

Somerset International Children's Choral Festival

in England's Historic Wells Cathedral and Sherborne Abbey

Followed by the *American Celebration of Music in Britain*

Festival Extension Tour #5 (8 nights / 10 days)

Sunday, July 10th, 2011

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 11th, 2011 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 introduction 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 12th, 2011 Sherborne/Bath

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

Wednesday, July 13th, 2011 Sherborne

Morning rehearsals. Non-singing participants may enjoy additional sight-seeing opportunities. Lunch at Sherborne School. Afternoon individual choir rehearsals in Sherborne Abbey. Early dinner. *Evening community concert featuring each individual choir singing optional performances in Sherborne Abbey.*

Thursday, July 14th, 2011 Sherborne/Wells

Breakfast, followed by coach transfer to Wells.

9:30am - Morning Dress Rehearsal in the Wells Cathedral. Afternoon guided tour of Wells. Early dinner.

7:30pm - Festival Finale Concert in Wells Cathedral.

Post-concert reception at the Cathedral for all tour participants.

Wells 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.



Friday, July 15th, 2011 Sherborne / Stratford

Transfer to Stratford. 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. It is on the north side of the chancel that Shakespeare is buried.

Today visit Stratford-upon-Avon, a small and delightful Tudor market town beside the River Avon. Stratford is one of Britain's most visited towns due to its association with the playwright William Shakespeare. The timber frames of numerous buildings come from the nearby Arden Forest.



Saturday, July 16th, 2011 Stratford / Cambridge / Canterbury

Transfer to Canterbury via Cambridge. **Perform a lunchtime concert in Stratford or Cambridge as part of the American Celebration of Music in Britain.** We will visit King's College Chapel, which was built between 1446 and 1515. It is particularly famous for its vaulted roof, which weighs an enormous 2,000 tons! In addition, the stalls and screen are very fine. The Choir of King's College Cambridge is famous throughout the world, due to their many recordings and highly televised Christmas service 'Carols from King's'. Continue to Canterbury for overnight.

Canterbury is located in southeast England between London and the port of Dover. It is the center of the Christian Church in England and the focal point of the Anglican Communion throughout the world. Founded by the Romans, it was the martyrdom of Thomas Becket and its significance for medieval pilgrims, which ensured the importance of Canterbury and its Cathedral. Although badly damaged in the Second World War (the Cathedral remained untouched), the city retains many of its charming medieval features.



Sunday, July 17th, 2011 Canterbury / London

Enjoy a tour of Canterbury Cathedral, visible from miles around, which is the most important center of pilgrimage in Northern Europe. The first Cathedral to occupy the site was begun in AD 597 by St. Augustine. After several fires, the Cathedral today consists of 11th, 12th, 14th and 15th century architecture. Afternoon transfer to London.

London encompasses 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.



Monday, July 18th, 2011 London

A guided 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. **Noon concert as part of the American Celebration of Music in Britain.** Afternoon excursion to the 900-year-old Tower of London, whose construction was initiated by William the Conqueror. Here we also view the Crown Jewels. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at your leisure for additional sightseeing, shopping, or other planned activities. Evening Farewell Dinner and overnight.



Tuesday, July 19th, 2011 Depart for home

Transfer to one of London's International Airports for return flight to USA. Arrive home in the evening of the same day.

