

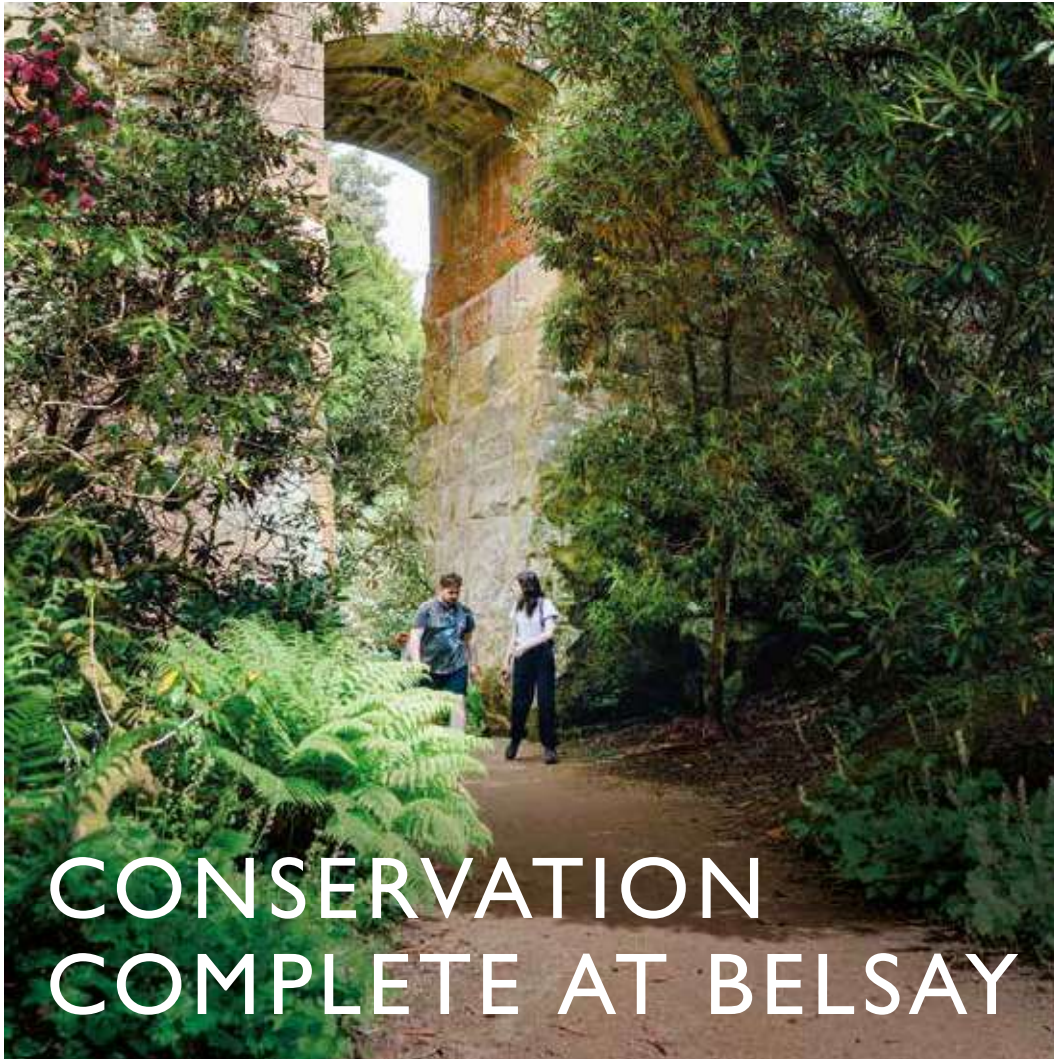


ENGLISH HERITAGE

ATTRACTIONS

In touch with our customers

AUTUMN/WINTER 2023



CONSERVATION COMPLETE AT BELSAY

Our conservation project at Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens is now complete and ready for your groups to visit.

We have now completed our two-year, multimillion pound project to conserve Belsay Hall, Castle and Gardens and rejuvenate its Grade-I listed grounds. The project has

transformed this Northumberland property into one of our star attractions. It is now ready and proudly waiting to provide a warm welcome to groups in 2024.

continued on page 2

INSPIRING DAYS OUT FOR GROUPS

Stay up to date with our most popular properties.

IN THIS ISSUE:



PAGE 4

Explore historic places with special views



PAGE 6

We meet the new curator at Osborne



PAGE 7

80th anniversary of D-Day planning at Dover Castle

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

We're looking forward to welcoming you and your groups to our sites.

Enjoy exploring them, knowing that your visits help keep the story of England alive for future generations.

Step into England's story



VISIT BELSAY IN 2024

With its Grecian architecture, medieval castle and 30-acre gardens, Belsay is a jewel in the north east.

But time had taken its toll and we needed to make vital repairs to secure its future. The hall's unique architectural design had caused leaks and damp issues for two centuries. Much of the planting had been lost in the grounds and woodland had become swamped by overgrown laurels and rhododendrons.

Two years on and we have now replaced Belsay Hall's original roof and repaired the castle's medieval stonework. Acclaimed designer and gardener

Dan Pearson has brought the gardens back to their glorious best, together with Belsay's gardens team, who worked alongside Dan to plant over 80,000 new plants to create a beautiful burst of colour for visitors.

Completed at the end of August, the project was supported with a grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and donations from the Garfield Weston Foundation, The Foyle Foundation and others.

Book a visit for your group in 2024 to enjoy:

- Improved parking, including dedicated coach bays
- A new 'grab and go' café in the former Coach House, providing hot drinks, sandwiches and light lunches. Complementing the menu in the tearoom and doubling catering facilities on site, it has its own renewable energy and rainwater systems
- Improved access – including new pathways around the grounds, accessible toilets at the Coach House and a full Changing Places facility at the site entrance with special equipment for those with additional needs
- New interpretation at the medieval castle which includes a projected animation and soundscape to vividly present 700 years of the castle's stories
- Newly refreshed formal and wild gardens linking the castle and the Greek revival hall, created by Sir Charles Monck in the 19th century, after being inspired by the classical sites of Greece. Belsay's famous quarry garden – effectively a walk-through ravine – was created when Sir Charles Monck quarried the stone to build the hall
- New 'Behind the Closed Door' guided tours take groups into closed areas to illustrate the hall's conservation
- Horticultural Highlights tours – always a perennial favourite – showcase changes made to the gardens



Cover image: The impressive Quarry Garden
Above: Belsay Hall
Top left: External view of the Coach House café
Bottom left: Group garden tour
Below: The formal garden area
Bottom right: The castle with new access ramp



TWO STUNNING TRANSFORMATIONS

At opposite ends of the country, two historically significant sites – each with remarkable archaeological finds to see in new museum spaces – are now wowing visitors thanks to major upgrades which opened earlier this year. The improvements have transformed both places into attractions with great group appeal.



Lindisfarne Priory, Northumbria

Lindisfarne Priory on Holy Island off the Northumbrian coast is renowned as a centre of Christian learning, where the illuminated manuscript known as the Lindisfarne Gospels was created in the early 700s.

Visitors can now see many new artefacts in the museum, including rare Anglo Saxon finds. These pieces give a much richer insight into the lives of the monks who once occupied the isolated religious community, founded in AD 635. There's also a new monument to St Cuthbert, one of our most famous saints, which marks the site of his original burial in March 687. Monks opened his stone coffin 11 years later and found his body had not decayed – a sign they believed, of his purity and saintliness. Lindisfarne quickly became a major pilgrimage destination.

Manager Sophie Howard says: 'Visitors are really appreciating the variety of objects on display, the interactives and the addition of contemporary artwork and illustrations in the museum. The monument to St. Cuthbert has been especially well received – it provides a perfect end point for many pilgrims and travellers and gives focus and context to the church ruins.'

Richborough Roman Fort and Amphitheatre, Kent

Further south close to the east coast in Kent, Richborough Roman Fort and Amphitheatre has seen visitors double since it reopened in April. Having witnessed both the beginning and the end of Roman occupation, the site now boasts a replica Claudian gateway. Visitors can climb it to take in views from above, and get a better understanding of the site's layout, which spans 360 years – as a military supply base, a thriving port town and then a fort.

Manager Serena Partridge comments: 'The project has been a massive success. The Gateway is the stand out new feature – visitors are wowed by the views –

but also by the new audio tour which helps them understand the site better. It's been great to show off the site to new visitors who perhaps did not recognise its importance before and therefore would never have come – and who will spread the word and come again.'

Take a look at this video on our website – the lively accounts of the English Heritage experts will make you want to take your group here in 2024:
www.english-heritage.org.uk/richborough





VIEWS TO REMEMBER

Castles were built at high vantage points with far-reaching views, to make it easier to spot enemy attack. Nowadays, they provide stunning vistas over more peaceful land and sea scapes. Exploring an historic place with a particularly special view is a valuable added extra to a day out. Here's a selection of some of our best-sited attractions for your group to enjoy. After all, who doesn't love a view?

1 Beeston Castle and Woodland Park, Cheshire

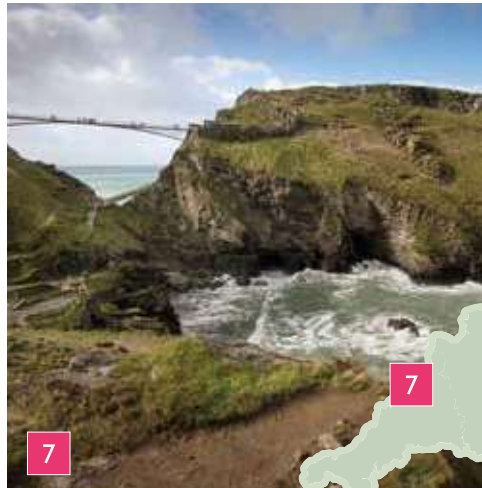
One of England's most dramatically sited medieval castles crowning a rocky crag with breathtaking views. Group members can also see an authentically recreated roundhouse from the time when the location was an important Bronze Age settlement. And there are 40 acres of woodland park to enjoy – with plenty of resting places to pause and enjoy the sights and sounds of wildlife. There's also a café and a museum, telling the site's 4,000-year history from the Neolithic period to the English Civil War.

2 Bolsover Castle, Derbyshire

An ideal stop for a break along the M1, the castle's hilltop position has panoramic views across the Vale of Scarsdale. Group members can stretch their legs and take in the sights from a wall walk around the Little Castle, created as a pleasure palace for horse-mad Cavalier playboy Sir William Cavendish in the 17th century. There are fabulous wall and ceiling paintings inside – some a little risqué! There's also the Riding School, the Terrace Range and a café serving hot and cold food.

3 Carisbrooke Castle, Isle of Wight

Standing proudly at the centre of the island, Carisbrooke Castle provides wonderful views in every direction from the top of its Norman keep and wall walk. It also has plenty to offer every group member – from seeing the room where King Charles I was imprisoned for over a year, to enjoying a stroll in the charming Edwardian-style garden created by designer Chris Beardshaw. There's also a team of donkeys who can be seen raising water from the castle well in daily demonstrations, a museum and a café.



4 Framlingham Castle, Suffolk

From the dizzy 10.5 metre heights of the 800-year-old curtain wall, your group can enjoy views across a tranquil mere and lovely countryside. The castle's more turbulent past witnessed Norman power struggles, a violent 13th-century siege and Tudor succession troubles, before becoming a prison and finally a workhouse for the poor. Visitors today can get to know its history and former inhabitants through an exhibition inside the workhouse. There's also a café serving hot and cold meals and snacks.

5 Kenilworth Castle and Elizabethan Garden, Warwickshire

Your group can climb the tower built by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester as a private residence for Queen Elizabeth I in 1575. It overlooks the recreated Elizabethan Garden and beyond into the surrounding countryside. There's an exhibition on the castle's 900-year history, another detailing Elizabeth's relationship with Dudley and group members can stroll through the garden and indulge in a treat in the tearoom.

6 Kenwood, north London

Kenwood's outstanding views towards our capital city are legendary – and a highlight of any visit. There's also 112 acres of glorious parkland designed by Humphrey Repton to explore. Inside is the world-class exhibition of Old Masters by artists including Rembrandt, Reynolds and Vermeer, plus wonderful Robert Adam interiors. There's also a café offering indoor and outdoor seating. Admission is free, but guided tours are well worth booking for a small charge to make the most of your visit here.

7 Tintagel Castle, Cornwall

With stunning sea views from the clifftops, Tintagel Island and the dramatic contemporary footbridge that reaches it, are a major draw to this legendary and very special place on the north Cornish coast. Against this dramatic backdrop, there's plenty for group members to discover, including the ruins of the 13th-century castle and the remains of Tintagel's early medieval settlement. Take in the exhibition and pause for a scenic break at the Beach Café before heading to the beach and Merlin's Cave.

8 Wrest Park, Bedfordshire

From the terrace of Wrest Park's French-style 1830's mansion there's a magical vista across the formal parterre and the Long Water beyond, where Thomas Archer's striking baroque pavilion, built between 1709-11, stands as the focal point of the 90-acre gardens. Group members can take in the pavilion's stunning interior and discover other delights in the garden including the Dairy Sculpture Gallery, the conservatory and Bowling Green House. There's also a walled garden complete with a café, Italian garden, rose garden and rooms inside the mansion to see. Pre-bookable guided tours take in the gardens or give the opportunity to go into the archaeology store holding over 150,000 artefacts – a third of our total collection – ranging from prehistoric antlers to Victorian bannisters.

Many of our other sites also have amazing views, inspiring history and superb facilities for your group. To find out more visit:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/group-visits

An inside view of...

QUEEN VICTORIA'S PALATIAL ISLAND HOME

We meet Osborne's new curator Christopher Warleigh-Lack.



Curator Christopher Warleigh-Lack joined English Heritage in September 2022. Having worked with royal history for much of his career and with family links to the Isle of Wight, he was attracted to Osborne by Victoria and Albert's 'amazing' art collection and says: 'it seemed the next logical step to come here – and I love it.'

Tell us about your role

I focus on collections and interiors, but that extends out into the wider landscape at Osborne where we have the Swiss Cottage and Museum, Queen Victoria's Bathing Pavilion, the Ice House and other buildings open to visitors. Although I'm based at Osborne, I'm also responsible for other English Heritage sites on the island, including Carisbrooke Castle, where Charles I was held prisoner, where Princess Beatrice once lived - and where donkeys still do.

Are you working on any special projects at the moment?

We are working with Coburg, the birthplace of Prince Albert, to install a Christmas tree in Osborne's Durbar Room for the Christmas period designed by a contemporary modern artist from the German city.

Prince Albert made Christmas trees popular and after his death, Victoria spent most Christmases at Osborne – she died here in January 1901.

What is your favourite part of Osborne?

I love the Grand Corridor, which certainly lives up to its name. It provided a space for the royal couple to show off their sculpture collection. Every year for Christmas and birthdays they commissioned or bought pieces for each other, often by female sculptors or made using innovative engineering techniques - both of which were unusual then. The space even used the latest designs in floor tiles, from the Minton company.

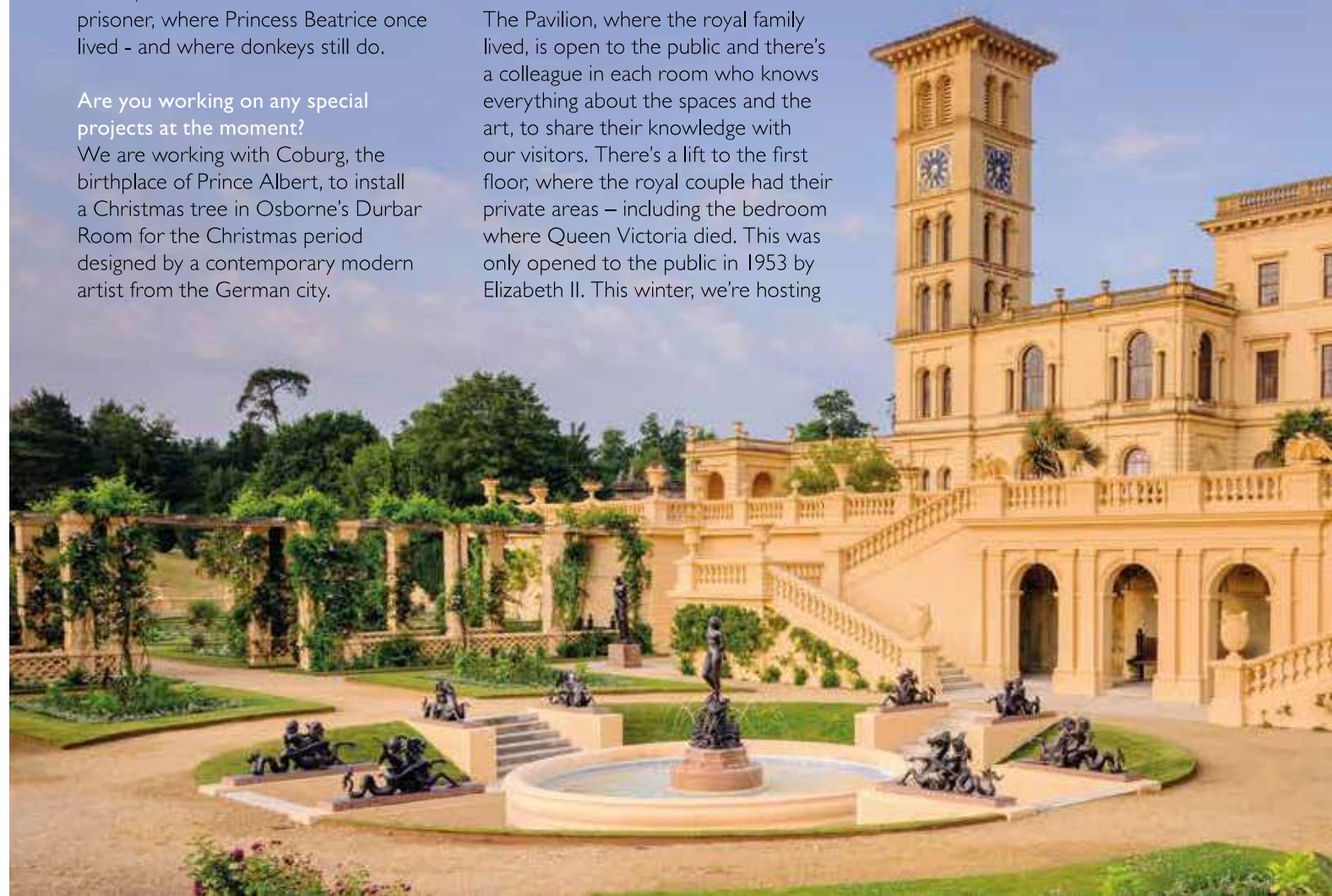
Can visitors access the whole of Osborne House?

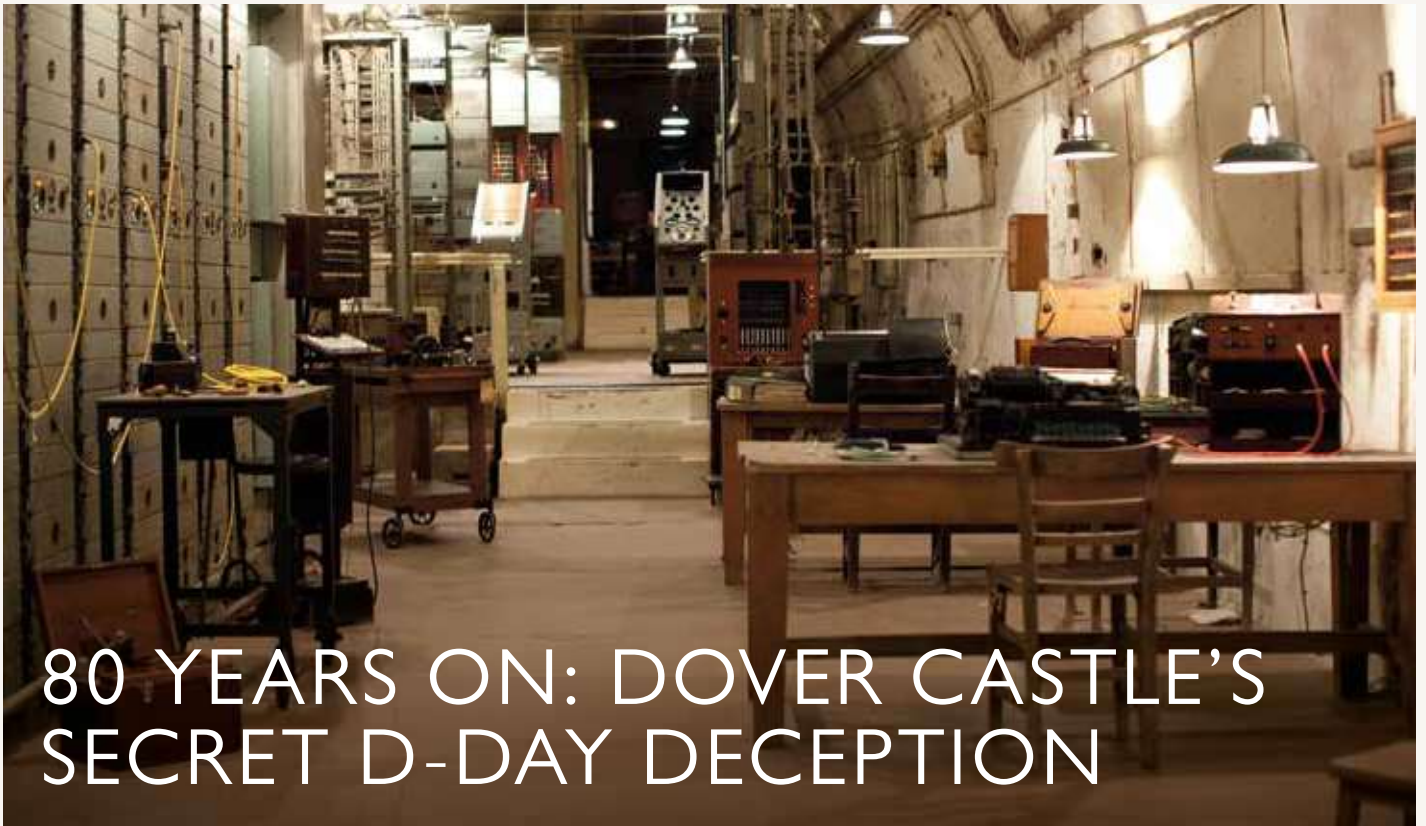
The Pavilion, where the royal family lived, is open to the public and there's a colleague in each room who knows everything about the spaces and the art, to share their knowledge with our visitors. There's a lift to the first floor, where the royal couple had their private areas – including the bedroom where Queen Victoria died. This was only opened to the public in 1953 by Elizabeth II. This winter, we're hosting

pre-booked guided tours for groups where we'll share more intimate stories of the household and how it worked... We're expecting the tours to be very popular. Osborne has more than the upstairs-downstairs story – for instance what is a lady-in-waiting, what does an equerry do, why did the Prime Minister of the day visit?

What else should group members make sure they see?

The museum at Swiss Cottage (Swiss Cottage is shown on the cover), created by Prince Albert for his children to display their precious objects. It is one of the most amazing ethnographic and natural history collections anywhere and includes a five-legged deer, Buddhist writings, Inuit weaving, Chinese dolls – and much more.





80 YEARS ON: DOVER CASTLE'S SECRET D-DAY DECEPTION

Operation Fortitude South may not be as well known as some other World War II actions like Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of Dunkirk, masterminded in Dover Castle's secret underground tunnels. But as Paul Pattison, English Heritage Senior Properties Historian explains, it was crucial to the success of the D-Day landings in June 1944 and saved thousands of lives in helping to bring about the liberation of Europe.

From July 1943, a secret group of military officers began devising a large-scale deception codenamed Bodyguard, to mislead the Germans about the timing and location of the Allied invasion of north-western Europe.

One of its main elements was Operation Fortitude South, which aimed to convince the enemy that the invasion would be in the Pas-de-Calais, using the shortest sea crossing from Dover, rather than in Normandy.

A fictitious army was created – the First United States Army Group (FUSAG) – under senior field commander General

George Patton. Supported by dummy landing craft deployed in harbours and estuaries, as well as fake tanks and vehicles spread across south-east England, the illusion of an army preparing a major assault via Calais was created. Fake radio traffic backed up by frequent but careful 'leaks' about the make-up and position of FUSAG units, reinforced the illusion as, further west, General Montgomery's real invasion force gathered.

Early in 1944 there were some real soldiers in Kent and the south-east comprising most of the 1st Canadian Army and the 2nd Canadian Corps.

Signallers from these forces operated from several locations to send a mass of dummy signals traffic, including from the underground tunnels at Dover Castle.

Hidden in the tunnels, British and Canadian units worked around the clock in eight-hour shifts seven days a week sending coded fake radio messages all over Britain to simulate the communications of FUSAG, as if preparing for invasion.

Paul says: 'The startling success of Bodyguard and especially of Fortitude South is reflected in German belief in the existence of FUSAG as late as August 1944, two months after the D-Day landings. As a result, the Germans kept vital units away from the main fighting front in Normandy, because they were still expecting a second, larger invasion in the Calais area.'



Plan your visit during the anniversary year

Mark the 80th anniversary of Operation Overlord in 2024 and take your group to Dover Castle's Secret Wartime Tunnels where the signallers worked as part of Operation Fortitude – and where the Dunkirk evacuation was masterminded four years earlier.

You can read the full story about this remarkable deception here:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/dover-castle/history-and-stories/d-day-deception

BELOW GROUND

Revealing a globally important prehistoric subterranean world.

Work is underway at Grime's Graves in Norfolk to provide a deeper understanding and better experience of the largest prehistoric flint mine known in Britain – and the only one where you can still descend into a pit.

From above, the site resembles a grassy lunar landscape. But beneath the lumps and bumps are more than 430 mine shafts, dug in the Neolithic period around 4,500 years ago.

Once we have completed the project, visitors will once again be able to



descend 9 metres down a ladder into an excavated pit to see the jet black flint. Here, a new multi-sensory digital projection will immerse them in the lives of the men, women and children who once lived and worked at Grime's Graves.

Back on ground level, there will be a new virtual tour for everyone to enjoy of Greenwell's Pit, named after

Victorian archaeologist Canon William Greenwell. A new exhibition will reveal more about the history of the mines.

Your group members might like to pack a picnic lunch to enjoy surrounded by the Breckland heath – Grime's Graves is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, abundant with rare wildlife and plants.

MEET OUR NEW TEAM MEMBER



Mitchell Tovey

As a busy GTO, you can rely on Mitchell Tovey to answer your queries and steer you in the right direction as you plan a historic day out for your group.

Mitchell has been working for English Heritage for a year as a customer service advisor and joins us from the central bookings team – you can contact him with your group enquiries on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

He says: 'I'm really looking forward to using my knowledge of English Heritage sites to help groups get the most from their visits. Questions from the travel trade can be a bit more complicated than general customer enquiries, but I always enjoy a challenge and I'm looking forward to making new relationships with our regular customers, new customers and organisational partners.'

Mitchell has been an English Heritage fan since he was a youngster. 'I just love what we do as an organisation and I don't know who wouldn't want to work here. My favourite site has to be West Kennet Long Barrow, one of our free-to-enter places. I've been visiting for as long as I can remember and to me, it's a place to relax and unwind. But I also have a soft spot for Stonehenge – I love the atmosphere it holds.'

You can contact Mitchell with any enquiries by emailing:

traveltrade@english-heritage.org.uk

INSPIRED TO BOOK? FIND OUT HOW

For more information and booking details for the properties featured in this issue of Attractions, please visit:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/traveltrade

Click through to **Planning Resources** to download our **Group Visits Guide 2022–24** and **Trade Admission Prices and Site Opening Times** booklet.

We give a generous **15% discount** (10% at Stonehenge) for groups of 11 or more at all our historic sites.

One tour leader and one coach driver are admitted free with each group (and do not count towards group numbers).

Advance booking no less than 7 days ahead is required for all group visits.

CONTACT US

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