



Woodstock
Oxfordshire
OX20 1PX

January 2011

▪ Themed Tours, Talks & Walks in 2011

Blenheim Palace offers a series of fascinating themed tours providing insight into some of the lesser known and more unusual aspects of Britain's Greatest Palace. With an extended series of tours, talks and walks on offer in 2011, visitors will find no matter how many times they have been to Blenheim Palace, there is always something new and intriguing to discover.

The famous and infamous have visited and lived in this magnificent ancestral home of the Dukes of Marlborough for more than 300 years, set within glorious parkland and Formal Gardens. The themed tours, talks and walks look at some of the personalities, periods and significant developments in more detail covering the following themes:

New in 2011

Odd Men and Necessary Women – Servants of a Great Palace - Friday 25th February

Led by *Karen Wiseman/Antonia Kearney*

This talk provides an insight into the colourful life and work of those who have served at Blenheim Palace through the ages inside and outside – in the gardens, park and forests. Here at Blenheim Palace there were all the traditional servants to be found in any great house but also some particular only to the Palace.

The Ladies of Blenheim Palace – Friday 18th March

Led by *Karen Wiseman/Antonia Kearney*

A fascinating and entertaining look at the ladies of the Marlborough/Churchill family usually overlooked in favour of the men. This talk and tour redresses the balance as it looks at the achievement of some of the Duchesses and discusses the thwarted talents and potential of others.

Behind the Scenes at Blenheim Palace - Friday 15th April, Thursday 14th July

Led by *Karen Wiseman/Antonia Kearney*

This talk will give a glimpse into the life and work at Britain's Greatest Palace. Behind the scenes there is a small army of people all of whom help run, restore, preserve and maintain the Palace. On any day you may find in some corner of the Undercroft Chris, Head of Maintenance with Paul the Palace electrician. Elsewhere you may find Mick the carpenter or John the horologist. Outside you may meet Chris the butterfly man or Harry the Palace Exterminator, who is always accompanied by his four very enthusiastic Jack Russell's. Keeping an eye on everything is Heather the Head of Operations who last year became an expert on marriage proposals!

An Historical Walk Through The Gardens and Landscape of Blenheim Palace - Tuesday 10th May, Tuesday 5th July

Led by *Karen Wiseman/Antonia Kearney*

This historical garden tour will take you out and about around the Palace grounds. The tour will concentrate on the way the Park and Formal Gardens have changed over time and give insights into the colourful characters that shaped the Palace landscape. The talk will start with the medieval landscape and then move on to the endeavours of Henry Wise and 'Capability' Brown. The tour continues into the 20th Century with the Water Terraces of Achille Duchene and then finishes with the delights of the Secret Garden.

Bring comfortable shoes, an umbrella and a water proof jacket to ensure the sun shines!

The Gentlemen of Blenheim Palace - Thursday 9th June

Led by *Karen Wiseman/Antonia Kearney*

Eleven Dukes of Marlborough - all of them with a fascinating story to tell. This tour will give you a personal and sometimes surprising glimpse into the fortunes of the Gentlemen of Blenheim Palace. Saints and sinners, soldiers and scientists, Blenheim Palace has been home to them all and each has found a unique way to protect and maintain their beloved Palace.

Understanding the Landscape and Gardens at Blenheim Palace - Thursday 16th June

Led by *Jeri Bapasola, Archival Researcher*

This talk will examine the evolution of the landscape and gardens over the past 300 years. The original gardens designed by John Vanbrugh and Henry Wise no longer exist but will be revealed through old maps, plans and drawings. 'Capability' Brown's transformation of the landscape in the second half of the 18th century will be explained, before discussing Achille Duchêne's 20th century reinstatement of a formal setting around the house. The talk will end with the creation of the 'Secret Garden' in 2004. This will be followed by an hour-long walk in the grounds focussing on many important garden features.

Winston Spencer Churchill and Blenheim Palace – Friday 19th August

Led by *Karen Wiseman/Antonia Kearney*

The private resources of Blenheim Palace are drawn upon to afford very new and refreshing insights into this remarkable man. We examine the breadth of talent, achievement and personality of the “Greatest Briton”: soldier, politician, statesman, painter, writer, orator, family man – and bricklayer!

Brown at Blenheim: Transforming the Landscape – Saturday 24th September

Led by *Jeri Bapasola, Archival Researcher*

Employed by the 4th Duke of Marlborough, Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown completely redesigned the landscape at Blenheim Palace, transforming the earlier formal garden layout created by John Vanbrugh and Henry Wise. Based on recently researched material published in *The Finest View in England – the Landscape and Gardens at Blenheim Palace*, the author, Jeri Bapasola, reveals the extent of Brown’s work, the nature of his ‘improvements’ and how the task was accomplished over a ten-year period from 1763. The talk will be followed by a walking tour of the landscape covering either the gardens, or the park, or both, depending on the requirements and the time available.

Evacuees and Espionage – the Second World War at the Palace – Friday 21st October

Led by *Karen Wiseman/Antonia Kearney*

The Marlborough family, Estate staff and the Palace itself played a full and energetic part in the war effort. This talk and tour tells the story of how the Palace prepared for the worst, survived the onslaught of 400 boys evacuated to Blenheim and kept the secrets of MI5. The talk will introduce visitors to such characters as the 10th Duchess, Mr. Sacre (land agent, ARP Warden and member of the Home Guard), and the PE teacher who was a conscientious objector. Photographs of Malvern College at Blenheim will be on display throughout the Palace during the tour so visitors can see as well as hear how the boys lived and learned.

Details and booking procedure

Each day begins at 10.30am with coffee and biscuits in the Palace’s Indian Room. The talk commences at 11am, followed by a tour of the Palace and/Gardens at 11.30am led by the specialist. The tour finishes at 12.30pm and you are free to spend the rest of the day in the Palace and grounds.

For further information details of booking and prices please call 01993 811091 to book or email operations@blenheimpalace.com.

For more information visit www.blenheimpalace.com or call 0800 849 6500 (24 hour recorded information)



Blenheim Palace is a member of the Green Tourism Business Scheme

Blenheim Palace is a member of the Treasure Houses of England, 10 of the most magnificent palaces, stately homes and castles in England www.treasurehouses.co.uk

Notes to Editors

	Individuals	Friends & Annual Pass
Adult	£23.50***	£5.00**
Concessions	£19.50***	£5.00**
Child	£15.00***	£5.00**

*** includes Palace Entry

** 'Friends' and Annual Pass cards must be produced

- **An Audio Garden Tour** is also available throughout the season, with commentary from the Palace experts offering visitors the opportunity to take in the wonders of the Park and Formal Gardens at their own pace. Audio Tours can be pre-booked by calling 01993 811091
Maximum of 15 handsets available.
- Blenheim Palace and Formal Gardens open from 12th February to 16th December 2011.
- The Palace and Formal Gardens are closed on Mondays and Tuesdays in November and December. The Park is open daily except Christmas Day
- The Park opens at 9am, the Formal Gardens at 10am and the Palace and Pleasure Gardens from 10.30am. (NB - The Pleasure Gardens normally open at 10am and 10.30am later in the season)
- Last admission to the Palace and Gardens is 4.45pm. The Palace and Pleasure Gardens* close at 5.30pm and the Park at 6pm.

For further information about Blenheim Palace please call the 24 hour information line on 0800 849 6500 or visit the website at www.blenheimpalace.com for media information contact: Blenheim Palace Marketing Department Telephone: +44 (0) 1993 810510 Email: marketing@blenheimpalace.com
