An English Country Christmas

Tour Leader: Curt DiCamillo

December 1–6, 2020 | England
When winter beckons and Christmas is just around the corner, what could be better than spending time in England, the country that almost invented Christmas? And no place is more redolent of the Yuletide season than Shropshire, where gingerbread was invented! We’ll be staying at Weston Park, one of England’s grandest country houses, where we will be the only occupants. There will be crackling log fires in the library, invigorating warm beverages, holiday stories, art that tells the Christmas story in the brush strokes of the Old Masters, laughter amid crisp, cold walks in the ancient deer park, and Christmas gifts for everyone!

This seasonal tour will feature visits to ancient English homes, scenes and settings that inspired Charles Dickens, and even a church where young passengers on the Mayflower worshipped before their voyage four hundred years ago. There will also be the chance to sample seasonal fare and local specialties, including gingerbread, a Christmas wine tasting at a 200-year-old wine merchant, a visit from carolers, a Christmas fair, and more!

**WESTON PARK, WESTON-UNDER-LIZARD**

Set on the Shropshire/Staffordshire border, Weston Park was built in 1671 by Lady Elizabeth Wilbraham and was the seat of the earls of Bradford from 1762 until 1981. Noted for its warm and welcoming atmosphere, the house boasts an internationally important collection of paintings, including works by Gainsborough, Van Dyck, and Stubbs. The House has also hosted a number of high-profile events, including the G8 Summit Retreat Day and the Northern Ireland Peace Talks, as well as exclusive groups such as ours! The park was landscaped in the 18th century by Capability Brown and is noted for its collection of follies. All rooms have private bathrooms and are equipped with mini-safes, clothing brushes, and hair dryers. Complimentary Wi-Fi is available throughout Weston Park.

**ITINERARY**

*Tuesday, December 1*

**London, Woodstock & Arrival in Weston-under-Lizard**

Arrive independently in London and meet Curt DiCamillo and fellow tour participants this morning at The Rembrandt Hotel in Knightsbridge, from whence we’ll depart by private coach for Blenheim Palace, one of the grandest private homes in Europe. Still the seat today of the Duke of Marlborough, here we’ll have lunch, followed by time at leisure to tour the holiday-themed rooms of the palace and the Blenheim Christmas Market. Later in the afternoon we’ll arrive at Weston Park, our home for the next six days. After time to unpack and relax in this lovely 17th century country house (where we will be the only
occupants), we’ll have drinks and a tour of the house with Weston’s curator, Gareth Williams, before our welcome dinner in the grand Orangery.

**Wednesday, December 2**  
Linley, Ludlow & Shipton

Our first full day together begins at **Linley Hall**, where we’ll have a visit hosted by Mr. and The Hon. Mrs. James Moores, who will open their important Palladian country house just for us. Linley was built in 1742 for Robert More, an 18th century polymath, friend of Carl Linnaeus, and one of the founders of the state of Georgia. More’s ancestor, Samuel More, had a further connection with America: he put his children onto the **Mayflower**. We’ll have lunch at The Clive at Bromfield, after which we will head to the **Church of St. James at Shipton Hall**, where there will be a service of remembrance for the passengers on the **Mayflower** (some of the youngest passengers who embarked on the famous ship were Samuel More’s children). After the service, tea will be served at Shipton Hall, the 16th century gabled limestone mansion that is today the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Bishop. We’ll end the day with drinks and dinner at Weston Park.

**Thursday, December 3**  
West Felton, Norbury & Bunttingsdale

Thursday starts at **Pradoe**, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Kenyon. This never-open-to-the-public Regency house was immortalized by Katherine Kenyon in her 1941 book, *A House That Was Loved*. Here the Kenyons will share their house’s history and stories of Christmases past with us. Lunch will be at **Hardwick Hall**, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Neil Kynaston-Mainwaring. After our repast we’ll have a tour of the Kynaston-Mainwarings’ exceptionally handsome early Georgian brick house, birthplace of the infamous Shropshire highwayman Wild Humphrey Kynaston. Next up is Market Drayton, the home of gingerbread! Here we’ll have homemade gingerbread, hot tea, and other bracing beverages at **Bunttingsdale Hall**, the early 18th century baroque house of the Mackworth family. This evening our drinks will be accompanied by a choir singing carols in the library at Weston Park, followed by dinner at the Granary Restaurant at Weston.

**Friday, December 4**  
Willey, Coalport & Tong

**Willey Park**, very possibly the grandest house in Shropshire, will be our first visit today. This little-known and extremely private house is the home of Lord and Lady Forester, who will kindly guide us through their jaw-dropping home, beginning with vaulted entrance hall. Lined with enormous yellow Corinthian columns, this huge, galleried basilica is redolent of ancient Rome and unlike any other space in England. Our next visit is to the **Coalport Museum**, where we’ll have a curator-led tour of some of the finest
porcelain ever made in England. The little village of Coalport, where the Industrial Revolution was born, was an important center of porcelain and pottery production in the 18th and 19th centuries. Between 1795 and 1926 the Coalport factory produced beautiful porcelain that successfully competed with Wedgwood, Spode, and Royal Doulton. We'll have lunch at the nearby Furnace Kitchen, before stopping at the impressive Tong Church on our way back to Weston, where there will be time to rest, relax, or walk the grounds before drinks and dinner.

Saturday, December 5
Weston-under-Lizard & Shrewsbury

In the morning we'll visit the Weston Park Christmas Fayre, an annual event when festive stalls of gifts, food, and drink crowd the stable area of Weston Park. Next we head to Shrewsbury, Shropshire’s county seat. This lovely town sits within a loop of the River Severn and is distinguished for its medieval and Tudor buildings and ancient churches. In 1984 Shrewsbury was chosen as the main location for the filming of Charles Dickens’ A Christmas Carol, starring George C. Scott as Scrooge. The famous scene of fun and festivities at Fezziwig’s ball was filmed at Tanners, a wine merchant established in 1854. It is here—at the exact same spot where Fezziwig’s ball took place—that we will have lunch, followed by a wine tasting! After lunch there will be time to shop and explore Shrewsbury, before Gareth leads a tour of filming locations of the 1984 production of A Christmas Carol, including St. Chad’s, where we’ll see Scrooge’s grave! We’ll end our Christmas idyll with drinks in the library and a grand farewell dinner in the state dining room at Weston.

Sunday, December 6
Return to the USA or London

After breakfast, we’ll depart by coach for London, where participants will have a choice of being dropped off at Heathrow Airport or in central London.
AN ENGLISH COUNTRY CHRISTMAS
December 1-6, 2020

Tour Cost:
Land Package .................................................. $5,295
Single Supplement ............................................. $395

Tour price is per person, based on double occupancy, with a minimum of 18 paying participants.

Activity Level: Moderate; good walking ability is advised.

Deposit & Final Payment: A deposit of $1,000 per paying participant will be required to guarantee participation in the program. This may be paid by check, or by Visa, MasterCard, or American Express. Final payment will be invoiced and is due on August 21, 2020. Final payment is due to NEHGS by check, or by Visa, MasterCard, or American Express. Registrations will be accepted beyond this date on a space-available basis.

Flights: Airfare is not included in the tour price. Participants are responsible for all aspects of their round-trip air arrangements.

Terms & Conditions: The New England Historic Genealogical Society (“NEHGS”) acts only as an agent for the participant with respect to transportation, accommodations, and all other services relating to this tour. NEHGS, and/or their agents assume no responsibility or liability for any act, error or omission, or for any injury, loss, accident, delay or irregularity, which may be caused by any defect in any aircraft, ship, train, bus, or other carrier, or through neglect or default of any subcontractor or other third party, which may be used wholly or in part in the performance of their duty to the participants of the tour. NEHGS reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure for any reason including insufficient numbers of participants, as well as the right to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour at any time. If bookings fall below the minimum required, passengers will be advised of additional costs or itinerary alterations before departure date.

Cancellations & Refunds: All cancellations must be received in writing by NEHGS, and charges are calculated as of the day notification is received by NEHGS. If a tour member cancels, the following scale of charges is incurred: There is a non-refundable administrative fee of $500 per person. The costs associated with any tickets purchased for planned activities (as indicated in the itinerary) are non-refundable. Written cancellation received by NEHGS on or before August 21, 2020: full refund minus $500 per person administrative fee. Written cancellation received by NEHGS between August 22 and October 16, 2020: full refund of any recoverable land costs, less $2,500 cancellation charge (includes administrative fee). Cancellations received by NEHGS on or after October 17, 2020: no refund. After the tour has commenced, it is not possible to issue any refunds. No refunds for any unused portion of the tour including, but not limited to, occasional missed meals or any missed sightseeing tours. Costs for promotion, staff, and other group expenses are not refundable. In the case of cancellation, substitutions are not acceptable. The tour cost is non-transferable, and no substitutions are allowed. If NEHGS or ISDI cancels the tour due to low registrations, active registrants will receive a full refund of all tour payments.

Travel Insurance: NEHGS and ISDI strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance. NEHGS will send you travel insurance information upon tour registration. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

Tour Price Inclusions: Five (5) nights’ deluxe accommodation at Weston Park; breakfast daily, four (4) lunches, five (5) dinners, five (5) drinks receptions; all sightseeing and admission charges as outlined in the itinerary; land transportation by deluxe air-conditioned coach; bottled water on coach; leadership of Curt DiCamillo for duration of the tour; services of Cy Britt, Director of Heritage Travel, as tour manager; expert, local guides for all planned sightseeing activities; gratuities at included meals and for guides and drivers; one (1) group transfer upon departure between Weston Park and London Heathrow Airport (LHR); handling of two (2) pieces of luggage per person at the hotel upon arrival and departure; service charges and taxes; complete pre-departure documentation and materials, including recommended reading list, travel tips, and destination information.

Tour Price Exclusions: Airline tickets, airline taxes, or fuel surcharges; airport porterage; arrival airport transfers; airport transfer upon departure for individuals not using the included group transfer; gratuities for hotel cleaning staff; personal items such as wines, liquors, à-la-carte orders, meals other than those specified in the itinerary, personal services, room service, valet/laundry service, and tour deviations. If due to weather, flight schedules, or other uncontrollable factors, you are required to spend any additional nights, you will be responsible for your own hotel, transfer, and meal costs. Personal insurance for health, baggage, and tour cancellation is not included. Tour cancellation/Interruption Insurance is strongly recommended. Travel insurance forms will be supplied to registrants by NEHGS.
Please find enclosed deposit(s) in the amount of $1,000 per person for _____ spaces on

Name (Participant 1)  Name (Participant 2)

Street Address

City  State  Zip

Home Phone  Cell Phone

E-mail Address  Please send mailings to my e-mail address so I may receive information more quickly.

DEPOSIT PAYMENT INFORMATION:

☐ Check in the amount of _____________ enclosed (made payable to "New England Historic Genealogical Society").

☐ Please charge my Visa/Mastercard/American Express (circle one):

Card Number  Expiry (mm/yy)  Security Code

Name (as it appears on card)  Billing Zip Code (if different from mailing)

The undersigned has read the tour itinerary and recognizes and accepts any risks therein. The undersigned also understands and hereby agrees for and on behalf of his/her dependents, heirs, executors, administrators and assigns to abide by the conditions set forth in the terms and conditions listed in this brochure and to release and hold harmless the New England Historic Genealogical Society (“NEHGS”), International Seminar Design, Inc. (“ISDI”), and any of their officers, trustees, agents, licenses, or representatives from any and all liability for delays, injuries, or death or for the loss of and/or damage to his/her property however occurring during any portion of, or in relation to, this tour.

Signature (Participant 1)  Signature (Participant 2)

COMPLETE & RETURN TO:  FOR QUESTIONS OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
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New England Historic Genealogical Society has retained International Seminar Design, Inc., to assist in some aspects of this program.
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