



**A Tour to England in Celebration of the 250th Anniversary
of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence
For the Charleston Library Society**

September 26th to October 3rd, 2026



The scene of the surrender of the British General John Burgoyne at Saratoga, on October 17, 1777, was a turning point in the American Revolutionary War that prevented the British from dividing New England from the rest of the colonies. This oil painting by American artist John Trumbull was completed in 1821 and hangs in the U.S. Capitol rotunda in Washington, D.C.

Overview

Caroline Stanley, Countess of Derby, invites you to join her on an entirely bespoke tour to London, Windsor and her home at Knowsley Hall with husband Edward, the 19th Earl of Derby, to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

One focus will be on the English men who lost the American Revolutionary War, or as Andrew O'Shaughnessy's book, *A North American Tour Journal 1824-1825: The Making of a Prime Minister*, rightly calls it, *The Men who Lost America*.

The tour will begin with two nights at The Stafford Hotel in London, where we will get acquainted with key historical figures at the National Portrait Gallery. We are also privileged to have special access to a number of sites near and dear to Charleston Library Society including the London Library and Benjamin Franklin House.

We will then head north to Knowsley Hall for a four-night stay. This grand house remains in the original ownership of the Stanley family as their private stately home for 600 years, and is still home to Edward and Caroline, 19th Earl and Countess of Derby. We will further explore the topic of 'The Men Who Lost America' while there.

En route to Knowsley Hall we will stop for lunch at Drayton House, set on 200 acres of parkland in Northamptonshire, and never open to the public. It was the home of Lord George Germain, who served as Secretary of State for the Colonies, and left behind an invaluable archive.

The tour will end with one night at the incomparable Coworth Park Hotel in Ascot, not far from Windsor Castle, where we will visit the Royal Library as well as the Royal Collection.

The tour is designed for a minimum of 18 tour participants, and a maximum of 22 participants.

Highlights

In London

- Visit the **London Library**, a sister library to Charleston Library Society, established in 1841 and open to all with an annual subscription. The library was founded on the initiative of Thomas Carlyle, who was dissatisfied with some of the policies at the British Museum Library.
- Behind-the-scenes tour with renowned architect, historic preservationist and Charleston resident Anne Keigher MBE at the **Benjamin Franklin House**. The house, c. 1740, was occupied by Franklin for almost 16 years. Anne dedicated herself full time to fundraising and project management beginning in 1997 through 2006.
- Dinner at the **London residence of Lord and Lady Derby** preceded by a visit to see the blockbuster fashion exhibition at the King's Gallery, *Queen Elizabeth II: Her Life in Style*.

At Knowsley Hall

- Hear a **before-dinner talk by Michelle Charters OBE**, Head of the International Slavery Museum. The museum spotlights Liverpool's role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade as well as slavery in the modern day, racism and the legacy of the African diaspora. There are direct ties between Liverpool and Charleston, as Liverpool ships carried enslaved Africans to Charleston's dock to labor on plantations and returned to the UK with goods such as sugar, cotton, coffee and tobacco – a microcosm of what occurred on a much larger scale between about 1500 to about 1865 between Europe and the Americas. Michelle is overseeing extensive renovation of the museum as part of a massive waterfront re-development project that is projected to be completed by 2029.
- Meet librarians and Proprietors at **The Liverpool Athenaeum** for a private look at treasures relating to the ties between England and the U.S. Founded in 1797 and opened in 1800, this is one of the greatest proprietary libraries in the UK containing books, prints, maps, and charts as well as one of the most important regional history resources in the country. We will also learn about research into the connections early Proprietors had on both sides of the slavery divide: founders of the Club included slave traders as well as abolitionists.
- Attend a performance of *Macbeth* at the Shakespeare North Playhouse in nearby Prescot. Its 470-seat, timber-framed Cockpit Theatre, designed in the round not unlike London's Shakespeare Globe -- is the perfect venue to see the witches' prophecy come true of Macbeth's hubristic pursuit of the Scottish crown.
- Meet a Keeper at **Knowsley Hall Safari Park** for a behind-the-scenes safari drive as well as foot safari to see birds of prey. The Park on the estate is the modern-day successor to the 13th Earl's menagerie, which exemplified the natural history interests that he and his contemporaries – such as Charles Darwin – shared. Lord Derby's passion for the animal kingdom extended to his library and other collections. We will not only see and learn about delightful watercolors by the artist and illustrator Edward Lear, which depict live specimens in the menagerie, but also incredible monograph works by ornithologist John Gould, and exquisite botanical works. *

At Windsor Castle

- Take a curator-led tour at the **Royal Collection** with special emphasis on George III, his life and role in the Revolutionary war. We will tour the grandest sequence of baroque State Apartments in England containing some of the most important works of art – from magnificent examples of porcelain, furniture and paintings, to displays of arms and armor, silver gilt and sculpture.
- Also meet a librarian at the **Royal Library**, located in a series of three rooms adjacent to the State Apartments. It contains more than 200,000 items, including not only books and manuscripts, but also music, sound recordings, insignia, medals and coins.

*The tour itinerary is subject to confirmation;
any visit that cannot be confirmed will be replaced by another in kind.*



Itinerary Program

Friday, September 25th

Fly overnight from Charleston (CHS) to London (LHR) no later than today.

Flight options include:

6:35 p.m. Depart CHS on AA with a change in CLT
9:25 a.m. +1 Arrive LHR

8:43 p.m. Depart CHS on BA / AA with a change in CLT
12:10 p.m.+1 Arrive LHR

4:45 p.m. Depart CHS on AA with a change in PHL
7:50 a.m.+1 Arrive LHR

Flight schedules are subject to change.

Saturday, September 26th

ARRIVE LONDON

Welcome Reception

Arrive in **London** no later than today. Independent transfer to the hotel.

If sufficient numbers arrive on the same flight, Travel Muse will coordinate a group transfer at an add-on cost.

Check-in at **The Stafford London**, one of London's top boutique hotels. The property, located in St. James's Place, just off Piccadilly, occupies three traditional town houses and adjoining stables that served as an overseas club for American and Canadian officers during World War II.
ADDRESS: 30 Portman Square, London, UK, W1H 7BH

RESERVED FOR CLS MEMBERS:

Deluxe rooms with a choice of a king or two twin rooms (280-344 square feet).

Normal check-in is 4 p.m. We have requested priority check-in for you to occupy rooms as soon as rooms are ready; however, please store luggage with the reception if needed.

OPTIONAL ADD-ON COST FOR A JUNIOR SUITE IN THE MEWS:

\$395 per room per night, double or single occupancy

Meet in the lobby at 3:00 p.m. for a short walk to the **London Library**, a sister library to Charleston Library Society, established in 1841 and open to all with an annual subscription. The library was founded on the initiative of Thomas Carlyle, who was dissatisfied with some of the policies at the British Museum Library. Return to the hotel for a **welcome standing reception** at the American Bar, where light appetizers will be served.

Overnight The Stafford



The National Portrait Gallery houses portraits of historically important and famous British people, selected on the basis of the significance of the sitter, not that of the artist. One of its best-known images is the Chandos portrait, the most famous portrait of William Shakespeare, although there is some uncertainty about whether the painting actually is of the playwright.

Sunday, September 27th
LONDON

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning we will enjoy a special visit at the **Benjamin Franklin House**, which was occupied by Franklin for almost 16 years, hosted by **Ann Keigher**, architect. Continue on foot to the **National Portrait Gallery** for lunch in its 4th floor restaurant, The Portrait, followed by a docent-led tour. Arrive back at the hotel by mid-afternoon to rest. This evening, we will depart The Stafford by coach at 6 p.m., dressed for dinner. Enjoy an after-hours visit at **The King's Gallery** at Buckingham Palace to see the special exhibition: *Queen Elizabeth II: Her Life in Style*. Then continue by coach for dinner at the **London home of Lord and Lady Derby**.
Overnight The Stafford



The grand entrance to Drayton House, which is not open to the public. Its history reaches back to the 1300s, but this great palace-like building with its towers, battlements and cupolas came into its final splendid form in the 18th century.

Monday, September 28th

Breakfast, Lunch, Drinks, Dinner

LONDON / NORTHAMPTONSHIRE / KNOWSLEY HALL

Following check-out from The Stafford, we will depart by coach from London, heading north to Northamptonshire. Late morning visit at **Drayton House** with archivist **Bruce Bailey**, on the role of Lord George Germain in the Revolutionary War. Lunch nearby, then continue to **Knowsley Hall**, arriving around 5:30 p.m. After getting settled, meet for drinks and a brief introduction to the house. A casual dinner will follow.

Overnight Knowsley Hall



Just a few of the sumptuous rooms at Knowsley Hall: the Walnut Drawing Room (left) and the State Dining Room (right).



Knowsley Hall, the ancestral home of the Stanley family, the Earls of Derby, and our home for four precious nights. Thomas Stanley was rewarded with the title of Earl Derby in 1485 by Henry VII as a reward for his support at the Battle of Bosworth Field, which led to Henry's gaining the crown. Successive generations have left their mark on British history – the 2nd Earl fought with Henry VIII, the 5th Earl was a patron of William Shakespeare, the 7th Earl fought in the Civil War as a Royalist (and was beheaded), the 10th Earl undertook the massive rebuilding of the Hall, the 12th Earl championed horse racing and established a menagerie that included many rare mammals and birds, the 13th Earl created a large library of works on subjects relating to natural history, the 14th Earl became Prime Minister three times and steered the Slavery Abolition Act through Parliament, and so on. The restoration of the hall has been the hallmark of Edward Richard William, the 19th and current Earl, and his wife, Caroline Emma Neville, daughter of the 10th Lord Braybrook.

Tuesday, September 29th
KNOWSLEY HALL

Breakfast, Lunch, Drinks, Dinner

Spend the day at Knowsley Hall, including a morning tour of the house and gardens with **Lady Derby** and Curator of Collections **Gareth Williams** and, in the afternoon, special access to the Derby Collection of Natural History Watercolors with Gareth. Free time to stroll the grounds, relax, and experience what it is like as if we were to the manor born! Enjoy evening drinks and a recorded **talk by Norman Poser**, author of *From the Battlefield to the Stage: The Many Lives of General Burgoyne* on the role of ‘Gentleman Johnny,’ in the Battle of Saratoga. Dinner at Knowsley Hall.

Overnight Knowsley Hall



Edward Lear (1812-1888), most popularly known for his nonsense poem, “The Owl and the Pussy-Cat,” was also a virtuoso illustrator of birds. By age 17, Lear was well known among naturalists at the London Zoo for his precision illustrations. By 19, he published a gorgeous monograph on parrots. He was the first major bird artist to draw birds from life rather than the skins of specimens. He was employed from 1832 to 1836 by the 13th Earl of Derby, who was a natural historian and a patron of the arts, to paint birds in his private menagerie on the estate.

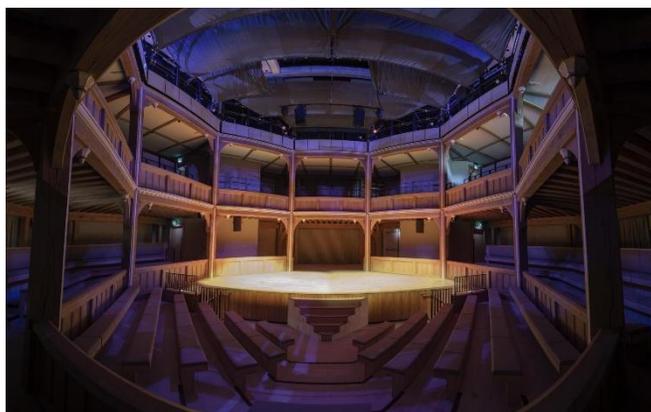
Wednesday, September 30th

Breakfast, Lunch, Pre-Theatre Dinner

KNOWSLEY HALL / PRESCOT / KNOWSLEY HALL

This morning take a behind-the-scenes guided safari drive of **Knowsley Safari Park** with a Keeper. We will board the ‘Baboon Bus,’ which is kitted out with ladders and ropes for the baboons to swing about right next to the windows once you enter the baboon enclosure. The bus will take you close up to some of the world’s most amazing animals, including lions, rhinos, zebras and, of course, baboons. We will also take a Foot Safari to see birds of prey. Lunch will follow at the Boat House on the estate, followed by free time to relax at Knowsley Hall. This evening we will have a light, pre-theater supper before a performance of *Macbeth* at the **Shakespeare North Playhouse** in nearby Prescott.

Overnight Knowsley Hall



Shakespeare North Playhouse's Cockpit Theatre



The Liverpool Athenaeum was founded in 1797 for and by merchants and other professionals in the city who needed a supply of up-to-date news and an uncrowded place to read and meet. Its opening preceded the club of the same name in London by 27 years.

Thursday, October 1st

Breakfast, Lunch, Drinks, Dinner

KNOWSLEY HALL / LIVERPOOL / KNOWSLEY HALL

Today we will take an excursion to **Liverpool**, where we will have a tour with local Blue Badge guide **Simone Peter** to learn about the development of this city, largely built upon maritime trade with America. We will begin by taking in the iconic architecture on the Pier Head with its ‘Three Graces’ – the Royal Liver Building, the Cunard Building and the Port of Liverpool Building -- conceived and constructed as visible symbols of Liverpool’s international prestige, proud emblems of its commercial prowess. We will also hear of those who migrated from this port, across the Atlantic, to establish lives in the ‘new world.’ Next, we will see remarkable architecture that runs the gamut from Bluecoat Chambers, its oldest surviving building (completed in 1725), to the striking modernist Catholic Church (completed in 1967) as we make our way past streets and squares laid out by 18th-century affluent merchants in the University Quarter and Georgian Quarter. We will visit the towering **Anglican Cathedral** and have a guided tour at **St. George’s Hall**, recognized as one of the finest neoclassical buildings in the world. Following lunch, we will have a VIP visit at **The Liverpool Athenaeum**, where we will see treasures from the collections. Return to Knowsley Hall by late afternoon. This evening we will have as our guest **Michelle Charters**, the Head of the International Slavery Museum, who will give a before-dinner talk on the genesis of the museum, the progress being made on its expansion, and plans for the future. Dinner will follow.

Overnight Knowsley Hall



The Library at Windsor Castle, watercolor by Joseph Nash, 1828-1878.

Friday, October 2nd

Breakfast, Lunch, Drinks, Dinner

KNOWSLEY HALL / WINDSOR / ASCOT

We will bid farewell to the divine Knowsley Hall this morning and journey south by coach to **Windsor**. Lunch at the Castle Hotel before arriving at Windsor Castle. We will begin with a curator-led tour of the **Royal Collection** with special emphasis on George III, his life and role in the Revolutionary war. The sequence of rooms built at Windsor for Charles II and his Queen, Catherine of Braganza, between 1675 and 1678, formed the grandest sequence of baroque State Apartments in England. They contain some of the most important works of art in the Royal Collection, many of them in the historic settings for which they were originally commissioned. Alongside magnificent examples of porcelain, furniture and paintings, we will also see displays of arms and armor, silver gilt and sculpture. Next we will have a special visit to the **Royal Library**. The principal collection of historical Royal Library material is held at Windsor Castle, in a series of three rooms adapted by William IV in the 1830s. This collection consists of the majority of the Library's historic material as well as extensive collections of reference material on history, biography, geography and literature. This collection is supplemented by items held in store at Windsor, consisting of further works on history and literature as well as the Royal Library's collection of scientific texts. Continue a very short distance **Coworth Park**, formerly the home of the 17th Earl of Derby and today a luxury country hotel. Check-in, relax and gather for drinks followed by our **farewell dinner** in the Barn at Coworth Park.

Overnight Coworth Park Hotel

Saturday, October 3rd
ASCOT/ LONDON HEATHROW

Breakfast

Check-out of the hotel this morning. One group transfer will be provided to London-Heathrow for flights departing mid-day; otherwise, private transfers at an add-on cost can be arranged to the airport or London.

Flight options include:

12:30 p.m. Depart LHR on BA / AA with a change in CLT
7:09 p.m. Arrive CHS

12:50 p.m. Depart LHR on DL / Virgin with a change in JFK
8:46 p.m. Arrive CHS

Also (though transfer on your own):

9:15 a.m. Depart LHR on BA / AA with a change in CLT
3:40 p.m. Arrive CHS

Flight schedules are subject to change.

Program Details

TOUR DATES

Arrive in London no later than **September 26th, 2026**

Depart from London not before **October 3rd, 2026**

LAND-ONLY TRIP COST PER PERSON

Tour Cost, based on double \$9,995 (excludes \$1,000 donation to CLS)

Tour Cost, based on single \$11,420 (excludes \$1,000 donation to CLS; includes single supplement of \$1,425)

The Trip Price is based on a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 22 paying participants.

PRE-TOUR EXTRA NIGHT(S) AT THE STAFFORD *(up to 3 added nights)*

\$775 per Deluxe Room for double occupancy, per room per night

\$735 per Deluxe Room for single occupancy, per room per night

ADD-ON COST TO UPGRADE TO A MEWS JUNIOR SUITE AT THE STAFFORD

\$395 for double or single occupancy, per room per night

Rates for extra nights and for the add-on cost to upgrade to a Mews Junior Suite include breakfast, VAT and 5% service charge; and are subject to availability

PARTICIPANT TOUR AGREEMENT

Please review carefully the **Participant Tour Agreement** for the complete Terms and Conditions, and Liability Statement, which is available on the online platform. It states that we cannot accept responsibility for losses or expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, acts of God, or other causes beyond our control. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. It is the passenger's responsibility to purchase travel insurance. We reserve the right to make alterations to the itinerary as may be deemed necessary for carrying out the tour. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of any tour.

REGISTRATION AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE

- Due at the time of registration:
 - First trip deposit of \$1,500 per person
 - Tax-deductible deposit of \$1,000 to Charleston Library Society (can be paid by check or credit card by email and covers coordination, organization and administrative oversight of tour implementation)
- Second trip deposit of \$3,000 per person due on or before June 1st
- Balance of trip cost is due 60 days prior to the tour's start: **July 28th, 2026**

Payments may be made by no-fee ACH electronic money transfer; or by major credit card with an add-on processing fee of 3.9%.

CANCELLATION POLICY

When a participant cancels, the following schedule of per person charges is incurred:

Written Notice of Cancellation received:	Refund / Cancellation Fees (Per Person): *
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On or before July 28 th , 2026 (60 days prior)	Refund all monies minus \$500 non-refundable fee
After July 28 th , 2026	No refund

** Travel insurance is the best way to protect your tour investment. Information will be sent to you upon receipt of your Registration.*

WHAT’S INCLUDED

Airport Transfer	One transfer on October 3 rd from Coworth Park to London Heathrow Airport
Accommodations	Seven (7) nights total, including taxes: 2 nights at The Stafford, London; 4 nights at Knowsley Hall; and 1 night at Coworth Park, Ascot. <i>Note there is only one bedroom with two beds at Knowsley Hall, available on a first-come, first-served basis; otherwise, rooms have either a king or super-king bed. The Stafford and Coworth Park have rooms with a choice of a king or two beds.</i>
Meals	Breakfast daily, one welcome reception, 6 lunches, and 6 dinners with pre-selected wines and pre-dinner drinks served 30 minutes prior to dinners
Transportation	Private coach for 6 days, September 27, 28, 29, October 1, 2, and 3, as indicated in the itinerary; including bottled water
Curator and Guided Tours	As indicated in the itinerary
Entrances and Donations	As indicated in the itinerary
Speaker Fees	As indicated in the itinerary
Entertainment	Best-available ticket to <i>Macbeth</i> at Shakespeare North Playhouse
WiFi	Complimentary WiFi internet access at hotels and Knowsley Hall
Gratuities	Tips for coach drivers and local guides
Staff	Accompaniment throughout by Laura Pelzer, Executive Director of Charleston Library Society; and a Tour Director from Travel Muse Inc.

WHAT’S NOT INCLUDED

Donation to CLS	Mandatory non-refundable, taxc-deductible donstion payable to Charleston Library Society of \$1,000 per person
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Arrival/Departure Expenses	To and from London, including airfare, taxes, surcharges, and baggage fees
Airport Transfer	To The Stafford Hotel upon arrival
Meals and Beverages	Not otherwise included, such as lunch and dinner on September 26 th , and drinks from the Honesty Bar at Knowsley Hall, which may be charged to your room
Transportation	From and between sites by taxi or ride-share services
Non-Group Activities	Tickets to events or performances other than indicated
Items for Personal Use	Including phone calls, room service, valet service, à-la-carte orders, specialty wines and liquors, laundry charges, travel extensions, or tour deviations
Travel Insurance	Recommended for participation on the tour (information will be sent to you upon registration)
Credit Card Fee	A 3.9% processing fee for any deposits and final payments made by credit card
Othe Fees	Electronic Travel Authorisation required for entry to the U.K., as well as any passport or visa fees
Housekeeping Gratuities	Not mandatory but appreciated

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Moderate; good walking ability is advised. Some of the visits require use of staircases, and there will be a limited amount of walking on uneven ground.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel Insurance is not included in the tour cost, but participants are strongly encouraged to purchase a travel protection plan in conjunction with this tour, including coverage of trip cancellation, trip interruption, emergency evacuation/repatriation, medical expenses, lost or damaged baggage, and other expenses and/or losses incurred due to unexpected situations. Should a participant cancel at any time after registering for the tour, Charleston Library Society and Travel Muse must strictly abide by the cancellation policy outlined herein. Travel insurance information will be sent upon tour registration.

TO RESERVE YOUR SPACE AND MAKE A PAYMENT

- Click on this weblink to access the registration-and-payment platform:
<https://tri.ps/xqgVU>

This online payment platform is powered by WeTravel, which uses the same encryption technology as Stripe, which is used by Amazon and Uber:

You are encouraged to pay by no-fee ACH bank transfer on the WeTravel payment platform. Major credit cards are accepted, though with a 3.9% added processing fee.

To make a no-fee ACH payment, under “Payment Method” please select “U.S. Checking Account,” then enter the name on your bank account, the bank’s routing number, and your account number (you will be asked to enter the account number twice).

- Next, please send a non-refundable, tax-deductible donation, payable to Charleston Library Society, for **\$1,000.00 per person** to:

Charleston Library Society
Attn.: Jen Comer, Director of Development and Membership
1264 King Street
Charleston, SC 29401

- The final balance is due to Travel Muse Inc. on or before July 28th, 2026. You will receive an automated reminder 7 days prior to make an online payment.

For assistance with registration, call Meg MacDonald at Travel Muse: (617) 480-0250.

DEADLINE

Please register as soon as possible. This tour is expected to sell-out.

To avoid disappointment, please do not delay registering and paying your deposit online to reserve your space.

The Itinerary in Brief is provided on the Registration weblink (powered by WeTravel). The complete Terms and Cancellation Policy are stipulated in the Participant Tour Agreement, which is posted on the Registration platform; you will need to provide a signature indicating that you have read and understand the Agreement.

A Final Itinerary with a detailed schedule will be sent to you no less than two weeks prior to the tour.

FOR QUESTIONS

Questions about the tour or how to register? Please contact Meg MacDonald at Travel Muse Inc.: meg@travelmuse.net or 617-480-0250.