



ACADEMY  
TRAVEL

TAILORED  
SMALL GROUP  
JOURNEYS

# GREAT GARDENS OF BRITAIN

A JOURNEY THROUGH LANDSCAPE



Gravetye Manor

## OVERVIEW

A garden is a thing of beauty created in the landscape for pleasure. The original Garden of Eden was a paradise, a paradeisos – literally ‘a walled enclosure’ keeping human beauty and ‘tamed’ nature in, and hostile ‘wild’ nature out.

From landscapes of the early 18th century through to those of the present day, this new 14-day tour led by Mike Turner visits 19 of the most beautiful and exciting garden landscapes in Britain.

Beginning in the Scottish Borders it travels down through the Lake District to Chester and south onto Sussex and Kent. June is the beginning of summer when the gardens and the countryside will be at their most beautiful – from traditional flower gardens to art gardens; topiary masterpieces to Europe’s largest lowland rewilding scheme; and the grandeur of stately homes to the pure joy of the humble allotment.

The choice of gardens for a tour such as this is always going to be subjective. These are gardens that Mike loves and that inspire him, that he can return to again and again.



## TOUR LEADER

**Mike Turner** is a classical archaeologist and garden historian. For many years he was senior curator at the Nicholson Museum in Sydney. He now lives in Sussex and works in publishing. He is a Fellow of both The Society of Antiquaries in London and The Linnaean Society.

## TOUR DATES

**June 14-27, 2024**

## TOUR PRICE

**\$16,800** per person, twin share  
**\$3,640** single supplement

## TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

## GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

## ITINERARY

Kelso - Scottish Borders (3 nights),  
Grasmere - Lake District (3 nights),  
Chester (3 nights), Sussex (4 nights)

## INCLUSIONS

**13** nights’ accommodation in conveniently located 4 and 5-star hotels. All breakfasts, 4 lunches, 5 dinners and 1 afternoon tea. Services of an expert tour leader and an experienced tour manager throughout. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.



## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Start & Finish

The tour starts at 9.00am on Friday 14 June, at Edinburgh Airport. The tour ends at c.11.00am on Thursday 27 June, on arrival to Gatwick Airport or London Paddington Station.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D and AT for afternoon tea.

### Friday 14 June

#### Arrival and Broadwoodside

This morning we gather at Edinburgh Airport for our private coach transfer to Schloss Roxburghe in the Scottish Borders, stopping on the way at **Broadwoodside** in Lowland Scotland. The private home and garden of Robert and Anna Dalrymple, Broadwoodside is set on a former farm steading dating from the 17th century to the present day, and has been stylishly transformed around two beautifully designed courtyards. At the heart of it you'll find Dalrymple's parrot who resides in an elegant wooden aviary in the middle of the courtyard. And around the outside of these, the garden extends into the surrounding farmland and woods on an ambitious scale, with views out to the Lammermuir Hills. Following our visit we continue to our hotel, once a quintessential manor house on the Duke of Roxburghe's Borders estate. We enjoy an introductory lecture on arrival, followed by a welcome dinner in the hotel's new restaurant, offering Scottish bistronomy at its finest. Overnight Kelso, Scottish Borders (D)

### Saturday 15 June

#### Little Sparta and Rosslyn Chapel

This morning we depart for **Little Sparta**, an enchanting garden on the southwestern slopes of the Pentland Hills. This internationally acclaimed garden by Ian Hamilton Finlay – Scottish artist, poet, gardener who lived here for the last 50 years of his life before passing away in 2006 – is set across seven acres of a wild and exposed moorland site. Individual poetic and sculptural elements, in wood, stone and metal, are sited in relation to carefully structured landscaping and planting. In this way, the garden in its entirety is the artwork. All will be revealed and explained by head gardener George Gilliland. We then make our way to **Rosslyn Chapel**, one of the most extraordinary ecclesiastical buildings in Britain. Its picturesque and romantic landscape setting and often-bizarre carvings and imagery have intrigued and inspired the likes of William Wordsworth, Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott (and of course Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*). Arriving back at hotel in the late afternoon, the evening is at leisure. Overnight Kelso, Scottish Borders (B)

## PRIVATE GARDENS & GRAND ESTATES

Visit 19 gardens in their summer glory.

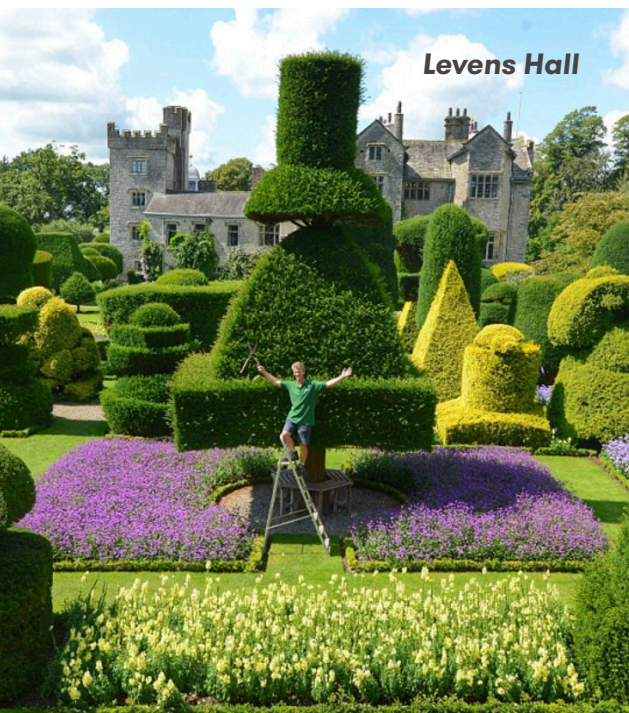
- **Broadwoodside**, one of Scotland's finest contemporary gardens
- **Little Sparta**, Ian Hamilton Finlay's greatest work of art
- **Jupiter Artland**, the most significant art landscape in Britain
- **Alnwick Garden**, host to the small but deadly Poison Garden
- **Levens Hall**, with its world-renowned and large topiary garden
- **Dalemain House**, a mansion surrounded by beautiful gardens
- **Lowther Castle**, one of the most romantic ruins in Britain
- **Gresgarth Hall**, a wild paradise from designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd
- **Biddulph Grange Garden**, a masterpiece of Victorian design
- **Alderley Edge Allotments**, a part of village life for 74 years
- **Bodnant Garden**, one of the most beautiful gardens in the UK
- **Rousham**, one of Britain's most historically important gardens
- **Hever Castle & Gardens**, once the childhood home of Anne Boleyn
- **Town Place Garden**, a three-acre garden with over 600 roses
- **Great Dixter**, a jewel of the Arts & Crafts movement
- **Sissinghurst**, the most popular of all 20th-century English gardens
- **Munstead Wood**, the charming home of Gertrude Jekyll
- **Goddards**, considered one of Edwin Lutyens' finest early works
- **Gravetye Manor**, created by visionary gardener William Robinson



**Jupiter Artland**



**Alnwick Garden**



**Levens Hall**

## **Sunday 16 June**

### **Jupiter Artland**

Following a morning lecture in the hotel, we spend the day at **Jupiter Artland** – an award-winning contemporary sculpture landscape and art gallery outside Edinburgh. Founded in 2009 by philanthropist art collectors Robert and Nicky Wilson, Artland is set on the stunning grounds of the old Jacobean manor house surrounded by 120 acres of woodland, meadows and lakes, and incorporates works by some of the world's leading artists including Anish Kapoor, Tracey Emin, Antony Gormley, Andy Goldsworthy and Ian Hamilton Finlay. Lunch is enjoyed at Café Party, the Artland's popular bistro renowned for its indulgent seasonal menu enjoyed within the wrappings of the psychedelically immersive murals that adorns the walls. We arrive back at hotel in the late afternoon, with the evening at leisure. You may like to take some time off in one of the hotel's saunas and soak up the ambience of the surroundings. Overnight Kelso, Scottish Borders (B, L)

## **Monday 17 June**

### **Alnwick Garden and Hadrian's Wall**

Leaving Schloss Roxburghe this morning, our destination is The Grand – a fabulous modern country house hotel in the English Lake District, with a dramatic backdrop of fells and beautiful lake vistas. We first stop on route at **Alnwick Garden** for a tour with the head gardener. Alnwick is the most ambitious garden created in Britain in the past 100 years. Designed by acclaimed Belgian landscape artists Jacques and Pieter Wirtz in the grounds of Alnwick Castle, we find a series of themed gardens surrounding an enormous, central, water cascade. Outrageously populist, it is also outrageously beautiful, and of course no visit would be complete without a tour of its (in)famous, locked, Poison Garden! We soak up the atmosphere of this magnificent medieval castle before continuing across country to the Lake District, an area of outstanding natural beauty and home to England's tallest mountains and largest lakes. Our next stop on route is at **Housesteads Roman Fort**, set high on a dramatic escarpment on Hadrian's Wall, offering spectacular views north and south. We arrive at our hotel in Grasmere in the early evening, with time to freshen up before a relaxed dinner in the hotel. Overnight Grasmere, Lake District (B, D)

## **Tuesday 18 June**

### **Levens Hall**

We begin the day with a lecture in the hotel, before we head to **Levens Hall**, a manor house in the Kent valley. The Hall started life in the late-13th century as an imposing fortified border tower. Much added to over the centuries, it has the oldest surviving topiary garden in the world, dating from the 1690s, designed by Guillaume Beaumont who worked at both Versailles and Hampton Court. There are also some extraordinary giant beech hedges, one of the most beautiful herbaceous borders in Britain, and the country's first ha-ha (a type of sunken fence to protect manicured lawns from

**Lowther Castle**



marauding sheep or cattle). We enjoy lunch in Levens Kitchen, which includes seasonal products grown on the Estate. Returning to Grasmere, the afternoon is free with countless incredible walks and low level lake-side ambles ready to be taken from the hotel. Overnight Grasmere, Lake District (B, L)

### **Wednesday 19 June**

#### **Dalemain House and Lowther Castle**

Our first stop today is the historic **Dalemain House**, where we enjoy a private tour with owner Jane Hasell-McCosh. Set in a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Dalemain is world-renowned for two things – its blue Himalayan poppies (*meconopsis grandis* ‘Dalemain’) and its annual Dalemain World Marmalade Awards. It also has one of the most gloriously situated and beautiful gardens in Britain which includes over 200 old-fashioned roses (which will be in bloom) and Britain’s largest silver fir (*abies Cephalonica*), a gift from Joseph Banks in the 1840s. We continue to **Lowther Castle**, one of the most romantic ruins in Britain. In the 1950s, the roof was removed from its 365 rooms and its interior walls knocked down, all to avoid paying crippling death duties. The grounds, used for tank-warfare training during WWII, were turned over to pig and chicken battery farming, and to timber plantations. In 2008, it was decided to save the grounds and to re-create the famous gardens. The transformation, under the leadership of gardening great, Dan Pearson, has been staggering. We enjoy lunch on arrival, followed by an exhibition viewing and garden tour with the head gardener. Arriving back at hotel in the late afternoon, the evening is at leisure. Overnight Grasmere, Lake District (B, L)



**Gresgarth Hall**

### **Thursday 20 June**

#### **Gresgarth Hall**

We depart Grasmere this morning, travelling south to Chester – a prominent city since the late 1st century when the Roman Empire expanded north to the banks of the River Dee. On route we stop at **Gresgarth Hall**, the home of celebrated garden designer Arabella Lennox-Boyd and husband Mark for 45 years. Set on the southern edge of the Lake District beside Artle Beck, its 12 acres have been transformed into an Italian-style garden of exquisite taste, as terraces descend from the Gothic house to the beck, planted with roses, clematis and more tender plants in season. In 2020, it won the Historic Houses Garden of the Year Judge’s Award. We arrive in Chester in time for lunch, before enjoying a stroll tour through the ancient streets of this picturesque town, taking us along the famous Roman walls that provide splendid views of the city. Following time to settle into our hotel, we enjoy dinner in a local restaurant. Overnight Chester (B, D)



**Biddulph Grange**

### **Friday 21 June**

#### **Biddulph Grange Garden and Alderley Edge Allotments**

Our morning begins with a lecture in the hotel, before making our way to **Biddulph Grange Garden**, set in the foothills of the Pennines outside Manchester. There is no other garden

**Alderley Edge Allotments**



like it in Britain. Created by James Bateman (1811-1897), it sits in the interim period between the landscapes of Capability Brown and the High Victorian style. The garden is separated into many 'rooms' representing areas of the world, each completely distinct from the other. They include an Egyptian garden where two sphinxes guard the mastaba-like entrance to the tomb-like grotto and a Chinese garden with pagoda and bridge. After a break for lunch on the extraordinary grounds, we contrast our visit with the backache and bounty of British allotment gardening, arriving at **Alderley Edge Allotments** in the early afternoon. The English allotment is an extraordinary phenomenon dating back to the development of 'common land' in Saxon times. Enshrined in law to protect them, the now often highly-desirable development property is instead owned and gardened by Allotment Associations all over the country. After exploring the various allotment sites, we stop for a well-timed English afternoon tea as guests of brother and sister, Graham and Stella Heap. We arrive back at our hotel in the early evening. Overnight Chester (B, AT)

**Bodnant Garden**



**Saturday 22 June**  
**Bodnant Garden**

The early morning is at leisure to explore Chester at your own pace, perhaps to visit the stunning cathedral. In the mid-morning we leave Chester to enjoy lunch in the beautiful Welsh countryside at the Michelin-starred Tyddyn Llan restaurant in Corwen. After lunch we will continue on to **Bodnant Garden**. In 1949 Bodnant became the second garden, after Hidcote, gifted to the Trust, and is today the most beautiful of all. Set in the valley of the Conwy River in North Wales, with views across to the Carneddau Mountains, it was created in 1874 and developed by five generations of the same family. Amongst the magnificent features there are no less than five terraces including lily pond and beautiful herbaceous borders. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Chester (B, L)

**Rousham**



**Sunday 23 June**  
**Rousham**

Today we leave Chester, with a full day of travel as we make our way to into the heart of East Sussex. Our final stay will be enjoyed in a luxury country house hotel and spa set amongst Ashdown Forest – the woodland that inspired the *Winnie The Pooh* stories. On the road we stop at **Rousham**, an 18th-century Arcadian Landscape garden. The garden as you see it today was designed in the 18th century by William Kent (1685-1748) and its original sculpture, buildings, rills, ponds, hedges, lawns and eye-catchers make this one of the most historically important gardens in Britain. Long-horned cattle in the meadows, an original dovecote which will be surrounded by a sea of foxgloves when we visit, and a quintessential, walled, herbaceous garden make this also, one of the most romantic. Arriving at Sussex in the early evening, we finish the day with a dinner in our hotel. Overnight Sussex (B, D)



Town Place Garden



Great Dixter



Sissinghurst

## Monday 24 June

### Hever Castle and Town Place Garden

We begin the day with a talk in the hotel, before we head to **Hever Castle** for a tour of both the castle and gardens. The ancestral home of the Boleyn Family, Henry VIII often visited here when he was courting Anne. In 1903 it was bought by one of the world's richest men, William Waldorf Astor. Astor made many alterations to both the castle and the landscape, most especially in the creation of a lake and an Italian Garden which includes, uniquely for Britain, Roman and Medieval sculpture. Together with the Italian Garden, the Rose Garden, the Herbaceous Border, the topiary and the loggias will all be at their best for the famous *Hever in Bloom* festival which will be on when we visit. Following a break for lunch within the grounds of Hever, the afternoon is spent at **Town Place Garden**, set round a 17th-century Sussex farmhouse. This lovely, private garden, hidden away down a Sussex lane, is described by *Country Life* as 'a garden shaped by intellect and clothed in beauty'. We will be welcomed by owner Anthony McGrath who will explain how over the past 35 years he and his wife Maggie have transformed a two-acre site with planting and sculpture. In 2000 they added a neighbouring field and planted it with hornbeam which, now nearly 20 foot high, has been clipped to resemble a ruined Romanesque church complete with buttressing, windows, and a cloister. It is as long as the nave of Chichester Cathedral! We return to our hotel with the evening at leisure. Overnight Sussex (B)

## Tuesday 25 June

### Great Dixter and Sissinghurst Castle

Today's travels take us through the rolling Sussex countryside into Kent, 'the garden of England', first stopping at **Great Dixter** for a private tour through the house and gardens. Made famous in 1993 when Christopher Lloyd announced in his weekly *Country Life* column that he was going to dig up his father's Lutyens-designed rose garden, there was a furore, especially when he said he would be replacing it with exotics! Lloyd, one of the greatest British gardeners of the past 50 years, always did things differently. Great Dixter is his legacy. The garden, surrounding an ancient Kentish farmhouse, is in the Arts & Crafts style and features topiary, a long border, an orchard and a wild-flower meadow. The planting is profuse, yet structured, and features many bold experiments of form, colour and combination. Following time for lunch at Dixter, we then travel to **Sissinghurst Castle**. Sissinghurst is a garden 'museum' retaining the structure and planting of its famous creators, garden writer Vita Sackville-West and her diplomat and author husband Harold Nicholson, both of whom were heavily influenced by Sir Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll. It is justifiably called 'one of the most influential gardens ever made'. Who hasn't heard of its White Garden? It resonates because it was created by a novice, amateur gardener. We arrive back at our hotel in the early evening. Overnight Sussex (B)

## HOTELS

These premiere hotels have been selected principally for their location.

### Scottish Borders, Schloss Roxburghe

(3 nights)

[www.hyatt.com](http://www.hyatt.com)

### The Lake District, Grand At Grasmere

(3 nights)

[www.grandatgrasmere.co.uk](http://www.grandatgrasmere.co.uk)

### Chester, The Chester Grosvenor

(3 nights)

[www.chestergrosvenor.com](http://www.chestergrosvenor.com)

### Sussex, Ashdown Park Hotel

(4 nights)

[www.ashdownpark.com](http://www.ashdownpark.com)

## WEATHER

England's green and pleasant land is 'green' for a very obvious reason. The sun shines and it rains – not always in equal measure. Come prepared for all eventualities. One essential is an umbrella – against both rain and the sun.

## FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

### Grade Two

This tour is designed for people who lead active lives. You should be able to:

- comfortably participate in up to five hours of physical activity per day, with only short breaks
- keep up with the group at all times
- negotiate challenging garden sites, with pathways that are often uneven and unstable
- negotiate stairs and bridges
- stand for one to two hours in gardens at a time, without a break
- get on and off a coach with steep stairs unassisted

## Wednesday 26 June

### Munstead Wood, Goddards and Gravetye Manor

This morning we begin by exploring the relationship between two of the great figures of garden history and design – the architect Edward Lutyens and the plantswoman Gertrude Jekyll. The latter designed over 400 gardens, working with Lutyens on over 100 of them. In early 2023, the iconic **Munstead Wood** was purchased by the National Trust. After extensive conservation work, we are hoping to be one of the first visitors as they open to the public in 2024. After a break for lunch, we then visit **Goddards**, considered one of Lutyens' finest early works. It was originally designed as a country holiday retreat for 'ladies of small means' before being redesigned by Lutyens in 1910. Jekyll was responsible for the original courtyard garden. Returning to our hotel in the afternoon, there is time to freshen up before our garden visits culminate at **Gravetye Manor**, the home of William Robinson (1838-1895). Robinson, along with Gertrude Jekyll, is the most influential British gardener of the past 150 years. Rather than the rigid, herbaceous formality of Jekyll, Robinson introduced the concept of the wild garden where garden and the wider landscape merge into one. Today the Manor is a Michelin-starred restaurant and one of the most beautiful gardens in Britain, continuing the ethos of its creator. As such, a fitting end to our tour with pre-dinner cocktails served in the garden. Overnight Sussex (B, D)

## Thursday 27 June

### Departure

After breakfast this morning we travel by coach to Gatwick Airport or London Paddington Station, where the tour ends. (B)



## ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Fergus Geddes** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email:

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