

# Hartley Wintney u3a Holiday

## Nuggets of North Devon

*A holiday at a slower pace than previous years*



**27<sup>th</sup> September**  
**to**  
**1<sup>st</sup> October 2026**

**Led by**  
**Tim and Angela Southern and Pavel and Madeleine Kudlac**  
**Nuggets of North Devon**

**Itinerary**

**Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September**

- 9.00am            Coach leaves Hartley Wintney
- Morning            Montacute House (NT) round the house and garden and  
                         have lunch
- Afternoon        West Somerset Railway ride from Bishops Lydeard to  
                         Minehead
- Go to hotel

**Monday 28<sup>th</sup> September**

- Morning            Rosemoor Gardens (RHS) visit and have lunch
- Afternoon        Dartington Glass visit and factory tour

**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September**

- Morning            Quince Honey Farm, tour and lunch
- Afternoon        Lynmouth museum visit and funicular

**Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> September**

- Morning            Arlington Court (NT), tearoom and garden
- Later                House visit, carriage museum visit and lunch
- Afternoon        Choice of own time in Ilfracombe or scenic tour of Exmoor

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> October**

- Morning            Wells and lunch
- Afternoon        Guided tour of the Cathedral
- Return Hartley Wintney

## Day 1.

### Montacute House

The house was built in about 1598 and inhabited by the Phelips family until 1911 when it was rented out. Put up for sale in 1929, it was acquired by the National Trust in 1931.

Built in English Renaissance style, this Grade I listed building is one of the few houses to have remained virtually unchanged since Elizabethan times. The stunning east front, with its large mullioned windows, gives the impression that the whole façade is made of glass. The Tudor west front was removed from nearby Clifton Maybank House and re-erected at Montacute in 1786.



Montacute House is built in an 'E' shape, as was the norm at the time. The ground floor houses the Great Hall and kitchens, with the Great Chamber for entertaining on first floor, along with some bedrooms and other rooms used by the family and their guests.

Unfortunately, the staircases to the upper floors are being renovated and only the ground floor is open for

visitors at present. However, the gardens and grounds at Montacute are a delight. There are two beautiful garden pavilions, an orangery, icehouse, walled gardens and of course, an excellent National Trust tearoom and café, where we will be taking a light lunch.



### West Somerset Railway

20 miles of heritage railway through stunning Somerset countryside and coast.



The railway, a true country branch line of the old Great Western Railway is full of fascination whether you are looking for a nostalgic ride back in time through lovely countryside or to study



the railway and industrial heritage which the line preserves.

The line starts at Bishops Lydeard and finishes at Minehead meandering through the Quantock Hills, an area of outstanding natural beauty. There are ten stations along the line each having something different to offer.

We have booked a ride on a steam train, but, if we have a very dry summer, the line will only be running diesel services because of the danger of fires on the line from the discharge of burning material from the engine. We hope that we can go down the nostalgia of being drawn by the steam trains of our youth!!

## The Carlton Hotel



A completely refurbished and highly recommended private hotel with small, but comfortable bedrooms and excellent public rooms.

Runnacleave Road,  
Ilfracombe,  
EX34 8AR.

Tel.020 3027 6614



## Day 2.

### Rosemoor Gardens

Nestled in a picturesque valley in the heart of North Devon, between Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks, RHS Garden Rosemoor is a breathtaking 65-acre paradise that offers a unique blend of horticultural excellence, biodiversity, and natural beauty. Whether you're a keen gardener, nature lover, or just looking for a peaceful retreat, Rosemoor has something to captivate every visitor.



The garden was first opened to the public in 1967. A small nursery was started in 1979, and both the garden and nursery were noted for rare and unusual plants. By the 1980s, the garden was attracting significant numbers of visitors. In the estate, surrounded by woodlands, there are several discrete areas where choice specimens take full advantage of the warmth and shelter offered by the south-westerly aspect and high ground to the north.



In stunning surroundings, the Garden Restaurant offers a relaxing dining experience, serving delicious lunches including lighter options and freshly baked cakes and scones. We will have lunch here.

## Dartington Glass



Dartington Crystal, is the UK's only remaining factory producing high-quality, hand-crafted lead crystal and glassware. Visitors can watch skilled artisans blow glass, enjoy a visitor centre with a factory shop (first and second quality), and explore the glass-making history.

The factory experience shows the process of turning glass into handcrafted luxury items and the opportunity to watch the skilled craftsmen and women bring our designs to life. The blowing room, also known as "the hot end", is the heart of the factory. White hot molten 24% lead crystal is gathered on a blowing pipe before it is mouth-blown, and hand crafted into shape. Only basic tools are used to produce the correct form and dimensions, plus a large element of physical effort, skill, precision and judgement. The finishing area is where the formation process is completed. The tour informs about the history of Dartington Crystal from its formation to present day. The glass shop is the finishing point of your experience where you can get great savings on crystal and glass.



## Day 3.

### Quince Honey Farm

Quince Honey Farm is a working honey farm based in South Molton, Devon, and offers an opportunity to learn all about bees.



The Honey Factory shows how bees make honey and there are viewing windows into the honey production areas to get a close-up look at how honey is extracted from the hive and then bottled in jar and shows how bees wax candles are rolled, all ready for sale in the shop.





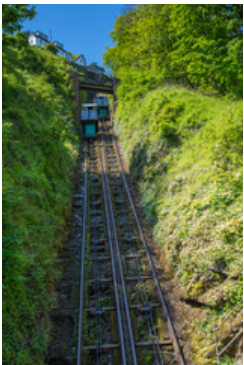
The Bee Shed has interactive hives, giving the chance to see millions of bees at work from behind glass and in complete safety. The interactive hives open at the push of a button, giving an even closer look, and beekeeping demos show how the team open a beehive from behind protective glass and explain the process.



The centrepiece for the attraction is the beautifully landscaped Nectar Gardens that can be explored and enjoyed all year round. The hexagonal plots, each with a different theme, have plants which are bee and pollinator friendly. The Meadow Trail leads to the fruit orchard via the Pollinator Path to the wild-flower meadows where the bees proliferate.

The Nectary Restaurant serves delicious home-made meals, drinks and special honey cream teas. The perfect place to relax while enjoying views out to the gardens and woodland. It is here we will have lunch.

## Lynmouth



Lynmouth is a village on the northern edge of Exmoor. The village straddles the confluence of the West Lyn and East Lyn rivers, in a gorge 700 feet directly below the neighbouring town of Lynton. The villages are connected by the Lynton and Lynmouth Cliff Railway, which works two cable-connected cars by gravity, using water tanks.



On 15 and 16 August 1952, a storm of tropical intensity deposited nine inches of rain within 24 hours on an already waterlogged Exmoor. Debris-laden floodwaters cascaded down the northern escarpment of the moor, converging upon the village of Lynmouth. In the upper West Lyn valley, a dam was formed by fallen trees and other debris, this gave way, sending a huge wave of water and debris down that river. The River Lyn through the town had been culverted and this culvert soon choked with flood debris, and the river flowed through the town. Overnight, over 100 buildings were destroyed or seriously damaged along with 28 of the 31 bridges, and 38 cars were washed out to sea. In total, 34 people died and a further 420 were made homeless.



The museum is an eclectic collection of agricultural, maritime, railway, and natural history, but also has unique pictures of the Lynmouth Flood, and a Victorian dolls' house.

## Day 4.

### Arlington Court and Carriage Museum

Arlington Court is on the edge of Exmoor, a complete family estate held by the Chichester family for over five hundred years. The collection consists of treasures for all tastes, from model ships to shells, collected over several generations. The house itself, built in 1823 and extended in 1860, has an austere facade. However, inside the cosy rooms purvey a homely, family atmosphere. The Carriage Museum in the stables has a vehicle for every occasion from cradle to grave.



The Neo-classical exterior is dominated by a single-storey Greek Doric porch. This austere façade belies its warm and sumptuous interiors, several of which were decorated in the late 1830s by John Crace and bear evidence of the influence of Sir John Soane. This is especially apparent in the anteroom with its shallow dome, segmental arches and mirrored panels. The morning room, ante room and drawing room on the south front have sliding screens that, when closed, form one long tripartite gallery. The ceilings feature delicate neoclassical plasterwork and the morning room retains original wallpaper from the 1830s.

The Old Kitchen Tea-room offers a range of hot and cold drinks, snacks, light meals, cakes and more. We will have a light lunch here.

### Scenic tour of Exmoor



Exmoor is a unique and very special place – a distinctive landscape shaped by generations of people who have farmed and managed the environment for thousands of years. Today it is celebrated and enjoyed for its wonderful variety of heather and grass moors, its ancient woodlands and forests, picturesque villages, dramatic coastline, magnificent herds of red deer and native ponies, and at night the magic of its dark skies.



### Ilfracombe

Ilfracombe is a Victorian seaside resort on the North Devon coast, with an attractive harbour area surrounded by cliffs. There is a variety of coffee and tea shops and the usual gift shops.

The landmark of Hillsborough Hill dominates the harbour and the site of an Iron Age fortified settlement. In the built environment, the architectural-award-winning Landmark Theatre has a distinctive double-conical design. The 13th-century parish church, Holy Trinity, and the St Nicholas's Chapel (a lighthouse) on Lantern Hill, have been joined by Damien Hirst's statue of *Verity* as points of interest.

## Day 5.

### Wells



Wells may, perhaps, be best known for its famous Cathedral – and is a reason why it is a city in the first place. No doubt this is what attracts many tourists – but England's smallest city has much more to offer than this beautiful building. Situated in the Mendips in Somerset, Wells offers time to explore briefly its rich heritage and tradition.

The springs, or wells, which originate in the grounds of the Bishop's Palace gave their name to the lovely city of Wells. The city's mediaeval alleyways are home to ancient, unaltered structures, and the High Street's water supply, which Bishop Bekynton gave to the town in 1451, still gurgles down its sides. The charming Grade II-listed Town Hall, which is also a well-liked location for weddings and other events, is where Wells City Council is located. It is adjacent to the magnificent, moated Bishop's Palace and famous Wells Cathedral.



We will have free time to look at the city and have lunch in one of the many pubs, cafés and tea rooms before having a tour of the Cathedral.



Wells Cathedral has been called "unquestionably one of the most beautiful" and "most poetic" of English cathedrals. The architectural historian John Harvey sees it as Europe's first truly Gothic structure, breaking from the last constraints of the Romanesque style. The west front, which contains 300 sculptures. It is next to the Wells and Mendip Museum, a

recognised member of the Museums, Libraries, and Archives Council and a registered charity. The museum houses the Wells City Archives along with several local history and archaeology artefact exhibits.

### Return to Hartley Wintney

Travelling through Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire. A scenic tour.

