

Glorious Gardens & Grandeur of North Wales

23 June to 2 July, 2019 | \$7,036 (AUD) per person double occupancy

North Wales, a land blessed with rugged mountains, beautiful beaches and picturesque villages also has some of the most striking gardens in the UK, many attached to magnificent houses with centuries of history to uncover. From world-renowned gardens to hidden gems, we encounter a remarkable array of sweeping landscapes, woodlands, valleys, walled gardens and displays of abundant flowers and shrubs which thrive in the unique climate of this region. We round off our tour with a visit to Tatton Park, one of Britain's most complete estates, and the historic and inspirational Waterperry Gardens in Oxfordshire.



Conwy Castle

Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Guided tour of Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens
- ◆ Guided tour and refreshments at Plas Tan y Bwlch
- ◆ Private guided tour of Erddig Hall and Gardens
- ◆ Lunch at Tatton Park
- ◆ Lunch and guided tour at Waterperry Gardens
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

Ten Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel, the Macdonald Windsor Hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.



Bodnant Garden

Monday: Stratford-upon-Avon

We head to Stratford-upon-Avon, situated on the banks of the River Avon and forever associated with England's greatest poet and playwright, William Shakespeare. Fans of Shakespeare can visit the house in which he was born, and there's a chance to wander the riverside gardens or discover the town's theatres including the Swan Theatre, home of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Later, we continue our journey to Wales, checking in to Bodysgallen Hall & Spa close to the Victorian seaside resort of Llandudno, where we spend the next six nights. Tonight we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Tuesday: Penrhyn Castle and Bodnant Garden

Built in the 19th century in a neo-Norman style, the magnificent Penrhyn Castle was built on a massive scale over a period of 13 years and offers superb views of Snowdonia. There is so much to see here, from the outstanding collection of paintings, restored Victorian kitchens and a railway museum.

Next stop is Bodnant Garden, nestled in the Snowdonian foothills. Created over 150 years, this world-famous garden is home to National Collections and Champion Trees and boasts sweeping lawns, grand terraces and verdant woodland.

The evening is free for you to make your own dinner arrangements.

Wednesday: Isle of Anglesey, Plas Newydd House & Gardens and Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens

Today we cross the 19th-century Menai Bridge to spend the day on the Isle of Anglesey. Our first visit is to Plas Newydd, a fine country house built on the banks of the Menai Strait with stunning views towards the mountains of Snowdonia. Its most famous past resident is the 1st Marquess of Anglesey, who commanded the cavalry at Waterloo in 1815. The elegant interior owes more to the 1930s, thanks to its associations with the artist, socialite and fallen WWII soldier Rex Whistler. The garden's climate allows extraordinary plants to flourish including

tender exotics and Mediterranean plants. There is also an atmospheric Australasian arboretum.

We continue on to Plas Cadnant Hidden Gardens. Described as one of North Wales' best kept secrets, these historic gardens are gradually being restored to their former glory. Three different gardens have been discovered, including an unusual walled garden with curving walls, a secret valley garden with three waterfalls and a river, and an upper woodland garden with the remains of a 19th-century folly. We discover more about the gardens and their restoration on our guided tour.

After dinner back at the hotel, we are treated to a fascinating talk by a guest speaker.

Thursday: Plas Tan y Bwlch, Betws-y-Coed and Conwy Castle

Home to the Snowdonia National Park Environmental Studies Centre, Plas Tan y Bwlch is a 17th-century country house which was once home to wealthy slate quarry owners the Oakeley family. The house occupies a superb position overlooking the valley of the River Dwyryd in the heart of the Snowdonia National Park and the 100 acre estate boasts a spectacular Victorian garden, native and exotic plants, rare trees and shrubs. We enjoy a guided tour with the Head Gardener followed by refreshments (please note there is no access to the house itself).

We then make a short stop in the picturesque village of Betws-y-Coed in the Snowdonia



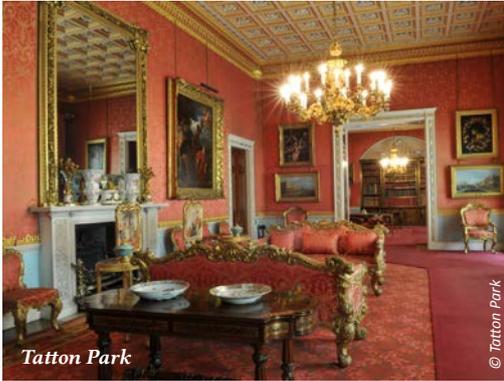
Plas Newydd

© NTPU/Nick Meers



Erddig

© NTPU/Andrew von Eitzinger



Tatton Park

© Tatton Park



Portmeirion

National Park. The backdrop of coniferous forests has earned this area the name 'Little Switzerland'.

From here we head to the medieval walled town of Conwy to visit the imposing Conwy Castle, situated on a rocky outcrop above the Conwy Estuary. Classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this imposing castle was built by Edward I during his conquest of Wales in the late 13th century and is considered to be among the finest surviving medieval fortifications in Britain with soaring curtain walls, round towers and fortified gateways.

Tonight, we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

Friday: Erddig and Brynbella Garden

Erddig is an atmospheric early 18th-century house that reflects the 'upstairs, downstairs' life of a gentry family and we're provided with a fascinating insight into the lives of the family and their servants on our private guided tour. The downstairs rooms are home to a unique collection of servants' portraits, whilst upstairs there is a wealth of important furniture, textiles and wallpaper. Our tour extends to the superb walled garden, now restored to its former 18th-century formal design with rare fruit trees and a national collection of ivies.

We then travel to Brynbella Garden, nine acres of beautiful garden and woodland set below a Palladian villa. The current owners have created a modern garden while retaining as many of the original 18th-century features as possible. The garden is laid out as a series of rooms including a woodland garden, walled garden, three water gardens, a gravel garden plus formal and informal garden areas with focal points such as statuary and sculptures.

Tonight we are treated to a traditional fish and chip supper.

Saturday: Portmeirion and Plas Brondanw Gardens

We start the day in Portmeirion, an Italianate village created by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, inspired by his visits to the Mediterranean. Its unique atmosphere has been featured on camera many times, most famously in the iconic 1960s British TV series *The Prisoner*.

We then visit Plas Brondanw Gardens, situated in the heart of Snowdonia. The house and gardens were given to Sir Clough Williams-Ellis by his father in 1902 and the gardens, although not as famous as Portmeirion, are regarded by some as his finest creation. Inspired by the gardens of renaissance Italy, he created a unique and characteristic garden landscape with stone walls, topiary and avenues of trees leading the eye to the dramatic backdrop of mountains beyond.

This evening, we enjoy dinner together at the hotel.

Sunday: Tatton Park

Leaving Wales we journey east to Tatton Park. Built by Samuel Wyatt, Tatton Park is one of Britain's most complete estates, with a landscaped deer park and exquisite formal gardens. The opulent interior is crammed with collections of silver, china, glass and fine furniture made by Gillows. This grandeur also extends outside to the garden, where year-round colour is provided by the Rose, Italian and Japanese gardens. We enjoy lunch here after our visit.

From here we travel south to the Mercure Stratford-upon-Avon Shakespeare Hotel, where we stay overnight with dinner included.

Monday: Waterperry Gardens

We start the morning with some time at leisure in Stratford-upon-Avon, before travelling to Waterperry Gardens where we enjoy lunch

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 2 nights at the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 6 nights at Bodysgallen Hall & Spa
- ◆ 1 night at the Mercure Shakespeare Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon
- ◆ Welcome drink and canapés
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 6 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ 2 dinners at local restaurants (including one traditional English fish and chip supper)
- ◆ 2 lunches
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All entrance costs
- ◆ Portage

*supplement applies for transfers from all other airports

Your Hotels

Nights One and Nine – Macdonald Windsor Hotel, Windsor

Nights Two to Seven – Bodysgallen Hall & Spa

One of the three Historic House Hotels of the National Trust, Bodysgallen Hall & Spa is a luxury hotel just two miles from the seaside resort of Llandudno in North Wales. This sympathetically restored, 17th-century country house stands in over 200 acres of wooded parkland and beautiful formal walled gardens affording lovely views of the Snowdonia mountain range and Conwy Castle. The individually-decorated bedrooms are divided between the main hall and several cottages in the grounds and leisure facilities include a swimming pool, steam room, sauna, solarium and gym.

Night Eight – Mercure Shakespeare Hotel, Stratford-upon-Avon

Single supplement \$1,131 (AUD)

followed by a guided tour. Made famous by Beatrix Havergal who established her School of Horticulture for Ladies here from 1932 to 1971, the 8 acres of beautifully landscaped ornamental gardens now include a rose and formal knot garden, water-lily canal, riverside walk, and one of the finest purely herbaceous borders in the country.

Afterwards, we return to the Macdonald Windsor Hotel, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Tuesday: Departure

A private transfer will take you back to Heathrow airport for your return flight home.



FOR BOOKINGS & FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR PREFERRED TRAVEL AGENT OR

WILTRANS INTERNATIONAL AU: 1800 251 174 | NZ: 0800 446 376 | albionjourneys@wiltrans.com.au

*Price quoted in AUD per person double occupancy. Terms & Conditions apply.