



## **Bridge End Garden, Saffron Walden, commended at 2018 UK Heritage Awards**

*March 2018* – Saffron Walden Tourist Information Centre is delighted to announce that Bridge End Garden was commended in the Hidden Gem at the prestigious UK Heritage Awards 2018. The awards were handed out at an exclusive ceremony celebrating the best heritage experiences and places to stay in the UK, hosted at Goldsmith’s Hall in London on 6<sup>th</sup> March.

The UK Heritage Awards are arranged by the UK’s leading heritage, tourism and destination marketing company, Visit Heritage, publisher of best-selling heritage guide Hudson’s and the UK’s independent hotel guide, Signpost.

This year’s awards were handed out across thirteen categories; nine UK Heritage Awards and four hotel awards recognized by Signpost.

The judging panel was lead by Norman Hudson OBE, Chairman of the Judges, and included country house consultant Simon Foster, author and TV presenter Lucinda Lambton, architectural writer and author Jeremy Musson, tourism consultant Ken Robinson CBE, writer and art historian Helen Rosslyn and Director of Visit Heritage Paul Bridle.

The awards were judged across nine categories, with winners and commended properties as follows:

### **Family Day Out**

Winner: Alnwick Castle, Northumberland  
Commended: Llanfaiach Fawr Manor, South Wales

### **Great Places to Eat**

Winner: Castle Howard, North Yorkshire  
Commended: Stansted Park, Hampshire

### **Shopping Experience**

Winner: The Queen’s Gallery, London

### **Wonderful Places to Stay**

Winner: The Victoria at Holkham, Norfolk  
Commended: Head Gardeners’ Cottage, Floors Castle, Borders

### **Best Event/Exhibition**

Winner: The International Autojumble at Beaulieu, Hampshire  
Commended: Whitby Abbey – English Heritage – North Yorkshire  
Commended: Houghton Hall, Norfolk

**Best Wedding Venue**

Winner: Myres Castle, Fife  
Commended: Hedsor House, Buckinghamshire

**Contribution to Heritage**

Winner: English Heritage and Google Arts & Culture  
Commended: Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire

Judges Recognition: English Heritage - Portchester Castle, Hampshire

**Hidden Gem**

Winner: The Charterhouse, London  
Commended: Bridge End Garden, Essex

**Best Loos**

Winner: Hampton Court Palace, Richmond

**Signpost recognises:****Great Places to Stay**

Winner: Plantation House Hotel  
Commended: Drakes Hotel

**Outstanding Customer Experience**

Winner: Old Rectory Norwich  
Commended: Lastingham Grange  
Commended: Castle House

**Gourmet Delight**

Winner: Gilpin Hotel and Lake House  
Commended: Blackaddie Country House Hotel  
Commended: Y Talbot

**Must Visit**

Winner: Milsoms Maison Talbooth  
Commended: Washingborough Hall  
Commended: Northcote Manor

Bridge End Garden is a free public garden at the edge of Saffron Walden, Essex, and managed by Saffron Walden Town Council. It was recognized by the judges as a total hidden gem, tucked into a corner of Saffron Walden. Planting adheres to Victorian principles, and there is a new Visitor Centre designed as an Orangery and a bed of commercial saffron – demonstrating the town's role in the historic saffron industry - to add to its heritage appeal.

## Notes to editors:

### About Visit Heritage

Visit Heritage is a leading heritage, tourism and destination marketing company in the UK. Visit Heritage is also the publisher of the best-selling guide Hudson's which has been published in a new hardback format. Hudson's will continue to feature all the must-see heritage sights within the UK. The company also publishes Signpost Guides, the independent guide listing delightful stylish hotels in the UK. Founded in 1935, Signpost was the UK's first ever hotel guidebook.

Visit Heritage will also launch a new range of printed guide books throughout 2018 including, **Time Traveler**, an A5 supplement that will be published in paperback as well as 6 monthly collectables in hardback known as **All about Heritage**.

For 2018 Visit Heritage has launched a new website – [VisitHeritage.co.uk](http://VisitHeritage.co.uk). Housing engaging content for a wide audience, [VisitHeritage.co.uk](http://VisitHeritage.co.uk) is the go-to website for discovering all things to do with Heritage in the UK. It has a fresh contemporary look and is highly user friendly. Visitors to the website can view historic homes, gardens, castles, museums and other heritage sites as well as being able to find places to stay and visit close by. Visitors are also able to create an itinerary, book tickets and learn about events at various locations within the website.

### About the Winners

#### Family Day Out

##### **Winner: Alnwick Castle, Northumberland**

A family visit to Alnwick Castle promises a true cornucopia of entertainment. In the Knight's Quest arena, budding knights and princesses can dress up in medieval finery, sample swordplay and try traditional crafts. Courageous kids can brave interactive games and animatronics in the new Dragon Quest, while guides lead entertaining history and film tours. Alnwick Castle was used as the film location for Hogwarts; watch out for Harry Potter-inspired characters and broomstick training sessions – all in one entry fee.

##### **Commended: Llanfaiach Fawr Manor, South Wales**

Families visiting the 16th century fortified manor house at Llanfaiach Fawr Manor step into a live costumed interpretation of the times of local Civil War leader, Colonel Pritchard - a brilliantly fun day out.

#### Great Places to Eat

##### **Winner: Castle Howard, North Yorkshire**

Castle Howard's special Afternoon Tea is reason enough to visit Sir John Vanbrugh's baroque masterpiece. Specially created by Head Pastry Chef, Vanessa Wade, afternoon tea is served during the summer and at Christmas for the perfect afternoon out. Meanwhile, Castle Howard's other catering outlets are benefiting from investment in new equipment and the success of 'Castle Howard at Christmas' has expanded into a dedicated Christmas café.

##### **Commended: Stansted Park, Hampshire**

Lunch and tea at Stansted Park is served in the charming restored Edwardian conservatory overlooking the Walled Garden. The judges commended it as a prime example of a local business that is at the heart of the local community.

#### Shopping Experience

##### **Winner: The Queen's Gallery, London**

The shop at the Queen's Gallery manages to cope with large visitor numbers, communicate the exceptional collection of works of art in the Royal Collection and maintain an air of prestige in exemplary style. The

shop is sophisticated and well arranged, full of bespoke pieces drawn from the collection, while there are plenty of items to appeal to children.

### **Wonderful Places to Stay**

#### **Winner: The Victoria at Holkham, Norfolk**

The Victoria Inn's location couldn't be better; less than a mile from England's best beach, views over Holkham National Nature Reserve and with brilliant access to Holkham Hall. The 20 bedrooms are named after shooting drives on the Holkham Estate and antique touches come from Holkham Hall. Local fish, game and meat from the estate are on the menu, plus there's a warm welcome for dogs.

#### **Commended: Head Gardeners' Cottage, Floors Castle, Borders**

The Head Gardener's House has been newly refurbished for holiday lets, the charm comes from family-owned antiques and art combined with contemporary design. Guests are welcomed with a hamper of produce from the estate.

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### **Best Event/Exhibition**

#### **Winner: The International Autojumble at Beaulieu, Hampshire**

The International Autojumble at Beaulieu, home to the National Motor Museum, has run every year, for 50 years. The idea to host a get-together for motoring enthusiasts from around the world was first realised in 1967; today, the event is Beaulieu's largest annual heritage get-together, with more than 37,000 visitors. Loyal exhibitors love it, look forward to it and often arrange their diaries around it.

#### **Commended: Whitby Abbey – English Heritage**

Whitby Abbey's ILLUMINATED ABBEY event for Halloween brought Bram Stoker's Dracula to life, revisiting the Abbey's history with theatrical characters in a spectacle that could be enjoyed by the whole town.

#### **Commended: Houghton Hall, Norfolk**

Landscape artist Richard Long's 'EARTH SKY' exhibition at Houghton Hall was his largest since a 2009 Tate retrospective; the quality of contemporary artists shown at Houghton Hall is exceptional. Long's work has been added to the Marquess of Cholmondeley's growing collection of contemporary art giving lasting impact.

### **Best Wedding Venue**

#### **Winner: Myres Castle, Fife**

Myres Castle aims to combine impeccable service with the relaxed feeling of staying with friends. The castle dates back to the 1530s with outstanding formal gardens and now offers 10 en-suite bedrooms with additional space in the gate lodge. The Barnquee - a specially designed hybrid between a barn and marquee - built in the gardens with local larch tree supports and is unique to the Castle, offering something away

from the norm. There is space to seat 160 guests, a rustic bar, and beautiful light filtering through the canvas roof and the trees above.

#### **Commended: Hedsor House, Buckinghamshire**

Brides and Grooms have exclusive use of the Georgian mansion and country estate at Hedsor House. From the Italianate Central Hall to the 12th century Chapel, the spaces are adaptable, while the bridal suite claims to be one of the largest in Europe.

#### **Contribution to Heritage**

##### **Winner: English Heritage and Google Arts & Culture**

2017 marked a ground-breaking collaboration between English Heritage and Google. Detailed images of 2000 objects at 29 sites are now available online, photographed with ultra-high-resolution Gigapixel and Art Camera technology. This was Google's first collaboration across many sites and is the largest amount of content generated with a partner on the platform. The result is free, instant access to treasures not normally available to view, including Frank Wilkins' 1820 painting of the Battle of Hastings or a 360° curator-led tour of Osbourne House.

##### **Commended: Blenheim Palace, Oxfordshire**

Blenheim Palace's new 10-year plan sets out 10 ambitious goals for the evolution of the Palace and estate in the next decade. This includes a £40 million restoration plan, a plan to acquire key items lost from the collection in the past, the establishment of an endowment fund for the Palace, and tripling Blenheim's contribution to the local economy.

##### **Judges Recognition - English Heritage - Portchester Castle, Hampshire**

The judges wanted to recognise English Heritage for the exemplary research that illuminated this underappreciated aspect of our history, and especially the Curator, Abigail Coppins, who did the research. In 1796, 2,000 black and mixed-race men, women and children arrived as prisoners of war at Portchester Castle. English Heritage's new creative installation opened in July 2017, telling their story through objects, models, panels and theatre, highlighting an important moment in Black British history; the struggle for emancipation in the Caribbean in the 18th and 19th centuries.

#### **Hidden Gem**

##### **Winner: The Charterhouse, London**

The Charterhouse is open to visitors for the first time, with a new reception, shop, museum and guided tour. A true hidden gem, The Charterhouse reveals the surviving buildings of a Carthusian priory, the Tudor mansion of the Howard family, an almshouse and the former premises of two public schools. The survival and preservation of so much history - all just moments from Smithfield Market - is extraordinary, and a visit is truly fascinating.

##### **Commended: Bridge End Gardens, Suffolk**

Bridge End Gardens is a total hidden gem, tucked into a corner of Saffron Walden. Planting adheres to Victorian principles, and there is a new Visitor Centre designed as an Orangery and a bed of commercial saffron - demonstrating the town's role in the historic saffron industry - to add to its heritage appeal.

#### **Best Loos**

##### **Winner: Hampton Court Palace, Richmond**

The newly-refurbished toilets at Hampton Court reflect the Tudor history of the royal palace. Taking a fun approach, visitors have the chance to keep learning about Henry and his wives during time spent in the loo. Specially designed graphics reveal Tudor beauty tips and silhouette you in costume in the mirror in a unique experience.

#### **Signpost recognises four hotel awards:**

## **Great Places to Stay**

### **Winner: Plantation House Hotel, South Hams**

Plantation House is a privately-run restaurant with rooms, effortlessly combining good food, warm service and a sense of attentive informality – all in a glorious South Hams setting. The building is a much-loved listed Georgian rectory that has been carefully restored to blend contemporary touches with traditional styles; the result is discreet comfort, soothing surroundings and a sense of sophistication.

### **Commended: Drakes Hotel, Brighton**

Set on the iconic Brighton seafront, Drake's is a delightful townhouse hotel. With brilliant design, excellent service and a luxurious feeling throughout, this is the hotel of choice in Brighton.

## **Outstanding Customer Experience**

### **Winner: The Old Rectory, Norwich**

Guest experience has been central to The Old Rectory's philosophy for more than 20 years. With a belief in 'traditional' hospitality, excellent service from friendly staff and brilliant food, The Old Rectory's reputation for excellence is well-deserved. Many guests are regular visitors, while many others have been recommended by previous guests.

### **Commended: Lastingham Grange, Yorkshire**

Lastingham Grange has featured in the Signpost Guide for more than 70 years under the same ownership. A traditional style property, Lastingham is full of countryside charm on the edge of the North Yorkshire Moors. Guests can expect a genuine welcome and exceptional service.

### **Commended: Castle House, Hereford**

Castle House is an elegant Grade II listed Georgian villa moments from the historic Hereford Cathedral. Castle House is a superb boutique hotel, while the fine-dining restaurant is ideal for special occasions. The location is exceptional for exploring the city centre, while there are charming walks along the river.

## **Gourmet Delight**

### **Winner: Gilpin Hotel and Lake House, Lake District**

A stay at The Gilpin is all about brilliant service, beautiful décor and the very finest culinary experiences. Six of the bedrooms have private cedarwood hot tubs, and five have their own treatment area, steam room, stone bath, sauna and hydrotherapy hot tub. The Michelin star restaurant Hrishu delivers food with an Asian twist. This award particularly recognises the new restaurant, Gilpin Spice, with an open kitchen serving tapas-style pan-Asian dishes inspired by the spice trail.

### **Commended: Blackaddie Country House Hotel, Dumfries**

Blackaddie is set on the banks of the stunning River Nith in South West Scotland, near Dumfries. With just seven rooms, this 16<sup>th</sup> Century country house is an idyllic and romantic place to stay. Blackaddie is set apart by its passion for the very best in local, seasonal Scottish food, and wonderfully friendly staff, making this an enchanting destination.

### **Commended: Y Talbot, Ceredigion**

Y Talbot is an historic and characterful Grade II listed Inn in Tregaron, Ceredigion. The characterful pub with nine rooms dates to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century and today, Head Chef Dafydd - who trained with Marco Pierre White and was Premier Sous Chef at The Ritz before coming to Y Talbot in 2010 - is passionate about preparing excellent food, which underpins the whole philosophy of the inn.

## **Must Visit**

### **Winner: Milsom's Maison Talbooth, Essex**

Maison Talbooth is part of the Milsoms Group, which has supported Signpost for many years. Consistently delivering an outstanding experience quality, Maison Talbooth is a Victorian House hotel set overlooking the beautiful Dedham Vale. The hotel offers traditional quality, together with the delicious Talbooth restaurant and a spa for spoiling treatments and a swimming pool.

**Commended: Washingborough Hall, Lincolnshire**

A beautiful Grade II listed, Georgian Manor House hotel, Washingborough Hall is set in three acres of mature gardens. With a 250-year history, the hotel is privately owned and managed by Edward and Lucy Herring. Together, they have taken every care to retain the elegant Georgian character, whilst lovingly refurbishing the building. The result is 20 delightful bedrooms with touches of indulgence, including homemade shortbread and complimentary Noble Isle toiletries.

**Commended: Northcote Manor, Devon**

Northcote Manor is a manor house dating to the 18th century, hidden in 20 acres of woodlands and gardens in the heart of the North Devon countryside. There is an aura of quiet relaxed sophistication throughout; guests leave with their batteries recharged after a bit of self-indulgent escapism.

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