

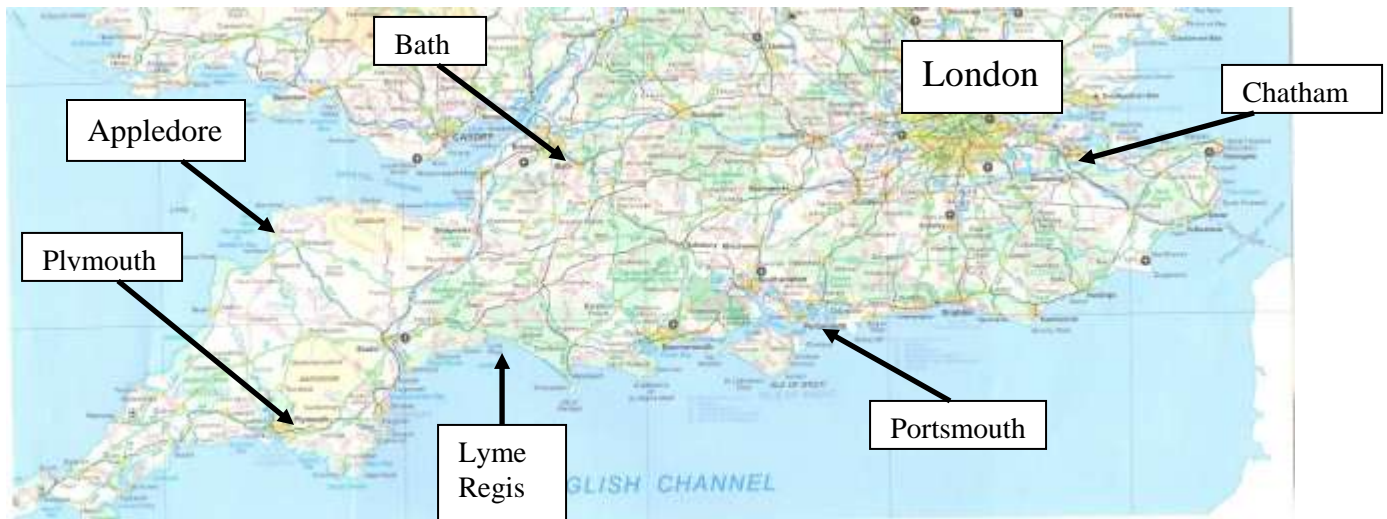
Jack Aubrey's England – a Guided Tour Introduction

NB; this is a planning document, and not all of the items mentioned can be guaranteed at this stage, though we will do our best to make them happen if there seems to be enough demand.

Cruises based on the novels of Patrick O'Brian have proved highly popular and successful in the past, particularly in the Mediterranean on board *Sea Cloud*. This tour, mostly by coach but with occasional boat trips, will look at the settings of the novels in England.



Patrick O'Brian's famous series includes twenty novels, starting with *Master and Commander* in 1970 and ending with *Blue at the Mizzen*, published just before his death in 2000. It has been highly praised by many critics, and compared with writers such as Sir Walter Scott, Herman Melville and Jane Austen. He is considered the finest historical writer of the twentieth century. His works are immensely popular and new editions continue to appear, including a deluxe one by the prestigious Folio Society in London.



It is well known that O’Brian often used real people, ships, incidents and places for his novels, and often these are quite easy to identify. This tour will examine most of these, but particularly the places and people, including houses associated with the novels, great naval ports and the public buildings of London and other cities. The domestic life of O’Brian’s hero Captain Jack Aubrey is largely set in London and the south and west of England, which means that the tour covers a relatively compact area, but one including a high proportion of the most striking museums, buildings and scenery of Britain, from St Paul’s Cathedral in the centre of London, to the rural isolation of the Sussex Downs and the wildness of Dartmoor.

The tour will also look at the world of Horatio Nelson, the British naval hero and inspiration for Jack Aubrey and many others. It will visit some of the sites associated with Jane Austen, who had two brothers in the navy and used the background for her novels *Persuasion* and *Mansfield Park*. She also had much influence in O’Brian’s novels. There will be passing looks at many other historic sites, including castles, cathedrals and stately homes, the works of the great Victorian railway engineer and shipbuilder Isambard Kingdom Brunel and some of the sites used by Charles Dickens in his novels. There will be time to explore other areas as requested by members of the party, or for small groups to go off separately for shopping or culture.



The Guides

The main nautical guide, Brian Lavery has written more than 20 books on several aspects of maritime history, including *Ship of the Line*, *Nelson’s Navy* and *Churchill’s Navy*. *Ship* is a beautifully illustrated international history of seafaring and *Island Nation* is a maritime history of

Britain. He was born in the shipbuilding town of Dumbarton (home of the *Cutty Sark*) in 1945. He has worked as a curator in both the National Maritime Museum and Chatham Historic Dockyard, he has served as a trustee of the Royal Naval Museum at Portsmouth and is on the advisory committee of HMS *Victory* and the Publications Committee of the *Mary Rose*. He was historical adviser on the replicas of the *Susan Constant* in Virginia and the *Endeavour* built in Australia. He has lectured extensively at conferences in Europe and North America and on cruise ships, and has conducted tours round the areas in question. He is an experienced yachtsman and has sailed in many kinds of vessel, from a dinghy to a square rigger.



Experienced and well-qualified guides will be able to talk on the general history and architecture of the areas to be visited.

Provisional Schedule

Arrival and Reception

Party met at Heathrow Airport

Coach to hotel

Introductory talk by guides, followed by dinner

Hotel in London

Day 1, Jack Aubrey's London



Walking and coach tour of the main sites from the books, including views of; Guildhall; St Paul's Cathedral and Nelson's tomb; Somerset House and the Navy Board; the Savoy; the Admiralty Building; Downing Street and Westminster Hall; St James's Park; St James's Palace; Brooks (Black's) Club; Half Moon Street; Shepherd's Market; Bruton Street; Brook Street.

Hotel in London

Day 2, Greenwich



Boat trip down the River Thames with views of: Tower of London; Docklands; old Deptford Dockyard and Victualling Yard.

Chapel and Painted Hall of the Royal Naval College, where Nelson's body lay in state and the Patrick O'Brian celebration was held in 1996.

National Maritime Museum, including the Nelson Gallery, paintings and ship models



Royal Observatory:
Harrison chronometers,
Meridian line

Return to hotel in London

Day 3, Chatham

One-hour coach journey to Chatham

Historic Dockyard, including: Wooden walls exhibition; Commissioner's House; Sail Loft; Ropery with practical demonstrations; old ship timbers in the Wheelwright's Shop; other exhibits, including steam sloop *Gannet*, destroyer *Cavalier* and Submarine *Ocelot*.

Private view of the National Maritime Museum store, including models of the 74-gun ship *Bellona*, plans of the *Surprise*.

Possible visit to nearby Rochester with its medieval castle and cathedral and associations with Charles Dickens



Return to hotel in London

Day 4, to Portsmouth

Coach to Kew Gardens with its associations with Sir Joseph Banks, another model for Stephen Maturin and the subject of a biography by Patrick O'Brian.



As an alternative, there will be a chance to look at UK's National Archives, home of millions of records including the logs of nearly all naval ships of the period.

Coach to Jane Austen's House at Chawton



View over Portsmouth Harbour

Hotel in Portsmouth

Day 5, Portsmouth



Visits to HMS *Victory*, Royal Naval Museum

Boat tour round the harbour with views of the naval anchorage at Spithead, the defensive forts, the site of the Weevil victualling yard, the naval hospital at Haslar and the sites of the sinking of the *Mary Rose* and other ships.

Opportunity to see other sights including Henry VIII's *Mary Rose* and the Victorian steam battleship *Warrior*.

Hotel in Portsmouth

Day 6, Excursions from Portsmouth



Coach tour of the area around Arundel, the setting for the country houses in *Post Captain*.
Boarhunt north of Portsmouth, the site for Aubrey's home at Ashdown Cottage.



Chesapeake Mill, partly built from the timbers of the US warship, whose capture is described in *The Fortune of War*.

Return to hotel in Portsmouth

Day 7. Going West

Boat to Buckler's Hard, an eighteenth century shipbuilding site and Museum.
Coach through Poole, where Aubrey had the *Surprise* rebuilt.



Coach trip with views of the eighteenth century town of Blandford Forum and the countryside around Bingham's Melcombe, a possible site for Aubrey's house at Woolcombe.



Visit to Athelhampton House near Dorchester, a manor house of the period and similar in style to Woolcombe.

Lyme Regis, the setting for parts of *Persuasion* and other novels such as *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.

Hotel in Lyme Regis area

Day 8, to Plymouth

Coach trip through Honiton, the Parliamentary constituency of Lord Cochrane, the model for Jack Aubrey; the port of Teignmouth, a possible site for Shelmerton; the fishing port of Brixham with its view over the naval anchorage at Torbay and some stunning coastline; Slapton Sands, where American forces suffered heavy losses while training for the Normandy invasion; Dartmouth with the Royal Naval College.



Hotel in Plymouth

Day 9, Plymouth



Land tour by foot or coach, to look at: the Hoe; the old Eddystone Lighthouse; the Citadel; the Barbican, the only central area to survive World War II bombing; Sutton Pool harbour from where the *Mayflower* sailed.



Boat trip round the Sound and up the River Tamar to look at: Plymouth Sound; the breakwater of 1812; the Mewstone Rock outside the harbour; the naval anchorage at Cawsand Bay; Drake's Island; the naval dockyard; Brunel's railway bridge over the Tamar.

Day 10, to Bath



Coach tour across Dartmoor with a view of the notorious prison, originally built to house American seamen from the war of 1812.



To Appledore, the model for the town of Shelmerston

Through Bristol, the starting point for many transatlantic voyages with the replica of the *Matthew* which Sebastian Cabot used to explore Newfoundland, and the pioneering nineteenth century steamship *Great Britain*.

Hotel in Bath

Day 11, Bath

A tour of the city, the pinnacle of English culture and architecture in the eighteenth century and visited, by Nelson, Jack Aubrey and Jane Austen, who set much of *Persuasion* there. To include: the Roman baths; the Assembly Rooms; Pulteney Bridge; Royal Crescent; the Museum of Costume; the Jane Austen Centre.



Hotel in Bath; easy departure for Heathrow airport or other tourist destinations

Other Features

Movies and Television Features

To be shown in the evening according to demand, to include: *Master and Commander* with Russell Crowe (the main guide was historical consultant); BBC film of *Persuasion*; *That Hamilton Woman* with Lawrence Olivier and Vivien Leigh (Churchill's favourite film); *HMS Defiant* with Alec Guinness (himself a wartime naval officer).



Lectures and Talks

These can be varied according to demand and interests. Brian Lavery can do a selection of talks from: Life in Nelson's Navy; The Ships of Nelson's Navy; The Battles of Trafalgar and the Nile; The Life of Nelson; The film of *Master and Commander*; Naval Fact and Naval Fiction.

Guest lecturers who might be invited include: Count Nikolai Tolstoy, the stepson of Patrick O'Brian and currently working on his biography; Geoff Hunt, the cover artist for many of the novels; David Cordingly, author of a recent biography of Lord Cochrane, on whom the character and exploits of Jack Aubrey were largely based

Other themes which might be explored include music, natural history, food, dress and the history of medicine.