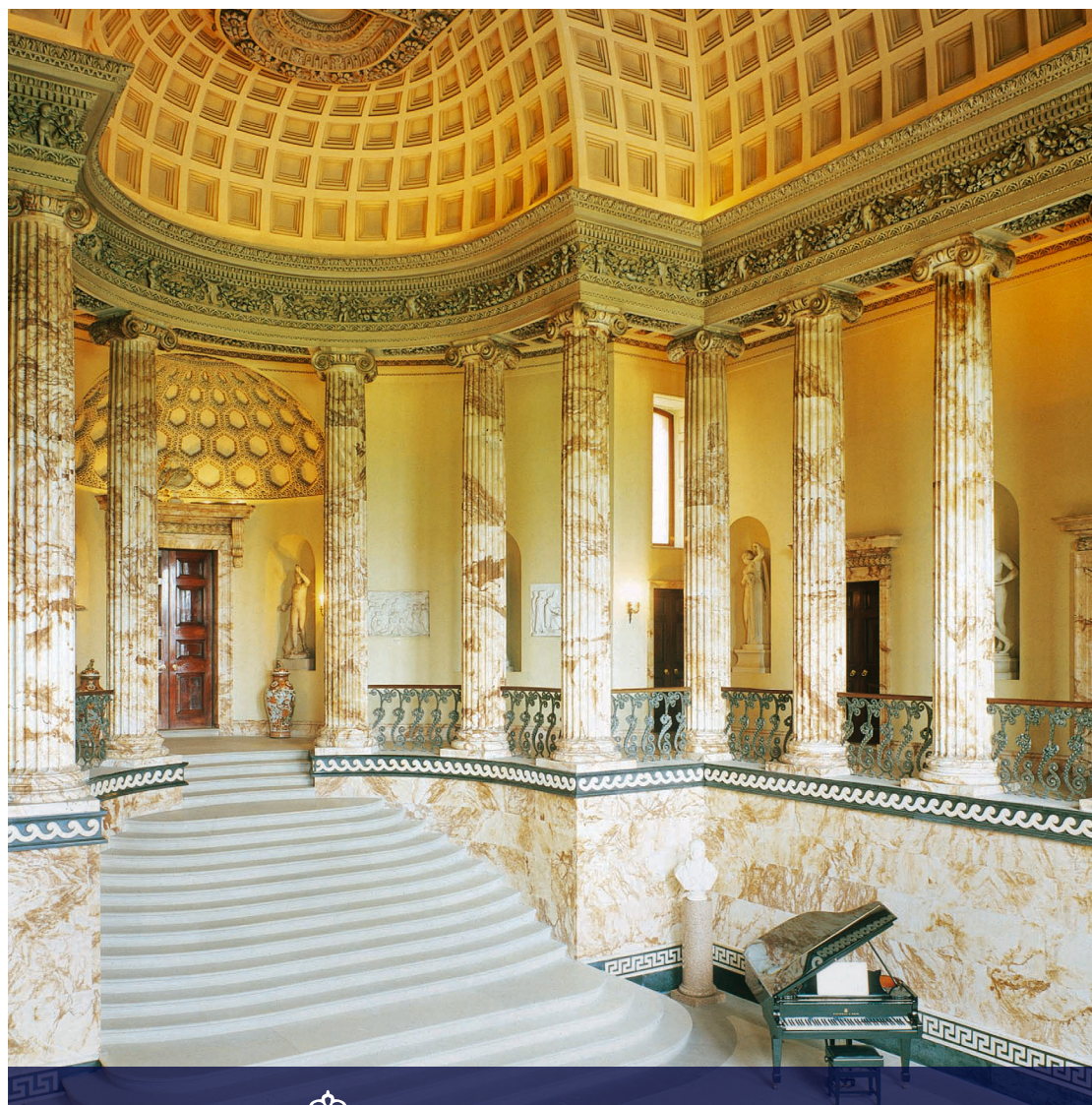


A Slice of Heaven

Country Houses of Norfolk / England

Tour Leaders: Curt DiCamillo and Oliver Gerrish

September 11–17, 2022



Heritage Tours

by American Ancestors

Experience Norfolk, one of England's best kept secrets, with American Ancestors! With its abundance of natural beauty, profound history, and awe-inspiring art and architecture, the best of East Anglia will be ours!

Accompanied by Curt DiCamillo and architectural historian Oliver Gerrish we will have the opportunity to visit Houghton Hall and its sumptuous William Kent-designed interiors; Sennowe Park, a grand style Edwardian country house; Wolterton Park, an ancestral home of the Walpole family and one of the grand power houses of Norfolk; and Gunton Park, with its Robert Adam-designed church. Not to be missed will be an after-hours tour of Sandringham, the royal family's country house, and a visit to Penstrophe Millennium Garden, considered one of the best places to see Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf's work on a grand scale.

Our tour will feature luxurious accommodation at the secluded Congham Hall Hotel & Spa, locally sourced cuisine, and a carefully paced itinerary. There is no better way to discover the special charms of Norfolk!



Congham Hall Hotel & Spa. By kind permission of Congham Hall Hotel & Spa.

Congham Hall was built around 1780 by a wealthy King's Lynn merchant. It remained a family home until 1982, when it was turned into a hotel. Since then, the restaurant and kitchen have expanded and the spa, indoor swimming pool, and 11 new garden-wing rooms have been added. Interior decoration throughout is in classic but contemporary style.

On the cover: The Marble Hall at Holkham Hall. By kind permission of Holkham Estate.

Itinerary

Sunday, September 11

Meet Curt DiCamillo, Oli Gerrish, and fellow tour participants mid-morning at **The Rembrandt** in Knightsbridge. After loading luggage on our private luxury coach, we will head north to Norfolk. Enroute we will visit **Elsing Hall**, a romantic medieval moated manor house with a splendid garden, restored in the Victorian period by gifted designer and architect Thomas Jeckyll. Now the home of Patrick Lines and Han Yang Yap, it is a stunning setting for their collection of Chinese art. We'll begin with a light lunch and then enjoy a tour of the house and garden. We will then leave Elsing Hall for **Congham Hall Hotel & Spa**, a privately-owned Georgian manor set in the heart of the beautiful Norfolk countryside, arriving in the late afternoon. We'll gather for pre-dinner drinks on the terrace, followed by dinner in the private writing room.



Elsing Hall. By kind permission of Elsing Hall.

Monday, September 12

Today we'll visit two houses designed by William Kent, beginning with a before-hours tour at **Holkham Hall**, one of the most important 18th-century houses in England. This elegant Palladian mansion, the seat of the Earls of Leicester, is still a lived-in family home. Our tour will begin in the Marble Hall, with its 50-foot plaster dome modeled on the Roman Pantheon and walls and columns of pink Derbyshire alabaster, not marble as its name implies. We'll then climb the stairs to the magnificent state rooms displaying superb collections of ancient statuary, original furniture, tapestries and paintings by Rubens, van Dyck, Claude, Poussin, and Gainsborough. We hope to be welcomed by the 8th Earl of Leicester, Thomas Cook, and his wife Polly. We'll have lunch at The Victoria Inn, located at the gates of Holkham Hall.

This afternoon we will visit **Pensthorpe Millennium Garden**, designed by world-renowned Dutch garden designer Piet Oudolf. The one-acre garden features over 150 species of perennials, shrubs, grasses, and climbers in Oudolf's romantic and highly influential planting style that blends plants to mimic natural landscapes.

We'll return to the hotel with time to relax before a special evening at **Raynham Hall** (not open to the public). Raynham was built in the first half of the 17th century based on the designs of Andrea Palladio. The 2nd Viscount Townshend, brother-in-law of Sir Robert Walpole, engaged William Kent to remodel the interiors in the 1730s. We will begin with a tour of the house. Drinks and canapes will be followed by dinner in the state dining room hosted by the Marquess and Marchioness Townshend.



Raynham Hall. By kind permission of Raynham Hall.

Tuesday, September 13

Today begins with a before-hours tour at opulent **Felbrigg Hall**, one of the finest and least altered 17th century houses in East Anglia. Felbrigg is famous for its two distinctive facades, which look like two different houses: the stone Jacobean east facade and the red brick Dutch style west facade. The interior is overflowing with treasures collected by the family over centuries while outside, the walled garden is a wonderland of beauty.

Next we'll drive to lunch at **The Gunton Arms**, a charming inn and Michelin Bib Gourmand gastropub that reflects its owners' passion for world-class contemporary art and sculpture. The pub looks out onto the deer park at Gunton Park, which will be our next visit. At Gunton we'll have a tour led by Kit Martin, who will share with us how he restored the parkland on the estate and take us by the oldest working sawmill in England. We'll also visit **St. Andrew's Church** on the Gunton Estate, Robert Adam's only complete church in England, where Oliver Gerrish will grace us with a special concert! We end our visit at **Gunton Hall**, home of Oliver's mother-in-law, for refreshments. We'll arrive back at the hotel in the late afternoon, where there will be time to relax before we leave for **Sennowe Park**, where we'll have drinks and dinner. Opened exclusively for us, Sennowe is romantically set in rolling parkland with formal terraced gardens overlooking a lake complete with boathouse. It was built by Thomas Albert Coke, the grandson of Thomas Coke, who founded the famous travel firm in the mid-19th century. Sennowe was finished on the eve of World War I and is often called the last great English country house.



The Cabinet Room at Felbrigg Hall. By kind permission of the National Trust.

Wednesday, September 14

This morning we will be blessed with a before-hours visit of **Houghton Hall**, one of the most important houses in England, where we hope to be welcomed by Marquess Cholmondeley, whose family has been here for over 200 years. This ravishing Palladian mansion, built in 1725 for Sir Robert Walpole, Britain's first prime minister, is famous for its stunning public rooms, an extraordinary testament to William Kent's decorative genius. The furniture, much of it designed by Kent, includes two magnificent state beds. There are also important collections of French 18th century furniture, Sèvres porcelain, and sculpture. Despite the notorious sale of much of Sir Robert's picture collection after his death to the Empress Catherine of Russia (now in the Hermitage), the house still has a significant picture collection. We'll end our time at Houghton with lunch in the old kitchen.

Next we're off to **Hindringham Hall**, a small, moated manor house straight out of a storybook. Here owners Lynda and Charles Tucker will give us a private tour of their house and garden, ending with tea and cakes. With its medieval moat and fishponds, walled vegetable garden, and formal and informal borders wrapped around the Tudor hall, it's no surprise that the Hindringham garden was shortlisted for the prestigious Historic Houses 2020 Garden of the Year award. You will have the remainder of the afternoon and evening on your own.



The Drawing Room at Holkham Hall. By kind permission of Holkham Estate.

Thursday, September 15

Our Thursday begins with a visit to **Blickling Hall**, one of England's greatest Jacobean houses, famous for its spectacular long gallery and its outstanding plasterwork ceilings. The house also contains notable collections of furniture, pictures, books, and tapestries (particularly the Battle of Poltava tapestry of 1764, probably given to the 2nd Earl of Buckinghamshire by Catherine the Great). Blickling is most famous today as home of Thomas Boleyn, father of Anne Boleyn. Although the exact birth dates of their children are unknown, historians are confident that all three surviving Boleyn children, including Anne, were likely born at the earlier house at Blickling.

Next we're off to **Wolterton Park**, an 18th-century powerhouse of Norfolk. Built by the 1st Lord Walpole, Sir Robert Walpole's brother, Wolterton is a grand early 18th century red brick Neoclassical mansion noted for its opulent Georgian interiors. We will be hosted by owners Peter Sheppard and Keith Day, who restored this remarkable mansion in the early 21st century. Our visit will begin with champagne and canapes in the saloon, followed by lunch in the state dining room before we have a tour of the house (never open to the public) and gardens. We'll return to the hotel for time to relax before we have dinner at a nearby restaurant.



Sennowe Hall. By kind permission of Dougal Waters.

Friday, September 16

This morning we'll visit **Oxburgh Hall**, a moated house built for the Bedingfeld family in 1482 and still their home today. Famous for its 80-foot-high gatehouse, Oxburgh has many royal connections: Henry VII and Elizabeth of York were guests here, while Mary, Queen of Scots, was held a prisoner here in the 16th century. Our before-hours tour will tell the story of the family's Catholic faith and endurance through religious persecution and their house's survival from Civil War devastation, near dereliction, and threatened demolition. After the house tour, there will be time to wander the gardens, a mixture of formal and wilderness, including a walled garden and French parterre garden. We'll have lunch at a nearby restaurant, after which we'll return to the hotel for some R&R time.

One of the highlights of our time in Norfolk will be an after-hours tour of **Sandringham**, the royal family's country estate. Here we'll see exceptional collections of porcelain, jade, rose quartz, silver, Russian art, and family portraits and photographs, all set in the Victorian and Edwardian decor that was the epitome of style in the late 19th century. We will also visit the gardens and **St. Mary Magdalene Sandringham**, where members of the royal family attend services when in residence. This evening we will gather in the hotel's private writing room for pre-dinner drinks, followed by our grand farewell dinner.

Saturday, September 17

Following check-out, we'll depart Congham Hall by coach for London, first dropping off participants at **London-Heathrow International Airport** for those with afternoon or evening flights. The coach will then continue on to central London to drop the remaining participants at **The Rembrandt**.

Tour Leaders: Curt DiCamillo and Oliver Gerrish

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Curt DiCamillo



Curt is the Curator of Special Collections at New England Historic Genealogical Society. Before he came to NEHGS he worked for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the National Trust for Scotland. He is a noted historian and a recognized authority on the British country house, about which he has written, lectured, and taught in the U.S. and abroad. Since 1999 he has maintained an award-winning database on the web, TheDiCamillo.com, which seeks to document every English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish country house ever built, standing or demolished. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, is listed in *Who's Who in America*, *Who's Who in the World*, is a Fellow of the Massachusetts Historical Society, and a member of the Council of the American Museum in Britain.

Oliver Gerrish



A native of Derbyshire, Oliver Gerrish is a Cambridge-educated architectural historian, a trustee of the Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust, and was one of the youngest feature writers to appear in the pages of *Country Life* magazine. He was chairman of The Young Georgians (the under-35 wing of the national architectural charity The Georgian Group), which he retired from in 2016 at the grand old age of 34, after nearly 15 years at the helm. While Chairman of The Young Georgians Oliver planned and led more than 100 tours and events on behalf of The Georgian Group. He is half of Historic Decoration, a series of study days on the history of British interiors, which Oliver founded, together with Lady Caroline Percy. The study days take place at the Percy family's London seat, Syon House. Oliver is also a professional countertenor.

All visits are subject to re-confirmation closer to the tour dates in the event of government orders for closures or restricted access to sites featured in this itinerary.

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Tour Cost:

Land Package: To be announced.

Single Supplement: To be announced.

Tour price is per person, based on double occupancy, with a minimum of 12 paying participants.

Activity Level:

Moderate; good walking ability is advised.

Flights:

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

Terms & Conditions:

Travel Muse Inc. acts only as an agent for the participant and for the New England Historic Genealogical Society ("NEHGS") 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 and Travel Muse Inc. reserve 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.

Travel Insurance:

NEHGS and Travel Muse Inc. 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 Inclusions:

6 nights' accommodation at Congham Hall Hotel & Spa in Norfolk (U.K.); breakfast daily, 6 lunches, 5 dinners including pre-dinner drinks, wine or beer at lunches, receptions and dinners; all sightseeing and admission charges as outlined in the itinerary; land transportation by deluxe airconditioned coach; bottled water on coach; leadership of Curt DiCamillo and Oliver Gerrish for duration of the tour; local English-speaking guides for all planned sightseeing activities; gratuities at included meals and for guides; one airport transfer on the last day of the tour as indicated in the itinerary; 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 Exclusions:

Airline tickets, airline taxes, or fuel surcharges, baggage fees; airport portage; passport or visa fees; individual transfers to and from the airport for individuals not using the scheduled group transfers; meals other than those specified in the itinerary; gratuities for hotel housekeeping; personal items such as telephone calls, room service, valet service, à-la-carte orders, specialty wines and liquors, laundry charges, travel extensions, or tour deviations; entry or departure fees levied by local governments; personal insurance for health, baggage, and tour cancellation; any other items not specifically included in the itinerary.

For more information, please contact Cy Britt, Director of Heritage Tours
at cy.britt@nehgs.org or 617-226-1267.