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Silhill u3a Gardening Group Kent – The Garden of England 11 – 14 June 2024

4 days / 3 nights

£605 per person

(£120 Single Supplement)

Plus 2x entry charges if non-NT member

Day 1 – Tuesday 11 June 2024

We depart by coach from Solihull Methodist Church (around 8:00am) and travel south, stopping en-route for a comfort break before arriving at our first destination: **Chartwell**.



Chartwell is the family home and garden of Sir Winston Churchill since 1922. Sir Winston and Lady Churchill designed the gardens, including Clementine's Rose Garden and the walled Kitchen Garden that Winston helped to build. We will have the opportunity to explore the house, gardens and the Art Studio, which is home to the largest collection of Winston Churchill's paintings. We will have free garden audio guides for our individual use as we explore. We can purchase lunch in the onsite café.

Later this afternoon, we will continue to our comfortable accommodation at the **3-star Holiday Inn Maidstone**. All rooms are ensuite with TV, hairdryer and tea and coffee making facilities. The hotel also has an indoor swimming pool, sauna, jacuzzi and steam room. *Please note: There may some stairs to climb to reach your room.* Dinner will be served at the hotel in the evening.

Day 2 – Wednesday 12 June 2024

After a full breakfast, we set off for the gardens at **Pashley Manor**. We will have a private tour of this award-winning, quintessential English Garden which offers a sumptuous blend of romantic landscaping, imaginative plantings and fine old trees, fountains, springs and large ponds.

We later depart for a visit to another classic English Country Garden – **Great Dixter**. The distinguished garden writer Christopher Lloyd was the genius behind Great Dixter, with its timbered 15th century house. We will be joined by one of the gardening team for a private tour of the gardens, which completely surround the house. Garden areas include: The Orchard, The Prairie, the Exotic Garden, The Upper Moat, The Front Meadow and many more. Lunch is available for purchase.

We return to our hotel where dinner will be served in the evening. The hotel has a lovely garden area where we can meet for drinks before dinner.



Pashley Manor



Great Dixter

Day 3 – Thursday 13 June 2024

After our full breakfast at the hotel, we set off for another day in the Garden of England. Refreshments and Lunch will be available for purchase at the Sissinghurst.



We will spend a full day at **Sissinghurst Castle Gardens**. This famous garden was created by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson from 1930 onwards and became the most admired English Garden of its time. Few great gardens live up to their reputations so effortlessly as this. Sissinghurst is a large connoisseurs' garden consisting of a series of small romantic areas enclosed by the surviving parts of an Elizabethan mansion.

We later return to our hotel where we will have time to relax and enjoy a pre-dinner drink before our evening meal.

Day 4 – Friday 14 June 2024

After breakfast, we leave the hotel for our final visit to **Hever Castle and Gardens** which was once the childhood home of Anne Boleyn. We enjoy a private guided tour of the castle with over 600 years of history followed by the chance to explore the 125 acres of award-winning gardens with our very own guide. The gardens were laid out between 1904 and 1908 by Joseph Cheal and Son, who turned the marshland into the spectacular gardens you see today. One of the most magnificent areas of the gardens is the Italian Garden, which was designed to display William Waldorf Astor's collection of Italian sculpture and includes the colourful walled Rose Garden with its 3000 plants. Other features of the gardens include Half Moon Pond, the Cascade Rockery, the cool and shady grottoes, the formal loggia fountain based on the Trevi Fountain in Rome, and the more informal Two Sisters Pond. There is also a Yew Maze. Lunch is available here (not included).



In the afternoon we depart and travel back north to Solihull (drop-off at Solihull Methodist Church).

Included in the price:

- Three nights' dinner, bed and full breakfast at the 3-star Holiday Inn Maidstone.
- Comfortable journey throughout on a luxury 16-seater coach
- Guided tours at Pashley Manor, Great Dixter and Hever Castle
- Visits to Sissinghurst and Chartwell

Not Included

- Single Supplement £120 per person
- Entrance to National Trust properties for any non-members (this will be payable directly to the property on the day)