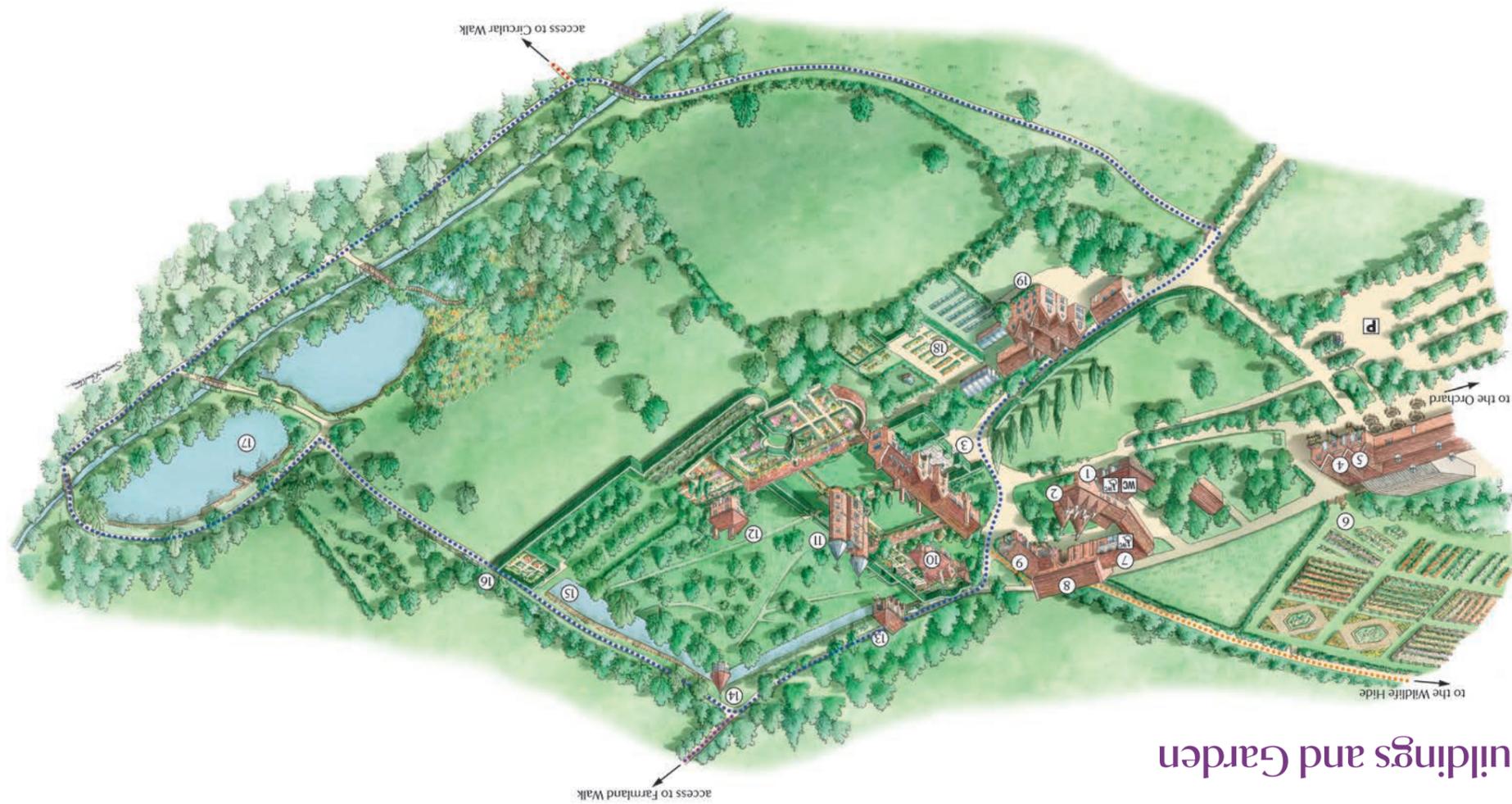


With 78 steps to the top, the tower is worth the climb for the views alone. Built in the 1560's it was then the centre of the Sissinghurst estate, it now houses an exhibition space. On the way up be sure to look into Vita's personal study. Regular updates on the blackboard at the garden entrance. Known to Vita and Harold as the 'Big Room' the library was converted by them from the farm stables. It is presented by the Nicolson family. The house are still occupied by the Nicolson family. The garden is available to hire through National Trust cottages, soaking up the atmosphere.

Garden History



Map of the Buildings and Garden

- Key:
- Car Park
 - WC and Baby Change Facilities
 - Accessible WC
 - Visitor Reception and Information
 - East House Exhibition
 - Entrance to Garden
 - The Garden Shop
 - The Coffee Shop
 - Vegetable Garden
 - Garnery Restaurant
 - Elizabethan Barn
 - The Gift Shop
 - Priest's House Holiday Cottage
 - Tower & Garden (privately owned)
 - South Cottage (privately owned)
 - Boat House
 - Gazebos
 - Moat
 - Entrance to Lake/Circular Walks
 - Lakes
 - Propagation Area (no access)
 - Sissinghurst Castle Farmhouse B&B
 - Lake Walk (1 mile)
 - Wildlife Hide Walk (1/2 mile)
 - Farmland Walk (1 1/2 miles)

Get in touch...

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... and stay in touch

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For alternative formats, please
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Welcome to
Sissinghurst

A quick introduction

Vita Sackville-West and Harold Nicolson moved to Sissinghurst Castle in 1932 and started creating the now world-famous garden at the heart of the estate.

However, Sissinghurst actually began life as a Saxon pig farm and within a few years had become a small moated manor house, lived in by a family who shared their name with the place; the de Saxingherstes. Nothing remains today of the original house except for part of the moat.

By the late 16th century the site had been transformed by the affluent Baker family who built a magnificent Renaissance courtyard house, complete with vaulted gallery, 37 fireplaces and tower at its centre.

Leased to the government during the Seven Years War (1756-1763),

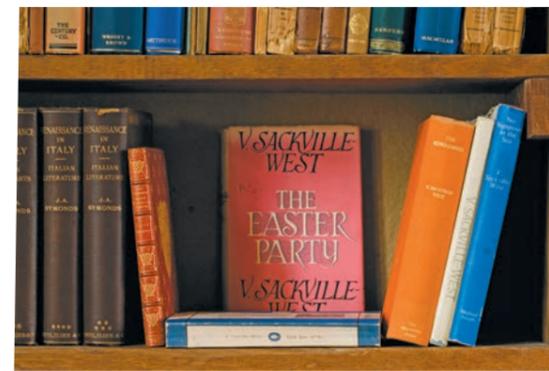
Sissinghurst was used as a prison camp for 3000 captured French sailors who largely destroyed the house. It is from this period that Sissinghurst became known as Chateau de Sissingherst or Sissinghurst Castle.

In 1796 the Parish of Cranbrook took out a lease on Sissinghurst Castle Farm, creating a poor house where up to 100 men were offered housing, employment and food.

By the 1800's Sissinghurst was home to the Mann Cornwallis family who repaired the remaining buildings, leaving their legacy on the tower weather vanes marked 'MC 1839'.

Today Sissinghurst is also a working farm with cattle, sheep and pigs and home to rare species of wild flowers, insects and birds.

Map of the Sissinghurst Estate



Some of Sissinghurst's best bits

If you don't have time to see absolutely everything today, then here's a few suggestions we think might interest you:

... for curious minds

Learn about Vita and Harold's life in our exhibitions.

Don't miss Vita's writing room in the tower.

Perch on the sofa in the library and immerse yourself in literary history.

Join one of our daily talks to learn about aspects of Sissinghurst.



... for foodies

Learn about the good life whilst strolling around our working vegetable garden.

Pop in to the restaurant to taste our home-grown food.

Take a relaxing stroll through our working farm to see what animals you can see.



... for families

Borrow exploring packs from visitor reception.

Re-charge your batteries with our family menus.

Pick up our garden quiz from visitor reception when you arrive.



... for explorers

Follow the path down and around the lakes.

Grab your binoculars and head down to our bird hide.

Seek out stunning views at the edges of our estate.

... for more ideas of what to see throughout the year, come and talk to us in the Visitor Reception



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