

Somerset International Youth Choral Festival

Sample Itinerary #4 (Festival plus Stratford and London - 8 nights / 10 days)

Sunday July 6, 2008

Departure from the USA via scheduled airline service to London, England. Enjoy full meal, beverage service and in-flight entertainment during this trans-Atlantic flight.

Monday July 7, 2008 Sherborne

Arrive in one of London's airports. After passport and customs clearance, meet your MCI Tour Manager who will assist you to awaiting motorcoach. Transfer to the southwestern English town of Sherborne. En route (if time permits), stop to see the prehistoric site of Stonehenge. Groups arrive in Sherborne and check into accommodations at the historic Sherborne School.

Chorus members and non-singing participants gather for the Welcome Dinner with introductions and a brief orientation.



Sherborne is, without doubt, one of the most beautiful towns in England. With its abundance of medieval buildings, superb Abbey, world famous schools, picturesque almshouse and two castles, Sherborne has much to offer visitors.



Tuesday July 8, 2008 Sherborne

Morning rehearsals. Non-singing participants may enjoy additional sight-seeing opportunities. Afternoon guided tour of Bath, including the Roman baths and beautiful Bath Abbey. Dinner is followed by ***evening rehearsals.***

Wednesday July 9, 2008 Sherborne

Morning rehearsals. Afternoon excursion to Weymouth to experience a typical English coastal town. Weymouth is a historic port, and, it was from here that John Endicott sailed in 1628 to found Salem in Massachusetts. Enjoy time in the ruins of Sandsfoot Castle, waterfront shops, the sea shore and unique ambience of this ancient seaside town. Early dinner. ***Evening community concert in Sherborne Abbey, with choirs singing individually and also en masse.***

Thursday July 10, 2008 Sherborne

Breakfast, followed by coach transfer to Wells (bringing all concert attire). ***9:30am - Morning Dress Rehearsal in the Wells Cathedral.*** Afternoon guided tour of Wells (including guided tour of the Cathedral) and also nearby Glastonbury. Early dinner. ***7:30pm - Festival Finale Concert in Wells Cathedral***
Post-concert reception at the Cathedral for all tour participants.



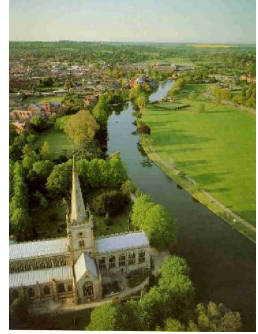
Wells in Somerset is England's second smallest city, with a population of only 10,000. It is a popular tourist destination, due in large part to having several historical sites and its proximity to Bath, Stonehenge and other popular sites. Parts of Wells Cathedral (widely considered one of the most beautiful in England) date back to the 10th century. The city derives its name from three wells in the grounds of the Bishop's Palace. William Penn is said to have passed through Wells shortly before leaving for America, spending a night at The Crown Inn.



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Friday July 11, 2008 Stratford-upon-Avon

Transfer to Stratford-Upon-Avon via Oxford and the Cotswolds. In Oxford, visit Christ Church College, founded in 1525 by Cardinal Wolsey. It is Oxford's biggest and grandest Renaissance college. The famous Christ Church College Chapel doubles as a cathedral, the smallest cathedral in England. Continue to Stratford for dinner and overnight accommodations.



Stratford-upon-Avon, one of the most famous towns in England, is situated on the west bank of the River Avon, in the heart of the Midlands. It dates back to at least Roman times, but its appearance today is that of a small Tudor market town, with mellow, half-timbered architecture and tranquil walks beside the tree-fringed Avon. This image belies its popularity as the most visited tourist attraction outside London, with eager hordes flocking to see buildings connected to William Shakespeare or his descendants.

Saturday July 12, 2008 London

Enjoy a guided tour of the Shakespeare properties. Start with the half-timbered house that is Shakespeare's Birthplace. The house itself is part museum and part shrine and is of course, the house where the bard was born in 1564. Then visit Anne Hathaway's Cottage, which is situated around 1 mile outside Stratford. In truth, the cottage is more a farmhouse than a cottage. See the Hathaway bed in addition to the beautiful gardens, orchard and Shakespeare tree garden. Also tour Holy Trinity Church, which occupies a truly magical setting amongst some trees next to the river. The church itself is typically English, demonstrated by the tower, transepts and the perpendicular nave and aisle. It is on the north side of the chancel that Shakespeare is buried. **Midday recital in Holy Trinity Church.** Late-afternoon transfer to London.



London is a cozy city, encompassing some 620 square miles and 7,000,000 hospitable people. Established 1,250 years ago by King Aethelbald, London became an important Roman city. It was resettled by the Saxons in the fifth century, after the end of the Roman occupation. London has been scourged by the plague (1665) and was almost entirely destroyed by the Great Fire (1666). World War II's "Blitzkrieg" tore up the city considerably. She stands today as a monument to perseverance, culture, excitement, history, and greatness.



Sunday July 13, 2008 London

A 6-hour tour of London includes the residential and shopping districts of Kensington and Knightsbridge. A visit is made to Whitehall and Trafalgar Square with Nelson's Column, past Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament to Buckingham Palace, where we see the Changing of the Guard. Continue along Fleet Street to St. Paul's Cathedral, and then to the 900-year-old Tower of London, whose construction was initiated by William the Conqueror. Here we also view the Crown Jewels. **Midday recital/concert as part of the 2008 American Celebration of Music in Britain.**



Monday July 14, 2008 London

A pleasant drive out of London passing Eton College takes us to royal Windsor. Built in 1078 for William the Conqueror, Windsor Castle is the official summer residence of the Queen. Tour includes a visit to the State Apartment or St. George's Chapel as well as the opportunity to admire the castle itself and the surrounding parkland. Afternoon at leisure. Motorcoach and Tour Manager at group's disposal for additional sightseeing, shopping, museum visits and excursions. Evening Farewell Dinner.



Tuesday July 15, 2008 Depart for home

Transfer to one of London's airports for the return flight to the USA. Return home in the evening of the same day.

