

Days out: March to September 2024

15 January 2024

Dear all,

We've another exciting set of Abbeyhall trips for you for March-September 2024, including climbing Everest without oxygen (don't worry – we've a very experienced set of Sherpas to guide us); bungee-jumping from Clifton Suspension Bridge; and – the one we're most looking forward to - wing-walking on a 1940s bi-plane (please NB: if you require ropes to strap you onto the wings during flight – rather than using your own natural strength - this will be charged as an extra).

For anyone who prefers bishops' palaces, street markets, theatre trips, and lunches in unusual places (NB not Everest; we've found lunches tend to freeze), then we've something for you, too 😊

IMPORTANT please: The Newt and Malvern Theatre (highlighted below) require numbers fairly quickly (we then have to release any unsold reserved tickets). So, if you fancy one of these, do let us know asap.

Otherwise, see you at Base Camp!

Wednesday 24 January	Mini Factory Cowley production tour and Oxford city centre
Tuesday 13 February	Time in Burford & lunch at Fox Inn, Great Barrington
Tuesday 19 March	Abergavenny centre & market
Wednesday 24 April	Kelmscott Manor & lunch
Saturday 04 May	Free time for lunch then Malvern Theatre Matinee, Cluedo 2
Wednesday 05 June	The Newt, Somerset Garden, Boutique Hotel, Cyder producer
Monday 08 July	NT Basildon Park, Reading - House, parkland formal gardens
T B D	Warwick Castle and town – (castle currently closed but will date soon)
Friday 13 September	David Austin Roses

Details follow below:-

24th January 2024 - Mini Plant Cowley production tour and Oxford

Coach £27, ~~Mini factory tour £15~~ - Total £43 per person

Tickets for factory tour sold out, sorry – Oxford, coach-only seats available at £23

Once Ian had explained to Katie that this was not a bonsai-tree experience (poor joke), we thought this was a great trip to do. The Oxford plant – where all parts are assembled and put together to make road-ready Minis – is the largest and oldest of the three Mini plants in the UK. Founded in 1913, it has been in constant production ever since; this is where the original Mini was born in 1959. Today, a major focus is on sustainability, targeting energy usage, water consumption, CO2 emissions and waste of all kinds. More than 800 cars are built each day here. The tour is fascinating – you'll see the body shop where pressed steel panels are welded/bonded together with the help of 1,200 robots (not by men called Robert, for anybody who remembers Not The Nine O'Clock News); ending up in the final assembly hall to see Minis ready to leave in all their glory. The tour takes around 1hr 40 minutes, and there's a free visit to the museum to finish at your own pace.

Do visit the website, [visit-bmwgroup.com/en/experience/plant-oxford-tour/](https://www.visit-bmwgroup.com/en/experience/plant-oxford-tour/)



Tuesday 13 February 2024 Lunch at Fox Inn at Great Barrington with time in Burford – *still room on this trip!*

Coach £20, Lunch £31 three courses (or £24 for two) - Total £51 (£44) per person

Some of you might already have been with us to the Fox for coffee/tea and cake, and discovered what a Cotswold gem this is. Situated on the banks of the Windrush, there are lovely strolls to be had in this pretty North Cotswold village. Even more temptingly, the food is absolutely excellent (and included; drinks extra). Let us know in advance and we can sort out food allergies.

You'll definitely all know Burford, where we'll also have time to have a shop and wander in the picturesque, famous High Street rising up from the medieval bridge and historic church. Individual shops, gallery, museum and England's oldest pharmacy (open since 1734 except Sundays) are on the menu. (We would mention the cafes and restaurants, but only the more robust of you will be interested, we feel.)

0915h **Nailsworth/Box/Minch pickups**
1030h **Burford**
1200h **Transfer to Fox Inn**
1445h **Leave for home**



Tuesday 19th March Abergavenny centre & market

Coach £23

This delightful Welsh town is great on any day of the week – but we're visiting on market day, a bustling under-cover shopping experience in the heart of the town. (Don't miss out on the Welsh cakes – and there's plenty more besides, from all kinds of eatables to bric-a-brac and clothes.)

The museum (entry free) is set within the grounds of a ruined Norman Castle, and tells the story of this historic town, from prehistory to present day. (Most areas are accessible to wheelchairs.)

Five minutes' stroll from the town centre are the Linda Vista gardens. Once a private garden, it's now a public park featuring some rare orchids and shrubs, as well as lovely displays of more commonly found plants and flowers.

For a tranquil walk, there are the Castle Meadows, which meander alongside the River Usk. And for those interested in churches, St Mary's, in the centre, is known as the Westminster Abbey of Wales; not only is it impressive in size, but it also has some first-class monuments.

More information: <http://www.visitabergavenny.co.uk/> or TIC enquiries 01873 853254

0800h-0815h Nailsworth/Box/Minch pickups
0945h Abergavenny
1500h Leave for home



Wednesday 24th April – William Morris's Kelmscott Manor

plus arrival tea/coffee biscuits and buffet lunch

Coach £20, Manor entrance & lunch £29 - Total £49 per person

This early 17th century Cotswold manor was the home of Arts & Crafts pioneer William Morris for 25 years, rented as a house 'for the wife and kids' away from the smoky confines of London. Morris saw an advert for the manor in 1871 – and that was it: he leased it as his country home until his death in 1896.

As the trust that now looks after it describes, 'Morris never lived here on a permanent basis but spent as much time as he reasonably could, considering his other commitments. He loved it deeply and it was a great inspiration for him. His daughter May later recalled that it was the undercurrent to his life. It inspired designs (e.g., 'Strawberry Thief') and writings (News from Nowhere), as well as informed his thinking about society, ecology and building conservation.'

There's lots to see, including the collection of artwork and objects he owned; as well as the enchanting gardens.

This is a free-flow visit, beginning with tea, coffee and biscuits, and including a buffet lunch that can cater for all dietary requirements.

<https://kelmscottmanor.org.uk/>

0915-0930h **Nailsworth/Box/Minch pickups**
1030h **Kelmscott**
1345h **Leave for home**



Photo courtesy Society of Antiquaries of London - Kelmscott Manor

Saturday 4th May - Time in Malvern for lunch then afternoon matinee – comedy thriller CLUEDO 2 at Malvern Theatres

Coach £22, **Premium stalls ticket £37** - Total £59 per person

**** PLEASE BOOK NOW/ASAP for this one – we can only hold the tickets for a limited time ****

Tickets are for premium seats in the stalls, rows D to G and include a 25% group discount & 12% booking fee

No one is accusing you... yet. But we would like formally to question you about what you're doing on the afternoon of Saturday, May 4...

We know what we're doing - we've booked some top seats for Malvern Theatres' matinee of CLUEDO 2, a comedy thriller starring a stellar cast!

We'll arrive in this pretty spa town in time for you to get some lunch, before sitting down to this spoof whodunit.

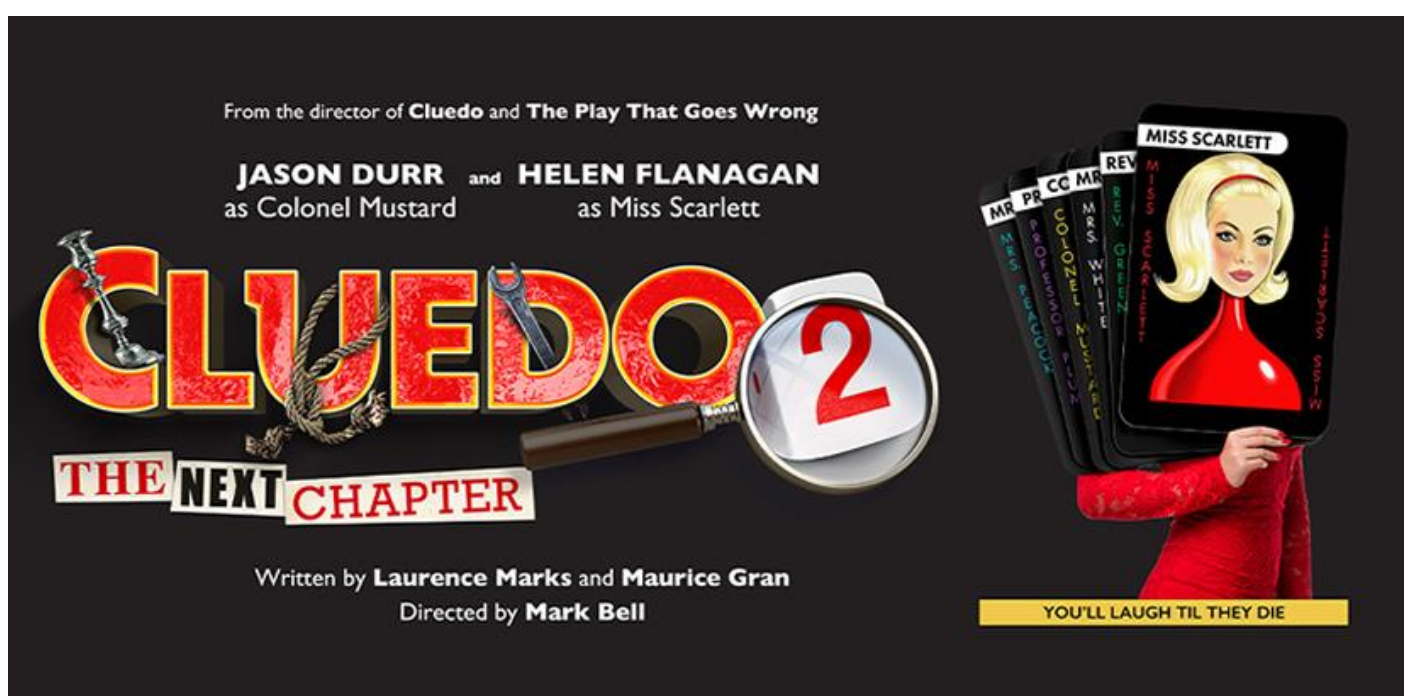
The theatre says:

Following the huge success of the smash hit original play, Cluedo is back with a brand new hilarious whodunit – CLUEDO 2 – The Next Chapter! Set in the swinging 1960s, we meet a host of new suspects, a new house, and lot of new bodies, in this all-new tale of murder, mystery and secret passageways.

The brilliant cast includes West End and TV star Jason Durr, whose numerous credits include leading roles in Heartbeat and Casualty, playing Colonel Mustard; and award-nominated actress and star of Coronation Street, and 'I'm a Celebrity' favourite, Helen Flanagan, playing Miss Scarlett.

<https://www.malvern-theatres.co.uk/whats-on/cluedo-2-next-chapter/>

1045-1100h	Nailsworth/Box/Minch pickups
1215h	Malvern free time
1430h	Cluedo 2
1700h	Leave for home



Wednesday 5th June, The Newt, Somerset: private garden tour, group lunch, cyder tour and tasting

Coach £27, The Newt's full "Flowering package" £75 - Total £102 per person

This luxurious five-star hotel and restaurant – once a country estate – has stunning gardens, and is a favourite of top chef Michel Roux Jr. The BBC programme, about a visit with Fred Sirieix, was broadcast over Christmas and was on iPlayer: Remarkable Places to Eat - Bristol

We've secured a real treat for you – and we make no apologies for the price: this is a rather special day out. This is a members-only establishment so you can't just drop in under normal circumstances.

We've a private tour booked of the gardens, which have been shaped over the past 200 years by enthusiasts such as Margaret Hobhouse, Penelope Hobhouse, and Nori and Sandra Pole. The latest creator is Italo-French architect Patrice Taravella, 'who believes a garden should be both beautiful and useful. Mixing ornamental and productive elements, the gardens are a feast for the eyes and stomach'. At their core sits the Parabola, a walled garden concealing an apple-tree maze.

What's more, The Newt not only makes its own cyder: it celebrates every aspect of this county's heritage industry: from the sapling to the tree, the fruit, its juice and the final stage: cyder. We'll have a private tour of the cyder-making facilities (and the opportunity for a sip or two).

Lunch – overlooking the kitchen gardens and orchards - is also included at the Garden Café, which should be very good indeed.

<https://thenewtinsomerset.com/>

<https://thenewtinsomerset.com/garden>

<https://thenewtinsomerset.com/cyder> (BBC "Remarkable Places to Eat" video? – msg Ian for a link)

Flowering £75 package includes: Entrance to the estate, Refreshments on arrival, Private garden tour, Lunch at the Garden Café (*not including drinks*) Private cyder tour, Free time to explore

0850h **Nailsworth/Box/Minch**
1100h **The Newt, Somerset**
1630h **Leave for home**



The Newt continued... **Gardens Illustrated magazine says:**

What: The Newt in Somerset is a new luxury country house hotel and gardens, which features a spa and cider pressed freshly on site. It's also a working farm.

Where: Somerset. Near Bruton, to be more specific, not far from another beautiful garden destination, Hauser and Wirth.

Is it brand new? Definitely not. Hadspen House in Somerset was the family seat of the Hobhouse family for more than two centuries. The house itself is Georgian and people have paid attention to the garden since the 17th century. Recognise the name Penelope Hobhouse? The legendary designer created an Arts and Crafts garden there in the 1970s and wrote her first book *The Country Garden*, about it.

Wow, good gardening heritage then... It wasn't just Penelope. Canadian gardeners Nori and Sandra Pope also developed their famous colourist borders in the estate's walled garden, which they wrote about in the 1998 book *Colour by Design*.

Who owns it now? South African telecoms magnate Koos Bekker and his wife Karen Roos bought the estate in 2013, having seen it for sale in the pages of *Country Life*.

Is it still the same garden? Renamed The Newt, the house and the gardens have undergone a redesign since the current owners took it on. French architect Patrice Taravella has worked on both the house and the gardens and Iain Davies, who previously worked at the Lost Gardens of Heligan in Cornwall, is Head of Horticulture.

And it's a farm too? It is and there is also a cider press and cider bar, just in case you forget you're in Somerset.

What's with the name? The name has been chosen because of amphibian friends that have been found on the estate. As The Newt's own website says: 'They also possess the incredible ability to regenerate, retaining their functional and structural properties. And so this resident was a perfect fit.'



Waterside
Bee House

Monday 8th July, National Trust Basildon Park near Reading

Coach £28, NonNT entrance £16.15 - Total £28 or £44.15 per person

Katie has visited this National Trust house with friends and says it's lovely – so blame her. Ruby the spaniel is also keen as it's a two-pawprint dog-friendly establishment, and that's the main thing. (Though we hope you might enjoy it, too.)

It's got all the usual NT attractions, including shop, second-hand bookshop, and a tearoom.

The house itself is very impressive: an 18th century Palladian-style mansion that was saved by Lord and Lady Iliffe, who bought it in 1952. They saw through the dreadful damage caused during requisitioning in the wars, and set about restoring it sensitively. They also filled the house with antiques and Old Master paintings.

Lady Iliffe created the beautiful rose garden with advice from the well-known American gardening expert Lanning Roper. The National Trust has resurrected that original design, after it fell into disrepair, replanting it with the old roses that populated it in its heyday.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/oxfordshire-buckinghamshire-berkshire/basildon-park>

0900-0915h	Nailsworth/Box/Minch pickups
1100h	NT Basildon Park
1530h	Leave for home



TBD xxth AUGUST Warwick Castle and Town Centre

To be updated, Castle closed at the moment Coach £27, Castle £22 - Total £27 or £49



Friday 13th September – David Austin Roses & Garden Centre for lunch

Coach £28

Again, it's taken us a while to secure another coach slot at David Austin, a perennially popular outing. It's a great place to buy some of the world's most beautiful roses – inevitably – but it's also a chance to see them shown off to perfection. On site, there's a series of gardens where over 700 varieties of rose have been planted. Covering around two acres, each area has its own style and character; but, overall, the effect is one of informal exuberance, complemented by sculptures by the late Mrs Pat Austin, a talented artist. The look around the garden is free-flow, with places to sit, relax and enjoy the scents.

The Long Garden sits at the centre, containing a collection of old roses, interlaced with pergolas supporting climbers and ramblers; the Victorian Walled Garden makes the most of its structures, inviting plants to cling to walls; the stunning Renaissance Garden is devoted to English roses; in the Lion Garden, borders are punctuated by magnificent standard roses; the patio garden shows off its plethora of English specimen roses in decorative terracotta planters; and the Species Garden hosts the true wild roses and their near hybrids.

If you'd like something to eat, the timber-framed licensed restaurant supplies everything from cuppa and cake, to a sit-down two-course meal. All food is homemade, catering for vegan and gluten-free; the fish is sustainably sourced.

The gift shop and plant centre (selling a full range of plants) are superb (we defy you not to buy anything) with the prettiest of home- and garden-ware, natural beauty products, gardening books and stationery.

(Pre-orders made online/telephoned may be collected and loaded/labelled onto the coach by the staff)

<https://www.davidaustinroses.co.uk/>

<https://www.davidaustinroses.co.uk/pages/food-and-drink>

0850-0905h	Nailsworth/Box/Minch pickups
1115h	David Austin, Albrighton
1515h	Leave for home
1730h	Home



Founder, David Austin, who died December 2018

We hope there's something in these "days out" for you!
But, as always, if you've a trip in mind we haven't thought of yet, then please do suggest it to us and we'll do our best.

Please reply UNSUBSCRIBE if you no longer wish to receive these messages

Thank you, from Ian and Katie (Jarvis)

ends...