

JOURNEY TO HIGHCLERE CASTLE & EDWARDIAN ENGLAND

APRIL 28 - MAY 5, 2015



On this adventure into the 'World of Downton Abbey' we will visit film sites, places immediately recognizable from the show, but also highlight places that would have been a part of the world of the Crawley family. See stately homes, stunning gardens, classical British sites like Oxford and Winchester. Explore what life was like in the time period of Downton, through the Great War, the Suffragette Movement, the rise of 'new American money' families and the emerging art and writing communities like The Bloomsbury group. Along the way, see Jane Austen's cottage, enjoy sumptuous afternoon teas, country pub meals and time in the ever evolving capital city of London, a favourite of every age!



ITINERARY

DAY 1 • TUESDAY, APRIL 28

Arrival into London Heathrow Airport, where you will be met as you exit the customs hall.

Welcome to London! Enjoy a panoramic tour of the capital, themed to “Life as a Lord or Lady in London of the Roaring 20s.” Our route will take us through the Western Borough of Ealing, past the white facade of **Ealing Studios**. Built in 1902 and made famous by the ‘Ealing Comedies’ of the 1950s, inside is where ITV films the interior servant quarters of Downton Abbey.

Learn of the rise of top retailers **Selfridges** and **Harrods**; go via Bond Street and Savile Row, the “golden mile of tailoring,” hearing stories of the Royal and famous clients. Mayfair is where fashion and art meet, the small winding streets full of art galleries and fashion boutiques. Also see the Bloomsbury neighborhood of Virginia Woolf and friends, many of the artists and writers who shaped the era.

WELCOME EVENT – AFTERNOON TEA AT FORTNUM & MASON

Fortnum & Mason, synonymous with London high quality since 1707. See the store itself and dine in style with a traditional, quintessentially British Afternoon Tea. In 1926, this famous grocery store was transformed into a unique department store with a restaurant. The tradition of taking tea and that “little bit of something” between lunch and dinner had long been a feature of smart households, and in the Roaring Twenties at Fortnum’s, it was defined by a menu featuring the finest teas, delicate sandwiches and exquisite cakes. It remains the place for high society dining, an experience for you to discover yourself today!

Evening free for individuals to recover from their international journey at their leisure.

ACCOMODATIONS

Sloane Square Hotel, London

sloanesquarehotel.co.uk

or similar BB & Afternoon Tea

DAY 2 • WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29

Free day to explore London as you choose.

London offers no shortage of iconic places to visit - the Tower, Westminster Abbey and St Paul’s Cathedral among them. Then there’s Shakespeare’s Globe Theatre, Kensington Palace, Hampton Court, Kew Gardens, V&A with its fashion collections... London has a wide array of parks, gardens and museums of all shapes and sizes. Attention shoppers: Harrods and Sloane St are a short walk away and right on your doorstep, the Kings Road offers a selection of the usual UK High Street shops and a few small boutiques that recall its heyday as heart of ‘Swingin’ 60s’ London. What to do? The choice is yours!

On our theme is the poignant Imperial War Museum. Walk in the boots of the brave soldiers in the trenches of WWI and life on the London Home Front. Explore artifacts, interactive displays, tanks, airplanes and other battlefield remnants from both world wars.

Directly on our theme, the 14th Century former Carthusian monastery The Charterhouse is located near the Smithfield Markets and Barbican Theatre complex. Downton Abbey used this historic location for some political rally scenes and is one place Branson drove Lady Sybil. In real life, the building has served as private mansion, a boys’ school and an almshouse, as it remains today. Tours are offered on Wednesdays by the local Brothers BY PRE-BOOKED TICKET ONLY, subject to availability. If you are interested in this option, please advise us at time of booking so we may make arrangements on your behalf.

Evening free for the option to attend the theatre. SGT is available for ticket assistance, subject to availability, as guests wish. From the West End to Shakespeare’s Globe to lesser known gems like the Royal Court opposite your hotel, London is a top destination for theatre, opera and concerts!

ACCOMODATIONS

Sloane Square Hotel, London

sloanesquarehotel.co.uk

or similar BB

DAY 3 • THURSDAY, APRIL 30

CLIVEDEN NT

A full day today as we make our way out of London and into the countryside, with the Astor family's magnificent country gardens at Cliveden, our first destination. Follow in the footsteps of dukes, earls and royalty as you explore this formal series of gardens that include topiary, colorful seasonal planting in the Long Garden plus the celebrated parterre offering breathtaking views. Now a luxury hotel, for more than 300 years Cliveden was the glittering hub of high society, home to aristocracy and royalty and visited by many famous friends.

Explore the garden highlights on a private walk with a Cliveden gardens guide.

Enjoy a group meal together in Cliveden's Boudoir and Tote Rooms, the respective interconnecting sitting rooms of Lady and Lord Astor.

GREYS COURT NT

Sewn into a Tudor mansion is a mid 20th-century interior, with an 18th-century tweak. All edged with a medieval parkland, Greys Court is a rich patchwork of styles and stories. Greys Court provided a magical backdrop for a decadent family picnic scene during filming of series three of *Downton Abbey*. Chosen for its atmospheric setting with a country house backdrop, the house, maze and gardens are well worth visiting in any case!

Our group will have a history guided walk with Greys Court guide.

Group dinner at Eagle & Child Pub, once the meeting place for the writers group 'The Inklings,' members included JRR Tolkien and CS Lewis. Yes, this is where Alice, The Hobbits and other well known literary characters were first discussed!

Joining us for a special chat is *Downton Abbey* author Jessica Fellowes.



As the author of the two worldwide bestsellers, *The World of Downton Abbey* and *The Chronicles of Downton Abbey*, both official companion books to the hit TV series and niece of the show's creator and writer, Julian Fellowes, she offers the unique position of being able to talk about the real-life inspirations of *Downton Abbey*, inspired by history or her own family. Her 3rd novel is scheduled to be released early 2015!

ACCOMODATIONS

Old Parsonage, Oxford

or similar BB & Lunch

DAY 4 • FRIDAY, MAY 1

BLenheim PALACE

Today see the incredible treasure house and garden estate **Blenheim Palace**, given to Winston Churchill's ancestor John, 1st Duke of Marlborough. The superb collection here includes fine paintings, furniture, bronzes and the famous Marlborough Victories tapestries. In addition to the opulent palace itself, see the amazing gardens, designed in part by 'Capability' Brown.

Enjoy a private guided walk featuring life at the palace during the Great War and through the 1920s.

SWAN AT SWINBROOK

The lovely Cotswold village of **Swinbrook**, a quintessentially English village where time has stood still, hosted the elopement of Lady Sybil with the family chauffeur Branson in the second series of *Downton Abbey*. Here too are connections to the notorious Mitford sisters, the property still owned by Debo, the Dowager Duchess of Devonshire.

OXFORD

The remains of our day will be spent exploring 'city of the dreaming spires' **Oxford**. See Christchurch College with its Harry Potter, Alice in Wonderland and Inspector Morse connections; yes this is also where our Lord Grantham read Philosophy! One of the epicentres for the Suffragette movement, Oxford was among the first to provide higher education opportunities for women and, from the early 1920s, women finally won the right to obtain degrees. A walking tour of the colleges will introduce you to these highlights and others.

Dinner is not included this evening so guests may explore more of Oxford at their leisure. This being a 'university town,' Oxford offers a vibrant nightlife, heaps of fine theatre, music and dining options:

oxfordcityguide.com/ee2/index.php?/SeeDo/theatre/

ACCOMODATIONS

Old Parsonage, Oxford

or similar BB

DAY 5 • SATURDAY, MAY 2

Today we will see a bit more of the lower Cotswolds as we make our way south into Hampshire.

BAMPTON

The ancient market town of Bampton, one of the oldest towns in England, has many pleasant 17th and 18th Century houses, a few inns and a Italianate Town Hall. Certainly to be recognizable as many outdoor scenes of Downton Abbey are filmed here, most notably St. Mary's Church and the library, which serves as the entrance to the cottage hospital.

BASILDON PARK NT

Basildon Park is an impressive Georgian mansion, surrounded by glorious parkland, which was lovingly rescued from ruin by Lord and Lady Iliffe in the mid 1950s. The house you see today is a re-creation and restoration of the 18th Century mansion. Basildon Park lit up the small screen in the Downton Abbey Christmas special 2013 as 'Grantham House,' the Crawleys' London residence. After an orientation chat with your guide, guests have free time to explore the estate independently.

Dinner included this evening together at our hotel.

Tynley Hall, a luxury hotel, is an elegant Grade II listed house set in 66 acres of formal gardens and parkland of a significant historical interest. Gertrude Jekyll was a notable horticulturist, garden designer, artist and writer of the turn of the last Century, highly influential in the Arts and Crafts movement. Jekyll created the gardens of Tynley Hall, they have been said to "represent a lifetime's achievement" for her. At one time, Tynley served as a make shift field hospital, much like Downton in the TV show. Our regular meals will be taken in the Oak Room Restaurant, where our group can enjoy beautiful views of the gardens and lawns.

ACCOMODATIONS

Tynley Hall Hampshire

or similar DBB

DAY 6 • SUNDAY, MAY 3

The county of Hampshire is a timeless place, one of the oldest regions in England, full of historical places of interest and the home setting for several great writers. Should we manage additional time today or tomorrow, there are many lovely gardens and countryside villages to meander through as we choose.

Jane Austen's cottage home at Chawton is now open as a museum. It was in this quaint village that she spent the majority of her later years and where she wrote or completed most of her most famous works, *Sense & Sensibility* and *Pride & Prejudice* amongst others. Also enjoy the village itself and the cottage gardens that Jane and her sister lovingly tended.

Later, a guided walking tour of the original Saxon capital of **Winchester** will introduce you to the general sights, including England's oldest public school. A place well known to several authors, this is Thomas Hardy's 'Wintonchester' and the final resting place for Jane Austen in **Winchester Cathedral**.

Together, enjoy a traditional Sunday lunch at a local country pub, **The Swan at Alton**, a former coaching inn with a rich history. Dine in the same location as former patrons Queen Elizabeth I, Sir Francis Drake, Admiral Lord Nelson and Jane Austen to name a few.

ACCOMODATIONS

Tynley Hall Hampshire

or similar BB & Lunch

DAY 7 • MONDAY, MAY 4 (BANK HOLIDAY)

10:30 HIGHCLERE CASTLE

Highclere Castle, perhaps the most well known setting for Downton Abbey, is one of England's most beautiful Victorian castles set amidst 1,000 acres of spectacular parkland. The Carnarvon family has lived at Highclere since 1679, and the current castle stands on the site of an earlier house, which was built on the foundations of the medieval palace owned by the Bishops of Winchester for some 800 years. Visitors follow a route exploring a bit of the worlds 'upstairs' and 'downstairs.'



SANDHAM WWI MEMORIAL CHAPEL NT – PRIVATE VISIT

Called 'Britain's answer to the Sistine Chapel' by some, this modest red brick building is home to stunning interior murals by Sir Stanley Spencer. Built to honour the 'forgotten dead' of the First World War, those who were not remembered on any official memorials, the series was inspired by Spencer's own experiences as a medical orderly and soldier, thus peppered with personal and unexpected details. This is the only National Trust property dedicated to the First World War.

FAREWELL DINNER RECEPTION AT TYLNEY HALL

A private dining experience together on our final evening in the Newnham Suite. Once the headmasters office, this is an impressive wood panelled suite with an open fireplace and views overlooking the vista.

ACCOMODATIONS

Tylney Hall Hampshire

or similar DBB

DAY 8 • TUESDAY, MAY 5

Depart for London Heathrow and your flight home.

11:50 or 12:50 LHR flight time.

YOUR TOUR PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- 6 touring days with personal driver/guide in 16 seat mini-coach vehicle
- all vehicle costs including petrol, parking, tolls, taxes
- all driver/guide expenses including out of London overnight accommodation
- Arrival & departure transfers for London Heathrow Airport
- 2 nights accommodation Sloane Square Hotel London (or similar property) with breakfast daily 2 nights Old Parsonage Hotel Oxford (or similar property) with breakfast daily
- 3 nights Tylney Hall Hotel Hampshire (or similar property) with breakfast daily
- Afternoon Tea at Fortnum & Mason London (2 tables in main dining room)
- Dinner at historic Eagle and Child Pub Oxford (in the conservatory)
- Sunday lunch at historic Swan at Alton
- Dinner in Oak Room restaurant at Tylney Hall
- Private dining with buffet meal in Boudoir & Tote rooms Cliveden House
- Private dining with 3 course 'farewell' dinner in Newham Suite Tylney Hall
- London panoramic tour
- Cliveden entrance with guided garden walking tour guide
- Greys Court entrance with history theme guided walking tour guide
- Blenheim Palace entrance with guided walking tour guide
- Christchurch College entrance fees
- Guided walking tour of Oxford colleges with driver/guide
- Basildon Park entrance fees
- Chawton Cottage entrance fees
- Winchester Cathedral entrance fees
- Special group entrance to Highclere Castle
- Special group entrance to Sandham Memorial Chapel
- Services of special speaker, author Jessica Fellowes

The final package cost may fluctuate as package inclusions change as to number of touring days with driver/guide, number of participants, special event inclusions etc.

PLEASE NOTE that all specific points of interest/events are subject to confirmation.

Current package cost does NOT include:

- Airfare
- Meals, tours or entrance fees not specifically mentioned in the above itinerary
- Theatre/opera/concert/optional tour tickets – available to be added on an individual guest basis, subject to ticket availability, for the appropriate supplemental cost

BOOKING

This tour is limited to 15 people. Please contact Kristen Holt Burkhartt for pricing.

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