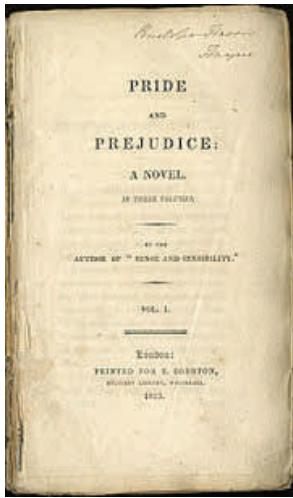


The Travels of Miss Elizabeth Bennett in *Pride & Prejudice*

Re-created, August 16 to 29, 2009



The early 19th Century reader must have envied the travels of Miss Elizabeth Bennett, who was able to visit some of the nicest parts of England during a period when travelling was more expensive, took longer, and was not as easy as it is now. Traveling was not as accessible to much of the English population as it was to Miss Bennett. They would envy her because she enjoys two special travel opportunities in *Pride & Prejudice*: a tour of the great houses and wild countryside of Derbyshire with her Aunt & Uncle Gardiner, and an extended visit to her old friend Charlotte (Lucas) Collins in Kent. What seem to us now to be short, easy, journeys were significant trips in those days; the solemn way in which Jane Austen portrays Elizabeth bidding farewell to her family (especially to her father) as she sets off for Kent reveals the significance of these short journeys in that period.

Unlike a "Jane Austen" tour, which typically includes areas of England where Jane Austen lived, this trip explores only the areas of England that are visited by Miss Elizabeth Bennett in "*Pride & Prejudice*". Hampshire and Bath would both figure into an exploration of Jane Austen's personal past because the author lived in those places, but they do not enter into the settings for *Pride & Prejudice* or for this tour.

Most of the Houses & Towns in *Pride & Prejudice* are fictional, but the Counties are real. By using real Counties Jane Austen gives us the framework for a tour through some of the top areas to visit in England, which takes place in a region that stretches from Kent in the Southeast to Derbyshire in the heart of England. For example, when Eliza travels to Derbyshire with her aunt and uncle Gardiner they stay in the fictional village of Lampton. She also visits Mr. and Mrs. Collins in Kent, but where is Rosings? The Bennetts live in Meryton, in Hertfordshire, but again, where? Meryton, Rosings, Longbourn, Netherfield: these fictional places are emblematic, allowing the reader to conjure up their own internal illustrations from what they may have seen in England, or what they *imagine* England to be like. That flexibility has allowed each generation of fans to use their own imaginations to bring these places to life.

Infact, many modern fans have very likely gotten their visual imagery of *Pride & Prejudice* through film interpretations, the most popular of which was the 1995 A & E / BBC interpretation which featured Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle. Because the imagery from that superb version of the film has gained such common currency among modern fans, this trip includes visits to some of the nicest locations used in it. These include a Ball in the Ballroom used for "*the Netherfield Ball*", Lyme Park, which was used for the *exterior of Pemberley*, & Sudbury Hall, where the *Pemberley interior* shots were filmed, and the small village in Derbyshire used for Lampton. I regret that the house used for Longbourn in the film is owned by a very frail elderly woman who no longer welcomes group visits; it is also located far to the West of the counties visited in *Pride & Prejudice*, so it is not feasible to include it in this tour.

Dancing was an important social opportunity for all of the Bennett sisters (and their friends), and it is one of the main attractions of *Pride & Prejudice* for the modern English Country Dancer. This particular journey is specifically for English Country Dancers with experience, though there will be a few spaces for non-dancing spouses, significant others, & traveling companions.

Timing and visits:

To the greatest extent possible, the sightseeing on this tour will focus on the sites that are likely to have been visited on a tour of Great Houses and popular sites in Jane Austen & Elizabeth Bennett's period. Some of the great houses that were all the rage to visit in the early 19th Century are still popular and open today. Many of these homes are still owned by their original noble families or by family trusts.

The meeting point for the trip on **August 16th** will be at a 4 star Sheraton Hotel at London's Heathrow Airport, which is the arrival point for most airline flights from North America. A one night hotel stay on **Sunday August 16th** will be included in the tour price. The next day, (**August 17th**) we begin the tour with a short drive North to *Hertfordshire*, the County that was home to the Bennetts, and their wealthy neighbors, Mr. Bingley and his sisters. We'll stop for sightseeing and lunch at the best pre-Austen period estate in Hertfordshire, *Hatfield House*.

The acknowledged authority on English Great Houses is Simon Jenkins, and I like his appraisals, so I will occasionally quote from his book "*England's Thousand Best Houses*" even though I've been to most of the houses personally. "*Hatfield House* is the epitome of early Stuart ostentation, a massive overstated pile and beloved of Victorian imitators. The



house is next door to Henry VIII's old palace. The house was built between 1607–1612....the principal coup is undoubtedly the Marble Hall, a glowing edifice rising above a chequer board floor, which has not been altered since 1612. Important portraits of Elizabeth, Mary Queen of Scots, James I and Charles I..." Later in the afternoon we'll continue to our very much humbler lodgings, the Quality Hotel in nearby Welwyn, where we'll have dinner and a free evening. (You may still be adjusting to jet lag so no dancing is planned).

On **Tuesday August 18th** we'll visit either *Knebworth House* or *Gorhambury*, depending on which one is open. We will have a late start sightseeing today in order to keep our driver within his legal hours limits because we will be out late tonight.

"The prospect of the Netherfield Ball was extremely agreeable to every female companion of the family."



Tonight is the dancing highlight of the trip, when we'll have our own "Netherfield Ball" in the exquisite Ballroom at *Brockett Hall*, which was used for filming the Netherfield Ball in the 1995 version of *Pride & Prejudice*. (Photo on left). Simon Jenkins: "The ballroom was decorated by Paine for the 1st Lord Melbourne in a style worthy of his princely guests (The Prince Regent). It abandons all restraint....it seats 54 people...the coved ceiling is gilded and filled with painted panels by John Hamilton Mortimer. Brockett Hall is a monument to aristocratic misbehavior. The lady of the house, Lady Melbourne, was a mistress of the Prince Regent, who came here to visit her and her son, the future Lord Melbourne. It was in the ballroom at Brocket that Lady Caroline is said to have been 'served up' naked in a giant tureen." What would Jane have thought? The ceilings were never shown in the BBC series – only the walls were visible. There is a superb grand piano, wide-plank oak wood floor, & elegant withdrawing rooms. There is plenty of room for dancing two longways lines, and I think that you are unlikely to dance in a more beautiful setting in your life (even on a different Ken-tour). The room was set for a Wedding luncheon when I took this photo.



On **August 19th** we'll travel South to *Kent*, where Elizabeth visited her old friend Charlotte Lucas and Mr. Collins, and is introduced to the redoubtable Lady Catherine de Bourgh at Rosings Park. We skirt around London (omitting the change of horses in Bromley suggested by Lady Catherine) and proceed to *Knole Park*, one of the grandest estates in Kent, and one with a special connection for English dancers who enjoy the dance of the same name. We should arrive before lunch time and will spend the afternoon visiting with free time for you to have lunch.

There is plenty to see at Knole Park: the magnificent state rooms are laid out as they were in the 18th Century and they contain a large amount of Royal Stuart furniture, portraiture by Gainsborough, Van Dyck, and Reynolds. The house is surrounded by an expansive park, and on Wednesday's only it is possible to visit Lord Sackville's private garden. (Sackville, as in Vita Sackville-West, who was born here, and set her novel "The Edwardian's" here, and went on to create the beautiful modern garden at Sissinghurst.) (*Knole Park photo on right*) At the end of the day we'll finish up at our modest & comfortable lodging for three nights, Hadlow Manor Hotel near Tonbridge, which has a good location for visiting the best great houses, and a reasonable room with a wood floor for dancing (we can dance all 3 evenings). On **August 20th and 21st** we'll be visiting these select places, which are appropriate to the period when Miss Bennett visited Kent:



Penshurst Place, owned by the Viscount De L'Isle, this old family estate of the Sydney family has an original medieval Baron's Hall dating from 1341, a sumptuous collection of paintings, tapestries and furniture dating from the 15th, 16th & 17th Centuries. But it is the 600 year old gardens that Miss Bennett might have enjoyed the most, for they incorporate a mile of yew hedges dividing the garden into individual rooms, each with seasonal color. The late summer rose garden should be in full bloom, and there is a lake and woodland trail.

Ightham Mote (picture below), a beautiful 700 year old moated manor with extensive gardens (550 acres) with lakes and a woodland trail. It was occupied by the family when Miss Bennett visited Kent, but it is in better condition now thanks to the generosity of a young American who saw it and funded the restoration of a remarkably romantic house in a dreamlike setting. It is now owned by the National Trust.



Groombridge Place, half hidden in a broad wooded valley, another moated manor house (which alas is not open), has stunning 17th century formal gardens which have been imaginatively restored. The story has it that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was inspired by Groombridge in "The Valley of Fear". From the magnificent border on the highest terrace, and a series of rooms such as the Oriental Garden, White Rose Garden, these aspects are a delight to visit. Miss Bennett's attention would surely have been exceedingly diverted.

Royal Tunbridge Wells, a Regency period "Watering Hole", is very likely to have been on Miss Bennett's itinerary on her visits to Kent. She may have stopped there for luncheon and a short exploration, which is what we will be doing.

"It is not the object of this work to give a description of Derbyshire, nor of any of the remarkable places through which their route thither lay; Oxford, Blenheim, Warwick, Kenelworth, Birmingham, &c. are sufficiently known."

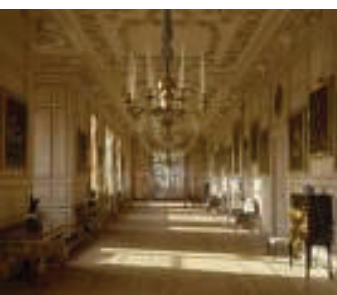
What took the Gardiner's and Eliza Bennett several days to accomplish can now be done quickly, but in order to get a better sense of the way in which their trip would have unfolded, and since two of the stops she mentions are in Warwickshire, we'll break our journey there. Blenheim is directly en route and would not have been missed in the period. I propose to omit Oxford and Birmingham. Birmingham is no longer a desirable stop, and it is not possible to absorb any true "sense of the place" in Oxford on a short visit. Neither place bears any resemblance to what Eliza might possibly have seen (and the truth is there are better places where we can spend our time).

Thus, on **August 22nd** we will drive from Kent to **Blenheim Palace** (photo on right), where we will spend as much time as possible. Blenheim is so grand and notable in English history, filled with so much significant art and surrounded by such a large park (2100 acres including 100 acres of formal gardens), that it is difficult to offer a summary appraisal. Among other notes, it was the place where the American Jennie Jerome gave birth to Sir Winston Churchill. Later on that day we continue on to the outskirts of Warwick.



We stay the nights of **August 22nd and 23rd in Warwick**, and on the 23rd we'll visit 3 nearby places: **Warwick Castle**, **Kenilworth Castle (ruins)**, and **Stoneleigh Abbey**. The first two are mentioned specifically in *Pride & Prejudice*, and Stoneleigh Abbey is very suitable because the Leigh family were distant relatives of Jane Austen and she is known to have visited there herself. In her description of 'Sotherton' in *Mansfield Park* she recalls her stay at Stoneleigh Abbey, and it's worth speculating that the route that Jane gives to Derbyshire might come from Jane's own travels in this direction. Parts of *Northanger Abbey* also use Stoneleigh for inspiration. Photo of Stoneleigh Abbey →

From Warwickshire it's a short drive to **Derbyshire**. We depart on **Monday August 24th**, and almost as soon as we enter Derbyshire we are at **Sudbury Hall**, which was used for the fine Pemberley interior shots in the 1995 film.



The house would have been occupied and possibly visited by the Gardiners and Elizabeth, and it was an excellent choice for filming luxurious interior shots of Pemberley. Simon Jenkins rates the staircase shown in the film as the best in England, and he has harsh words for the National Trust who no longer allow people to walk up the stairs. But apparently the balustrade panels of 'voluptuous scrolls of painted lime wood', the underside decoration, baskets of fruits decorating the newel posts, and framed paintings around it all are enough to calm his nerves and encourage us to visit! Mr. Darcy strides moodily through the long gallery to his bedroom at the end of the first evening visit to Pemberley by the Gardiners and Miss Bennett.



We continue on to **Newton House**, in the Dovedale area of the Peak District National Park in Derbyshire, arriving on August 24th. Since Lampton is fictional, and there are no clues given as to where in Derbyshire Lampton might have been located, it took some thoughtful research to find an area that could have been a likely setting. I finally settled on the Dovedale area because it is still an area for walkers to this day, it's somewhat off the beaten path, and there was a rustic country lodge-house which could be hired for a group of our size at a reasonable cost. Dovedale was praised by travelers with tastes as different as Dr. Johnson (who said 'he who has seen Dovedale has no need to visit the Highlands'), Lord Byron ('there are things in Derbyshire as noble as Greece or Switzerland'), and it was fished by Izaak Walton, author of 'The Compleat Angler'.

Newton House is a homey, welcoming place with a large public room suitable for dancing (albeit with elbows tucked in because it's not huge!), & comfortable simple bedrooms. The residential staff provides all 3 meals a day, including a packed lunch that can be taken on excursions to the great houses of Derbyshire or on walks through the countryside. It's the sort of place that is conducive to having a "country house party" with English Dancing included.



On the **25th, 26th, and 27th** I propose that we have part days available for walking and that we visit the principal great houses in the area. The most important house is the well known ducal palace of **Chatsworth** (photo left), home of the Dukes & Duchesses of Devonshire—one of the great treasure houses of England. There is a stunning home nearby that is much less familiar: **Haddon Hall** (photo on next page), which is quite simply the most perfect English house to survive from the middle ages. It's a medieval fortified hall house around a courtyard which has not really changed since the 15th century because it sat empty (though furnished) for several centuries while the family lived in a more exclusive home elsewhere. It was used as a film location for the most recent (short movie version) of *Pride & Prejudice*.



The house is appropriate to the period when Eliza Bennett visited Derbyshire but because the house was closed, she would not have been able to visit it. I propose to leave some flexibility in the schedule so that we might be able to visit the tiny village of Hartington, which served as the outside scenes of Lampton in the 1995 film.

On the morning of **August 28th** we'll depart Newton House and head North to *Lyme Park*, the house used as the exterior of Pemberley where we can tour and walk. On my very first English Country Dance

tour in 1993 we were allowed to dance in the house at Lyme Park, but shortly thereafter the house became part of the National Trust, which does not allow dancing inside *any* of it's properties. The scene of Darcy hurriedly dressing and racing down some stairs thru a courtyard to catch Elizabeth before she boards the carriage to drive away with the Gardiners, as well as the walk they take through the grounds are available at Lyme Park and overall it's a fitting final image to end our recreation of Miss Bennett's sojourn in Derbyshire.



I am currently planning that we would continue from Lyme Park to a Marriott Hotel near the Manchester Airport (only a short distance away) for August 28th (our last night) to save a long drive back to London, and because of the convenience of being able to easily catch flights or trains from the nearby station and airport. From Manchester there are excellent connecting flights to anywhere in the US and Europe, and Manchester lies at the heart of the British rail system. Fly home date is **August 29th, 2009**.

Music and Dancing

Music for the Netherfield Ball and for 3 other evening dances will be provided by David Fleming-Williams and members of the British band *the Pemberley Players*. Music for 4 other evenings will be provided by American's Lee Shepherd and Charlene Thomson of *Fine Companions*. Callers have not been completely finalized, but so far they would most likely include Judee Provonost, Mary Devlin, and yours truly, Ken McFarland. Other Callers and musicians who Register for the trip and who would like to contribute are invited to contact me, and there may be British guest Callers as well. Ladies who have male dancing partners, friends, or companions are strongly encouraged to entice them to join us, or we will have (as Elizabeth Bennett said about the Meryton Assembly Dance, "*too many women*"). The Netherfield Ball will have a printed program in advance, and I will encourage all of the Callers to chose dances that are of medium skill range, accessible to all and if possible I will try to get dance programs in advance.

Details of Cost & Inclusions, Terms and Conditions

Thanks to a significant gain in the value of the dollar a trip that would have cost well over \$3,000 in 2007 can be had for \$2575 in 2009. Financiers think there may some further increase in value of the dollar; I have used a conservative rate of exchange which should protect against any price increase but I do reserve the right to adjust should there be a significant devaluation of the dollar. If there is a noticeable gain in the dollar value I would also reduce the trip cost accordingly. The trip cost is based on a minimum of 34 paying participants. Bookings will be taken on a first come basis, with some attention being paid to gender balancing.

As usual I have attempted to prepay and include as many things as possible in order to save participants the hassle of having to convert currency and carry money around. This trip includes lodging from arrival on August 16th through check out on August 28th. There are primarily Twin and Double rooms available and a few Singles in Derbyshire.

A typical English Breakfast (usually buffet style) is included at our hotels and lodges. Four packed lunches are included for the four nights in Derbyshire. Dinner is included every night except for arrival night at Heathrow Airport when there may be late arrivals who couldn't make it to dinner but we will probably have an informal gathering that night. Vegetarian and Vegan meals are the only diets that can be assured; other special diets must be requested at the time of booking and there is no guarantee of any other special diet. Genuine food allergies should be advised in advance. Allergies such as lactose free and gluten free are typically easy to accommodate and usually present no problem but they must be requested at time of booking.

We have our own modern new Executive style 49 seat coach (with an emergency toilet) and designated driver for the entire tour. All the entrance fees for the sights listed in the trip description are included in the tour cost; in this case those total in excess of \$200 per person! I will be working as our guide & coordinator, except in the great houses where outside guiding is generally prohibited (and in poor taste: there's nothing worse than having a group of foreign speaking tourists and a loud guide arrive in a room that you have been enjoying and take over the space as if you are not there!)



The most equitable system of payments that both protects me from being left in a lurch should you have to drop out, and causes you the least amount of loss if you have to withdraw for unpredictable reasons, is this: up to and including the 2nd payment that you make, your money is non-refundable at the time you make it, but if you have to with-

draw and either you or I can find a replacement dancer or dancers for you of the same gender / configuration, I will put all of those funds in abeyance, and you can use the entire amount on one of my future trips. It's simple and offers the maximum protection to both of us. You can make a transfer to *one* more future trip; the funds can't be rolled over again and again for endless years— sorry, but that would be a book keeping nightmare. I do encourage you to consider Trip Insurance and as a convenience I have a list of companies with on line web sites listed at on my own web page (www.reeljig.com/mcfarland/).

The trip cost does not include airfare to the UK, items of a personal nature, such as alcoholic beverages, phone calls, internet charges, laundry, or other similar things.

Second hand smoke is hazardous to the health of other people, and I personally am extremely allergic to it, so it is not practical to accept smokers on this or my other trips. I have specifically negotiated to hire a non-smoking driver for our coach and I have specified non-smoking rooms for our private dining, and I have requested all non-smoking hotel rooms. Smoking laws in public places have been rapidly improving in the UK and you will probably find it easier to avoid smokers, except in some pubs. I do my best but I can not guarantee situations that are out of my control.

The itinerary has been carefully planned to include as much as possible while simultaneously trying to avoid long drives. There is nothing that I like better when traveling than being able to add in some impromptu special *short* stop, whether it's at a roadside farm stand for cider, a nursery for seeds, or some other unusual opportunity. I welcome your requests but please be understanding if it is not possible to add anything more to our itinerary.

Dress! A subject near and dear to the hearts of many Jane Austen devotees. Please plan on dressing in something special for the Netherfield Ball. First preference would be Austen, English or American Regency period, some other historical period, or at the minimum evening / formal attire. Our other evening dances are in much less elegant surroundings, however Newton House in Derbyshire would be a good place to have one or more special dress or themed evenings and I welcome suggestions.

I request that you try to be thoughtful and considerate travelers with each other. Plan to rotate yourself around the Coach when we travel, not always taking the front rows. Get to know the other people in the group, and make new friends. We come from a wonderful community of dancers, so be inclusive and welcoming; you might be meeting your travel friends of future trips!

Payment schedule & Booking: Please print out a copy of the Trip Registration Form from my web page and send it with your deposit. The deposit to save space is \$800 per person. A second payment of \$887.50 is due on March 31, 2009, and final payment (less any adjustments) of \$887.50 is due on June 10, 2009. If you do not send in your payments when they are due your space is subject to cancellation and funds are subject to forfeit.

To avoid disappointment, I suggest that you send an email to advise that you are registering for the trip, and I will set aside space/s for you *for one week* pending the arrival of your deposit check. Please be aware that it can take a full week for regular mail to reach Alaska! Registering Mail adds 2 to 3 days to that. Priority Mail takes 3 or 4 days and is a reasonable price. I do often have people on a Wait List, often for a considerable amount of time, and often they are eventually confirmed so I invite your inquiries even if the trip is sold out.

Please use email to communicate with me prior to the trip. I will be away from my office for at least 3 or 4 months between now and our trip, and the only dependable way to reach me is by email: ken_mcfarland@earthlink.net You should check now to make sure that this is the email address that you have on file for me; I've used it for over 4 years but I still get email sent to older addresses which are never read when I'm on the road.

Make all checks payable to Ken McFarland and send them to 3875 Geist Road #E323, Fairbanks, AK (Alaska) 99709-3549. Another dependable way to reach me is by Fax, which is (907) 456-7558.

You have questions? Please send them by email: ken_mcfarland@earthlink.net

I hope that you can join this jolly adventure!