

The English House through four Centuries

See behind the great houses of Derbyshire and Cheshire



Haddon Hall



Shrigley Hall Hotel Golf & Country Club



'Bess of Hardwick'



Hardwick Hall

The English summer in July is at its most glorious. What could be more agreeable than to spend a weekend in a comfortable Regency country house set amidst verdant parkland with its own golf-course and leisure club facilities?

Join our party in this beautiful corner of England, bordering on Cheshire and Derbyshire. During this weekend you'll visit some very fine English houses. Your host will be Nicholas Merchant, who not only lectures extensively on the decorative and fine arts, but also has a lifetime interest in the English country house and its history.

Friday evening Talk by Nicholas Merchant 'The English House through four centuries'.

Saturday To Hardwick which is a unique house built by a unique woman, Elizabeth of Shrewsbury, or 'Bess of Hardwick'. Starting to build in her 70s in the late 16th century, Bess employed the celebrated architect Robert Smythson, to build a house unlike any other, "more glass than wall". She filled it with furniture and furnishings, which can still be identified from the 1601 inventory.

After lunch, on to Haddon which has been the site of a house since the 11th century, and what we see today dates mainly from the 14th century. It has links to William the Conqueror, but its ownership by the Vernon family has given it its romantic appeal through the elopement of Dorothy Vernon with the dashing son of the Manners family later to be Dukes of Rutland, to whom the house still belongs.

Sunday Tatton Park, a Regency house, almost contemporary with Shrigley Hall, built in the Neo-Classic style for the Egerton family by Lewis Wyatt of the architectural dynasty. The house represents a wonderful example of country-house life in the early 19th century.

Capesthorpe, one of the largest houses in Cheshire and deserves to be better known. Seat of the Bromley-Davenport family since Domesday, its long history is reflected in its varied contents ranging from a Roman marble chair, to American furniture and architecture by Sir Edward Blore. The house is now a quintessential Victorian pile.

Monday optional tour Chatsworth, the home of the Dukes of Devonshire is connected with 'Bess of Hardwick' who built the Elizabethan house, which still forms the core of what we see to day. The present house is of 17th, 18th and 19th century origin. Successive dukes added and embellished the house so that it now justly deserves the title 'Palace of the Peak'. Late lunch at your hotel before departure.



Nicholas Merchant

Your host hotel Shrigley Hall Hotel Golf & Country Club, Cheshire

Dates July 6 - 8 2007 (two nights)
September 28 - 30 2007 (two nights)

Price £298 each
Includes dinners with wine and Sunday lunch

Deposit £100 each.
(balance payable 28 days before event)

Monday optional tour £125 each Inc. Sunday D, B&B, visit, coach transfers and lunch

Thursday night £49.50 B&B per person

Please quote CHESHIRE

D, B&B Dinner, bed & breakfast