The Association of Former Students, Texas A&M

TOWN & COUNTRY LIFE®

Oxford • English Countryside

Featuring Downton Abbey and Blenheim Palace

Guest Speaker Lord Charles Spencer-Churchill

Aug. 28-Sept. 5, 2015
Howdy, Ags!

For many, the unspoiled nature of England, Shakespeare’s “blessed plot,” lies in the ways of town and country life that has been practiced for centuries in Albion’s idyllic university towns, pastoral villages and picturesque countrysides. Experience the time-honored quest for knowledge and the tradition-rich passage as played out in the hallowed classrooms, dining halls and quadrangles of Oxford University. Learn more about how the legacy of days gone by transcends time and forms the roots of contemporary country life as you chinwag with village residents. Meet Lord Charles Spencer-Churchill, cousin to Sir Winston Churchill, as you call on their family’s stunning Blenheim Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Uncover the deep history behind the Victorian castle now known as “Downton Abbey,” and take the opportunity to step into the cottage where Jane Austen penned “Emma.” Savor the extraordinary experience of traveling in a small, merry group to the university town of Oxford and through the Cotswold region, town and country juxtaposed, discovering the great heritage and character of England's historic academic centers, great country houses of Britain and enchanting villages.

Explore the age-old traditions of Oxford and become more familiar with the lives of great authors and icons of English history who were educated here or hailed from the surrounding region. Admire the picture-perfect scenery of thatched cottages, flower gardens and gentle streams, framed by the bucolic Cotswold landscape and dotted with haunting ruins and spectacular medieval churches built from the wealth of the wool trade. Hear about contemporary life from the local ladies and gents during the exclusive TOWN & COUNTRY LIFE FORUM®, Experience this most quintessentially English culture and region, while staying in two lovely hotels, ideally located in the heart of a medieval city and in the center of a quaint country village.

This comprehensive, one-of-a-kind, limited, small group travel program is the best way to experience the charm and beauty of English town and country life. It is an exceptional value including comfortable accommodations, most excursions, daily breakfast, specially arranged meals and travel at the perfect pace. So don’t delay—space sold out quickly in 2014. We encourage you to join fellow alumni and friends and make your reservation today while Early Booking Savings and space are available.

Gig 'em!

Jennifer Bohac ’87, Ph.D.
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No funds donated to The Association of Former Students or to Texas A&M University have been used in the production or mailing of this travel brochure; all such costs are covered by our tour supplier.
OXFORD ♦ ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE

Experience firsthand storied destinations and steadfast traditions that have shaped the English character for centuries in Oxford, the medieval town that serves as a beacon of academia, and in the quintessentially English villages of the Cotswolds, where bucolic country life unfolds amongst charming villages, lush rolling vales and sylvan woodlands. Learn about the rhythms of daily life and the generations-old customs and ceremonies of the hallowed universities in England's towns and chat with the ladies, chaps, nobles and gentry in the grand estates of the countryside. Enjoy an enriching and intimate small group travel experience like no other, including accommodations, specially arranged meals and excursions—an excellent value. This exclusive program is one of the popular TOWN & COUNTRY LIFE® series that immerses you in a comprehensive and intimate travel experience at just the right pace.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENTS are specially arranged and only available on this custom-designed itinerary:

♦ Enjoy an authentic experience in historic British university towns and quaint, traditional Cotswold villages.

♦ Immerse yourself in a carefully planned, balanced itinerary of included, guided historical and cultural excursions and time on your own to partake in local daily rituals while sipping afternoon tea, watching punting boats glide along the River Thames or having a Pimm's cup in a local pub.

♦ Meet Lord Charles Spencer-Churchill, Sir Winston Churchill’s cousin and the brother of the 11th Duke of Marlborough, who will host your specially arranged visit to Blenheim Palace, with a private lunch in the stately Marlborough Room.

♦ Visit “Downton Abbey,” the splendid, authentic Victorian Highclere Castle, to explore the estate’s magnificent period state rooms, special Egyptian exhibition and extensive gardens, and the market town of Bampton, filming sites for PBS’s popular MASTERPIECE series.

♦ Experience the venerable tradition of Formal Hall dining during the exclusive and private Farewell Dinner in one of Oxford University’s grand college dining halls.

♦ Hear it from the Experts! A local guest lecturer will discuss the glories, trials and expectations of student life at Oxford University. Experienced, accredited local guides will accompany you throughout the program and share their expertise of historical, cultural and contemporary England.

♦ Engage locals during the TOWN & COUNTRY LIFE FORUM®, where residents share their stories and discuss contemporary life in the Cotswolds.

♦ Choose to visit Jane Austen’s England and the cherished locales that influenced the writing of one of England’s most beloved authors (optional excursion).

The long twilight glow of a perfect English summer evening sweeps over Chipping Campden, a serene, quintessential Cotswold village with a deep-rooted history in the wool trade.
River Thames
River Thames
River Windrush
River Windrush
English Channel
English Channel
River Evenlode
River Evenlode
Minster Lovell, United Kingdom
One of the prettiest of the Oxfordshire villages, Minster Lovell was built on the banks of the bucolic, meandering River Windrush, essential to the wool trade that flourished in the medieval Cotswolds. Thatched-roof stone cottages line its quiet rural lane. A short distance outside the village, the 15th-century Minster Lovell Hall is steeped in legend. The surrounding lands once belonged to the Lovell family, and Francis Lovell fought in the Wars of the Roses with Richard III at the battle of Bosworth.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT:
During the exclusive TOWN & COUNTRY LIFE FORUM®, local residents will discuss contemporary life in the Cotswolds.

Cotswold and Oxfordshire Villages
One of the Cotswolds best known villages, Stow-on-the-Wold is a delightful market town set along Fosse Way, the first great Roman road in Britain. It was designed around its market square during the height of the English wool industry, where as Daniel Dafoe told it, up to 20,000 sheep a day were funneled to market along narrow-walled avenues, called tunes.

Nestled inside the scenic Vale of Evesham, medieval Chipping Campden was built on the “white gold” wealth of the wool merchants, who left behind the soaring 15th-century Gothic tower of the Church of St. James and wool-tycoon manors, including the 14th-century Grevel House.

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Romantic gardens and classic stone houses are part of many English traditions that live on in the Cotswold and Oxfordshire villages, a bastion of beauty, history and culture.
Here villagers carry on along High Street, which retains its old English character.

Simply beautiful, Broadway was first settled by the Romans and is often referred to as the “Jewel of the Cotswolds.” The home of William Morris, leader of the English Arts and Crafts Movement whose devotees settled throughout the Cotswolds, Broadway was once a major stage coach stop brimming with inns and public houses and today beckons travelers with its splendor and tranquility.

Scenes from the acclaimed international PBS MASTERPIECE television series Downton Abbey are filmed in Bampton, one of the oldest towns in England. First established during the Iron Age, with later markings as the site of an extensive unwalled Roman settlement, the historic town is included in William the Conquerer’s Domesday Book of 11th-century shires and landholders.

The magnificent Church of St. John the Baptist is tucked away at the bottom of Burford’s main road. Inside, a monument to Henry VIII’s surgeon-barber is said to contain the first depictions of native Americans in Britain.

Highclere Castle—“Downton Abbey”

The authentic Highclere Castle, featured as Crawley Manor in the PBS Downton Abbey series, is set in an Edwardian-period property among 1000 acres of spectacular parklands. It was built as a Victorian country house upon the foundation of a medieval palace owned for some 800 years by the Bishops of Winchester.

The richly decorated state rooms and bedrooms have been restored with authentic elements including embossed Spanish leather wall coverings, 15th-century Italian embroideries, 18th-century silk bed hangings and 400 years’ worth of European and English paintings and furniture, including a mahogany desk and chair that once belonged to Napoleon.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT: Discover the authentic history of one of the great manor houses of England, where the Carnarvon family has lived since 1679. Explore the exquisite staterooms and bedrooms and walk the lush grounds. The Egyptian antiquities on exhibit celebrate the fifth Earl of Carnarvon’s love of Egyptology. The combined efforts of benefactor Lord Carnarvon and archaeologist Howard Carter led to the discovery and excavation of Egyptian King Tutankhamun’s tomb in 1922.

Blenheim Palace

Sir Winston Churchill remarked that he’d made two of the most important decisions of his life at Blenheim Palace—to be born and to marry. He continued, in that dry wit of his, to say he was “content with the decision I took on both occasions.”

Built in the 18th century by another national hero, Sir John Churchill, the first Duke of Marlborough, with funds donated by a grateful Queen Anne after his victory at the Battle of Blenheim, this stunning Baroque masterpiece today is a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of Britain’s most treasured stately homes. The estate’s 2200-acre parkland and gardens were designed by the legendary English landscape architect “Capability” Brown.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT: By special arrangement, meet Lord Charles Spencer-Churchill, who will give our group a private and personal introduction to his family home before an exclusive luncheon in the Marlborough Room.

Oxford

Affectionately named the “city of dreaming spires” by adoring poets, Oxford is home to Britain’s most venerated university which counts Sir Thomas More, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Margaret Thatcher among its illustrious alumni. Steeped in eight centuries of history and erudition, Oxford continues to nurture great scholars while blending its revered traditions with cutting-edge research and instruction provided by many of the world’s brightest minds. Here, the exclusive customs of a Formal Hall dinner require proper attire, or college gowns, and are still honored with a three-course meal and waiter service.

Magnificent cobblestone squares, medieval alleyways and Renaissance quadrangles fill the grounds of the oldest university in the English-speaking world.

Your Farewell Dinner will be held in one of Oxford’s oldest and most beautiful dining halls.
CULTURAL ENRICHMENT: Visit Trinity College and the Ashmolean Museum.
CULTURAL ENRICHMENT: Exclusive lecture about student life at Oxford.
CULTURAL ENRICHMENT: Join your traveling companions for a specially arranged, exclusive and private Farewell Dinner in one of the college's hallowed dining halls.

Jane Austen’s England
Beloved author Jane Austen deftly chronicled the transition from the 18th century’s emphasis on reason and improvement to the 19th century’s emphasis on sensibility and romantic excitement.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT OPTION: On this full-day optional excursion, visit the Jane Austen Museum in Chawton, the house where the author spent the last eight years of her life, and the cathedral in Winchester, where she is buried. Each site offers glimpses of the iconic writer’s life and the era she captured in her writings.

OLD SWAN & MINSTER MILL
Tucked away in a lovely corner of the Cotswolds and ideally located at the heart of Minster Lovell, the intimate OLD SWAN & MINSTER MILL is both quintessentially English and captures the charm of bygone years and the romance of the countryside with all the modern conveniences of a fine hotel. Enjoy the pristine gardens and calmly flowing river on the property. Featuring a gastro-pub inspired dining room, bar and Wi-Fi, this quaint country inn is an ideal “home” from which to explore the English countryside.

MACDONALD RANDOLPH HOTEL
Located in the center of Oxford in a landmark building, the Five-Star MACDONALD RANDOLPH HOTEL has elegance and charm and offers award-winning food in the heart of this world-famous university city. Having played host to prime ministers and presidents, the hotel’s renowned Morse Bar is instantly recognizable as the pub favored by Colin Dexter’s fictional detective, Inspector Morse. The hotel’s beautiful architecture and historic setting provide the perfect venue to enjoy afternoon tea. Each room has all the modern amenities of a fine hotel and the hotel has an elevator.

Cambridge Colleges and Chapels • East Anglia
Pre-Program Option
Experience the iconic and prestigious British university town while walking in the pristine quad and along the sculpture-lined corridors of Cambridge. Visit the famed King’s College Chapel and tour Bletchley Park, the secret World War II intelligence site where the British deciphered the German code. Accommodations for three nights are in the comfortable, centrally located CAMBRIDGE CITY HOTEL.

Windsor Castle • Buckinghamshire • River Thames
Post-Program Option
“Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song,” exalted the Elizabethan poet Edmund Spenser in praise of this fabled riverway, etched as it is in heart and history of England. Explore life in the villages surrounding the Thames and cruise the river itself for a spectacular view of the locales that dot its storied banks. Visit romantic Windsor Castle, the family home of British royalty for nearly 1000 years, and look for the Queen’s Royal Standard flying from the Round Tower to see if she is in residence. Visit the traditional college town of Eton, site of England’s most famous public school and the historic and picturesque regatta town of Henley-on-Thames. Accommodations for two nights are in the deluxe, riverside MACDONALD COMPLEAT ANGLER HOTEL in the charming Buckinghamshire town of Marlow.

The Optional Excursion and Pre- and Post-Program Options are available at additional cost. Details will be provided with your reservation confirmation.
Meet Lord Charles Spencer-Churchill, noted speaker and host at his ancestral home, Blenheim Palace.

In Minster Lovell, United Kingdom
- Three nights in the charming OLD SWAN & MINSTER MILL.
- Private Welcome Reception.
- Breakfast each day and one dinner in the hotel.

In Oxford
- Four nights in the historic Five-Star MACDONALD RANDOLPH HOTEL.
- Breakfast each day in the hotel.

Exclusive Excursions Led by Accredited Local Expert Guides
- Walking tour of the legendary university town of Oxford.
- Tour of the typical and charming Cotswold villages of Stow-on-the-Wold, Chipping Campden, Broadway, Burford, Bibury and Cirencester.
- Visit to Sir Winston Churchill’s grave in Bladon.

Exclusive Cultural Enrichments
- Exclusive meeting in Blenheim Palace with Lord Charles Spencer-Churchill, who offers a unique perspective on his ancestral home and the life of Sir Winston Churchill.
- Specially arranged private luncheon in Blenheim Palace's Marlborough Room.
- Exclusive and private Farewell Dinner in one of Oxford University’s storied colleges.
- Specially arranged TOWN & COUNTRY LIFE FORUM® with local residents who will share their stories and discuss contemporary life in the Cotswolds.
- Unique look at the English countryside’s architecture, cultural traditions and timeless way of life during visits to historic Cotswold and Oxfordshire villages.
- Specially arranged visit to authentic Highclere Castle, also known as “Downton Abbey,” and the village of Bampton featured in PBS MASTERPIECE’S Downton Abbey.
- Expert lecture on Oxford’s colleges and student life with time to explore the Ashmolean Museum.

Enhanced Travel Services
- Transfers and luggage handling abroad for participants whose arrival(s)/departure(s) coincide with the scheduled group transfer(s).
- All excursions and visits, as outlined above, led by accredited, local expert guides.
- Gratuities to local guides and drivers on included excursions.
- Jane Austen’s England optional excursion at additional cost.
- Hospitality desk in the hotels.
- The services of an experienced Gohagan & Company Program Director throughout the program.
- Travel document wallet, name badge and pre-departure information.
- Automatic $250,000 flight insurance policy for each participant ticketed on flights by Gohagan & Company.
In the company of Lord Charles Spencer-Churchill, see the splendor and learn more about the rich history of Blenheim Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage site.
Punting along the serene River Cam is a long-standing tradition where students, ladies and gents enjoy a relaxing afternoon gliding through the heart of the beautiful and historic university town of Cambridge.

**LAND TARIFF**

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<tr>
<th>Per person, based on double occupancy</th>
<th>Early Booking Price through March 6, 2015</th>
<th>Regular Price after March 6, 2015</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>$3,795</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,095</strong></td>
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- Singles are available upon request for an additional $1,100.
- Taxes are an additional $295 and are subject to change.

**Please make my/our reservation(s):**

- Double occupancy (two twin beds).
- Double occupancy (one queen bed).
- Single accommodations.
- I am reserving as a single but prefer to share accommodations and will allow you to select my roommate (shares cannot be guaranteed).

**TOWN & COUNTRY LIFE® OXFORD • ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE RESERVATION FORM**

*Note: Airfare is subject to change and availability and is nonrefundable. I/We will make my/our own air arrangements.*
Explore the enchanting patchwork of the Cotswolds dotted with traditional farms, country houses and picturesque villages.

RELEASE OF LIABILITY, ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND BINDING ARBITRATION AGREEMENT

RESPONSIBILITY: Thomas F. Gohagan & Company, the sponsoring associations/organizations, and its and their employees, shareholders, subsidiaries, affiliates, officers, directors or trustees, successors, and assigns (collectively “Gohagan”) do not own or operate any entity which is or do provide goods or services for your trip including, for example, lodging facilities, airline, vessel, or other transportation companies, guides or guide services, local ground operators, providers or organizers of optional excursions, food service or entertainment providers, etc. All such persons and entities are independent contractors. As a result, Gohagan is not liable for any negligent or willful act or failure to act of any such person or entity or of any other third party.

CANCELLATION: If due to weather, flight schedules or other uncontrollable factors, you are required to spend an additional night(s), you will be responsible for your own room transfers and meal costs. Baggage is entirely at owner’s risk. The right is reserved to decline to accept as a trip participant, or substitute persons capable of meeting the rigors and requirements of participating in the activities, or who is abusive to other trip participants, leaders or third parties, or who Gohagan determines to detract from the enjoyment of the trip by others. Specific room/cabin assignments are within the sole discretion of the hotel or cruise line.

Gohagan reserves the right to substitute vessels, hotels or attractions of a different class, or other like replacement, for any reason, including but not limited to acts of God, government restrictions, force majeure, or other Warnings or Advisories of any kind. Gohagan is not responsible for or liable for changes, even if Gohagan makes the flight arrangements or cancels the trip. Gohagan reserves the right to change the itinerary or trip features at any time and for any reason, with or without notice, and Gohagan shall not be liable for any such change, alteration, substitution or curtailment of your trip or any refund to you in connection with any such change. Gohagan is not responsible for any failure to act of any such person or entity or of any other third party.

TRIP INSURANCE: Because our cancellation policies are strictly enforced, we strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement. Because our cancellation policies are strictly enforced, we strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement. In the event that you must cancel your participation in a travel program, trip cancellation insurance may be the only source of reimbursement.

BINDING ARBITRATION: Any controversy or claim arising out of or relating in any way to the Release of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Binding Arbitration Agreement, the brochure, or any other information relating in any way to the trip, to the trip itself, shall be settled solely and exclusively by binding arbitration in Chicago, Illinois, in accordance with the commercial rules of the American Arbitration Association then existent. In any such proceeding, the substantive, but not the procedural law of Illinois will apply. The arbitrator and not any federal, state, or local court or agency shall have exclusive authority to resolve any dispute relating to the interpretation, applicability, enforceability, conscionability, or formation of this contract, including but not limited to any claim that all or any part of this contract is void or voidable.

ACCEPTANCE OF CONTRACT: By forwarding of deposit, the participant certifies that he/she does not have any mental, physical or other condition of disability that would create a hazard for him/herself or other participants and accepts the terms contained in this Release of Liability, Assumption of Risk and Binding Arbitration Agreement.

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