

# Heritage Tours

by American Ancestors



## *An English Country Christmas*

*Tour Leaders: Curt DiCamillo and Gareth Williams*

**December 7 - 12, 2022 | 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

Wednesday, December 7

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.

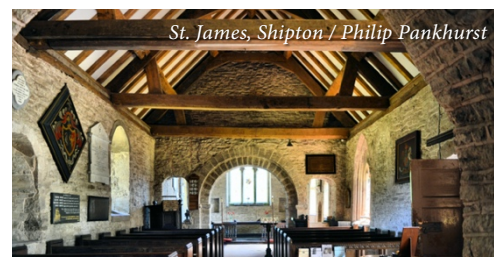
*Thursday, December 8*  
**Linley, Ludlow & Shipton**



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.



*Friday, December 9*  
**West Felton, Norbury & Buntingsdale**



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 **Buntingsdale 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.



*Saturday, December 10*  
**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



Tong, Shropshire, St. Bartholomew's Church / Draak 1702

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.

Sunday, December 11

### Weston-under-Lizard & Shrewsbury

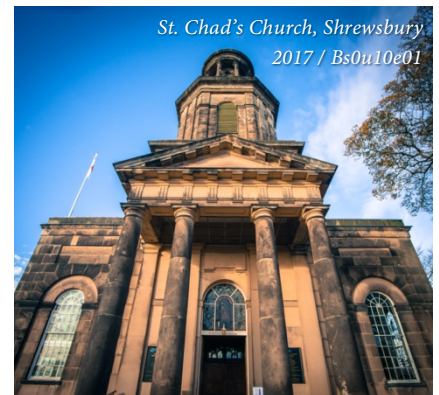
This morning we travel to **Shrewsbury**, Shropshire's county seat. This lovely town sits within a loop of the River Severn and is distinguished for its medieval and Tudor buildings and ancient churches. In 1984 Shrewsbury was chosen as the main location for the filming of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas 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.



English Bridge Shrewsbury / John Kenyon  
(image purchased by Shrewsbury BID)



Tanners Wine Merchants HQ in  
Shrewsbury / Jaggery



St. Chad's Church, Shrewsbury  
2017 / Bs0u10e01

Monday, December 12

### 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.



#### 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.

## AN ENGLISH COUNTRY CHRISTMAS

December 7 - 12, 2022

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.

### **Tour Cost:**

Land Package: \$5,995

Single Supplement: \$395

*Tour price is per person, based on double occupancy, with a minimum of 18 paying participants. A limited number of single supplements are available on a first-come, first-served basis.*

**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:** 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.

**Travel Insurance:** NEHGS strongly recommends 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, five (5) lunches, four (4) 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 and Gareth Williams for duration of the tour; expert, local guides for all planned sightseeing activities; gratuities at included meals and for guides and drivers; two (2) group transfers upon arrival in London from the Rembrandt Hotel to Weston Park and upon departure between Weston Park and London Heathrow Airport (LHR) and the Rembrandt Hotel; 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 portage; 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.

For more information, please contact Cy Britt, Director of Heritage Tours  
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