

*Special Houses of the Lake District*  
A Georgian Group visit to Cumbria  
15-19 May 2017



Blencow Hall

The Lake District is a hauntingly beautiful area of the country and easily the most scenic and romantic place in England. Its spellbinding landscape of mountain tarns, craggy hilltops and sparkling lakes has been stirring imaginations for centuries. Its long and dramatic history has borne the marks left by ancient civilisations in the Stone Age and Mesolithic periods, followed by Celts, Romans, Vikings and Normans and into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when artists and poets such as Wordsworth, Turner, Ruskin and Beatrix Potter were drawn to the beauty of the area.

In an area rich in ancient monuments, stone circles, Roman forts and medieval battlements, there are also a number of interesting Georgian country houses and castles. From the grandeur of great houses such as Hutton-in-the-Forest and Dalemain to the very private country houses and estates such those of the Blakett-Ords at Warcop and Helbeck, we will enjoy a wide variety of architecture and period interiors.

On past trips, our members have particularly enjoyed staying in private historic houses and this year, we are once again staying in a very special property, Blencow Hall, a Grade 1 listed house on the Rowley Estates near Penrith, which we will have to ourselves for the week.

Blencow Hall sits on a bluff above the small river Peterill surrounded by its own fields with spectacular views over the nearby Lakeland Fells. The Hall is thought to have been moated at one time and its chapel set to one side of the main courtyard is located next to a

set of springs which historical accounts say were used for medieval baptisms. Today, these springs feed a series of small rills which flow around the property.

Some 60 years after Henry de Blencow's extension into the Southern Peele Tower, local legend has it that Oliver Cromwell's troops mistook Blencow Hall for Greystoke Castle and slighted it with cannon causing the three story rent in the South Tower. With the loss of its structural integrity, the South Tower developed a massive lean to the Southern exposure and was left open to the elements for successive generations. Victorian accounts record a plane tree growing up in the middle of the South Tower and the North Tower being semi-derelict - used in part for agricultural purposes. An advantage of this history is that the medieval features of Blencow Hall have been preserved through neglect rather than "remodelled by subsequent generations.



Blencow Hall

The spiral stone staircases, enormous fireplaces and other unusual features including ancient garde robes have survived in their original condition and been carefully protected in this renovation which was undertaken with the supervision of English Heritage. The cannon damage suffered during the Civil War is now part of the award-winning design and restoration.



Castletown House

Our tour will begin with a visit to Gresgarth Hall, home of Sir Mark and Lady Arabella Lennox-Boyd, and a tour of the gardens designed by Lady Arabella Lennox-Boyd (see attached article from House & Garden, January 2017). In the afternoon, we will see visit Burrow Hall, winner of the Georgian Group Architectural Award for restoration of a Georgian House. The owners, the Warburtons, have also invited us for tea. On the following day, we visit Castletown House and Corby Castle. Subsequent days will include visits to Daleman, Hutton-in-the-Forest, The College (near Kirkoswald), Rose Castle and the Blckett-Ord houses at Warcop and Helbeck among others.



Daleman

This year we have some special additions to our itinerary. On Thursday we will have a private cruise on Lake Windermere in a traditional wooden launch, sailing around Belle Isle, Wray Castle and Storrs Castle while we enjoy a champagne picnic lunch on board surrounded by glorious mountain scenery.



Traditional Wooden Launch on Lake Windermere

On several evenings we have invited various owners to join us for dinner. One evening, we will have a talk by a noted architectural historian, followed by drinks and dinner with a local house owner. As a special treat, we have invited Anna Howard, a harpist who lives at nearby Johnby Hall, to give us an informal recital before dinner at Blencow. Her husband Henry will join us later for dinner.



Helbeck Hall

We will have our own chef for breakfasts and dinners at Blencow. All meals and wine are included in the price as well as coach transport during the week, entrance fees and boat hire. Members will make their own independent arrangements to travel to and from Blencow Hall but recommended train times will be given and coach transport from local station on Monday and return to local station on Friday will be provided.



The College

All rooms at Blencow are beautifully appointed to the highest standards and all but two are en suite. Several have 4 poster beds and magnificent views of the surrounding countryside.

A list of room prices and details is included. I will do my best to give you the room you request but please bear in mind, this may not be possible so please list your second and third choices. If you would like to apply for this tour, please let me know as soon as you can and I will note your preference and send you a booking form. You can then pay the correct amount by bank transfer or cheque. Booking will be on a first come first served basis. Other houses and visits may be added and all are subject to change.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes  
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Temple of Heroes, Storrs Hall, Lake Windermere

