



SE England, Guernsey and Sark

2 – 12 July 2026

11 days from £3,295 per person (based on min 35 paying guests)

Itinerary

For those guests staying in central London prior to the tour, we have listed a few comfortable hotels in the area:

Premier Inn London Victoria

The Clermont Victoria

The Belgrave Hotel

Hotel Riu Plaza London Victoria

Citizen M London Victoria Station

We can of course check availability and provide you with a quote at the time of booking based on your requirements – please contact us for details.

Day 1 – Thursday 2 July 2026

We all meet at London Gatwick airport in time to depart at 1030hrs (full details of meeting point will be sent prior to departure).

For those guests who will be in central London the quickest and easiest way to reach Gatwick is via the Gatwick Express from London Victoria Station. The train departs every 30min and takes approximately 30 minutes to get to Gatwick (South Terminal). More details can be found on their website: <https://www.gatwickexpress.com/>

Our first visit is to the magnificent **Lullingstone Castle**. A historic family mansion dating back to the time of Domesday, frequented by Henry VIII and Queen Anne, the manor house and garden are set in the beautiful Darent Valley. The garden was designed by horticulturist Tom Hart Dyke, a modern-day plant hunter who follows in the traditions of plant hunters who used to risk their lives and limbs in pursuit of fantastic blooms and plants. He was held captive for nine months by Columbian guerrillas in 2000 and on his release, he created the World Garden of Plants, which continues to grow and build each year adding rare and important botanical plants to its collection. **A guided tour of the World Garden is included.** Lunch facilities are available (not included).

We will have a stop to visit the **Capel United Church** in Tudeley – the only church in the world to have all its twelve windows decorated by the artist Marc Chagall.

We continue to our comfortable hotel, the **Mercure Tunbridge Wells**. We will enjoy a welcome drink prior to dinner.

Day 2 – Friday 3 July 2026

This morning after breakfast we visit the magnificently manicured gardens of **Sissinghurst**. This famous garden was created by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson from 1930 onwards and became the most admired English Garden of its time. Few great gardens live up to their reputations so effortlessly as this. Sissinghurst is a large connoisseurs' garden consisting of a series of small romantic areas enclosed by the surviving parts of an Elizabethan mansion. It never disappoints its visitors, it has the power of enchantment, but it is also an unending source of inspiration for all gardeners. Sissinghurst is surely as close to gardening perfection as you can get, and it continues to be one of the most-copied flower gardens in the world. Lunch facilities are available in the large café outside the garden or healthy snacks available from the farm market (not included).



We later continue to **Goddards Green** near Cranbrook is a hidden gem just waiting to be explored with over 500 years of history. The grade II listed home belonged to one of the principal clothier families of Cranbrook, the Courthopes, for more than 400 years. Today the present owners John and Linde Wotton have evolved the design of the garden. There is the Fountain Garden (linked by a rill to the Water Garden), Swimming Pool Garden, Fern Garden and several new borders. The gardens surround the house and extend to about 7 acres, including an arboretum, a mature apple, plum, cherry and nut orchard and a wilderness. The garden is in a rural location and offers a variety of mix planting. **A guided tour and refreshment are included.**

We return to hotel in time for dinner.

Day 3 – Saturday 4 July 2026



Today we will visit the gardens at **Gravetye Manor for a guided tour with Head Gardener Tom Coward and his associate**. Gravetye was home to William Robinson, one of the greatest gardeners of all time, who bought the manor in 1884 and it was his home until he died, well into his nineties in 1935. It was at Gravetye he realised many of his ideals for the creation of The English Natural Garden, of which he was a pioneer. The variety and charm of the arrangement of trees and shrubs, the

landscaping and the layout of different types of gardens at Gravetye is still his creation and memorial. Post war and until the late 1950s Gravetye's gardens saw general neglect and became even more wild! In 1958, a pioneering hotelier, Peter Herbert came to Gravetye and established one of Britain's first country house hotels. Over 40 years later the gardens saw enormous revival of their fortunes, and projects such as the restoration of the kitchen garden and peach house were completed.

Day 3 – Saturday 4 July 2026 (continued...)

We later continue to historic **Hever Castle**, a picturesque double-moated fortress best known as the childhood home of Anne Boleyn. Set within 125 acres of stunning gardens and parkland, Hever offers a captivating blend of history and horticulture, and shares expert insights into the seasonal highlights and design of the award-winning grounds, from the Italian Garden and Tudor-inspired topiary to the tranquil lakeside walks. There is also time to explore the castle's richly furnished interiors, which bring the Tudor period vividly to life. Lunch will be available here (not included).

Our final visit of the day is to **Long Barn Garden** at Sevenoaks. Believed to be dated back to at least 1360 it was bought in 1915 by Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson who set about creating the three-acre formal garden before buying Sissinghurst in 1930. They permanently moved to Sissinghurst in 1932 but keep Long Barn until 1945 before selling this. Much of the garden remains original and is lovingly curated by current owners Lars and Rebecca Lemonius. We will enjoy a 20min **talk** on the history of the gardens and house along with **tea/coffee and cake**. Please note there are several paths and steps with no handrails, so sensible footwear is essential.

We return to the hotel where dinner is served in the evening.

Day 4 – Sunday 5 July 2026

This morning we visit **Prospect Cottage Garden** is set on the Dungeness Shingle Beach and was home to the late Derek Jarman. The cottage which is covered in black shiplap wood has bright yellow windows and is surrounded by an amazing but small coast garden with a wide range of colourful plants suited to the environment – **Note access – 20-25 min walk from lighthouse car park/power station**.

We enjoy a stop at the historic hilltop town **Rye**, known for its medieval architecture, cobbled streets and rich past as a significant port and member of the Cinque Ports confederation. There will be an opportunity to have lunch here (not included).

We later continue to the classic English Country Garden – **Great Dixter**. The distinguished garden writer Christopher Lloyd (who died in January 2006 at the aged of 84) was the genius behind Great Dixter, with its timbered 15th century house. Restored by Edwin Lutyens who also planned the garden, Mr Lloyd has firmly put his lively stamp on it. A recent experiment involved installing a summer tropical garden rich in bold shapes and brilliant colours. No gardener could come to Great Dixter without making discoveries and rekindling a zest for gardening. **A guided tour and champagne drinks reception is included.**



Dinner will be served in the hotel this evening. Following dinner, we will enjoy lectures provided by **Troy Scott Smith** from Sissinghurst, and **Tom Coward** and **Sam Fry** both from Gravetye.

Day 5 – Monday 6 July 2026

This morning following breakfast we visit to Sarah Raven's own garden, **Perch Hill**. Once a rather ramshackle ex-dairy farm with a lot of concrete, corrugated iron and not much else, the land has been converted to an organic two acres of new seed and plant varieties. The constant supply of favourite flowers comes from the large cutting garden where the central four beds are filled with hardy and half-hardy annuals and biennials. There are also two purely ornamental gardens at Perch Hill, not dedicated to harvesting – the Oast Garden with an extravagant mix of colour and structure and the front farmhouse garden, which is designed to have a calmer feel. **We will enjoy a 1hr talk with Sarah Raven and a tour of the gardens with the Perch Hill Gardens followed by a 2-course lunch.**



We return to the hotel where you have the afternoon and evening at leisure. For those who wish you can visit **Notcutt's Nursery** which is located across the road from the hotel (approx. 5m in walk). Alternatively, we will do a drop off for those who wish at one of the most famous places in Royal Tunbridge Wells at **The Pantiles**, a historic Georgian colonnaded walkway which has over 70 bars, restaurants and shops to enjoy at leisure.

Dinner is on own this evening.

Day 6 – Tuesday 7 July 2026

This morning, we will enjoy a visit to a **private garden** before making our way to London Gatwick for our afternoon flight to Guernsey. *(A hold bag is included at 23kg per person).*

On arrival we shall be met and transferred to our comfortable hotel the **4-star St Pierre Park Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort**, located in 35 acres of groups and approx. 1mile from St Peter Port. Our local **horticultural guide, Malcolm Cleal**, director of La Seigneurie Gardens and previously manager of Guernsey Parks and Gardens, will join us this evening to introduce himself. Malcolm will guide the group around on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday. Dinner will be served in the evening.

Day 7 – Wednesday 8 July 2026

Today we take the 45min ferry to the island of Sark. As there are no cars on the island, we will take a short journey on the horse and cart to visit the gardens of **La Seigneurie**, which were created on land bought by Seigneur Le Pelley in 1835. The Walled Garden is aligned with the Church Le Pelley built in 1820 and the central arches framed a view of the tower, a scene now obscured by the new Island Hall. The high walls give protection from the wind and, together with the mild micro-climate, allow many tender and half-hardy plants to thrive. The more unusual specimens are labelled, such as the Australian Bottlebrush and New Zealand Tea Tree. Probably the oldest surviving feature of the original layout is the formal rose garden edged with box hedging. Other features include a Victorian glasshouse on the north wall which shelters some long-established vines; a productive vegetable garden which helps supply the café, and adjacent sensory and wildflower gardens. Malcolm will guided us around the garden and we will also get an opportunity to visit some areas not normally open to visitors.



We will enjoy lunch at Hathaways before making our way to the **Stocks Hotel** to visit their **Permaculture Garden** where we will be greeted by the owner, Helen.

This evening, we will overnight at the Stocks Hotel, where we will enjoy dinner with ingredients produced from their own gardens. Following dinner, we will enjoy a walk to view **Sarks Dark Skies**.

Please be aware that Sark is a walking island. A good degree of mobility is required, getting on and off the ferry. There will be a 3 to 5-minute walk to the hill transport, and a 10-15 minute flat walk from where the carriages drop guests to La Seigneurie.

Day 8 – Thursday 9 July 2026

This morning following breakfast we catch the ferry back to Guernsey, where on arrival we will visit **Castle Corney** for a tour around the **3 historic gardens** and see the noonday gun along with the **Millennium Tapestries** (which is being rehomed here) and were the Island's Millenium project produced by local people and tells the story of 1,000 years of local history in ten embroidered panels, one for each of Guernsey's parishes.



We later continue to the gardens at **Victor Hugo's House** before enjoying some free time in **St Peter Port** for lunch (not included) and a spot of shopping. Guernsey's capital has been a busy entrepôt since Roman times and the Channel Islands' premier port, graced by the wealth of ship builders, privateers and merchant adventurers. Georgian and Regency styles were enriched by an influx of French émigrés, including Victor Hugo, whose influences included Parisian-style urinoirs! Today the town is a captivating blend of styles, framed by a tumble of terraces and tiered gardens and criss-crossed by worn steps and hidden alleys. There is an excellent range of shops, and the Old Quarter is the place to find antiques.



Later we visit the **Guernsey Museum & Art Gallery** which is located at the top of Candie Gardens and near the Victor Hugo Garden that Raymond Evison designed. The museum features many permanent collections including the 'Early People of Guernsey'; 'Folklore of Guernsey'; 'Guernsey Language' and the Rona Cole Art Gallery. We can also visit the current temporary exhibition, 'Guernsey Milk Tales', which allows us to step back in time to see how dairying on the island used to be and how the modern Guernsey Dairy came into being, and why Guernsey's cows' milk is such a renowned product.

We later return to our hotel where dinner is served.



Day 9 – Friday 10 July 2026

This morning following breakfast we will make our way to the **Guernsey Clematis Nursery Ltd** where we will be welcomed by **Raymond J Evison** and introduced to the management team before being guided around the Breeding and Development department. We later enjoy a tour of the Guernsey Clematis Nursery where we see the propagation, production and shipping. There will be at least 1.5million plants in production at that time. Following this we will view the near market trial varieties in the Exhibition are whilst enjoying drinks followed by lunch.

We later travel to the Victorian walled garden at **Saumarez Park**. Work to restore the walled garden is still in progress, but it is already producing well, yielding crops in varieties appropriate to the Victorian era. The garden has also gained several first prizes in the Northern Agricultural & Horticultural Society's annual show held in the park. We will enjoy a guided tour here where we will learn about the history of the de Saumarez family and their influence upon the park and gardens.

Within the park is the National Trust of **Guernsey's Folk and Costume Museum**, where we will enjoy a guided tour. The museum illustrates the history of the people of Guernsey over the last 250 years through their costumes.

We later enjoy a visit the Kitchen Gardens at the **Government House** where we will be shown around by Brett Moore the Head Gardener, following this we return to our hotel where dinner is served.

Day 10 – Saturday 11 July 2026

Today we have a full day in the **Educational Centre** at the Victorian Walled Kitchen Garden – talks and presentation will be given by members of the I.C.I.S. Raymond Evison will also do a presentation on Clematis Past, Present and Future. There will be a Large TV screen which can connect to laptop.

Guest will be able to enjoy lunch at the Café at Saumarez Park (not included).

This evening, we will return to our hotel in time for a farewell dinner and a chance to talk over our time in Kent and the Channel Islands.

Day 11 – Sunday 12 July 2026

This morning after breakfast, we will enjoy visiting more **local gardens** with Malcolm.

On our way back to the airport we will stop by the **Little Chapel**, which was erected during the last century by Brother Deodat, who tried to build his own version of the Notre Dame Grotto in Lourdes. Totally covered in shells and broken pieces of China, it is potentially one of the smallest chapels in the world.

We return to the airport in time for our late afternoon flight back to London Gatwick, where on arrival the group shall disperse.

For those guests flying home from London Heathrow Airport we have detailed some suggested hotels below. (All the hotels listed can be accessed by foot from the terminals – there are of course lots of other options nearby which can be accessed via a short taxi ride or via the Heathrow Hoppa bus).

Crowne Plaza London Heathrow T4 by IHG

Premier Inn London Heathrow Terminal 4

Hilton Garden Inn London Heathrow Terminal 2 & 3

Sofitel London Heathrow Terminal 5

We can of course check availability and provide you with a quote at the time of booking based on your requirements – please contact us for details.



Included in the price:

- 10 nights' bed and breakfast: 5 nights at the Mercure Tunbridge Wells; 4nts at the St Pierre Park Hotel, Guernsey; 1nt at the Stocks Hotel, Sark
- Welcome and Farewell drink
- Nine dinners at hotels (1 evening is free when staying in Tunbridge Wells)
- Return flight from London Gatwick to Guernsey (including 1 piece of hold luggage and small handbag)
- Three lunches (one at Sarah Ravens Garden, one on Sark and one at Guernsey Clematis Nursery)
- Comfortable coaching throughout
- All visits and tours as per itinerary
- Porterage

Not included (per person):

- Single supplement £695 per person
- Drinks with evening meals (unless stipulated in itinerary)
- International flights
- Pre- & post- night's accommodation in London