

Gardens of Norfolk & Suffolk

18 - 22 June 2017



from £575.00 (based on 20 passengers)
from £505.00 (based on 30 passengers)

Itinerary

Sunday 18 June 2017

We depart this morning from our local area and travel north towards Norwich for our first garden visit - the famous **Beth Chatto Gardens**, near Colchester. The garden was created in 1960 by Beth and Andrew Chatto from overgrown wasteland with poor gravel soil and boggy hollows. They have now transformed the area into an informal garden harmonising with the surrounding countryside and complemented by a large retail nursery with a wide range of plants. In the gravel garden, areas have been filled with drought loving plants, emulating a winding dried up river bed. The gentle descent of what was a soggy hollow has now been turned into dramatic water gardens. Refreshments/lunch (cakes and snacks only) are available in the tea room here today (not included).



Following our visit, we then make a short stop at the small village of **Lavenham**, before we continue on to our hotel accommodation for the next four nights at the **3-star Best Western Brook Hotel**, Norwich. All rooms are en-suite with flat screen TV, complimentary wireless internet access, hairdryer and tea & coffee making facilities.

Dinner will be served in the hotel this evening.

Monday 19 June 2017

This morning after breakfast, we travel to **Corpusty Mill**, the private garden of Roger Last. The main garden is to one side of the house, and consists of lawns, pools, a woodland garden, water garden, and kitchen garden, bound on one side by a long flint wall. Water is a feature of the garden and is to be found in pools, a rill, water masks, streams, a small lake, the mill overflow stream - and in the River Bure, which flows under the mill and forms one boundary of the garden. The lake is in the landscaped meadow behind the Mill - by the water is a stone cave with a large gunnera above. A modern folly, a seven metre stainless steel spire, acts as an eye catcher.



We then continue to **Blickling Hall (NT)**, whose gardens encompass almost every element of garden history from the seventeenth to the twentieth century. The 55 acre park includes many interesting garden buildings, a lake, huge yew hedges and lush 1930s herbaceous planting. Lunch is available here (not included).

We then return to our hotel where dinner will be served this evening.

Tuesday 20 June 2017

Following breakfast this morning, we will enjoy some free time in **Norwich** – a modern, yet one of the most complete medieval cities in the UK with the spire of the majestic Norman Cathedral dominating its skyline. Norwich has a heritage that is a delight to explore with a flourishing arts, music and cultural scene, a superb high street for shopping and a vast selection of lively cafes/restaurants.

Later this morning we will depart for our first garden visit to **Helmingham Hall**, near Stowmarket, where the combination of the house, parkland and gardens create an exceptional work of art. The house overlooks a deer park with a double avenue of oaks and to one side a walled kitchen garden has been turned to ornamental purposes. At the entrance a box-edged parterre with Santolina is surrounded by borders of Hybrid Musk roses and hedges of lavender. Few great historic houses have gardens as attractive as Helmingham Hall. Lunch will be available here (not included).



In the afternoon we travel to **Wyken Hall**, a four-acre garden which has been much developed recently. The garden comprises a knot and herb garden, an old fashioned rose garden; wild garden, nuttery, pond, gazebo and maze; herbaceous borders and an old orchard. We then depart for a guided tour of the adjoining **vineyards** with the vintner, which will conclude with a tasting of their award-winning white wine.

We return to our hotel, where once again dinner will be served this evening.

Wednesday 21 June 2017

After breakfast this morning, we depart for our first visit of the day to **The Plantation Garden**, one of Norwich's great surprises. This Victorian town garden features a Gothic fountain, flower beds, a lawn, an Italianate terrace, a 'Medieval' terrace wall, woodland walkways and a rustic bridge. There are many hidden and unique features to this idiosyncratic garden making it a haven of peace, tranquillity and a glimpse into a bygone age.

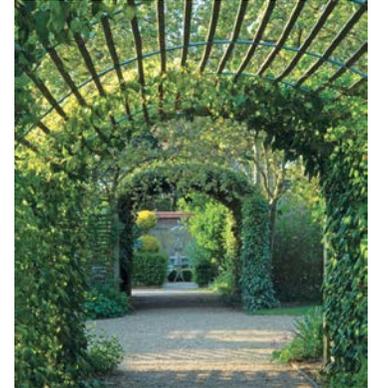


From here, we continue on to **Felbrigg Hall (NT)**, one of the finest 17th-century country houses in East Anglia. The Walled Garden has been restored and features a series of *potager* gardens, a working dovecote and the National Collection of Colchicums. The park, through which there are way-marked walks, is well known for its magnificent and aged trees. Refreshments/lunch (cakes and snacks only) are available in the tea room here today (not included).

Wednesday 21 June 2017 – cont.

Our final visit today is to the breath-taking 20-acre **East Ruston Old Vicarage** garden, which for many will be the highlight of our visit to Norfolk, home of the unstoppable gardeners Alan Gray and Graham Robeson. It is quite unbelievable that such an exotic garden can lie less than two miles from the North Sea. With the benefit of good shelter beds and hedging it has been possible to grow many plants not normally associated with Norfolk.

We complete our journey with a scenic drive via Wroxham before returning to our hotel, where we will enjoy our final dinner together this evening.



Thursday 22 June 2017

Sadly our trip has come to an end and after breakfast, we will check out of our hotel. Before we complete our journey home, we will have time for two more visits today. Our first visit will be to **Fullers Mill**, an enchanting seven-acre garden on the banks of the River Lark. The garden features light, dappled woodland with a plantsman's paradise of rare and unusual shrubs, perennials and marginals planted with great natural charm. Euphorbias and lilies are a particular feature.



From here, we continue to Bury St Edmonds for some free-time and lunch (not included), before arriving at our final visit to the gardens of **Ickworth (NT)**. Created by the First Marquess of Bristol, the 19th century Italiante gardens are overlooked by the magnificent Rotunda house. The gardens include a Victorian Stumpery and the Temple Rose garden. The famous Capability Brown also helped to design Ickworth's extensive wood and parkland. Lunch is available here today (not included).

Following this, we continue with our homeward journey, stopping en-route for refreshments (not included), before returning to our original pick-up point early evening.

Included in the price:

- 4 nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at the 3-star Best Western Brook Hotel, Norwich. All rooms have private facilities
- Comfortable coaching throughout
- Entry to the gardens of Beth Chatto, Blickling Hall, Felbrigg Hall, Helmingham Hall, Wyken Hall, Corpusty Mill, East Ruston Old Vicarage, Fullers Mill, Ickworth and a visit to the Plantation Garden
- Services of Sara Hunter as Brightwater Holidays tour manager

Not included (per person)

- Single room supplement £100.00
- NT non-member supplement £20.00
- Insurance £21.00 (under 65); £42.00 (65-74); £63.00 (75-90)

A deposit of £75.00 per person will be required to secure your place on this tour