



Romance & Statecraft Tudor England with WILL

CHR Travel

**9 or 11 Days August 8-16
(or return the 18th), 2019
From \$4932***

- The counties of **Kent, Surrey & Sussex**, south of London:
 - Penshurst Place • Ashdown Park • Hever Castle • Leeds Castle • Seven Sisters white chalk cliffs on the English Channel
 - Sheffield Park & Gardens • Talk by Tudor author, Elizabeth Norton • Hampton Court • **The Cotswolds**: • Highclere Castle • Ellenborough Park • Sudeley Castle & Tea • Owlpen Manor, Gardens & Lunch • Thornbury Castle • Monmouth, Wales
 - Optional extension to London

THIS WILL TOUR combines culture, history and visits to settings featured in your favorite WILL-TV programs. We take our unique, easy-paced itinerary approach to parts of Southern England and The Cotswolds we have not visited before. On a WILL custom tour, we always have minimum two-night hotel stays to keep the pace modest—this time staying three to four nights at both locations. This also gives the possibility of more free time than the average tour allows. Best of all is traveling with other *Friends of WILL* who share a kinship from the first day. Group size is limited and tours fill up quickly! Don't delay in reserving your seat now!

Itinerary

Day 1 Thursday: Central Illinois-Chicago-Flight

Danda and Erin of WILL welcome you aboard our private motor coach to Chicago where we board our overnight non-stop flight to London.

Day 2 Friday: Flight-London Heathrow-Runnymede-Penshurst Place-Ashdown Park

Upon arrival at London Heathrow airport, we are met by our tour manager, Victor Seedman. Our first stop has become a new tradition for us, a Hobbit-style "Second Breakfast" near where the Magna Carta was signed in Runnymede. This allows the opportunity for a proper breakfast and freshen up after deplaning.

Above: the original Leeds Castle was wooden and owned by a Saxon chief from 857; below: a royal welcome at Hever Castle.





Penshurst Place, a hunting lodge for Henry VIII was convenient for courtship being only a few miles from Hever Castle, childhood home of Henry's second wife Anne Boleyn.

Once revived we head to Penshurst Place and Gardens for a private tour of this stately home built in 1341. Penshurst was reportedly Henry VIII's favorite hunting lodge; Henry visited often when besotted by Anne Boleyn, who lived at nearby Hever Castle. Penshurst was used in the MASTERPIECE adaptation of Hilary Mantel's novel *Wolf Hall*. The Queen Elizabeth Room, The Tapestry room, The Solar, The Long Gallery and The Crypt were all used in filming – to create a perfect Tudor period setting.

Mid-afternoon we drive to Ashdown Park Hotel and Country Club, our home for three nights. Our hotel is surrounded by Ashdown Forest, known to be the inspiration for Winnie-the-Pooh's Hundred Acre Wood. The country house was built in 1867 by Mr. Thomas Charles Thompson, a Member of Parliament, who died in 1892. In his will he left a black suit to each of his employees so they would be smartly dressed for his funeral.

The rest of the day is free for wandering the lovely grounds or catching up on sleep! Maybe you would like to try your swing at the on-site 18-hole par 3 golf course or enjoy a relaxing spa treatment. As is our custom, we do not include dinner this first night so you can turn in earlier if you like. However, there will be plenty of options to choose from at the

hotel or in the town of Forest Row; transportation will be provided. (B)

Day 3 Saturday: Ashdown-Leeds Castle-Hever Castle-Ashdown

We drive east to Kent and Leeds Castle, 'the loveliest castle in the world', for a private tour. Originally a wooden fort of a Saxon chieftain, Leeds Castle was rebuilt by Norman Robert de Crevecoeur in 1119. By the 16th century, Henry VIII was using Leeds Castle as a dwelling for his first wife, Catherine of Aragon.

Delight in some free time to explore the gardens, maze and falconry center. Then we journey to Hever Castle, where we will see the castle grounds transformed to a medieval encampment and may see "knights" in their colorful livery mingling with their King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Admission to the castle and garden is included for you to explore on your own. Tonight, we return to Ashdown for our welcome dinner. (B, L, D)

Your Tour Hosts

Danda Beard,
is *WILL's*
Development
Director



Erin Lippitz,
Major Gifts
Director





The Great Gate of Hampton Court

Day 4 Sunday: Ashdown-Eastbourne-Seven Sisters Cliffs-Sheffield Park-Ashdown

Today is our day for the scenic coast, plus a bit of English ‘managed’ nature! We head south to East Sussex and the English Channel. If tramping about the white chalk cliffs is not your cup of tea, you will have free time for exploring and shopping in Eastbourne, the Victorian seaside resort.

The walkers continue on to the hamlet of Birling Gap and the Seven Sisters and Beachy Head. These towering cliffs and undeveloped coastline have often been used in films to stand in for the Cliffs of Dover.

Free time for lunch is provided before we gather again to drive to Sheffield Park Garden, owned by the National Trust. The park was originally designed by Lancelot “Capability” Brown in the 18th century and later expanded by the home’s various owners. Four ponds with water lilies form the garden centerpiece surrounded by



Hever Castle Gardens

acres of parkland and a woodland with a collection of exotic trees and shrubs. Henry VIII visited the home in 1538, as documented by the Domesday Book. The park was used as a training ground for Canadian soldiers during the Second World War. (B)

Day 5 Monday: Ashdown-Hampton Court-Cheltenham

Today we depart Ashdown for Richmond upon Thames and Hampton Court Palace for a guided tour. Originally built by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, he gave it to Henry VIII in a vain effort to restore himself to Henry’s good graces. Henry must have needed it for his royal entourage of 1,000 courtiers! Afterwards we will have lunch and a talk by historian Elizabeth Norton (*at right*). Her research and writing centers around the contributions of women to English medieval history. Her 13 books include “She Wolves, The Notorious Queens of England”. A regular on BBC programs, Elizabeth will relay some insights into her research of the Tudor period.



The Seven Sisters is a series of chalk cliffs by the English Channel. They form part of the South Downs in East Sussex, between the towns of Seaford and Eastbourne





The Cotswolds, charming villages made of honey-coloured stone



Your Tour Manager

Victor Seedman has led the last eight **WILL** tours in Europe. He started leading tours in the 1980's and has continued to do so while being the Head of Travel, Tourism & Hospitality for the London campus of the University of Gloucestershire.



CHR Travel has been awarded the prestigious Queen's Award for Enterprise. We have worked with the same people for 33 years, going back to when we visited Yorkshire on

WILL's very first tour.

We continue on to The Cotswolds, a lovely area of quaint homes built of honey-colored stone and site of Ellenborough Park, our hotel for four nights. The hotel was built as a manor house from 1485 and later home to a former Governor of India and Jane Digby, a 'scandalous society beauty' who was seventeen years his junior when they wed in 1824. Dinner is included tonight. (B, L, D)

Day 6 Tuesday: Cheltenham-Sudeley Castle-Highclere Castle-Cotswolds villages-Cheltenham

We travel to Winchcombe, Gloucestershire and are welcomed with tea and biscuits to Sudeley Castle, the private home of Elizabeth, Lady Ashcombe. After time to see the interior, enjoy a look at its nine individual gardens. The centerpiece is the Queens Garden, so named because four of England's queens—Anne Boleyn, Catherine Parr, Lady Jane Grey and Elizabeth I—once admired the hundreds of varieties of roses found in the garden. Catherine Parr, the last of the six wives of King Henry VIII, is buried on the grounds of Sudeley Castle in St. Mary's Church.

We continue on to Highclere Castle, which was made famous as the setting of Downton Abbey. Your admission will give you free time to wander about this still-private home.

Highclere Castle in the Cotswolds was the location for Downton Abbey





Monmouth's fortified bridge in Wales

Afterwards we have time in the Cotswolds village of Burford and then enjoy an included dinner in the Venice of Britain, Bourton-on-the-Water. We then return to Ellenborough Park. (B, T, D)

**Day 7 Wednesday:
Cheltenham-Welsh Marches-
Cheltenham**

We head west into Wales and the birthplace of Henry V of Agincourt fame, Monmouth, at the juncture of the Rivers Monnow and Wye. Nearby is the Forest of Dean, second largest of the Crown Forest preserves with

mixed woodland, one of the surviving ancient woodlands. Monmouth is on the 177 mile long Offa's Dyke, a trail along the border of Wales and England. We have time for shopping and private exploration like the small museum named for Lord Nelson, the victor of Trafalgar. Nelson had come here to arrange for the fine timber for realm's warships. (B, D)

**Day 8 Thursday:
Cheltenham-Owlpen
Manor-Thornbury-
Cheltenham**

We wander to the Stroud district of The Cotswolds and a spot that invites superlatives: "The loveliest place in England" – *Fodor's Britain Guide*, "Owlpen in Gloucestershire—ah! What a dream is there!" – *Vita Sackville-West* and "The epitome of the English village" – *The Prince of Wales*.

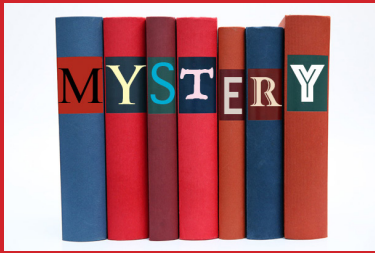
Not otherwise open to the public, we are given a private tour of a Tudor masterpiece, Owlpen Manor. The estate only started changing hands in 1924 after a thousand years in the family.



The Beachy Head Lighthouse near Eastbourne on the English Channel

In the Cotswolds: 15th century Sudeley Castle's secret garden. It is still a residence and the only private castle to have a queen buried in its grounds. We plan to have tea here.





Mostly Histories Traveling Book Club

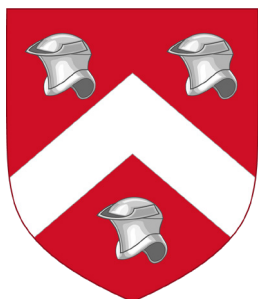
This year, our travels are taking us to places visited by the Tudor Kings and Queens. Let's read (and watch!) and discuss:

Wolf Hall by Hilary Mantel (Available on video from PBS MASTERPIECE on WILL Passport through February 2019!) The court of Henry VIII seen through the eyes of his confidant Thomas Cromwell. Named for the Seymour family seat of Wolfhall or Wulfhall in Wiltshire. Historical fiction.

Anne Boleyn by Elizabeth Norton (Ms. Norton will be giving a talk for our group. Her 13 books span the Tudor era, especially the women of the Tudor period.) Anne Boleyn's early life at Hever Castle is discussed here. Nonfiction

Dissolution (Matthew Shardlake Series #1), C.J. Sansom. Dissolution concerns the investigation of a murder in a monastery in Tudor England, just as the monks' way of life is about to end, abruptly. Mystery

On the Black Hill, Bruce Chatwin. The story of twin boys living in the border territory of England and Wales. Also a movie (available on Amazon Prime or perhaps in your local library?), Historical fiction



We have a scrumptious private dining experience—lunch in the manor's 15th century tithe barn. Then we enjoy a guided tour of the gardens with its topiary and yew from the early Stuart times, about 1620.

Next we head to an early example of a Tudor country house, Thornbury Castle, once home to William the Conqueror. In the 16th century the Duke of Buckingham was owner of Thornbury. He was beheaded by order of his distant cousin Henry VIII, who then took possession of the magnificent estate. We have tea before returning to Ellenborough Park and our farewell dinner. (B, L, T, D)

Day 9 Friday: Cheltenham- Heathrow-Flight-Chicago- Central Illinois or London

After breakfast, we depart The Cotswolds and you have a choice to either fly home or extend your stay in London! Those returning home are taken from O'Hare back to central Illinois by our private motor coach.

London Extension:

Those extending enjoy two nights in London to explore to your heart's desire. Visit a London Museum, cruise the Thames, or partake in shopping or the theatre! (B)

Day 10 Saturday: London Free Day

Victor will be at your hotel in the morning to assist with your plans. And if you have no idea, he will offer up suggestions of what to do and how to get there. (B)

Day 11 Sunday: London- Heathrow-Chicago-Central Illinois

Victor accompanies you to the airport in our private transfer. After your non-stop flight to Chicago you are taken by private transfer back to central Illinois with wonderful memories of the rich history and charm of England. (B)

Included meals are noted each day with the initials for Breakfast, Lunch, Tea, and Dinner.

What's Included: • Round trip motor coach transportation from Central Illinois • Baggage handling • Round trip flights • Round trip transportation from airport to hotel • Tour manager, transportation, sightseeing and admissions per itinerary • Headsets throughout the tour • 18 Meals: 8 Breakfasts 3 Lunches, 2 Teas, 5 Dinners • \$225 current total taxes & fees, subject to change • Hotel accommodations • Led by Danda Beard & Erin Lippitz

Accommodations: (7 or 9) total number of nights

Ashdown Forest (3) Ashdown Park Hotel and Country Club

Cheltenham (4) Ellenborough Park

Optional extension:

London (2) DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel

London Westminster or similar

What's Not Included: • Airline baggage fees if any • Tips to tour manager, driver and local guides • Travel insurance

*All prices are per person, based on occupancy, double: \$4932, single: \$5699—for the basic tour without London.
• Document required for US Citizens is Passport valid through the last day of your visit to the UK (longer is recommended though); no visa or shots at this time. Other citizens should consult their consulate. • Insurance coverage is Deluxe Group Plan from Travel Guard at a cost of 7.2%. For coverage details see www.tourgroupplanners.com/insurance.html. Other terms at www.tourgroupplanners.com/terms.html incorporated by reference. • Price and details are subject to change. If fewer than 21 book, a small group surcharge of \$90 applies. For the extension to London, a minimum of 10 participants will be needed – if fewer, we will re-price based on current air fares. Acct#190808 21DEC18 16:40

Join us from • Champaign • Decatur
• Springfield or call for a quote from
other cities. Tour Coordinator is
Judy or Dawn, email:

Judy Judy@TourGroupPlanners.com &
Dawn Dawn@TourGroupPlanners.com;
call **217-422-5002** to charge your
credit card for the \$1500 per person
deposit (the balance is due April 8
and you get a \$50/person discount if
balance is paid by check). Or mail a
check (payable to Rio Grande Travel)
to **Tour Group Planners**, 363 S
Main St Suite 307, Decatur IL 62523



<http://will.illinois.edu/willtravel>



Owlpen Manor

London Extension Option

Enjoy two extra days in London, at an additional cost of \$571 per person based on double occupancy or single room at \$958.

Included: • Heathrow Airport to hotel private transfer • Two nights hotel, tax and daily breakfast at the DoubleTree London Westminster or comparable • Victor available from 9 A.M.–Noon to assist with your plans • Hotel to Heathrow Airport transfer

Not included: • Lunch or dinner meals
• Free time activities

Physical Requirements

Travel in England requires more walking, steps and inclines that could be difficult or impossible for those with physical limitations. You need to decide whether you can accept that this may make you miss parts of the tour or stay at the hotel and be on your own. Each of our hotels has elevators.

Charitable Donation

This trip is designed as a fundraiser for **WILL**, your favorite public television and radio station. The more people who travel with **WILL**, the more funding the station receives. A non-refundable donation of at least \$200/person is included in your trip cost. After the trip, you will receive a charitable donation receipt to use as a tax deduction. **WILL** thanks you for your support!



Thornbury Castle



Your Hotels

Nights in parenthesis shows length of stay. See numbered photos:

1. Forest Row, E. Sussex (3) Ashdown Park Hotel & Country Club
2. Cheltenham, The Cotswolds (4) Ellenborough Park
3. London (2) *Optional Extension:* DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel London Westminster or similar



Leeds Castle



1



2



3

