

Glorious and Grand: A Private House and Garden Tour

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Overview

The Highlights

- Private visit to Alnwick Castle & Gardens
- Guided tour of Chipchase Castle & Gardens
- Wind-in-your-face viewing from the open-air platform
- Spend time in the Lake District, famous to fans of Beatrix Potter
- Breathtaking views of the moors, mountains, lakes, and sea
- Visit to the Hutton-in-the-Forest, Lord and Lady Inglewood's historic home
- Tour of the Garden of Cosmic Speculation, a modern marvel of garden design
- Traditional performances by local musicians on board
- All beverages, including alcoholic drinks
- All meals aboard the train, including full Scottish breakfast, three-course lunch, and four-course dinner
- 24-hour personal steward service

The Tour

[*Belmond Royal Scotsman*](#)'s Glorious and Grand: A Private House and Garden Tour is a discovery of outstanding gardens for green-fingered adventurers and history lovers alike. On this unforgettable journey, you'll join respected British gardening writer Sue Chivers and photographer Patsy Floyd to explore some of the finest private homes and gardens in Scotland and the North of England, many of which are rarely – if ever – open to the public.

Itinerary

Day 1: Edinburgh – Alnmouth – Scarborough

The adventure begins as you board *Belmond Royal Scotsman* at Edinburgh Waverley Station in the early afternoon. Travel towards Alnmouth on the east coast for your first stop: a visit to Alnwick Castle. Known to many as a Harry Potter movie location, the majestic estate is home to

fascinating and flourishing gardens transformed by the Duchess of Northumberland. Wondrous features include the Grand Cascade, Bamboo Labyrinth and Treehouse. Enjoy canapés and drinks in the castle before stepping out on a tour with the head gardener.

Back on board, enjoy a delicious informal dinner as you journey south to your destination for tonight, Scarborough, a pretty seaside resort on the North Yorkshire coast.

Day 2: Scarborough – Hexham

Today, a real treat awaits railway lovers as the train travels on the breathtaking Settle to Carlisle line. Absorb sweeping views of the wild Yorkshire Dales and North Pennines and gaze in awe as you cross the iconic, 24-arched Ribbleshead Viaduct, a masterpiece of Victorian engineering. (Be sure to head to the observation deck to maximize your views!)

After an early lunch, disembark in Hexham to visit nearby Chipchase Castle, a fine Jacobean mansion with a medieval pele tower, vaulted cellar, watchtowers and original portcullis. The ornate grounds include a lush walled garden and wooded areas that roll down to the River Tyne. The highlight of your relaxed visit is meeting the owners, Jonathan and Zoe Elkington, who together with their young children are delighted to mingle and chat – a very different experience to a formal stately home visit. They'll happily show you how they're putting their stamp on this beautiful property.

After your visit, re-join the train and relax over an informal dinner followed by live music in the Observation Car.

Day 3: Penrith – Carlisle – Ayr – Kilmarnock

This morning, disembark in Penrith and travel to the shores of Derwentwater for an exclusive visit to Fawe Park, where Beatrix Potter spent several happy summers. The Victorian lakeside mansion, not open to the public, has been in the same family since it was built in the mid-19th century. Join the owners, devoted Potter fans Joy and Jason Pemberton-Piggott, to explore the garden that inspired the fictional Mr. McGregor's Garden, which was also where the famous author sat and painted charming watercolours that were later used to illustrate her books.

Continue to Hutton-in-the-Forest, Lord and Lady Inglewood's historic home in the north-east corner of the Lake District. This important border castle is fascinating for its features and artefacts ranging from the Medieval era right through to the High Victorian Gothic period. Enjoy lunch in the grand Victorian dining room and meet Richard Inglewood, a former MEP who now sits in the House of Lords, and his wife Cressida, a knowledgeable gardener and keen cook. As part of your private tour you'll explore the elaborate gardens dating from the late 17th century, including terraces, topiary, woodlands, ponds and a Walled Garden restored by Cressida.

Re-join the train for an informal dinner.

Day 4: Kilmarnock – Dumfries – Sanquhar – Kilmarnock

This morning, as your journey takes you into Dumfries & Galloway, prepare to be amazed by the

Garden of Cosmic Speculation. Renowned throughout the world to those interested in modern garden design, the expansive sculpture park is, quite simply, unlike any other landscape garden in the UK. It was created by Charles Jencks and his late wife, Maggie Keswick, whose family gave them free rein to transform 30 acres of their estate into a landscape celebrating modern scientific theory and discovery (picture black-hole terraces, snail-shaped mounds and DNA helix sculptures!) Open to the public just one day a year, the garden is now run by son John Jencks, whose anecdotes about how his parents coped with such an ambitious project are enlightening and amusing. If he's available, John will lead your tour.

Return to the train for lunch on board and to prepare for the grand finale of the trip. Alight in Sanquhar to visit magnificent Drumlanrig Castle, a feast for those who love art, exquisite furniture and artefacts. The Dumfriesshire home of the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch and Queensberry, this turreted pink-sandstone mansion with sweeping views over the Nith Valley is among the most beautiful castles in Scotland. Housed inside is one of the UK's finest private art collections, including exquisite portraits by Hans Holbein the Younger, Rembrandt and Van Dyke and many other famous artists. The castle is only open to the public in August, so your visit is totally private. You'll be welcomed in by the family piper, no less. The head gardener will show you around the immaculate 40-acre gardens, whose highlights include the Duchess' Garden, East Parterre, Shawl and Long Wall Border. Afterwards, enjoy drinks and canapés as you relax in comfy sofas surrounded by priceless artworks.

Back on board, your head buzzing with inspiration, dress for a formal farewell dinner. Afterwards, we invite you to the Observation Car to tap your toes to live Scottish music.

Day 5: Kilmarnock – Edinburgh

Savor a final leisurely breakfast as the train wends its way back to Edinburgh, your journey's end. We wish you safe onward travels and look forward to seeing you again soon.

Please note: *Belmond Royal Scotsman* operates within the constraints of the railway network. As such, timings, routes and associated itineraries are subject to change.

Dates & Prices

More

Note: All prices are per person and include all table d'hôte meals, all alcoholic and other beverages, all sightseeing excursions as shown in the itinerary and accommodation on board based on two people sharing a twin compartment or one person in a single.

The Society of IRT highly recommends extending your stay with our Virtuoso preferred hotel The

Balmoral. We get special rates and amenities for our passengers there - and it's especially handy because it's right at the train station - just an escalator down to the tracks. We also have wonderful guides and drivers at our fingertips. Please inquire if you would like this concierge service before or after your train journey.