



SILHILL u3a Gardening Group

June 23rd - 26th 2025
4 Days / 3 Nights
Dinner, Bed and Breakfast
£570 (single supplement £140)
Plus approx. £40 for non-NT members
Deposit of £125 due by 7 February 2025


brightwater
tailor-made group travel

Gardens of North Wales

Day 1

We depart by coach from Solihull Methodist Church and travel to **Powis Castle and Gardens (NT)**. Influenced by French and Italian styles, this amazing garden is cared for by the National Trust and has some of the most flamboyant and stylish herbaceous planting of any garden in the British Isles, as well as billowing yew topiary and magnificent views over the River Severn and Border countryside. The castle was originally built in the early 13th century as a medieval fortress. It has been remodelled over the years and each generation has added to the magnificent collection of sculpture, furniture and paintings. We will have time to thoroughly explore the gardens and to purchase lunch.



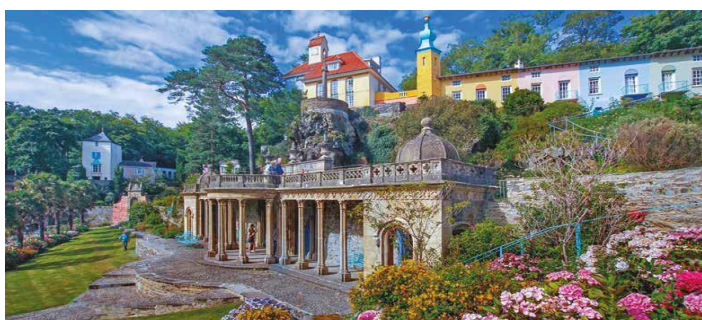
Powis Castle and Gardens

After our visit to Powis Castle, we travel further North in Wales to the 4* Faenol Fawr Country House and Manor Hotel, our home for the next three nights. The hotel is a Grade II listed building and therefore has no lift (ground floor rooms available upon request). We will have time to explore the grounds and relax before our 3-course evening meal which will be served in the "Tudor Room".

Day 2

After a full Welsh breakfast we travel to **Plas Brondanw**, at Croesor (Gwynedd). This Italianate garden was created by Sir Clough Williams-Ellis, who also designed Portmeirion so we can compare and contrast the two properties today. On entering the cobbled stables courtyard, the outside world seems to disappear. All you hear is the sound of running water from the fountain and the bleating of sheep in the nearby fields. Enclosed by clipped yew hedging punctuated by towering columns of Italian cypress, a narrow gap in the green walls is marked by a low panel of elegant ironwork with views beyond that will take your breath away. In the shade by the house, grow billowing white-flowered Japanese anemones, purple aconites, astilbes, hostas and ferns. **We will enjoy a guided tour here.**

We later continue to nearby **Portmeirion**, the famous Italianate village. Sir Clough Williams-Ellis acquired the site in 1925 for less than £5,000 as it was then "a neglected wilderness". Over the course of 50 years the village was developed in a unique and wonderfully eccentric style, while at all times staying in harmony with the natural surroundings. Much work has been carried out in recent years to improve the gardens, enhancing the beauty of the architecture. We will take a walk in 'The Gwyllt', a display woodland where the major concentrations of Rhododendron, Azalea and Camellia were planted, with a wide variety of choice trees. **We will have a guided tour of the village** with the opportunity to purchase lunch (or coffee and cake!).



Portmeirion Italianate Village

Following our day in the Portmeirion area, we return to our hotel where we can perhaps meet in the bar for a drink before our 3-course dinner is served.

Day 3

This morning after breakfast we travel to Anglesey to visit the house and gardens at **Plas Newydd (NT)**. Set amidst breathtakingly beautiful scenery on the Menai Strait, this elegant house was redesigned by James Wyatt in the 18th century. There is a fine garden and Australasian arboretum, with an understorey of shrubs and wildflowers, a summer terrace, and massed hydrangeas. The Terraces and Sunroom Courtyard are full of colour - the Hot Border on the Terraces is a riot of reds, oranges and yellows, with the contrasting Cool Border opposite. The Sunroom Courtyard is filled with blues, pinks and whites, both from bulbs and perennials. A woodland walk gives access to a marine walk beside the Menai Strait. **We will enjoy a guided tour with the head gardener.** Lunch is available here (not included).

Our afternoon visit is to **Plas Cadnant**, a hidden historic garden which is slowly being uncovered – a Welsh ‘Lost Gardens of Heligan’. Three different gardens have been discovered, including an unusual walled garden with curving walls and a pool, a secret valley garden with three waterfalls and a river, and an upper woodland garden with stone outcrops and the remains of a 19th century folly. Work started on restoring the gardens and grounds in 1997, which was a huge undertaking as large areas had not been maintained for over seventy years. In 1998 the area immediately behind the main house became a ‘herb garden’. The following year the sheltered courtyard between the cottages was planted as a garden. Since then large parts of the gardens have undergone a spectacular transformation and have been restored to their former glory. **A tour along with light refreshments is included.** We return to the hotel where dinner is served in the evening.

Day 4

Following breakfast, we check out of the hotel and head for **Bodnant Garden (NT)** situated above the River Conwy spanning some 80 acres looking across the valley towards Snowdonia. The garden has two parts – the upper garden around Bodnant Hall, which consists of the terraced gardens and informal lawns, and the lower garden – known as the “Dell”, formed by the River Hiraethlyn and containing the wild garden. Bodnant has a range of beautiful plants from all over the world, particularly China, North America, Europe and Japan, which are suited to the Welsh climate and soil. Care has been taken to ensure that they enhance each other and contribute to the general beauty of the garden throughout the seasons.



Bodnant Garden

We will also have time to visit the **Bodnant Garden Centre** - which sell many plant varieties only found at Bodnant and **Bodnant Craft Centre** - which sells work from many of the best designers and artists in North Wales. We then begin our journey back to Solihull where we expect to arrive in the early evening.

Included in the price

- Three nights' dinner, bed and breakfast at 4* Faenol Fawr Country House and Manor Hotel
- Comfortable coaching throughout
- Visits to all gardens, garden centre and craft centre listed above
- Guided garden tours at Plas Brondanw, Portmeirion and Plas Cadnant
- Tips for coach driver and hotel staff

Not included

- Single supplement (£140)
- Lunches

Note

- Entry to National Trust properties (Powis Castle, Plas Newydd and Bodnant) is **free for National Trust members**; non-members will pay a discounted group entry rate on the day (approximately £40 total)