



## **ALNWICK CASTLE**

By kind permission of Their Graces the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland

TUESDAY 11 TO FRIDAY 14 OCTOBER 2016

NICHOLAS FRIEND

Alnwick, high on its bluff above the river Alne, was at the heart of English and Scottish border disputes for nearly a thousand years. Owned first by the Tysons and the De Vescys, the full glory of the castle began with its purchase by the Percys, future Dukes of Northumberland, in the 14c. By 1475 the superlative 8-foot-thick walled Barbican and its gatehouse were built. Fine towers followed, a medieval keep with hall, kitchens and sleeping quarters, a chapel, a brewhouse, bakehouse and slaughterhouse, a storehouse and a chantry house. In the 18c the castle was gothicised by Robert Adam with picturesque turrets and terraced gardens added above the river. As the principal seat of the Dukes of Northumberland in the 19c, Alnwick was brilliantly restored with rich Italianate Rooms, now one of the greatest repositories in the UK of Old Master paintings and world-renowned historic furniture. The present Duchess has spent £12 million on an astounding formal garden of pergolas, topiary, geometrical planting and a cascade designed by Jacques and Peter Wirtz, celebrated garden designers from Belgium. We have arranged special visits to the Old Master paintings collection, the State Rooms and the gardens led by Head Guides and Head Gardeners. If their diaries permit, their Graces will greet us at the Castle. We take coffee in their Graces' Private Dining Room, never opened to the public before, hosted by His Grace's Household Comptroller Andrew Farquarson. To complement our private visit to Alnwick we have also arranged an archaeological-themed visit of Bamburgh Castle, Royal Seat of the Kings of Northumbria, a great fortification sited 150 feet above the sea. Ably guided by Graeme Young, site archaeologist and head of the Bamburgh Research Project Graeme Young we see what he and his team have unearthed including prehistoric and Roman pottery, pre-Norman stone buildings in the Inner Ward of the castle, and an Anglo-Saxon cemetery of enormous complexity and importance.

## **TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER**

- 09.30 Recommended train from Kings Cross
- 1.10 Train arrives Alnmouth. Meet minibus.
- 1.30 Lunch in Bistro 23
- 3.00 Leave for Alnwick for architectural walk.
- 3.30 Introductory architectural walkabout in Alnwick
- 5.00 Leave Alnwick for Doxford Hall Hotel
- 5.30 Arrive Alnwick Doxford Hall Hotel and check in.
- 7.00 Drinks and Lecture 'The History of Alnwick Castle'
- 8.00 Group dinner in hotel

## **WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER**

- 09.15 Walk to Alnwick Castle
- 09.30 Exterior of Alnwick Castle with Head Guide Daniel Watkins
- 10.30 Coffee in the Courtyard Cafe
- 11.00 Alnwick State Rooms with Daniel Watkins
- 12.30 Lunch in the Courtyard Café
- 2.00 Minibus to Bamburgh Castle
- 2.30 Exteriors of Bamburgh Castle with Nicholas Friend
- 3.00 Visit Bamburgh Castle with Graeme Young
- 5.00 Minibus to Hotel
- 5.30 Arrive Hotel
- 7.00 Dinner in Hotel

## **THURSDAY 13 OCTOBER**

- 9.00 'Behind the Ropes' tour by Nicholas Friend of Alnwick art collection
- 11.00 Coffee in Their Graces' Private Dining Room hosted by His Grace's Household Comptroller Andrew Farquharson
- 12.00 Pump Room Tour to see engineering of the garden water features
- 2.30 Tour of the garden with Head Gardener Trevor Jones
- 4.00 Leave Alnwick for Hotel
- 4.30 Arrive Doxford Hall Hotel
- 7.30 Group Dinner in Hotel

## **FRIDAY 14 OCTOBER**

- 09.30 Leave for Kirkharle, Capability Brown's birthplace
- 10.30 Arrive Kirkharle for coffee, church and lake visit and optional lunch
- 1.00 Leave for Newcastle Station
- 2.00 Train leaves for London
- 4.42 Train arrives London Kings Cross



**DOXFORD HALL HOTEL AND SPA**  
DOXFORD HALL, CHATHILL  
NE67 5DN

Originally built in 1818, this beautifully restored country house is set in 10 acres of grounds, 15 minutes' drive north of Alnwick. The award-winning property has been awarded 4 AA red stars and offers state-of-the-art spa facilities, luxuriously furnished bedrooms, and an award-winning restaurant. Featuring a swimming pool, 2 spa baths, a sauna and steam room, Doxford Hall Hotel and Spa also boasts 5 treatment rooms. With satellite TV and a marble bathroom, each bedroom is decorated with rich fabrics and period-style furniture. Rooms are each named after a Northumbrian castle, and many enjoy views of the estate. Overlooking the Doxford Hall estate, the George Runciman Restaurant has been awarded 2 AA Rosettes for its creative menu, made using fresh local produce. Afternoon Teas are also served in the Georgian Room.

COST £1180 members, £1230 non-members, single room supplement £75, deposit £250. This cost includes three nights accommodation at Doxford Hall Hotel, all breakfasts, all morning coffee, three lunches with wine, three dinners with wine, all tuition and lectures, entry fees, private tours, all travel during the tour, all gratuities, VAT. This cost excludes travel to and from the tour.