

GREAT HOUSES AND CASTLES

a. GREAT HOUSES OF ENGLAND

We examine castles like Leeds, Bodiam and Warwick where we visit the State Apartments to see the place where the love affair between Daisy Warwick and Edward VII took place visit magnificent Penshurst Place, home of the de Lisle and Dudleys, Igham Mote, a moated manor house, Knowle in Kent, given by Queen Elizabeth to Thomas Sackville and home of the writer Vita Sackville West; stately Jacobean houses like Longleat and Ham House near Richmond, and Althorp, the home and final resting place of Princess Diana. Along the way we learn about the distinguishing features of Elizabeth and Jacobean architecture and the Victorian additions to several great castles like Warwick, home of Countess Daisy Warwick, mistress of King Edward VII and now run by Madame Tussauds.

b. STATELY HOMES & CASTLES OF SCOTLAND

We tour Scottish castles like the Queen Mother's former home, haunted Glamis and Crathes with its French influenced turrets, Traquair House, the most magical house in Scotland, where Mary Queen of Scots stayed and whose owners loyal to the Jacobites have vowed they will not reopen its doors until the Stuarts regain the throne of Britain; stately Hopetoun House, Robert Adam's architectural work at Haddo House and the heart breakingly beautiful Mellerstain,, romantic turreted Abbotsford, home of Sir Walter Scott the author who promoted Scotland's heritage in his books. This armchair tour brings the rich and colourful past of Scotland to life and shows how Scottish architecture has been influenced by French castles and Palladian villas.

c. WINDSOR CASTLE AND THE ROYAL ART COLLECTION

Susanna attended a boarding school near Windsor and each term was taken to visit the castle and did some research here into the Canaletto drawings so knows the Castle and the collection very well. We look at the overall layout of the castle, the Round Tower, the Royal Library and St George's Chapel, recently the scene of the blessing of the wedding of Charles and Camilla. The British royal collection and that of the Kings of Spain in the Prado are Europe's greatest art collections and the Queen's Michaelangelo and da Vinci drawings are worth billions of pounds and are irreplaceable treasures, which was why the fire that ravaged Windsor Castle could have been even more disastrous than it was.

THE BEST OF BRITISH ART DEALS WITH THE RISE OF THE PORTRAIT IN BRITISH ART, THE IMPORTATION OF LANDSCAPE ARTIST FROM EUROPE TO BRITAIN, STUBBS, HOGARTH SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS AND CONSTABLE.