

WEST DOWN GARDENING CLUB

HOLIDAY – 18TH JUNE TO 21ST JUNE 2023

Sunday, 18th June

Depart West Down 8.15 a.m. with pick ups at Braunton and Barnstaple stopping for a comfort break at Taunton Deane before we drive on to Sherborne Castle and Gardens. The Grade I listed garden was one of Capability Brown's first commissions resulting in a magnificent English landscape garden which survives largely unaltered today. In the Museum there is an exhibition, Capability Brown at Sherborne Castle, which draws on the castle archives to tell the story of his work at Sherborne.

We leave at 4.30 p.m. for our onward journey to the Royal Chase Hotel, Shaftesbury for three nights bed, breakfast and evening meals with en suite facilities. The Hotel enjoys a prime location, nestled in its own extensive grounds on the outskirts of Shaftesbury at the heart of Thomas Hardy Country. There are comfortable rooms, award-winning cuisine and an indoor swimming pool.



Monday, 19th June

Today we visit Minterne Gardens which is a haven of tranquillity to explore and inspire. It is landscaped in the manner of Capability Brown and trailing around a mile in length, Minterne boasts a world renowned and completely unique collection of Himalayan Rhododendrons and Azaleas, with Spring bulbs, Cherries, Maples and many fine and rare trees. Wander the trail and enjoy the chain of small lakes, waterfalls and streams. With an abundance to see from the snowdrops in winter, to spring bluebells through to summer azaleas and hydrangeas, the garden is full of interest throughout year.

We then stop off in Shaftesbury on our way back to the hotel. How about a walk up Golden Hill – the setting for the famous Hovis advert?



Tuesday, 20th June

Our visit this morning is to Wimborne Minster and it's Wimborne Model Town. It is a 1/10th scale of the centre of Wimborne as it was in the 1950s. Set out in the late 1980s, the gardens which surround the Model Town received accredited listing by the National Garden Scheme. Included are herbaceous borders, a vegetable garden, rockery, miniature river system, shrubs and trees. The Sensory Garden area includes grasses, wind and water features and a seasonally fragrant and colourful border. For the ladies, Dolls' Houses collected and refurbished for very many years provide each with illumination, new decoration, fixtures and fittings and characters. For the gents, Engine drivers of all ages will enjoy the 00 gauge model railway diorama. The multi-track layout runs with motion sensor controls and features main line, branch line and Underground line running.

If there is time you could have a look round the town of Wimborne Minster.

We then drive to Knoll Gardens which since 1994 internationally acclaimed gardener and owner of Knoll Gardens, Neil Lucas, together with his team, have created a wonderful naturalistic garden, a haven for both people and wildlife. Seamlessly blending graceful grasses, adding drama with striking perennials and form and structure with mature trees and shrubs, the gardens afford colour and interest throughout the seasons.





Wednesday, 21st June

Our journey home includes a visit to the famous National Trust's Stourhead. On a plateau of high ground Stourhead house was built and became home to generations of the Hoare family. Their house in the country was seen as an escape from London and truly became their family home.

Stourhead was one of the first grand Palladian-style villas to be built in England and therefore it follows the correct tradition, where the carriage entrance leads to the piano nobile, or main floor, where the principal rooms are arranged. Underneath, in a semi-basement, lie the 'engine rooms' of the house – the kitchens, sculleries and storerooms.

With hills, water and classical architecture overlaid by a fabulous collection of trees and shrubs, Stourhead was described as 'a living work of art' when first opened in the 1740s. Meandering paths offer vistas through trees to classical temples and surprises at every turn.



Our final part of the return journey sees us arriving at West Down at approx. 5.45 p.m.

Please note that apart from the leaving times in the mornings all other times are approximate and are dependent upon traffic.