

A Visit to Remember

The House

The Gardens

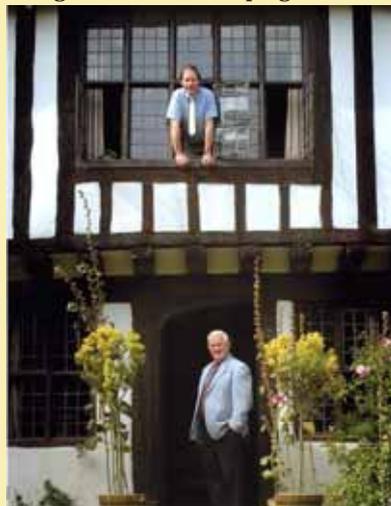


Photo: Anthony Capobianco

Enchanting historic house c1450 in the pretty downland village of Bramber. Many thousands of visitors admire its picturesque charm and enjoy its atmosphere of friendliness and welcome.

Once the home of the originals of Oscar Wilde's hilarious comedy, *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Other associations with the house include Queen Elizabeth I and Charles II. Location for BBC's world-famous *Dr Who*, and for a number of popular BBC, ITV, C4 and C5 television series.

Peter Thorogood, author, composer and historian, and Curator **Roger Linton**, conservator, designer and landscape gardener, together with other



members of their family, saved St Mary's from semi-dereliction in 1984 and have brought the house and gardens to their present splendour. They were each awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours for services to conservation and the arts.



Fine interiors include exquisite painted wall-leather and a wealth of fine panelling, family furniture and memorabilia.

The **Monks' Parlour** is notable for its massive 'dragon' beam and fine 17thC inglenook.

The **Octagonal Gothic Dining Room**, designed by Roger Linton, displays the Merrett collection of over eighty English costume dolls.

The **King's Room** holds a mystery about Charles II's escape in 1661, and has interesting evidence of medieval wall-paintings.

The **Library** holds a unique collection of books devoted to the life and times of the Victorian poet, Thomas Hood, on whose works Peter Thorogood is the leading authority.

The **Painted Room** is decorated with unique 16thC *trompe l'oeil* murals for the visit of Queen Elizabeth I.



Five acres of charming gardens

The **Topiary Garden**, entered through a pleached lime walk, contains a variety of box and yew shrubs trimmed into shapes of amusing animals and birds. In the summer months, colourful parterres and a brilliant display of hollyhocks complete the picturesque scene.

The **Terrace Garden**, sometimes used for open-air performances, has fine herbaceous borders, rose beds, and an exceptional example of the prehistoric 'Living Fossil' tree, *Ginkgo Biloba* – the world's oldest species of deciduous tree.

The **'Secret' Garden** has a massive 140 ft fruit wall with the original Victorian heated pineapple pits and stove-house. The potting shed and apple store now houses a Rural Museum of horticultural implements. The **Jubilee Rose Garden** was planted to commemorate Queen Elizabeth's Golden and Diamond Jubilees. Visit the **Poetry Garden** in the former Circular Orchard and the **Landscape Water Garden** with its island and waterfall.



Photo: Mike Mauger

Concerts and Functions

Concerts

A varied programme of concerts and events takes place in the magnificent Victorian Music Room.



Weddings and functions

St Mary's is licensed for Civil Ceremonies and provides a beautiful romantic setting for up to 90 guests.



Education

St Mary's important history provides an informative visit for school groups.

Supported by

Charitable Trust

The *St Mary's Historic House and Gardens Charitable Trust* (Registered Charity No. 1103429) has been established to preserve St Mary's House and Gardens for future generations. Please consider our Trust when making a donation or legacy.

Friends and volunteers

The *Friends of St Mary's* help to support the house and gardens through fundraising activities. St Mary's also provides a unique volunteering opportunity for those with a love for their heritage.

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PUBLIC Open Afternoons

May to end of September
Sundays, Thursdays, Bank Holiday Mondays
2–6 pm. Last entry 5 pm.

PRIVATE Group Visits

April to end of September
Any day 10–6 (except public open afternoons), by prior arrangement.
Guided tours. Reduced rates for parties of 25 or over.

Refreshments

Morning coffee or country house teas served in the Orchard Tea Rooms.

Gift Shop

The Gift Shop stocks a range of souvenirs, including books and music by the owner of St Mary's, Peter Thorogood.

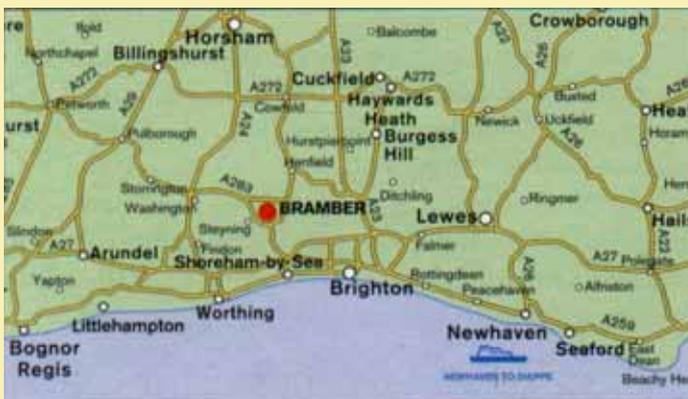


Where is St Mary's?

St Mary's House is in Bramber village off the A283, 1 mile east of Steyning, 10 miles from Brighton, 56 miles from London. Trains hourly from London Victoria to Shoreham-by-Sea with connecting buses to Bramber (5 miles). Free car/coach park in grounds. Wheelchair access to ground floor and gardens, and accessible WC. Guide dogs only.



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St Mary's

House & Gardens



BRAMBER WEST SUSSEX

Features in Sir Simon Jenkins' book
ENGLAND'S THOUSAND BEST HOUSES