

SHROPSHIRE: GREAT HOUSES & GARDENS

15 - 19 JUNE 2026

FROM
£2,195 PER
PERSON

Tour Leader: Tania Illingworth

Weston Park


The Ultimate
TRAVEL COMPANY



Enjoy another tour in this successful series of 'Great Houses and Gardens' in the UK with Tania Illingworth, an opportunity to see the best of little-visited Shropshire at this prime time of year. The county's mineral wealth attracted landowners to build creatively in Shropshire from early medieval times and its coal and iron deposits became the source of our great Industrial Revolution. The manufacture of machinery and new technology from the 1750s transformed industrial growth world-wide, contributing immeasurably to Britain's economy. This one-off tour includes visiting great houses of historic interest, built during the 18th and 19th-century boom times, with guided tours by the owners and head gardeners and some private lunches with friends of Tania's. See the world-class collection of paintings at Weston Park privately; the Iron Bridge Gorge UNESCO World Heritage Site; Hatton Grange, an 18th-century architectural jewel; magnificent Millichope Park; the family landscaped gardens at Hodnet Hall; as well as other mature, heavenly gardens set within the hills, woods and rivers in one of England's prettiest rural counties.



Woodlands Hall

5-DAY ITINERARY, DEPARTING 15 JUNE 2026

15 June Wolverhampton / Ludlow

Suggested train (not included in the cost of the tour) departing London Euston Station at 10.38 hrs arriving Wolverhampton Station at 12.29 hrs.

Group transfer by coach to Weston Park, the opulent 17th-century mansion set in Lancelot 'Capability' Brown extensive landscaping of 1000 acres of parkland. Private guided tour with Gareth Williams, Curator and Head of Learning, author of *The Country Houses of Shropshire* and *Weston Park: The House*. Weston, of national importance, is the remarkable home to a world-class collection of old master paintings, furniture, silver and fine china gifted to the nation in 1986 by the 7th Earl of Bradford. See the impressive Victorian Library with over 3000 books, Grand Tour acquisitions including works by van Dyck, Lely, Stubbs, Gainsborough and Reynolds along with sporting paintings. Time permitting, see the sunken Italian Gardens and the Rose Garden.

Continue to Burwarton Hall for a tour and afternoon tea with Viscount and Viscountess Boyne. The house of Italianate style

(1835 / architect Anthony Salvin) sits extremely high at 780ft upon the slopes of the Brown Cleve Hill commanding splendid views over the 11,500-acre estate. See the family's portraits with items from the 2nd Viscount's Grand Tour.

Drive on to Ludlow. Check in at the Clive Arms Hotel (4*) where four nights are spent. Dinner at the adjoining Ludlow Kitchen (with all good things from the Windsor-Clive estates!).

16 June Bromfield / Morville / Shifnall

Depart by coach for 18th century Oakley Park (Grade II), the private home of the Windsor-Clive family. The house and park are not open to the public but by special permission, the present (4th) Earl of Plymouth (Ivor Windsor-Clive) will kindly show us his famous Old Master Collection of paintings. In the early 19th century, the house was restored in Neo-classical style and extended by Charles Robert Cockerell, Surveyor to the Bank of England, for his friend Robert Henry Clive.

Private lunch at Aldenham Park hosted by the owners, Hettie and James Fenwick. The original manor was owned by the Acton family from 1465 but the present family home (not open to the public)

dates from 1691. The house effuses history and its finest work is a painting by van Dyck of Charles I who sought refuge there.

Visit the world-famous David Austin Roses extensive show gardens close by. Buy your favourite scented rose here!

Visit Hatton Grange (Grade II) and its beautiful gardens with owners Christina and Rupert Kenyon-Slaney. This pretty Georgian doll's house dates from 1764 (architect Thomas Farnolls Pritchard, Shropshire's leading architect in the mid-18th century) when built for Plowden Slaney and has remained in the family ever since. See the Rose Garden which was a wedding present from David Austin.

Dinner under own arrangements.





Hodnet Hall Gardens

17 June Iron Bridge / Willey / Bridgenorth

Depart by coach for a visit to Ironbridge Gorge, UNESCO World Heritage Site. Created by Abraham Darby III, this was the world's first bridge of cast iron when erected in 1779.

Continue to Willey Hall for a tour of the house with owner Kate, Lady Forester. The Willey Estate was rich in minerals for the Industrial Revolution which enabled Cecil, 1st Lord Forester, to build Willey Hall by 1820. The imposing house overlooks interlinking lakes. The Palladian-Neoclassical tunnel-vaulted Hall lined with Corinthian scagliola columns (architect Lewis Wyatt) remains his masterpiece while the extremely impressive saloons are filled with fine art and furniture, retaining intact features.

Lunch privately at Stanley Hall, seeing the garden, hosted by the owners Clare and Michael Thompson. This comfortable home, with their own family collections, dates from the 17th century but was considerably enlarged in Tudor-Gothic style in the early 19th century.

Visit Woodlands Hall Gardens

(Grade II) owned by Antonia and Casper Gabb, Gold Medal Winner at the 2006 RHS Chelsea Flower Show, and one of Shropshire's most stunning gardens. Simple shapes create the architectural stage for this imposing house (dating from 1790) with its unspoilt views. Private tour of the gardens with the Head Gardener.

Continue to Acton Round Hall (Grade I) owned by Louisa and Tom Kennedy who will show us their home and the gardens. This exquisite Queen Anne house (1714 / architect Smith of Warwick) built of mellow red brick with stone dressings was built as a dower house for the Acton family of Aldenham but then not occupied for 200 years! The interiors show much of their original panelling and decorative features. Enjoy afternoon tea here.

Return to the hotel. Dinner under own arrangements with the option to drive into Ludlow to see the historic medieval town centre, one of the best preserved and maintained in England (at own expense).

18 June Hodnet / Wollerston / Cound

Depart by coach for a visit to

Hodnet Hall Gardens, the ancestral home of Sir Algernon and Lady Heber-Percy. Hodnet is famed for its beautiful 60 acres of gardens displaying rare and native species planted over centuries. See the Water Garden, the Circular Garden, the traditional Kitchen Garden, walk the Broad Walk with its rich assortment of herbaceous perennials and much more...

Lunch at Maynards, the garden restaurant at Hodnet. Jane and Algie Heber-Percy to join the party (to be confirmed).

Visit Wollerton Old Hall Gardens with the Head Gardener. Described by Monty Don as 'the nation's favourite garden' this glorious garden with many 'rooms' is set around a 16th-century Hall. See the Walled Garden, salvias, clematis and exuberant roses.

Continue to the stunning Leasowes Garden at Cound, overlooking the River Severn and Wrekin with the enthusiastic owners Tricia and Robert Bland. Also see the arboretum with unusual trees planted in the meadows, including 140 maples from around the world.

Return to the hotel and dinner at the adjoining Ludlow Kitchen.



Preen Manor Gardens

19 June Munslow / Church Preen / Wolverhampton

Depart by coach to visit Millichope Park, a Greek Revival porticoed mansion designed by Edward Haycock in 1835. The Grade II mansion was transformed in 1970 with interiors by David Mlinaric. The house is perfectly poised overlooking a terrace, lake and classical 18th century temple. Private tour of the house with the current owners Frank and Antonia Bury who have restored the original classical dining room as a kitchen and family space and have also added a new cantilevered stone staircase and a colonnade. They are also undertaking a project

to restore the rare 1830s curvilinear glasshouses on the estate. Enjoy a tour of the walled garden with the Head Gardener.

Continue to Preen Manor Gardens in the hamlet of Church Preen (time permitting see the 12th century church) for a tour and refreshments with owner Katy Tanner. This historic house sits on the site of a former Cluniac priory and is renowned for its 6-acre garden featuring a wide variety of plants.

Packed lunch. Group transfer to Wolverhampton Station. Suggested train (not included) departing Wolverhampton at 16.45 hrs arriving London Euston Station at 18.45 hrs.

TOUR PRICES PER PERSON

Tour Price	£2,195
Single Supplement	£295

PRICE INCLUDES

- Accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- Breakfast daily; 4 lunches; 2 dinners
- All entrance fees, visits, excursions and transportation as per the itinerary
- Gratuities in restaurants for included meals; gratuities to guides/s; gratuities to driver/s; portorage
- The services of your tour leader throughout

PRICE EXCLUDES

- International flights / rail tickets
- Travel insurance
- Items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- Government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 09/05/25.



Woodlands Hall Gardens



Hatton Grange



YOUR TOUR LEADER

Tania Illingworth (nee Tolstoy) is one of our most long standing, experienced and popular tour leaders. From 1990-2020 she led hugely successful annual tours to the Russian Federation. She has travelled widely throughout Western, Central and Eastern Europe. Her passions are the arts, history and architecture.

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