



BOWOOD

SPOT A SPRIG OF ORANGE BLOSSOM AT BOWOOD AND RECALL THE WEDDING SCENE FROM 'THE YOUNG VICTORIA'

*Bowood House & Gardens opens for 2009 season on Wednesday 1st April,
just two months ahead of new hotel.*

*Victoriana and Indiana collections, Adventure Playground and Children's Nature Trail,
Rhododendron Walks, Dog Show & Summer Fair ...just some of the many delights for all ages*

As visitors return to Bowood House & Gardens from Wednesday 1st April, when the popular family attraction (near Calne, Wiltshire) reopens to the public for the 2009 season, fans of the recent film hit, 'The Young Victoria', will be particularly intrigued by a sprig of orange blossom.

This piece of orange blossom from her bridal bouquet appears, alongside the gilded chair and footstool used by Queen Victoria at her wedding, within the Victoriana section of the Bowood Collection – a fabulous treasure trove of priceless heirlooms arranged over several floors of Bowood House. These three items were given to the 3rd Marquess of Lansdowne who was present at the 1840 wedding as the Lord President of the Council. A friend and political confidant of Her Majesty, the Marquess had become Chancellor of the Exchequer at just 25 and later as Lord President he presided over meetings of the Privy Council.

Looking round the Bowood Collection – which also features precious aspects of Georgian life, an insight into Napoleonic times, souvenirs brought back from India by the 5th Marquess (who had been Viceroy from 1888-94), plus tantalising paintings, tapestries, antiques, jewellery and porcelain - many visitors will delight in the past as they consider the associated lives and times of the Lansdowne family for whom Bowood has been home since 1754. Entering Bowood House through Robert Adam's Orangery, those with an interest in times gone by can also explore the private Chapel, the Sculpture Gallery and the Laboratory where oxygen was discovered by Dr. Joseph Priestley in 1774.

Others will look to the present more, particularly youngsters keen to head outdoors and towards the thrills and spills of Bowood's **Adventure Playground**. Here there's a full size pirate galleon (complete with rigging and a crow's nest), high-up walkways and the much talked about 'Space Dive'

that are the most daring. In tempting children away from the TV screen and computer games, Bowood urges children to run about, let off steam and discover their own boundaries rather than fight shy of them. With safety precautions well in place, many other attractions for gentler play and a special Soft Play area for very young ones, it is still the 'sheer height and danger of it all' that children appreciate most.

The nature trail mapped out around Bowood's Pleasure Grounds and across the Grade I listed Great Park, landscaped by Capability Brown in the 1760s will stimulate children's inquisitiveness. Starting at the Ha ha and winding around various significant trees to a Cascade and Hermit's Cave near to Capability Brown's lake, a work sheet will test young minds along the way before leading them back to the Wildflower Meadow. While parents steer younger children round the trail, older ones can negotiate it on their own accord.

Various outdoor seasonal delights will continue to dazzle as they have done for several centuries. For six weeks from late April to early June, the **Rhododendron Walks** (located in a separate part of the estate, two miles from Bowood House, and with their own entrance) will be open to the public once again. This woodland garden of rhododendrons and azaleas, sprawls out across 60 acres and features some of the earliest known hybrids. Wander aimlessly along some two miles of pathway that make up the walks and gaze at the plantings of successive generations of the Lansdowne family since the 3rd Marquess started this garden in the 1850s. Signs are that the blooms will be particularly outstanding this season.

An annual favourite and summer highlight that is now in its fourth year is the **Bowood Dog Show & Summer Fair** which will take place in 2009 on Sunday 7th June, in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support and local charities. Very much the brain child of Lady Lansdowne, last year's event raised almost £44,000 with around 10,000 people attending and this year promises to be bigger and better than ever with displays and attractions including a wide variety of Food Stands and Trade Stands, Carriage Driving, Dog Show Classes, donkey rides, falconry, music, a petting zoo and much more!

Autumn will see another riot of colour with the russets, maroons, crimsons, scarlets, oranges, yellows and golds of the **Arboretum**, boasting 11 champions trees and rivalling a New England Fall for 'leaf-peepers'.

As Bowood opens for its 2009 season on Wednesday 1st April, the estate is also poised to unveil Bowood Hotel, Spa & Golf Resort at the end of May with the opening of a brand new 43 bedroom hotel alongside Bowood Golf & Country Club. Located on a completely separate part of the 2,000 acre

park from Bowood House, the new Bowood Hotel will be found in the western corner of Capability Brown's Great Park and reached through the majestic 'Golden Gates' built by Sir Charles Barry in 1840.

"This will be the very first year that the public will have the choice of visiting Bowood House & Gardens either as a family day out or to tie it in with an overnight stay or weekend break, thanks to our new hotel," comments Charlie Lansdowne, the 9th Marquis who opened Bowood House & Gardens to the public in 1975 as one of many stages in Bowood's evolution. "The one piece of the jigsaw puzzle missing has been the lack of accommodation and we have been moving towards resolving this, slowly but surely, over the past 20 years. We are really thrilled that those who will be heading to this very special part of Wiltshire will now have a greater chance than ever before to experience more fully the various treats and delights that Bowood offers."

Bowood House & Gardens will be open to the public from Wednesday 1st April – Sunday 1st November 2009, from 11am-6pm daily – with last admissions at 5pm (closing one hour earlier after the autumn clocks go back).

Individual entrance tickets start at £4.75 per head for children aged 2-4 and go up to £8.40 per adult. Special rates for groups and senior citizens are also available, as are Family and Season Tickets.

Entrance tickets for the Rhododendron Walks are priced separately at £5.60 per adult (with children up to 16 being admitted free of charge) and £5.10 per senior citizen. If visiting Bowood House, on the same day too, then entrance to the Rhododendron Walks is reduced by £1 per person.

For further details, log on to www.bowood.org or call 01249 812102.

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