

Episode 64 UK Travel Planning Podcast - Introduction to Expedition Yorkshire with Andrew Ward

Welcome to the UK travel planning podcast. Your host is the founder of the UK travel planning website Tracy Collins. In this podcast, Tracy shares destination guides, travel tips, and itinerary ideas as well as interviews with a variety of guests who share their knowledge and experience of UK travel to help you plan your perfect UK vacation. Join us as we explore the UK from cosmopolitan cities to quaint villages, from historic castles to beautiful islands, and from the pick West Country Side to Seaside Towns.

Tracy Collins [00:00:37]:

Hi, and welcome to episode 64 of the UK travel plan podcast. In this week's episode, I'm joined by guest Andy Ward, the founder and owner of private tour company expedition Yorkshire. Andy talks about the various Jersey off across Yorkshire and beyond, plus their benefits have taken a private driver guided tour. So if you are considering a visit to the beautiful English County of Yorkshire, this is the perfect episode for you. I began by asking Andy to introduce himself and share a little of his background and motivation for starting expedition Yorkshire. Hi, Andy. It's good to have you on

Tracy Collins [00:01:10]:

the podcast. Would you like to introduce yourself and tell us a little bit about your background and why you started expedition Yorkshire?

Andy Ward [00:01:17]:

Yeah. Sure. thanks very much, Tracy, for having me on this podcast. So I actually worked in, literally, maybe not every tour format there is, but many different tour formats. I've worked with, a company that flew hot air balloons over Europe, with guests on board, and then I would do the ground based tours. I've worked with a company that did tours in minis, in London, in classic 1960s minis, and I've worked with a company that did long distance tours in buses where I was giving the tour and I was driving the bus all at the same time. And I did all of these different tour mat tour formats over about a decade. and everything was going swimmingly well. Probably, truth be talked to you and I, getting a little bit cocky, and then the pandemic. And, like, lots of people, pandemic had lots of effects, and I I never want to sound light about this because I know so many people suffered so badly. But like a lot of people, it also made you think about what you're gonna do next. And in my case, I and my wife, Joe, who is American, which has a big, the reason why I mentioned it, because it has a sort of big impact on things. And, our little boy, we decided to move up to the north of England to start again, at least to move up here because we love it up here, and to start a tour company. because this time, I I wanted my own company doing my own thing in with my own own form, my own way of doing things. So, yep, we came up here and I started expedition Yorkshire. And it's small, high quality private tours. You get me for the day, which You might consider a good thing, and you get the Mercedes Benz V Class, which is always a good thing. It's extremely comfortable. And I show you the best bits of Yorkshire, the best bits of

north the the north of England, and going on up into Scotland as well, depending, of course, which, which to use

Tracy Collins [00:03:22]:

Okay. So I'm gonna ask because, obviously, I mean, you've said that you moved up to Yorkshire. So I can hear from your accent being a northern girl that you you are originally Northern. So would you like to start where you originally from London, Andy?

Andy Ward [00:03:34]:

So, actually, very originally, I'm, from Glasgow, but you wouldn't necessarily guess it by, cause that's where I was born. I can't see that coming. Did you know?

Tracy Collins [00:03:44]:

I did not. Yeah.

Andy Ward [00:03:45]:

But very originally, I was yeah. No. Very originally, but I left there when I was three years old, not on my own. It was with was with my parents. I'm yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:03:53]:

Oh, that's good job.

Andy Ward [00:03:53]:

I my wanderlust is big, but it wasn't that big. So, yeah, most of my life I've spent in London, and Perhaps maybe when I first came up here, I felt just between you, me, and all the listeners are horrible fraud. because I'm not Yorkshireman. I'm absolutely not Yorkshireman, but I did do my first degree up in Yorkshire, And my wife, Joe, and I had taken many holidays up here because Yorkshire is amazing. and, Joe absolutely loved it. And when I came up here, I committed to know as much as possible. And they do say that, you know, converts are the most extreme, aren't they?

Tracy Collins [00:04:37]:

Absolutely. And, yes. And, of course, you because you've run your business in Yorkshire, Finding out everything about Yorkshire and sharing your love for the county is perfect when you do your tours, isn't it? Great way to do it. Great way to get that. Share that love

Andy Ward [00:04:51]:

1000%, 1000%.

Tracy Collins [00:04:53]:

So would you like to talk about some of the tours that you offer? Cause I know that you've got some fantastic tours -- including an an old creature's great and small one, which I'm excited to be going on, you know, Christmas, which will be excellent. And I know a lot of our American listeners and particularly absolutely love all creatures great and small, so they'll be very excited to hear about that. Talk us through some of the most popular shows that you offer, Andy.

Andy Ward [00:05:16]:

Yes. So we offer 3 off the shelf tours, 3 tours have already been tested and tested and tested and different bits added and taken away to give you, you know, the very, very best day possible. And the three tours that we currently offer are the more coast and cliff tour, which goes out to Whitby and the North Sea coast. We also offer the fell valley and Castle tour, which goes to the Yorkshire Dales National Park. And we also offer a transfer tour. This is a tour that goes only in one direction. you don't come back from it, which sounds very ominous, I know. but it's perfectly harmless because we go from York through to Edinburgh. So at the end of the day, you find yourself in Edinburgh, and you've seen all the incredible Sites and landscapes between York and Edinburgh, which are many and numerous.

Tracy Collins [00:06:14]:

Ah, yes. And you go through Northumberland, which, of course, is my home county. So that's lovely to hear.

Andy Ward [00:06:19]:

We do indeed. And and and Northumberland is a hidden gift to the world. It's England's hidden secret.

Tracy Collins [00:06:26]:

certainly is we need to not tell too many people about it, Andy. So that's a very popular chair.

Tracy Collins [00:06:32]:

I know that's a very popular chair. You've said

Tracy Collins [00:06:34]:

that, taking people up from York to Edinburgh?

Andy Ward [00:06:36]:

It's at the moment, almost our most popular tour, although the all creatures, great and small tourists coming up on the inside. So, yeah, it's really popular, the York Edinburgh turn. you never know precisely why something is is loved or is really popular, but I think I can take a guess, which is people often say to me, but but Andrew, there's a train that goes between

your Canberra. And that is absolutely correct. And it's a very fast train. It's a very good train. I love trains, and, my son, Max, 5, loves them even more than I do. But the issue is that it's so fast that you don't see much. And also, if you're coming from your hotel, you gotta get your bags packed and get out of the hotel and then get a taxi and then get on the train and go on the train and do the reverse when you get up to Edinburgh. or vice versa. And what that means is, is that one day of your holiday more really felt like transport didn't really feel like a holiday. And when every day, every hour, every minute, and every second of your beautiful holiday, or in a many of you call it vacation counts, That's not a good thing. And that's where Expedition Yorkshire comes in. We pick you up from your hotel in the morning, I load your cases on board. You sit on board. We talk about, you know, some of the stuff that you love and and and kind of what what interests you and all the rest of it. And then we make our way north or south, depending which direction the tour is flowing in. and you see lots of amazing things today. They don't just see them. You experience them because we're in these, you know, vast, amazing landscapes. And at the end of the day, you're at your destination. You just step out and you're there. We eliminate the hassle.

Tracy Collins [00:08:31]:

Well, that sounds perfect. And I know lots of people would be very interested in that, Andy, because there's to say it's a perfect way to to do the transfer, but also to see, parts of the country as well as you travel. So perfect. Absolutely brilliant. Can I ask you to talk through, one of your tours in Yorkshire and, you know, how would a day pan out for somebody who booked the 2 with you?

Andy Ward [00:08:54]:

Yeah. Sure. Absolutely. So that I'm gonna pick for this question, actually, is the all creatures, great and small tour, because we get so many inquiries now about it, and we're doing quite a few of them. For those who don't know, all creatures great and small was a book written by a man who was he was he was known by his nomenclature. Am I pronouncing that correctly? Is is written name a picture.

Tracy Collins [00:09:18]:

Yeah. Nom De Plume.

Andy Ward [00:09:19]:

Nom De Plume. That's the one. Nom De Plume.

Tracy Collins [00:09:21]:

That's it.

Andy Ward [00:09:22]:

Which was James Herriot. And James Herriot actually originates from Glasgow. I think that's where our similarity stops. I'm not gonna hand that up too much. But James Harriet comes

down to the Orchard Dales, and he worked for a vet for the for the bigger part of his life. And he writes lots of stories, not just about the animals that they're, of course, fascinating, but also the people He met along the way as a vet in the extraordinary circumstances he often found himself in. And, there was big TV series that came out on ABC, I think, in America or, PBS, it's beautifully shot I think the 1st of the new series came out in 2020. It's really stunning. If you haven't seen it yet, it's it's incredible Nicholas Ralph is wonderfully cast, as James Harrier, and it's really a gem of a show. And what we do is we drive up through the Yorkshire's National Park pointing out some of the locations, some of the best and most important locations used in in the show. Now, the chances are that If you book this tour, you might be really into the your show, but your partner, your husband, your wife, your brother, sister friends, They might never have seen the show. They might not actually be that into the show. It doesn't matter because we go into the into the world that James Herritt knew, which is the Yorkshiredale's National Park, which is absolutely stunning. I mean, I'm Of course, I'm biased, but it is very, very beautiful, lonely planet called it, I think, Europe's Number 1 National Park a few years ago. It's a really, a very, very special place. And we spend the day exploring the Yorkshire National Park and talking a bit about James Harriet and pointing out a few other things as well so that everybody on that tour amongst your group is gonna be happy, no matter whether they're all creatures grant small aficionados, or they're not that familiar or couldn't care that much, whatever it is. You will all be treated with great respect, love, and honor.

Tracy Collins [00:11:29]:

Perfect. That sounds wonderful. And is that so you you picked people up from their accommodation? And then is that what sort of time scales are we talking here, Andy?

Andy Ward [00:11:37]:

Yeah. So I generally pick people up around 9 AM if they wish to adjust that time within reason they're most welcome, and then we generally go through to about 1 o'clock or so lunchtime, would normally back anywhere between about 6 to

Andy Ward [00:11:57]:

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Andy Ward [00:11:57]:

o'clock. I never watched the clock. It often depends on how the depth of interest that people have. You know, some people want something in headlines. Quick move on. you know, other people want to spend, you know, 20 minutes a half an hour in one key location. That's absolutely fine. Obviously, we're back a bit later, so I never So exactly when we're back, but, you know, in the in the earlier past the evening, so you you're free to do other things in the evening if if you want.

Tracy Collins [00:12:21]:

Okay. That's great. And also, that's a beauty, isn't it? having your own private chair is that you have that flexibility. and I've talked quite often about, because we know it's a little bit more expensive if you're gonna book a private to for yourself, but it comes with huge, huge advantages. And if you're, you know, if you're planning a vacation travel around the UK and you can, you know, I would highly recommend that you look at doing a private chair. So the advantages, obviously, Andy, is that you do the driving.

Andy Ward [00:12:48]:

Absolutely. I do the driving. The advantages really are, and thank you for stating that are numerous. I do the driving. a lot of the areas we visit, the driving is very complicated because the roads are extremely narrow and steep. Then the other thing is okay, you might have that advance on a public tour as well, but where the advances really stack up, you have to think when you're booking a tour or booking your activities on any holiday you're planning. But just being there, just waking up and having your breakfast is extremely expensive once you divide. the flight, you know, in the hotel, between the number of days you have, that gives you your base cost of a day. So if you have a tour where you have to share it with 52 other people. You don't really like half those people. And, you know, maybe you like them. Maybe they're great, but you know, you kinda, you gotta follow their stick and what have you, maybe it's a tool you don't like, then that is a whole wasted day of your holiday. At Expedition Yorkshire, we we treat the the fact that you've chosen to come to the UK with unbelievable respect and love And, you know, that's a huge thing that you're doing. And I always try and work as hard as I can to give you the very, very best to possible. And and it's just you and your friends on board or your family and and that in itself is special.

Tracy Collins [00:14:09]:

Oh, that's fantastic. So I'm gonna ask you in a in a bit about how people can book with you, but I know you mentioned earlier that you've got some new tours coming out in the new year. So I think it'll be useful to actually share some of those because I think you're doing a bit more of the kind of, York Edinburgh type of transfer, which I think, listeners will be very interested here about.

Andy Ward [00:14:28]:

Absolutely. So in the new year, we'll almost certainly be offering a southbound transfer that will take you York to London via it doesn't have to be via this, and we're we're not actually fixed yet, but probably via chatsworth. because that's a stately home that many, many want to see. For those of you who are not re into stately homes, bit more action. We can do a southbound by Silverston and the British racing, British motorsport museum. If that's your if that's your thing, so we'll really be mixing it up in the new year. We'll be offering tours that just aren't offered at the moment, really, by

Tracy Collins [00:15:07]:

Oh, that's no. That's great.

Andy Ward [00:15:08]:

And there's a few other things. Keep keep tuned. There's some stuff I'm I'm not quite ready to talk about yet, but -- Okay.

Andy Ward [00:15:14]:

which will be Mega Mega in the New Year. Thank you.

Tracy Collins [00:15:17]:

Oh, that's brilliant. And you know what? You you can come back on in the New Year when you've when you've got those kind of finalized and we can we can do that can talk about that on the podcast because that'd be brilliant. I mean, I'm very excited about the fact that you're gonna be doing a York London trip because we are often asked about getting to Chatsworth. and it is difficult to get to chats with. so if if that, you know, this is a brilliant way to do it so that you can incorporate that trip down to your to from York to London and also visit someone like Chatsworth if that's what you wanna do or Silverston or if you're interested in that as well. So there's some some perfect opportunity. There's a great opportunity. I'm glad that, yeah, she offering that, Andy.

Andy Ward [00:15:53]:

Thank you.

Tracy Collins [00:15:53]:

I can see a lot of interest in that. so I just wanted to ask as well. So if somebody who wants to book with you, obviously, I'm gonna put a link in the show notes for the episode, which is episode 64, will be in the show notes on our website. So if anybody wants to book, they can go via that link. But, obviously, the other way is that they can go direct with you. Is that correct?

Andy Ward [00:16:12]:

Yeah. So, you can put, you know, direct off our our website, although, you know, you might have questions. You might just wanna chat to me to check that I am real. I am real. And, you know, you can get in contact through the website. You can ring me up. You can email me whatever you feel comfortable with. We pride ourselves on being an extremely personal company. You will never, ever, ever have with us a chatbot Okay. Cause or any of those automated because I can't stand them, so I don't want my customers having to face up to that nonsense. Okay? so, you know, you can get in contact with me. If there's something that you're concerned about or something special that you had in mind, then let me know. That's the other thing. If you've got imagination and the way you wish to use the Mercedes V class, which, and and myself, which is legal, then please get in contact because we can we can probably do it we already do things like, location scouting for films and that kind of thing. So

Tracy Collins [00:17:12]:

that's really excited. So how many people can you fit in your van? That's also worth knowing how many what's the large size group that you can take.

Andy Ward [00:17:18]:

Yeah. So we're we're licensed by the very venerable and wonderful, city of York council. We're licensed by city of York council. to take up to 7 people.

Tracy Collins [00:17:26]:

Okay. That's perfect. And, so, obviously, expedition Yorkshire dotcom is your URL?

Andy Ward [00:17:32]:

Correct. Thank you.

Tracy Collins [00:17:33]:

Yeah. So people can pop over there and check that. But as I say, it will be I will put the link in the show notes as well so people can pop over that way.

Andy Ward [00:17:40]:

you can also, follow us if you're quite shy, you just want to follow us. You can follow us on Expedition_ Yorkshire or @expedition_ Yorkshire on Instagram.

Tracy Collins [00:17:53]:

Oh, perfect.

Andy Ward [00:17:53]:

And, you'll see some of the stuff that we do. We we try and put photos up you know, when we're out and about. Yeah.

Tracy Collins [00:17:58]:

And I follow you. I have to say, do check out what you've been doing, so and it looks excellent. So, I I can't wait. I'm really looking forward to to join a new in December. this I'm gonna end the podcast. I'm really I'm so happy that you came on, to chat about, expedition Yorkshire. We're very careful about who we take on board as our preferred partners. And I know you're a perfect fit for us, so it's very exciting. But I wanna ask, the one that ask everybody to share at the end of a podcast, which is the one tip that you would share with anybody visiting Yorkshire for the first time.

Andy Ward [00:18:29]:

I don't think that you can come to Yorkshire without visiting Castle Howard. At the very minimum, you need to find out that it's not actually a castle. Okay. But at the same time, it won't leave you disappointed It's amazing.

Tracy Collins [00:18:42]:

Excellent. We should do a leave listeners with that, and then they can I can share a little bit of information about Castle Howard in the show notes, but, obviously, on your your tours of incorporate, Castle Howard?

Andy Ward [00:18:53]:

yeah. We we can very much incorporate it even if it's just some people will ask us to actually stop and they want to look around, and that's fine. or some people just wanna drive by on the way on the way to Whitby and we can do that as well. But, yeah, I try and I try and incorporate on the the tours where the geography makes sense. I turn incorporate Castle Howard.

Tracy Collins [00:19:12]:

Okay. That's brilliant. Oh, so thanks very much, Andy, for coming on to the podcast. And, I'm sure we'll we'll chat again, in the, yeah, find out about all your new tours and and share those with listeners. but it's been great chatting with you today.

Andy Ward [00:19:24]:

It's been a pleasure. Thank you for having me.

Tracy Collins [00:19:28]:

Once again, thanks to Andy for coming onto the podcast. You can find details of the places and tours, Andy mentioned, plus a link to the expedition Yorkshire website in the episode show notes at uktravelplanning.comforward/episode64.

Tracy Collins [00:19:43]:

That just leaves me to say until next week, happy UK travel planning.