

Friends of Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum (FLAG)

Cultural Dorset – From Coast to Countryside

25 – 28 April 2022



INTRODUCTION

With over half the county designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, no one can deny that Dorset is truly something special. With its rolling dales, protected heathlands and dramatic Jurassic coastline, it's no wonder filmmakers, poets and authors have long been drawn to beautiful Dorset. A few of the literary giants include Thomas Hardy, Jane Austen and Enid Blyton with acclaimed artists such as Fra Newbery, Paul Nash, Turner and Charles Rennie Mackintosh all drawing inspiration from Dorset.

This three-night, four day bespoke tour is based in Blandford, a 25-minute drive from the County Town of Dorchester and the unique development of Poundbury. This location is within easy reach of the county's most alluring attractions including grand historic houses and gardens, sweeping golden beaches, cobblestone market towns and historic manor houses.

We will explore the stunning scenery of The Isle of Purbeck, not a true island but a peninsula, and take a drive through the beautiful village of Corfe Castle, through the heath land of Studland and cross on a chain Ferry to Sandbanks with spectacular vistas over Brownsea Island and Poole Harbour.

ACCOMMODATION:

THE CROWN HOTEL, BLANDFORD

With 27 well-appointed bedrooms, some with Georgian theming, a beautiful outside patio, a separate dining room and further pantry and common room seating areas, the inn is very much the focal point of the small market town of Blandford, situated just a 15-minute drive from the county town of Dorchester, Dorset.



With views of the River Stour and water meadows, the hotel is nestled in Thomas Hardy's "Blackmore Vale". It is a sister hotel to The Duchess of Poundbury Inn at Poundbury, both are owned by the Hall and Woodhouse Brewing Company. All the ensuite bedrooms have Sealy mattresses and are equipped with smart TV, digital radio and free Wi-Fi, together with lovely teas and coffees.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Sherborne Castle is situated just outside the historic Ham-Stone town of **Sherborne**. The castle was built by Sir Walter Raleigh back in 1594 and later purchased by Sir John Digby in 1617, with four distinctive wings added to the house thereafter. The Digby family still reside at Sherborne Castle. The castle interior has been decorated with rooms reflecting the Tudor, Jacobean, Georgian and Victorian periods. Our private guided tour will take us through the extensive staterooms and beautiful collections of art, antiques and furniture. The magnificent English Landscape Gardens were one of Capability Brown's first commissions.

Kingston Lacy, a 17th century mansion, set in attractive formal gardens, contains an outstanding collection of paintings, furniture, works of art. The Spanish Room has a gilded leather and gilded ceiling brought from the Contarini Palace in Venice. There are paintings by Rubens, Van Dyck, Titian and Brueghel and the largest private collection of ancient Egyptian artefacts in the UK.

Russell Cotes Gallery and Museum. Built by Merton Russell-Cotes as an extravagant birthday gift for his wife, Annie, it celebrates the couple's passion for art and travel, world cultures and natural history. Situated on Bournemouth's stunning cliff-top overlooking the sea, this exotic seaside villa has been sealed in time creating a unique atmosphere in a most dramatic setting.

Dorset County Museum has reopened in the summer of 2021 after a 2 year, multi-million-pound redevelopment. It has an art collection acquired over 150 years. Dorset has long been a source of artistic inspiration and has attracted visiting artists such as John Constable, Paul Nash and Frederick Whitehead. Others such as Sir James Thornhill, Thomas Beach, Alfred Stevens, Henry Moule, Reynolds Stone and Elizabeth Frink were either born in the county or came to live here; all are represented in the collection.

Salisbury Cathedral, Cathedral Close and Mompesson House (NT). En route to Dorset we stop in Salisbury. Salisbury Cathedral is one of Britain's most iconic heritage and tourist attractions with Britain's tallest church spire (123m). Within the beautiful Cathedral Close is **Mompesson House**, a homely and welcoming 18th-century Queen Anne townhouse. Notable features include magnificent plasterwork, fine period furniture and a graceful oak staircase. The Turnbull collection of 18th-century drinking glasses is of national importance.

Poundbury - The architecture of Poundbury is unashamedly traditional; it is not a village but an urban extension to the county town of Dorchester, built on Duchy of Cornwall land according to architectural principles advocated by The Prince of Wales. Poundbury is over one-half built and when completed in 2025, it is planned to grow to 2,200 homes, increasing Dorchester's population by about one quarter. Over 170 individual businesses operate in Poundbury, scattered around amidst the housing - both private and social housing with a mixed array of architectural styles. There are many individual shops and Dorchester's famous chocolate factory produces quality chocolate for the worldwide market and Royal Residences gift shops from its base in Poundbury.

Breamore House and Countryside Museum - A Tudor manor house on the edge of the New Forest, Breamore was built in 1583 for the Dodington family. It was later the home of Edward Hulse, doctor to Queen Anne, George I, and George II. The house boasts a collection of 17th and 18th-century portraits, period furniture, porcelain, and fine art. In the grounds is the Mizmaze, a turf maze of medieval origin.

Please see over for further tour details including costs and booking information