




Great Libraries and Stately Homes of England 2026

5 OCT – 20 OCT 2026

Code: 22637

Tour Leaders **Shane Carmody, Sam Brown**

Fitness Level 

Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

Unique, privileged access to England's great private libraries & famous institutions including the Bodleian Library, Magdalene & Trinity colleges, Ham House, Wormsley & Kew Gardens.

Overview

Visit great libraries and fine stately homes of England with bibliophile and historian [Shane Carmody](#) who has called upon his personal contacts to gain privileged access to special private libraries. Shane will be assisted by [Sam Brown](#), a PhD student based in London who has a particular interest in book history and provenance.

- Explore the magnificent libraries of the Church, State, universities and nobility in their sumptuous architectural settings, learning about the very special English relationship between famous people, grand architecture and their priceless collections of manuscripts and books.
- Encounter the work of England's great architects: Christopher Wren, William Kent, Sir John Soane, Sir Charles Barry and James Gibbs.
- Tour the great university library of Oxford, the Bodleian, and Cambridge college libraries at St John's, Trinity and Magdalene, assembled by luminaries like Samuel Pepys.
- Take a special private tour of the house of one of England's greatest architects and antiquarians, Sir John Soane, viewing his famous art and book collections.
- Visit the new Lambeth Palace Library. Completed in 2020 this new purpose-built library contains the major archive of the Anglican Church.
- Explore Westminster Abbey: its famous Library, Chapter House with medieval paintings, and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries set in the medieval triforium, hidden for over 700 years.
- Discover Ham House, arguably the best preserved 17th-century house in Europe, and its unique library, the earliest to survive unchanged in a private mansion.
- Tour Anglesey Abbey with its marvellous art collection including works by Canova, Lorraine, Constable, its fine library and extensive gardens.
- Visit the Fitzwilliam Museum, home to some of the finest extant illuminated manuscripts.
- Enjoy the choir of Kings College, Cambridge, at Vespers.
- Explore Holkham Hall, private home of Viscount Coke, and arguably the finest example of Palladian country house architecture in England.
- Visit Wormsley House, with its library built by Sir Paul Getty to house his remarkable collection; our hosts' generosity has made this a tour highlight for past participants.
- Tour the Rothschild's Waddesdon Manor containing a wonderful library of French books.
- End the tour in grand style with a visit to Windsor Castle and special access to Eton College's book and manuscript library, including Eton's rare copy of the Gutenberg Bible.
- Limited to 16 participants

Overnight London (5 nights) • Cambridge (5 nights) • Oxford (3 nights) • Windsor (2 nights)

Testimonials

This tour took me to unique places within England's popular destinations in a private viewing environment, which was very special, informative and comfortable at the same time. Stately homes opened just for our small group, libraries presenting their best books with curators responsive to any question, vast collections that go beyond books - herbariums, antiquities, art. Marina, NSW

We have had privileged access to extraordinary rare books, libraries, collections, parchments, manuscripts, artefacts and stately homes. This tour not only highlighted the significance of the book as an historical artefact but also its ongoing significance in the present and future. David, VIC

I gladly rate this tour as being 5 out of 5, if not an extra point more! ...Each time we were shown a college library it was as if we had just discovered the grave of Tutankhamun together...Wolfgang,

AUSTRIA

Leaders



Shane Carmody

A committed & articulate library historian, Shane has called upon his many personal contacts to create a tour matching great public libraries with privileged access to special private libraries.

Shane Carmody is a historian with a great love of libraries and archives. He has worked for the National Archives, the State Library of Victoria and the University of Melbourne Library. He is widely published on the history of Libraries and collections. Shane has managed major international exhibitions including *The Medieval Imagination: Illuminated Manuscripts from Cambridge, Australia and New Zealand* (State Library of Victoria 2008) and *Love and Devotion: From Persia and Beyond* (State Library of Victoria, 2012). Shane has presented papers at many conferences and his most recent project is a paper on the complete printing of Piranesi that was formerly part of the Library of the first Catholic Bishop of Melbourne, James Alipius Goold. Shane holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honours with a double major in History and Fine Arts from the University of Melbourne, and a Master of Arts in History and Historical Urban Geography from the University of Toronto. He currently leads ASA's *Great Libraries and Stately Homes of England*.



Sam Brown

Sam is a book historian researching encounters with the Arabic language in England pre-1635. She joined ASA in 2023 and assists Shane Carmody on the 'Great Libraries and Stately Homes of England' tour.

Sam is a PhD student at University College London, where her work sheds light on encounters with the Arabic language in Tudor and Stuart England. Her research takes her to libraries and archives around the UK — including many that feature on the tour — and she has a particular interest in book history and provenance. From 2022-3 she was a research assistant on David Pearson's [Book Owners Online](#), and in 2024 she was a British Library-National Trust doctoral fellow, investigating the provenance of Arabic manuscripts in both collections. Prior to developing a love for old books, Sam gained a Bachelor of Arts with Honours in Arabic and Islamic Studies from SOAS and embarked on a career in television, which saw her researching and producing documentaries for the BBC and other major broadcasters for nearly a decade. In 2018 she returned to academia to pursue her love of history, gaining a Master of Arts in Early Modern Studies from University College London. She assists Shane Carmody on ASA's *Great Libraries and Stately Homes of England* tour.

Combine this tour with

An Adriatic Journey: from Trieste to Dubrovnik 2026
20 SEP – 5 OCT 2026



Itinerary

The following itinerary lists a range of libraries, museums, galleries, churches etc which we plan to visit. Many are accessible to the public, but some require special permission, which may only be confirmed closer to the tour's departure. The daily activities described in this itinerary may change or be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate alterations in opening hours, flight schedules and confirmation of private visits. Participants will receive a final itinerary together with their tour documents prior to departure. The tour includes breakfast daily, and lunches and dinners as indicated in the itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch, and D=dinner.

London - 5 nights

Day 1: Monday 5 October, Arrive London

- Tour commences at 5.00pm in the foyer of the Citadines Holborn-Covent Garden
- Welcome Meeting
- Welcome Drinks

Meeting Point: The tour commences at 5.00pm in the foyer of the [Citadines Holborn-Covent Garden Apart Hotel](#). The official check-in time is 3.00pm. Following a brief welcome meeting, we share a welcome drink. (Overnight London)

Day 2: Tuesday 6 October, London

- The British Library, including a 'behind the scenes' tour of the Conservation Studios
- Sir John Soane's Museum, including Soane's private apartments and Research Library
- Welcome Dinner

We begin our tour at the British Library, the national library of the United Kingdom and the world's largest library, with over 170 million catalogued items including books, manuscripts, journals, newspapers,

magazines, sound and music recordings, videos, play-scripts, patents, databases, maps, stamps, prints, and drawings. The library receives a copy of every book published in the UK and Ireland in addition to purchasing books from around the world, so adds over 3 million items to its collections every year, requiring 10 kilometres of new bookshelves. We will limit ourselves in this vast collection to an introduction to the historical King's Library of King George III, given to the nation by George IV. Since the 1970s, this collection has been housed in the King's Tower, designed by the new British Libraries architect, Colin St John Wilson. We also take a private tour of the Centre for Conservation, where the iconic treasures of the Library are treated.

Sir John Soane (1753-1837), architect of such famous buildings as the Bank of England, was Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy from 1806. Throughout his working life, especially on his Grand Tour, he collected paintings, drawings, books, plaster casts, architectural models, ancient artefacts, furniture and decorative arts, which he kept in his own house, now his museum, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. When he became professor he gave his students easy access to study the wealth of objects and gain inspiration from them. We shall explore some of the thousands of items like Hogarth's painting series of *The Rake's Progress* in Soane's townhouse in rooms carefully preserved as closely as possible to the way they were when he bequeathed his collection to the nation. Our tour of the private apartments will include Soane's famed Model Room, where forty of the finest architectural models in the world are on display – depicting ancient monuments and Soane's own buildings – and we also enjoy a special tour of the Research Library to view items from Soane's impressive collection of some 7000 books.

Our day will close with our Welcome Dinner. (Overnight London) BD

Day 3: Wednesday 7 October, London – Richmond – Twickenham – London

- Ham House and Garden, including private library
- Lunch at Garden Café, Strawberry Hill House & Garden
- Private Tour of Strawberry Hill House & Garden

This morning we travel to Richmond. Ham House, designed by William Samwell (1628-1676), is considered one of Europe's greatest and most authentic 17th-century mansions. Its almost untouched interior houses a historic collection of textiles, furniture and paintings. Here we visit the earliest dedicated library room to survive in a private house. It dates from 1675 and was installed for the Duke of Lauderdale.

We then visit Strawberry Hill House, Horace Walpole's magnificent 18th century 'little gothic castle'. Set back from the River Thames in Twickenham. This enchanting House & Garden inspired Walpole to write the first ever gothic novel, 'The Castle of Otranto' and today, is internationally famous as Britain's finest example of domestic Georgian Gothic revival architecture and home to an increasingly important collection of paintings and objects.

Inspired by William Kent and the ideas behind the English Landscape Movement, Horace Walpole created a romantic garden to complement his Gothic castle. Formal borders mixed with groves of trees and shrubs crossed by winding paths, and flowers and fragrance were all important.

Lunch will be served in the Garden Cafe which occupies the ambient Great Cloister of Strawberry Hill House and enjoys glorious views across Horace Walpole's naturalist garden. (Overnight London) BL

Day 4: Thursday 8 October, London

- Westminster Abbey: Library, Chapter House and the [Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries](#)

- The Royal College of Surgeons of England Library

Our morning visit is to Gothic 13th- to 16th-century Westminster Abbey, Britain's coronation church since 1066. In the 10th century the Abbey was founded as a home to a community of Benedictine monks. Since the reign of Elizabeth I, Westminster has been a Royal Peculiar, that is, under the direct control of the Sovereign, and a Collegiate Church with a community of canons led by the dean. It is also a grand national memorial; many of Britain's greatest authors and poets are buried here and/or remembered in sculpted monuments.

The Abbey also has a significant library and archive. We will be given an introduction to the riches of this collection by a senior curator, followed by a viewing of some of the many valuable books and manuscripts it contains. Our tour includes the Chapter House, which has remnant wall paintings illustrating the *Book of the Apocalypse* copied from a medieval manuscript that is now part of the collection of Trinity College, Cambridge, which we will see later in our tour.

Opened in June 2018, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries are set more than 16 metres (52 feet) above the Abbey's floor in the beautiful 13th century triforium, an area that has remained hidden for over 700 years. Displaying 300 treasures from the Abbey's collection, many for the first time, the Galleries reflect the Abbey's thousand-year history. Highlights include the Westminster Retable (1259 – 69), the oldest surviving altarpiece in England from Henry III's Abbey; the Litlington Missal, a magnificent illuminated 14th-century service book made for the Abbey's high altar; and the 14th century Liber Regalis, a guide to staging coronations and royal funerals at the Abbey which still forms the basis of royal ceremonies today.

In the afternoon we return to Holborn. The Royal College of Surgeons of England possesses an outstanding library of surgical literature that dates from the late 15th century to the present day, documenting the achievement of British surgery from the 18th century onwards through its printed collections, prints, drawings and archives and in providing a provenance to the collections housed in the Hunterian Museum. (Overnight London) B

Day 5: Friday 9 October, London

- Lambeth Palace Library
- The Linnean Society of London incl. the Linnean Collections and Library
- Optional visit to Maggs Bros. Ltd – dealers of rare books and manuscripts since 1853

We begin today with a visit to the new Lambeth Palace Library. Housing the major archive of the Anglican Church, the collection is considered one of the most important religious archives in the UK and the largest in Europe, after the Vatican. For centuries this precious collection was held within the Great Hall of Lambeth Palace. Now, after 400 years, it has a purpose-built home. Completed in 2020 at a cost of £24 million, this new library was designed by Scottish architect Clare Wright. The library holds about 200,000 printed books – 30,000 dating from before 1700 – plus more than 5,000 manuscripts (600 medieval) as well as the correspondence of the Archbishops of Canterbury in an unbroken sequence from the 1860s onwards. Highlights include the famous 'Lambeth Apocalypse', a 13th-century illuminated text. During our visit we will be shown some of its remarkable treasures.

Following a light lunch at the Royal Society of Arts cafe, we enjoy a private tour of The Linnean Society of London in Burlington House, Piccadilly. Founded in 1788 by Sir James Edward Smith (1759–1828), it is the world's oldest active biological society and takes its name from the Swedish naturalist and taxonomist Carl Linnaeus (1707–1778) whose botanical, zoological and library collections have been in its keeping since 1829. It was at a meeting of the Society in 1858 that papers from Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace

outlining the theory of evolution by natural selection were first presented. Our tour will include visits to the Meeting Room, the fascinating Linnaean Collections and the grand Reading Room of the Library to view some of its treasures.

The rest of the afternoon will be at leisure with the opportunity to visit Maggs Brothers, one of the world's oldest antiquarian booksellers, at their main premises in Bedford Square, Bloomsbury. (Overnight London) BL

Cambridge - 5 nights

Day 6: Saturday 10 October, London – Cambridge

- The Waddesdon Bequest at The British Museum
- Pepys Library, Magdalene College (To be confirmed)

This morning we transfer to the British Museum to view the Waddesdon Bequest, a new gallery showing the priceless gift of Baron Ferdinand Rothschild and named after his rich estate that we visit later on tour. There will also be an opportunity to further explore the British Museum's remarkable collection.

We then depart London for the university city of Cambridge to explore its College Libraries, including the Pepys Library at Magdalene, gifted by the great diarist Samuel Pepys (1633-1703). His eyewitness account of life in the London of Charles II includes a famous account of the Great Fire of 1666. Pepys believed the Library of an educated man need hold no more than 3000 books and once he had arrived at that number any addition meant a book had to be discarded! One book to survive his occasional culls is a manuscript translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* used by William Caxton (1422-1491). Our tour includes an introduction to Samuel Pepys as a collector, information on the very fine classical library building (1670-1703) and its furniture, and a chance to see and hear about a range of items from the collection. We spend the next five nights in Cambridge, a centre of learning since the 12th century. (Overnight Cambridge) B

Day 7: Sunday 11 October, Cambridge – Audley End – Saffron Walden – Cambridge

- Audley End House and Gardens (Library to be confirmed in 2026)
- Medieval market town of Saffron Walden & St Mary the Virgin
- Afternoon at leisure: optional visit to Kings College Chapel Evensong

Today we visit a great country house that monarchs and aristocrats alike have used for over 400 years as a symbol of their wealth, status and power, as well as for their pleasure. This is Audley End, a fitting climax to our tour. Henry VIII gave Walden Abbey to Sir Thomas Audley, who transformed it into his mansion, Audley End. His grandson Thomas, first Earl of Suffolk, rebuilt this mansion between 1603 and 1614. The new Audley End was truly palatial in scale, but Suffolk fell from power after 1618. Charles II bought the house in 1668 and used it as a base for attending the Newmarket races. By the 1680s, Sir Christopher Wren was warning of the need for major repairs. The cost of these caused William III to return Audley End to the Suffolk family. When the Suffolk line died out in 1745, the Countess of Portsmouth bought the house for her nephew and heir, Sir John Griffin Whitwell, the fourth Baron Howard de Walden and first Baron Braybrooke. Today, the house's interior largely reflects the tastes of the third Baron Braybrooke, who inherited it in 1825. He installed his extensive picture collection here and filled the rooms with rich furnishings. The fourth Baron Braybrooke's natural history collection also remains an appealing feature of the house. After nearly thirty years in store, a rare set of English tapestries by the Soho weaver Paul Saunders has been conserved and displayed in the Tapestry Room. They depict figures in a landscape with ruined buildings and were

originally supplied to Audley End in 1767.

Audley's park and the fine Victorian gardens are just as glorious as its interiors. An artificial lake, created with water from the River Cam, runs through delightful 18th century parkland. The Classical Temple of Concorde, built in 1790 in honour of George III, and the restored 19th century formal parterre garden, dominate views from the back of the house. We will see Robert Adam's ornamental garden buildings, and the Elysian Garden cascade.

The medieval market town of Saffron Walden takes its name from saffron crocus (*Crocus sativus*) which was widely grown during the 16th and 17th centuries. The stigmas of the flower were used in medicines, as a condiment, in perfume and as expensive yellow dye. The town features many heritage buildings including one of the most beautiful parish churches in Essex, St Mary the Virgin. The church dates mainly from the end of the 15th century when an old smaller church was extensively rebuilt by the master John Wastell who also built King's College Chapel in Cambridge. Following some time at leisure for lunch we visit the church and take a walking tour to view the colourful half-timbered buildings which overhang the sloping medieval streets.

We return to Cambridge in the early afternoon and the rest of the day is at leisure. You may wish to attend the Sunday afternoon evensong service at the wonderful King's College Chapel to hear its famous choir and enjoy its soaring English Perpendicular Gothic architecture and beautiful stained glass, spared from destruction during the Reformation. (Overnight Cambridge) B

Day 8: Monday 12 October, Cambridge – Wimpole House – Anglesey Abbey – Cambridge

- Wimpole House, Library & Book Room
- Anglesey Abbey and Lord Fairhaven's Library

This morning we visit grand, classical Wimpole Hall (begun 1630) where Edward Harley, second Earl of Oxford, amassed the largest and most important collection of books and manuscripts ever assembled by a private individual in England; the manuscripts would later form the nucleus of the British Library collection. By 1720, Harley's guests were able to view his books in five beautiful, specially designed spaces, known as the Book Room, and later in the Library, an extension built by James Gibbs (1682-1754). Our tour will include a visit to the fine Library rooms and a display of the collections.

Following time at leisure for lunch at the Old Rectory Restaurant, we transfer to Anglesey Abbey, a beautiful Jacobean house built in 1600 on the site of a 13th-century priory. Here we shall explore the interior of the house in which Lord Fairhaven (1896-1966), son of an American Railway magnate, used great ingenuity in displaying his collections. His eclectic taste in art ranged from paintings by Antonio Canova and Claude Lorraine to those of John Constable. Lord Fairhaven also had a remarkable library, which we will explore. (Overnight Cambridge) B

Day 9: Tuesday 13 October, Cambridge

- Old Library & Rare Books Reading Room, St John's College
- Wren Library, Trinity College
- The Fitzwilliam Museum and Founder's Library

This morning we walk to St John's College to visit its Old Library, which houses the College's special collections. The College was founded in 1511 by Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of the first Tudor monarch Henry VII; the Old Library dates from 1624 and was a gift from John Williams, Bishop of Lincoln.

Built in the Gothic style, its oak shelves each have a little door that, when opened, reveals the list of books that they contained. The collection is rich in manuscripts and early printed books and we will be able to view some of these during our visit.

We next visit the Wren Library, Trinity College (1676-1695), designed by Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723). This superb building contains a statue of Byron (who broke every college rule when he was a student there) and some of the earliest manuscripts in the world including the *Epistles of St Paul*, produced in the 8th century. It also contains Newton's own copy of the first edition of *Principia* with his annotations for the second edition, and manuscripts by Milton, Tennyson and Thackeray, as well as A.A. Milne's *Winnie-the-Pooh*.

Our day concludes with a visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum to explore its collections of art and antiquities of Greece, Rome, Egypt, the Near East and Far East, all bequeathed by Richard Fitzwilliam, 7th Viscount Fitzwilliam (1745-1816). The museum, one of the oldest in the world, was established in 1816. Along with antiquities, including a highlight, the bas-reliefs from Persepolis, it has a fine collection of paintings, including masterpieces by Simone Martini, Domenico Veneziano, Titian, Veronese, Rubens, Van Dyck, Frans Hals, Canaletto, Hogarth, Gainsborough, Constable, Monet, Degas, Renoir, Cézanne and Picasso and a fine collection of 20th-century art; miniatures, drawings, watercolours and prints. The Museum also houses a fine collection of books, including some of Britain's most famous illuminated manuscripts. We will enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of the Founder's Library to view some of its treasures. (Overnight Cambridge) B

Day 10: Wednesday 14 October, Cambridge – Holkham Hall – Cambridge

- Holkham Hall: exclusive house tour including the Libraries – Manuscript, Classical and Long Library

Today there will be an excursion to Holkham Hall, residence of the Earls of Leicester for 250 years. With a stunning location on the north Norfolk coast, this fine 18th-century Palladian mansion, designed by William Kent (1685-1748) is known for its stately Marble Hall and great collection of Old Master paintings by Rubens, Van Dyck, Claude, Gaspar Poussin and Gainsborough. We shall take a private tour of the state rooms and, following lunch, enjoy an exclusive specialist look at the Manuscript, Classical and Long Library.

Time and weather allowing, we will also take a walk along Holkham's stunning panoramic beach, part of the Holkham National Nature Reserve which comprises a number of rare and precious habitats including salt marsh, sand dunes, pine woodland, beach and grazing marsh. (Overnight Cambridge) BL

Oxford - 4 nights

Day 11: Thursday 15 October, Cambridge – High Wycombe – Oxford

- Parker Library, Corpus Christi College
- Wormsley Library, near High Wycombe

This morning we visit the Parker Library, the rare books and manuscripts library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. The Parker Library, whose collection was initiated in 1376 was named after its greatest benefactor, Matthew Parker (1504-1575), Archbishop of Canterbury to Queen Elizabeth I. Parker built a rich collection known throughout the world for its medieval books. This includes the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, principal source book for early English history, and the best manuscript of Chaucer's *Troilus*. No less important are the Middle English, French and Latin texts on subjects ranging from alchemy and astrology to music and medicine.

We then leave Cambridge for the Chiltern Hills near High Wycombe for a private visit to 18th-century Wormsley Park by special arrangement. Sir Paul Getty, son of the great collector and philanthropist, J. Paul Getty Snr, created its library, which has one of the finest private collections in the country. Wormsley Library includes a range of illuminated and calligraphic manuscripts from the Middle Ages to the 20th century, as well as monuments of typography ranging from a fragment of the Gutenberg Bible, the Ulm *Ptolemy* on vellum and the only first edition of Caxton's *Chaucer* in private hands (there is also a Shakespeare First Folio). There are also the greatest British private press books, many of which are printed on vellum, such as the Kelmscott *Chaucer* and Ashendene *Dante*. Most spectacular is the collection of fine British and European decorative book bindings again ranging from the Renaissance to the 20th century. There is also an important collection of colour-plate travel books. (Overnight Oxford) BL

Day 12: Friday 16 October, Oxford

- Merton College: Library, Chapel & Beerbohm Room
- Christ Church Library
- Tour of the Bodleian Library, including the 15th-century Divinity School, Convocation House, Chancellor's Court and Duke Humfrey's medieval library

Oxford University (founded c.1167) is a vast corpus of stunning architecture such as Sir Christopher Wren's Sheldonian Theatre (1664-68). Over the centuries many famous writers, poets, novelists, critics and children's authors have studied or lived in Oxford; writers include Jonathan Swift, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lewis Carroll, C.S. Lewis, T.S. Eliot, Oscar Wilde, J.R.R. Tolkien, T.R. Lawrence, Thomas More, Aldous Huxley and Graham Greene. We explore its rich intellectual and architectural heritage with a guided walking tour.

This morning we make our way to Merton College, founded in 1264, to visit the Old Library (1371-78), the Chapel (with Sir Thomas Bodley's memorial) and the Beerbohm room. The Merton Library is the oldest continuously functioning library for scholars in the world. Its fine collection includes medieval manuscripts, early printed books, and the papers of distinguished members of the College including T.S. Eliot. Our tour will include a display of some of these great treasures.

Then we have a special visit to the library at Christ Church, which is an important resource and research centre that contains a large collection of early printed books and manuscripts. These are housed in the Upper Library, a 150 feet long building lit by Venetian windows at either end, and three sash windows overlooking the Peckwater Quadrangle, that was built between 1717 and 1772. We will view a number of manuscripts and treasures including Wolsey's lectionaries and his cardinal's hat. Cardinal Wolsey founded Christ Church in 1525, although originally named Cardinal College. It is unknown whether he had intended to build a library from the beginning as there was no provision for books until the early 1560s. The Library can be dated from a gift of twelve books that contain ex dono inscriptions from the reign of Elizabeth I, together with letters of appeal written to wealthy patrons in 1562. We will also take a look inside Christ Church Cathedral, which is not only the College Chapel but also the cathedral church for the Diocese of Oxford. The site of the present Cathedral was originally a nunnery founded by St Frideswide, the patron saint of Oxford. Her shrine and relics are in the Latin Chapel. St Frideswide's Priory was surrendered to Cardinal Wolsey in 1522 when he decided to build his college. A choir has been at the cathedral since 1526 and music is still an integral part of Christ Church Cathedral.

We also take a tour of the Bodleian Library, one of the world's greatest libraries, established in the 15th century. It contains 6.5 million books, manuscripts and maps. The beautiful historic buildings of the Bodleian are complemented by a recent full redevelopment of what was known as the New Bodley into the Weston Library, which includes a major new exhibition space and public café and shop.

The evening is at leisure. You may wish to visit the Christ Church Cathedral for choral evensong. (Overnight Oxford) B

Day 13: Saturday 17 October, Oxford – Hereford – The Cotswolds – Oxford

- Hereford Cathedral incl. Medieval Garden, Mappa Mundi & Chained Library
- Lunch at the Castle House Restaurant, Hereford
- Scenic drive through the Cotswolds incl. Stow-in-the-Wold

Today we visit the cathedral city of Hereford. The seat of Putta, Bishop of Hereford, some time between AD 676 and 688, by the beginning of the 8th century Hereford had become the Saxon capital of West Mercia. In the following centuries the town was involved repeatedly in struggles between the Saxons, the Welsh and the Vikings. Its strategic location on the Welsh Marches led to the construction of a huge castle by the Earls of Hereford (dismantled in the 18th century). Hereford Cathedral dates from the 12th century and the adjacent Bishop's Palace was constructed in 1204. The cathedral has a grand Romanesque nave and a fine Gothic ceiling and tracery windows in the aisles. It has a lustrously decorated Lady Chapel. Hereford Cathedral School is also one of the oldest schools in England.

We shall explore the cathedral and the library museum, whose greatest treasure is the magnificent Mappa Mundi (1300), the largest medieval map in existence. Although parts of Europe and Africa are identifiable in this map, which has as its centre Jerusalem, its real importance lies not in its accurate representation but in its portrayal of the medieval spiritual worldview, which includes paradise. In the cathedral's magnificent library books, such valuable items in the Middle Ages, were chained for security; the use of chains, of which Hereford has the most complete example, endured until the 18th century. Its oldest manuscript, one of 229 in the collection, is the extraordinary 8th-century Hereford Gospels.

We shall enjoy a late lunch at the nearby Castle House Restaurant overlooking the old Hereford castle's moat. In the early afternoon, we return to Oxford via the picturesque Cotswolds, making a short stop at the village of Stow-on-the-Wold, an important medieval market town and now a centre for English antiques. As well as the large market square, the town has some very early coaching inns, including the Royalist Hotel that has timbers that have been carbon-dated to 987; it is believed to be the oldest inn in England. (Overnight Oxford) BL

Windsor - 1 night

Day 14: Sunday 18 October, Oxford – Waddesdon – Windsor

- Waddesdon Manor, including a private tour of the library

Today we visit Waddesdon Manor, one of the most extraordinary houses in England. Over 125 years ago, Baron Ferdinand Rothschild transformed a barren hill in the countryside outside London into the setting for this breathtaking estate, where he entertained family and friends, politicians and artists, royalty and writers. Over the years, he assembled an outstanding collection of French decorative art, and an extraordinary library rich in fine French imprints, to which his heir (his younger sister Alice) and in turn her heirs (their French cousin James and his English wife Dorothy) added many complementary furnishings, paintings and drawings. Today, Waddesdon Manor is admired not only for its architecture and luxurious and colourful French interior decor but also for its collections of superb English portraits and Dutch Old Masters, as well as its books, manuscripts and exquisite textiles. The extensive gardens are renowned for their seasonal flower displays, and the Parterre, in particular, has been restored using traditional techniques. Our visit includes a private tour of the library, which contains the collection of 17th- and 18th-century volumes

created by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild. (Overnight Windsor) BL

Day 15: Monday 19 October, Windsor

- Windsor Castle
- Eton College's rare book and manuscript library – (by special appointment, to be confirmed in 2026)
- Farewell Dinner

This morning we explore the very seat of the Royal Family, Windsor Castle. Begun by William the Conqueror, the Castle has been home to successive monarchs and, in the case of Charles I, his prison. Our visit will include the State Apartments with their collection of paintings and artefacts.

Following time at leisure for lunch in Windsor, we enjoy a special visit to the Eton College Library, a rare book and manuscript library of international importance. Eton College was founded by King Henry VI in 1440 for the education of seventy King's Scholars. In addition to the King's Scholars housed in 'College', there are now over 1200 'Oppidan' boys at the school in 24 other boarding houses, making Eton the largest boarding school for boys in the United Kingdom. On display in the 18th-century College Library, will be a selection of treasures from the archives. These include a rare copy on paper of the Gutenberg Bible, notable for having retained a very early binding, made in the German university city of Erfurt.

This evening we gather at the hotel for a farewell dinner. (Overnight Windsor) BD

Day 16: Tuesday 20 October, Depart Windsor. Tour Ends.

- Tour concludes in the morning
- At leisure/Check out

Our tour ends in Windsor. In the morning you will be required to check out of the hotel. Please contact ASA if you require assistance with a transfer to London Heathrow Airport. B

Accommodation

ASA has selected 4-star hotels that are themselves historical buildings and/or are located in historical centres. All hotels provide rooms with private facilities. Further information on hotels will be provided in the 'Tour Hotel List' given to tour members prior to their departure.

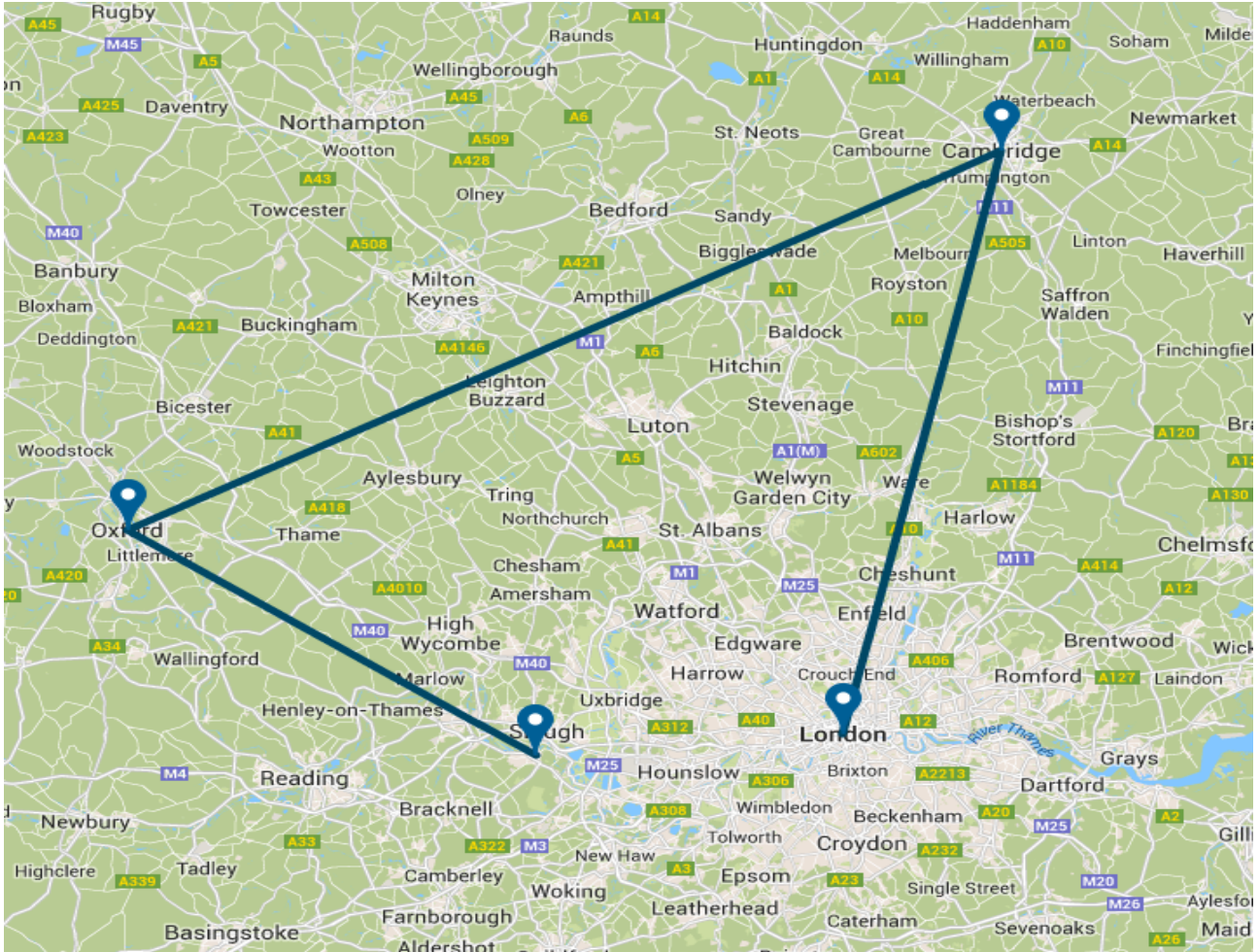
- London (5 nights): 4-star [Citadines Aparthotel Holborn-Covent Garden London](#) – a 10 minute-walk from the British Museum, this contemporary aparthotel is surrounded by shops, old pubs and restaurants.
- Cambridge (5 nights): 4-star [Hilton Cambridge City Centre Hotel](#) – stylish modern hotel located in the heart of the city within easy walking distance to the colleges, Fitzwilliam Museum and King's College Chapel.
- Oxford (3 nights): 4-star [Mercure Oxford Eastgate Hotel](#) – hotel set in a 17th-century townhouse building that was once frequented by author J.R.R Tolkien, located in Oxford city centre a short walk from Merton College and the Bodleian Library.
- Windsor (2 nights): 4-star [Macdonald Windsor Hotel](#) – modern hotel in a townhouse dating from the 1700s, situated in the heart of this historic town just a few minutes walk from Windsor Castle.

Note: Hotels are subject to change, in which case a hotel of similar standard will be provided.

Single Supplement

Payment of this supplement will ensure accommodation is for sole occupancy throughout the tour. The number of spaces available for single occupancy is extremely limited. People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.

Tour Map



Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$ TBA Land Content Only – Early-Bird Special: Book before 30 Sep 2025

AUD \$ TBA Land Content Only

AUD \$ TBA Single Supplement

Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in 4-star hotels
- Breakfast daily, lunches and dinners as indicated in the itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=dinner
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may not have drinks included
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach between cities and use of public transport in London
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports). Porterage is not available in London
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Tour reference book
- Entrance fees
- Use of audio headsets during site visits
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals

Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- International Airfare: Australia-London, London-Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers
- Luggage in excess of 20kg (44lbs)
- Travel insurance



Fitness Criteria & Practical Information

Fitness Level



Level 2 - Intermediate

For people with energetic lifestyles and very good mobility

You must be able to:

- manage at least five to six hours of physical activity per day with ease.
- walk at a regular to moderate pace on flat or undulating terrain; some stretches include uneven cobbled streets and steeper slopes.
- keep up with the group at all times.
- negotiate challenging historic sites: several flights of stairs feature in many historic libraries and stately homes.
- cope with using the London Underground system which includes negotiating several flights of stairs.
- stand for one to two hours during visits to libraries and museums without the need to sit.
- cope with a daily schedule often involving an early-morning departure (8.00-8.30am), concluding in the late afternoon (5.30-6.00pm).
- contend with a shower over a bath; walk-in showers may not be available at all hotels.
- manage your own luggage at some hotels. Porterage is NOT available in London.

Fitness Levels

Please also view the fitness criteria required for our tours, graded from Level 1 to Level 3, at www.asatours.com.au/fitness-level/

All ASA tours are active programs suitable for people with a good level of mental and physical fitness and good mobility. They are not suitable for people who lack stamina, have difficulty walking at the group's pace or who have mobility issues. An unavoidable aspect of every tour is the need to manage walking, stair-climbing and standing for long periods of time.

It is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. Before enrolling on an ASA tour please read the fitness requirements carefully.

Booking Conditions

Making a Tentative Reservation before the tour price has been published

ASA INTENTION TO TRAVEL APPLICATION FORM

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD \$200.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD \$800.00 per person. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your deposit of AUD \$1000.00 is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

Or

- CANCEL your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD \$200.00 per person deposit, less a \$66.00 service fee (including GST).



Intention to Travel Application

TOUR NAME _____

TOUR DATES _____

Booking before the tour price is available

Some ASA tours fill almost immediately. Don't miss out! You can register your 'Intention to Travel' by completing this application and returning this to ASA with a AUD\$200.00 per person deposit. Once the tour price has been published, the itinerary and ASA Reservation Application Form will be sent to you. From the time you receive the itinerary you will have two weeks to either:

- Send us a completed ASA Reservation Application Form together with an additional deposit of AUD\$800.00 per person applicable for International tours OR AUD\$300.00 per person applicable for Australian tours. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation. At this time your full deposit is subject to the tour's Booking Conditions.

OR

- Cancel your Intention to Travel in writing. ASA will refund your AUD\$200.00 per person deposit, less a \$66.00 service fee (including GST).

Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Dr ☐ Other _____

FIRST NAME _____ Preferred FIRST NAME _____

MIDDLE NAME _____ SURNAME _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ COUNTRY _____ POSTCODE _____

TEL. (AH) () _____ TEL. (BH) () _____ Mobile Tel: _____

EMAIL address _____

Date of birth ____ / ____ / ____ GENDER Male ☐ Female ☐

Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like: ☐ a twin-bedded room ☐ a double-bedded room ☐ a room for sole occupancy

I am travelling: ☐ on my own ☐ with a friend/family member Travel Companion _____

Meals

☐ I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

☐ fish ☐ poultry ☐ red meat ☐ dairy products

☐ eggs ☐ pork ☐ nuts

☐ Other _____

Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence ☐ Postal Mail ☐ Email Address _____

Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour.

ASA's ability to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs, your health and safety and the health and safety of other tour members, is of paramount importance to us. For this reason the ASA Reservation Application includes a Medical Information section. As a general guideline, you must be able to accomplish each of these activities *without assistance or support*:-

- walk & stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions
- walk confidently on and over uneven surfaces
- climb at least 3 flights of stairs
- embark and disembark from ferries, buses and trains
- walk up and down steep slopes
- walk at a steady pace and no less than 1 km every 15 - 20 minutes
- organise, manage and carry your own luggage
- follow and remember tour instructions
- meet punctually at designated times and places
- administer your own medication.

Applicant's Signature _____

Dated _____

Tour / Course Name

Name of Traveller 1 _____

Name of Traveller 2 _____

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ _____ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

Payment by (please indicate): ☐ Cheque ☐ Direct Debit (see below) ☐ Credit Card (see below)

International Payments

Welcome to our international travellers! If you are making a payment and do not have an Australian bank account/credit card, we can only accept payment as follows:

- via credit card with the applicable fee - the credit card company/bank will set the exchange rate
- via bank transfer; please give your surname and tour code (eg. Smith 21705) as a reference and ask your bank to allow for all charges.

Bank cheques or personal cheques will not be accepted.

By Cheque (accept Australian cheques only)

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic
Swift Code ANZBAU3M
BSB 013-423
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. _____

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended

Date Money Transferred _____

Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard, Visa & American Express 2%

Please debit my: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number _____

Expiry Date _____

Security Code (CVC) _____

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) _____

Cardholders Name _____

Cardholders Billing Address _____

Postcode _____

State _____

Country _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Cardholders Signature _____

AUSTRALIANS STUDYING ABROAD

206 Williams Road, Toorak VIC 3142 (PO Box 8285, Armadale VIC Australia 3143)
Phone +61 3 9822 6899 Email info@asatours.com.au

www.asatours.com.au

License No. 31248 ABN 27 006 589 242