



## Yorkshire Houses & Gardens

Parks and gardens, architecture and decoration, art and furniture

**11–17 May 2026 (MM 953)**

7 days • £3,460

Lecturer: Christopher Garibaldi

The finest country houses and gardens in Yorkshire, the county with the greatest number and widest range of these in England.

All aspects of the country house are studied – architecture, furniture, decoration, works of art; gardens and parks; historical context and daily life; conservation and custodianship.

Many of the houses have excellent gardens and are set in classic landscaped parks.

Stay in one hotel throughout.

Special arrangements and out-of-hours visits.

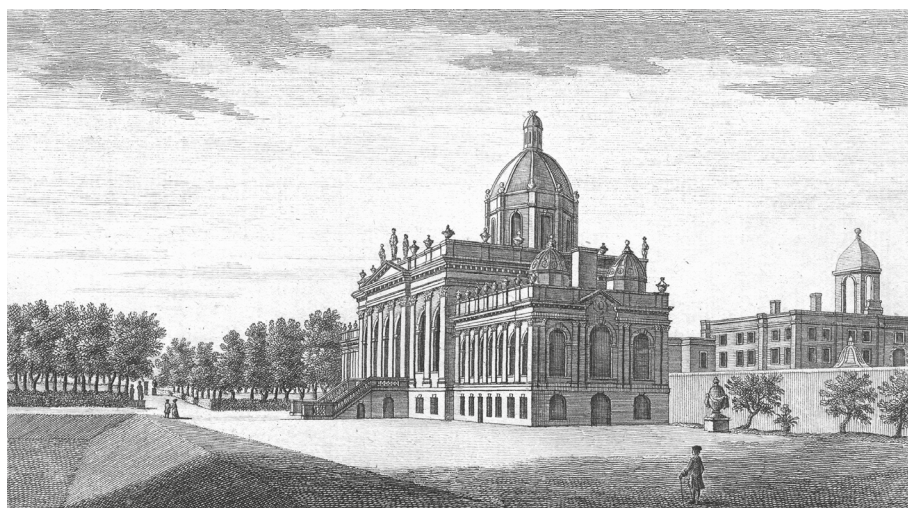
This tour can be combined with the Martin Randall Travel music festival, *Early Music in Yorkshire*, 6–11 May 2026.

Yorkshire is England's largest county, and one of its most beautiful, renowned for spectacular countryside. It is also blessed with a range of outstanding country houses, of all periods and sizes, though the 18th century – and large scale – predominate.

The story begins in the Middle Ages at Markenfield Hall, a remarkable survival of a walled and moated manor house which is still part of a working farm. The splendours of the English Renaissance can be found at Temple Newsam and Burton Agnes; Castle Howard is a great Baroque edifice, equal in magnificence to some of the European palaces of the time.

Britain's tentative flirtation with Baroque was succeeded by devotion to Palladianism, of which Wentworth Woodhouse is the grandest manifestation. Under the threat of collapse or demolition for many decades and visited by very few, in 2017 its future was secured through a trust set up by SAVE. Harewood House is only marginally less magnificent – 'a St Petersburg palace on a Yorkshire ridge'.

Robert Adam makes several appearances – at Harewood, Nostell Priory and Newby Hall. So does Thomas Chippendale, a London-based Yorkshireman, who provided much of the furniture at Nostell, Harewood and Newby. Many houses have such museum-quality treasures, among them the Gobelins tapestries at Newby Hall, Burne-Jones glass at Castle Howard, Old Masters at Harewood (Bellini, Titian, El Greco, Turner, Gainsborough) and modern French paintings at Burton Agnes



Castle Howard, engraving c. 1780.

(Pissarro, Cézanne, Gauguin, Matisse).

Most of the houses are privately owned, some still in the hands of the families who built them. As on most of our tours, we have made arrangements for out-of-hours visits to some of the properties.

The hotel is the former headquarters of North Eastern Railway in York, which has one of the finest concentrations of historic buildings in England.

### Itinerary

**Day 1: Markenfield Hall.** The coach leaves the hotel at 2.00pm. The best surviving medieval moated manor house in England, with parts dating to c. 1290 and crenellations licensed in 1310, Markenfield Hall has charm beyond words. It is a textbook case of how a family-owned historic property can flourish, given energy, imagination and love.

**Day 2: Castle Howard, Scampston.** One of the great houses of Europe, Castle Howard was begun in 1699 to designs by the leading architect of the English Baroque, Sir John Vanbrugh. Fine collections of artworks and furniture, grand gardens, park, famous garden temple and mausoleum. A contrast in classicism is found at Scampston Hall with the disciplined restraint of a Regency refurbishment, housing a wealth of art treasures. Also a 'Capability' Brown parkland and a contemporary garden by Piet Oudolf.

**Day 3: Sledmere, Burton Agnes.** Designed and built in the mid- to late-18th century, mostly by Sir Christopher Sykes, Sledmere House remains in the same family today. It was damaged by fire in 1911 but immaculately restored. Burton Agnes Hall was described by Simon Jenkins as 'the perfect English house'. The creation of Robert Smythson, the leading late-Elizabethan architect, the great hall and long gallery are outstanding features – as is the collection of 19th- & 20th-century French paintings.

**Day 4: Brodsworth, Nostell.** A Victorian time capsule, Brodsworth is a magnificent Italianate mansion of the 1860s, 'conserved as found' by English Heritage when they took it over thirty years ago. The gardens have been restored to splendour. Nostell Priory is an architectural treasure by James Paine, leader among second-generation Palladian house architects; Robert Adam modified some interiors. A celebrated feature is the unequalled collection of furniture made for the house by Thomas Chippendale, who was born nearby.

**Day 5: Wentworth Woodhouse, Fairfax.** Wentworth Woodhouse is the largest private house in England and among the most magnificent. Despite a complex building history, it is essentially 18th-century Palladian. Afflicted by existential threats for 70 years, its future and access to the public were secured only in 2017. Some free time in York. Fairfax House in York was built in 1745 and is perhaps the best preserved and furnished Georgian town house in Britain.

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continued

**Day 6: Temple Newsam, Harewood.** A fine Jacobean mansion incorporating some of its Tudor predecessor, Temple Newsam has restored interiors and outstanding collections of paintings, furniture and decorative arts – and another ‘Capability’ Brown landscape. Harewood is one of the most beautiful of English country houses, created by Yorkshire architect John Carr (1772) and Robert Adam and aggrandised by Sir Charles Barry (1843). There are excellent pictures, Italian Renaissance to modern, furniture by Chippendale and a park – yet another – by ‘Capability’ Brown.

**Day 7: Newby Hall.** Designed by Wren, beautifully augmented by Adam, filled with art over many generations and with 25 acres of brilliantly designed and managed gardens, Newby Hall provides the quintessential country house experience of the highest order. Return to York railway station by 3.00pm; the coach continues to the hotel.

## Lecturer

**Christopher Garibaldi.** An independent researcher and academic. From 2010 to 2019 he was Director of Palace House, Newmarket (the National Horseracing Museum). He was previously Co-Director of the Attingham Summer School for the Study of Historic Houses and Collections. Earlier in his career he was Assistant Keeper of Art (Decorative Art) at Norwich Castle Museum. In the 1990s, he worked for the Royal Collection cataloguing the silver in at Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle and other royal residences. He recently completed an MPhil in the History of Art and Architecture at St John’s College, Cambridge where he is currently studying for his PhD on aspects of the history of royal patronage.

## Practicalities

**Price, per person. Two sharing:** £3,460.  
**Single occupancy:** £4,150.

**Included:** hotel accommodation; private coach throughout; breakfasts and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; admission to houses, gardens and sites; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Accommodation. The Grand, York** ([grandhotelyork.co.uk](http://grandhotelyork.co.uk)): the former headquarters of North Eastern Railway, the hotel retains many original features. It is a few minutes on foot from the railway station and the Minster. Service is plentiful and helpful. There is an indoor swimming pool. **Single rooms are doubles for sole use.**

**How strenuous?** Unavoidably there is quite a lot of walking on this tour and it would not be suitable for anyone with difficulties with everyday walking and stair-climbing. Coaches can rarely park near the houses, many of the parks and gardens are extensive and most of the houses visited don’t have lifts. Average distance by coach per day: c. 60 miles.

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.

**Combine this tour with:** *Early Music in Yorkshire*, 6–11 May 2026; *Arts & Crafts in the Cotswolds*, 18–23 May 2026.