



Defence of the Realm & Battle of Britain Tour - Goodwood Revival & Heritage of Motoring Tour

28th August to 11th September 2023

Itinerary

Day one: - Victoria, Central London (Monday 28th August).

All participants meet late afternoon at The Rochester, 69 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PA, where we will spend our first night, enjoying a welcome dinner and introductions to the tour in the hotel restaurant.

(D)

Day two: - Churchill War Rooms Westminster, Imperial War Museum Lambeth, Cambridge University walking tour. (Tuesday 29th August).

We start with a visit to "The Churchill War Rooms", where we will soak up the atmosphere in the Cabinet Room where Churchill and his key ministers met with the heads of the British Armed Forces to make decisions that influenced the course of the Second World War. The fascinating underground labyrinth of corridors and offices are presented just as they were in the dark days of the war. We travel the short journey in our mini coach to The Imperial War Museum in Lambeth. The Museum is dedicated to conserving, displaying and interpreting stories of the most devastating conflict in human history. Here we will take our lunch in one of the two restaurants.

After lunch we will depart for the University City of Cambridge, whose colleges date back to 1209. On arrival we will meet Professor Antony Rodgers who will take us on a very informative walking tour of the colleges and the river Cam riverside. We will also visit the famous Eagle public house, frequented by British, Australian, and American airmen throughout the war, before their hazardous missions over occupied Europe. Tonight, we will stay at the Holiday Inn Express, where we have a free evening.

(B)

Day three: - American Cemetery, IWM Duxford, Classic Wings flight over Cambridge, Petwood Hotel Woodhall Spa. (Wednesday 30th August).

After a sumptuous breakfast we depart for the Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial, a sombre but very beautiful memorial to over 3800 American service members who gave their lives defending these islands. It is a place of stillness and reflection, which will stay long in the memory. A short drive in our minibus brings us to Imperial War Museum Duxford, Europe's largest air museum, a collection of enormous hangers filled with every conceivable flying machines from all ages, also not to be missed are the Battle of Britain Hanger and the American Air Museum. A special feature of our visit will be to take a flight on an iconic, beautiful art deco De Havilland Dragon Rapide biplane, over the city of Cambridge.

Mid-afternoon we will depart for the Petwood Hotel at Woodhall Spa, formally the officers mess of 617 Squadron "The Dam Busters", where we will stay for the next three nights.

(B)

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Day four: - RAF Coningsby home of The Battle of Britain Flight, East Kirby Aviation Heritage Centre. (Thursday 31st August).

This morning we travel the short distance to RAF Coningsby and the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight visitor centre where we will enjoy a guided tour around the hanger and see Lancaster PA474, Douglas Dakota ZA947, six Spitfires, two Hurricanes and two Chipmunks.

This afternoon we will visit East Kirby, Lincolnshire Aviation Centre, home of Lancaster NX611 "Just Jane", who if we are lucky, will go on a taxi run demonstrating the enormous power of her four Merlin engines. This fascinating privately run centre is also the home of newly restored Mosquito HJ711, a rare sight indeed.

This evening we return to Petwood Hotel, where we have a free evening. (B)

Day five: International Bomber Command Centre and Memorial, Lincoln Cathedral. (Friday 1st September)

Our day starts with a visit to the International Bomber Command Centre at Canwick where 57861 men and women who gave their lives supporting Bomber Command during World War 2 are commemorated. This spectacular site, only completed in the last few years, looks down on the city of Lincoln and its magnificent cathedral.

Our final visit today is to Early Gothic style Norman Cathedral built in 1072, once thought to be the tallest building in the world at 160 metres (520 feet), and certainly used by WW2 airmen as a navigational beacon in years past.

Tonight, we dine together in the "Squadron Bar" once the regular haunt of Squadron Leader Guy Gibson VC and his fellow airmen of 617 Squadron, the walls abound with memorabilia from the period.

(B, D)

Day six: - RAF Cosford Museum, Morgan Car Company Malvern. (Saturday 2nd September)

Sadly, we must say goodbye to Petwood, Lincolnshire and "Bomber County" and head for RAF Cosford and its extensive displays, including all three V Bombers, the "Cold War" section and much, much more.

After lunch we will depart for our first "Goodwood" section of the tour, with a visit to the Morgan Car Company in Malvern and enjoy a factory tour, here we will immerse ourselves in the mix of rare craft skills and the latest modern technology and watch close-up, the making of these iconic sports cars. Later we travel to our overnight hotel, the Holiday Inn Express, Redditch, where we have a free evening.

(B)

Day seven: - Gaydon British Motor Museum, Bletchley Park. (Sunday 3rd September)

Still with motoring, we are off to Gaydon and The British Motor Museum to view the world's largest collection of historic British cars, with over 300 on display.

This afternoon we make our way east to Bletchley Park, once the top-secret home of the WW2 codebreakers, notably, Alan Turing and his team who developed the world's first programmable digital computer, Colossus, to break the German codes, thus shortening the war by several years.

Tonight, we stay at the Holiday Inn Express in Milton Keynes, where we have a free evening.

(B)

Day eight: - The Shuttleworth Collection Biggleswade, Haynes Motor Museum Yeovil. (Monday 4th September)

We start today at The Shuttleworth Collection, an automotive and aeronautical museum, which is the oldest in the world and one of the most prestigious, due to the variety of old and well-preserved aircraft.

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This afternoon we journey to Haynes Motor Museum which is a multi-award-winning museum and home to the UK's largest collection of cars and motorbikes, from the dawn of motoring to the most modern cars of today.

Heading east, we make our way to the ancient City of Winchester, where we will stay for two nights at the Mercure Winchester Wessex Hotel, where we have a free evening.

(B)

Day nine: - Bovington Tank Museum Wareham, Hardy Monument Black Down and Winchester. (Tuesday 5th September)

We dive through beautiful Dorset to the Bovington Tank Museum, where we will see over 300 huge military machines and is the world's largest collection of tanks.

Along the Dorset coast, we will make a brief stop at the Hardy Monument, built in 1844 on Black Down, overlooking Weymouth, this 22-meter monument was built to celebrate the life of Vice Admiral Sir Thomas Hardy, who famously was the captain of HMS Victory at the Battle of Trafalgar but went on to achieve much more in his naval life. The monument can be seen from 60 miles out to sea, what wonderful views.

Finally, we return to our hotel the Mercure Winchester Wessex Hotel, for a free evening.

(B)

Day ten: -Royal Navy Submarine Museum Gosport, Historic Dockyard Portsmouth. (Wednesday 6th September)

Today we concentrate on Gosport, Portsmouth and Southsea. First visiting the Royal Navy Submarine Museum and going aboard HMS Alliance an A-class submarine and being shown around by a Royal Navy submariner.

Next, we make the short journey to The Historic Dockyard in Portsmouth where we will visit the wonderfully preserved HMS Victory, Nelson's flag ship at Trafalgar and the Mary Rose Museum and see Henry VIII flag ship, raised from the Solent in 1982 and view the hundreds of artefacts that were found aboard her.

Tonight, we stay at the Holiday Inn, Portsmouth, where we will stay for the next five nights.

(B)

Day eleven: - The National Motor Museum, Bucklers Hard Maritime Museum. (Thursday 7th September)

Our first visit is to The National Motor Museum at Beaulieu with over 280 vehicles in its world-famous collection, the Museum tells the story of motoring in Britain from humble beginnings to the modern day.

To complement our visits to the Hardy Monument and HMS Victory, we will visit Bucklers Hard an 18th century preserved dockyard, where many of Nelson's ships were built on the Beaulieu River in the New Forest National Park in Hampshire.

We stay at the Holiday Inn, Portsmouth, where we have a free evening.

(B)

Day twelve: - D Day Museum Southsea, Portsmouth Friday 8th September 2023. (Friday 8th September)

This morning we visit the D Day Story, a wonderful exhibit, reopened in 2018, after a 5-million-pound refit, which tells the sequence of events before, during and after the invasion, using the most innovative digital and interactive displays.

This afternoon is free time, when perhaps you might visit Portsmouth's Gunwharf Quays and the 170-metre-high Spinnaker Tower, beneath which there are many bars and restaurants, together with some of Britain's best-known shops and stores for some retail therapy!

We stay at the Holiday Inn, Portsmouth, where we have a free evening. (B)

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Day thirteen, Goodwood Revival, all day. (Saturday 9th September)

We travel to Goodwood in our mini coach, which will take approximately 35 minutes and return at the end of the day to our hotel.

(B)

Day fourteen as above. (Sunday 10th September)

As this is our last night of the tour we will join together for a farewell dinner at our hotel.

(B, D)

Day fifteen: - Tangmere Military and Aviation Museum, Biggin Hill Heritage Hanger. (Monday 11th September)

We depart our hotel of the last five nights and make our way to Tangmere Military and Aviation Museum, on the site of England's most southerly WW2 fighter station and in daily combat during the whole of The Battle of Britain. Now two hangers display a whole range of wartime and post war aircraft including a full-size replica of the Supermarine Spitfire prototype K5054.

We will stop for lunch at the 700-year-old Grasshopper on the Green pub in Westerham, for an end of tour lunch, before driving the short distance to Biggin Hill aerodrome to visit the Heritage Hanger, where there are seldom less than ten Spitfires under restoration or being serviced. Other aeroplanes on site include an ME 109 and a Hawker Hurricane. We will be shown through the workshops by Heritage staff; have the opportunity to sit in a Spitfire cockpit; watch take off and landings by a special two seat Spitfire (there is the opportunity to take a flight in a two seat Spitfire, at an extra cost, this must be prearranged, costs will be advised later).

All good things come to an end! We travel the short distance to central London where sadly our tour ends, at The Rochester Hotel, 69 Vane Street, London, SW1P 2PA (where we started fifteen days ago!)

(B)

B= breakfast included

D= dinner included

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"any way the wind blows"