

Further details – Barge, Blooms & the North West

With so much to see and do in the North West of England, we have combined a number of well-known favourites including lively Liverpool and Chester with less known excursions including the brand new RHS Garden Bridgewater. We will also visit the grand Shugborough Estate which incorporates a Georgian mansion and walled garden. We will also enjoy a guided coach tour of the village of Port Sunlight amongst many other, memorable excursions.



RHS Bridgewater

Thursday 23 June - Departure & Shugborough Estate

We will depart our pick up points and begin our journey North. We will enjoy a visit to Shugborough Estate (NT), which is the ancestral home of the Earls of Lichfield. With rumoured connections to the Holy Grail, the 364-hectare (900-acre) classical landscape is peppered with unusual monuments. The fine Georgian mansion house, with magnificent views over riverside garden terraces, features stunning collections of porcelain. We continue our journey, arriving at our hotel in Warrington early evening with time to freshen up before dinner is served this evening.

Friday 24 June - Chester & Port Sunlight

After breakfast we spend the morning in the charming walled city of Chester. We can explore 'The Rows', the two-tiered shopping arcades dating from medieval and Victorian times. The galleried walkways run along the four streets that meet at the High Cross and are named after the traders who carried on their business there (Shoemakers' Row, Ironmongers' Row etc). After some time to make our own lunch arrangements we continue to Port Sunlight, where we enjoy a guided coach orientation tour of the village on arrival.

This 19th century garden village was built by William Hesketh Lever for the workers in his soap factory and is today a conservation area. We also have admission to the museum which tells the story of William Lever and his vision in creating the village. The displays explore how the village developed, from the working conditions to the charming architecture and lively social scene. The museum is packed with nostalgia, from vintage soap packaging to the story of Ringo Starr's first performance with the Beatles, which took place in Port Sunlight in 1962. Dinner is back at our hotel this evening.

Saturday 25 June - Liverpool

After breakfast we make our way to Liverpool, we will enjoy a visit to the city's Anglican Cathedral, which is the UK's largest Cathedral. The rest of the day we will enjoy independent sightseeing in Liverpool. One of the easiest ways to see the sights of the city is with an all-day ticket on a Hop-on-Hop-off Bus. To experience the majesty of the city from a different viewpoint a River Explorer Cruise with Mersey Ferries is recommended. For music lovers there is the Beatles Museum at The Albert Dock or a Magical Mystery Bus Tour which takes passengers on a two hour tour of sites associated with the Fab Four. Of course we mustn't forget the iconic Cavern Club for anyone looking to relive the 1960s. Those of us interested in history will appreciate the exhibits at The Museum of Liverpool and The Maritime Museum and art lovers will want to spend time in The Walker Gallery and Tate Liverpool. After a full day of our own discoveries we return to our hotel for dinner.

Sunday 26 June - Wigan Pier & RHS Bridgewater

After breakfast we make a short journey to Wigan Pier to enjoy a friendly and informative barge cruise. We will enjoy an alternative view of the geography, wildlife and heritage of the Industrial Revolution and environs of Wigan, Leigh and the Douglas Valley. We continue this afternoon to the brand new RHS Garden Bridgewater, one of the largest gardening projects in Europe. This spectacular creation is RHS's fifth garden and has transformed the historic grounds of Worsley New Hall in Salford. We return to the hotel for our evening meal.

Monday 27 June - Return journey & Birmingham Botanical Garden

After breakfast this morning we check out of the hotel and begin our journey home, making an en route stop at Birmingham Botanical Gardens, There are four glasshouses ranging from the exotic Tropical House through to the Subtropical, Mediterranean and Arid Houses. We continue our journey, arriving in Bishops Cleeve early evening.

Accommodation - Park Royal Hotel, Warrington 4*

The 4* Park Royal is an ideal base for touring Cheshire, Manchester, Liverpool and the North West region in general. The hotel has 146 bedrooms which are well appointed and spacious and is peacefully set in large grounds which include a tennis court and lawned areas. There is lift access to all floors. The lovely rooms and award-winning restaurant are complimented by the excellent leisure facilities. The Park Royal has a large indoor pool and a fantastic health, beauty and leisure spa. Rooms are equipped with High-speed WI-FI, tea and coffee making facilities, TV and hairdryer. We will be based here for 4 nights on a half board basis -

full English breakfast, and 3 course dinner with minimum 3 choices per course plus tea & coffee to follow.

The price of this tour is guaranteed against alteration due to exchange rate fluctuations. No admission costs have been incorporated to the National Trust properties featured on this tour. Admission for N.T. Members is free of charge on production of a valid membership card.

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For booking forms and conditions, contact the Bishop's Cleeve u3a Group Organiser, Linda Coole, phone 01242 674 830. Completed forms and payments (cheques payable to Norman Allen Group Travel Ltd) to be sent to Linda.