



SIR ROBERT WALPOLE'S NORFOLK: HOUGHTON REVISITED

FRI 6 TO TUES 10 SEPTEMBER

NICHOLAS FRIEND

The Norfolk of de facto first prime minister Sir Robert Walpole constitutes the unique theme of INSCAPE'S 2013 five day Summer ESCAPE, our 15th summer school. At the heart of the Course we place an exclusive private visit to Sir Robert's family home, Houghton Hall, for the triumphant, if temporary, return of old master paintings from his extraordinary collection. More than seventy works by Van Dyck, Poussin, Rubens, Rembrandt and Velasquez will be placed in their original William Kent frames and hung in their original positions in renovated 17c State Rooms. They have hung in the Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg since 1779 after being sold by Walpole's grandson to Catherine the Great. This is a truly unmissable occasion, the product of many years of negotiation between the Hermitage and Lord David Cholmondeley, a direct descendent of Sir Robert.

Our five day Course will illuminate the Norfolk roots of Britain's first Prime Minister, setting his life and career within the context of his families' roots and influence in Norfolk. We shall acquaint ourselves with his political colleagues and neighbours through exclusive private visits to several houses: the current Lord and Lady Walpole will personally guide us at Wolterton Park, built for Robert Walpole's brother in 1720, and Mannington Hall, the Walpoles' moated 15c house nearby. We enjoy a private tour of Holkham Hall, the seat of Thomas Coke, Earl of Leicester, Walpole's neighbour, protégé, and Postmaster-General of England. Then, well-guided by local historian Dr. Paul Richards, we also visit Robert Walpole's constituency town, Kings Lynn, including Clifton House, the magnificent medieval merchant house home of Simon Thurley, Director of English Heritage, in order to better understand the domestic lives of the wealthy mercantile class.

We have most carefully chosen the base camp for our explorations in the beautifully situated Blakeney Hotel, a delightful family-run hotel, with its helpful staff, bright rooms and panoramic views across the Estuary and marshes. Not only is the Blakeney an ideal and comfortable place to relax and savour the unique flavours of the north Norfolk coast, but comes well equipped with meeting facilities for our morning or evening lectures.

This tour is suitable for any INSCAPE Member or Friend as the pace will be gentle, the company congenial, the lectures invigorating, and the walking limited to the interiors of the houses and the hotel, and garden and town walks are optional.

FRIDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

11:30 Coach from Kings Lynn Station to Blakeney Hotel visit Castle Rising en route
Group welcoming lunch at Blakeney Hotel
Coach to St Nicholas Church, Blakeney then St Margaret's Church, Cley-next-the-sea
Return to Blakeney Hotel
Dinner in Hotel, Evening Lecture *Norfolk in the Middle Ages*

SATURDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

Coach to Wolterton Park for coffee and private tour by Lady Walpole
Lunch at the Greedy Goose
Tour of Mannington Hall by Lady Walpole
Return to Blakeney Hotel mid-afternoon, Late afternoon FREE
Dinner in Hotel, Evening Lecture *The Walpoles in Norfolk*

SUNDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

Coach to Holkham Hall for private view
Coach to Walsingham
Lunch at Swallows Restaurant in Little Walsingham, followed by Walsingham visits
Return to Blakeney Hotel mid-afternoon, late afternoon FREE
Dinner in Hotel, Evening Lecture *The Life and Career of Sir Robert Walpole*

MONDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

Early morning FREE
Lecture *Houghton and Sir Robert Walpole's Art Collection*
Early lunch in Hotel
Coach to Houghton for tour, private view, and tea
Return to Blakeney Hotel early evening
Dinner in Hotel, Optional Evening Presentation *Music and Poetry in the time of Sir Robert Walpole*

TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER

Coach to Kings Lynn
Private guided tour of Kings Lynn by Dr Paul Richards, including Custom House, Guildhall, Hanseatic Warehouse and St Margaret's Church
Group Lunch in Kings Lynn
Private visit and tour of Clifton House with Dr Paul Richards
15:45 Arrive Kings Lynn station for trains

BLAKENEY HOTEL

COST £1295 members, £1325 non-members, Single Room Supplement £240, deposit £150 includes four nights in Blakeney Hotel, all breakfasts, one lunch, all dinners with wine, all lectures, all entrance fees including five exclusive private views, all luxury coach travel within Norfolk, all gratuities, VAT.