

HIHS Visit To Cliveden Gardens and House Thursday 14th July

The weather was perfect for this the last coach outing of 2016, a lovely English summer day. Our visit began with a conducted tour of the magnificent and extensive grounds when we were split into three separate groups each allocated their own guide with a horticultural background coupled with extensive historical knowledge of the gardens. Starting from the information centre we headed off, passing the maze, to the magnificent water gardens which were first created by William Astor.



The sun created vivid reflections of the sky, distant trees and poolside planting on the extensive water surfaces and created rainbows in the fountain sprays.



Back tracking we progressed to the Fountain of Love at the head of the main drive and on to the Long garden a blaze with 10,000 Begonia 'Devil's Delight Mix' and 200 Cordyline as dot plants, all to the backdrop a long border in full array with a tapestry of colours and species.



The tour continued to the Blenheim Pavilion with on route a distant view down between the trees back to the Fountain of Love. From the Pavilion one could enjoy distant views down to the River Thames. On through wooded areas with open grassed spaces and a chance to marvel at the granite baboons created in ancient Egypt some 2,400 years past.



Our destination was the rose garden, a recent planting following Jellicoe's initial concept, with over 900 roses, using a colour scheme of reds, oranges and yellows all showing their best in spite of the recent wet spell. The perfume was a joy with bees buzzing flying all around.



We were taken onward to the main house front lawns with its colourful borders fronting the side walls and the impressive line of Roman sarcophagus to the North elevation. A door in the West wall gained access to the pool of Profumo renown. To the South the Main House with alongside the ornate water tower clock and on the East corner a dove cote.



On to our ultimate destination by walking around the side of the house to the rear terrace with its panoramic views across the Parterre garden on to the Buckinghamshire landscape beyond. We thanked Hugh our guide and went separate ways, some of the group going down the steps to experience the Sounding Chamber others were escorted by Hugh direct to the Orangery for lunch.



After lunch there was time to further explore, visiting the memorial gardens, the chapel and walking down to the River Thames before our short tour of the house begun. Again we were divided into three groups setting off at 10 minute intervals. The current house is the third construction as both of the previous buildings were destroyed by fire. It is said the giant water tower was insurance against it occurring a third time. During our tour a control panel for a large and comprehensive automatic electronic fire alarm system was spotted so everything has been done to stop history repeating itself. Much renovation to the house and terrace is underway to maintain for future generations.



For a short time we were able to see how the wealthy guests enjoy the luxury of this opulent hotel. The menu for the private dinner in the reception room was something special envied by all. Some of the rooms looked familiar having been used in a number of Hollywood movies.

With the coach departing at 4.45 there was just time for a light refreshment, or visit to the shop before the ride through the rush hour traffic home to Hayling Island. Chairman Bill, on all our behalf, gave thanks to Eve for organising another season of interesting and enjoyable outings and to our driver for safely delivering us back home.