

# The Jewels of Winter

Snowdrops & Winter Gardens of England

February 17-25, 2024



**Price:** \$3,250 per person, double occupancy

**Single Supplement:** \$595.00

**Maximum Group Size:** 15 guests

**Reservation Deadline:** December 15, 2023

**Difficulty Rating:** Easy. Daily walking, but mostly easy. There may be some uneven surfaces or terrain in some gardens.

Winter may seem an unusual time for a garden tour to England, but it is the only time to see one of the country's greatest garden spectacles—the annual flowering of the snowdrops in woodlands, gardens, and estates throughout the countryside.

For gardeners “in the know”, snowdrops are one of the most popular bulbs amongst collectors around the world, but the mania started with the collections in England, Scotland, and Ireland. While diminutive on their own, collections begun a century or more ago now have bulbs numbering in the tens, if not hundreds, of thousands and the displays are some of the most impressive in the gardening world. For one week, we'll explore the best public and private collections of snowdrops from the Cotswolds to Yorkshire. For good measure, we'll include some visits to gardens and nurseries with impressive displays of hellebores, witchhazel, crocus, and many other late winter and early spring flowering plants, as well.

**February 17—Saturday**—Depart the U.S. for London Heathrow.

**February 18—Sunday**—Arrive London Heathrow in the morning. Please plan to arrive on an early flight. **Our driver will pick us up at Heathrow, not later than 10:30 a.m.** We will head straight for the Cotswolds from London with our first stop at **Welford Park**. Welford Park may be known to some as the home of the Great British Bake Off but come late winter, you will see one of the finest snowdrop collections in the UK. The dainty droplets of snowdrops thrive amongst the 5-acre beech wood and enchanting riverbanks of the river Lambourn. For our official Welcome Lunch, we're off to **Barnsley House**. Originally created by revered garden designer Rosemary Verey, the gardens at Barnsley House are a classic example of an English country garden that evolves with the seasons. With knot gardens, statues by Simon Verity, and a working kitchen garden that supplies much of the produce found on the menus at The Potager and the village pub, The Boot, there are four acres of carefully tended grounds to amble through and discover. Finally, we'll head for **Cheltenham** and the **Queens Hotel** for a quiet evening of relaxation. **Breakfast and Lunch included.**

**February 19—Monday**—Today, we're off through the Cotswolds to discover three of the most spectacular collections of snowdrops in England. First, it's **Painswick Rococo Garden**, famed for having one of the largest naturalistic plantings of snowdrops in the country. The hidden valley which forms the Rococo Garden is unforgettably carpeted with white for a few weeks at the start of spring. There are fifteen known varieties of snowdrops in the Garden, including the famous Galanthus 'Atkinsii'. This distinctively tall, handsome flower was first discovered in Painswick by estate worker James Atkins in the 1800s. Next, we're off to **Cerney House** whose gardens, set around a Victorian walled garden, are described by Country Living as "what most people aspire to in their gardens – and few achieve." On a winding path through the woodland, you'll find more than 150 varieties of snowdrops, with tantalizing glimpses of the formal garden below. And finally, we'll head for **Colesbourne Park**, the grand dame of snowdrop collections and probably the most varied of any garden on display, with over three hundred varieties of this spectacular harbinger of spring on show during the short season. Over 10 acres of private gardens and woodland walks with a mix of snowdrops, hellebores, cyclamen and a wide variety of early flowering shrubs will delight you at every turn. **Breakfast included.**



**February 20—Tuesday**—Birmingham, England will be our destination this evening, but we have a day full of beautiful gardens and snowdrops to enjoy along the way. First, we'll visit **Batsford Arboretum and Garden Centre**. Batsford Arboretum is home to a unique collection of some of the world's most beautiful and rare trees, shrubs and bamboos spread across 60 acres. Enjoy impressive displays of spring flowering bulbs – from swathes of snowdrops, aconites, hellebores, daffodils and narcissi, to (depending on the weather and timing of spring) the earliest magnolias, witch hazels, and more. **Ragley Hall** is a stately home located south of Alcester, Warwickshire and is the ancestral home of the Marquis of Hertford. Surrounding the hall are landscaped gardens and parkland totaling 450 acres. In the formal gardens bordering the paths, clumps of *Galanthus nivalis* 'Flore Pleno', the **double-flowering snowdrop** have been planted intermittently between clumps of "named" hybrids, leading to enormous drifts of naturalized varieties in the woods. Then, it's **Packwood House** to finish out our day, where the centerpieces of its winter garden are the amazing 300+ year-old yew topiaries. <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/warwickshire/packwood-house/the-story-of-the-yew-garden-at-packwood> You'll also have time for a late lunch while visiting at Packwood. **Breakfast included.**



**February 21—Wednesday**—West of Birmingham, near Craven Arms, lies **Millichope Park**. Throughout the spring, earliest delights here include winter aconites and a carpet of snowdrops and woodland anemones, followed by daffodils and the native English bluebell. There is an extensive system of lakes and cascades, which attracts both waterfowl and insect life, creating picturesque reflections of the adjacent water gardens and landscape architecture. Even though we can't bring plants back to the United States, we cannot be in the Birmingham area and not visit **Ashwood Nurseries Ltd**. Plants are their passion and Ashwood's award-winning hellebores are regarded as 'simply the best' strains ever produced. But the story doesn't end there...their plant breeders and growers have worked the same magic on Hepatica, Cyclamen, Hydrangea, conifers, snowdrops, and more. We'll also enjoy lunch at their tearoom. On our way back to Birmingham and our hotel, we'll make our final stop of the day the **Birmingham Botanical Gardens & Glasshouses**.

Birmingham Botanical Gardens is the green heart of Birmingham, offering a uniquely bio-diverse natural environment. It is one of the UK's most significant historic Botanic Gardens which has remained remarkably intact since 1829 and their collection now includes more than 7,000 plants ranging from alpines to tropicals and bulbs to bonsai. **Breakfast and Lunch included.**

**February 22—Thursday**—York is our destination today. A fairly long drive from Birmingham, we'll make the most of our day out with three amazing stops! First, it's **Biddulph Grange Garden**, an amazing Victorian garden created by James Bateman for his collection of plants from around the world. A visit takes you on a global journey from Italy to the pyramids of Egypt, a Victorian vision of China and a re-creation of a Himalayan glen. Its strong architectural elements shine through every season, especially in winter and as the garden begins to wake in early spring. From here, we're off to **Dunham Massey Hall**. Nestled between the vibrant city of Manchester and the beginnings of rural Cheshire, Dunham Massey includes a 300-acre deer park, a historic house and buildings, and all-season gardens. Outdoors, accessible paths pass roaming fallow deer and ancient trees in the parkland, while the Winter and Rose Gardens reveal the sights and scents of the seasons. More than 200,000 snowdrops greet visitors during the month of February. And finally, we'll visit the charming **York Gate Garden**, a magical one-acre garden created by the Spencer family between 1951 and 1994. Frederick and Sybil Spencer, along with their son Robin, laid out and nurtured what is now one of the finest small gardens in the country. The design of 'rooms' interlinked through a succession of vistas and executed with meticulous attention to detail owed much to the Arts and Crafts movement, complemented by Sybil's skills as a plantswoman. Tonight, we check into our York hotel for two nights and we'll have dinner at a local restaurant or pub. **Breakfast and Dinner included.**

**February 23—Friday**—Today, we have just one destination, but with two distinctly different gardens—**Castle Howard & the Yorkshire Arboretum**. Although building work began in 1699, the construction of Castle Howard took over 100 years to complete, spanning the lifetimes of three Earls. Whatever the weather, the Castle Howard landscape brings out the color and drama of the season. With 1,000 acres of parkland to explore, Castle Howard is a haven of peace and tranquility with extensive woodland walks, temples, lakes, and fountains. The monumental landscape offers breathtaking views at every turn. Castle Howard's sister property is The Yorkshire Arboretum situated on 128 acres of the former deer park of the castle. It is run as a joint enterprise between Castle Howard Estates and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Originating in 1959, it comprises more than 6,000 trees, including some that are rare or endangered, as well as bulbs and other ephemerals and meadow plants. \*\*\*If the timing and a friend's schedule permits, we will visit a private garden and snowdrop collection near Castle Howard.

**February 24—Saturday**—\*\*\*Please note, there has been a change from the original tour announcement. The group will RETURN TO LONDON BY TRAIN from Leeds after visiting Harlow Carr. Flights will be ROUND TRIP INTO AND OUT OF HEATHROW.\*\*\*



**Goldsborough Hall** will be our first stop today. This 16th-century historic house in North Yorkshire, the former home of Princess Mary, boasts a garden that was designed, in part, by the Princess. There have been snowdrops at Goldsborough Hall for hundreds of years but when the current owners arrived at the Hall in 2005, they were hidden under the fallen trees, nettles & brambles. Having cleared the woodland, they were stunned by the thousands that emerged and they now open the garden in February for everyone to enjoy the display. We will officially end our tour with a visit to the relatively new **RHS Garden Harlow Carr**. Very much part of the Yorkshire countryside, Harlow Carr is a delight in every season. Created on land originally leased from Harrogate Corporation, the garden was established by members of the then newly formed Northern Horticultural Society (NHS) and opened its gates to visitors in 1950 but didn't merge with the RHS until 2001. The beautiful garden visitors see today has evolved significantly from its early beginnings all those decades ago. \*\*\*Our driver will drop us off at the Leeds train station to return to London. Rooms will be booked near Heathrow for our flights home tomorrow.\*\*\*

**February 25—Sunday—Return to the U.S. from LONDON HEATHROW.**



# Troy B. Marden Travel—Terms & Conditions

**RESERVATIONS & PAYMENTS** To guarantee your reservation, deposits, along with single supplements for individual travelers, must be received either by check, credit card, or electronic payment (PayPal or Venmo). Payments must be made in accordance with the payment schedule stated in the itinerary and/or on the website, as well as at the bottom of this form. Credit card and E-payments will be subject to a 3.5% surcharge to cover processing fees.

**\*\*\*DEPOSITS\*\*\*** Beginning January 1, 2021, deposits for tours will no longer be fully refundable. Deposits of \$500-\$1,000.00 per person will be required for all tours and will be specified on individual Booking Forms. 50% of the deposit (\$250.00 - \$500.00 per person) will be non-refundable, but **will be transferable** to another tour should you be forced to cancel your reservation. The remaining 50% (\$500.00 per person) will be refundable up to 120 days prior to travel, per the cancellation and refund policy below. Any cancellations fewer than 120 days from travel will be subject to the fees laid out in the same policy. **Single Supplements must be made along with initial deposits. These will remain fully refundable until 120 days prior to travel.** After that time, the cancellation fees outlined below will apply.

**CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS** Cancellations are subject to the following **per person fees based on the total package price** as offered by Troy B. Marden Travel:

**Cancel 120 days or more** prior to departure—Deposits will be 50% refundable. The remaining 50% will be retained by Troy B. Marden Travel and **may be applied to a future tour**. If more than the deposit has been paid, the full balance, less 50% of the deposit fee, will be refunded.

**Cancel 90-119 days** prior to departure—25% Cancellation fee, per person, applies

**Cancel 60-89 days** prior to departure—50% Cancellation fee, per person, applies

**Cancel fewer than 60 days** prior to departure—No Refunds

**\*\*\*Refunds of domestic flights as part of an itinerary cannot be guaranteed once flights have been booked.**

**Reservations made after any cancellation deadline has passed will still be subject to the cancellation policy and deadlines.** In the event a client is required to cancel, that client's reservations may be transferrable to another client. However, transfer of reservations cannot be guaranteed for every tour and will be addressed on a case by case basis. This cancellation and refund policy refers to the ground package only, as set forth by Troy B. Marden Travel in the trip itinerary. Airfares are the responsibility of the passenger and any cancellations or changes to airfares are subject to the agreement between the passenger and the airline.

**PASSPORT INFORMATION** A valid passport is required for **all** international tours and for some tours to U.S. Territories and is the responsibility of each passenger. **Passports must be valid for at least six (6) months beyond the traveler's RETURN DATE.**

**COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS** Troy B. Marden Travel **and its passengers** will follow **all** rules and guidelines regarding Covid-19 for all countries. There will be no exceptions. This includes proof of vaccination, quarantining, and all other requirements as they are laid out by the U.S. Government or the governments of other countries. These rules and guidelines may vary. **Any person choosing not to be vaccinated assumes any and all responsibility for the consequences thereof including, but not limited to, rejection at borders, return home, accommodation, infection or illness, hospitalization, or death. Troy B. Marden Travel, nor any of its agents, will be held liable for any form of Covid-related postponement, cancellation, expense, medical care, et al.**

**TRIP CANCELLATION AND MEDICAL INSURANCE** Troy B. Marden Travel does not provide trip cancellation or medical insurance of any kind, but strongly urges passengers to secure insurance through their own agents, credit card companies or other providers. **Should the client choose not to secure trip cancellation insurance, it is agreed that Troy B. Marden Travel or its agents will not be held liable for any refund of monies lost, nor the reimbursement of any expenditures, due to unexpected illness, injury, or any other cause of cancellation fewer than 120 days prior to departure.** Further, it is agreed that all clients maintain up-to-date medical insurance for coverage in the event of any health or medical emergencies or needs during a tour, whether in the U.S. or abroad. Should the client choose **not** to maintain up-to-date medical coverage, the client agrees that Troy B. Marden Travel or its agents will not be held liable, financially or otherwise, for any health or medical circumstances that may arise before, during, or after the completion of any tour.

**TOUR PRICES AND PRICE CHANGES** All tour **prices are based on double occupancy** and are in U.S. Dollars. Single supplements cover additional charges for single occupancy rooms as imposed by the hotel, bed and breakfast, or other provider of accommodations. Tour prices are based on a minimum number of passengers, which may vary between tours. Should the number of passengers fall below the minimum, **Troy B. Marden Travel reserves the right to adjust the tour price and impose a**

**surcharge to cover losses.** Tour prices are also based on hotel rates, motor coach rates, and other rates negotiated many months in advance of departure and, for international tours, on an exchange rate which is subject to change based on world financial markets. Should any portion of any tour see a significant change in price for reasons beyond our control—including, but not limited to, hotel rate changes, motor coach rate changes or fuel surcharges, or a significant change in the currency exchange rate between countries—Troy B. Marden Travel reserves the right to adjust the tour price in accordingly.

**TOUR PRICE INCLUSIONS AND EXCLUSIONS** Tour prices include hotel accommodations, ground transportation, entry fees, tips for drivers and guides, and meals as specified in the final itinerary. Tour prices **do not include** airfares unless specifically noted as part of the tour itinerary (i.e. a tour may include a domestic flight within a country or a short flight between countries if those flights are deemed a necessary part of the itinerary), travel insurance, excess baggage fees, items of a personal nature, telephone calls, room service, optional tour extensions, hotel accommodations for additional nights before a tour commences or after a tour ends, spa treatments or other hotel/resort services, meals not listed in the itinerary, alcoholic beverages or other special beverages ordered at group meals, or tips to hotel personnel. At some special group meals, all beverages may be included. The customer will be made aware of these special occasions on a trip by trip basis.

**TOUR CANCELLATION BY TROY B. MARDEN TRAVEL** On the rarest occasions, it may be necessary for Troy B. Marden Travel to cancel a tour. These could include, but not be limited to, war, civil unrest, family illness or death, adverse weather conditions, global pandemic or other health-related crises, or other acts of God that may threaten the comfort and/or well-being of the client. If Troy B. Marden Travel is forced to cancel a tour due to unforeseen circumstances, Troy B. Marden Travel will make reasonable effort to recover monies paid to vendors (hotels, coach companies, site visits, restaurants, etc.) up to the date of cancellation. **Troy B. Marden Travel cannot guarantee the recovery of funds from vendors in these circumstances.** Recovered funds, if any, will be distributed equally between travelers, less the \$500 non-refundable deposits laid out in the **Reservations & Payments** and the **Cancellations and Refunds** sections of this agreement. The non-refundable portion of the deposits **will remain transferable** to a future tour.

**RESPONSIBILITY** Tour itineraries are planned well in advance. Troy B. Marden Travel reserves the right to make alterations to any itinerary should local conditions dictate. When weather or unforeseen conditions of any kind which are beyond our control affect our routes or itinerary, Troy B. Marden Travel and its representatives reserve the right to provide a suitable alternative. In exceptional circumstances outside the control of Troy B. Marden Travel or any of its representatives, agents or suppliers, including, but not limited to the threat of war, political unrest, riots, civil disturbances, terrorist threat or action, disease outbreak or other health concerns, legal or illegal labor disputes, adverse weather conditions or an Act of God, Troy B. Marden Travel, its representatives, suppliers, or agents cannot be held responsible for such limitations or withdrawal of facilities. The use by Troy B. Marden Travel of transport and accommodations in connection with any tour is subject to the conditions of the owners/operators of such transport or accommodations for whom Troy B. Marden Travel acts as an agent. Troy B. Marden Travel does not, under most circumstances, book air travel unless the itinerary requires shuttling of passengers between local destinations by air. Unless specifically stated in the itinerary, the client is responsible for their own domestic and/or international airfare and for meeting the group at the destination at the given time.

Troy B. Marden Travel will not be responsible for damages or inconvenience caused by late arrivals, departures or changes of schedule beyond their control. Troy B. Marden Travel does not hold any responsibility for the conduct of any of its members, hotel, motorcoach, cruiseline, train, airline, or other personnel that are not their own. Troy B. Marden Travel reserves the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of its tour/cruise at its discretion. Troy B. Marden Travel or its Tour Director retain the right to require any participant to withdraw from a tour/cruise at any time, if determined to be in the best interests of health, safety, and general welfare of the tour/cruise group or of the individual participant. Payment of the deposit constitutes the acceptance of these terms and conditions. Itinerary and hotels are subject to change based on local conditions and availability.

**Please print the following Reservation Form (2 pages), fill out, sign, and return to the address listed at the bottom of the form. Thank you!**

Troy B. Marden Travel  
Booking Form for  
**The Jewels of Winter**

Snowdrops and Winter Gardens of England  
February 17-25, 2024

**Price: \$3,250.00 per person, ground only, based on double occupancy**  
**Single Supplement: \$595.00 due with the deposit at the time of booking**

\*Please note that the price does NOT include roundtrip airfare from the U.S. Travelers will be required to purchase their own airfares from their departure city.

**TRAVELER # 1**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Room Type (Please Circle One):**

**Single**—A private room for one traveler (Single Supplement applies)

**Double**—A room with one bed for two people

**Twin**—A room with two beds for two people

**TRAVELER # 2 (If Double or Twin Occupancy, please list the second traveler below. Include address, telephone and email if different from above.)**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Payment Schedule:**

**Deposit:** \$1,000.00 per person at time of booking to secure your space.

**Final Payment:** \$2,250.00 per person due no later than **December 15, 2023**

**Single Supplement:** \$595.00 due with the deposit at the time of booking.

\_\_\_\_ Please **“X” HERE IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF NARGS** (the North American Rock Garden Society)

I have read, understand, and accept the Terms & Conditions provided by Troy B. Marden Travel.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Email: [tmgardens@gmail.com](mailto:tmgardens@gmail.com)

Phone: (615) 974-5566

Mailing Address: Troy Marden  
7012 City Center Way #275  
Fairview, TN 37062

**Checks payable to: Troy Marden**

\*Credit cards can be accepted. There is a 3.5% surcharge for all credit card payments.  
**Electronic payments by Venmo or Zelle are also accepted and are free of charge.** Please contact Troy directly, preferably using the email address provided above, to schedule credit card payments or if you need contact information for Venmo or Zelle.

**Reservations will not be considered complete until deposits and a signed reservation form have been received.**