

Preliminary notice - Science History Tours trip for 2009

Plans are afoot for going to England for the 2009 trip. The theme for this tour will be Darwin and Evolution, since in 2009 it will be the bicentenary of Darwin's birth (February twelfth, 1809, the same day as Abraham Lincoln's birth) and also the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin's seminal work, 'On the origin of Species'

Darwin was born in Shrewsbury, where he was educated at Shrewsbury School, then moved on to Edinburgh University, then Cambridge University. He married his cousin Emma Wedgwood, of the famous family of china and pottery manufacturers founded by Josiah Wedgwood, Darwin's maternal grandfather. His paternal grandfather was Erasmus Darwin, an 18th century physician and natural philosopher who was a member of the Lunar Society, a group of well-known industrialists and others that met on the nights of the full moon.

All these connections give us reasons for a number of interesting visits to places that we have not yet seen: to Darwin and his wife's home near London, possibly to the Darwin Centre at the Natural History Museum in London, to Cornwall, where James Watt, one of his grandfather's cronies in the Lunar Society built steam engines for use in pumping out the water from the very deep Cornish tin mines, and a visit to Darwin's college in the beautiful city of Cambridge, where the British Society for the History of Science is holding its annual meeting, devoted to a celebration of the Darwin anniversary. Don't forget, that without the steam engine there would be almost no mining or for that matter the industrial revolution. A quote from Lee's engineering days "Science owes more to the steam engine than the steam engine owes to Science." L. J. Henderson (1917).

Dates are yet to be set, but the two-week tour will start about the middle of June. Accommodations are in comfortable hotels of at least 3* standard. Many meals are included in the tour cost. All tours, lectures and visits are included, as is all surface transportation during the tour. Participants will need to book their own air tickets to Europe, but we can give advice about this to those who are inexperienced travelers. Room-sharing arrangements can usually be made for those traveling alone (we have lots of people who do this) and you will find this group to be friendly and welcoming.

For those wanting to get ahead with their reading, we can recommend Janet Browne's two-volume biography of Darwin, Vol. 1 "Voyaging" and Vol. II (winner of the National Book Critics Award) "The Power of Place". Also, for the 'Complete Works of Darwin Online' go to: <http://darwin-online.org.uk/>

This trip will take place only if we have a minimum of 25 people, so if you are interested in joining us, please let us know ASAP. There will be no real commitment until you register. We do not yet know the cost of the trip; since the dollar has diminished in value so much in recent years, the cost of foreign travel has increased, and of course the increase in the cost of oil has added another increment. This means that the cost of the trip is unlikely to be less than the 2008 trip, \$3850 per person double occupancy. Airfare is not included. As most people are aware, Science History Tours is a non-profit organization, so you pay only the cost of the trip - no one makes any profit from it! Our trips should be compared for interest, unusual or even unique visits and lectures, food and accommodations with tours organized by the Smithsonian or other high-end operators whose trips cost a great deal more than ours. It is not surprising that we always get very good evaluations, particularly with regard to value for money. Many of our tour members have traveled with us many times, so at least 75% of any tour group is now composed of returning tour participants. Sign-up will start in January and tour payments will be made in three installments. Inexpensive graduate credit will be available for those interested. Teachers can get CPDUs for free.

To be included in the tour, or for further information, contact:
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Also you can look at: Websites: Lee Marek at UIC <http://www.chem.uic.edu/marek/> (look under history stuff)
Frequent tour member, chemist and photographer John Oliver has pictures online at:
<http://community.webshots.com/user/oliverjcomo>