



MARTIN RANDALL TRAVEL

ART • ARCHITECTURE • GASTRONOMY • ARCHAEOLOGY • HISTORY • MUSIC • LITERATURE

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For immediate release

Literary tours in the UK and Europe

Martin Randall Travel's literary tours stimulate and engross beyond the page. In the bicentenary year of his birth, celebrate the vision of John Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice*, or travel to his home in 2020 on *Literature & Walking in the Lake District*. Poetry and place are a poignant combination when visiting the sites of the Western Front, while *Iceland's Story* interprets the country's astonishing landscape through its renowned medieval sagas.

New for 2019, *Literary England* explores the formative environments and homes of great writers, among them Milton, Austen, Bronte and Byron. The latter left England for Europe in 1816, an exile shared with his friend Shelley, which proved both tragic and creative. Pursue the Romantic poets through Italy, on a mini 'Grand Tour' that blends art, biography, history and poetry.

London Day: [Charles Dickens](#)
Marshalsea, Chelsea, Westminster & Holborn
29 August 2019

Retrace the footsteps of the Victorian Age's greatest novelist by exploring the London of his writings through walks, talks and readings. Led by the author of *Charles Dickens's London*, this London Day tour starts near the site of the old Marshalsea Prison, takes in the Lincoln's Inn settings of Bleak House, and ends at the Charles Dickens Museum. In between, there is a specially arranged visit to the house of Thomas Carlyle, whose ideas inspired Dickens, and lunch at one of Dickens's clubs, the Athenaeum.

£245 pp includes special entrances, morning and afternoon refreshments, lunch, travel by taxi, talks by the lecturer and all taxes and tips.

For further information, please call **020 8742 3355** or visit www.martinrandall.com/charles-dickens

[Poets and the Somme](#)
Poetry of the Great War in battlefield context
6–9 September 2019

A unique element of this poignant tour is the accompaniment of a poetry reader who recites these great works at the sites where they were composed, at the scene of the poet's grave or at the place of the poet's death or disappearance. It is a vivid way of capturing the essence, not just of the poems themselves but of the men who expressed through them the horror and 'pity' of the Great War. Starting with the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the daily walks explore a particular event,

illuminated by lines from Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon and many others. Led by the military historian who devised the tour, Andrew Spooner.

Prices from £1,480 pp (two sharing), including travel by private coach and Eurotunnel, accommodation, most meals with drinks, the talks by the lecturer and poetry reader, all taxes and tips.

For further information and to book, please call **020 8742 3355** or visit www.martinrandall.com/poets-and-the-somme

Literary England

Where writers lived and worked

8–16 September 2019

Explore the sites associated with some of England's greatest writers on this nine-day tour, from the Manchester of Elizabeth Gaskell and the Brontës' parsonage at Haworth, to Jane Austen's Hampshire home and Rudyard Kipling's in Sussex. Houses vary from the grand (Byron's Newstead Abbey, the country residence of the Sitwells), to the modest (the birthplaces of DH Lawrence and Charles Dickens). Allowing ample time at each, many special arrangements bring both writer and place to life. Led by literary historian, Professor Andrew Sanders.

Prices from £3,030 pp (two sharing) includes travel by private coach, hotel accommodation, most meals with drinks, talks by the lecturer and all taxes and tips.

For further information, please call **020 8742 3355** or visit www.martinrandall.com/literary-england

Byron, Shelley and Keats in Italy

English Romantics in the 'paradise of exiles'

12–19 October 2019

In Venice, Florence, Pisa and Rome this eight-day tour considers the sites and encounters that shaped the English Romantics and inspired their poetry – and the tragedies that are part of the Romantic story. Lord Byron fled England for Europe in 1816, finding refuge in Italy and friendship with Shelley. In Rome, visit the apartment where fellow poet Keats died of TB in 1821 and, in Liguria, take a boat across the Bay of Lerici, where Shelley drowned the following year. Led by Dr Thomas Marks, expert on the Romantic poets in Italy.

Prices from £3,680 pp (two sharing) includes return LGW flights, travel by private coach, water-taxi, vaporetto and first-class rail, hotel accommodation, most meals with drinks, talks by the lecturer and all taxes and tips.

For further information, please call **020 8742 3355** or visit www.martinrandall.com/romantic-agony-english-poets-italy

Ruskin's Venice

Through 19th-century writers & artists

20–24 November 2019

2019 marks the bicentenary of the birth of John Ruskin, author of *The Stones of Venice*, whose interpretations of Venetian architecture and history have influenced generations of scholars and visitors. Celebrating his vision on this five-day tour of the palazzi, churches, paintings and sculpture that inspired him, take in sites from the Byzantine church on Torcello to the works of Carpaccio and Tintoretto. Highlights include a special after-hours private visit to the Basilica of San Marco. Led by art historian Christopher Newall, who curated the exhibition *John Ruskin: Artist & Observer* for the National Gallery of Canada and National Galleries of Scotland in 2014.

Prices from £2,410 pp (two sharing) includes return LGW flights, travel by water-taxi and vaporetto, hotel accommodation, most meals with drinks, talks by the lecturer and all taxes and tips.

For further information, please call **020 8742 3355** or visit www.martinrandall.com/ruskins-venice

Iceland's Story

Natural marvels, saints and sagas

20–27 May 2020

This celebration of Iceland's extraordinary history and geography is inspired by the medieval sagas and the chieftains, poets and outlaws that are brought to life on their pages. In Reykjavik, visit the National Museum and tour the 'Golden Circle' of sites that include the Geysir geothermal field, before heading west to the majestic Snæfellsnes peninsula, a setting of Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, and where the evenings hotel is located on a lava field. Integral to both the tour and the sagas is the story of early Christianisation. Led by Dr Emily Lethbridge who has published widely on the Icelandic sagas.

Prices from £3,570 pp (two sharing) includes return LHR flights, private coach travel, hotel accommodation, most meals with drinks, talks by the lecturer and all taxes and tips.

For further information, please call **020 8742 3355** or visit www.martinrandall.com/icelands-story

Literature & Walking in the Lake District

Wordsworth, Ruskin & Beatrix Potter in spectacular countryside

7–13 September 2020

On a series of five manageable walks (the longest being three miles) this seven-day tour celebrates three writers whose works and influence have helped shape today's Lake District. In Rydal and Grasmere, follow in the footsteps of William Wordsworth; on Lake Coniston and in Hawkshead visit the former homes of John Ruskin and Beatrix Potter; and there are detours to Blackwell, the Arts & Crafts house overlooking Lake Windermere, and the outstanding Holehird Gardens. Led by Christopher Newall, contributor to the *John Ruskin: Artist & Observer* exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada and Scottish National Portrait Gallery (2014).

Prices from £2,480 pp (two sharing) includes private coach travel, hotel accommodation, most meals with drinks, talks by the lecturer and all taxes and tips.

For further information, please call **020 8742 3355** or visit www.martinrandall.com/literature-and-walking-in-the-lake-district

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For further information please contact [Liz Brown](#) or [Lucy Stickling](#) on 020 3948 9743.

To view our latest press release please visit: www.martinrandall.com/press

Notes to editors:

Martin Randall Travel is the leading specialist in cultural tours, organising a unique series of all-inclusive music festivals and around 300 small-group tours every year in the UK, continental Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, India, China, Japan, the Americas and Australasia.

All aspects of our cultural tours have been carefully researched, tried and arranged by members of MRT staff, including the most authentic restaurants and comfortable hotels. There are no hidden

extras. The price covers nearly everything, including wine with meals and all tips. We do not levy surcharges for fuel or for any other reason.

Martin Randall Travel has won numerous awards, most recently *Best Special Interest Holiday Company* (2018) at the British Travel Awards.