

WELLS CATHEDRAL CHORAL RESIDENCY

A GRACE EPISCOPAL CHURCH BICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION PILGRIMAGE

JULY 18 – 26, 2027

SUNDAY, 18 JULY

Arrive at Heathrow International Airport, clear Customs, and collect baggage by noon or meet the group in baggage claim if you have arrived early. Follow our tour guide to our private coach to drive to **Stonehenge**.

There is nothing quite like this awe-inspiring monument anywhere else in the world, yet at first sight it is curiously disappointing, probably because it is set on a plain so vast that, in comparison, the stones seem quite insignificant. It is only when man stands close to the stones that he seems so puny in comparison and it is hard to imagine how centuries ago with only primitive tools to help them men could have placed these huge boulders into position. The actual building falls into three phases:

Phase One took place in the late Neolithic Period somewhere around 2,000 years BC but little is known of this work.

Phase Two took place between 1,700 and 1,600 BC. We do know at this point that about eighty blue stones were brought over land on wooden sledges by Neolithic migrants from the Preseli Mountains in Pembrokeshire and were placed in two concentric circles with the entrance at the northeast. This work was never finished.

Phase Three took place between 1,600 and 1,300 BC during the Bronze Age. At this time, the blue stones were moved and about sixty enormous sarsen stones were dragged here from the Marlborough Downs.

The whole history of Stonehenge covers the period from about 2,200 BC to 1,300 BC but exactly why it was built remains a mystery. One fact remains. The axis of Stonehenge was carefully aligned with the sunrise of 21 June, the longest day of the year. Was it built to calculate the annual calendar of the seasons?

The free “Stonehenge Audio Guide” is available on the Apple App Store or Google Play. The file is 60 mb and requires Wi-Fi accessibility.

After visiting the stones, look around the visitor centre and get some food. **Lunch is on your own arrangement.**

Returning to our coach, we will continue west to Wells where we will book in at The Swan Hotel. An included dinner will be served for the whole group at 7:00.

Wells is very much a cathedral city and is dominated by it. The existing building was started in 1180 and continued construction in stages until 1424. Many of the buildings in the cathedral precincts are used today

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for much the same purposes as that for which they were originally built. The Vicars Close consists of a cobbled street with a total of 42 houses built in the 14th century for the vicars of the cathedral.

The cathedral school was started in 909 AD and closed for one brief period of six years in 1861. It now records over 600 pupils. On the west front there are 294 sculptures left of the original 386, some are damaged beyond recognition. Three new ones were unveiled by the Prince of Wales in 1985.

The Chapter House is reached by an ancient stone stairway and is octagonal in shape and part of a two-storey building. It could be one of the most beautiful chapter houses in Britain. The cathedral's south doors lead to beautiful 15th /16th century cloisters.

MONDAY, 19 JULY

Included breakfast is available starting at 7:30.

CHOIR – Walk to the Cathedral for morning rehearsals bringing your vestments and music. Meet the vergers at the crossing in the cathedral at **10:00 a.m.** to be shown to Music Room East, where you will leave your vestments and music for the week.

Everyone – Meet the tour guides at the west end of the Nave at **10:30** for a 90-minute tour of the cathedral. After the tour, **lunch is on your own arrangement.**

CHOIR – At 2:50 p.m. meet back at the Choir Practice Room East for rehearsal from 3:00 – 3:40; rehearse the processional in the Quire at 3:45; rehearse in the choir stalls from 4:00 – 5:00.

EVENSONG – 5:15 p.m.

Evening meal is on your own arrangement.

TUESDAY, 20 JULY

Included breakfast is available starting at 7:30.

CHOIR – Meet in the Cathedral Practice Room at 8:25, morning rehearsal is from 8:30 – 9:30.

Everyone – Meet the coach at the pickup point near the Cathedral for a 9:45 a.m. departure to **Bath** arriving around 10:30 to be dropped off near the Roman Baths, where a visit to the Baths is scheduled for 10:45.

Bath – The Romans built a city here and called it Aquae Sulis, which grew around the Baths establishment. It is one of the foremost of its kind in the Western Empire. In the 18th century Bath became a fashionable resort for society presided over by Beau Nash. It was at this time that the work of providing a suitable environment began. From the early 1700s to the early 1800s many beautiful buildings, streets, squares, and crescents were completed.

The Pump Room was built in 1795 and Pulteney Bridge, the only bridge left in England built with shops, was completed in 1777 by William Pulteney. The city abounds with acres of parks and gardens which set off the formality of the Georgian architecture.

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The town name means Bath, which is not Roman but a pure English word. The Romans did originally call the area Aquae Calidae (hot waters), then Aquae Sulis (waters of Sulis referring to a pagan god). The Anglo-Saxon name was Akemanchester, derived from the Latin Aquae (AKE) and the Roman Road of Akeman Street which ran via Bath. Also, the old English word Ceaster means Roman fort.

Lunch is on your own arrangement.

Meet the coach at the drop off point at 2:00, returning to Wells at 2:45 p.m.

CHOIR – Meet at the Cathedral Practice Room at 3:15 for rehearsal until 3:50 and then move to the Quire Stalls to continue rehearsal from 4:00 – 5:00.

EVENSONG – 5:15 p.m.

Possible informal reception for the choir in the Vicars Hall for wine, squash, and nibbles at 6:15 to 7:00 p.m. to meet the cathedral staff.

Evening meal is on your own arrangement.

WEDNESDAY, 21 JULY

Included breakfast is available starting at 7:30.

Meet the coach at the pickup point near the cathedral promptly at 8:30 a.m. to head north arriving in Berkeley at approximately 10:00 for a guided tour of Berkeley Castle at 10:30.

Berkeley Castle – Built over 800 years ago it remains the ancestral home of the Berkeley family who still live here. The family, of course, have close associations with Berkeley USA!

This is the oldest castle in Britain to have been lived in continuously by the same family. It was built as a fortress and used as a home. During its chequered history, it has been the scene of sieges during the Civil War and other terrible deeds. In some places the walls are over 14 feet thick; its turrets and towers stand majestically.

This was the scene in 1327 of the frightful murder of Edward II. He was imprisoned in a cell close to the castle dungeon, a pit into which rotting carcasses and half alive prisoners were thrown. It was anticipated the stench from the dungeon would overpower the prisoner in the cell. However, Edward survived for five months and ended up being tortured to death by his jailers.

The castle is also the site of the Great Hall where the west country barons met before setting off to meet King John for the signing of the Magna Carta in 1215. It is a small but real example of how we think a castle should look.

While enjoying your visit take time to wander in the church yard and visit the church. Why does the church have a detached tower? Dr. Edward Jenner who discovered the smallpox vaccine in 1796 was born in Berkeley Village and is buried in this church.

Lunch is on your own arrangement. (Café on site.)

Depart the castle at 1:15 for an arrival back in Wells at 2:45.

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CHOIR – Meet at the Cathedral Practice Room at 3:15 for rehearsal until 3:50 and then move to the Quire Stalls to continue rehearsal from 4:00 – 5:00.

EVENSONG – 5:15 p.m.

Evening meal is on your own arrangement.

THURSDAY, 22 JULY

Included breakfast is available starting at 7:30.

Today is the Cathedral's Quiet Day – no services are scheduled. Enjoy a full day excursion to Bristol. Meet the coach at the pickup point near the Cathedral at 8:50 a.m. for a departure at 9:00. We will meet our local guide at 10:00 for a bus tour of Bristol and the area with a stop at the famous Bristol Brunel Suspension Bridge lasting about 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Bristol – Once one of the most important ports in the country, the earliest record of commercial activity goes back to Edward II in the 10th century when silver coins were minted here. The rivers Severn and Avon were navigable to this point, and it was from Bristol in 1497 that John Cabot and his Bristol born son Sebastian set sail with 18 sailors in the 100-ton ship “Matthew” before reaching the mainland of America in Newfoundland.

Bristol has been a centre for trade and commerce for over 1,000 years with large container ships now docking at the entrance to the Avon Gorge at Avonmouth. The old dock side area remains a popular and active site.

Bristol Cathedral – Formerly an Augustinian Abbey founded in 1142 by Robert Fitzharding, it became the cathedral church of the newly formed Diocese of Bristol in 1542. It still retains much of its Norman solidity, particularly in the fine Chapter House.

The church building is known as a “Hall Church” type where high chancel, aisle and eastern Lady Chapel are of equal height. The Choir is full of fine woodwork dating back to the 1500s and the Misericords of great interest depicting Biblical scenes. Choristers are educated at the adjoining cathedral school. An important feature in the Berkeley Chapel is a medieval candelabrum (understood to be the only one of its kind in England) recorded as being given to the Temple Church in Bristol in 1450 and passed to its present home during the terrible blitz of World War II.

St. Mary Redcliff – A superb example of Medieval architecture and once described by Queen Elizabeth I on a visit to Bristol as “the fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in the kingdom.” In all respects it is the size of a cathedral with a 240-foot nave and a spire added in the 19th century rising 285 feet above street level.

The church owes much of its construction to William Canynges in the 14th century and further work completed by his son.

Admiral Sir William Penn whose son, also a William, founded Pennsylvania is buried in the south transept. The close links with the United States are further strengthened by the restoration of the St. John's Chapel by the Friends of St. Mary Redcliff in America.

The tour will conclude around noon at the rear of the cathedral. **Lunch is on your own arrangement in the city.**

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Return to the coach at the drop off point at 2:00 for a short journey to the Maritime Heritage Centre, where we will visit the SS Great Britain at 2:25 p.m.

SS Great Britain – Launched in Bristol in 1843, the ship was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the famous Victorian engineer who also designed the Bristol suspension bridge.

This was the first ship fitted with a screw propeller; the first to have an iron hull; and the first to have a 1,000-horsepower engine. On her first voyage across the Atlantic, she set a new speed record.

SS. Great Britain continued on the high seas until 1894 travelling 32 times around the world and completing nearly one million miles of sailing. Eventually, she was abandoned in the Falkland Islands in 1937 after serving as a floating warehouse for over 40 years. She remained there a rotting and rusting hulk.

That was not the end of her story because in the late 1960s a fund was launched with the sole aim of bringing her back to Bristol. In 1970 the dream was realized and a tremendous salvage exercise took place to bring her back home. After many years of careful conservation, she now rests in the same dry dock where she was originally built 175 years ago.

Use the audio guide to wander around this lovely ship and be ready to board the coach again at 4:35.

After a short journey back to harbourside where an included evening meal has been arranged at 5:15 p.m. at Za Za Bazaar, an international buffet where you can eat as much as you like from around the world. A bar is available to purchase drinks, or water is provided for the tables. We will leave Za Za's at 7:00 to return to Bristol on the coach at 7:15 with an arrival in Wells at 8:00 p.m.

FRIDAY, 23 JULY

Included breakfast is available starting at 7:30.

CHOIR – Meet in the Cathedral Practice Room at 8:25, morning rehearsal is from 8:30 – 9:45.

Everyone – Meet the coach at the pickup point near the cathedral, ready to leave at 10:00 a.m. for a short journey to Glastonbury, arriving at 10:20 a.m. for a five-minute walk to the Abbey.

Glastonbury – It is believed by many people that under the waters of a spring on the slopes of its tor, Joseph of Arimathea buried the chalice used at the Last Supper. Also, on a nearby hill, he thrust his thorn staff into the ground, and it took root to produce the distinctive Glastonbury winter flowering thorn tree. On that site the town grew on the Great Abbey Round and Joseph built a church of daub and wattle. This is the legend which has drawn pilgrims to this place for centuries.

In 688 King Ine of Wessex gave it a monastery, the most majestic, rich, and beautiful in Britain. It is also believed that King Alfred and Queen Guinevere were reburied in the Abbey.

In the town St. John's Church is a fine 15th century example. The George Inn was also built in the 15th century to lodge pilgrims. The handsome market cross is from the 19th century.

After your visit, you will have free time in the town. **Lunch is on your own arrangement.** Meet the coach at the coach park at 2:00 p.m., returning to Wells by 2:15 p.m.

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CHOIR - Meet at the Cathedral Practice Room at 3:15 for rehearsal until 3:50 and then move to the Quire Stalls to continue rehearsal from 4:00 – 5:00.

EVENSONG – 5:15 p.m.

Evening meal is on your own arrangement.

SATURDAY, 24 JULY

Included breakfast is available starting at 8:00.

CHOIR – Meet in the Cathedral Practice Room at 9:25 a.m. for rehearsals from 9:30 – 11:00.

Everyone – Free time in the city for shopping or visit the Bishop’s Palace. **Lunch is on your own arrangement.**

CHOIR - Meet at the Cathedral Practice Room at 3:15 for rehearsal until 3:50 and then move to the Quire Stalls to continue rehearsal from 4:00 – 5:00.

EVENSONG – 5:15 p.m.

Evening meal is on your own arrangement.

SUNDAY, 25 JULY

Included breakfast is available starting at 8:00.

CHOIR – Meet in the Cathedral Practice Room at 8:45 a.m. Choristers move to the Nave at 9:15 to walk through the processional. Rehearse in the Cathedral Nave from 9:30 to 10:15.

Sung Eucharist at 10:30 a.m. in the Cathedral Nave.

Free time after services to wander in the city. **Lunch is on your own arrangement.**

CHOIR – Meet in the Cathedral Practice Room at 1:45 p.m. Move to the Quire Stalls for rehearsal from 2:00 to 2:30 p.m.

EVENSONG – 3:00 p.m.

CHOIR – Gather all belongings from the practice room by 4:15 p.m.

Everyone – Included group dinner at The Swan Hotel at 6:00 p.m.

MONDAY, 26 JULY

Included breakfast, luggage loading, check out, and coach departure for Heathrow International Airport are all dependent on flight schedules. More on these arrangements as the trip develops.
