

Blossom Trail

11th to 14th April

The Vale of Evesham is renowned for its strong horticultural links with, for a few weeks in the spring, roadsides ablaze with colour - the soft pink tones of cherry and apple blossom contrasting with the white of the pear and plum. We visit Batsford Arboretum, with (weather permitting) breath-taking displays of Japanese Cherry and maple trees nestled amongst carpets of bluebells and other wild flowers; The Vyne, where we can see rooms recently opened to the public for the first time & take a ride on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway.



£420 PER PERSON

Single Room Supp: £69
(Nat Trust members less £10.80,
but must bring card)

What's Included

- ✓ 3 nights Dinner, Bed & Breakfast
- ✓ All rooms are en-suite with TV, telephone, WiFi, hairdryer & hospitality tray
- ✓ Entry to The Vyne
- ✓ Guided tour of the Blossom Trail
- ✓ Entry to Batsford Arboretum
- ✓ Return trip on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Steam Railway
- ✓ Time to explore Evesham & Cheltenham
- ✓ Entry to Waterperry Gardens

★★★★ CHELTENHAM CHASE HOTEL

Brockworth

This modern hotel features a fantastic spa & swimming pool.

Thursday 11 April

Departing Oxted 9.00am, we make our way to The Vyne at Basingstoke. Following a major roof restoration, we are able to see rooms in this former Tudor 'power house' which have never been opened to the public before. See 500 year-old Majolica tiles, Renaissance stained glass, and exquisite wood carvings in the Tudor chapel and stroll through rooms once enjoyed by notable guests like Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn,



Horace Walpole, and Jane Austen. The house is set in 13 acres of beautiful, relaxing gardens, with fine herbaceous borders, a wild garden, orchard and walled garden. Early afternoon we continue on to our hotel, making a short stop at the Swindon Designer Outlet Village en route.

Friday 12 April

This morning we have a 2 hour guided tour through the Vale of Evesham, passing through the pretty plum towns of Pershore, Radbury, Harvington and Offenham, before returning to Evesham where we shall have some time to find lunch and explore. Early afternoon we make our way to Batsford Arboretum. This 56 acre site is home to one of the largest private tree collections in the country and there has been an arboretum here since the 17th century. As you wander through the arboretum, you may see flowering cherries, maples and magnolias, with swathes of wild

garlic, shady glades of bluebells and grape hyacinths. We shall have time to explore the grounds, browse the gift and plant shops, maybe visit the on-site Falconry Centre (entry not included) before returning to our hotel.

Saturday 13 April

This morning we take our seats on the Gloucestershire Warwickshire Railway for a steam train journey through the beautiful Cotswolds countryside from Cheltenham Racecourse Station to Broadway and back, passing through Greet Tunnel and over the spectacular 15-arch Stanway Viaduct. Our journey will take us through some of the most spectacular scenery in the Cotswolds with panoramic views across the Severn Vale to the Malvern Hills and on to the Black Mountains in Wales. On our return, we make the short transfer into Cheltenham, where we shall have the afternoon at leisure to explore.

Sunday 14 April Departing after breakfast, we take a scenic drive through the Cotswolds on our way to Waterperry Gardens near Thame, made famous by Beatrix Havergal who established her School of Horticulture for Ladies there from 1932 to 1971. We shall have time to find lunch and explore the 8 acres of beautifully landscaped ornamental gardens. There's also a plant centre, garden shop, gallery, gift shop, museum and tea shop. After lunch we continue our homeward journey, arriving back in Oxsted late afternoon.

