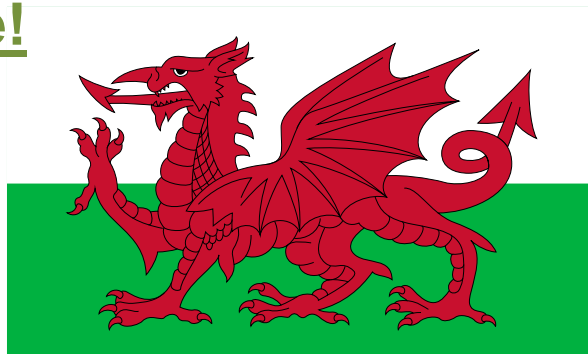


## Croeso cynnes i Gymru!

## A Warm Welsh Welcome!

2–10 May 2024

Wildlife sanctuaries, country mansions, famous castles, beautiful mountain views, boat rides, traditional fishing villages and much more awaits you in this programme. Read on and don't miss this amazing trip around Wales.



### Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024: Brussels – Llangollen – Conwy

10.00 h British Airways flight from Brussels National airport to Manchester airport

10.20 h Arrival at Manchester airport



Your first stop will be at the **Pontcysyllte Aqueduct Visitor Centre** (pronounced Pont-ker-sulth-teh), where you will have the opportunity to learn about the construction of the aqueduct.



You will then transfer to the Anglo-Welsh canal boat yard and enjoy a **45-minute return trip** across the aqueduct.

At the end of the visit, you will transfer to Llangollen for lunch at leisure before transferring to the **1950's Museum** in Denbigh.



*In the beautiful setting of a working farm in the Vale of Clwyd, the 1950's era museum is a unique collection. Featured, amongst other items are areas dedicated to crime, sport, music, classic cars and a varied assortment of room sets dating from the 1950's era.*

At the end of the visit, you will continue to Deganwy and check in at the hotel, **The Quay Hotel and Spa**, where accommodation has been arranged for three nights on a bed and breakfast basis.

A 3-course Welcome dinner will be taken in the hotel dining room this evening.

Overnight Deganwy

### **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2024: Conwy and Bodnant Gardens**

Breakfast will be taken in the hotel dining room.

This morning the coach will transfer you to **Conwy** where you will enjoy a visit to the **Castle**, be able to walk across Thomas Telford's suspension bridge, which was one of the first bridges of its type in the world, see the exterior of the toll-keeper's cottage and gardens and explore the historic town.



After lunch at leisure, you will transfer to **Bodnant Gardens** for a visit.

*With intimate corners, sweeping lawns, grand terraces and verdant woodland, there are many gardens in one at Bodnant. Created over 150 years, with plants collected and brought to Britain from far afield, and the incredible vision of generations of the McLaren family and Puddle head gardeners, this haven of rarity and beauty with a stunning backdrop of the Carneddau mountains of Eryri (Snowdonia) is a delight for the senses.*



At the end of the visit, you will return to the hotel.

Dinner will be at leisure.

Overnight Deganwy

### **Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024: Anglesey: Beaumaris, Puffin Island and Plas Newydd**

Breakfast will be served in the hotel dining room.

09.00 h After breakfast you will transfer to the Isle of Anglesey and drive to **Beaumaris** where you will enjoy a visit to the **Castle**.



*Beaumaris is famous as the greatest castle never built. It was the last of the royal strongholds created by Edward I in Wales – and perhaps his masterpiece. By now Edward and his architect James of St George had already constructed the great castles of Conwy, Caernarfon and Harlech and this was to be their crowning glory, the castle to end all castles.*

*The result was a fortress of immense size and near-perfect symmetry. No fewer than four concentric rings of formidable defences included a water-filled moat with its very own dock. The outer walls alone bristled with 300 arrow loops. But lack of money and trouble brewing in Scotland meant building work had petered out by the 1320s. The south gatehouse and the six great towers in the inner ward never reached their intended height. So, the distinctive squat shape of Beaumaris tells of a dream that never quite came true.*

11.20 h At the end of the visit you will walk the short distance to Beaumaris Pier, where you will take a **boat trip to Puffin Island**.

*Puffin Island, also known as Ynys Seiriol in Welsh, is located at the Northeast entrance of the Menai Straits and is the ninth largest island off the Welsh coast. Puffin Island is now a bird sanctuary and a nesting site for many species of breeding seabirds. The main season is between April and July when you are likely to see common guillemots, razorbills, kittiwakes and, of course, puffins. Other species such as cormorant and shags are on the island all year round, as are the resident Atlantic grey seals. You may even be lucky enough to encounter porpoise, sometimes even dolphin.*

*Please note, the sailing will only take place if the conditions are safe. This is a sea cruise and sometimes the sea state around the island can be rougher than in Beaumaris and the Menai Strait. Waterproof coats are recommended.*

The boat trip will last approximately 80 minutes, and on return to Beaumaris there will be time for a quick lunch at leisure before transferring to **Plas Newydd** for a visit to the house and gardens.



*Plas Newydd is an enchanting mansion and gardens, with spectacular views of Snowdonia and the Menai Strait. Home of the Marquess of Anglesey, its previous historic residents include the 1<sup>st</sup> Marquess, who lost his leg during the Battle of Waterloo, and the flamboyant 5<sup>th</sup> Marquess. This elegant 18<sup>th</sup> century house is an interesting mixture of classical and Gothic which also boasts Rex Whistler's 58-foot mural. The Grade I-listed*

*gardens include the Italianate Terrace, Rhododendron Garden and Australasian Arboretum.*

At the end of the visit, you will transfer back to the hotel.

Dinner will be taken at leisure.

Overnight Deganwy

### **Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2024: Betsy-y-Coed, Llechwedd and Portmeirion**

Breakfast will be served in the hotel dining room.

After breakfast you will check out of the hotel and begin your journey towards Aberystwyth.



Your first stop will be at **Betws-y-Coed**, where there will be free time to explore the village.

You will then move on to **Llechwedd Slate Caverns**.

*Take a step back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century as you're submerged 500ft into the rich history of the Deep Mine Tour, where you'll spend approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes soaking up all there is to know about Llechwedd's fascinating past. Head underground and learn all about this iconic mine's 16 underground levels – including where the famous Llechwedd Cheese is matured, along with the 8 underwater layers.*

*You'll learn all about the work undertaken by the former miners; see first-hand where the world-class slate was produced by local men and children, who risked their lives every day to provide the world with this famous slate. After the tour, head through the tunnels and hop aboard the underground train, which is Europe's steepest cable railway and take a journey back to the surface.*

At the end of the tour, you will transfer to **Portmeirion** for lunch at leisure and a visit.



*In 1925, Welsh architect Clough Williams-Ellis acquired the site which was to become Portmeirion. He had been searching for a suitable site for his proposed ideal village for several years and when he heard that the Aber Iâ estate near Penrhyndeudraeth was for sale, he did not hesitate to make an offer. He wanted to show how a naturally beautiful location could be developed without spoiling it, and that one could actually enhance the natural background through sympathetic development. The Aber Iâ estate had everything he had hoped for as a site for his architectural experiment: steep cliffs overlooking a wide sandy estuary, woods, streams and a nucleus of old buildings.*

*Portmeirion was built in two stages: from 1925 to 1939 the site was 'pegged out' and its most distinctive buildings were erected. From 1954-76 he filled in the details. The second period was typically classical or Palladian in style in contrast to the Arts and Crafts style of his earlier work. Several buildings were salvaged from demolition sites, giving rise to Clough's description of the place as "a home for fallen buildings".*



±16.30 h Departing Portmeirion, you will transfer to your hotel near Aberystwyth. The journey will take just under two hours.

On arrival you will check into your hotel, the **Plas Nanteos Mansion**, where accommodation has been arranged for three nights on a bed and breakfast basis.

Dinner will be taken at leisure.

Overnight Aberystwyth

## Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2024: Aberystwyth and Devil's Bridge Falls

Breakfast will be served in the hotel dining room.

After breakfast you will transfer to the town of Aberystwyth and enjoy a **walking tour with a local guide**. You will see the **Castle**, the University area and make your way to the top of Constitution Hill - you can walk or use the cliff railway (at additional cost) where you can marvel at the view across the bay.



After lunch at leisure in the town you will catch the **Vale of Rheidol Steam Railway train** to Devil's Bridge, where you will have the option of walking around the **Devil's Bridge Waterfalls** or, if you prefer, enjoying a coffee in one of the cafés in the area having taken the short walk to see the **Devil's Bridge**.

*Please note that the walk to the Falls is not suitable for anyone with mobility, breathing or serious heart conditions. It is steep, involves many steps and can be very slippery. A reasonable level of fitness is required along with suitable footwear.*

At the end of the visits the coach will meet you and return you to the hotel.

A 3-course dinner will be taken in the hotel dining-room this evening.

Overnight Aberystwyth

## Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2024: Elan Valley and Bwlch-Nant-Yr-Arian

Breakfast will be taken in the hotel dining room.

After breakfast you will meet your local guide in the hotel reception and drive to the **Elan Valley for a visit**. Starting at the Visitor Centre, you will discover more about the **Dams**, before driving the route to see them for yourselves.



There will be opportunities to walk and enjoy the countryside and your guide will tell you more about the history of the construction and the local area.

Lunch will be at leisure.

13.45 h You will depart the Elan Valley and head to **Bwlch-Nant-Yr-Arian**.

On arrival there will be time to walk down to the lake and find a good spot to watch the Red Kite feeding, which takes place at 15.00 h.

15.00 h During the feeding up to 150 Red Kites will swoop over the lake to take food on the wing. It is a dramatic and exciting sight.



At the end of the feeding there will be time to walk around the lake or follow one of the forest trails to enjoy the area, or you might prefer to enjoy a drink overlooking the lake.

At the end of this visit you will return to the hotel.

Dinner will be taken at leisure.

Overnight Aberystwyth

### Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024: Aberystwyth to Cardiff

Breakfast will be taken in the hotel dining room.



After breakfast you will check out of the hotel and, once the coach is loaded, you will transfer to **Aberaeron** where you will have time to explore the town, with its pretty coloured houses, and harbour before transferring to **Llanerchaeron** at 10.45 h.

*Discover the elegant Georgian villa at Llanerchaeron. Originally designed by the famous architect John Nash in the 1790s, the house has remained largely unaltered for over 200 years. Explore the servants' courtyard, including a dairy, laundry, brewery and salting house, as well as the main house, including the John Nash room and Pamela Ward collection.*

*This traditional Welsh country estate offers peaceful walks around the redbrick walled garden, ornamental lake and wild parkland and an opportunity to meet the animals in the traditional farmyard, including Welsh cobs, Welsh pigs, poultry and geese.*





Lunch will be taken at leisure.

13.15 h You will depart Llanerchaeron and drive to the **'In the Welsh Wind' distillery**, where you will enjoy a **gin tasting experience** and a **tour of the distillery**.

14.00 h *After a welcome G&T, you will have the opportunity to taste 3 Welsh craft gins and consider them as you complete a tasting card. You will receive a tour of the distillery, and a second G&T following the tasting - choose from your favourite from the tasting session, or one of the other gins available. A Non-Alcoholic Tasting is available for those who would prefer it!*

At the end of the visit, you will drive to your hotel in Cardiff, **The Hotel Indigo**, where accommodation has been arranged for two nights on a bed and breakfast basis.

Dinner will be taken at leisure.

Overnight Cardiff

### Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2024: Cardiff

Breakfast will be taken in the hotel dining-room.

After breakfast you will meet your guide in the hotel reception and enjoy a full day exploring **Cardiff**, with visits to **Cardiff Castle**, the **National Museum** and **Cardiff Bay**.

*Cardiff Castle is a Norman marcher stronghold, founded by William the Conqueror himself, and built on the site of a Roman fort dating from the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD, parts of which were reconstructed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the Castle is most famous for its incredible Victorian apartments, designed by William Burges for the wealthy 3<sup>rd</sup> Marquess of Bute. Both men*



*were fascinated by medieval history and little expense was spared in realising their neo-Gothic vision of the past*



*The National Museum is situated in the heart of Cardiff's elegant civic centre, and houses Wales' national art, geology and natural history collections, as well as major touring and temporary exhibitions.*

*Cardiff Bay has been the focus of regeneration for some years and now offers a place to shop or relax on the waterfront. You can see the Senedd (Welsh parliament) building, the Pier Head Building along with the Norwegian Church Arts Centre and Captain Scott Memorial.*

Lunch will be taken at leisure.

A 3-course Farewell dinner will be taken in the hotel dining room.

Overnight Cardiff

## Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024: St Fagans and Home

Breakfast will be taken in the hotel dining room.

09.30 h After breakfast you will check out of the hotel and drive to **St Fagans National Museum of History**.

10.00 h You will enjoy a visit to St Fagans.



*St Fagans is an open-air museum in Cardiff chronicling the historical lifestyle, culture, and architecture of the Welsh people. It consists of more than forty re-erected buildings from various locations in Wales, and is set in the grounds of St Fagans Castle, a Grade I listed Elizabethan manor house. The museum holds displays of traditional crafts, with a working blacksmith forge, a pottery, a weaver, a miller, and a clog maker. It also includes two working water mills: one*

*flour mill and one wool mill. Part of the site includes a small working farm which concentrates on preserving local Welsh native breeds of livestock.*



Lunch will be at leisure.

13.00 h You will depart St Fagans for Birmingham Airport.

±15.30 h Arrival at Birmingham Airport ready for check-in for your flight for Brussels.

17.40 h Brussels Airlines flight to Brussels airport

19.50 h Arrival at Brussels airport



## Hotels

**2 – 5 May 2024:** 3 nights

Quay Hotel and Spa, Deganwy, Conwy\*\*\*\*: <https://quayhotel.co.uk>  
Deganwy Quay, Deganwy, Conwy LL31 9DJ

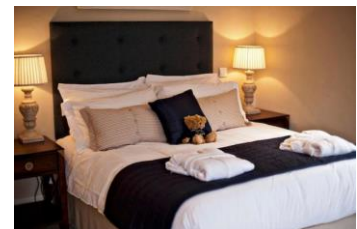
Idyllic scenery and an intimate feel welcome you to The Quay Hotel & Spa. Expansive views across the water to majestic Conwy Castle and an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity await you here. The Pool and Leisure facilities are open from 7am-7pm.



**5 – 8 May 2024:** 3 nights

Plas Nanteos Mansion\*\*\*\*: <https://www.nanteos.com>  
Nanteos Mansion, Nr Rhydyfelin, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 4LU  
Virtual tour of the Mansion at <https://www.nanteos.com/virtual-tour>

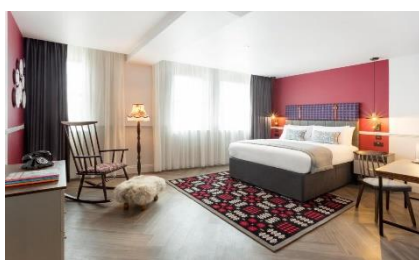
The building of Nanteos began in 1739 under the direction of Thomas Powell, funded by the considerable wealth of his wife Mary Frederick, granddaughter of the Lord Mayor of London. Nanteos remained a family home until the last surviving Powell died in 1930. The present owners set about a multimillion-pound refurbishment of this Grade 1 listed Mansion, together with its Grade 2 listed stables and walled garden.



**8 – 10 May 2024:** 2 nights

Hotel Indigo® Cardiff\*\*\*\*: <https://www.ihg.com/hotelindigo/hotels/gb/en/cardiff/cdfin/hoteldetail>  
Dominions Arcade, Cardiff, CF10 2AR

Our boutique bedrooms reflect our vibrant city, with the themes 'Made in Wales', 'Welsh Industry' and 'Music' embodied in local art and natural materials. Many also offer wonderful views of the Cardiff skyline, and they all have free Wi-Fi and invigorating rainfall showers.



## Prices (€)

### **Double room booking:**

Members: **€2,540** per person (**before 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023**); €2,591 (**from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2023**).

Non-member guests\*: €2,667 per person

*\*Non-member guests are accepted only within the limit of available places. Priority is always given to members.*

**Single room supplement: €531**

**Please note that our prices are based on a group comprising 20–24 participants** and have been calculated at the following exchange rate: £1 = €1.18

Any fluctuation in **tariffs, exchange rate or number of passengers** may involve a change of price (price per participant for a group of 15–19 participants: €2,790 in double room; €3,321 in single room).

### Payment schedule:

- First instalment: **€900 at registration.**
- Balance before **1<sup>st</sup> February 2024.**

### The price includes:

- Return economy air ticket between Brussels/Manchester and Birmingham/Brussels.
- Use of a 48-seat coach
- Services of **English-speaking** Blue Badge guides for visits on 6<sup>th</sup> May (morning), 7<sup>th</sup> May and 9<sup>th</sup> May.
- 8 nights' accommodation: Quay Hotel & Spa\*\*\*\* (2–5 May), Plas Nanteos Mansion\*\*\*\* (5–8 May) and Hotel Indigo® Cardiff\*\*\*\* (8–10 May) on a bed & breakfast basis.
- Breakfast daily plus 3-course dinners at Quay Hotel & Spa on 2<sup>nd</sup> May, at Plas Nanteos Mansion on 6<sup>th</sup> May and at Hotel Indigo® Cardiff on 9<sup>th</sup> May.
- All the excursions and visits mentioned in the programme in **dark green.**
- Tips for the tour guides and drivers.

### Cancellation Policy of Barton Hill & Armchair (The Company):

- All deposits paid are non-refundable. However, in the event of a full group cancellation the Company will work with suppliers to ascertain if any payments made can be refunded or rolled to a future booking.
- No refund will be made for cancellations within 2 weeks of arrival date or for any services confirmed but not used during the programme/itinerary.
- The Company reserves the right to levy 100% cancellation fees for any cancellation occurring within 4 weeks of arrival date.

### Cancellation Policy of Brussels Airlines:

- Between 12 and 8 weeks before departure: 50% cancellation fees
- Between 8 and 6 weeks before departure: 75% cancellation fees
- Between 6 weeks and date of departure: 100% cancellation fees

### Entry requirements:

It is the responsibility of each passenger to be informed of entry requirements and necessary travel documents from his/her own authorities (valid passport, visa, vaccination certificate and other travel documents). **Identity cards are no longer accepted for EU citizens; a valid passport is compulsory.**

**THE ABOVE PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGES, SUCH AS SEQUENCE, DURATION, AIR SCHEDULE AND AVAILABILITY OF SERVICE PROVIDERS, OR DUE TO OTHER UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES, SUCH AS WEATHER CONDITIONS OR SAFETY CONCERNS. IN SUCH CASES ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS WILL BE ARRANGED AT NO EXTRA COST.**