

AN INVITATION TO GROUPS



PENSHURST PLACE  
AND GARDENS

GROUP BOOKING  
INFORMATION

*The Place to Visit*  
*Home of Viscount De L'Isle*

# CONTENTS

1. Welcome from Viscount De L'Isle .....	1
2. Planning your visit .....	2
3. Food & Drink .....	8
4. Making the most of your visit .....	10
5. Banqueting & Private Events .....	14
6. Map of the House and Grounds.....	15
7. Education visits .....	16
8. Access facilities .....	20
9. How to book and general information about your visit .....	22
10. How to find us .....	24
11. For further information .....	26



Long Gallery

# 1. WELCOME FROM VISCOUNT DE L'ISLE



My family home, a defended medieval manor house and its gardens, dates from 1341. Lying in the rural landscape of the Weald of Kent, surrounded by parkland, it was granted to my family by Edward VI in 1552 after a period of being used by Henry VIII as a hunting lodge.

Having survived the vicissitudes of history for nearly seven centuries Penshurst Place has many stories to tell about people who have lived and visited it.

The house still retains the warmth and character of a family home and my team look forward to welcoming you to Penshurst Place.

With best wishes,

De L'Isle



Lord De L'Isle, Hon Sophia Sidney,  
Lady De L'Isle & Hon Philip Sidney

*Now, Penshurst, they that will proportion thee  
With other edifices, when they see  
Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else,  
May say, their lords have built, but thy lord dwells.*

From a poem dedicated to Penshurst Place by Ben Jonson (1572-1637)

## 2. PLANNING YOUR VISIT

Described as a 'quintessentially English home' Penshurst Place has been a home to kings and noblemen for over 650 years.

Displaying much of the original medieval and Tudor buildings and historic garden design, the Sidney family have a proud residency at Penshurst Place of over 450 years – with their place in history to be explored on your visit.

You will also find a place of peace and tranquility – where time has almost stood still; with an unique atmosphere emanating from the House's ancient sandstone walls, stunning formal walled gardens and ancient parkland estate.

**TO HELP PREPARE FOR YOUR GROUP VISIT  
GROUP LEADERS ARE WELCOME TO VISIT US  
IN ADVANCE, FREE OF CHARGE.**

**FOR OPENING TIMES AND PRICES SEE OUR  
CURRENT BOOKING FORM OR WEBSITE.**



Baron's Hall

# THE HOUSE

The Baron's Hall, built in 1341, is regarded as one of the best examples of medieval domestic architecture in the country: in its day built to impress all who visited, as it still does today.

Within the adjoining Staterooms you will find a fine collection of portraits, furniture, porcelain, tapestries and armour.

## EXHIBITION AREA

We sometimes have special exhibitions and currently there is a Sidney family photographic exhibition compiled by the owners.

## TOY MUSEUM

The Museum is a must see for all ages and contains a wonderful collection of toys from generations of the Sidney family as well as from the collection of Yootha Rose, stage designer, artist and royal toymaker. Many others have been kindly given or on loan to the collection.



# THE GARDEN

The gardens at Penshurst Place are considered to be one of the most beautiful in England and are probably one of the oldest. With records dating from 1346 the original 11 acre Tudor walled garden was first laid out in 1580.

Over one mile of yew hedging divides the garden into a series of 'rooms'. Each has its own season and colour combining to make Penshurst Place & Gardens an alluring and seductive spectacle throughout the year.

## SOME SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS:

- Spring flowering bulbs and sublime blossom displays
- The Magnolia Garden in April
- 100 metre Peony Border in late May/early June
- Clematis, the Wisteria, and the Water Lilies
- Soft tones of the Grey and White Garden in July
- 2000 roses and a sea of lavender in the Union Flag Garden in July/August
- Lime Walk a vivid blaze of autumnal colour

And, a new highlight from early summer is the Jubilee Walk – the newly redesigned double Herbaceous Borders.

Further detail on the Garden History is displayed in the Gardens.







## THE PLACE

### GIFT SHOP

Open all year, and one of Penshurst Place's hidden gems. With local produce, wonderful gift ideas, a wide selection of cards, books, clothes, jewellery; all at very reasonable prices. Make time to visit – it is located by the main visitor entrance/exit and free to visit all year.



### WOODLAND TRAIL

Our Woodland Trail highlights key areas of interest and designed to stimulate visitors' awareness of the countryside environment.

### THE ARBORETUM

A collection of tree species native to England planted in 1992 to commemorate the life of 1st Viscount De L'Isle, VC, KG, a previous owner of Penshurst Place.



### PARKLAND WALKS

The Lake Park Walk is within the paid Garden perimeter and offers stunning views back to the House. The Riverside and Parkland Walks offer a chance to step out into the wider estate and see the historic Sidney Oak – one of the Top 50 Great British Trees.



## PORCUPINE PANTRY

The Porcupine Pantry is located next to the main visitor entrance and Gift Shop, serving light refreshments - open daily all year and free to visit. Seating inside and out for up to 82.

## OTHER:

### ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

For children up to the age of 16 there is our wonderful traditional Playground offering children the perfect way to let off some steam.

### PENSHURST VILLAGE

The village is home to the 'original Leicester Square'. The Square includes a medieval Guildhouse and St John the Baptist church set back from the buildings, where the Sidney family memorials and tombs are to be found.

### CYCLING

The Regional Network cycle route no. 12 from Tonbridge to Penshurst Place is practically traffic free and crosses beautiful countryside in the Weald of Kent. A copy of the route map is available on our website at [www.penshurstplace.com/outdoorpursuits](http://www.penshurstplace.com/outdoorpursuits).

“ Our visit to Penshurst was fabulous - a real treat. People were still talking about it days later. We were very grateful to our guide for making it so special.”



### 3. FOOD & DRINK

The Garden Restaurant, refurbished in 2009, is set within the gardens and adjacent to the house entrance. Open daily during the season it serves morning teas and coffee, a delicious selection of homemade hot and cold lunches, cakes and Penshurst Place cream teas. It is self-service and a licensed premises. Seating is available inside and outside on the terrace overlooking the house. There is a maximum capacity for groups of 50 in one sitting. Should your group be larger please contact us to discuss.

Our Porcupine Pantry, opened in 2013, is located outside the main house and grounds ticketed area and is also accessible via the Gift Shop. Open daily all year, The Pantry provides a simple breakfast, lunch and afternoon tea menu including fresh soup and a selection of freshly-baked savory and sweet pastries cooked on the premises. It has seating inside and out for up to 82 people.

To ensure you will have space allocated we recommend you book your catering requirements in advance. We can then have your tables prepared for your group on arrival and offer table service.



## SPECIAL GROUP MENUS

We have a special group menu offering morning coffee and our hot food lunch menu – please see the Catering booking form for further information and our group afternoon teas.

## FOR LARGER GROUPS

For groups of 50+, or those looking for more of a dining experience, we can offer special fine dining menus, which can be served in the uniquely atmospheric environment of the Buttery or the Sunderland Room, the original 14th century solar.

For further information on our special menus and costs, please contact our Banqueting & Events team at [banqueting@penshurstplace.com](mailto:banqueting@penshurstplace.com) or call 01892 870307.

## PICNIC AREAS

We provide picnic areas in the playground and near the Lime Walk. There is also a Kiosk in the Adventure Playground selling ice-creams, drinks and snacks during the holidays.

## BENEFITS TO GROUPS

A group leader booking lunch for their group will receive a complimentary meal from the chosen menu.

On arrival coach drivers will also receive a refreshment voucher.



## 4. MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR VISIT

### YOUR OPTIONS

Groups visiting Penshurst Place and Gardens have two options; either pre-booking a private guided tour or a non-guided freeflow visit. Both offer full access to the House, Gardens and Grounds.

### A FREEFLOW NON-GUIDED VISIT

Groups can wander around the house and gardens at their leisure. We provide laminated room guides for each of the Staterooms in the House, as well as having knowledgeable stewards in each room who can provide a wealth of information and background.

The Room guides are also available in large print, Braille and the following foreign languages: French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Japanese.



## PRIVATE HOUSE TOURS

Enjoy an exclusive guided tour of the house from one of our trained Guides. Tours take place when the house is closed to the general public; starting from between 9.30am and 11am or from 4pm. House tours can also be arranged out of season.

A private guided House tour takes approximately 45 minutes and will give you an insight into the history of the house and family. If you have a particular area of interest please let us know on booking so we can choose a guide with the appropriate specialist interest.

Private tours of the House during the winter are subject to availability. Please contact our Head of Visitor Services for further details.

## GARDEN TOURS

For those who want to know more about the planting and the history of the Gardens, a guided tour with one of our Garden Guides gives Penshurst's historic gardens a new dimension.

Garden Tours can take place any time from 10.30am until 4pm and take approximately 1 hour.

*A garden tour with our Head Gardener* is also available at an additional charge, subject to his availability.

## COMBINED HOUSE AND GARDEN TOURS

Combined tours give you the best of both worlds. We suggest you have a refreshment break in between the two tours.

## FOREIGN LANGUAGE TOURS

We offer tours in French, Dutch, Flemish and German, subject to guide availability.

## OTHER DETAILS:

Larger groups are divided into smaller groups of 25, with one guide per group.

The maximum group size we can accommodate in one day is 110 people.

Only Penshurst Place guides may conduct guided tours through the house and gardens.

## VISIT A NEARBY ATTRACTION ON THE SAME DAY



### ROYAL SPA TOWN AND COUNTRY HOUSE TOUR ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS & PENSURST PLACE

In times gone by visitors to Tunbridge Wells would ride out to Penshurst Place and pay the housekeeper a shilling to visit the staterooms. Today you can pay a little more and have a one-hour guided tour of the famous Pantiles in the historic heart of Royal Tunbridge Wells then drive on to Penshurst Place & Gardens for a freeflow visit, or guided tour.

For further details or to book please contact the Tunbridge Wells Tourist Information Centre on: 01892 515675 or email: [touristinformationcentre@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:touristinformationcentre@tunbridgewells.gov.uk).



### ON THE TUDOR TRAIL HEVER CASTLE & PENSURST PLACE

Visit two historic places in Kent, just a few miles apart, brought together by the Tudors. Hever Castle the childhood home of Anne Boleyn; Penshurst Place the property of Henry VIII used as his hunting lodge. Enjoy a private house tour of Penshurst Place in the morning, followed by a visit to Hever Castle in the afternoon. Both have lovely catering facilities and Gift Shops that are not to be missed!

For further details of this and any other offers currently available please contact our Head of Visitor Services at Penshurst Place.

# ANNUAL EVENTS AT PENSURST PLACE

## FARMERS' MARKET AT PENSURST PLACE

This Times Top 10 Farmers' Market is held on the first Saturday of the month from 9.30am - 12noon by the Penshurst Place Gift Shop.



## WEALD OF KENT CRAFT SHOW

First May Bank Holiday & normally the second Friday – Sunday in September



With special offers to Groups on prebooked tickets to visit Penshurst Place & Gardens and the Craft Show. To book tickets call the organiser's Ticket Hotline on 01425 277988 or book online at [www.ichf.co.uk](http://www.ichf.co.uk).

## GLORIOUS GARDENS WEEK

Early June

Celebrate the stunning 100 metre Peony Border in bloom.

For further information about our events, visit our website [www.penshurstplace.com/whatson](http://www.penshurstplace.com/whatson) or request a copy of our events listing.



## 5. BANQUETING & PRIVATE EVENTS

### THE PLACE FOR YOUR EVENTS

Penshurst Place & Gardens provides an idyllic setting for special events and more formal dining.

Our award-winning wedding venue is available for exclusive hire throughout the year for events such as:

- Formal lunches and dinners, balls, parties and champagne receptions
- Civil ceremonies, wedding receptions, civil partnerships and renewal of vows
- Corporate and private hire activity events which can involve a wide range of outdoor pursuits
- Conferences, training, business meetings and team-building days.

For further details contact our Banqueting & Events team on 01892 870307 or visit our website [www.penshurstplace.com/yourevent](http://www.penshurstplace.com/yourevent).





## 6. MAP OF THE HOUSE AND GROUNDS



- |  |                                      |  |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Main entrance                             | 7. Alternative entrance to Gardens ♿ | 13. House exit and entrance to exhibition area ♿             |
| 2. Coach Parking                             | 8. WCs                               | 14. Lime Walk Picnic Area                                    |
| 3. Porcupine Pantry, WCs & WC for disabled ♿ | 9. WC for Disabled ♿                 | 15. Lake Park  |
| 4. Visitor Entrance & Gift Shop ♿            | 10. Education Room ♿                 | 16. Adventure Playground                                     |
| 5. WCs                                       | 11. Garden Restaurant ♿              | 17. Woodland Trail & Arboretum                               |
| 6. Entrance to Gardens                       | 12. Entrance to House ♿              | 18. Penshurst Village; Leicester Square and access to Church |



For details of a wheelchair accessible route around the gardens, please contact us for our access facilities information. 15

## 7. EDUCATION VISITS

Penshurst Place provide a resource for schools to explore history through the ages; to educate and inform pupils of all ages about life in England from the Romans to the modern day.

To ensure you have a full and productive day out of the classroom, there are also plenty of opportunities for cross-curricular work, all in one place.

With a stunning private collection of portraits, Penshurst Place was also the home of the Elizabethan poet Sir Philip Sidney and has had many other famous literary visitors.

For overseas and foreign language students wanting to learn more about British history and culture, Penshurst Place is a valuable historical and cultural resource.



## TEACHING RESOURCES

### PRIVATE GUIDED TOURS

We strongly recommend that schools book a House Tour on arrival with one of our guides who are experienced at working with school groups. Do let us know what areas of the curriculum you would like the tour to focus on.

### TOY MUSEUM

With toys and games from the past on display, this is the perfect educational resource for younger age groups. A simple trail for pupils can also be provided, as well as a written museum guide for teachers.

### BUSHCRAFT FOR SCHOOLS

At a new woodland base on Penshurst Place estate, The Bushcraft Company deliver real outdoor adventures to school groups: their mission, to make the next generation think differently. Think Outside. For further details and to book visit their website [www.thebushcraftcompany.com](http://www.thebushcraftcompany.com).

### THE WOODLAND TRAIL

Designed in conjunction with the Kent Wildlife Trust, this is an excellent resource available to schools. There are interpretation panels throughout the Trail, and a pupil question and answer sheet.

### ADVENTURE PLAYGROUND

Ideal for children to let off steam before jumping back on the coach, it also includes areas to picnic.

### FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE SCHOOL CHILDREN AND STUDENTS

Private house and garden tours are available in French, Dutch, Flemish and German and we have guides for the staterooms in French, German, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Russian and Japanese.

### GARDEN VISITS

Rates are available for access just to the Gardens, Adventure Playground and Toy Museum.

**We request schools are in small supervised groups when visiting the house independently, the formal gardens and Gift Shop.**



## FACILITIES

### EDUCATION ROOM

We have an education room that can be prebooked where bags can be left and used as a place to do follow-up work and have lunch. The Education Room is suitable for up to 50 children.

### PICNIC AREAS

Picnic areas are available in the Playground and along the Lime Walk.

### RISK ASSESSMENTS

We provide a full risk assessment for schools.

### OTHER INFORMATION:

We offer a free preparatory teacher's visit.

Supervision and adult admittance: We recommend one adult to eight schoolchildren and these adults are given free admittance. Additional adults will normally be charged at the adult group rate.

### SPECIAL NEEDS

Please do let us know in advance of your visit of any children with special needs and where a child requires one to one supervision the accompanying adult will have free admittance.

## WORKSHOPS

### ARMADA!

Our annual Armada Living History Presentation for schools involves a skilled cast of actors recreating colourful characters from the Elizabethan period as they prepare for the invasion of the Spanish Armada - a 'real life' history lesson.

“ This was my first visit and I thought the day was brilliant - it really inspired me.”

We can also provide bespoke educational workshops, at an additional charge, inviting experienced actors to present, as costumed characters, on topics relevant to your curriculum.

**CONTACT US FOR A BOOKING FORM AND FURTHER INFORMATION OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE.**

**For more information including other resources available to schools and a copy of our booking form visit [www.penshurstplace.com/forschools](http://www.penshurstplace.com/forschools).**



## 8. ACCESS FACILITIES

If any of your group have special needs do contact us in advance so we can do our best to assist.

### COACH DROP OFF POINTS

Coach and car parking for visitors with disabilities is close to the main Visitor Entrance. The car park is a short inclined walk to the House on shallow gravel paths. Alternative access, closer to the House, can be arranged in advance for those in wheelchairs.

### HIRE OF WHEELCHAIRS

Two wheelchairs are available to use free of charge, but do book them in advance of your visit (please see relevant section in the group booking form).

### GUIDES

A guided map for visitors with disabilities is available on arrival to show a recommended wheelchair route with other relevant facilities also marked.



A copy can also be downloaded from our website or requested in advance of your visit.

A large print and Braille House guide is available for the House and a pictorial and large print guide for the Toy Museum.

## **WHEELCHAIR ACCESS:**

### **PORCUPINE PANTRY, VISITOR ENTRANCE AND GIFT SHOP**

The Porcupine Pantry, Visitor Entrance and Gift Shop are all accessible to wheelchair users with a concrete path leading up to them.

### **THE HOUSE AND GARDEN RESTAURANT**

Wheelchair access to the House, Toy Museum and Restaurant is through the gardens with some grass paths.

The House entrance and the Baron's Hall are at ground level and accessible to wheelchair users via portable ramps. The Nether Gallery and Panelled Room are also accessible. To view the upper staterooms there is a commentated virtual tour DVD presentation available to view in the Hall.

The Toy Museum is located up a series of steps so not accessible to wheelchairs though there are sturdy handrails up both sides of the stairs.

### **THE GARDENS**

The Gardens are accessible to wheelchairs via some grass paths which do require some exertion to navigate but there are ramps in key places. Seating can be found at frequent intervals around the gardens.

### **TOILET FACILITIES**

Toilets for visitors with disabilities are situated next to the Visitor Entrance, in the Porcupine Pantry and another is close to the House and Garden Restaurant.

### **OTHER INFORMATION FOR THE GROUP LEADER**

- The carer of the wheelchair user has free admittance.
- If you have wheelchair users in your group, please let us know in advance via the booking form to ensure we can prepare the appropriate facilities.

## 9. HOW TO BOOK AND GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR VISIT

### BOOKING

Once you have decided on your itinerary, group leaders are requested to complete our Group Booking form which also details the prices.

Please return the form by fax, email or post for the attention of the Head of Visitor Services at Penshurst Place. Confirmation will be sent before your visit.

### PAYMENT

No deposit is required but we ask groups to give a minimum of 24 hours notice of cancellation. If no notice of cancellation is received we reserve the right to charge a cancellation fee for any costs incurred.

Payment can be made on the day by cash or debit/credit card. We accept the following:



Mastercard, Visa, Switch, Sterling Cheques, Euros (notes only).

We ask that catering is paid for separately directly with our caterer Leith's.

### VOUCHERS

For travel and coach companies, we can supply an invoice on presentation of an appropriate voucher.

### GROUP SIZE

Group rates apply to groups of 15+. For smaller group sizes please contact us to discuss.

### PHOTOGRAPHY



Visitors are welcome to take photographs of the gardens and house exteriors for their own personal use but we do not allow photography or video cameras to be used in the house.

### DOGS



Guide dogs for blind people and hearing dogs for deaf people are welcome.



## INFORMATION FOR COACHES

We offer free admission to coach drivers and a refreshment voucher on arrival to be redeemed in our Garden Restaurant or Porcupine Pantry.

### VISITOR ENTRANCE HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS

Double-decker and some larger continental coaches will not fit through the archway entrance so will need to contact us for details of our alternative entrance. The coach can then park in a layby close to the Entrance, in the village.

### PARKING

There is ample parking with hard-standing coach parking in the main visitor car park, next to the Visitor Entrance and Gift Shop.

## EXPLORE THE AREA

If you are looking to extend your visit to the area, there is accommodation available locally in the surrounding villages and in Royal Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge.

### FOR FURTHER DETAILS ABOUT THE AREA CONTACT

Tunbridge Wells Tourist Information Centre

Tel: 01892 515675

Email: [touristinformationcentre@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:touristinformationcentre@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

You can also visit [www.visitkent.co.uk](http://www.visitkent.co.uk).

“

I would like to thank you for the visit we had at Penshurst Place yesterday. We enjoyed and were very interested in the tours of the house - both groups said they had excellent guides.”

## 10. HOW TO FIND US

Located in Kent, the Garden of England, Penshurst Place is close to London, the main city airports, and easily accessible from the M25.

- M25 Junction 5 – 12 miles/19 km
- Dartford Tunnel – 28 miles/44 km
- London - 40 miles (by train 40 minutes to Tonbridge)
- Canterbury – 50 miles/80 km
- Dover – 63 miles/101 km
- Ashford – 42 miles/68 km
- Gatwick – 24 miles/38 km
- Heathrow – 56 miles/90 km
- Ebbsfleet International Rail station – 30 miles/48 km
- Kent International airport – 63 miles/102 km





## 11. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you wish to book please complete a copy of our booking form and return to us at the address below. For further information and to discuss your visit in more detail contact:

### Head of Visitor Services

Penshurst Place & Gardens  
Penshurst  
Kent TN11 8DG  
England, UK

**T:** + 44 (0)1892 870307 **F:** + 44 (0)1892 870866

**E:** [groups@penshurstplace.com](mailto:groups@penshurstplace.com)

**W:** [www.penshurstplace.com/forgroups](http://www.penshurstplace.com/forgroups)



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Please see our website and current booking form for further details.

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