

Brookland Travel Heritage and Garden Tour Collection

Houses and Gardens of Northumbria

5/9 July 2010 – from the De Vere Slaley Hall Hotel, near Hexham ****

Northumbria is a county of rural beauty, market towns and some outstanding country houses and gardens. Here you can discover how the successful and wealthy created grand designs incorporating their own ideas and visit some of their architectural wonders from grand castles such as **Alnwick Castle** to small manor houses in beautiful and tranquil surroundings. Where there are great houses there are usually spectacular and historic gardens and these include **outstanding private gardens** and the inspirational “modern” garden created at Alnwick – **The Alnwick Garden**. During this five day break, we also tour the slightly eccentric interiors of **Cragside**, a Victorian house with one of the finest rock gardens in Europe, and visit **Wallington House and Gardens, Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens, Howick Estate and Gardens**, the **Northumbria National Park** and **Craster**. Craster, a small fishing village on the Northumberland coast, is famous for its herring curing business and Craster Kippers are well known in England.

Hotel accommodation is based close to Hexham in the comfortable **De Vere Slaley Hall Hotel** and there is an option to transfer to the hotel free of charge to and from Newcastle Central Station on Day 1 and Day 5 of this tour. There will be plenty of historical and horticultural information on offer from a professional tour leader and many of the gardens we visit will have rare and unusual plants for sale.

The tour commences with a welcome drink and dinner on **Monday** evening and after breakfast on **Tuesday** we travel by executive coach to **Alnwick Castle** and **The Alnwick Castle and Garden** where there is much to see and do. Alnwick Castle is the family home of the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland and on arrival, there will be guided tour of the staterooms. This majestic and imposing medieval castle offers impressive architecture, fine art treasures and a beautiful setting. It has been a popular film location, for everything from Harry Potter to Elizabeth to Becket to Blackadder.

The Alnwick Garden was the inspiration of the Duchess and is still an ongoing project for new garden developments. The garden has a Grand Cascade of amazing water displays as its centrepiece, a rose garden with pergola covered paths and a fine show of shrub and climbing roses, honeysuckle and clematis. An Ornamental Garden featuring the very best of European design and planting, a Poison Garden and a Serpent Garden provide further



interest. More recent developments are the Bamboo Labyrinth and one of the world’s largest tree houses, with rope bridges, walkways and a restaurant. The garden can be explored at leisure and Alnwick town is just a short stroll away. There is a good variety of shops and cafes including Barter Books, one of the country’s largest second hand book shops. There is a restaurant and other refreshment areas within the grounds of the garden and castle. At the end of the day we return to Hexham for a leisurely evening and dinner.