

# THREE SHIRES EXPLORER

25th to 29th April



**A short break encompassing unspoilt countryside, market towns of distinctive character and a wealth of varied landscapes from historic cities to fascinating villages. The richness of the natural environment forms a backdrop to a more leisurely pace of life – where the past is ever present but where innovation and inspiration blend in with the historic landscapes of the past.**

**Sunday 25th April** Depart Oxted 8.00am for the drive to the historic carpet-making town of Kidderminster where there will be time for lunch before boarding the 2.00pm Severn Valley Railway steam hauled train for a leisurely ride through 16 miles of beautiful countryside to Bridgnorth. Passing through the ancient riverside town of Bewdley, the timeless village of Arley, the perfectly restored stone-built station of Highley and the riverside hamlet of Hampton Loade to the medieval market town of Bridgnorth where there will be time to explore the town, spectacularly situated on a tall sandstone cliff, honeycombed with caves, above the River Severn. Rejoining the coach we take the short drive to our hotel situated in the heart of historic Ludlow.

**Monday 26th April** This morning will be at leisure to explore Ludlow. Often called 'the perfect historic town', Ludlow is a delightful blend of ancient border stronghold, medieval planned town and present-day country market centre. The street plan is still much as it was 800 years ago, but each street within it has developed its own distinctive character. In some, the feeling is of Georgian elegance, whilst elsewhere there is plenty of beautifully preserved Tudor half-timbering with bulging walls and steep, higgledy-piggledy roofs. Early afternoon we take the short drive to Berrington Hall, an exquisite 18th-century mansion with superb views to the Brecon Beacons, set in parkland designed by 'Capability' Brown. It contains beautifully decorated interiors complete with a nursery, Victorian laundry, Georgian dairy and an attractive garden.

**Tuesday 27th April** Today we are joined by a local guide for a full day tour of the picturesque Black and White villages of Herefordshire, enjoying the unspoilt countryside of the English-Welsh Border where past and present blend in a timeless tapestry. Our route will take us first to the lovely village of Eardisland on the River Arrow, where there will be a short, easy walking tour, then on to Pembridge where coffee is available at the historic New Inn, followed by a short talk on the village and a visit to the church with its detached bell tower. We then continue on to Kington, one of



Westons Cider Visitor Centre

Herefordshire's five market towns and named after Edward the Confessor, before visiting Hay on Wye, the "town of books" where time will be available for lunch and visits to some of the dozens of bookshops. In the afternoon we visit the village of Dilwyn, then one of the county's gems, Weobley for another short and easy walking tour of the village before returning to the hotel via the historic market town of Leominster.

**Wednesday 28th April** After breakfast we drive to Worcester, especially known for its porcelain, sauce and gloves. Early afternoon we shall enjoy a relaxing two hour cruise taking in the sights along the river Severn whilst enjoying afternoon tea.

**Thursday 29th April** Departing from the hotel we make our way to Hereford city, standing proudly on the banks of the famous River Wye. Visit the majestic Cathedral where you will find the unique Mappa Mundi, a medieval map of the world, and the world's largest Chained Library Exhibition. Early afternoon we take the short drive to Westons Cider Mill. This family run business has been producing cider since 1880. Here we shall be taken on a tour of the mill and hear how cider is produced, from the planting of orchards to the moment the cider is poured into the glass. Step back in time as you experience the tranquil and fragrant vat shed, housing the historic oak vats, some nearly 200 years old and still in use. Included in the tour is a tasting session. Following the tour we shall be served with a cream tea before heading for home, arriving back mid evening.

## What's included:

**Feathers Hotel**, Ludlow

4 nights Dinner, Bed & Breakfast

All bedrooms have private facilities, TV, telephone & hospitality tray.

**Time to explore Kidderminster, Bridgnorth, Ludlow, Worcester & Hereford**

**Train ride on the Severn Valley Railway**

**Entry to Berrington Hall**

**Full day Black & White Villages tour**

**Boat trip with afternoon tea on the River Severn**

**Guided tour of Westons Cider, with tastings & afternoon tea**

**COST: £368.00 per person**

*Single Room Supp: £40.00*

Less £6.00 for Nat Trust Members, but **must** bring card



The Feathers Hotel, Ludlow