

Chatsworth at Christmas December 2019

On a very wet and windy Friday morning in December a party of 43 WI members and two husbands left Norfolk to spend two nights at the Doubletree Hilton Hotel in Sheffield to visit Chatsworth House

After breakfast on Saturday morning we set off for the Chatsworth Estate, fortunately the weather was kinder to us than when we left Norfolk. We stopped at the Garden Centre on the estate, where members were able to have coffee and view and purchase festive lights, plants etc.

We then drove the short distance to begin our tour of the House. Chatsworth has been opening at Christmas for over 20 years and hosts over 200,000 visitors during the eight weeks of Christmas opening. Each year the house portrays a different theme and for 2019 it was 'In a Land Far Far away'.

As we walked through the 22 rooms some of the highlights we saw were the Painted Hall decorated as 'Festive Russia', in the Chapel Corridor there were Maple leaf Arches portraying Canada in December and the Dining Room was dressed with Delft Ware and gave us insight to a Dutch Christmas dining scene. We travelled through the Nordic Countries, China and Morocco to name a few, all celebrating the festive season.

There were over 30 decorated Christmas trees in the house with over 60,000 baubles and a million fairy lights. Even the guides uniforms were customised to this year's theme.

In the Stable block and Farm Shop there was numerous Christmas items to browse, sample and purchase many unusual festive treats.

Sunday Morning saw us heading back to Norfolk where we arrived back late afternoon, with new friendships made, and WI ideas swapped. I am sure that everyone was inspired with new ideas for the Festive season in their own homes.

This was the first festive break organised by the Norfolk Federation and from the interest shown by members do look out for future opportunities to see Christmas at other Stately homes

Wendy Nash



