



Stourhead, Wiltshire
NTPL/Nick Meers

Destination Wessex

The heart of ancient England



DESTINATION WESSEX is a body of leading attractions and accommodation providers that is marketing the central area of Southern England as a quality heritage destination. Wessex has the combination of historical, outdoor and cultural heritage that will appeal to your clients and provide special tours for a very wide range of special interests. This issue tells you about the gardens.

WESSEX GARDENS. There are more than 60 outstanding gardens in the area regularly open to the public. All are readily accessible from London and the area is compact which means travel between them is never very far. There is no need to change hotels every night.

On the following pages, we introduce you to a variety of Wessex gardens and provide sample itineraries that include them.



■ This is the first of a series of reports, each of which will present a different segment of the attractions of Wessex. The next one will be on historic houses.

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Wessex Gardens



Hestercombe, Somerset

We have an inventory of outstanding gardens and here are some of them.



Abbey House Gardens. The largest private collection of roses in Britain and a variety of other environments leading down the slopes to the fish ponds of the monks below. www.abbeyhousegardens.co.uk

Abbotsbury Sub-Tropical Gardens. Established in 1765 and extended to 20 acres of Grade 1 listed magnificent woodland valley gardens. www.abbotsbury-tourism.co.uk

Athelhampton. The Grade 1 listed award winning gardens of one of a very fine 15th century manor. www.athelhampton.co.uk

Barrington Court. Enchanting garden laid out in three contrasting rooms, inspired by a design prepared by Gertrude Jekyll. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Beaulieu. The 19th century garden of The Palace House, with a very interesting wilderness garden. www.beaulieu.co.uk

Bowood House. Over 2,000 acres of gardens and grounds landscaped by Capability Brown between 1762 and 1766 and featuring

rhododendron walks. www.bowood.org

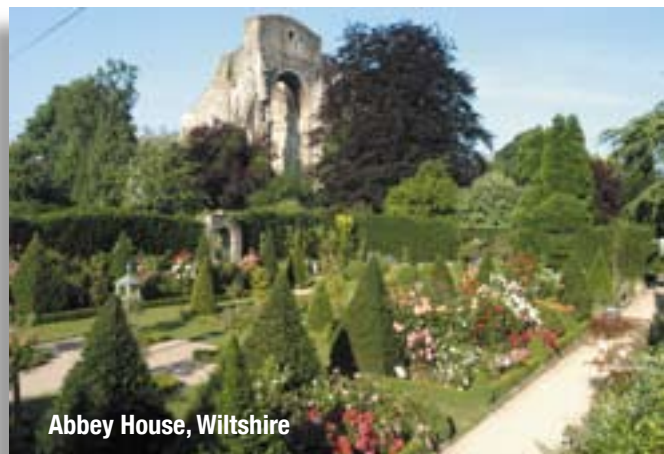
Corsham Court. Landscaped by Capability Brown in the 1760's with herbaceous borders, secluded gardens, a rose garden and a lily pool. www.corshamcourt.co.uk

The Courts. A seven acre English country garden of charm and variety. Flower gardens containing imaginative colour schemes, a water garden and an arboretum. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

East Lambrook Manor. This Grade I listed English country cottage style garden was the inspiration of Margery Fish, noted for the richness of her planting. www.margeryfish.com

Exbury. Over 200 acres of natural beauty and horticultural variety. world famous for its displays of rhododendrons, azaleas and camelias. www.exbury.co.uk

Forde Abbey. Award winning 30 acre garden, begun almost 900 years ago. Three lakes, herbaceous borders, arboretum and magnificent trees. www.fordeabbey.co.uk



Abbey House, Wiltshire



Athelhampton, Dorset

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More gardens to enjoy

Hadspen Garden. Formerly the garden of Penelope Hobhouse, it is best known for its carefully colour co-ordinated borders. www.hadspengarden.co.uk

Heale Garden. An award winning garden set beside the river Avon. A fine display of plants, shrubs and roses providing colour throughout the year.

Hestercombe Gardens. One of Britain's premier gardens. The formal gardens were designed by Sir Edward Lutyens and complemented by the informal planting of Gertrude Jekyll. www.hestercombegardens.com

Hinton Ampner. An outstanding 12 acre 20th century garden uniting a formal layout with informal planting and offering year round interest. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Sir Harold Hillier Gardens and Arboretum. 180 acres that contain one of the finest collections of hardy trees and shrubs anywhere and stunning herbaceous borders. www.hillier.hants.gov.uk

Iford Manor. The Peto garden is a Grade 1 award winning Italianate garden characterised by pools, sculpture and terraces. www.ifordmanor.co.uk

Mapperton Gardens. Below the orangery and croquet lawn is an Italianate formal garden with paths leading into the Wild Garden. www.mapperton.com

Mottisfont Abbey. Walled gardens, magnificent trees and the famous rose garden which houses the National Collection of old shrub roses. www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Montacute House. A formal Elizabethan garden with raised walks along colourful herbaceous borders that is surrounded by a landscaped park. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Prior Park. A beautiful 18th century landscape garden set in a sweeping valley with fine views over the city of Bath. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Stourhead. One of the most outstanding landscape gardens. An 18th century garden designed around lakes with an important collection of specimen trees and shrubs. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex

Tintinhull Garden. A delightful and intimate walled garden divided into rooms by walls and clipped hedges. Pool, azalea and fountain gardens. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wessex



The Courts, Wiltshire

NTPL/Stephen Robson

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Mapperton, Dorset



**A three day
tour that
includes
some
of these
beautiful
gardens.**



Day 1

Depart London for Bath. Stop in Corsham and visit Corsham Court, a fine Elizabethan house containing paintings by Italian and Flemish masters.

The visit begins with a guided tour of the house followed by one of the gardens designed by Capability Brown in the 1760's. Continue to Bath, check into your hotel (2 nights).

After lunch, visit Prior Park, an 18th century landscape garden created by Ralph Allen with advice from Capability Brown and Alexander Pope. It contains three lakes and

a Palladian bridge set in a sweeping valley with great views over Bath. Afterwards explore the many attractions of Bath.

Day 2

Leave for The Courts Garden. This is a fascinating garden with great charm. There is an imaginative use of colour and interesting plants in its borders. The tour then heads south to Stourhead, one of the most stunning gardens in England. It was laid out between 1741 and 1780 and is an outstanding example of the English

landscape garden. You will be taken on a walk around the lake followed by lunch.

In the afternoon, you will visit the Peto Garden at Iford Manor, an Italian style garden set on a hillside with colonnades, terraces, statues and ponds. It is a Grade 1 listed garden which won the Historic Houses Association award of Garden of the Year in 1998.

Return to Bath and see more of this World Heritage Site.

Day 3

Begins with a visit to the world famous Roman Baths.

Leave for Bowood House set in over 2,000 acres of gardens and grounds, landscaped by Capability Brown in the 1760's. After a visit to the gardens, tour the beautifully proportioned Georgian house. A special feature is Robert Adam's fine Diocletian wing.

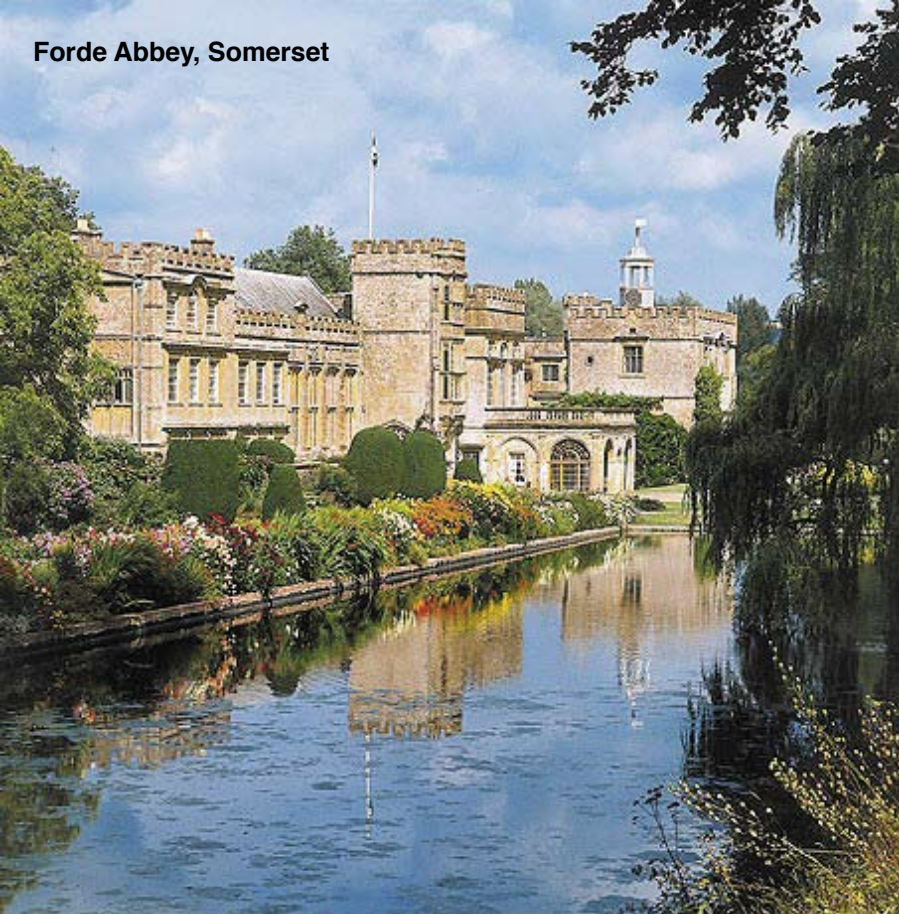
Lunch will be at Bowood.

Continue to Malmesbury for a

special tour of Abbey House Gardens. They are in an historic location, next to the ruins of the 12th century abbey. Included within their borders is a wide variety of environments including slopes down to the river, the ancient fishponds of the monks and a garden with more than 2,000 different roses. It will then be time to head up the M4 motorway and return to London.



Bowood, Wiltshire



**A five day
tour will
include
the chance to
see more of
England's most
outstanding
gardens**

Day 1.

Leave London for Winchester, the ancient capital of Wessex.

A guided tour of the magnificent 900 year old cathedral will be followed by visits to two small gardens.

First will be the Victorian Dean Garnier's Garden and the second, Queen Eleanor's Garden, a faithful representation of a medieval garden.

After lunch, leave for nearby Romsey and check into your hotel (2 nights).

In the afternoon, visit the beautiful Mottisfont Abbey Garden with its walled gardens, splendid trees and the National Collection of old roses. Welcome reception and dinner.

Day 2.

Leave for Exbury and its landscaped woodland gardens overlooking the Beaulieu River.

They include the famous Rothchild plant collection (rhododendrons, azaleas) as well

as many rare trees plus rose, water, rock and heather gardens.

Next stop is at Beaulieu Abbey which, after its dissolution by Henry VIII in 1538, became the ancestral home of the Montagues.

Lunch will be taken after a guided tour of the house. Afterwards, there will be time to stroll around the gardens.

The tour heads back to Romsey and a visit to the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens.

These are a contrast in that they were only established in 1953.

The 180 acre area contains no less than 11 National Collections and one of the greatest collections of trees and shrubs.

On to Salisbury and a visit to its great cathedral. Overnight in Salisbury

Day 3.

Head south west into the beautiful Dorset countryside and to the 15th century

Athelhampton manor house and one of the finest architectural gardens in England. The Historic Houses Association chose it as Garden of the Year in 1997.

Next, the Abbotsbury Sub-Tropical Gardens which were established in 1765 and hold 20 acres of exotic and rare plants.

Lunch during the garden visit.

Third stop will be at Forde Abbey, which was founded in 1140 and survives externally almost as the monks left it in 1539.

Surrounded by an outstanding garden, it was recognised as Garden of the Year in 1992. It has 30 acres of colourful borders, wide lawns, ponds and huge mature trees.

On to the hotel in Sherborne (2 nights) and perhaps a stroll to the beautiful abbey and charming high street of this historic market town.

continued on next page

Five day tour continued ...

Day 4.

First on the list will be Tintinhull Garden which was created around a 17th century manor house and enhanced in recent years by the well known garden designer, Penelope Hobhouse.

It is a wonderful collection of 'rooms' with small ponds, varied borders and secluded lawns plus an attractive kitchen garden.

Next, it is Barrington Court, originally a Tudor manor house that is best known today for the quality of its garden.

This is a formal garden laid out in a series of walled rooms including the White Garden, Rose Garden, Iris Garden and Lily Garden.

Lunch will be in Barrington Court's restaurant.

The third garden visited today will be Hestercombe where Grade 1 listed gardens cover 50 acres.

The formal gardens have the distinction of having been designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and planted by Gertrude Jekyll and are a supreme example of this famous partnership.

They have now been joined by the

Landscape Garden which was created in the 1750's and re-opened in 1997 for the first time in 125 years. Return to Sherborne.

Day 5.

Leave for Hadspen Garden. This charming garden in the grounds of Hadspen House is best known for its display of colour co-ordinated borders.

The tour now heads back towards London. On the way, two stops will be made.

The first of these will be at Stourhead, one of the finest gardens in England.

It was laid out between 1741 and 1780 and is an outstanding example of the English landscape garden.

Lunch will be taken here

The second and final stop is at a man-made structure that was created long before gardens were around.

However, the road to London goes right past it and so it would be a shame not to make a stop. It is Stonehenge.

The tour will then continue to London and to your hotel.



NTPL/Nick Meers

Above: Tintinhull, Somerset
Right: Mottisfont, Hampshire
Far right: Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Hampshire



NTPL/Stephen Robson



Photographs in this newsletter courtesy of the National Trust and individual gardens

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Who and what is Destination Wessex

DESTINATION WESSEX is a private sector non profit organisation bringing together an area which, in terms of quality and variety, has one of the greatest concentrations of English heritage in the country.

It is an area that, with the exception of Bath and Stonehenge, has not been marketed as extensively overseas as its attractions warrant. Our aim is to do something about this.

Destination Wessex is a group of leading attraction and accommodation providers in the Wessex area including the National Trust. It is also supported by English Heritage and the Historic Houses Association and is headed by a team of senior tourism professionals.

Our role is to interest you in what Wessex has to offer, invite you to come and visit us and put you in touch with business partners in Wessex. It is to assist you in whatever way we can to provide products that will attract your clients and send them home happy.

This newsletter is the first of a series which will describe the various aspects of the attractions of Wessex.

The next two will be devoted to the historic houses of Wessex and transport.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about Wessex, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Michael Mounde,
Chairman



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