

Aristocrats & Manor Houses & a Grand Tour to the North

21 to 30 July, 2019 & 11 to 20 August, 2019

\$7,182 (AUD) per person double occupancy

Our unforgettable tour explores the architectural grandeur and superb collections of some of Britain's finest estates, some still family homes to this day. We also discover how these dramatic properties and their society stories have inspired literature through the centuries as we travel from the Home Counties up to the rugged landscapes of the north.



Alnwick Castle



Highclere Castle



Beningbrough Hall

Special extras included in your itinerary

- ◆ Introductory house tour and Devonshire Cream Tea at Chatsworth House
- ◆ Refreshments at Fairfax House
- ◆ Guided tour of Fountains Abbey
- ◆ Private house tour with morning coffee and biscuits at Castle Howard
- ◆ Guided State Rooms tour at Alnwick Castle
- ◆ Audio guided tour and afternoon tea at Blenheim Palace
- ◆ Themed evening talk by a guest speaker

Ten Day Itinerary

Sunday: Arrival

On arrival at Heathrow airport, a private transfer will take you to our overnight hotel. In the evening you are invited to join the group for a welcome drink, followed by dinner.

Monday: Highclere Castle

After breakfast, we journey to the world-famous Highclere Castle, residence of the Earl and Countess of Carnarvon and filming location for the much loved *Downton Abbey* television series. Entrance includes access to the Egyptian Exhibition in the cellars of the castle, which explores the achievements of the 5th Earl of Carnarvon who discovered the tomb of Tutankhamen in 1922.

From here, we travel to Leicestershire and the Stapleford Park Country House Hotel where we stay for the next two nights. We enjoy dinner tonight at our hotel.



Highclere Castle



Chatsworth House Library

Tuesday: Chatsworth House and Nottingham

We start the day at Chatsworth House where we enjoy an introductory house tour. This magnificent pile is home to the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire and has witnessed sixteen generations of the powerful Cavendish family and boasts grandiose interiors, wonderful grounds and a superlative art collection. Chatsworth also appeared as Pemberley in the film *Pride and Prejudice*. We finish our visit with a Devonshire Cream Tea.

En-route back to our hotel, we make a short stop in Nottingham. One-time lace capital of the world, Nottingham is renowned for its landmark buildings, each which tells of its own chapter in Nottingham's history, including the Lace Market with its stunning architecture.

The evening is left free to make your own dinner arrangements.

Wednesday: Hardwick Hall, York and Fairfax House

Our first visit is to Hardwick Hall. Ordered in the 16th century by Bess of Hardwick, England's richest woman after her Queen, Elizabeth I, Hardwick is a striking Elizabethan treasure. The lavish number of windows (at a time when glass was a luxury) inspired the neat phrase, 'Hardwick Hall, more glass than wall'.

We then travel north to the historic city of York. Here we visit Fairfax House, a stunning Georgian town house that has been returned to its former glory, providing a perfect time capsule of life in Georgian times with a richly decorated interior and a fine collection of English 18th-century furniture. We enjoy refreshments here after our visit.

Afterwards, we make our way to our hotel for the next two nights, the Wood Hall Hotel. We enjoy dinner together at the hotel this evening.

Thursday: Fountains Abbey and Beningbrough Hall

This morning we go to the largest monastic ruin in Britain, Fountains Abbey, where we enjoy a guided tour. Nestling in the Skell Valley, the ruin is surrounded by some 800 acres of gorgeous countryside, including the Georgian Studley Royal Water Garden with its wonderful views, cascades, follies and statues, and a medieval deer park.

Our next stop is Beningbrough Hall. This imposing Georgian pile contains a famous



Castle Howard

art collection; an imaginative collaboration between the National Trust and the National Portrait Gallery in London. Outside are magnificent grounds including a wonderful Victorian Walled Garden and labyrinth.

After dinner at the hotel this evening, we enjoy a fascinating talk by a guest speaker.

Friday: Castle Howard and Shandy Hall

Designed by Sir John Vanbrugh, Castle Howard has twice appeared as *Brideshead* in film and television adaptations of Evelyn Waugh's classic novel. Home to the Howard family for over 300 years, this magnificent 18th-century residence offers world-renowned collections and stunning architecture, all set within 1,000 acres of breathtaking scenery. We enjoy a private guided tour followed by coffee.

We then make a stop at Shandy Hall, former home of the 18th-century novelist Laurence Sterne. Now a museum, the rooms are filled with books, paintings, manuscripts, prints and ephemera relating to the history of the house and its famous inhabitant.

Later, we check in to the Ramside Hall Hotel, our base for the next two nights where dinner is included on both nights of our stay.

Saturday: Alnwick Castle and Cragston

Still home to the Duke of Northumberland and his family, Alnwick Castle is the second largest inhabited castle in England. Inside the medieval walls are lavish State Rooms filled with

an eclectic array of furniture, ceramics and art collected by the Percy family over hundreds of years, which we discover on our guided State Rooms tour. Alnwick Castle has also been featured in *Downton Abbey* and *Harry Potter*.

We enjoy a scenic coastal drive to Cragston, built high into the rock above the clear waters of Debdon Burn. Once the home of Victorian inventor Lord Armstrong, this imposing house is packed to the rafters with fascinating gadgets from the era. It was also the first house in the world to be lit by hydro-electricity and in 2014, a fully-working Archimedes Screw was installed, once again producing enough energy to light the house.

Sunday: Nostell Priory

Today we visit Nostell Priory, an 18th-century architectural masterpiece which has been the home of the Winn family for 300 years. Set in landscaped parkland, Nostell is also home to England's best documented collection of Chippendale furniture, designed especially for the estate.

Later, we check back in to the Stapleford Park Country House Hotel, where we stay overnight with dinner included.



Alnwick Castle

What's Included

- ◆ Airport transfers from London Heathrow*
- ◆ 1 night at the Woodlands Park Hotel or the Macdonald Windsor Hotel
- ◆ 3 nights at the Stapleford Park Country House Hotel
- ◆ 2 nights at the Wood Hall Hotel
- ◆ 2 nights at the Ramside Hall Hotel
- ◆ 1 night at the Hartwell House Hotel
- ◆ Welcome drink and canapés
- ◆ Full English breakfast each day
- ◆ 3-course *table d'hôte* dinner on 8 nights at the hotels (with after dinner tea and coffee)
- ◆ Services of a tour director throughout your stay
- ◆ Travel to and from all excursions
- ◆ All excursion costs
- ◆ Porterage

**supplement applies for transfers from all other airports*

Monday: Blenheim Palace

We travel south and visit Blenheim Palace, undoubtedly one of Britain's greatest houses. Seat of the Dukes of Marlborough and the birthplace of Winston Churchill, Blenheim was designed on an awe-inspiring scale by Vanbrugh and is set in over 2,000 acres of beautiful parkland landscaped by 'Capability' Brown. We enjoy an audio guided tour followed by afternoon tea.

From here we travel to Hartwell House Hotel, one of the National Trust's Historic Hotels, where we enjoy a farewell dinner together.

Tuesday: Departure

A private transfer will take you back to Heathrow airport for your return flight home.

Please note: As this tour travels from the Home Counties to the north of England and back, some days will involve fairly long journeys.

Your Hotels

Night One (July 21 tour) – Woodlands Park Hotel, near Cobham

Night One (August 11 tour) – Macdonald Windsor Hotel, Windsor

Nights Two, Three and Eight – Stapleford Park Country House Hotel

Stapleford Park Country House Hotel is a beautiful country house hotel and golf course surrounded by 500 acres of Capability Brown grounds. The mansion bears the imprint of architectural styles, from Tudor to Victorian with all of the 21st-century amenities you would expect in a luxury hotel. Each room is individually decorated and many have been designed by famous names.

No single supplement – limited availability

Nights Four and Five – Wood Hall Hotel

Originally built as a country escape in 1790, the Wood Hall Hotel is a tranquil country house hotel perched high on a hill amidst 100 acres of rolling Yorkshire countryside. The hotel offers an elegant drawing room, Georgian restaurant and a small health club and spa with swimming pool, spa pool, steam room and gym while the bedrooms blend contemporary comforts with traditional country house charms.

Nights Six and Seven – Ramside Hall Hotel

Located close to the city of Durham, the Ramside Hall Hotel is set within a 350 acre estate and features two Championship golf courses. The hotel offers spacious bedrooms, each with stunning views over the beautiful grounds, four restaurants and lounge bars plus extensive leisure facilities including indoor and outdoor swimming pools, hydrotherapy pool, fitness suite and spa.

Night Nine – Hartwell House Hotel, near Aylesbury



FOR BOOKINGS & FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT YOUR PREFERRED TRAVEL AGENT OR

WILTRANS INTERNATIONAL AU: 1800 251 174 | NZ: 0800 446 376 | albionjourneys@wiltrans.com.au

**Price quoted in AUD per person double occupancy. Terms & Conditions apply.*