



Birkenhead Park

An invitation to join us for

‘The Parks That Made the Man Who Made Central Park’

A Tour of England in the Footsteps of Frederick Law Olmsted

Sunday 14th to Sunday 21st May 2023

Whether judged by the scale of his operations, his vision or his influence on the look and character of North America, Frederick Law Olmsted must rank amongst the most influential landscape architects on the planet. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine anyone else attaining his pre-eminence in the field.

Famously he drew inspiration from his exploration of Europe and Britain, and the landscape style of the English tradition particularly affected his understanding of design. He took from his travels not only the delight in nature that is so much a part of 18th century English landscape, but also its didactic and philanthropic role in ameliorating the lives of ordinary people in the new industrial cities. The creation of entire landscapes, he concluded, “all in imitation of nature, is to this day the peculiar art of England.”

We invite you to join us on this tour of England retracing Olmsted’s footsteps as he explored great private estates such as Chatsworth, Knowsley, Rhug, Charlecote and Hagley Hall as well as smaller but critically influential sites and the public parks created for the benefit of the working people at Birkenhead and the Birmingham and Derby Arboreta.

The tour will be led by landscape architect and historian John Phibbs MBE, and at each place we will meet experts: historians, curators, park keepers and estate owners. Our aim is to offer exclusive access and opportunities for discussion. These are beautiful places, with a power to move us today as much as they moved Olmsted 150 years ago.

Throughout, we will stay in historically important hotels, as renowned for their architecture and sublime surroundings as for their exceptional comfort and service: Bodysgallen Hall in North Wales, the Cavendish Hotel at Chatsworth and Weston Park in Warwickshire. The perfect settings for a memorable week of stimulating social interaction and discovery.

Our Itinerary



Bodnant Gardens

Monday 15th to Wednesday 18th May – Bodysgallen Hall in North Wales

Our tour begins at Bodysgallen Hall in north Wales where we stay for two nights - perfectly placed for visits to Bodnant Gardens, a Grade I listed horticultural gem and Birkenhead Park, opened in 1847, a pioneer in the development of public parks across the world. We also visit Knowsley Hall, the home of the Earl and Countess of Derby, where we shall be guests for lunch.



Knowsley Hall

Tuesday 16th to Thursday 18th May – The Cavendish Hotel, Chatsworth

We head for Derbyshire and the Cavendish Hotel, the coaching inn on the edge of the Chatsworth estate, where we shall stay for two nights. Along the way, we visit Rhug, the private residence of the Lord and Lady Newborough - a privileged access visit arranged by John Phibbs.



The Rockery at Chatsworth



Chatsworth House

While at Chatsworth we shall enjoy a private tour of the house before it opens to the public and explore the park and gardens in the company of the estate manager, with access to private areas of the estate, by kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Devonshire.

Nearby, at Haddon Hall, regarded as England's finest example of a Medieval residence, we will be invited to a private evening drinks reception with a tour of the house and gardens.



Haddon Hall

Thursday 18th to Sunday 21st May – Weston Park, Staffordshire

Finally, we head south to Weston Park stopping along the way to explore the Derby Arboretum, Britain's first public park opened to great acclaim in 1840 following donation of the land by a local philanthropist.



Trentham Gardens

We then continue to Trentham Gardens, another landscape designed by Capability Brown, but it was the later transformation of the landscape that Olmsted was to see and our guide here will be Michael Walker, the head gardener in Trentham's recent and celebrated refurbishment, with gardens designed by Tom Stuart-Smith.



Weston Park, Shropshire

Our head quarters for the last three nights will be Weston Park (also with a park designed by Brown), where we will have exclusive use of the great house and will be hosted by the director, Gareth Williams, who is the curator of the estate and scholar of all things landscape.



Hagley Hall

From here we visit the most famous trio of late 18th century English gardens: Hagley Hall, Enville and the Leasowes, a must on the itinerary of every 18th and 19th century traveller.

For the last day of our tour, we head to Birmingham's Botanical Gardens and go on to Stoneleigh Abbey, with a landscape designed by Humphry Repton, a place where Olmsted had the great revelation that may have provided the seed for Prospect Park. Jane Austen also stayed here with her parents and was so inspired by the house, its grounds and many family intrigues, she wove descriptions of all into her novels.

Finally, we call in at 16th century Charlecote Park, near Stratford-on-Avon, where as a young man, William Shakespeare was caught poaching rabbits and deer in the park and brought before magistrates. It is now in the guardianship of the National Trust and we shall be guests of the curator and head gardener.



Charlecote Park

Our week celebrating Olmsted and influence of English design on his ideas will be brought to a fitting close with a farewell dinner at Weston Park on the evening of Sunday 21st May.

Sunday 21st May – End of Tour

Following breakfast, we take our leave of Weston Park. We will be pleased to liaise with and assist guests with their individual onward transport arrangements.

About Inspiration Events

Arrangements for this tour are made exclusively through and managed by Inspiration Events.

Inspiration Events is a UK cultural travel company specialising in exclusive, privately commissioned tours focusing on the great houses, gardens, parks and landscapes of the 18th century. Special features of all Inspiration tours are specific historic themes enhanced by privileged access to private estates and the opportunity to meet the owners, curators, head gardeners and historians. Inspiration tours are also noted for their fine attention to detail, excellent food and accommodation in England's finest country house hotels and inns.

This tour has been designed by John Phibbs in consultation with National Association for Olmsted Parks president Dede Petri. It is being offered as one of many events in conjunction with the bicentennial of Frederick Law Olmsted's birth in 2022.

John Phibbs MBE

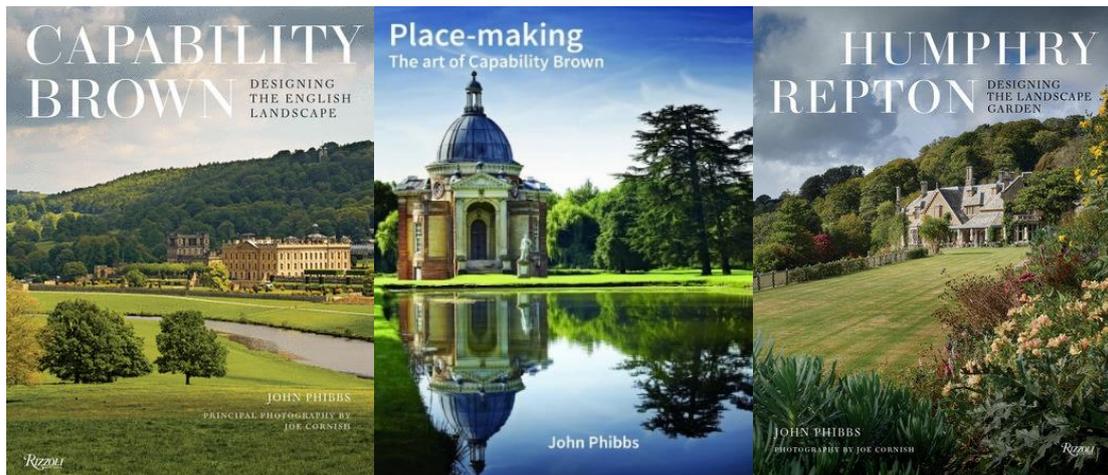


This tour will be led throughout by John Phibbs MBE.

John is one of the world's leading experts on 18th century parks and gardens and in particular the English landscape style and the work of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and Humphry Repton. In 2016 John led the celebrations to mark the tercentenary of Capability Brown's birth and has published two complementary books on Brown: 'Capability Brown, designing the English landscape', a series of fifteen essays on fifteen of his landscapes, with Rizzoli, and 'Place-making, the art of Capability Brown', a study of Brown's design in context with Historic England and the National Trust. He has also appeared in many television documentaries that have been broadcast on Capability Brown and landscape design.

In 2018 John was honoured to be made a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by Her Majesty the Queen, in recognition of his contribution to English landscape.

John takes enormous pleasure in sharing his passion for gardens and landscape and his master classes have a unique reputation for bringing the subject to life in the most entertaining and engaging way.



Tour Cost

The cost of this tour includes everything you might need while you are with us. We include all meals, pre-dinner drinks and wines served with meals. All admission charges and ground travel arrangements by luxury coach are of course also included. In theory, it is possible to complete a entire tour without needing to open your wallet once ... except perhaps for shopping!

The inclusive cost per guest of this tour is:

<i>For single occupancy of a double bedroom</i>	<i>£8,950.00 per guest (\$10,650.00*)</i>
<i>For shared occupancy of a double or twin bedroom</i>	<i>£8,450.00 per guest (\$10,100.00*)</i>

To include:

- Accommodation at Bodysgallen Hall (2 nights) , the Cavendish Hotel (2 nights) and exclusive use of Weston Park (3 nights).
- All house and garden visits as detailed.
- All meals, to include: English breakfast, two course lunches accompanied by wine and soft drinks, pre-dinner drinks receptions each evening (wine and spirits) and three course dinners accompanied by fine wines.
- Transport throughout by luxury Mercedes coach.
- The programme will be led throughout by John Phibbs, joined by owners, curators, head gardeners and guest speakers.
- The tour will be managed by Inspiration Events - Gilly Kitching will be in attendance throughout to oversee the smooth running of the programme and guests' individual needs.
- Incidentals to include porters' charges, staff tips, bottled water and snacks.

Please note the following are not included:

- Your transport to Bodysgallen Hall where this tour begins and from Weston Park at the end of the tour to your forward destination. We will be pleased to advise and assist you with appropriate transport arrangements. Please note, you may like to consider flying into and out of Manchester Airport which is 1hour 20 minutes from both Bodysgallen Hall and Weston Park. There is a daily service to Manchester Airport from New York JFK.
- Flights to the UK.
- UK entry visas, where applicable.
- Insurance: Medical, personal effects or cancellation – this is required. Please note our Covid cancellation policy as detailed in our Terms and Conditions.
- Miscellaneous personal expenses such as after-dinner drinks, mini-bar, laundry, room service.
- Any expenses not detailed herein.

* Please note this tour is charged in Pounds Sterling and the US\$ price is for guidance only.

A note about this tour

Number of Guests

This tour is for a minimum of 14 and a maximum of 22 guests

Cost

We cost our tours to include everything you might need while you are with us. We include all meals, pre-dinner drinks and wines served with meals. All admission charges and ground travel arrangements are of course also included.

Friendliness

Our tours are designed to make it easy for everyone to get to know our hosts and each other quickly and in the most convivial and relaxed way. We are together for all meals and for every meal we arrange a seating plan ensuring all our guests get to mix and mingle. Of course, it's quite alright if you feel like a quiet night!

Travel

We travel from place to place by spacious luxury coach. Water, soft drinks and snacks are provided and we pick our coach drivers for their safe, smooth driving and helpfulness.

While on the road

This tour will be managed by Gilly Kitching (also known as Mrs John Phibbs), who will ensure the smooth running of all arrangements and will be available to assist with your individual needs and comfort.

Additional needs

Diet: The hotels, restaurants and hosts take enormous pride in producing delicious, wholesome food and are happy to accommodate all dietary requirements.

Allergies: Please let us know if you require hypo-allergenic bedding.

Showers: Please let us know if you require a walk-in shower and we will do our best to arrange this where possible. While the hotels do offer showers, in many cases these are over the bath.

Donation to the National Association of Olmsted Parks

The cost of this tour includes a donation of £200.00 per person to the National Association of Olmsted Parks donated by Inspiration Events. At the end of the tour, you will be invited to make a further donation of £200.00 should you wish to do so.

Pre-tour Extension Programme

A four day pre-tour to explore other sites Olmsted is known to have visited is also under consideration. This will most likely include Regent's Park in London and the Isle of Wight. If this is of interest, please let us know and we will announce further details in due course.

The RHS Chelsea Flower Show

You may like to know that Members' Day at Chelsea Flower Show opens on Tuesday 23rd May 2023. Do let us know if this is of interest and we will be pleased to advise how you can apply for tickets through the Royal Horticultural Society. Applications should be made before December 2022.

A note about the accommodation

At Bodysgallen Hall, The Cavendish Hotel and Weston Park, we shall have a mix of room categories. At all hotels, some bedrooms will be located in the main house while others will be in the courtyard (also very charming!). Over the course of the tour and where possible, we shall endeavour to ensure guests are accommodated in a mix of rooms (eg sometimes in the main house and at others in the courtyard).

Bodysgallen Hall, Llandudno, North Wales



The Cavendish Hotel, on the Chatsworth Estate, Derbyshire



Weston Park, Staffordshire

