



WEST DOWN GARDENING CLUB FIVE DAY WEEKEND 4th July to 8th July 2014

Friday, 4th July

Depart 08:10 from West Down with pick ups en route.

Comfort breaks at Taunton Deane and Michael Wood services

Arrive at Mill Dene Garden for garden visit. Mill Dene Garden is a partner garden of the RHS. The two and a half acre garden rises from a mill pond and a grotto to a cricket lawn and views over the hills. The garden will interest all who love gardening and are looking for ways to reduce the amount of time they spend on maintenance; so they can spend more time enjoying their garden.



Depart at 16:00 to drive to Best Western Stone Manor Hotel, Stone near Kidderminster for a four night stay. Arrival time is approximately 17:15.



The four star hotel provides dinner, bed and breakfast in en-suite accommodation within the price. All rooms have:

- Television
- Complimentary Wi-Fi
- Hair Dryer
- Direct Dial Telephone
- Tea & Coffee Making Facilities
- Trouser Press

Saturday, 5th July

Leave hotel at 09:15 to go to Birmingham Botanical Gardens where we have a good look round and can have a light lunch. The gardens have four stunning glasshouses, beautiful gardens, a tearoom and shop. The gardens were designed by the pioneering designer of public open spaces Scotsman John Claudius Loudon. He was a prolific author of gardening books and magazines and had a vision for long term planning to provide green spaces in the rapidly growing cities of Britain.



Depart Birmingham 14:45 and drive to Stone House Cottage Gardens and Nursery

A romantic garden set in an old walled kitchen garden. The area is only 1 acre but seems much larger - hedges divide it into different compartments and create diverse habitats in which to grow the vast selection of rare and unusual plants that thrive there.

Unusual brick follies adorn the walls and these in turn are covered with a multitude of climbing and twining plants in which the garden specialises.

The garden acts as a shop window for the adjoining nursery. Here we can buy plants of almost all that grow in the garden - the list of shrubs and climbers includes many hardly ever seen for sale in this country.



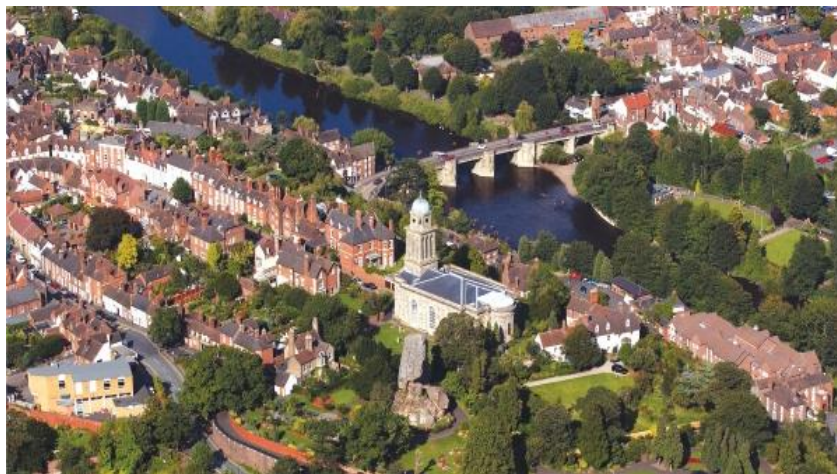
Depart 17:00 and return to hotel arriving approximately 17:15

Sunday, 6th July

Leave hotel at 09:15 to go to Severn Valley Railway station at Kidderminster. Today is a special event day - 'Stepping Back to the 40's' - not that any of us are that old!



We catch a steam train to Bridgnorth station. We have a 'Freedom of Line' ticket which allows you, if you want, to get on and off at every station including Highley station to look round, for free, the Engine House Visitor Centre. This is the home of the reserve collection of steam locomotives and other items of railway interest. The journey follows the River Severn valley through the glorious scenery of Worcestershire and Shropshire to its final destination, Bridgnorth.



Bridgnorth, in reality, is two towns: the High Town (good views down) and the Low Town (good views up) which are now connected by the steepest inland funicular railway in Britain. The Low Town was once a thriving port along the banks of the River Severn, while the High Town held the castle, the churches, and many fine 16th and 17th century mansions. Charles 1, lost his head here completely, declaring the view to be - "the finest in all my kingdom".

The coach will meet us at Bridgnorth where we depart at 16:45 to return to the hotel arriving approximately 17:30

Monday, 7th July

Leave hotel at 09:15 to drive to the National Trust's Wightwick Manor and Gardens for a look round and lunch.



In 1937 Geoffrey Mander MP did something remarkable - he persuaded the National Trust to accept a house that was just 50 years old.

The local paint manufacturer and Liberal MP had been left the timber-framed house by his father Theodore. Taking inspiration from a lecture on 'the House Beautiful' by Oscar Wilde, Theodore and his wife Flora had decorated its interiors with the designs of William Morris and his Arts and Crafts contemporaries.

This house of the Aesthetic Movement was, by 1937, a relic of an out of fashion era. Yet, so complete was the design that it was worthy of preservation. Having given the house to the Trust, Geoffrey and his second wife Rosalie became its live-in curators, opening the house to the public and adding to its contents. In particular they added a remarkable collection of Pre-Raphaelite paintings by Rossetti, Burne-Jones and their followers.

We leave Wightwick at 13:15 to go David Austin Roses where they have created a large rose garden which many consider to be one of the most beautiful in the world. Over 700 different varieties of roses are planted in the garden which now covers around 2 acres. The garden is divided into a number of smaller areas, each with its own style. The overall concept is to enclose the exuberant and rather informal growth of the roses within neatly clipped evergreen hedges.



Our visit includes a guided tour of the rose gardens, cream tea, time to visit the gardens at leisure, the plant centre and gift shop and a 10% discount voucher.

Depart 16:30 and return to the hotel arriving approximately 17:15

Tuesday, 8th July

Leave hotel at 09:30 to drive to the Alpine Garden Society's Garden at Pershore

The Garden at the AGS Centre, Pershore is open for visiting by anyone interested in alpines and related small hardy plants (perennials, bulbs, ferns, dwarf conifers, etc.) with troughs, tufa and rock work, screes, experimental sand beds, a European meadow, ericaceous and woodland areas.

The Centre also houses a comprehensive reference library covering a wide range of plants. Enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and biscuits whilst wandering among the various areas of the garden or just sit and appreciate the view.



Depart Pershore at 12:15 for our journey back to West Down stopping at Michael Wood services at approximately 13:15 for refreshments. We depart at 14:00 with a comfort break at one of the services on the M5 as required.

Arrive back in West Down approximately 17:30.