

Press Release



15 September 2008

ESCORTED GARDEN TOUR AT ARUNDEL CASTLE

Experienced and amateur gardeners alike can enjoy guided tours of the beautiful and extensive gardens at lovely Arundel Castle. Led by either Head Gardener Gerry Kelsey or Deputy Head Gardener Isobel McKinley, the last tour will be held on Friday 26 September 2008 and will include the brand new Earl's Garden which was opened by HRH The Prince of Wales in May this year.

The Castle gardens were largely developed in the 1850s although there is evidence of a medieval herb garden in what is now the rose garden. The gardens were once much larger than they are now as they had to produce hardy and tender crops as well as a variety of exotic fruits in glasshouses. In the 1990s, when the present Duke and Duchess of Norfolk moved in and Gerry Kelsey joined as Head Gardener, a new plan was formulated for the revival of the gardens.

The Victorian theme has been preserved in much of the garden with the restoration of the peach and vine houses and the re-establishment of the enormous walled vegetable gardens. New elements have been added including the reversion of much of the lawns to natural meadow, and a contemporary rose garden. There is colour throughout the seasons, from early Spring to the end of October, when the Castle and gardens close. The gardens are also run on strict organic lines with natural predatory control, homemade compost from recycled materials and companion planting.

The Earl's Garden is a highlight of the tour. Built on a former car park which was itself once part of the walled kitchen garden, the Earl's Garden is a new design by well known garden designers Julian and Isobel Bannerman, based on an original Jacobean Inigo Jones design for the 14th Earl's London home, Arundel House. The 14th Earl of Arundel was also known as the Collector Earl and is regarded as instrumental in introducing Renaissance style as well as collecting much of the fine furniture, antiques and art on show in the Castle today.

Based on a formal Jacobean garden, the Earl's Garden contains a grand centrepiece of a rockwork 'mountain' planted with palms and rare ferns to represent another world, supporting a green oak version of 'Oberon's Palace', a fantastic spectacle designed by Inigo Jones for Prince Henry's Masque on New Year's Day 1611, flanked by two green oak obelisks. This contains a shell-lined interior with a stalagmite fountain and gilded coronet 'dancing' unsupported on top of the jet. The garden is divided into formal courts with a centre canal pond and tufa-lined cascade. The planting is restrained: no flowers but catalpas, scented magnolia grandiflora and shrubs.

Visitors on the tours will also be shown other features of the gardens such as tropical fruits grown under cover, tender exotic Mediterranean species in the flower garden, and central long borders in cool colours crossed by hot-coloured borders containing tender plants such as cannas, lobelias and agapanthus that survive winter thanks to Arundel's mild climate, the white-themed Fitzalan Chapel gardens and the newer contemporary-styled rose garden as well as several ancient and unusual trees.

The garden tours, which are by advance booking only, are very popular and numbers are restricted so early booking is advisable. Tickets cost £15, including general admission to Fitzalan Chapel, gardens, grounds, Castle Keep, restaurant and gift shop and a complimentary tea or coffee and biscuits. For £20, general admission to the castle rooms is also included.

For further information, contact Arundel Castle on **01903 882173**,
www.arundelcastle.org or email: info@arundelcastle.org.

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Notes to editors

1. Arundel Castle has been the home of the Dukes of Norfolk for 900 years; it is the longest inhabited country house in England and furniture, armour, art and antiquities from many periods in its history can be seen. The Castle's formal gardens create an attractive setting.
2. Head Gardener Gerry Kelsey NCH NP grew up in the Royal Parks in London and worked at Painshill Park, Surrey and RHS Rosemoor, North Devon, before coming to Arundel in 1994. He won the Twentieth Century Design Award in 1999 for the Castle and the Sussex Heritage Trust Award in 2000 for the design of the vegetable and flower gardens.
3. Deputy Head Gardener Isobel McKinley trained with the National Trust as Powis Castle then worked at Waddesdon Estate before coming to Arundel in 2002. Isobel is responsible for the potager which provides fresh produce for the castle.
4. Arundel Castle and grounds are open (including Saturdays) from 21 March to 2 November 2008. Opening times are: Tuesday to Sunday inclusive & Bank Holiday Mondays, except the month of August where the castle will be open on all Mondays. (Mondays are 4, 11, 18 & 25) 10am-5pm (Castle rooms open from 12 noon). Last entry is 4pm.
5. Normal admission rates are: £13 for adults, £10.50 for seniors, £7.50 for children and the great value £34 family ticket (2 adults + up to 3 children) for Castle, Fitzalan chapel, gardens, grounds, Castle shop and restaurant. Upgrade tickets available at the ticket office to see an extra seven bedrooms in the Castle for only £2 per adult. Accompanied children free
6. Garden tours are held on Friday 27 June, Friday 25 July and Friday 26 September.