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IN QUEST OF THE CLASSICS...

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In Quest of the Classics proudly offers a deluxe tour of Northern England and Scotland featuring three stunning hotels from the Von Essen collection and finishing with a night in a 5 star hotel in Manchester. Your own dedicated blue badge driver/guide will be "at your disposal" from start to finish. The tour includes full English/Scottish breakfasts, two lunches and four dinners as mentioned, all entrances and portage. Prices are upon request. This programme can only be booked through a bona fide travel agent.

Day 1 MANCHESTER AIRPORT/ULLSWATER

We will meet guests at Manchester Airport and transfer via the motorway straight through to **The Sharrow Bay Hotel** which lies in a breathtaking setting on beautiful Ullswater in the Lake District. Nestled in twelve acres of private gardens and woodland and surrounded by magnificent fells, the hotel was where the term 'country house hotel' was first coined. The Michelin starred restaurant uses the finest local ingredients and produces some of the best British cuisine you are likely to eat - the famous dish 'sticky toffee pudding' was invented here! We include a welcome dinner tonight.

Our next two days will be spent exploring the Lake District, where 16 lakes are squeezed between the steeply pitched faces of the country's highest mountains, an almost Alpine landscape augmented by picturesque stone-built villages. The region was brought to the attention of the outside world by the poetry of William Wordsworth and his contemporaries.



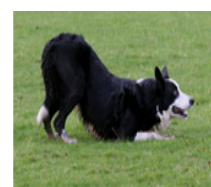
Day 2 LOCAL

We head south and cross the Kirkstone Pass, stopping for photos of the endless views stretching away for miles and miles. We'll drop down into Windermere, where we take a boat cruise to Lakeside before boarding a steam train for a short trip reminding us of days gone by.

Lunch is arranged at Yew Tree Farm, with its distinctive 'spinning gallery'. The Farmhouse, built in 1693 and owned by Beatrix Potter, featured in the movie 'Miss Potter' starring Rene Zellweger. Afterwards we take a really scenic tour off the beaten track and up through the mountains.



Our day culminates with a chance to learn all about the Border Collie breed and experience the joy of handling a fully-trained sheep dog - under instruction of course! We return via Thirlmere and take a short stop at Castlerigg prehistoric stone circle.



Day 3 LOCAL

I wandered lonely as a
When all at once I saw a
Beside the lake, beneath



cloud, That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
crowd, A host, of golden daffodils;
the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze...

This morning we stop at Gowbarrow Park. It's thought that Dorothy's recollections of the visit in her diary inspired William to write his famous 'Daffodils' poem. You can take a short walk to Aira Force, a seventy-foot waterfall.

Next a visit to Hill Top, the delightful small 17th century farmhouse where Beatrix Potter wrote many of her famous children's stories. The cottage has a traditional garden planted with flowers, herbs and vegetables.



Lunch in the adjacent Tower Bank Arms, which serves traditional Cumbrian dishes using local produce. An afternoon visit to Dove Cottage home to William and Dorothy Wordsworth from 1799 to 1808 and where the poet wrote some of his best works. Guides bursting with anecdotes lead you around rooms that reflect the poet's guiding principle of 'plain living but high thinking' and little has changed now. We'll see graves of the poet and his family beneath the yews in the churchyard.



Special late afternoon private visit to Rydal Mount, where the poet lived from 1830 until his death. Here we'll have a poetry recital accompanied by wine and Grasmere gingerbread.

DAY 4 EDINBURGH

This morning we travel through the southern uplands of Scotland, with bare, rounded peaks and heathery hills, punctuated by valleys. We'll visit Abbotsford, home of Sir Walter Scott, located by the River Tweed. You'll see Sir Walter's immense collection of historic relics, weapons and armour, and over 9,000 rare books. You can see the Private Chapel, wander through the grounds, gardens and along the woodland walk. Tucked in between the Tweed and the Eildon Hills, tiny Melrose is the most beguiling of towns, its narrow streets enhanced by pretty little cottages and tweedy shops. The Abbey ruins soar above their riverside surroundings. We head on into Edinburgh so you can have some free time for your own pursuits - of course there is excellent shopping and there are world-class museums and art galleries.

The next three nights are spent at **Dalhousie Castle**, a luxury hotel close to Edinburgh. The castle dates from the 13th century, is set within acres of woodland on the banks of the River Esk, and has a falconry in the grounds. You can browse amongst the extensive collection of books in the library, relax in the Aqueous Spa and tonight we include dinner in the ancient barrel vaulted dungeon.



Day 5 EDINBURGH

Edinburgh, the showcase capital of Scotland, is a cosmopolitan and cultured city. Perched on a series of extinct volcanoes and rocky crags, it was called 'My own Romantic town' by Sir Water Scott. We'll bring in a Scottish guide for the morning to add a little local colour and include a visit to Edinburgh Castle, whose north side rears high above an almost sheer rock face. Inside the Castle is St Margaret's Chapel, probably the oldest building in the City and The Honours of Scotland or Crown Jewels.

After free time for lunch we'll tour the Royal Yacht Britannia. This magnificent ship has played host to some of the most famous people in the world, but most importantly was home to Her Majesty the Queen and the Royal Family. The afternoon will end with a tutored tasting at the Scottish Malt Whisky Association Vaults in Leith. Join the members as they relax in the wood panelled rooms on leather sofas in front of an open fire.

Day 6 LOCAL

The ancient Kingdom of Fife is surrounded by water on three sides, with scenery varying from the gentle hills in the rural hinterland to windswept cliffs. The morning brings us to Scotland's oldest university town and the home of golf, St Andrews. The University was where Prince William studied for four years, before joining the military. The ruins of the great Cathedral give only an idea of the former importance of what was once the largest cathedral in Scotland, founded in 1160 but only consecrated in 1318 in the presence of Robert the Bruce. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club dates back to a meeting of 22 of the local gentry in 1754. We include a visit to the British Golf Museum, which has plenty of hands-on exhibits along with footage of the Open championships. If you're not into golf, there are some excellent cashmere outlets nearby!



Passing through Dundee we'll head to Scone Palace, home of the Earl and Countess of Mansfield. Fifteen hundred years ago it was the capital of the Pictish kingdom, has housed the Stone of Destiny and been immortalised in Shakespeare's Macbeth. You'll tour the state rooms including the library with its outstanding collection of porcelain. Look out for Marie Antoinette's writing desk. We'll return to Edinburgh via Perth, Loch Leven and the Forth Road Bridge.



*Except old seers do feign
and wizard wits be blind,
the Scots in place must reign
where they this stone shall find*

Day 7 SEAHAM

This morning we travel south crossing the border at the historic town of Berwick.

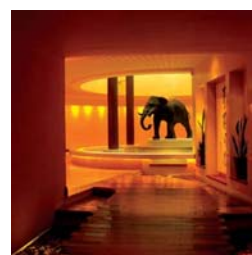


If the tide allows we'll cross the three mile tidal flats to Lindisfarne, or Holy Island. The first thing you'll see is the Castle, sitting atop a volcanic mound. The Priory, now a ruin, was a Benedictine foundation of St Aidan in 634. The monks established a reputation for scholarship and artistry, exemplified by the Lindisfarne Gospels, the apotheosis of Celtic religious art. On days when the tide is high we'll visit Bamburgh Castle.

We continue south to visit Alnwick Castle and The Alnwick Garden. The Castle is home to the 12th Duke of Northumberland and his family. Some of you may recognise it from the Harry Potter films. The Castle has had a long and colourful life, being at the centre of many famous historical events from bloodthirsty battles to the intrigues of the Gunpowder Plot. The Garden is one of the most exciting contemporary gardens in the world, a magical landscape created from a unique idea. The Duchess's vision was to create a beautiful space accessible to everyone: a garden for contemplation, fun, inspiration and education. The Garden is now halfway complete and features spectacular water displays and one of the largest tree houses in the world.



We spend the next two nights at **Seaham Hall**, a small luxury hotel on the Durham Coast. The Serenity Spa has won a string of international awards and is linked to the hotel by a magical underground walkway. Seaham has the only Michelin starred restaurant in the region.



DAY 8 LOCAL



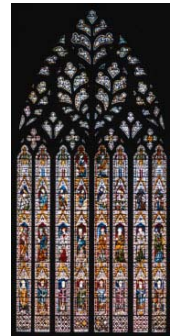
Our first visit is to the open-air Beamish Museum, spread over 300 acres. Many of the costumed guides are recruited for their real-life experience – the collier, who take you down the drift mine may once have been a miner, and some of the men driving the steam engine used to work for British Rail. There's a farm, mining village, complete with chapel and school, a train station, manor house and a market town, with horse yard and vegetable plots. Four of the sections show life in 1913. The Museum was established to tell the story of the people of the North East by collecting and preserving buildings, machinery and objects

from their daily lives and workplaces.

From the outskirts of Durham you are met with a stunning view – a panoramic prospect of the Cathedral, its towers dominating the skyline from the top of a steep sandstone bluff within a bend of the River Wear. This dramatic site has been the resting place of a saint since 995, when the monks fled Lindisfarne in fear of the Vikings. The Prince Bishops ruled the land with their own army, law courts and mint. We'll tour the cathedral, voted by architects their favourite building in Britain. We return to the hotel in time to enjoy its facilities.

DAY 9 MANCHESTER

York is the north's most compelling city, a place whose history, said King George VI, 'is the history of England'. The City stood at the heart of England's religious and political life for centuries. We'll visit the Minster, which ranks as one of the country's most important sights. Seat of the Archbishop of York, it is Britain's largest Gothic building and home to countless treasures, not least of which is the world's largest medieval stained glass window. York is a shopper's paradise and we'll give you free time for those last minute purchases. If you prefer history we recommend the Castle Museum, a remarkable collection of by-gones instituted by a Doctor who realised that many of the everyday items used in rural areas were in danger of disappearing. The museum's range of early craft, folk and agricultural ephemera is complemented by costume, toys and domestic implements.



No visit is complete without dropping tearooms in heaven they'll be like this –



by our favourite tea shop, Betty's. If there are try a pikelet or a Yorkshire fat rascal!

Our last night is spent at **The Lowry Hotel** on the banks of the River Irwell near Manchester.



The first five-star in the region, The Lowry makes a bold contemporary architectural statement with its dramatic, curved, glass-fronted façade that creates a light and airy feel within the hotel interior. The relaxing and stylish ambience of the River Restaurant reflects the sophisticated feel of the hotel with a fresh, unpretentious approach to top quality dining. We include a farewell dinner with wine.

DAY 10 MANCHESTER AIRPORT

Departure transfer to Manchester airport.