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TOURS THROUGH TIME

A RANGE OF FULLY GUIDED HISTORICAL TOURS

Historic Worcester

9/12 July 2010
from the Worcester Whitehouse Hotel ****



Situated in the heart of England, Worcester is a vibrant city where you can discover an interesting blend of old and new, heritage and tradition and a thriving arts scene. The magnificent cathedral and the city have strong connections with **Sir Edward Elgar** and just outside the city the Elgar Birthplace Museum tells the story of the life, music, family and friends of the great composer.

Out of the city we visit Great Malvern and its magnificent priory, historic **Harvington Hall** and **Great Whitley Court**. We are delighted to include a **guided tour of the privately owned Madresfield Court**, a property of medieval origins with Elizabethan and Victorian extensions and an exceptional Arts and Crafts decorated chapel.

The city's historic buildings include the 15th century Greyfriars, the 18th century Guildhall and the Victorian façade of **Royal Worcester Porcelain**, where fine china was produced from 1751 until the end of the 20th century. Some hand painting and gilding continues at Royal Worcester and the factory shop sells an extensive range of wares.

Itinerary at a glance

Day 1 Friday 9 th July	Day 2 Saturday 10 th July	Day 3 Sunday 11 th July	Day 4 Monday 12 th July
Independent travel and check-in to the hotel from 14.00 hrs. 14.30hrs: Join your guide for a walking tour of "Historic Worcester" and a visit to Greyfriars. 19.00hrs: Welcome reception and introduction to the tour. 19.30hrs: Dinner.	Breakfast. Depart by executive coach for Madresfield Court. Private tour on arrival. Free time to explore the gardens. Depart for Great Malvern. Free time to enjoy lunch and visit the Priory. Return to the hotel.	Breakfast. Depart by executive coach for Harvington Hall. Private tour on arrival. Buffet lunch included. Depart for Great Witley Court. Return to hotel with a visit to Elgar's birthplace en route. 19.30hrs: Dinner.	Breakfast. Join your guide for a guided tour of Worcester Cathedral and a visit to the Commandery. Free time for lunch and independent sightseeing. Return to hotel and depart at leisure.

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Full Itinerary

Day 1 After checking in to the hotel on Friday, join your guide at 1430 for a "Historic Worcester" walk to **Greyfriars**. Greyfriars is a small property, which is now in the care of The National Trust and is a fine 15th century black and white merchant's town house. During your visit the history of the house and its previous owners is revealed as you tour the extensively restored interior. It is filled with furniture, rugs and tapestries and very much as it would have been in its time. Rare 18th century wallpapers, grandfather clocks and a collection of antiquarian books are just a few of the highlights.

Return to the hotel with time to relax before joining fellow tour members and your tour leader for a welcome drink before dinner is served.

Day 2 On Saturday, we will depart after breakfast for **Madresfield Court**, north east of Great Malvern. A private tour of this rarely opened house with free time to enjoy the gardens is included. The house has remained in the same family, the Earls Beauchamp, since the Middle Ages and the original Tudor house had the normal plan of a moated manor with a gate-house leading to an inner courtyard, on one side of which would have been a great hall. However, the **6th Earl of Beauchamp** engaged Philip Hardwick to add new rooms inside the courtyard, crowding it with a gallery, cloister and a tower with a spire.

Further new rooms were added and no expense was spared with each room in Madresfield completely different from the rest. This makes it even more interesting and memorable. The alterations were completed by the 7th Earl, a patron of the **Arts and Crafts movement** and the arts and crafts theme is continued to the adjacent chapel. The Long Gallery survives from the pre Victorian house and the former Great Hall is now the dining room, refashioned by Hardwick with a hammerbeam roof, Jacobean chimneypiece and minstrels gallery. This is an absolute gem of a property with beautiful gardens and fine interiors.

After departing from Madresfield, we will stop for lunch (not included) in Great Malvern where there is a magnificent **Priory** to explore. This combination of Norman and Perpendicular Gothic architecture has some remarkable fifteenth century English stained glass, a medieval floor and wall tiles and some unusual carvings.

Dinner is not included on Saturday evening to allow free time for dining out, although it is also possible to book a table in the hotel restaurant.

Day 3 After breakfast on Sunday, an executive coach will transfer us to **Harvington Hall** near Kidderminster. Harvington Hall survives almost unaltered from the Elizabethan era and the house conveys the intensity of the religious conflicts of this time and claims to have the most priest's holes in England.

A private tour has been organised and will reveal a medieval clutter of outer courtyard and an old moat house, a moat, random facades, stone mullioned windows and an old Great Hall. Family chambers, passages, priest's holes, hidden chapels and other surprises can be discovered during this fascinating visit. **A buffet lunch is served** before we depart for Great Witley Court through the Worcestershire countryside.

At **Great Witley Court** we will see the ruins of one of the most palatial residences in England. Now in the care of English Heritage, the gardens and gigantic fountains, Poseidon and Flora, have been restored and are quite sensational. We should arrive in time to see the fountains playing at 1400 hrs.

Before returning to the hotel we will visit **Elgar's birthplace** at Lower Broadheath, now a museum. After a short video introduction you can see the nationally important collection of Elgar's personal possessions and manuscripts. The day ends with a return to Worcester and dinner at the hotel. (Cont/ ...)

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Day 4 On Monday, there will be a **guided tour of Worcester Cathedral** during the morning and a visit to The Commandery. Close to the cathedral, the exterior of The Commandery presents half timbering and beautiful stained glass panes dating back to early Tudor times. Re-opened a few years ago after extensive restoration, highlights include the panelled rooms, the Civil War Museum and the Great Hall.

Guided tours of the magnificent 11th century cathedral, situated on the banks of the River Severn, will be provided and you can see the Elgar Memorial Window, which shows a scene from Elgar's work "**The Dream of Gerontius**". His statue in the High Street looks out towards the cathedral and it was close to this statue that the original site of the Elgar Brothers' music shop was situated.

There will be some free time for lunch and independent sightseeing before returning to the hotel for departure at leisure. Almost opposite the hotel is the **City Art Gallery and Museum**, which provides an insight into the City's past and this is certainly worth a visit if there is time before departing from Worcester.

Tour Cost

Tour Cost per person	£359
English Heritage Member per person	£355
Single Supplement	£45
Non-refundable deposit per person	£100

Included

- Three night's accommodation with full English breakfast and dinner on two evenings
- Executive coaching, as per the itinerary
- The services of a professional guide
- All visits, tours and entries as per the itinerary
- Buffet lunch (two-courses) at Harvington Hall and coffee/tea
- Welcome drink on first evening

Not included

- Travel Insurance (strongly recommended).
- Dinner on Saturday evening although you may make a booking in the hotel restaurant if you do not wish to dine out in Worcester
- Lunches (except for buffet lunch, as per itinerary), although suitable stops are included

NB: This tour does involve a fair amount of gentle walking.

How to Book

You can visit the website and the "Contact Us" page to make a provisional booking. Alternatively, please ring the office between 9.00am-5.00pm (Monday-Friday). A non-refundable deposit of £100 is required at the time of booking, unless you are booking less than 8 weeks before departure. In this case, full payment of the tour is required.

Further Information

If you have any questions about the tour, please do not hesitate to contact us.

(Hotel information overleaf ...)

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Your Accommodation



The Worcester Whitehouse Hotel ****

Foregate Street
Worcester
WR1 1EA

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F: 01905 23440

www.whitehousehotels.com

Bedrooms

The 84 en-suite bedrooms have all the facilities you would expect in a four star hotel, including cotton duvet, power shower, ironing centre and in-room safe to name a few extras. All designed for your comfort and convenience and included in the price, not to mention the best bed you've probably ever slept in.

All rooms are recently refurbished and kept in superb condition and range from standard to executive rooms, should you wish to upgrade. There are also feature rooms and suites.

Hotel Facilities

Foregates Brasserie offers a choice of the best English and International dishes and an extensive choice of wines served by the glass or by the bottle.

The hotel offers 24-hour room service including continental breakfast served in your room from 2am.

Leisure Club facilities include indoor heated pool, whirlpool spa, sauna, steam room and fully air-conditioned gymnasium. This is complimentary for hotel guests.

Extra nights may be available, on request. Please enquire at the time of booking.

How to get there

Foregate Street Station is opposite the hotel entrance. Shrub Hill Station is 1 mile away. The nearest main line station is Birmingham New Street, 33 miles away. Birmingham International Airport is 39 miles away.

Road directions will be forwarded with tour joining information