



Walking to Derbyshire Houses

Magnificent countryside and great country houses

25–30 June 2026 (MM 999)

6 days

Lecturer: Christopher Garibaldi

Daily walks over hills, dales and landscaped parks followed by visits to country houses.

A mixture of grand stately homes and smaller mansions: Kedleston, Haddon, Tissington, Chatsworth, and Hardwick.

Stay throughout in a comfortable hotel on the Chatsworth Estate.

One of the joys of a walk in the English countryside is glimpsing a great house in the distance. At first just dimly perceived chimneys and roofs, the rest screened by trees, but as the walk continues more is revealed, and beauty beckons. But after further progress along the path, foliage and land mass reassert themselves and the mansion passes from sight.

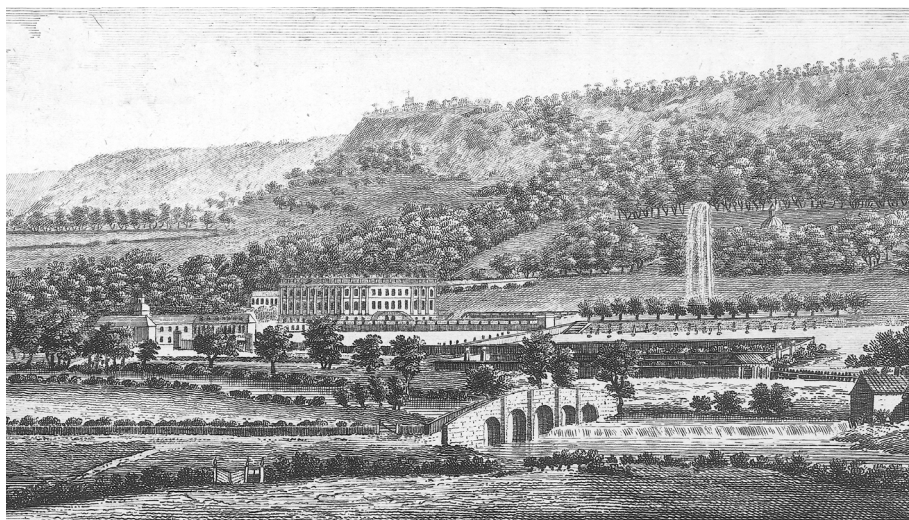
Unless the house is the goal of the walk. Then it continues to grow in size, in detail, in magnificence, until one is examining it from the front lawn. Maybe next one mounts the steps and passes over the threshold; or peels away for refreshments or lunch – on this tour the more frequent course, given that arrival follows a country walk of an hour or two, or three.

This tour includes some of the greatest houses in the country, outstanding representatives of their period, laden with treasures – Haddon, Hardwick, Chatsworth, and Kedleston. Tissington also features, for contrast but also for its intrinsic delight.

Famously, the Peak District offers wonderful walking country, and all but one of our walks are within the boundaries of this, the oldest National Park in Britain. Most consists of rumpled hills and their covering of little green fields, dry stone walls, deciduous trees and a dense population of cattle and sheep. There are only occasional hints of moorland.

Itinerary

Day 1: Derby, Kedleston Hall, Baslow. Leave Derby Station at 12.30pm for the 20-minute drive to Kedleston. Starting at the Doric gateway to the estate, there is an easy stroll (c. 1½ miles, 40 minutes) through meadows, woodland and the 'Capability' Brown park to one of the supreme monuments of Classical architecture and decoration in England. Inside and out Kedleston Hall has hardly changed



View of Chatsworth House, engraving.

since the 1760s. There is a further easy, optional walk of 1 hour through the grounds. Continue to Baslow where all five nights are spent.

Day 2: Bakewell, Haddon Hall. Drive to the lovely historic town of Bakewell. A moderate walk out into fields and gradually up through farmland leads to the village of Over Haddon (c. 2 miles, 1 hour.) After refreshments, descend through fields, gently at first, with views of the hillsides beyond the Wye and Lathkill Valleys, with tantalising glimpses of Haddon Hall in the valley (c. 2 miles, 1 hour 15 minutes). Late medieval and Tudor, and with exquisite terraced gardens, Haddon Hall is for some the most arrestingly beautiful and atmospheric house in England. Return to Baslow by coach.

Day 3: Tissington. An easy walk along an enchanting rural route to Tissington from the village of Parwich (2½ miles, 1 hour 30 minutes). Tissington is an extraordinarily pretty village, and the largely Jacobean Hall is a delight; Georgian interiors, family documents and terraced gardens. After lunch, there is an easy, guided walk through the estate (c. 2 miles, 1 hour 30 minutes). The landscape is enchanting, quintessential Derbyshire, the hills gentle, trees plentiful, fields bounded by hedges or stone walls.

Day 4: Eyam. A moderate circular walk from the village of Eyam (3½ miles, c. 2 hours), made famous in 1665 for isolating during the plague. Pass the boundary stone where neighbours left food - holes in the top of the stone contained vinegar to disinfect the money left for

payment. Some free time in Eyam. Grade-I-listed Renishaw Hall has been home to the Sitwell family for nearly 400 years and is still a lived-in family home.

Day 5: Chatsworth House. An easy walk for half an hour from the hotel along the valley to Chatsworth House. Dating largely from around 1700 and the 1840s, Chatsworth is not only one of the grandest country houses in Britain but also an extraordinary treasure-house of art and furnishings, brilliantly presented as refurbishment continues. A tour in the morning is followed by about three hours of free time, to revisit the house and to explore the gardens. Leave for a moderate afternoon ascent (2 miles, 1 hour 15 minutes) to an inhabited Elizabethan tower before descending back to the hotel.

Day 6: Hardwick Hall, Derby. The final, easy walk (45 minutes) is another which begins at the edge of an estate and winds through varied terrain to reach the house, which sits atop a high scarp. Features include two magnificent avenues and a woodland walk laid out by Lady Spencer, mother of Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire. Built in the 1590s by the richest woman in England, Hardwick Hall ranks among the greatest Elizabethan architecture and most memorable interiors in England. Visit Derby Cathedral where Bess of Hardwick is buried. The tour ends at Derby station by 4.45pm.

Some visits on the tour are dependent on the kindness of individuals and organisations, some

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of whom are reluctant to make arrangements far in advance, so the order of visits outlined above may change and there may be substitutions for some places mentioned.

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 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

Included: hotel accommodation; private coach throughout; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners with wine, water, coffee; admission to houses and gardens; all tips; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

Accommodation. The Cavendish Hotel, Baslow (www.cavendishbaslow.co.uk): located on the Chatsworth Estate, it has been an inn for centuries. All bedrooms have good views and elegant décor with original artwork. (4-stars.) *Single rooms are doubles for sole use.*

How strenuous? This is a walking tour, graded easy. There are 9 walks of which 5 are easy (1 is optional) and around an hour in length, 2 are moderate and 1 is challenging. A feature of the Peak District are the squeeze stiles – gaps in drystone walls too narrow for livestock. Some step stiles require walkers to raise the foot as high as their knee. It is essential for participants to have appropriate walking footwear, be in good physical condition and to be used to country walking with uphill and downhill content. Average distance by coach per day: 47 miles.

Group size: between 10 and 22 participants.

This is a walking tour. Our walking tours require a different scale of fitness and agility to our other tours. You should be used to country walking and have a good level of fitness and balance. There are ascents and descents, climbs over stiles and terrain which can be uneven, loose, slippery or muddy. Appropriate footwear and clothing are essential. Only in weather conditions which are so extreme as to be dangerous would a walk be cancelled.

Please attend to the walk descriptions for details of the distances covered, lengths of walks and type of terrain.

We also grade both individual walks and tours as a whole using the following system:

Easy. A short and mostly flat walk lasting 1–2 hours, on well maintained footpaths or roads, perhaps with short periods of gentle ascent or descent. An 'easy' tour will consist of mostly 'easy' walks, perhaps with a couple of 'moderate' ones. There might not be a walk every day.

Moderate. A walk of 2–3 hours' duration, with significant elevation gain, or stretches of rocky, gravelly or slippery paths. A moderate tour will consist mostly of moderate walks, perhaps with a couple of easy or challenging ones, too. There is likely to be a walk every day.

Challenging. A walk that is longer than 3 hours, has steeper, longer or more frequent episodes of ascent and descent, or is tricky under foot. Tours graded as 'challenging' will consist mostly or entirely of this level of walk, perhaps with some moderate or easier walks too.

Walking tours