



# Important Houses of Norfolk

THE ENGLISH MANNER

## Behind the Ropes with Nicholas Merchant & Alexandra Messervy

September 20 - 28, 2015

Windmills and waterfowl, tiny stone churches, rambling country mansions, and vast gentle fens that stretch to the sky. East Anglia is an area of England often overlooked by visitors — which means that it remains blissfully free of tourist buses. And it is truly worth discovering.

Nicholas Merchant’s career has mirrored his abiding interest in antiques. He has worked for some of the major auction houses in London as well as running his own book business devoted to the decorative and fine arts. His particular interest is 18th-century furniture and country houses and the objets within. Nicholas lectures worldwide and for the Victoria & Albert Museum, and joined the panel of NADFAS lecturers in 2004. Previous guests warmly praise his enthusiasm, presence, humour and style.

Alexandra Messervy was formerly a member of the Royal Household of Her Majesty The Queen and was part of the team which organized state events and private family occasions such as the Royal Wedding. She latterly served as Private Secretary to a member of the Royal Family. Alexandra has a wealth of Royal knowledge, soundly backed up with exemplary attention to detail and protocol tips, and our guests will learn much from her of the ‘behind the scenes’ that we all love to know about!

This fall, *Discover Europe* invites you to join Nicholas and Alexandra, and a small group of fellow travelers in exploring *The Important Houses of Norfolk*.



Sandringham



King's College Chapel, Cambridge

The cost of this itinerary, per person, double occupancy is:

Land only (no airfare included): **\$5480**  
Single supplement: **\$1590**

Airfares are available from many U.S. departure cities. Please call for details.

The following services are included:

- Hotels:** 7 nights accommodation in first-class hotels. All hotel taxes and service charges included.
- Coaching:** All ground transportation as detailed in the itinerary.
- Meals:** Full breakfast daily, 1 lunch, 1 afternoon tea, 4 dinners.
- Guides:** Local guides and lectures as specified. Discover Europe tour director throughout.
- Expenses:** Porterage of one large suitcase per person.
- Entrances:** Entrance fees to all sites included in the itinerary.

Please note that travel insurance is not included on this tour.





**Sunday, September 20th.** Departure from your chosen US gateway. **Overnight: Plane**

**Monday, September 21st.** Your arrival at London's Heathrow Airport will be met for the transfer to our city-center hotel. After time to unpack and rest up from the overnight flight, we'll take a tour of the State Apartments at Buckingham Palace with Alexandra Messervy. This evening we'll dine together at the hotel. **(D)** **Overnight: London**

**Tuesday, September 22nd.** This morning we'll have a panoramic tour of London's art and architecture with a local guide, ending with a private tour of St. Paul's Cathedral, Sir Christopher Wren's masterpiece. The afternoon and evening are free to pursue individual interests, attend the theatre or have a leisurely dinner. **(B)** **Overnight: London**

**Wednesday, September 23rd.** Leaving London behind, we travel to the northeast, into the pristine countryside of East Anglia. Our first stop is Cambridge, for a walking tour of the ancient university: Trinity Great Court, King's College Chapel, and 800 years of architecture and tradition. There will be free time to explore the warren of Cambridge's ancient colleges, museums, and shops, and to have lunch. The truly intrepid may try a

hand at punting on the River Cam before we gather again and continue to our hotel for the next 4 nights. On arrival at the hotel we'll gather for afternoon tea and an introductory talk by Nicholas Merchant: *Two Great English Houses*. Dinner is included at the hotel this evening. **(B, T, D)** **Overnight: Congham Hall**

**Thursday, September 24th.** This morning we have a private tour of Houghton Hall and gardens, the home of the Lord Great Chamberlain to HM The Queen, the Marquess of Cholmondeley. We'll have 1 ½ hours to appreciate the treasures within and then morning coffee will be available in the Estate restaurant at 11 and at that stage, it is suggested, if the weather is fine, for everyone to wander at leisure and explore the gardens. Houghton is one of the finest examples of Palladian architecture in England, built by England's first Prime Minister, Sir Robert Walpole. The house has been restored to its former grandeur, and is complimented by an award winning 5-acre walled garden which was created by the present Earl in memory of his grandmother, and designed by the Bannermans, instrumental in the design of the gardens at Highgrove. This afternoon, we visit Oxburgh Hall, a romantic, moated manor house built by the Bedingfield family in the 15th Century and lived in continuously by them since. The family has a rich Roman Catholic history with strong connections to Mary Queen of Scots, and her needlework is on display together with historic and important wallpaper samples. A real gem; described by guests as 'their favourite place on earth.' This evening, over dinner, Nicholas will give a talk about Sandringham – *A Royal Bolt Hole* – and we'll be joined by Barbara Allred, former Royal Housekeeper, who will also talk about the house parties held on the Royal Estate. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Congham Hall**



*Congham Hall*

**Friday, September 25th.** This morning we'll visit the renowned Norfolk Lavender, and then stop briefly to visit the picturesque St Mary's Church at Heacham. Guests may be interested to learn that John Rolfe's family home was here. This year is the 400th anniversary of his marriage to Pocahontas and there is now a Memorial Bench and Bible to commemorate the connection with the founding residents of America. We will then drive into the very pretty little town of Burnham Market for some leisure time and lunch, before we enjoy an afternoon visit to Holkham Hall, a breathtaking Palladian mansion overlooking the finest beach in Norfolk. Here, guests will be guided through the outstanding art collection, original furniture and magnificent state rooms. The evening is free for guests to sample a local pub or to dine at the hotel at their leisure. **(B)** **Overnight: Congham Hall**

**Saturday, September 26th.** An early start today for a day at Sandringham. We'll enjoy a private guided visit pre-regular opening times and then have free time to explore the gardens and church, and to have lunch and browse the gift shop. This afternoon is spent exploring two great treasures of the National Trust. Our first stop is Blickling Hall, built in the 17th century and one of England's great Jacobean houses. From here it's a short drive to Felbrigg Hall, renowned for its original 18th-century furniture and painting collection. We return to our hotel for dinner. **(B, D)** **Overnight: Congham Hall**



*Sandringham House*

**Sunday, September 27th.** This morning we have a private visit to Narborough Hall. Narborough is one of Norfolk's most beautiful and romantic private homes. Set in the valley of the River Nar it is surrounded by ancient parkland, lakes and woods. The gently evolving classic English garden has been created by Joanne Merrison who won a gold medal and best in show at the 2008 Sandringham Flower Show. The house dates from the 16th Century and herbaceous borders overflow with old roses, subtle colours and abundant wildlife. We'll return to our hotel for lunch before departing for London. After our late afternoon arrival back at our hotel, the rest of the day is free – perhaps you purchase tickets to a West End theatre when you were in town at the beginning of the tour? **(B, L)** **Overnight: London**

**Monday, September 28th.** Morning transfers to Heathrow Airport for returning flights to the U.S. **(B)** **Overnight: Home**

Key to included meals: **B** - breakfast, **L** - lunch, **T** - afternoon tea, **D** - dinner