



PENSHURST PLACE  
AND GARDENS

Group Tours  
& Experiences  
2019







# Welcome to Penshurst Place & Gardens



Set in the beautiful Weald of Kent, Penshurst Place & Gardens and the surrounding estate have stood on the banks of the river Medway since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when the awe-inspiring medieval Baron's Hall was built as a country retreat for the Lord Mayor of London, Sir John De Pulteney. The Baron's Hall, crowned by an original 60ft high chestnut beamed ceiling, is the jewel in Penshurst Place's crown, and an unmissable sight for visitors to the ancestral home of the Sidney family.

It's easy to see why Penshurst Place has been the inspiration for many a literary scholar, including Ben Johnson and Philip Sidney, and more recently can be recognised as a filming location for many a large and small scale television and film projects, including Anne of a Thousand Days, The Princess Bride, The Other Boleyn Girl and Wolf Hall.

Used as a hunting lodge for King Henry VIII, Penshurst Place has a unique place in history. The House was gifted to the Sidney Family in 1552 by Edward VI and it has remained in their safe hands ever since, making it one of the oldest family-owned estates in England.

The stately home with 11 acres of formal gardens separated into different themed "rooms", can tailor tours to cover a variety of historical topics, and for groups with a horticulture interest, guided tours with the Estate's Head Gardener are also available. Groups who book a lunch to accompany their

tour will be able to enjoy the delights of Kentish produce in the on-site restaurant, or may wish to book an exclusive lunch in one of the private banqueting rooms within the historical house.

All of the special interest tours for groups are led by senior guides and can be combined with a delicious hot or cold lunch or cream tea for a special offer price. Free flow visits are also available and start from £7.80 per person, or £7.30 per person if a catered lunch is pre-booked.

## From Viscount De L'Isle, MBE

*I hope you will find pleasure in visiting the 14th century Manor House and its Gardens. For more than 20 years, my wife Isobel and I have continued to care for the House, Garden and its contents, assisted by a small team of dedicated staff.*

*The Sidney family have been in continuous occupation for more than 460 years since the estate was gifted to my forbear William Sidney in 1552 by King Edward VI. We are very proud that it is still a family home and all of us who live and work here welcome visitors to discover the charm of Penshurst in the State Rooms, Gardens, Parkland and beyond.*







# Our History

Standing on the banks of the River Medway since the mid – 14<sup>th</sup> century, Penshurst Place & Gardens in the Weald of Kent has a unique place in history with links to countless royals, nobles and writers.

Sitting within the village of Penshurst on a 2,500 acre estate, the ancestral home of the Sidney family is a testament to changing architectural styles and building techniques, with various materials being used across the centuries to create the building seen today. The oldest part of the building, the medieval Baron's Hall, was completed in 1341 and was intended as a country house for Sir John de Pulteney, a wealthy wool merchant who was four times Mayor of London.

In 1519, the estate was visited by King Henry VIII who arrived to meet with the owner Henry Stafford Third Duke of Buckingham. The Duke, approaching such a visit with apprehension, decided to lavish the King with a banquet worth over two thousand, five hundred pounds (or one million pounds in today's money). Such a lavish display of wealth did not benefit the Duke, for King Henry was already fearful of his right to the throne and power among the aristocracy, which was only inflamed by his own lack of a male heir. The King took to the banquet as an aggressive display of power and shortly afterwards in 1520, the Duke was arrested for treason and executed the following year at Tower Hill; Penshurst Place and the surrounding estate was now property of the crown.

In 1552, the house was granted by King Henry VIII to his son, King Edward VI. Edward however had no intention of keeping Penshurst Place, and instead saw it as a fitting gift for the Chamberlain of his Household, Sir William Sidney, in whose family Penshurst Place and the surrounding estate still belongs today.

## Literary History

Penshurst Place has long been recognised as a place of poetic inspiration and cultural excellence, our most notable literary ancestor, **Sir Philip Sidney** (Astrophel and Stella, Arcadia) was born and lived at Penshurst Place, before his untimely death at Battle of Zutphen at age 31.

A further key literary figure, who went largely unrecognised for many years, is **Lady Mary Wroth**, born 430 years ago. She wrote a literary masterpiece in 1620, '**Love's Victory**' that was given its first reading in public in 2014 in the Baron's Hall at Penshurst Place, by actors from The Globe, and performed using the full manuscript in 2018. The earliest surviving comedy written by an Englishwoman, Love's Victory explores human responses to love. The play has close links with Penshurst; **Lady Wroth** was the niece of **Sir Philip Sidney**, and spent much of her life at the ancestral home of the Sidney family.







# The House & Grounds

Set in the beautiful Weald of Kent on a 2,500 acre country estate, Penshurst Place & Gardens and the surrounding estate have stood on the banks of the river Medway since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, when the awe-inspiring medieval Baron's Hall was built as a country retreat for the Lord Mayor of London, Sir John De Pulteney.

The Baron's Hall is one of the very few examples of a fourteenth century domestic Hall, which has survived almost untouched. The roof is especially interesting, 48 years earlier than the present roof of Westminster Hall, it is of simpler construction, and presents features which are not found in many other timber built roofs. Still in their original condition, the roof timbers are of chestnut, considered as strong as, but lighter than, oak.

Upstairs, you will find a further collection of opulent staterooms, constructed across the centuries, each room features a unique architectural style, with beautiful furniture, antiques, portraiture and tapestries.

Surrounded by 11 acres of formal gardens separated into different themed "rooms", Penshurst Place is a horticultural haven, hosting hundreds of varieties of flower and flora, including two Iris breeds bred especially for the estate by Olga Wells, and found nowhere else: Penshurst Blue, and Penshurst Yellow.

Both grassed and paved gardens can be found at Penshurst Place, with benches in each to stop and enjoy the scenery.

Those with a keen film eye, may recognise the estate from productions such as Anne of a Thousand Days (1969) The Princess Bride (1987) The Other Boleyn Girl (2007) Wolf Hall (2015) and most recently, Mary Queen of Scots (2019)

## From Head Gardener, Tony Wiseman

*The Gardens of Penshurst Place are a truly unique, with many areas remaining largely unchanged since they were originally laid out in 1346.*

*With over 11 acres to tend to, divided into 11 different rooms, there is a huge variety of planting and styles to enjoy throughout; from herbaceous borders, manicured Rose Gardens, and more rustic-looking orchards.*

*We work hard to ensure that our work here provides longevity for the gardens, with records dating back to the 14th century, it is of vital importance that the gardens are well-looked after for future generations.*

*My team and I hope you enjoy your visit, if you happen to see us tending to the beds during your stroll through the grounds, please do feel free to stop and ask us any questions you might have!*







# Group Benefits 2019



Ample on-site coach parking



Meet and greet service by our Visitor coordinator



Two on-site dining areas for pre-booked or free-flow lunches



Guided Tours of the House and Gardens



Seating throughout the formal gardens



Multi-lingual guides and information available



Private dining spaces available



A spacious Gift Shop

With ample amenities for groups to enjoy, a day out at Penshurst Place is entirely flexible to your needs. A wide selection of tours and experience can be found on the following pages, but we are always happy to discuss more bespoke experiences that your group may be interested in.

With over 11 acres of grounds to explore, a medieval and Elizabethan home, delicious on-site food options, a woodland walk, arboretum and lake park, Penshurst Place is a manor house unlike that of any other in Kent, with a rich history to be felt throughout







# Group Experiences 2019

With an historic family home dating to 1341, 11 acres of formal gardens to explore, a Toy Museum, two restaurants, and an extensive woodland trail to wander along, Penshurst Place & Gardens is a superb destination for both full and half day excursions, with multi-lingual guides and printed information available for every group. Offering an authentic Kentish experience, Penshurst Place is one of the leading authentic examples of historic life in the garden of England.

## Types of Experiences Include

Guided house and gardens Tour

A tour of the garden led by the Head Gardener

Free-flow house and gardens visit

A hot breakfast and guided tour

A hot or cold lunch and guided tour

Specialist architecture, ornaments, or portraiture tours

A joint tour with nearby Hever Castle







# 2019 Group Rates

| Tour Type   | Per Adult | Per Child |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| House & gardens non-guided visit  | £9.50     | £5.00     |
| Gardens only  | £8.50     | £4.50     |
| Guided house tour   | £11.50    | £5.50     |
| Guided garden tour  | £11.50    | £5.50     |
| Cream tea & tour  | £15.50    | N/a       |
| Lunch & tour  | £23.00    | N/a       |
| Combined house and garden tour  | £19.00    | £10       |
| Combined house and village church tour                                      | £18.00    | N/a       |
| Head Gardener's tour (additional £100 supplement)                           | £11.50    | N/a       |
| Connoisseur's tour<br><i>Special interest house and church tour</i>         | £19.00    | N/a       |
| In the footsteps of the Tudors tour<br>Visit Penshurst Place & Hever Castle | £23.00    | N/a       |
| Winter behind the scenes tour<br><i>Includes seasonal refreshments</i>      | £16.00    | N/a       |









# A Delicious Visit

Groups Catering at Penshurst Place, provided by Partner Caterers, Kudos

Penshurst Place and Gardens has a food history lasting nearly seven centuries, when the medieval Baron's Hall was built in 1341 after the Lord Mayor of London Sir John De Pulteney bought the surrounding land, which is still owned by the estate today.

Over the centuries that followed, Penshurst Place became known as a popular hunting destination, with forests and glades rich with game birds, wild boar and roe deer. In 1521, Penshurst Place and the surrounding estate became the property of King Henry VIII, who used the house as his hunting lodge whilst courting Anne Boleyn at nearby Hever Castle. 31 years later in 1552, King Henry's son, Edward VI, gifted the estate to his tutor and steward of his household, Sir William Sidney, and the House, Gardens and wider estate have been looked after by the family ever since, making Penshurst Place one of the oldest family-owned estates in all of England.

Penshurst Place works with expert caterer Kudos, who are firm believers in sourcing locally wherever possible and showcasing food heroes in their delicious menus.





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# Seasonal Highlights

*The Bloom of the 12,500 Jewel of Spring Yellow Tulips in the Italian Garden*

Early - mid April

*The Weald of Kent Country Craft Show*

4th - 6th May

*The bloom of the 100 metre Peony Border*

Late May

*Glorious Gardens Weekend*

1st & 2nd June

*The Weald of Kent Country Craft Show*

30th August—1st September

*The Woodland Trail & Arboretum Autumnal Colours*

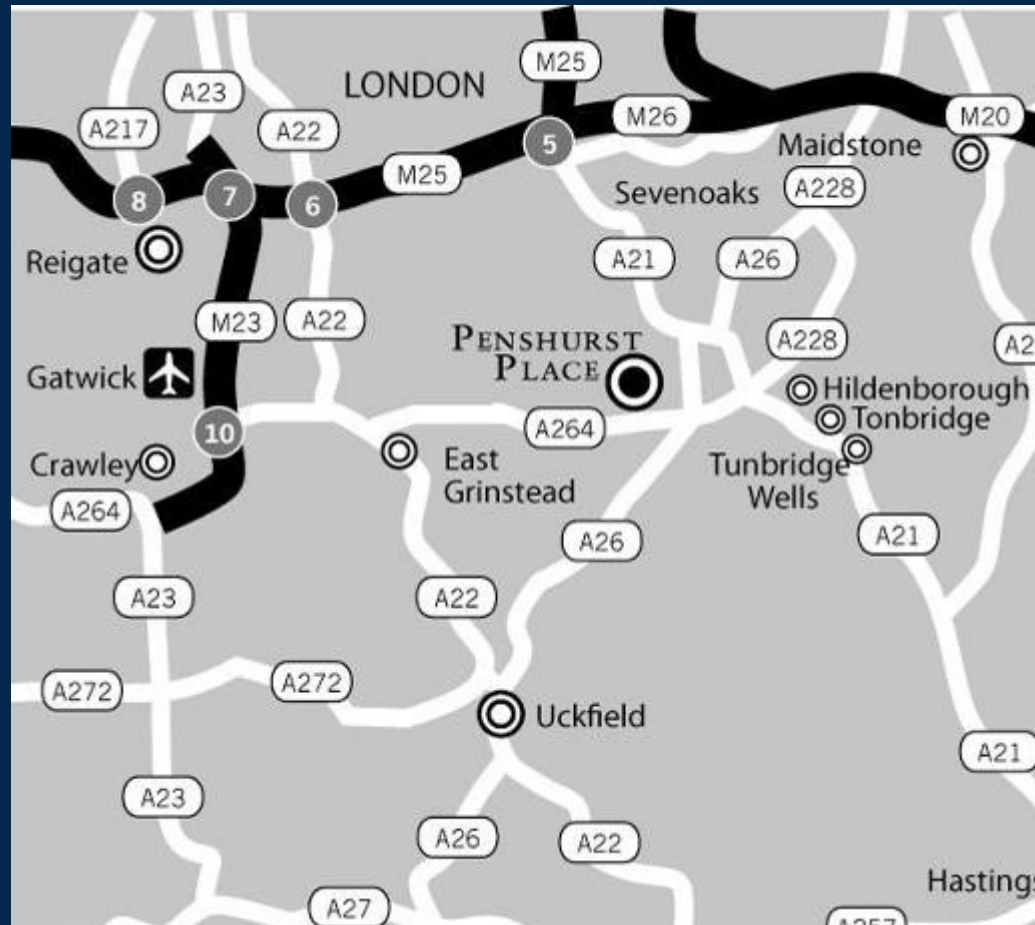
From late October







# How To Find Us



**From the M25 junction 5**, follow the A21 to Tonbridge, leaving at the Hildenborough exit. Follow the brown tourist signs to Penshurst Place.

**From the M20 / M26 junction 2A**, follow the A25 towards Sevenoaks and then the A21, before taking the Hildenborough exit. Follow the brown tourist signs to Penshurst Place.







# PENSHURST PLACE AND GARDENS


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


[wendyw@penshurstplace.com](mailto:wendyw@penshurstplace.com)

01892 870 307

[www.penshurstplace.com](http://www.penshurstplace.com)

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 @penshurstplace

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