. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents prior to departure. The tour includes breakfast daily, lunches & evening meals indicated in the detailed itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=evening meal.

York, Yorkshire - 6 nights

Day 1: Tuesday 28 May, Manchester Airport – Adel – York

- Arrive Manchester Airport and transfer to Leeds
- York Gate Garden: Guided tour of gardens and afternoon tea
- Light (2-course) evening meal

Participants travelling on the ASA 'designated' flight are scheduled to arrive into Manchester Airport around midday. Upon arrival we transfer by private coach to York, where we spend the next six nights. Those taking alternative flights should meet the group at the Manchester Airport Arrivals Hall – please contact ASA to arrange a suitable meeting time.

En route to York we visit the highly innovative 'paradise' garden of York Gate, a one-acre garden tucked away behind the ancient church in Adel, on the northern outskirts of Leeds. Created by the Spencer family during the second half of the 20th century, and in 1994 bequeathed to Perennial, the Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society (founded 1839), it is a garden of extraordinary style and craftsmanship, widely recognised as one of the most innovative small gardens of the period. The garden is divided by yew and beech hedges into a series of smaller gardens, each with its own theme and style. From the formality of the herb garden with its topiary, to the dell with its half-hidden pathways and stream, every area has an intimacy

and charm of its own. Traditional materials are used with creativity and invention. From pretty paths to pergolas, detailing throughout is exquisite. Evergreens, clipped into strong architectural shapes, are used to spectacular effect throughout the garden.

Tonight we enjoy a light (2-course) evening meal at our hotel. (Overnight York) D

Day 2: Wednesday 29 May, York – Harewood – Harrogate – York

- Harewood House: Private tour, Thomas Chippendale and the Watercolours Collection
- Spa Town of Harrogate
- Evening Welcome Reception at Fairfax House (Exclusive private visit)

This morning we travel through West Yorkshire to Harewood House. There we embark on a private tour of one of England's greatest country houses, boasting architecture by John Carr (1772) and Charles Barry (1843), magnificent interiors by Adam, furniture by Thomas Chippendale, and a park designed by 'Capability' Brown. A particular focus of our tour will be the highly regarded watercolour painting collection.

We next visit the old spa town of Harrogate. Prior to the discovery of its iron- and sulphur-rich waters, Harrogate comprised two minor villages (High Harrogate and Low Harrogate), situated close to the historic town of Knaresborough. Harrogate's first mineral spring was discovered in 1571 by William Slingsby, who found that water from the Tewitt Well possessed similar properties to that of the springs of the Belgian town of Spa (which gave its name to spa towns). The medicinal properties of Harrogate's waters were widely publicised by one Edmund Deane, whose book *Spadacrene Anglica, or The English Spa Fountain*, was published in 1626 and Harrogate consequently developed considerable fame as a spa town.

This evening we walk from our hotel to Fairfax House, one of the finest Georgian houses in England. Here we enjoy the ambience of the house with beverages and canapés in a private reception, then take an exclusive tour of the house. (Overnight York) B

Day 3: Thursday 30 May, York

- Guided Walking Tour of York, including York Minster
- Afternoon at leisure

This morning we will take a walking tour of the historic centre of York. This vibrant city was founded by the Romans in 71AD. As Eboracum it was an important town in the Empire's north and in 208 the entire Roman world was governed from here. After being virtually abandoned following the fall of the Roman Empire and the withdrawal of the army, the town saw a period of population by the Anglo Saxons. York was first invaded by the Viking army on 1 November 866 and a new era began. After a short period of invasion and conquest, the Vikings chose to settle in York (which they called Jorvik) rather than return to Scandinavia. Archaeological excavations have revealed a wealth of evidence of the successful metal-based industries that were developed here, as well as the city's role in trade. By the time of the *Domesday Book* in 1086, York was second only to London in size and prosperity.

The next chapter in the city's history is Norman, when William the Conqueror marched on York intent on making this wealthy town part of his kingdom. He established a garrison here and built two castles to control access to the town from the River Ouse. There was considerable resistance to the Norman occupation of the town, with attempts to overthrow the new power. This was brutally suppressed in what is known as the 'Harrying of the North', when William extracted his vengeance on the population and many thousands died in a period of violence and famine, whilst the lively Viking city was systematically destroyed.

The Normans rebuilt York and it is to this period a number of the city's churches belong.

The medieval period was a Golden Age for York, when the town was a centre of trade and religion. However, following the War of the Roses and the defeat of Richard III to Henry Tudor, the city underwent another period of decline. The Reformation had a tremendous impact on York and its many churches and important religious houses which operated schools, hospitals, hospices and employed local citizens. The Dissolution of the Monasteries left a large hole in the finances of the city, and many religious buildings fell into disrepair. Elizabethan York saw a return to prosperity which continued until the Civil War, when the city was used as a Royalist stronghold and was besieged by the Parliamentary army. Once again, the religious and business focus of the town allowed it to rise again to regional prominence, and the Industrial Revolution brought new business opportunities to the region.

The Georgian period coincided with a building boom and York now boasts many fine Georgian mansions. Our guide will point out the many layers of the city's rich history that can be seen in the buildings, roads, walls and churches.

Our walking tour includes a visit to York Minster, one of England's greatest cathedrals, which has a long, intricate history. The present building, which has the finest medieval stained glass in England, had a number of precursors. In 1069, for example, the Normans destroyed the Anglo-Saxon cathedral and so in 1080 its Archbishop, Thomas, began a new cathedral that was completed in 1100. In 1137 its east end was destroyed by fire. A new Romanesque choir was built in 1175, a south transept added in 1220, and the north transept completed in 1253. In 1394 the present choir was begun, and the foundations of the Lady Chapel laid in 1361. In 1338, the Great West Window was completed. The Great East Window followed in 1405, and the Minster, now completed, was consecrated in 1472. Meanwhile, the Minster's original west towers had collapsed. The Minster became caught up in the Reformation – Thomas Wolsey was archbishop here – and in the Civil War, York remained a centre of Catholicism in England. 18th-century damage by fire and 19th-century restoration further modified this great building. Major restoration occurred again after another fire in 1984; in consequence York University has become one of England's most important architectural conservation centres.

After the conclusion of our visit to York Minster the remainder of the day is free to explore York further, at leisure. (Overnight York) B

Day 4: Friday 31 May, York – Fountains Abbey – Newby Hall – York

- Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal: Tour of Cistercian Abbey & Georgian Water Garden
- Church of St Mary
- Church of Christ the Consoler
- Newby Hall & Gardens

Today we visit England's largest ruined monastery, Fountains Abbey, situated in the beautiful Skell river valley, in which the 18th-century water garden of Studley Royal is also located. The view of the Abbey from the cliff above Studley Royal became a definitive instance of the 'Picturesque': a ruined Gothic abbey, evoking an ancient, pious culture, seen from a 'modern' 18th-century site. Flanked by two vast lawns set against awe-inspiring cliff faces, with the Skell running under its buildings, the Abbey is a masterpiece of 12th-century building ingenuity. Our tour of the site will take in spaces like the cellarium in which the lay brothers ate and slept; it retains much of its sophisticated vaulting.

In 1132 Fountains was founded in its isolated valley by Thurston, Archbishop of York, for a community that wished to return to a strict form of Benedictine rule; isolation being an ideal of medieval monasticism. The

valley was sheltered from the weather and had clean water, plentiful wood, and building stone of high quality. The Abbey subsequently came under reforming Cistercian rule. The Cistercians followed a rigorous daily regime, committed to long periods of silence and a subsistence diet. They wore habits of coarse undyed sheep's wool that earned them the name 'White Monks'. After Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries (1536-40), glass and lead from Fountains found their way to Ripon and York. Its buildings and parts of its estate were sold to Sir Richard Gresham, whose family subsequently sold them to Stephen Proctor, the builder of Fountains Hall. In 1767 the ruins were sold for £18,000 to William Aislabie, creator of Studley Royal.

The Aislabie family created Studley Royal Water Garden in a wild and well-wooded part of the valley. Its formal, geometric design and its extraordinary vistas constitute a very imaginative, free and individualistic interpretation of French formal garden tradition. Ground level views emphasise its sweeping horizontality, relieved by fabriques and the kind of statues favoured by Grand Tourists to Rome; from higher up the garden's complex structure reveals itself. Fabriques include the Neoclassical Temple of Piety (dedicated to Hercules), a rusticated Banqueting House, a Gothic octagon tower and a Temple of Fame, and a rotunda with wonderful views across the garden where 18th-century visitors picnicked. Other garden features include the Rustic Bridge, Hermit's Grotto, Half Moon Pond, Cascades, Canal, Fishing Tabernacles, Drum Fall and the Seven Bridges Valley in the Deer Park. Our garden tour climaxes at the end of the High Ride at 'The Surprise View', also called 'Anne Boleyn's Seat', because of a headless statue to be seen there! It gives a magnificent panorama of the distant Abbey ruins.

Returning from the end of the water gardens we climb a path through the fields to William Burges' St Mary's Church, one of Britain's finest Gothic Revival churches. From outside its chancel you can see all the way to Ripon Cathedral.

We next tour the house and gardens at Newby Hall, one of England's renowned Adam houses; its exceptional interior decoration and fine Neoclassical sculpture collection represent the epitome of 18th-century taste. Built in the 1690s in the style of Sir Christopher Wren, it was later enlarged and transformed by John Carr and subsequently by Robert Adam. It was the home of the Compton family and much of its superb collection was acquired on a Grand Tour by a Compton ancestor, William Weddell. The collection includes tapestries in the magnificent Gobelins Tapestry Room, a renowned gallery of classical statuary, and some of Chippendale's finest furniture. Its glorious garden was designed in the 1920s by Major Edward Compton, who was strongly influenced by the garden of Hidcote. Newby Hall's garden has many rare plants, including the National Collection of Cornus (Dogwood). It is famed for its main axis of double herbaceous borders, amongst the longest in Europe. Flanking this axis are numerous formal, compartmented gardens including a Rose Garden, a Water Garden, Autumn Garden and even a Tropical Garden. (Overnight York) BL

Day 5: Saturday 1 June, York – Castle Howard – Thirsk – Markenfield Hall – York

- Castle Howard: Private Guided tour of house & morning tea
- Market town of Thirsk, the Darrowby of the late James Herriot
- Markenfield Hall

This morning we will have a private tour of a masterpiece of the Baroque, one of England's greatest country houses, Castle Howard, the setting for the BBC series *Brideshead Revisited*. The 3rd Earl of Carlisle commissioned the 'castle' (a term often used for country mansions with no military purpose) from the gentleman-dilettante Sir John Vanbrugh, a fellow member of the famous Whig Kit-Cat Club. Nicholas Hawksmoor, architect of a number of Oxford colleges, assisted Vanbrugh here and at Blenheim. Vanbrugh designed a Baroque structure with two wings projecting symmetrically on either side of a north-south axis.

Castle Howard's crowning central dome over the Great Hall, where we have our morning tea, was added as an afterthought. The East Wing and the east end of the Garden Front, the Central Block (including the dome), and the west end of the Garden Front all received exuberant Baroque decoration of coronets, cherubs and urns. Doric pilasters are on the north front and Corinthian on the south. Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini, the Venetian Rococo painter, designed many of the house's interiors when he was living in England between 1708 and 1713. Much of his painting was unfortunately destroyed in a fire in 1940. The house remained incomplete on the death of the 3rd Earl in 1738, and Vanbrugh's design was never completed. The West Wing was designed in a Palladian style for the 4th Earl by Sir Thomas Robinson and was not completed until 1811. Much of the house, including the central dome, was destroyed by fire in 1940. Most of the devastated rooms were restored and the house was opened to the public in 1952.

Castle Howard has extensive and diverse gardens, including a large formal garden immediately behind the house. The house, flanked by two lakes, is prominently situated on a ridge, which was exploited to create a landscape garden that lies beyond the formal garden and merges with the surrounding park. Occupying this landscape are the Temple of the Four Winds at the end of the garden and the Mausoleum in the park. Castle Howard also has an arboretum called Ray Wood, and a walled garden that contains decorative rose and flower gardens. The garden architecture at Castle Howard also includes the ruined Pyramid, an Obelisk and several follies and other motifs in the form of fortifications. Another huge arboretum, called Kew at Castle Howard, was established in 1975 as a joint venture between Castle Howard and Kew Gardens. Managed by the Castle Howard Arboretum Trust, it has one of the most important collections of specimen trees in the United Kingdom.

Many of us grew up watching the television series *All Creatures Great and Small* and late this morning we travel to the bustling market town of Thirsk, where the stories originated. James Alfred Wight (James Herriot) moved to Thirsk to work as a country vet with Donald Sinclair in July 1940. Here there will be some time at leisure for lunch and to explore the town on a Saturday, which is Market Day.

Our day's program concludes with a private tour of Markenfield Hall, a charming medieval moated manor house. The privately owned home is tucked away down a mile-long winding drive and is the most complete surviving example of a medium-sized 14th-century country house in England. The earliest part of the house dates to c.1230, while the main sections were built 1310-1325 for John de Markenfield, Chancellor of the Exchequer to Edward II, with further additions and alterations in the 16th, 18th and 19th centuries. The history of the home has always been deeply intertwined with the fortunes of Fountains Abbey and it was one of the most important centres of the 1569 'Rising of the North'. The house has been lovingly restored and in 2008 it was the first recipient of the Sotheby's/Historic Houses Association Restoration Award, a prize that recognises the finest restoration of a historic house in Britain in a way which respects and is in sympathy with the age and quality of the building. (Overnight York) B

Day 6: Sunday 2 June, York – Scampston Estate – Mansion Cottage – Burton Agnes Hall – York

- Walled Garden of Scampston Hall
- Mansion Cottage
- Burton Agnes Hall

We begin this morning by driving to Scampston Hall, situated in peaceful North Yorkshire, to visit its famous Walled Garden. Sir Charles and Lady Legard's stunningly beautiful contemporary garden is quite unlike any other. Opened to the public for the first time in 2004, it has been received with great acclaim by visitors from all over the world. Set within the 18th-century walls of Scampston's original kitchen garden, today the Walled Garden has an exciting and unashamedly modern feel to it and complements the adjacent 18th-century 'Capability' Brown park. The garden had been derelict for nearly fifty years before Sir Charles and

Lady Legard undertook the huge task of renovating. Having adopted a traditional approach to the restoration of the house and park, they here produced a stunning garden with a contemporary feel with the help of leading garden designer, Piet Oudolf.

We next visit the small, private garden of Chris and Polly Myers' Mansion Cottage. This hidden garden offers beautiful views and a tranquil atmosphere. Lush, vibrant perennial planting is highlighted with grasses; features include a globe garden, mini hosta walk, 100-foot border, summerhouse, vegetable plot, cutlery, bee and butterfly border, ponds, decking areas and lawns.

Having visited two contemporary gardens we now travel back in time to visit Burton Agnes Hall, an exquisite Elizabethan house filled with fine art, furniture, porcelain and impressionist and modern paintings. Fifteen generations have filled the Hall with treasures over five centuries, from magnificent carvings commissioned when the Hall was built to French Impressionist paintings, contemporary furniture, tapestries and other modern artwork. Lawns and topiary bushes surround the Hall and its gardens contain a maze, giant games, a jungle garden, and more than four thousand plant species. Burton Agnes Hall's walled garden won the Historic Houses Association and Christies' Garden of the Year Award 2005. We shall be given a guided tour of this beautiful property before returning to York. (Overnight York) BL

Buxton, Derbyshire - 4 nights

Day 7: Monday 3 June, York – Renishaw Hall – Haddon Hall – Buxton

- Renishaw Hall: Private Literary Tour of the Sitwell family home & gardens
- Bakewell
- Haddon Hall

We depart York early this morning and travel south to Renishaw Hall, a country house in Derbyshire where the Sitwell family has lived in this ancestral home for nearly four centuries. On arrival we take a tour of Renishaw's beautiful Italianate garden, park and lake, that were created by Sir George Sitwell, father of Osbert, Edith and Sacheverall. Sir George spent much of his life in Italy, where he had bought the huge former palace-villa of the Florentine Acciaiuoli family, Montegufoni. In England, he wanted to create an Italian garden in contrast to Gertrude Jekyll's 'colourful' designs. The use of water, fountains, temples, cave and avenues adds effect and shelter for tender specimen plants.

The interior of Renishaw Hall, which features an antechamber designed by Edwin Lutyens, is graced with many Italian artworks and pieces of furniture collected by Sir George. The painting collection includes Salvator Rosa's *Belisarius in Disgrace*, a painting that was once much appreciated by Benjamin Franklin. Our tour will have a literary focus, as Renishaw Hall is a house 'built on books', with a wide range of literary interests and connections over a period of almost 400 years. Each Sitwell generation has made its unique contribution to the literary legacy of the house and the family, particularly the famous 'literary trio' – Edith, Osbert and Sacheverell Sitwell. Our tour will follow the fortunes of the Sitwell family as wealthy book collectors in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and will include a special visit to the Renishaw Hall Library.

After free time for lunch in the small market town of Bakewell (famous for its pudding) we continue our tour of Derbyshire with a visit to Haddon Hall, arguably the finest example of a fortified medieval manor house in existence, and dating mostly from the 14th and 15th centuries. Originally owned by the descendants of William the Conqueror's illegitimate son, Peverel, it was passed through marriage to the Manners family, later to become Dukes of Rutland, in whose possession it has remained. Haddon Hall affords a wonderful glimpse of English Early Modern country house design, because it remained closed and empty for two hundred years after the Dukes of Rutland moved to Belvoir Castle in the 17th century. The 9th Duke of

Rutland reopened it in the 1920s. Because the grounds had escaped transformation into a landscape garden it influenced Edwardian gardeners deeply; its series of 17th-century terraces were particularly important. It embodies a vision of 'old England' symbolised by the rambling roses growing over its old stone walls. These roses are quite superb (some are 80 years old), and also impressive are the delphinium beds. There are recreations of 17th century box-edged parterres or knots, and below there are wonderful river meadows with a small and large stone bridge, which feature prominently in the 2006 BBC TV dramatisation of *Jane Eyre*. The approach to the house has a wonderful topiary garden.

The house itself has sections from a number of periods from the late 12th century to c.1620. The Banqueting Hall is medieval, but the house is predominantly Elizabethan, its pride being the oak panelled Long Gallery; the diamond panes of the gallery's many windows are set at different angles to facilitate the entry of daylight. It also has a magnificent collection of English, Flemish and French tapestries, remains of a larger collection lost in a 1925 fire. Most important are five early 17th century English tapestries that may have belonged to King Charles I. The chapel has medieval frescoes, and the house also has a fine painting by Rex Whistler (1933), the artist of Plas Newydd.

Next we continue our journey to the elegant spa town of Buxton, which will be our base for the next four nights. Our hotel, built in 1550 by the Earl of Shrewsbury, the 4th husband of formidable Bess of Hardwick, is reputedly the oldest in England and has hosted during its long history such luminaries as Mary, Queen of Scots and Daniel Defoe. It is located in the centre of the town opposite one of the most exquisite Edwardian opera houses in the British Isles. (Overnight Buxton) B

Day 8: Tuesday 4 June, Buxton – Peak District – Castleton – Lyme Park – Buxton

- White Peak District
- Castleton Village, Peak District National Park
- Lyme Park, House & Garden

This morning we enjoy the stunning and diverse scenery of Britain's first designated national park, the Peak District National Park (1951). The Peak District is situated at the southern end of the Pennines in Central England and covers most of northern Derbyshire as well as parts of Cheshire, Yorkshire and Staffordshire. It has been prominent in numerous movies and TV dramas, including the BBC's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*. A local guide will point out some of the locations used during filming whilst introducing Derbyshire's bustling market towns, villages, and showing us its hills, dales and rivers.

Following lunch in Castleton, one of the most beautiful villages in the Peak District, we visit Lyme Park, the largest house in Cheshire. A Tudor house transformed into an Italianate palace, it is famous for its role as 'Pemberley', Darcy's home, in the BBC's 1995 version of *Pride and Prejudice*. Aficionados of the series will recall the scene of Lizzy meeting the dripping figure of Mr Darcy following his dip in the lake! Thomas Legh, an intrepid explorer and collector who made a pioneering journey through Egypt and up the Nile in 1816, saved Lyme Park from ruin. An extremely wealthy young man, he set Lewis Wyatt the huge task of reviving this vast, outdated family home. Wyatt's remodelling, although extremely thorough, in no way compromised the 17th-century character of Lyme Park. The saloon, with its magnificent rococo ceiling and Grinling Gibbons-carved wood decorations, speaks amply of his sensitive approach. (Overnight Buxton) BL

Day 9: Wednesday 5 June, Buxton – Chatsworth House – Buxton

- Chatsworth House: one of the grandest Whig country houses
- RHS Chatsworth Flower Show (Members' Day)

This morning we visit Chatsworth House, one of the grandest Whig country houses, situated in a spectacular landscape in the heart of the Peak District. It is the home of the 12th Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, of the Cavendish family. The late Duchess, born Deborah Mitford (Debo) (1920-2014), the youngest of the famous Mitford sisters, revived the economy of the estate after it had been almost destroyed by death duties following the death of the 10th Duke in 1950 (the Chatsworth Settlement). The core of the house is from 1552, but its great days date from the 1690s, after the 4th Earl of Devonshire was created 1st Duke in 1694 for his part in the Glorious Revolution (1688). Generations of prominent Whigs followed and so Chatsworth represents the first phase of the great Whig country house (Stowe represents the second). The 1st Duke rebuilt the old house in stages, adding its fine Baroque façades, and it was substantially complete by 1707. The Painted Hall, whose ceilings and walls carry scenes of the life of Julius Caesar (1692-94) by Louis Laguerre, leads to a grand staircase. The State Apartments are the most important late Baroque presentation rooms in England, with ceilings by Laguerre and Mortlake tapestries made from Raphael's tapestry cartoons now in the Victoria & Albert Museum. The chapel, designed by Cibber, is equally impressive, with illusionistic paintings by Laguerre and woodcarvings by Grinling Gibbons.

Chatsworth's late Baroque gardens, like almost all great English Baroque gardens, were swept away when the 4th Duke commissioned Capability Brown to replace them (1760s). One survival is an Italianate cascade designed in 1696 by Grillet, a pupil of Le Nôtre. Thomas Archer, arguably the English architect who best understood the Italian Baroque, added the Temple or Cascade House above it in 1703. In the 19th century Joseph Paxton, the 6th Duke's gardener, created a great glasshouse for exotic specimens; its revolutionary design led to his architectural triumph, London's Crystal Palace. Paxton also built the Emperor fountain, whose jet rises 280 feet, and a vast rock garden. Newer additions to the garden include a serpentine hedge.

A highlight of our tour is a visit to the [RHS Chatsworth Flower Show](#) on Members' Day, set in the grounds of Chatsworth house and laid out to complement the rolling Peak District landscape. The show features magnificent displays of plants and flowers, planting ideas, botanical art, and talks and demonstrations. The vast marquee houses specialist plants and displays, and offers the opportunity to explore plant-themed habitats such as woodland, jungle, and Mediterranean. We discover an exciting array of Show Gardens, which display innovative designs, and investigate the 'Free-Form' category, which provides a blank slate for designers to showcase cutting-edge ideas. This visit has been designed so that you are free to wander through the event at your leisure. This is a treat for all gardeners and plant enthusiasts! (Overnight Buxton) B

Day 10: Thursday 6 June, Buxton – Quarry Bank – Buxton – Baslow Hall – Buxton

- Quarry Bank Mill & Styal Estate
- Walking Tour of Buxton, followed by time at leisure
- Group Dinner at Fischer's, Baslow Hall

This morning we drive to Quarry Bank Mill, a rare Georgian cotton mill that is both one of Britain's most important industrial heritage sites as well as a working mill that produces over 9000 metres (10,000 yards) of cloth each year. Founded in 1784 by a young textile merchant, Samuel Greg, Quarry Bank Mill was one of the first generation of water-powered cotton spinning mills. By the 1830s Samuel Greg & Co. was one of the largest cotton manufacturing businesses in Britain with four other mills as well as Quarry Bank.

This mill reflects the earliest phase of the industrialisation of England, when manufacturing had not yet moved to great industrial cities, but rather occurred where water was plentiful. Such early industrial complexes often are built in a fine, simple architectural style not unlike some of the earliest colonial architecture in Australia. Our visit here offers a unique opportunity to see the two major sources of power available during the Industrial Revolution. The most powerful working waterwheel in Britain illustrates how

power can be harnessed to drive machinery. A Boulton and Watt type beam engine (c.1830) and an 1880s Horizontal Engine powered by steam bring the past to life. Chief Engineer Barry Cook will be on hand to explain how everything operates. Time permitting, we also visit the three-hectare (8-acre) 'Secret Garden', the Greg family's lovely, picturesque valley retreat adjoining the mill. Recently restored, it has now been opened to the public for the first time.

We return to Buxton for a short walking tour of the town, followed by time at leisure to continue exploring. Tonight we dine at Fischer's Restaurant at Baslow Hall. The Michelin-starred dining room serves classical dishes created with balance and finesse, using the very best of fresh local and regional produce. The setting within a charming manor house further enhances this very special dining experience. (Overnight Buxton) BD

Chester, Cheshire - 3 nights

Day 11: Friday 7 June, Buxton – Little Moreton – Biddulph Grange Garden – Chester

- Little Moreton Hall
- Biddulph Grange Garden: Private guided tour of this amazing Victorian Garden

This morning we drive to Little Moreton Hall for a guided tour of one of Britain's finest timber-framed, moated Tudor manor houses, which featured in David Dimbleby's *How we built Britain* documentary (2007). Of particular importance is its magnificent Long Gallery that has unusual plasterwork. Its grounds feature a delightful knot garden.

This afternoon we take a private tour of Biddulph Grange Gardens. Biddulph is a treasure trove of 19th-century eccentricities and a rare surviving example of a High Victorian garden. Our private guided tour of the garden, to be opened specially for our group, leads us down tunnels and pathways taking us on a miniature tour of the world, with rare and exotic plantings and picturesque garden architecture, such as an Egyptian court and elegant Italian terraces. There is a unique Chinese garden with a temple enclosed within its own Great Wall of China. Some of the more eccentric features of the garden are an upside-down tree and strange stone sculpture. Biddulph also has an unusual geological gallery where the garden's creator, James Bateman, showed his fossil and geological collection. It was arranged to correspond with the seven days of creation in the Genesis story and is contemporaneous with the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* (1859), a seminal work in scientific literature and a pivotal work in evolutionary biology.

We next drive a short distance to the city of Chester, lying on the River Dee, close to the border of Wales. (Overnight Chester) B

Day 12: Saturday 8 June, Chester

- Guided Tour of Chester Cathedral
- Walking Tour of Chester
- Afternoon at leisure

A Roman legion founded Chester on the Dee River in the 1st century A.D. It reached its pinnacle as a bustling port in the 13th and 14th centuries but declined following the gradual silting up of the river. While other walls of medieval cities of England were either torn down or badly fragmented, Chester still has 3 kilometres of fortified city walls intact. The main entrance into Chester is Eastgate, which dates only from the 18th century. Within the walls are half-timbered houses and shops, though not all of them date from

Tudor days. Chester is unusual in that some of its builders used black-and-white timbered facades even during the Georgian and Victorian eras.

This morning we visit Chester Cathedral. The present building, founded in 1092 as a Benedictine abbey, was made an Anglican cathedral church in 1541. Many architectural restorations were carried out in the 19th century, but older parts have been preserved. Notable features include the fine range of monastic buildings, particularly the cloisters and refectory, the chapter house, and the superb medieval woodcarving in the choir (especially the misericords). Also worth seeing are the long south transept with its various chapels, the consistory court, and the medieval roof bosses in the Lady Chapel. We then take a walking tour of this interesting medieval city. The afternoon is free for you to further explore Chester at leisure.
(Overnight Chester) B

Day 13: Sunday 9 June, Chester – Liverpool – Chester

- Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
- Time at leisure at Liverpool's refurbished Albert Dock
- The Beatles sites: Penny Lane, Strawberry Field, Mendips and 20 Forthlin Road (exteriors)

Liverpool, with its famous waterfront on the River Mersey, is a great shipping port and industrial centre and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. King John launched Liverpool on its road to glory when he granted it a charter in 1207. Before that, it had been a tiny 12th-century fishing village, but it quickly became a port for shipping men and materials to Ireland. In the 18th century, it grew to prominence because of the sugar, spice, and tobacco trade with the Americans. By the time Victoria came to the throne, Liverpool had become Britain's biggest commercial seaport.

This morning we drive to Liverpool to visit the Walker Art Gallery, opened in 1877. Here, we focus on its Pre-Raphaelite collection and its Victorian sculpture. The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, founded in London in 1848, consisted of seven young artists dedicated to the revival of styles that preceded the High Renaissance: John Millais, William Holman Hunt, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, James Collinson, F G Stephens, Thomas Woolmer and William Michael Rossetti. Liverpool was the only provincial city with its own Pre-Raphaelite school (The Liverpool Academy). The Walker Art Gallery collection includes Rossetti's *Dante's Dream* (1871), Millais' *Isabella*, Holman Hunt's *Triumph of the Innocents* and one of the world's finest corpora of Victorian sculpture.

We take a short walk to Liverpool's recently refurbished Albert Dock, where there will be time at leisure to explore this precinct. Albert Dock features a number of museums, including the Merseyside Maritime Museum, the award-winning 'Beatle Story' and numerous restaurants and cafés. In your leisure time you may wish to visit the Tate Liverpool, which displays much of the National Collection of 20th-century art, complemented by changing art exhibitions of international standing such as the prints of Joan Miró or the sculptures of the iconoclastic British sculptress Rachel Whiteread.

Before returning to Chester we make a short tour to view a number of the sites associated with the Beatles including Penny Lane, Strawberry Field and the childhood homes of John Lennon and Sir Paul McCartney.
(Overnight Chester) B

Portmeirion, Wales - 3 nights

Day 14: Monday 10 June, Chester – Erddig Hall – Powis Castle – Portmeirion

- Erddig Hall: private tour of house

- Powis Castle and Garden
- Dinner at Hotel Portmeirion

Early this morning we depart Chester and cross into Wales for a private tour of Erddig Hall. Located on the outskirts of Wrexham, Erddig is one of the finest and evocative country houses in Britain, reflecting the upstairs-downstairs life of a gentry family over 250 years. Mainly of the 18th century, it has fine furniture, textiles and wallpaper. The servants' quarters are particularly well preserved.

We continue south to Powis Castle and have lunch here on arrival. Powis, a 13th-century border castle, features the rare 17th-century Baroque garden of William Herbert, first Marquess of Powis. Herbert, a Roman Catholic, went into exile with James II after the Glorious Revolution (1688). In 1703 the Herberts returned from exile, their taste shaped by great French gardens such as St Germain-en-Laye, where the Stuart court was located. This put them out of step with new directions in Whig landscape gardening. Their grand Baroque terraces survive, with an extraordinary yew hedge, planted in 1720, that is now old and irregular in a way never intended when it was first established. Powis did not escape change entirely. A Dutch-style water garden laid out in 1705 in the flat meadows below the castle was swept away in the 1770s, and in part of this area an Edwardian formal garden was laid out in 1912. The Baroque terraces enjoy magnificent views. Against them are spectacular herbaceous borders by Graham Stuart Thomas and Jimmy Handcock. There are rich flower displays in vases on the edges of the terraces and in its niches. They are lined with lead statues by John van Nost, examples of the early 18th-century taste for picturesque Italianate rustic garden figures. In the castle courtyard stands a lead statue of Pegasus bearing aloft the personification of Fame, original centrepiece of the lost Dutch water garden. Van Nost's pupil, Andries Carpentière, based it on Antoine Coysevox's group of Fame at Louis XIV's palace at Marly. South and east of the castle is a Wilderness with a fine collection of trees and shrubs planted in the 20th century.

A Herbert family member married into the Clive family in the 18th century and their descendants own Powis today. Powis' Clive Museum displays superb Indian treasures collected by family members, including Robert, 'Clive of India'. The castle interior has a fine Baroque staircase (1674-1685) with a ceiling by Verrio, its walls painted in 1705 by his pupil Gerard Landscroon, who also painted the library. G.F. Bodley's dining room with fine panelled walls and Jacobean plasterwork and his Oak Drawing Room are fine examples of Edwardian taste. A grand Baroque state bedroom (1665-1685) is the only one in Britain with a bed railed with a balustrade in the manner of Louis XIV's Versailles. A superb T-shaped Elizabethan Long Gallery (1587-1595) has original plasterwork and chimneypieces. The castle's sculpture collection includes marble busts of Roman emperors and a Roman statue of a cat playing with a snake that Robert Clive acquired in Rome. An interesting painting collection includes a fine view of Verona by Bernardo Bellotto.

From Powis Castle we cross the mountains, rising above the treeline, before descending into Gwynedd, an area in north-west Wales. We make our way to the resort village of Portmeirion, our base for the next three nights. Portmeirion is the creation of the flamboyant Arts and Crafts architect and garden designer Sir Clough Williams-Ellis (1883-1978), a dedicated sailor who loved the Amalfi Coast, the Cinque Terre, and, especially, Portofino, and decided to create his own version of them in Wales. In 1925 he bought a spectacular Snowdonian peninsula site not far from his family house at Plas Brondanw, overlooking an estuary that forms a vast sandy beach at low tide. On the cliffs above Portmeirion's only pre-existing structure (now Hotel Portmeirion) he built a range of picturesque buildings and towers as a kind of village-hotel. Many writers, including Evelyn Waugh, lived and wrote here in the '20s, '30s and '40s. These village houses surround a garden, forming a colourful, seaside version of Arts and Crafts taste. Many are tiny and are built using parts of demolished buildings. Clough later espoused a Romantic version of the Dutch 17th and 18th-century style. He was not afraid to create buildings in painted sheet metal, sometimes painted illusionistically to give a sense of relief, or to create buildings that had no other function than to look interesting: he built a domed building because he felt an Italianate coastal village should have one.

Portmeirion also has interesting woodland walks, one of which takes you past a pet cemetery and 'lighthouses'.

Williams-Ellis wanted to demonstrate that architecture could be both beautiful and fun but he was also a serious conservationist and town planner. He argued against uncontrolled suburban development (*England and the Octopus*), founded the Council for the Protection of Rural England, saved Stowe, and contributed to the planning of New Towns in post WWII Britain. His daughter created the Portmeirion pottery works, which is still run by the family. Tonight we enjoy a group dinner at Hotel Portmeirion. (Overnight Portmeirion) BLD

Day 15: Tuesday 11 June, Portmeirion – Caernarfon – Llanberis – Snowdonia National Park – Portmeirion

- Caernarfon Castle: the greatest of the Edwardian Castles
- Dolbardarn Castle (exterior)
- Snowdon Mountain Railway – excursion by diesel engine to summit
- Dinner at Castell Deudraeth

This morning we head further north along the coast to reach Caernarfon, located at the southern end of the Menai Strait between north Wales and Anglesey. Caernarfon was considered a strategically excellent place to build a castle during Edward I's invasions of Wales. Completed in 1330, the castle was built on a site that had once been a Roman fort and then a Norman motte and bailey; it was to become a symbol of English dominance in a region strong in Welsh tradition and anti-English feeling. To stamp his supremacy even further on the native population, Edward ensured that the birth of his son, the first English Prince of Wales, took place in the castle (1284) and the castle continues to be the setting for the Investiture of the Prince of Wales, the last being Prince Charles in 1969.

Following lunchtime at leisure, we view Dolbadarn Castle. Built for Llywelyn the Great in the 1230s, it features a massive round-towered keep. We then take the cogwheel railway train to the summit of Snowdon to enjoy the breathtaking views over the area. In the late afternoon we return to Portmeirion.

Tonight we dine at Castell Deudraeth, a Victorian castellated mansion Williams-Ellis bought from his uncle in 1931 with the intention of incorporating it into the Portmeirion hotel complex. The intervening war and subsequent building restrictions delayed its incorporation until 2001 when it was finally opened. Portmeirion is now owned by a charitable trust. (Overnight Portmeirion) BD

Day 16: Wednesday 12 June, Portmeirion – Harlech – Plas Brondanw – Portmeirion

- Harlech Castle
- Plas Brondanw Gardens
- Afternoon at leisure in the village of Portmeirion

This morning we make a brief visit to Harlech Castle. *Men of Harlech* or *The March of the Men of Harlech* is a song and military march which is traditionally said to describe events during the longest siege in British history (1461-1468) which took place here during the War of the Roses. Edward's tried and tested 'walls within walls' model was put together in super-fast time between 1283 and 1295 by an army of nearly a thousand skilled craftsmen and labourers. The structure boasts two rings of walls and towers, with an immensely strong east gatehouse. It was impregnable from almost every angle. Its secret weapon was a 200-foot (61m) long stairway which still leads from the castle to the cliff base. Access via the stairway to the sea and crucial supplies kept the castle's besieged inhabitants fed and watered. When it was first built, a channel would have connected the castle and the sea. You could have sailed a boat up to the moat. Seven

hundred years later, the sea has receded and you could say the castle appears almost stranded, waiting for the tide to turn once more.

Next we visit Plas Brondanw, the home of Clough Williams-Ellis between 1902 and 1960. It has one of the great Arts and Crafts gardens, noted for its structure of yew-hedged compartments. Inspired by stunning views of the mountains of Snowdonia, Clough cleverly 'borrowed' the peaks of the Snowdon and Knight mountains visually by using the former to establish the chief axis of the garden, and revealing the latter through a window-opening cut in a hedge. Within the grounds of Plas Brondanw is Folly Castle, described on a plaque as 'a wedding present from the Welsh Guards to Clough Williams-Ellis and Amabel Strachey in 1915. Located on a small hill, the folly affords good views of the surrounding landscape. It has featured in the film *Inn of the Sixth Happiness* and the Doctor Who film, *The Five Doctors*. We enjoy a light buffet-style lunch at Plas Brondanw before retuning to Portmeirion, where we have the afternoon and evening at leisure to explore the village and its beautiful gardens. (Overnight Portmeirion) BL

Bodysgallen Hall, Conwy, Wales - 3 nights

Day 17: Thursday 13 June, Portmeirion – Gwydir Castle – Bodnant Garden – Bodysgallen Hall

- Gwydir Castle
- Bodnant Garden
- Gardens of Bodysgallen Hall
- Dinner at Bodysgallen Hall

This morning we drive to Gwydir Castle beneath Carreg y Gwalch (Rock of the Falcon), the ancestral home of the powerful Wynn Family, descendants of the kings of Gwynedd, and one of the most significant families of North Wales during the Tudor and Stuart periods. The Castle is being sympathetically restored by the present owners, who will introduce us to their house and garden.

Following our tour of Gwydir Castle we travel to Bodnant Garden. Bodnant Garden occupies an 80-acre westward sloping site above the River Conwy that looks across the valley towards the Snowdonia range. Its spectacular garden was the inspired work of the second Lord Aberconway who in 1902, with his mother's encouragement, conceived and constructed its great terraces and organised the mass planting of Chinese rhododendrons. Appointed in 1920, Bodnant's head gardener, Frederick Puddle, undertook an extensive and successful rhododendron hybridising programme, a project continued until today by three generations of Aberconways and Puddles. It is the archetypal plantperson's garden, where exotic species brought from China or the Himalayas were first cultivated in Britain.

The garden has two parts. The upper part surrounding the house consists of five Italianate terraces on which herbaceous borders surround informal shady lawns. Its most famous feature is the laburnum walk, a fifty-five metre long tunnel that becomes a mass of yellow blooms from late May to early June. Lower down is the Pin-Mill, a reconstructed garden folly. From here the ground drops away to a deep, damp valley, known as The Dell, along which rushes the river Hiraethlyn. Here, in the Pinetum and Wild Garden, grow Britain's earliest plantings of the Metasequoia (Dawn Redwood), discovered only in the 1940s.

From Bodnant Garden we continue north to Bodysgallen Hall, which will be our base for the next 3 nights. Bodysgallen is a manor house in Conwy county borough, north Wales, near the village of Llanrhos. Since 2008 the house has been owned by the National Trust. We plan to arrive at the hall in time for you to enjoy a walk through the hall's magnificent 200 acres of gardens before dinner. (Overnight Bodysgallen Hall) BD

Day 18: Friday 14 June, Bodysgallen Hall – Penrhyn Castle – Conwy – Bodysgallen Hall

- Penrhyn Castle
- Time at leisure in Conwy
- Plas Mawr
- Conwy Castle

This morning we journey along the coast to visit the enormous Penrhyn Castle, which sits between Snowdonia and the Menai Strait. Built in 1820-35 in neo-Norman style, this is one of the most sumptuous country houses of its time. It features a one-ton slate bed made for Queen Victoria, elaborate carvings, plasterwork and mock-Norman furniture. It also has an outstanding collection of paintings. The stable block houses a fascinating railway museum.

Midday we travel to Conwy, and following some time at leisure for lunch we visit Plas Mawr, possibly the best preserved Elizabethan town house in Great Britain. It was built by Robert Wynn between 1576 and 1585 and its interior has elaborately decorated plaster ceilings and fine wooden screens.

Castle Conwy, which, like Caernarfon, was constructed by Edward I between 1283 and 1289 as one of the key fortresses in his 'iron ring' of castles to contain the Welsh, dominates the town. A World Heritage site, Conwy has no concentric 'walls within walls' because they were not needed. Its massive military strength springs from the rock on which it stands and seems to grow naturally. Soaring curtain walls and eight huge round towers give the castle an intimidating presence undimmed by the passage of time.

This evening we are at leisure. You may wish to dine at Bodysgallen Hall, or perhaps take a short taxi ride (approx. 10 mins) to the seaside town of Llandudno. (Overnight Bodysgallen Hall) B

Day 19: Saturday 15 June, Bodysgallen Hall – Anglesey Island – Bodysgallen Hall

- Plas Newydd House & Gardens
- Bryn Celli Ddu Burial Chamber
- Farewell Dinner at Bodysgallen Hall

This morning we depart Bodysgallen Hall for an excursion to the Isle of Anglesey. Here we visit the house and gardens at Plas Newydd. James Wyatt redesigned this elegant old home in the 18th century in a Gothic style and its 1930s interior is famous for its association with Rex Whistler. Like Williams-Ellis, Whistler belonged to that underrated strand of mid 20th-century British culture that looked to the past with gusto. Uninhibited by modernist theory, they did not hesitate to revive the great traditions of the past. In the dining room, Whistler created his masterpiece, a vast mural for the sixth Marquess of Anglesey. This mural, eighteen metres wide, was executed on one enormous piece of canvas that Whistler had made on a special French loom. Within an Arcadian and Romantic coastal landscape are romantic allusions to Whistler's unrequited love for Lady Caroline, the beautiful eldest married daughter. On the painting's left side is a depiction of Romeo and Juliet in which the young Whistler (Romeo) languishes beneath the balcony of Lady Caroline (Juliet).

The mild climate of the coastal setting of the gardens at Plas Newydd is ideal for many woody plants from warmer temperate regions of the world. While the bones of the garden were set out in the late 18th century by leading landscape gardener Humphrey Repton, much has changed in the intervening centuries. A long and broad sweep of lawn fringed and broken by trees to the west of the house is known as 'the West Indies', and at the end of the Long Walk you arrive at an arboretum known as 'Australasia' that features, among other things, a collection of eucalyptus, added in the 20th century. A wild and exotic wood of rhododendrons was established in the 1930s by the sixth Marquess and added to by the 'thinnings' sent from Lord Aberconway of Bodnant as a wedding present to Lord Anglesey in 1948. For three seasons, lorry-

loads of rhododendrons arrived with two gardeners to plant them.

Following a light lunch at Plas Newydd's café, we visit the prehistoric site of Bryn Celli Ddu, meaning 'the mound in the dark grove'. This is an impressive Neolithic chambered tomb with partially restored entrance passage and mound, on the site of a former henge monument.

In the late afternoon we return to Conwy, where we shall enjoy a farewell dinner together at Bodysgallen Hall. (Overnight Bodysgallen Hall) BLD

Day 20: Sunday 16 June, Bodysgallen Hall – Manchester Airport. Tour Ends.

- Departure transfer to Manchester Airport

This morning we depart Bodysgallen Hall and travel to Manchester Airport for our return flight to Australia. The ASA 'designated' flight is scheduled to depart in the early afternoon. B

Accommodation

20-day Cultural Garden Tour of England & Wales

ASA has selected a range of 3- to 5-star hotels that are themselves historical buildings and/or are located in historical centres. All hotels provide rooms with en suite bathroom.

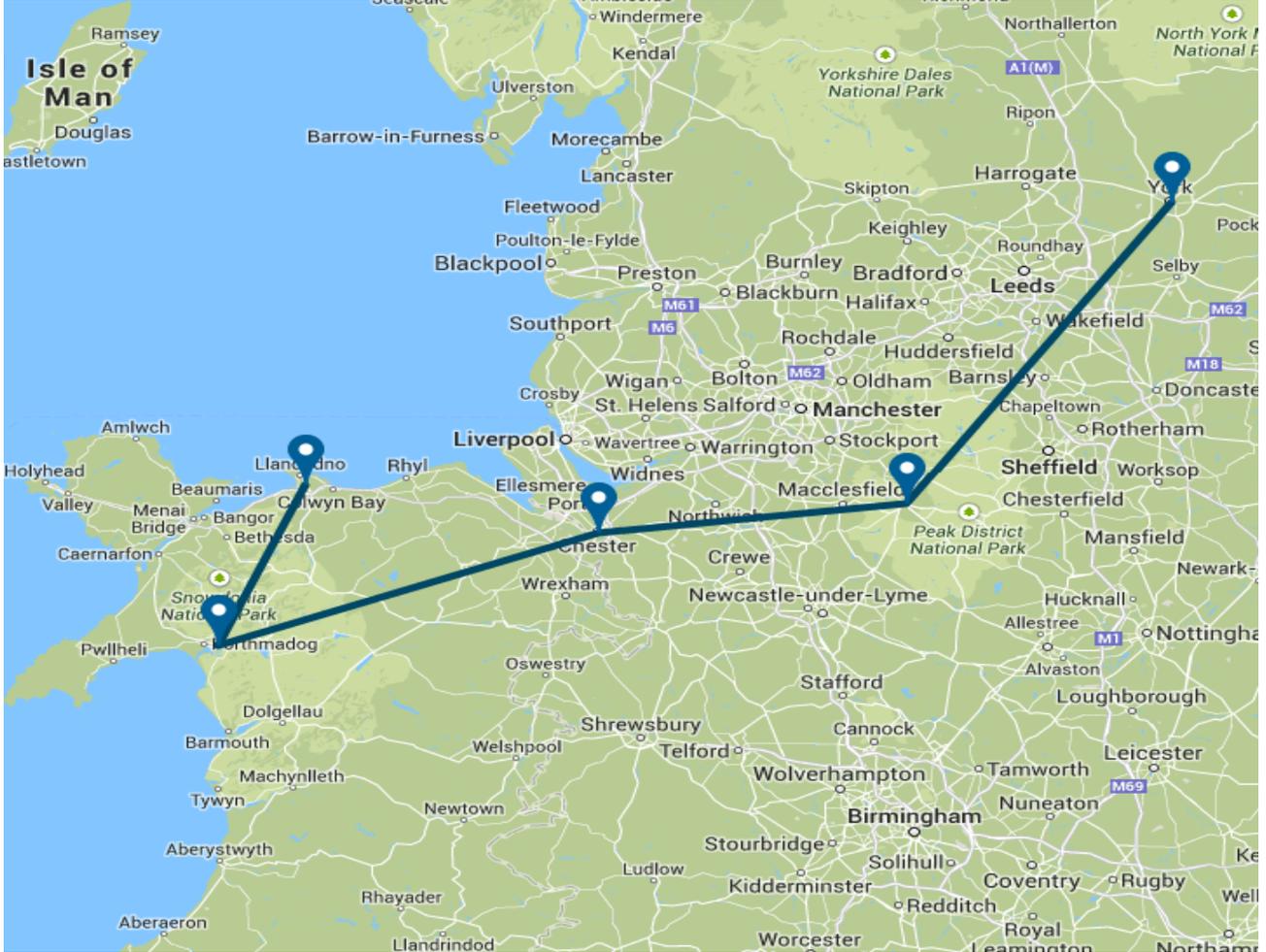
- York (6 nights): 4-star DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel – nestled alongside the city walls at Monk Bar, a short walk from York Minster, this hotel has recently undergone a £3 million refurbishment. doubletree3.hilton.com
- Buxton (4 nights): 3-star Old Hall Hotel – reputed to be the oldest hotel in England, and located in the heart of Derbyshire's market town. www.oldhallhotelbuxton.co.uk
- Chester (3 nights): 5-star Chester Grosvenor – this Grade II listed building was built between 1863 and 1866 and is owned by the Duke of Westminster. It is located inside the city walls next to the famous Eastgate Clock. www.chestergrosvenor.com
- Portmeirion (3 nights): 3/4-star Hotel Portmeirion & village cottages – the main building of the hotel was built around 1850 (extended by Clough Williams-Ellis in 1926 & 1930; listed Grade II 1971) and was the original mansion of Aber Iâ, and first described by Richard Richards in 1861 as "one of the most picturesque of all the summer residences to be found on the sea-coast of Wales." www.portmeirion.wales/
- Conwy Borough (3 nights): AA 4-star Bodysgallen Hall – a manor house in Conwy county, north Wales, near the village of Llanrhos. Since 2008 the house has been owned by The National Trust. It is a grade I listed building surrounded by over 200 acres of magnificent gardens. Accommodation is provided in the hall's cluster of cottages. www.bodysgallen.com

Note: *Hotels are subject to change, in which case a hotel of similar standard will be provided.*

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a single-occupancy room throughout the tour. In all hotels on this tour, this will be a double/twin room for single occupancy. The number of rooms available for single occupancy is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$11,180.00 Land Content Only – Early Bird Special: Book Before 31 July 2018

AUD \$11,380.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$2190.00 Single Supplement

For competitive Economy, Business or First Class airfares and/or group airfares please contact ASA for further information.

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 3- to 5-star hotels
- Breakfast daily, lunches and evening meals indicated in the tour itinerary, where: B=breakfast, L=lunch & D=evening meal
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach
- Airport-hotel transfers if travelling on ASA 'designated' flights
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Tour notes
- Entrance fees (excluding National Trust properties)
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Manchester; Manchester-Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on 'designated' flights
- National Trust Membership
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance



Physical Endurance & Practical Information

Physical Ratings 

The number of flags is a guide to the degree of difficulty of ASA tours relative to each other (not to those of other tour companies). It is neither absolute nor literal. One flag is given to the least taxing tours, seven to the most. Flags are allocated, above all, according to the amount of walking and standing each tour involves. Nevertheless, all ASA tours require that participants have a good degree of fitness enabling 2-3 hours walking or 1-1.5 hours standing still on any given site visit or excursion. Many sites are accessed by climbing slopes or steps and have uneven terrain.

This 20-day Cultural Garden Tour of England & Wales involves:

- A large amount of walking (ranging from one to five kilometres per day) often up and down hills, flights of stairs, cobbled streets, and uneven ground (especially during some of the garden site visits), and/or standing, interspersed with coach travel.
- Extensive coach travel, some on winding country roads.
- Visiting a range of towns and villages on foot, involving walks uphill from bus parks to historic town centres and other sites.
- Many early-morning departures (between 8.00-8.30am), concluding in the late afternoon (5.30-6.30pm).
- Travelling to the United Kingdom during summer. June is the sunniest month of the year across England and Wales. While the average day-time temperature is 18-20°C, in recent years England has experienced heatwaves reaching up to 35°C.
- This tour includes the use of audio headsets, which amplify the voice of your guide (despite noisy surroundings). This technology also allows you to move freely during site visits without missing any information.

Other considerations:

- 3- to 5-star hotels with four hotel changes; some hotels do not have in-room air-conditioning.
- You must be able to carry your own hand luggage. Hotel portorage includes 1 piece of luggage per person.
- A trip on the Snowdon Mountain Railway (Diesel Service: Summit return – Day 15).

It is important to remember that ASA programs are group tours, and slow walkers affect everyone in the group. As the group must move at the speed of the slowest member, the amount of time spent at a site may be reduced if group members cannot maintain a moderate walking pace. ASA tours should not present any problem for active people who can manage day-to-day walking and stair-climbing. However, if you have any doubts about your ability to manage on a program, please ask your ASA travel consultant whether this is a suitable tour for you.

Please note: it is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. For further information please refer to the ASA Reservation Application Form.

National Trust Membership

It is a requirement that all travellers on this program have a current membership to the National Trust for the period of the tour. You will need to send a photocopy of your National Trust membership card to ASA prior to the start of the tour, and to carry your card with you throughout the tour program. Different types of National Trust membership are available (family, singles, etc) and the fees vary from state to state. For assistance in joining the National Trust and completing these formalities, please contact ASA.

Practical Information

Prior to departure, tour members will receive practical notes which include information on visa requirements, health, photography, weather, clothing and what to pack, custom regulations, bank hours, currency regulations, electrical appliances and food. The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade website has advice for travellers: www.smartraveller.gov.au

Booking Conditions

Make a Reservation

ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION and send it to Australians Studying Abroad together with your non-refundable deposit of AUD \$500.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.

Passport Details

All participants must provide no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the program a photocopy of the front page of their current passport.

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation in a single-occupancy room throughout the tour. In all hotels on this tour, this will be a double/twin room for single occupancy. The number of rooms available for single occupancy is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.



Reservation Application

TOUR NAME _____

TOUR DATES _____

Please complete **one application, per person in block letters and sign**. Parental signature is required for participants under 18 years of age. Please mail this form with the appropriate deposit to: **P.O. Box 8285, ARMADALE, VICTORIA, 3143**. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation.

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr Mrs Ms Miss Dr Other _____

FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____

MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____

TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

Date of birth / / _____ GENDER Male Female

Passport Number _____ Expiry date / / _____ Nationality _____

Colour copy of my current valid passport enclosed I'm renewing my passport ASA has a colour copy of my current passport

Travel Plans

I wish ASA to book my airfare, please contact me to discuss my options. Business Class Economy Class

I plan to leave Australia before the tour commences. Planned departure date / / _____

I will be arranging my airfare independently and taking the Land Content Only option.

Frequent Flyer _____ Name of Airline _____ Airline Seat preference _____
Membership # _____ (please note request only)

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: a twin-bedded room a double-bedded room a room for sole occupancy

I am travelling: on my own with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

fish poultry red meat dairy products

eggs pork nuts

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Other _____

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence Postal Mail Email Address _____

Emergency Contact Details

Note: this person **MUST** be available by telephone and be present in Australia for the duration of your tour with ASA

Name _____ Relationship to Traveller _____

Address _____

TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

The purpose of seeking this information is to assist ASA to determine, where necessary, whether ASA is able to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs and whether your health and safety (or that of your fellow travellers) is likely to be compromised given your choice of tour. It will also assist you and ASA if you fall ill or have an accident whilst travelling.

- ASA reserves the right to decline your Reservation Application if this Medical Information section is not completed properly and may reject or cancel your reservation, or terminate your participation on any tour, if ASA subsequently learns that you have failed to make full and proper disclosure.
- ASA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. ASA's privacy policy is available for viewing at www.asatours.com.au
- If ASA has any concerns about the information you have provided, it will contact you to request clarification before considering your Application.
- ASA requires you to consider carefully your limitations in light of ASA's Physical Endurance Star Rating System in ASA's Brochure and Itinerary when choosing your tour.
- If you are not likely to satisfy ASA's Participation Criteria (see below), ASA, in its sole discretion, may reject your Reservation Application.
- It is a condition of your tour that you agree to accept the directions of ASA's Tour Leaders in relation to your suitability to participate in activities planned on tour.
- ASA reserves the right to cancel your participation on a tour if your behaviour is in ASA's opinion causing undue distress or damage to any person or their property.
- If your participation is discontinued during a tour, ASA will assist by arranging your onward travel (if required) at your own cost, but you will not be refunded for forfeited parts of the tour.
- ASA tour groups are not accompanied by a medical practitioner. ASA recommends that you see your doctor for advice about your specific needs while overseas. You may also wish to contact a travel and vaccination clinic for advice. www.traveldoctor.com.au tel: 1300 658 444; www.travelvax.com.au tel: 1300 360 164.
- Travel insurers require you to declare all existing medical conditions.
- Please carry a complete list of medications with you during the ASA tour. Include **generic names** of each medication (consult your local pharmacy for information).

Please mark **X** in the YES or NO box to every question below and provide details where necessary:

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. The responsibility of the Tour Leader is to ensure that the larger group enjoys a relaxing and informative journey, and he or she cannot be relied upon to provide ongoing individual assistance to any one guest.

- | | YES | NO |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Can you walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Can you walk unassisted on and over uneven surfaces? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Can you climb at least 3 flights of stairs and/or walk up and down steep slopes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Can you walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15 - 20 minutes unassisted? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Can you organise, manage and carry your own luggage? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Can you follow and remember tour instructions and meet punctually at designated times and places? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Can you administer your own medication? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Do you have impaired vision or hearing which may impact your capacity to participate on this tour? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

Mobility and Fitness

As many of ASA's international sites do not provide access to wheelchairs or similar mobility aids, we regret that ASA tours are not suitable for people who require the use of a walking frame, wheeled walker, wheelchair or motorised scooter.

1. Do you suffer from any medical conditions that may compromise your mobility and/or fitness to participate on this program? YES NO
 If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

Allergies and/or Food Intolerances

ASA will make reasonable endeavours to organise meals to suit you, provided that you give ASA adequate notice of your specific dietary requirements or allergies. You may be required to research dietary alternatives, as not all destinations may be able to offer suitable food substitutes.

1. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances? YES NO
 If yes, please specify

2. Have you ever had an anaphylactic reaction to anything? YES NO
 If yes, please specify

Do you carry an epipen? YES NO

3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs? YES NO
 If yes, please specify

Existing Medical Conditions

You alone are responsible for managing any existing medical conditions, your medication and any medical equipment that you may need when on your tour. Please plan for contingencies and take extra medication, dietary supplements and/or fully charged batteries for medical equipment if your health and safety depends on these. You should take into consideration that power sources at some destinations may be unavailable, inadequate, inconvenient or unreliable.

1. Have you any significant medical conditions that may impact your capacity to complete this tour? YES NO
 If yes, please specify

If yes, how will you manage this on tour?

2. Do you require some form of powered medical aid, such as a CPAP machine? YES NO

These machines may not be operable on certain international flights, modes of transport, in remote or other areas with inadequate or unreliable power sources without a fully charged independent long life battery or batteries.

Diabetics: You may be travelling and sightseeing for many hours at a time. Insulin dependent diabetics must carry extra supplies of insulin (as this medication cannot be obtained in some destinations), regulators, applicators, storage and refrigeration equipment, as well as any necessary supplements. Accommodation may not provide refrigerators in rooms.

3. Are you diabetic? YES NO

Are you insulin dependent? YES NO

4. Do you suffer from travel sickness? YES NO
 Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.

Declaration

I declare that: I have read and understood the ASA Tour Itinerary, Reservation Application and Booking Conditions. I am aware of ASA's terms as relating to refunds, cancellations, responsibility and liability. I understand that ASA relies upon this declaration when considering this Application. I accept that there are inherent dangers and risks that may occur during any tour. I have made full and complete disclosure and have not knowingly withheld any medical information about myself from ASA. I have completed this Reservation Application honestly and accurately. I warrant that I am able to participate independently in all activities described by ASA in the itinerary without assistance from any person.

I will advise ASA in writing if any aspect of my fitness and or health conditions change materially at any time before my departure date. I understand and accept that the itinerary, accommodation and lecturers scheduled for this tour may change.

I agree and consent that ASA may give my personal information in this Reservation Application to tour service providers and relevant authorities as required by law, but for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services provided for the tour. I understand that if I do not consent to the use of my personal information for this purpose, ASA will decline my Reservation Application.

In consideration of ASA's acceptance of my Reservation Application, I irrevocably release and indemnify ASA from all claims that I, or any other party, may have against ASA its employees, invitees, agents and contractors, however arising in respect of any loss, damage, injury, death or expense incurred in the course of travelling to, on and from any tour.

I understand and acknowledge that this Release and Indemnity applies with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of travelling to, on or from any ASA tour
2. Every special risk, in particular medical risks, to which I may be exposed in the course of travelling to, on or from any ASA tour arising from, including, but not limited to:
 - a. intermittent power cycles and/or the temporary or permanent loss of power (beware CPAP or any other medical machine users);
 - b. dietary, food or other allergies (ASA cannot guarantee that traces of items to which you are allergic are not present in food or drink you are served, medication you are administered or other substances with which you may come into contact);
 - c. any event or situation that may compromise the administration of necessary medication or my health, safety and wellbeing generally.
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of my continued participation on a tour for whatever reason (refund conditions in ASA's Booking Conditions excepted).

Limitation of Liability

ASA is not a carrier, event or tourist attraction host, accommodation or dining service provider. All bookings made and tickets or coupons issued by ASA for transport, event, accommodation, dining and the like are issued as an agent for various service providers and are subject to the terms and conditions and limitations of liability imposed by each service provider. ASA is not responsible for their products or services. If a service provider does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

ASA will not be liable for any claim (eg. sickness, injury, death, damage or loss) arising from any change, delay, detention, breakdown, cancellation, failure, accident, act, omission or negligence of any such service provider however caused (contingencies). You must take out adequate travel insurance against such contingencies.

ASA's liability in respect of any tour will be limited to the refund of amounts received from you less all non-refundable costs and charges and the costs of any substituted event or alternate services provided. The terms and conditions of the relevant service provider from time to time comprise the sole agreement between you and that service provider.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

Booking Conditions

DEPOSITS

A deposit of \$500.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

CANCELLATION FEES

If you decide to cancel your booking the following charges apply:

More than 75 days before departure: \$500*
75-46 days prior 25% of total amount due
45-31 days prior 50% of total amount due
30-15 days prior 75% of total amount due
14-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

This amount may be **credited to another ASA tour departing within 12 months of the original tour you booked. We regret, in this case early-bird discounts will not apply.*

We take the day on which you cancel as being that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.

UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE TOUR

We regret that refunds will not be given for any unused portions of the tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation, flights or transfers.

WILL THE TOUR PRICE OR ITINERARY CHANGE?

If the number of participants on a tour is significantly less than budgeted, or if there is a significant change in exchange rates ASA reserves the right to amend the advertised price. We shall, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price. If an ASA tour is forced to cancel you will get a full refund of all tour monies paid. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to daily itineraries. We will inform you of any changes in due course.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

ASA requires all participants to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of your travel insurance certificate and the **reverse charge** emergency contact phone number must be received by ASA no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 75 days prior to the tour commencement date.

PLEASE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, PRINT AND SIGN BELOW

I accept the conditions on this booking form I have read the information about the physical requirements of the tour in the detailed itinerary and confirm that I am able to meet these requirements

Applicant's Signature

Print Full Name

Dated

Tour / Course Name

Name of Traveller 1

Name of Traveller 2

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$

 (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

The above amount is payable for:

- Intention to Travel Tour Deposit
- Balance of Payment Upgrade from Intention to Travel to a Deposit
- Travel Insurance Other (eg. Airfares, Accommodation)

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No.

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

Date Money Transferred

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard & Visa 2%
American Express 2%

Please debit my: Mastercard Visa American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number

Expiry Date

 Security Code (CVC)

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ)

Cardholders Name

Cardholders Billing Address

Postcode

State

 Country

Phone

Email

Cardholders Signature

AUSTRALIANS STUDYING ABROAD

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