

## ISLAND OF FLOWERS EXCURSION

Horticulture has a rich heritage on the island of Guernsey - from the days when Cannon Hall grapes were a major export, through the prosperous decades of the 1950s and 1960s for the Guernsey Tomato - and the more turbulent years of recent times as growers searched for viable crops. The island's unique microclimate encourages a wide variety of plants to thrive, and our tour takes you behind the scenes of a modern day flower growing vinery - as well as visiting the stunning 5 acre gardens and grounds of Bruce Russell's Gold & Silversmiths workshop in the beautiful parish of St Saviour. Also included is an exclusive visit to a cliff top landscaped garden, as well a chance to wander around the Little Chapel.....

Boarding your coach at St Peter Port Harbour, we head northwards away from the island's capital, before heading inland to visit a working vinery (*the name given to commercial glasshouses on the island - derived from grapes & tomatoes being grown 'on the vine'*). The Guernsey Freesia Centre offers visitors the opportunity to see how Mark Fletcher and his team raise their flower crops - from planting 'corms', through the process of raising them, picking the blooms, and then packing them for postal export. As well as being able to see the flowers themselves, you'll find an interpretation centre and discover the wide range of products which benefit from the beautiful and fragrant scent of these delicate flowers.

Time to continue our journey, heading through the quaint area known as King's Mills, with Wisteria covered walls, and beautifully kept farmhouse gardens which line your route. We make our way to the parish of St Saviour, as we arrive at Bruce Russell's Gold & Silversmiths - a traditional family-run business. Here you'll be able to wander around the extensive gardens and grounds, as well as visiting the workshops where many unique and precious commissions (including a number made for royalty) have been crafted and created by Bruce Russell, and his son Simon. Here you'll also be able to purchase optional refreshments at the Mint Brasserie.

Onwards through the field lined country lanes of St Andrew, as we head for the unique monument in the centre of the island that is the Little Chapel. We stop off to admire the smallest consecrated church in the world - designed a hundred years ago, and based on the grotto at Lourdes in France. A true labour of love, it is decorated in a mosaic fashion with local shells and donated fragments of Wedgwood and Royal Doulton china - as well as similar material from all over the world.

Passing through the leafy tree-lined roads of St Martin, you'll see some of the beautifully kept gardens and properties that have in recent years helped the parish to award-winning status in both local and national competitions. We head for the breathtaking cliff top views which dominate the southeast coastline of Guernsey, to visit a privately owned cliff top garden, as you enjoy the sights, scents and beauty of the diverse array of plants which thrive in our Mediterranean-style climate.

Time to head back down into St Peter Port, and take in the beautiful seascape with the islands of Herm & Sark as a backdrop, before arriving back at the harbour.

**Duration:** 3.5 hours

**Accessibility:** No wheelchair access at The Little Chapel. 12 steps on entrance to the Little Chapel and a few steps to explore inside.

Medium walking involved - some steps in gardens, and on cliff paths.

**Toilet Facilities:** Available at the Freesia Centre and at Mint Brasserie.

**NOTE:** To avoid congestion at attraction sites, the route may be alternated.

