



May 20th to 23rd 2019

A Tour of Sussex and Kent.

Capture the essence of an English Country garden- plus lots more besides

Even if you have visited Sussex and Kent before, such is the allure of these two counties, that you can return again and again, each season displaying colours and a mood quite unlike anywhere else. First-time visitors will be bowled over by the quality and pedigree of the houses and gardens which capture the essence of the English country house and garden.

The tour begins on **Monday 20th May at The Ashdown Park Hotel and Country Club, Wych Cross, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5JR**. This will be our base for the tour. The Ashdown Park is a 19th century mansion house with extensive grounds located in the middle of the magical Ashdown Forest. Facilities include: a par 3, 18 hole golf course, driving range and putting green: a Health and Beauty Spa, indoor swimming pool, gym, aerobics studio, sauna and steam rooms. Parking will be reserved for us in the first car park you come to as you come down the drive. Dinner will be at 19.30 with pre-dinner drinks at 19.00.



On **Tuesday 21st May**, our first full day, we will be driving past **Worth Abbey** (time to stop if you wish) on our way to the **Bolney Estate**, one of England's longest established vineyards with its award winning wines, to sample their still and sparkling wines.



After a guided tour and wine tasting (including wine pairing over lunch), we move on to stroll around the gardens of **Wakehurst Place**. The Gardens at Wakehurst Place, set in 180 acres, are now managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens in Kew. Wakehurst Place boasts a walled garden with cottage style garden plantings, a water garden with a mixture of plants growing in and around the water and the Himalayan Glade with a collection of azaleas and rhododendrons, however the main feature is the collection of trees and shrubs. In the summer months we can expect to see many delightful brightly coloured plants. There will be an organised walking tour of the gardens which will take about 75 minutes.

Our route back to the hotel will take us past the **Bluebell Railway**, should you have time to stop here also. The Bluebell Railway is one of the first preserved heritage lines in the UK. The company has a large collection of vintage steam locomotives and carriages and uses some of them to recreate journeys from 1880s through to the 1960s. Popular with film and television, the railway has been featured in films like Downton Abbey and Churchill's Secret.

On returning to our Hotel and if you have time, you may wish to visit **Standen**, designed by Phillip Webb and Morris and Co, one of the finest examples of Arts and Crafts workmanship. The house is dressed for a weekend stay in 1925 and boasts views across the Sussex countryside.

On **Wednesday 22nd May**, we will explore more of this fabulous countryside with time to also take in other places should you wish to on your return to the hotel. We will commence with a drive through the stunning and extensive **Ashdown Forest**. Originally a deer hunting forest in Norman times, the Ashdown Forest is one of the largest public access spaces in the South East and is known the world over as the home of Winnie the Pooh. Due to the anticipated size of this tour, we will split into 2 groups today – one group to visit Sarah Raven's in the morning and Bateman's during the afternoon and the second group visiting Bateman's in the morning and Sarah Raven's that afternoon. The offering will be the same for each group. Lunch may be had at Bateman's for both groups.



Sarah Raven's Cutting Garden at Perch Hill was once a rather ramshackle ex-dairy with a lot of concrete, corrugated iron and not much else; the land has been converted to an organic 90 acres of new seed and plant varieties. The constant supply of favourite flowers comes from the large cutting garden where the central four beds are filled with hardy and half-hardy annuals and biennials. There are also two purely ornamental gardens, not dedicated to harvesting- the Oast garden with an extravagant mix of colour and structure and the front farmhouse garden, which is designed to have a calmer feel. We will have a guided tour of the gardens with Sarah's Head Gardener. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and browse the shop. Sarah is married to Adam Nicholson, the historian and grandson of Vita Sackville and Perch Hill is their family home.

Bateman's, the former home of Rudyard Kipling is very close by. Here we will have a guided tour and talk. Bateman's was the home of Rudyard Kipling from 1902 until his death in 1936. The house is a Jacobean Wealden mansion built in 1634. Kipling's widow bequeathed the house to the National Trust on her death in 1939. The house is a Grade I listed building the highest grade reserved for buildings of "exceptional interest". The garden was created by Kipling from 1907, using the prize money from his award of the Nobel Prize in Literature. Rudyard Kipling's Rolls Royce Phantom 1 will be available for inspection.



The rest of the afternoon is free to see what you wish in what is a most beautiful and rural part of Sussex and Kent: **Battle** (where the Battle of Hastings was fought) and **Sissinghurst** with its magnificently manicured gardens (created by Vita Sackville and Harold Nicholson) are both nearby and worthy of a visit. On the way back to our hotel, you will pass **Scotney Castle** near Royal Tunbridge Wells. The gardens, are a biological Site of Special Scientific Interest with dormice, a protected species, and several nationally scarce invertebrates, such as Rolph's door snail. If you wish to take a diversion, **Tudeley's** All Saints Church near Tonbridge is also worth a visit. It is the only church in the world to have all its twelve windows decorated by the great Russian artist Marc Chagall. The only other Chagall glass in Britain is just one window at Chichester Cathedral.

On making your way back to our hotel you might like to visit **Bayham Old Abbey**. The ruins are on the border of Kent and Sussex near Tunbridge Wells and appears to have entrances in both counties. It was founded c. 1207. Bayham functioned as an abbey until its dissolution in the 16th century. The abbey's ruins are currently maintained by English Heritage. They largely consist of partial walls, though the room layouts can still be seen.

On our last day (**Thursday 23rd May**) and after checking out from our Hotel, we will drive north towards **Westerham**. Westerham nestles in the valley of the ancient River Darent amongst some of Kent's finest countryside. It's roots can be traced back to the Vikings and Romans and it's most famous (and more recent residents) are, amongst others, Sir Winston Churchill and General James Wolfe.

Our first stop will be **Chartwell** where we will have a guided tour of the house commencing at 10.30am.



For over forty years Chartwell was the home of Winston Churchill. He bought the property in September 1922 and lived there until shortly before his death in January 1965. In the 1930s, when Churchill was excluded from political office, Chartwell became the centre of his world. At his dining table, he gathered those who could assist his campaign against German re-armament and the British government's response of appeasement; in his study, he composed speeches and wrote books; in his garden, he built walls, constructed lakes and painted. During the Second World War Chartwell was largely unused, the Churchills returning after he lost the 1945 election.

Continuing on to **Westerham Brewery**, we will have a tour by the owner and founder Robert Wicks. Westerham Brewery was founded in 2004 and has revived many of the much-loved flavours of the old Black Eagle Brewery which closed in 1965 following the catastrophic consolidation by the “Big Brewers” in the 1950’s. The local water, is excellent for brewing pale bitter beers for which Westerham was once famous. Being based in Kent, the Brewery uses the hops grown in the county and have developed a close working relationship with the Scotney Castle Estate in Lamberhurst and the Finchcock’s hop gardens in Goudhurst- both of which you may have visited or driven past on this tour!

Following our tour we will have lunch at one of our own pubs, The Wheatsheaf at **Bough Beech**. The Wheatsheaf is a listed building, said to be a 15th century hunting lodge frequented by Henry VIII on his way to Hever Castle and Anne Boleyn.



Following lunch you are free to go home or stay a while longer and visit **Wolfe House** in Westerham (home of General James Wolfe), **Hever Castle** (once the home of Anne Boleyn and where Henry VIII visited to court her) or **Penshurst Place** (the home of the Sydney family and now home to Philip Sidney, 2nd Viscount De L'Isle MBE, Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Kent) all within 10 minutes of the Pub.



The 20-Ghost Club Limited Registered Number 5224632

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I/We wish to join you on the **Tour of Sussex and Kent from 20th May to 23rd May 2019.**

Names of all participants.....

Address for correspondence.....

E-mail..... Phone.....

The cost per couple of the Dinner, Bed and Breakfast package for 3 nights (4 days), (includes wine tasting and lunch at Bolney Vineyards, all arranged tours at Wakehurst, Sarah Raven's Cutting Garden, Bateman's, Chartwell, Westerham Brewery and lunch at The Wheatsheaf) is £1300 (Single person £700). Admission costs to the various National Trust properties are **not** included as most people have NT membership. Please bring your National Trust Membership card with you.

Please send your deposit cheque of £500 made payable to "The 20-Ghost Club Limited" to the address above or by Bank transfer to the 20-Ghost Club's bank account (a/c 00066803, The 20-Ghost Club Ltd, 30-96-35). Please advise our Treasurer Philip Hall of your payment: pah.rr@btopenworld.com

Double Room..... Twin Room..... Single Room.....

Dietary needs(if any).....

DETAILS OF THE PARTICIPATING CAR

Manufacturer.....

Model.....

Chassis.No.....

Reg No.....

Colour.....

YearBody style.....

Coachbuilder.....

As a participant in the 20-Ghost Club Limited Tour of Sussex and Kent and in consideration of the right and privilege to enter and participate in this event and intending to be legally bound, I agree to release the 20-Ghost Club and all committee members and its representatives from any and all liability and injuries, damage or loss or consequential loss arising from my entry and participation in the event. I confirm that my car is roadworthy for the event and complies with the current vehicle regulations for the country in which the car is registered. I also agree that information about the participating car, the names of the driver and passengers, including photographs taken during the event and tour, may be published in the Club's journal, News & Record, unless I inform the Editor by e-mail that I do not wish such information and/or photographs to appear.

Name..... (Printed please)

Signature..... Date.....