

March 2023

Tour Times

A publication of Mary Valentine Tours

Welcome to **Tour Times**. As many of you know, I'm a life-long Anglophile. My formative years were spent with Sherlock Holmes, Miss Marple, and Elizabeth Bennett. I've been to England more than 50 times since my first visit on 1988. In recent years, I've led tours of England which you'll read about later.

I've designed **Tour Times** to share with you what makes traveling to this part of the world so enjoyable for me. After all, this is the land that has given us Shakespeare and Elton John; Churchill and the Beatles; T.S. Eliot and Adele. And let's not forget scones with clotted cream or fish and chips.

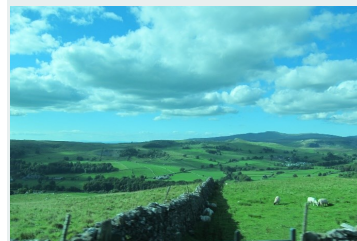
In this issue, you'll discover why Churchill described the UK and the US as "two nations divided by a common language." You'll also read about two new films I recommend; learn about a tour I'm leading in September; and read about five of my favorite things that are found in the UK.

Cheers,

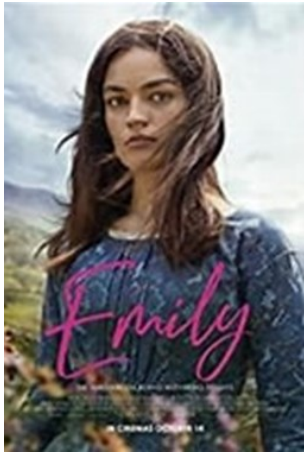
Mary

FIVE OF MY FAVORITE BRITISH THINGS

1. Red mailboxes
2. Old phone booths turned into mini-libraries
3. Fish and chips
4. Tea and scones
5. London's free museums



MOVIE RECOMMENDATIONS



Fans of *Wuthering Heights* will want to see “**Emily**,” which is now showing in art theatres.

Starring a British cast led by Emma Mackey as Emily Bronte, this is far from an action-packed speed chase. Rather, it’s a dark, atmospheric slow-paced glimpse into the lives of Emily, her grim father, her sisters Charlotte and Ann and their brother Bromwell.

While the whole family is depicted as brilliant but strange, Emily is the focus for the viewer’s attention because she’s been labeled by family and neighbors as the misfit recluse. She sadly dies at the age of 30, having written some of the greatest poetry and fiction in English literature.

Those of us who went to the Bronte home in Haworth on our 2015 tour will recognize many of the locations in the film. Rating: R



Coming Soon: “The Lost King”

March 24 will bring the initial screening at AMC theaters of “**The Lost King**,” the true story of the 2012 discovery of the remains of Richard III.

Richard’s remains had been lost for more than 500 years. Then in 2012, thanks to one amateur historian’s obsession, and eventual funding from the government, Richard was found buried beneath a parking lot in a shopping mall. This film, starring Oscar winner Sally Hopkins as well as Steve Coogan, tells that story.

On September 6, our tour will be visiting the site of the discovery, so you may want to check out this film which will be in limited release starting March 24. Rating: PG



September 3-10 Tour Announced

You're invited to join us for eight extraordinary days in London, Oxford, Leicester, Birmingham, Liverpool, the English countryside, and the Cotswolds. See England as you haven't seen it before. Here are some things to look forward to:

- 4- and 5-star hotels
- Dinners at outstanding restaurants
- A traditional afternoon tea
- Battersea Power Station, a shopping, eating, and cultural center
- Greenwich, home of the Royal Navy College with its extraordinary painted ceiling, as well as the Prime Meridian
- The state rooms at Buckingham Palace
- King Richard III Center, where we'll learn the story of how his remains were found 500 years after his death.
- Kensington Palace's "Crown to Couture" exhibit
- A day in Liverpool
- Punting on the Cherwell river in Oxford and a tour of Oxford University
- A village circus
- **Just added:** a winery tour in Surrey

WANT TO JOIN US? IT'S EASY

Cost per person: \$6059. This covers hotels for eight nights; eight breakfasts; seven dinners; one afternoon tea; group taxis in London; a luxury coach in the countryside; tickets and entry fees to all venues. Not covered: airfare, airport transfers, lunches, incidentals, and tips for our driver. Group size: 7-10.

To reserve a spot, send a non-refundable \$500 deposit to Mary Valentine now. An installment of \$2779 is due no later than July 1, 2023. The balance (\$2780) is due no later than August 1, 2023.

Send payments to:

Mary Valentine Tours
15030 Ventura Blvd. #456
Sherman Oaks, CA 91403
323.868.6394 or 747.998.5630
www.maryvalentinetours.com
maryvalentinetours@gmail.com

WHAT MAKES OUR TOURS SPECIAL?

Led by Mary Valentine, a retired community college instructor and an Anglophile who has visited the UK more than 50 times since 1988, our twice-yearly tours focus on themes and locations that will fascinate participants, whether this is their first visit or one of many.

"I look for off-the-beaten-track locations and events. In the last few years, for example, we've spent a day at cooking school making Cornish pasties; spent a day on the moors tracing the steps of the Bronte sisters who wrote some of the greatest novels in English literature; gone underground in one of the tin mines seen in Poldark; visited locations from Bridgerton; and played croquet on the lawn at Thomas Hardy's home."



DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Note: This information is accurate as of today's publication. Covid outbreaks and schedule changes beyond our control may require some minor tweaking before September.

September 3: Tour begins. We'll start at Buckingham Palace's State Rooms and Kensington Palace's "Court to Couture" exhibition which compares royal and red carpet looks, including items worn during the reign of Richard II and gowns worn more recently by Lady Gaga and Lizzo. Finally, we'll stop at Battersea Power Station which has recently been converted into a shopping and cultural center.

September 4: We'll start the day taking a boat from Westminster Pier to Greenwich where we'll explore the Royal Naval College with its extraordinary Painted Ceiling, as well as the Prime Meridian. Back in London we'll walk to the Garden Museum, stopping along the way to see the National Covid Memorial Wall.

September 5: Our luxury coach will take us to Oxford where we'll explore the universities and fabulous architecture and then go punting along the river. Next, we'll stop at the Back-to-Backs in Birmingham. Carefully restored and atmospheric, these 19th century homes illustrate living conditions for the working classes and the poor in that era..

September 6: Today we'll visit the spot where King Richard III was found in 2012 after 500 years being lost. Then we'll head to Stoneywell, an arts and crafts center featuring a restored home furnished in the styles of the arts and crafts movement (1880-1920). Stoneywell is the site used in the BBC series *Make It at Market*. *Note: You can view this series here in the US on IMDb and Britbox. Warning: This show is addictive.*

September 7: *Our first stop will be at Chatsworth.* Chatsworth House, home to the Cavendish family for five centuries, is known for its Painted Hall, state rooms, and sculpture gallery.



September 8: We'll spend a half-day in Liverpool. Liverpool is the home to an extraordinary remodeled library that combines old and new architecture styles. Also in Liverpool is the Museum of Slavery, as well as the city's own impressive museum. After Liverpool, we'll make a stop at Middleport Pottery, home of much of England's finest pottery, in Stoke on Trent. Then we'll set off for the Cotswolds.

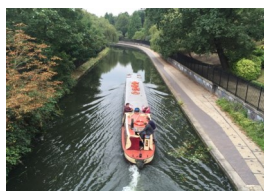
September 9: In the morning we'll stop at Stow-on-the-Wold, a beautiful Cotswold town where you can ramble and do some shopping. In the afternoon, we'll enjoy Giffords Circus, an annual countryside event.

September 10: We've scheduled a wine tasting in Surrey in the heart of England's wine growing region. Then it's on to our London hotel. We'll have one final dinner together before ending our tour. Our hotel is only a couple hundred feet from the train that will take you to Heathrow in twenty minutes on the 11th.

All breakfasts, an afternoon tea, and all but one dinner are paid for by the tour. You are responsible for your lunches and one dinner. We'll always be near places at lunchtime where you can find something to eat.

WHAT PAST PARTICIPANTS SAY ABOUT OUR TOURS

"I have participated in three tours to England with Mary and can unequivocally state that they are the best trips of my life and have provided wonderful memories. Every day is filled with great sights, great accommodations and great food. But most important is the camaraderie and the deep friendships formed among the travelers." - P. Litt



"We've done lot of travelling through the years and Mary Valentine's tours are truly exceptional. Mary's thorough research of the various destinations results in unique finds that are always fascinating. She takes you to places you would never find on your own and provides background to enhance the visit. Treat yourself to a trip to England with Mary ; it's touring as it should be." R. and E. Berry



"England with Mary is a trip like no other! Great accommodations, people, food, sights, all arranged with the utmost care and skill to create memories to last a lifetime. She picks the most interesting and unusual tours which introduced us to worlds outside the usual and to the most passionate, knowledgeable, and fun individuals. We stayed in some extraordinary and out of the way places in the English countryside that were so picturesque and comfortable that they could have been vacations on their own." J. Lang



"Best way to experience England. Cushy digs. Foodie foods. Interesting companions (but not a crowd). Places you wouldn't get to - or even think of - on your own." M. Bergan

TOUR TIMES



In the next issue:

- ◆ Where to Next: Mary's 2024 Tours
- ◆ United Kingdom, Great Britain, England: What's the Difference?
- ◆ Book Recommendations
- ◆ Birmingham's Back-to-Backs
- ◆ The Importance of Travel Insurance
- ◆ Finding the Best British TV Shows
- ◆ English Wine Comes into Its Own

More Opinions

"I had the opportunity to go with Mary to England. She booked beautiful hotels with friendly staff and great locations. We had a private coach for 9 people and the sites she booked each day were interesting. Looking forward to another trip in the future. I highly recommend her tours." P. Fritzel

"If you want to go on a well-designed, educational, literary, yummy, and totally fun trip planned to the 't' with other like-minded folks, look no further than a Mary Valentine tour. Her tour to England in was honestly one of the best trips I have ever taken. And I am not exaggerating." C. Bernstein

"I accompanied Mary on a trip to Southwest England and loved it. It didn't really feel like a 'tour' at all, but rather a group of companionable friends travelling together! Such interesting folks, and Mary's easy-going manner made it all seem effortless. The accommodations were wonderful. The 'activities' Mary had planned took us off the beaten tourist-track to experience some really interesting and varied hidden treasures. I highly recommend travel with Mary." P. White

"Escape to the English countryside with Mary Valentine! From personalized itineraries to savvy hotel and restaurant choices, travelling with Mary guarantees a unique experience. Her deep knowledge of history, culture (and British TV mystery series) informs each tour she creates. I've travelled with Mary twice and look forward to joining her again." K. Breazeale