

Chelsea and the English Gardens of the Bohemians

May 14-24, 2018

Join Pacific Horticulture and discover the extraordinary gardens of England's bohemians, the artistic set of writers, philosophers, intellectuals, and artists in the early 20th century. Explore the masterful gardens at Sissinghurst Castle created by Vita Sackville-West and Sir Harold Nicolson, and Charleston's walled garden. Visit Nymans, Virginia Wolfe's home and garden, and Great Dixter, designed by Sir Christopher Lloyd. Enjoy a special lunch and garden tour at Gravetye Manor and walking tour of London's Bloomsbury with high tea. Visit the Chelsea Flower Show on "members only" day. Escorted by PHS board member, Linda McKendry.

May 14, Monday **Depart the USA**

May 15, Tuesday **London Heathrow-Royal Tunbridge Wells**

Arrival London Heathrow Airport. A group transfer will be provided for guests on flights arriving by 3:30pm. Our accommodations are at the **Spa Hotel** situated in 14 acres of picturesque grounds on the edge of Royal Tunbridge Wells. The Spa is a family run hotel offering a restaurant, bar and Brasserie with swimming pool, spa, and free WiFi. Join Linda, your guide Jane, and traveling companions for a welcome dinner at the hotel this evening. **Dinner**

May 16, Wednesday **East and West Sussex**

This morning we will visit Nymans, formerly a country retreat for the creative Messel family,



with views stretching out across the Sussex Weald. We will explore this beautiful place, discovering hidden corners, walking along tree-lined avenues while surrounded by lush green countryside. From vibrantly colourful summer borders, to the tranquillity of ancient woodland, Nymans is a place of experimentation with constantly evolving planting designs and a rare and unusual plant

collection. The comfortable yet elegant house, a partial ruin, reflects the personalities and stories of the talented Messel family, from the Countess of Rosse to Oliver Messel and photographer Lord Snowdon.

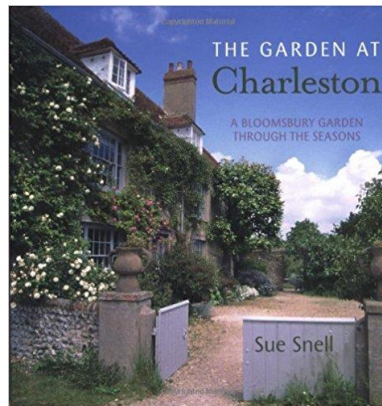
Next we'll stroll through Sheffield Park, a landscape garden, bordered by historic parkland and woodland. It is a horticultural work of art formed through centuries of landscape design, with influences of 'Capability' Brown and Humphry Repton. Four lakes form the heart of the garden, with paths circulating through the glades and wooded areas surrounding them. There are falls, a Palm Walk and many different tree and shrub species from around the world. The River Ouse runs across the parkland and the meadows have been transformed into a wildlife haven.

Lunch will be at Gravetye Manor, a quintessential English Country Manor, surrounded by gardens with a Michelin starred restaurant. After our "farm-to-table" luncheon we will have a private tour of the gardens. We return to Tunbridge Wells with the late afternoon and evening at leisure. **Breakfast, Lunch**



May 17, Thursday East Sussex

After breakfast we depart for a private visit to Charleston House, favored by the Bloomsbury Group. In 1916, on Virginia Woolf's recommendation, the painters Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, his friend David Garnett, and Vanessa's sons, Julian and Quentin, moved to Charleston, an ordinary farmhouse in East Sussex. Dating from the late sixteenth century and altered in the nineteenth century, it was to be occupied by the family and their friends for the next sixty-four years. Today the house appears as it was in the 1950s, representing a way of life in which lovely surroundings and harmonious objects and paintings were of more importance than creature comforts. Charleston has become, as Quentin Bell wrote, "a kind of time capsule in which the public can examine a world which has vanished". We'll have a special tour of the gardens with Sue Snell, author of *The Garden at Charleston*. The 1950s saw the full flowering of the garden under Vanessa Bell's direction. Quentin said "the garden flourished, as though the exuberant decoration of the interior had spilled through the doors".



After lunch we will visit Monk's House, Leonard and Virginia Woolf's 17th-century country retreat and Farley Farm, formerly the residence of the photographer Lee Miller and the Surrealist artist Roland Penrose. Here they built a collection of contemporary art treasures. Many of these were made by their friends and visitors, including Pablo Picasso, Man Ray, Max Ernst and Joan Miró. The house is surrounded by a sculpture garden and Lee Miller's vegetable patches. Later we will drive through charming Rodnell Village. Virginia Woolf loved the peaceful village with its thatched roofs and riverbank.

Breakfast, Lunch

May 18, Friday Kent

Today we visit Sissinghurst, a magnificent garden with profuse bloom. Historic, poetic, iconic; a refuge dedicated to beauty. Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson fell in love with Sissinghurst Castle and created a world-renowned garden. Vita, the poet and writer, began transforming Sissinghurst Castle in the 1930s with her diplomat and author husband, Harold Nicolson. Harold's architectural planning of the garden rooms, and the colourful, abundant planting in the gardens by Vita, reflect the romance and intimacy of her poems and writings.

Our next stop is Scotney Castle where we will enjoy a picnic lunch in the woodland before we explore the Victorian Country house, romantic garden, and 14th century moated castle - all in a beautiful wooded estate of 770 acres. We return to the Spa Hotel with the evening at leisure.

Breakfast, Lunch

May 19, Saturday East Sussex- Kent

Today we have a private opening at Great Dixter, an outstanding garden and the family home of gardener and gardening writer Christopher Lloyd – it was the focus of his energy and enthusiasm and the subject of over 40 years of books and articles. Now under the stewardship



of Fergus Garrett, Great Dixter is an historic house, a garden, a center of education, and a place that attracts horticulturists from all over the world. If Fergus is at home when we visit, he will lead our tour. We will also explore the house which was started in the 15th-century.

The afternoon is free to sample the great shopping in Tunbridge Wells or to relax and enjoy the amenities the Spa has to offer. **Breakfast**

May 20, Sunday Kent- Surrey- London

We depart Tunbridge Wells for the Royal Horticultural Society test gardens at Wisley. One of the great gardens of the world, Wisley, is home to some of the largest plant collections anywhere on the globe. We'll find everything from grand borders to a wonderful woodland and beautiful wild garden. The garden was created to inspire and educate. We will have free time for lunch and a visit to the amazing gift shop which houses a large collection of gardening books and related gift items.



Upon arrival London, we will check in to our hotel, the Edwardian Kenilworth, located in the heart of Bloomsbury, ideally positioned in London's famous West End. It is situated one block from the British Museum, walking distance to Covent Gardens and Oxford Street. The hotel has a restaurant, bar, fitness center and free internet. Full English breakfast is included.

Later today or tomorrow we'll have a tour of a public garden at the Barbican created by Nigel Dunnett. Nigel is a Gold Medal winner at the Chelsea Flower Show and Professor of Planting Design, Urban Horticulture and Vegetation Technology at Sheffield University. He has pioneered the use of innovative approaches to landscape planting, and the multi-functional use of vegetation in the built environment. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening.

Breakfast, Dinner

May 21, Monday London

This morning we will have a guided walking tour of Bloomsbury, an enclave of attractive garden squares and Georgian brick buildings long favored by avant-garde artists, writers and intellectuals. The Bloomsbury Group began meeting at a house in Bloomsbury and soon gained a reputation for their Bohemian lifestyle. Virginia Woolf, EM Forster, Vita Sackville-West and JM Keynes visited. As we discovered in Sussex, Charleston became an outpost for the group when Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell moved there in 1916. After the walking tour, our lunch today will be a champagne high tea at the lovely Charlotte Street Hotel. We have reserved the Vanessa Bell room! **Breakfast, Tea**

May 22, Tuesday London



Today as members of the Royal Horticultural Society we will attend the prestigious Chelsea Flower Show on "Members only Day". The grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea will be transformed with stunning horticultural displays. World-renowned garden designers, plant specialists,



florists and nurseries come together every year to one of London's most charming and affluent neighborhoods.

Breakfast

May 23, Wednesday London-Hertfordshire

This morning we travel to Hertfordshire to visit *Serge Hill*, Tom Stuart-Smith's garden. Tom is a landscape architect and garden designer and winner of 8 Gold Medals at the Chelsea Flower Show. He specializes in gardens that combine naturalism and modernity. Four generations of his family have lived at Serge Hill. In 1986 Tom renovated a dilapidated barn and field which he turned into his new home and garden. Next, we visit Tom's sister at *The Barn*. Her garden has two



contrasting areas with a wide range of herbaceous perennials and shrubs tolerant of generally dry conditions. There is an area of naturalistic planting, wild flower meadows and exotic meadow. We will have lunch at the Barn before returning to London mid afternoon. Our tour concludes with a farewell dinner. **Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner**

May 24, Thursday Independent departures or additional nights in London Breakfast

TOUR LAND COST PER GUEST BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY:

Based on a minimum of 16 guests: \$3985 per person for members of Pacific Horticulture Society. We suggest non-members join before registering for the tour. Single supplement \$828

THE PRICE INCLUDES:

- 9 night's accommodation, all rooms with private bathrooms
- All hotel taxes and service charges
- Breakfast daily/ lunches and dinners as noted in the itinerary
- Deluxe transportation by private motor coach
- Arrival airport transfer (If arriving by 3:30pm)
- Special horticulture guide, Jane Brand
- Membership in the Royal Horticultural Society (for those who sign up by Nov. 2017)
- All sightseeing and entrances as per the itinerary
- Escorted by Linda McKendry
- Tax-deductible donation of \$350 to Pacific Horticulture Society

COSTS DO NOT INCLUDE:

- Airfare
- Tips to your guide and driver
- Travel insurance
- Transfer back to the airport

For reservations and further information contact:

Sterling Tours, Ltd

2907 Shelter Island Drive Suite #105-262

San Diego, CA 92106 Tel: 619 299-3010 x 10 800-976-9497

www.sterlingtoursltd.com

info@sterlingtoursltd.com

CSTZ02384940

