





# CHIDDINGSTONE CASTLE

## TREASURE IN THE GARDEN OF ENGLAND

Steeped in an endearing mix of recent and past history, and nestling in the beautiful, rolling Kent Weald, Chiddingstone Castle is one of the county's foremost, but lesser-known, treasures. Set in 35 acres of grounds including a lake, a rose garden and woodland, this attractive country house is situated in the heart of the village of Chiddingstone, itself dating back to the 15th Century. The property's origins date from the 1550s when High Street House, as the Castle was known, was home to the Streatfeild family. Several transformations have since taken place and the present building dates back to 1805 when Henry Streatfeild extended and remodelled his ancestral home in the 'castle style', after William Atkinson, which was then fashionable.



Rescued from creeping dereliction in 1955 by the gifted antiquary Denys Bower, the castle became a home for his amazing and varied collections. With a genius for spotting masterpieces before they had been discovered, he amassed a stunning collection of Japanese armour, swords and lacquer as well as Egyptian antiquities, Buddhist artifacts, Jacobean manuscripts and paintings.

Today, you can still enjoy his eclectic collections, exhibitions devoted to Castle and local history as well as the Victorian Kitchen.

### CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

#### Activity Rooms, Backpacks and Bingo Cards

Our two dedicated activity rooms offer the opportunity for parents and children of all ages to create their own arts and crafts including an origami Samurai helmet, peg doll or Egyptian sarcophagus mask. They can also dress up as historical characters, construct a model pyramid, play with Japanese writing blocks, help with chores in the Victorian Kitchen, or write their name with magnetic Egyptian hieroglyphs.

'Alex the Explorer' backpacks help children explore the Castle and exhibitions in a fun and



interactive way. Borrowed with your admission ticket, they include an activity pack, crayons, magnifying glass, magnetic board and string. Bingo cards are also available to spot objects around our beautiful grounds – with a prize for each child on completion.

#### Activity Days

15 fun family activity days, free with a family season pass, run throughout the year. They run rain or shine and full details are on our website (you can download an information leaflet). Themes include:

*Discover the Dinosaurs:* Make your own fossil and dinosaur, face painting.

*Victorian Day:* Make your own sugar mouse, hair curling, interactive performance.

*Japanese Day:* Taiko drumming workshop, Japanese writing, Samurai mask making.

*Castle Creepy Crawlies:* Nature trail, arts and crafts, bouncy castle and face painting.

#### Schools

School visits, including tours of the collections and interactive learning to tie in with the National Curriculum can be arranged. Prices are £5 per child for a 2 hour Victorian or Egyptian session. The Castle is also available for teacher training sessions. Contact [events@chiddingstonecastle.org.uk](mailto:events@chiddingstonecastle.org.uk) or telephone 01892 872746.

Denys Eyre Bower

