



ENGLISH HERITAGE

ATTRACTIONS

In touch with our customers

SPRING 2023



Osborne, Isle of Wight

OUR CROWNING GLORY

Some of our most beautiful and fascinating properties have been shaped by monarchs, their families and those serving them through the centuries.

With the eyes of the world on the coronation of King Charles III this year, we're turning the spotlight onto some of our best-known

former royal residences - and others with royal tales to tell - to inspire your planning for group visits over the coming months.

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INSPIRING DAYS OUT FOR GROUPS

Stay up to date with our most popular properties.

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Holy Island finds now on show at Lindisfarne Priory

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We're looking forward to welcoming you and your groups to our sites.

Enjoy exploring them, knowing that your visits help keep the story of England alive for future generations.

Step into England's story

BELSAY AWAKES



A major conservation and improvement project - underway since autumn 2021 - comes to fruition this summer at Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens in Northumberland.

Although the site has remained open throughout - even when the Greek Revival hall was encased in top-to-toe scaffolding while the roof was repaired and protected - the wraps come off fully this summer. It will present the newly conserved historic buildings and the Grade I listed gardens in their full glory and give visitors a much-enhanced experience.

Stonework on the medieval castle has been repaired and conserved and a new ramp will make access easier into the ground floor, complete with a projected animation, soundscape and interpretation panels. New interpretation is also being added throughout the hall and gardens.

A new café will open in the former Coach House doubling Belsay's catering capacity to around 120 seats - and adding essential new accessible toilets. There's a new car park with bays for two coaches, and pathways around the 30-acre grounds have been improved. We're also removing invasive plant species and enhancing habitats for wildlife and native flora.

Garden-loving groups will be delighted to know that areas of Belsay's stunning grounds have received a refresh from celebrity designer Dan Pearson, most especially the Formal Garden. Belsay's head gardener Debbie Crombie explains: "Dan has 'embroidered' the existing historic garden structure, with naturalistic plantings that are sensitive to

the Mediterranean spirit of place. With a light touch characteristic of his style, the new plantings have transformed yet complemented the garden, staying true to the original design."

Belsay's famous Quarry Garden won't be much changed, although information panels are being added to give a better insight into some of the exotic plants that thrive in its unique microclimate. Created in the early 19th century by Sir Charles Monck, it was influenced by the early picturesque garden movement and was later overlaid with exotic horticultural plantings.

Debbie adds: "It also contains a lot of the individual Rhododendron specimens introduced by Monck's grandson Sir Arthur Middleton in the 1920s, so they are very old and tree-like now. The Rhododendron garden to the south of the main terrace was his addition too - unfortunately, it is currently off limits due to its overgrown nature, but we are looking to restore it and make it accessible to visitors in the years to come. Meanwhile, they still make for a fabulous display each June."

Make a date to visit this summer, or a little later to enjoy the autumn colour from specimen trees and shrubs. Highlights are the Persian ironwood and the seldom-seen Katsura tree, with its burnt sugar scent and flame-coloured foliage.



Main image: Belsay Hall
Top: Belsay Castle
Bottom: The Quarry Garden

Images taken before the project commenced

Pre-book your group onto a seasonally themed tour with Debbie or one of her knowledgeable team. Tours cost £6 per person, including a guide book.

FROM EMPTY SHELL TO YORK'S BRIGHTEST VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Our transformation of Clifford's Tower makes it a number one destination for group visits.

Julie Brookes joined English Heritage as Site Manager at Clifford's Tower, just before it re-opened last year after a £5m conservation and transformation project. We asked her about the vibrant new experience group visitors can enjoy there.

How significant has the transformation been for visitors?

It's been completely transformative! What was previously just an empty shell is now a spectacular and unique city attraction. It is very much more now than just a city landmark.

What will group members see?

Inside there's a stunning free-standing timber structure, which protects the ruin and the archaeological remains beneath and creates the new roof deck. Aerial walkways take visitors on a walk through the tower's lost first floor, to explore rooms unseen since the interior burned down in 1684. On the way, they can pause to hear audio scenes bringing key moments in the tower's history to life. The roof deck gives unrivalled 360-degree views across the city's medieval buildings and famous Minster. Plus, it's the best place to get a photo in the whole of York.

What is its main appeal for group visits?

Clifford's Tower is now a 'must do' attraction for any GTOs to include in a trip to York. It is home to almost one thousand years of history, so group members will discover one of the most important buildings anywhere in England. It was home to the royal government of the north of England, a royal mint and a gaol, as well as being the site of a massacre of the Jewish population of York in 1190.

How accessible is it?

At the base of the tower a bronze map and timeline set into paving tell its history, there's a permanent tactile map and information in Braille. An animation of the transformed interior is also available for those who cannot climb the stairs to go inside. Seating has been installed at the base, for rest stops on the way up the stairs - and inside the tower. An audio tour is available via QR codes providing text panel information, a description of the tower and navigation support, and there are hearing loops in audio seating to hear the tower's history come to life.



Julie Brookes
Above: The new aerial walkway

Any tips for group organisers booking visits?

The nearest coach park at St George's Field is just across the road. So, you pass Clifford's Tower on your way to Coppergate, the Shambles and on to the Minster. It's an ideal place to start your journey and look out over the city on your way into town, or take that perfect picture as you leave on the way back to the coach after indulging at Betty's or a visit to the pub.

Are the exclusive group 'early bird' tours proving popular?

Yes - they are popular, but there is always room for more! It is a great time to see the city in the morning light and have the tower absolutely to yourself.

And finally, what is your own favourite view from the top?

Ah, there are too many to pick - so I'm going to have to give you my top three! York Minster; our chocolate factories, Terry's and Rowntree - and 18th-century Holgate Windmill in the suburbs. You can just see it on the horizon so it's often one I see if our guests can manage to spot.



DISCOVER OUR ROYAL CONNECTIONS IN CORONATION YEAR

Take our whistle-stop tour through great English Heritage historic houses, once-mighty castles and other fascinating places where our monarchs have left a lasting legacy – from King William I to our new King Charles III. Some of their stories are already well known; others may surprise and delight you. Each one merits a visit with your group during this coronation year.

1 1066 Battle of Hastings Abbey and Battlefield, East Sussex

The site where English history was forged after a day of bitter fighting between the Saxon King Harold and his rival, William of Normandy – better known to us as William the Conqueror. Groups can tour the battlefield, explore the exhibition and climb the gatehouse for magnificent views before visiting the abbey William built here to atone for the bloodshed on that fateful, decisive day.

2 Audley End House and Gardens, Essex

Bought by King Charles II in 1667 to indulge his passion for a flutter on the horses at nearby Newmarket. Your group can enjoy the magnificent interiors of the Jacobean mansion and discover Victorian life upstairs and downstairs in the house and wider estate. Outside, you can stroll through the Capability Brown landscape, visit the stables and explore the walled organic kitchen garden.

3 Boscobel House and the Royal Oak, Shropshire

In 1651 King Charles II hid from Cromwell's troops in a priest hole inside this timber-framed house and among the branches of a nearby oak tree. Explore the house and learn more about this extraordinary royal tale, meet the rare breed animals in the Victorian farmyard and visit the 'Royal Oak', a descendent of the very tree in which Charles once hid. You can also see a younger oak planted by King Charles III when he was Prince of Wales.



4 Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight

Prison to King Charles I for 14 months before his execution in 1649. Group members can see the room and the window from which he tried to escape – unfortunately for him, he got stuck in the window. Other highlights include demonstrations by the castle donkeys to draw water from the well, panoramic vistas from the Norman keep and the Edwardian-style Princess Beatrice garden, named after Queen Victoria's youngest daughter in commemoration of the time she spent living at the castle.

5 Dover Castle, Kent

Built in the 1180s by King Henry II, Anne of Cleves stayed here in 1539 on her way to marry Henry VIII, and Elizabeth I visited in 1573. Henry II's castle still dominates the White Cliffs and its Great Tower offers colourful recreated interiors and stunning rooftop views. A visit to the Secret Wartime Tunnels is also a must. Hidden in the cliffs below the castle, they formed the operational nerve centre for the evacuation of Allied troops from the beaches of Dunkirk in 1940.

6 Eltham Palace and Gardens, Greenwich

This site has a roll-call of royal credentials. Originally a moated bishop's palace, it was presented to Edward II in 1305 and owned by the crown until the 17th century, with Charles I the last monarch to visit. In its Tudor heyday, it could accommodate and feed the entire 800-strong royal court, and Henry VIII spent much of his boyhood here. In the 1930s a wealthy couple built a new art deco home around the ruins of the palace, and today the blend between medieval architecture and interwar glamour makes a fascinating and memorable day out.

7 Kenilworth Castle and Elizabethan Garden, Warwickshire

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester transformed a medieval stronghold into a pleasure palace to impress - and perhaps to woo - his queen. Elizabeth I took full advantage of his lavish hospitality and spent 19 days partying at his castle in 1575 – the longest 'royal progress' she ever made. You can still see her quarters and a beautiful recreation of the pleasure garden Dudley created for her visit.

8 Osborne, Isle of Wight

The island getaway of our new king's great-great-grandmother, Queen Victoria. Your group will enjoy a captivating glimpse into the family life of Victoria, Albert and their nine children. Inside their Italianate home, lavish formal state rooms contrast with their private apartments filled with their original furnishings and treasured family gifts. The magnificent gardens and landscaped grounds sweep down to the sea, where visitors can enjoy a paddle on the queen's private beach before exploring the lives of the royal children in their quirky playhouse, the Swiss Cottage.

9 Walmer Castle and Gardens, Kent

Walmer Castle was home to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother each year when she stayed in her role as Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. The cosy rooms she used are still much as they were during her residence and your group can also admire the charming garden created for her 95th birthday, containing a pavilion, pool and her beloved roses.



ISLAND SHOWCASE

Early knitting and a fish bone necklace star among holy island finds showcased for the first time at Lindisfarne Priory.

One of the earliest surviving examples of knitting in Europe has gone on display for the first time at 12th-century Lindisfarne Priory. The fragment of a 17th-century knitted sleeve discovered on Lindisfarne, or Holy Island, is among dozens of new items on display in the priory museum.

Giving visitors a fascinating glimpse into the daily lives of the monks who once occupied this isolated site, other star items to look out for include Britain's earliest known rosary bead necklace, which dates from the 8/9th century and is made from salmon vertebrae. Recent discoveries on loan to the museum include name stones (used to identify the dead), an iron spearhead and a glass Anglo-Saxon gaming counter.

Lindisfarne was one of the most important centres of early English Christianity. Irish monks founded a monastery here in AD 635, and it soon found fame thanks to one of its earliest bishops, St Cuthbert. In the museum, group members can trace the footsteps of St Cuthbert and his

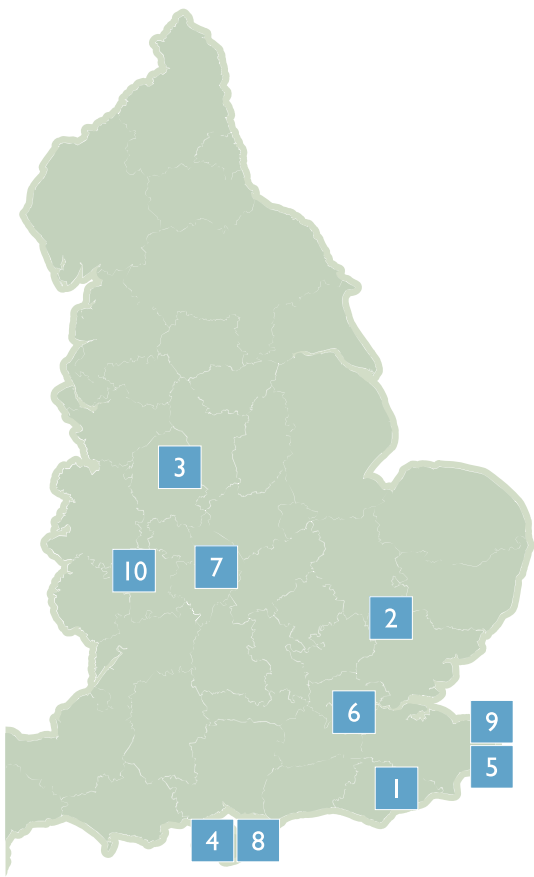


Top: Lindisfarne Priory
Above: Fishbone necklace
Below: Early knitting

legacy, find out about the infamous Viking raid of 793, and learn more about the art, crafts and culture of the monastic community from the time of the creation of the Lindisfarne Gospels, the beautiful illuminated manuscript made on the island in the early 8th century.

We've also added another new dimension for visitors by commissioning local poet Katrina Porteous and artist Olivia Lomenech Gill - who illustrated JK Rowling's 'Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them' - to produce a trail inspired by the Lindisfarne Gospels. There are new information panels across the site and a monument to St Cuthbert, created by local sculptor Russ Coleman. Groups arriving at the priory will also find an improved welcome at the admissions and retail area.

Time your visit carefully as the causeway to the island can only be used during low tide. Coaches must use the main Lindisfarne coach park, approximately a 10-minute walk away.



10 Witley Court and Gardens, Worcestershire

Once one of England's greatest houses, staffed by over 100 servants, Witley Court frequently hosted the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, at decadent parties and lavish grand occasions. In 2003, our new king, as Prince of Wales also visited Witley. He 'fired' its huge Perseus and Andromeda fountain for the first time following major conservation work. Witley Court was destroyed by fire in 1937 but the remaining ruins and gardens still bear testament to its glittering past.

Other sites with a royal touch:

- Carlisle Castle, Cumbria**
Mary Queen of Scots was held captive here in 1568.
- Framlingham Castle, Suffolk**
Mary Tudor rallied her troops here to fight for the throne.
- The Jewel Tower, Westminster**
King Edward II's 'Privy Wardrobe' which held his treasures.
- Middleham Castle, North Yorkshire**
King Richard III's teenage home.



RE-OPENING THE GATEWAY TO ROMAN BRITAIN

Richborough Roman Fort's starring role in our history steps out from the shadows.

In a sleepy backwater of Kent, two miles inland from the coast, significant changes are soon to be revealed at one of the most important sites in the country, which witnessed both the start and the end of the Roman period. It is hard to believe that 2,000 years ago it was the 'accessus Britannia' – or gateway to Roman Britain.

In AD43 Roman invasion forces first stepped ashore at Richborough, which then lay directly on the coast. Over the next 360 years it developed first into a military supply base, then a thriving 21-hectare port town with a monumental arch and amphitheatre, and finally a fort surrounded by huge walls.

Excavations over the years have unearthed a vast number of important objects dating from the entire Roman period and revealing the lifestyles of those who lived in, or passed through 'Rutupiae', or Richborough.

The collection is exceptional for a single site and ranges from a 1st-century bronze lamp to high quality tableware, medical equipment, weaponry - and more than 1,000 hairpins.

Many of these finds will help us tell Richborough's largely unsung story when the site re-opens in Spring. Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, these treasures

will be on display in our new museum, to help visitors grasp the significance of the site in our history.

We've also added new information panels, a new trail, an audio guide and improved paths across the site to make access easier. There's also a replica of the wooden gateway, tower and rampart built by soldiers when they first arrived in Britain. Group members can climb to the top for panoramic views.

There are three group-friendly sites close to Richborough to combine for a full day excursion – St Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury, Dover Castle, and Walmer Castle and Gardens in Deal.



Wroxeter Roman City

Our Roman site in Shropshire will also have new interpretation in place from May, which focuses on Wroxeter's prosperous heyday in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. A redisplayed and themed museum highlights many site finds never seen before, including personal possessions, jewellery and specialist equipment, to reveal the daily lives of a cast of Roman characters including an elite couple, a market trader - and a witch.

MEET OUR TEAM



Brook Bishop



Laura Gibbs



Emma Peters



Anna-Karin Hanson



Michelle Brown

Need to organise a fam trip, source an image to promote your tour or find out about joining our Agency Voucher Scheme? With Michelle Brown now bringing our team up to strength, busy GTOs can rest assured we're here to help.

We all talk your language. Each member of our five-strong travel trade marketing team contributes extensive and complementary experience in the travel and leisure industry. Michelle joined us in February from Visit York, where she spent 20 years managing leisure marketing and travel trade activity. She continues to be based in York, so is well-placed to set up fam trips to our properties in the north of the country.

Her counterpart in the south is Anna-Karin Hanson, who joined in August 2022 having spent 12 years with the Park Plaza Hotel Group. Previously Anna worked for both wholesale and tour operators, so also has a detailed knowledge of the leisure industry. Members of the AGTO Kent branch can meet Anna when she hosts the AGM on 17 May at Richborough Roman Fort (page 7) and at Walmer Castle and Gardens.

Your first port of call however is Brook Bishop, who many readers will already know. He has worked for English Heritage

for eight years – originally at Tintagel Castle, Cornwall, where he gained valuable 'front line' experience in various visitor-facing roles before he joined us in 2019. Brook is your 'go to' person in the first instance.

If you are thinking of opening an account with us, he may pass you to Laura Gibbs who has been with us for seven years and manages our Agency Voucher Scheme. Before coming to English Heritage she was with the National Trust for almost seven years, having already worked in local authority tourism management and the cruise industry.

And finally, pulling the whole package together is Emma Peters. Senior Marketing Manager for Stonehenge and Travel Trade, she's been with us for 10 years now and formerly promoted consumer and group visits to the Philharmonia Orchestra at London's Southbank Centre after working with the National Trust's marketing team.

INSPIRED TO BOOK? FIND OUT HOW

For more information and booking details for the properties featured in this issue of Attractions, please visit:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/traveltrade

Click through to **Planning Resources** to download our **Group Visits Guide 2022–24** and **Trade Admission Prices and Site Opening Times** booklet.

We give a generous **15% discount** (10% at Stonehenge) for groups of 11 or more at all our historic sites.

One tour leader and one coach driver are admitted free with each group (and do not count towards group numbers).

Advance booking no less than 7 days ahead is required for all group visits.

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