

The Manuscript Society

HIDDEN TREASURES OF
BRITAIN'S GREAT UNIVERSITY CITIES:
CAMBRIDGE & OXFORD

September 10–18, 2025

with an optional extension to London, September 18–21, 2025



The Manuscript Society is pleased to announce another custom-designed European study trip for our members, this time focusing on the great English university cities of Cambridge and Oxford. We will spend a week examining the amazing holdings of college, public, and private libraries and collections, often enjoying special openings and access that few visitors obtain.

Our touring will uncover lovely secret places in both Cambridge and Oxford, including a number of historic libraries and archives with precious documents and rare books relating to scientists, authors, thinkers, artists and more, both British and European. Our time will be split between historic college campuses and excursions to magnificent private country estates with notable private libraries and collections. Center city hotels (a four-star and a five-star) provide comfortable and convenient accommodations throughout the weeklong itinerary, and we'll enjoy hospitality at historic pubs, fine restaurants, and private estates. Join us for this one-of-a-kind look at Cambridge and Oxford from a unique Manuscript Society perspective!



Duke Humfrey's Library, Bodleian Library, Oxford
(photo by Diliff)

CUSTOM ITINERARY

This custom travel program has been created uniquely for The Manuscript Society.

Wednesday, September 10

Departure for England

Take independent international flights to London.

Thursday, September 11

Arrival in London / Transfer to Cambridge

Upon arrival at London Heathrow airport, with time for an early independent lunch, take a group transfer by private coach (1.5-2 hours) to the classic British university town of Cambridge. After settling into the four-star University Arms Hotel, join an expert guide for an introductory walk around the loveliest corners of the town's many campuses – a great chance to understand Cambridge's unique academic and architectural structure. Finish our tour by boarding a traditional Cambridge Punt for a privately chauffeured cruise down the River Cam with the chance to enjoy fantastic views of the world famous Cambridge College "Backs," named by the National Trust as one of the Top 10 Views in England. Tonight, celebrate our arrival and get to know your fellow travelers during a welcome dinner near our hotel.

University Arms, Cambridge (Meals Included: Dinner)

Friday, September 12

Books, Manuscripts, and More: The Best of Cambridge

Today is primarily spent discovering a number of the renowned College Libraries of Cambridge. Begin with a tour of Wren Library at Trinity College, the largest of the Cambridge college libraries designed by Christopher Wren in 1676 and completed in 1695. The library is considered as one of the first libraries to be designed with large windows to provide the appropriate amount of light for readers. The collection includes 1,250 western medieval manuscripts, many books are from the library of Sir Isaac Newton, the Rothschild collection of 18th century literature, as well as the Kessler collection of livre d'artistes.

We hope to arrange for a private luncheon in a beautiful reception room at one of Cambridge's historic colleges with the presence of a manager of the Research Collections at Cambridge University Library, who will give a fascinating talk on the history of libraries in England.

Later we visit the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, the personal library collected by Samuel Pepys, which he bequeathed to the college after his death in 1703. The more than 3,000 volumes, including Pepys diary, form one of the most important surviving 17th century private libraries. As a grand finale, be greeted by staff of Cambridge University's prestigious Manuscripts Department, with a chance to consult rare and fascinating pieces within their peerless collection.

Dinner and the evening are on your own.

University Arms, Cambridge (Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch)



King's College from River Cam (Punting Cambridge)



Wren Library at Trinity College, Cambridge (GZagatta)

Saturday, September 13

Great Historic Libraries Just Outside Cambridge

After breakfast, we drive eight miles south of Cambridge to the 2,500-acre Wimpole Estate. At Wimpole Hall, visit the library that was built by James Gibbs in 1730 and became the prized possession of the 1st Earl of Harwicke, who was an avid collector and lover of books. Admire the largest and most important collection of books and manuscripts ever assembled by a private individual in England.

Enjoy lunch at Wimpole Hall's Old Rectory Restaurant.

This afternoon, we visit another lesser-visited Cambridgeshire estate, Angelsey Abbey, dating back to Jacobean times. Lord Fairhaven built up a beautifully maintained library and a very personalized books collection that we will be invited to review "up close."

Back in Cambridge this evening, dinner is on your own.

University Arms, Cambridge (Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch)

Sunday, September 14

Art and Libraries En Route to Oxford

Today is a gradual ramble through the attractive countryside between the two great university towns, and our morning stop will be Drayton House, which recently has become famous as the filming location for *Saltburn*. But pop culture is not driving our visit – it's rather the quite remarkable private library contained within the house. We'll have the special chance to admire some of the most special historic works within the collection.

We continue to Boughton House, owned by the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch and Queensberry, a Tudor monastic building enlarged around seven courtyards! After a lunch in the Boughton House Café, we'll explore the house's outstanding collections of 16th- to 18th-century furnishings and art, with works by El Greco, Van Dyck, and Gainsborough.

Arriving into Oxford in the late afternoon, we check into our center-city five-star hotel, the Randolph. Dinner and the evening are independent.

The Randolph Hotel, Oxford (Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch)

Monday, September 15

Iconic Oxford: Libraries and more

This morning, we embark on a guided walking tour of the city and the University of Oxford, with its famous "dreaming spires" and venerable colleges. Admire beautiful architecture and prized parks and green spaces while getting the "lay of the land" in this legendary capital of learning.

Enjoy lunch at a historic pub in the heart of the city. This afternoon take a guided tour of the Bodleian Library, which first opened to scholars in 1602 making it one of the oldest libraries in Europe. Explore the Bodleian's reading rooms, Radcliffe Camera, 15th-century Divinity School, Convocation House, Chancellor's Court and Duke Humfrey's medieval library.

We continue to Merton College, home to the world's oldest continuously functioning library for university academics and students. Merton's



John Soane fireplace in the Book Room at Wimpole Hall (Orangeaurochs)



Entrance to the Bodleian Library; Statue of William Herbert, 3rd Earl of Pembroke (Ali Mannan)

special collections include medieval manuscripts, early printed books, and personal papers of notable college members.

The remainder of the day is at leisure.

The Randolph Hotel, Oxford (Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch)

Tuesday, September 16

Stately Libraries on Great Estates

This morning is dedicated to an in-depth visit of Waddesdon Manor, a French Renaissance château built by the Rothschilds in the 19th century famous for its world-class collection of French 18th-century decorative arts and 17th- 18th- century paintings, which were assembled by three generations of Rothschilds. The guided tour will include a special private viewing of the library with its world-class collection of 17th- and 18th-century volumes.

Next a delicious country luncheon at the Lord Nelson Pub. In the afternoon, we have the pleasure of a private visit and tea at Wormsley Park, the 2500-acre estate and 18th-century country house still the home of Sir Mark Getty. His father, the late Sir Paul Getty, created the library, which includes precious early manuscripts and a first edition of *The Canterbury Tales*.

Returning to Oxford in the late afternoon, enjoy free time for dinner and evening explorations on your own.

The Randolph Hotel, Oxford (Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Tea)

Wednesday, September 17

Country Houses Great and Small: Blenheim & Rousham

Our morning is filled with a wide-ranging visit at Blenheim, the vast, magnificent, baroque palace built by Queen Anne for the Duke of Marlborough after his decisive 1704 victory over Louis XIV. Still owned by the family, it was the birthplace of Winston Churchill and features extensive landscaping by “Capability” Brown. We are working to arrange a special look at the estate archives. Free time will be given for an independent lunch at one of the estate cafes.

Just miles away, Rousham House is a perfect counterpoint to the gargantuan Blenheim. Still very much a lived-in home, this estate is surrounded by glorious gardens and still maintains much of its original William Kent design, including the sublime library that was lauded by Horace Walpole after its completion in 1760.

We return to our hotel in Oxford, with a bit of free time for last wanderings around the beautiful college grounds. We then gather for a memorable farewell dinner at a great city restaurant.

The Randolph Hotel, Oxford (Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner)

Thursday, September 18

A Fond Farewell to England or Continue to London

One morning transfer (about 1 hour) will be provided from our Oxford hotel to London Heathrow airport to meet flight departures. Or, travelers may choose to continue their Manuscript Society touring and head to London for a 3-night extension.

(Meals Included: Breakfast)



Waddesdon Manor (Orangeaurochs)



Blenheim Palace (Dreilly95)

A LIBRARY LOVER'S LONDON - OPTIONAL EXTENSION

September 18-21, 2025

This fun and creative combination of archives, museums, architectural monuments, and hidden collections is a one-of-a-kind way to explore London, specially designed for lovers of books and historic documents. We will spend three nights in the five-star comforts of the Bankside Hotel, near the Thames, just steps from the Tate Modern, the Globe Theater, and the Millennium Bridge, and surrounded by good restaurants. Arriving in London, we will have a special look at the historic holdings of the Royal Society, England's most prestigious scientific academy. We'll be guests of the Middle Temple Hall for a lunch and a tour of the rare medieval church. Rare book collections at multiple historic libraries will be opened for us, including King's College's legendary library. An easy trip out to Kew will feature both the National Archives of the UK with lots of surprising treasures and the beautiful library of Kew Gardens, with extremely rare maps and early books and drawings related to horticulture. We'll see Ham House, one of London's finest 17th-century homes, complete with a stunning original wood-decorated library. Great museums will also be part of the experience, with a private visit (pending confirmation) of the Victoria & Albert's famed archives and a stop to see the conservation laboratories of the British Museum. During your stay in London, you will learn from a great guide, marvel at lesser-known wonders, and enjoy a variety of fun meals, including a fine dining farewell dinner with your fellow travelers.

\$3,195 double occupancy | \$895 single supplement



Big Ben at Sunset
(photo by Uzbek)

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS



UNIVERSITY ARMS – CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge's oldest hotel's style is undeniably British and quintessentially Cambridge. Classic Edwardian interiors are combined with bespoke, leather-padded writing desks, low ottomans, and tiered chandeliers in playful colors and rooms full of natural light. The result is ambitious, beautiful, and full of life. The hotel offers 189 luxury rooms and suites across four floors, with views over Parker's Piece, historic Regent Street, and the hotel's inner courtyard.



RANDOLPH HOTEL – OXFORD

Located within Oxford's cultural epicenter, the five-star Randolph Hotel offers some of the finest accommodations in the city. The hotel is just steps away from the University of Oxford Colleges and a 15-minute stroll from the picturesque riverside and boathouses. Plush and cozy guest rooms have been recently renovated and strike the perfect balance between a historic property and a modern boutique hotel. Enjoy an all-day British brasserie, an indulgent afternoon tea in The Drawing Room, the storied Morse Bar, and a relaxing wellness center.



LONDON EXTENSION:

BANKSIDE HOTEL, AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION

The Bankside Hotel, Autograph Collection, is a design-led hotel on the culturally vibrant South Bank of London. An intimate six-story hotel with 161 bedrooms including seven suites, the hotel is known for its modern and stylish décor. Nestled in a prime location, the hotel is celebrated for its proximity to key landmarks and the convenience of nearby transport and dining options. Rooms are spacious and well appointed, and the service is outstanding.

Hidden Treasures of Britain's Great University Cities: CAMBRIDGE & OXFORD

September 10–18, 2025

with an optional extension to London, September 18–21, 2025

TOUR COST:

Main Tour Land Package.....	\$6,395
Main Tour Single Supplement	\$1,795
Extension Land Package.....	\$3,195
Extension Single Supplement	\$895

Tour Prices are per person based on double occupancy, with a minimum of 16 paying participants on the Main Tour and a minimum of 12 paying participants on the Extension.

ACTIVITY LEVEL: Moderate; good walking ability advised.

DEPOSIT & FINAL PAYMENT: A deposit of \$1,500 per registrant is required to reserve space on the main tour, and an additional deposit of \$500 per registrant is required to reserve space on the optional extension. Deposits are due by February 10, 2025 and may be paid by check or credit card. Final balance will be invoiced and is due on March 10, 2025. This may be paid by check or by credit card. Please make checks payable to The Manuscript Society with ATTN to Shirley Sands at PO Box 13349, Overland Park, KS 66282.

FLIGHTS: Airfare is not included in the tour price. Participants are responsible for their own air arrangements. Please do not purchase airline tickets until the operation of the tour is confirmed by ISDI.

TERMS & CONDITIONS: Upon receipt of registration, ISDI will send registrant a Participant Tour Agreement detailing the full terms and conditions for this tour. This document must be signed and returned to ISDI before participant's registration is considered complete and any arrangements can be confirmed.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS: Cancellation by participant must be made in writing to ISDI and is effective only upon acknowledged receipt by ISDI. There is a non-refundable registration and planning fee of \$500 per person regardless of cancellation date. Written cancellation received by ISDI on or before March 10, 2025: refund of payments made minus \$500 per person registration and planning fee. Written cancellation received by ISDI between March 11 and July 16, 2025: refund of payments made minus \$3,200 per person cancellation fee for the main tour and \$1,600 per person cancellation fee for the optional extension (includes registration and planning fee). Written cancellation received by ISDI on or after July 17, 2025: no refund. Tour registration is non-transferable. In the case of cancellation, substitutions are not allowed. After the tour has commenced, no refunds will be issued for any reason including, but not limited to, unused portions of tour. If the tour is cancelled by ISDI or The Manuscript Society due to low enrollment, active registrants will receive a full refund of all tour payments.

TOUR PRICE INCLUSIONS:

Main Tour: 3 nights' accommodation at the University Arms, Cambridge; 4 nights' accommodation at the Randolph Hotel, Oxford; breakfast daily at the hotels, 5 lunches, 2 dinners, 1 afternoon tea; 1 group airport transfer upon arrival on September 11 from London Heathrow airport (LHR) to Cambridge; 1 group airport transfer upon departure on September 18 from Oxford to LHR.

Post-tour Extension: 3 nights' accommodation at the Bankside Hotel, Autograph Collection, London; breakfast daily at the hotel, 2 lunches, 1 dinner; 1 group airport transfer on September 21 from the hotel to LHR.

Both Segments: water, non-alcoholic beverages with all meals; wine with included dinners; land transportation by deluxe private motor coach; entrance fees to sites and donations for private visits; services of an ISDI Tour Director; expert local guides for most planned sightseeing; personal listening devices for duration of tour; gratuities for guides, motorcoach drivers, and waitstaff at included meals; handling of 2 pieces of luggage per person at the hotels; bottled water on coach; service charges and taxes.

TOUR PRICE EXCLUSIONS: Airfare and associated airline taxes, surcharges, and baggage fees; airport portage; meals other than those specified in the itinerary; gratuities for hotel housekeeping; any items or excursions listed as optional; personal items such as telephone calls, room service, valet service, à-la-carte orders, specialty wines and liquors, laundry charges, travel extensions, or tour deviations; medical tests (i.e., COVID-19 tests) required by national or local governments; travel insurance; any other items not specifically included in the itinerary.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: Travel Insurance is not included in the tour cost, but participants are strongly encouraged to purchase a travel protection plan, including coverage of trip cancellation, trip interruption, emergency evacuation/repatriation, medical expenses, lost or damaged baggage, and other expenses and/or losses incurred due to unexpected situations. Should a participant cancel at any time after registering for the tour, ISDI must strictly abide by the cancellation policy outlined herein. Travel insurance information will be sent upon tour registration.

FOR QUESTIONS OR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Shirley Sands, Executive Director
The Manuscript Society
sands.manuscript@protonmail.com

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Name (Participant 1)

Name (Participant 2)

Address

City

State

Zip

Home Telephone

Mobile Telephone

E-mail Address (Participant 1)

E-mail Address (Participant 2)

OPTIONAL EXTENSION:

☐ Please sign me up for the optional post-tour extension to London, September 18–21, 2025

ROOMING OPTIONS: *(please select)*

☐ Double Occupancy; I will share a room with _____

☐ We prefer separate beds

☐ Single Occupancy (Single supplement of \$1,795 on main tour, and \$895 on optional post-tour extension)

☐ I would like a roommate but will pay the single supplement if one cannot be found

TOUR DOCUMENTS:

ISDI will send all documents pertaining to the tour by email to the email address(es) listed above.

☐ If you wish to receive hardcopy versions of the tour documents by post as well, please check this circle. Paper documents will not be sent to your home address unless this circle is checked.

DEPOSIT: \$1,500 PER PERSON FOR MAIN TOUR; ADDITIONAL \$500 PER PERSON FOR THE OPTIONAL EXTENSION

☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Amex ☐ Check *(Make check payable to The Manuscript Society)*

Card Number

Exp. (mm/yy)

CVV Security Code

Name as it appears on credit card

Billing Zip Code

EACH PARTICIPANT MUST SIGN *(Registration invalid without signature)*

By registering and paying the deposit for this tour, registrant acknowledges that he/she has carefully read and understands all information contained in the tour brochure, recognizes and accepts any risks therein, and agrees to be bound by the terms and conditions outlined above.

Signature 1 / Date

Signature 2 / Date

COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM TO:

Shirley Sands, Executive Director

The Manuscript Society

PO Box 13349

Overland Park, KS 66282

Email: sands.manuscript@protonmail.com

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