

Aristocrats & Heiresses

Duchess 'Debo' and Chatsworth

Chatsworth House in Derbyshire has been home to the Devonshire family for 16 generations. In the 1950s its future was in peril after death duties left a huge debt. We'll discover how the Duchess (Deborah Mitford) and Duke saved Chatsworth from ruin and turned it into one of the country's most beloved and visited stately homes. Featuring tours of the property, interviews with 'Debo', and excerpts from her books.

The Grounds at Chatsworth

Explore Chatsworth Garden, the ever-evolving 105-acre garden surrounding one of Derbyshire's most popular country houses. Take a tour with 'Debo', Duchess of Devonshire, and marvel at the famous waterworks including the 300-year-old Cascade, and the impressive gravity-fed Emperor Fountain. As well as the Maze, the Rockery and the Rose, Cottage and Kitchen Gardens, there are also over five miles of walks with rare trees, shrubs, streams and ponds to discover.

The Saga of the Mitford Sisters - Part I & II

The Mitford Sisters were the most colourful characters of the 20th century. Beautiful, smart and more than a little eccentric, their lives were a succession of tragedies, bad choices, and very dubious affiliations.

In Part I we hear from the sisters in their own words about their unusual upbringing, and the paths each of them forged in the 1930s amid the polarizing forces of fascism and communism.

In Part II we cover the wartime years and beyond. Stories of public and private betrayals, losses, and deep fractures in the family. We'll explore the consequences of each sister's actions and the impact on the others.

Kathleen 'Kick' Kennedy and the British Aristocracy

In 1940s London, British aristocrats had never met anyone like Kathleen Kennedy. Nicknamed "Kick" because of her "irrepressible nature", the life story of JFK's free-spirited sister is filled with rebellion, cross-continent love and tragedy. With family photos and news reports we'll tell the story and ponder the truth of the so-called Kennedy curse.

Mind Your Manners: What would Emily Post do?

Sit up straight. Say please and thank you. Don't put your elbows on the table. Most of us were drilled from an early age in proper manners and etiquette. But would you meet Emily Post's etiquette standards from her 1922 guide to good manners? In this fun and interactive presentation, we find out who could pass as a lady or gentleman! We'll also discuss modern-day etiquette, learn how to take afternoon tea, and replicate a Downton Abbey-style table setting!

The Real Downton Abbey: Life in an English Country House

Edwardian England was the heyday of the country house. For the aristocracy it was a life of extravagance and luxury. But for those who kept these grand estates running, it was a very different world. Life below stairs meant 17-hour days, endless drudgery, and always knowing your place.

This presentation lets the audience experience what it was really like to work 'in service' on country estates, including Highclere Castle, the setting for period drama 'Downton Abbey'. It also draws from the pages of the classic 'Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management', published in 1861.

England at War

The Real 'Q': MI9 and Escape Gadgets in WWII

The incredible story of intelligence officer Christopher Clayton Hutton, the inspiration for 'Q' in the James Bond novels. Hutton headed the MI9 'escape and evasion' program, responsible for building and concealing tools that enabled Allies to evade or escape capture. We'll reveal many of these gadgets and tell the remarkable story of how they were smuggled into prisoner of war camps.

Fashion on the Ration

From 'onesies' that could be worn in the air raid shelter to jewelry created from aircraft parts, Fashion on the Ration looks at how fashion survived and even flourished under the strict rules of rationing in 1940s Britain, often in new and unexpected ways. This presentation explores how men and women found new ways to dress when rationing took hold. Discover what life was really like on the home front.

The Female Agents of SOE

They were ordinary women with extraordinary courage whose missions helped to change the course of history. Experience life as a female agent of the SOE, from selection and training to working in Nazi-occupied France. Includes interviews with Special Operations Executive leaders and the agents themselves.

In part II of the program, we go deeper into the agent's undercover lives in France. We'll tell the incredible stories of couriers and wireless operators Odette Sansom, Pearl Witherington, Noor Inayat Khan, and OSS agent Virginia Hall. For those who made it back, what were their post-war experiences?

Over The Top: Reflections on the First World War

Marking the 100th anniversary of WWI, we reflect on its profound significance. From the devastating losses suffered during the Battles of the Somme and Passchendaele to the stunning work of the war poets, we take a personal look at why this called 'the war to end all wars'.

This presentation also looks at the special commemorative events held in England, France and Belgium to mark the centenary.

The Dunkirk Spirit

The phrase refers to the spirit of the British public pulling together to overcome times of adversity. But its origins lie in the 'little ships of Dunkirk' that helped rescue over 338,000 allied troops who were stranded on the beaches of France in May 1940.

This unique presentation tells the story from both the perspective of the men on the beach and those who risked their lives crossing the English Channel. We will learn more about Churchill's high-risk strategy and listen to his famous 'We Shall Fight on the Beaches' speech.

Entertainers & Visionaries

Walt Disney World – One Man's Vision

Go behind the scenes of one of the world's most famous theme parks. Learn about Walt's vision for this 27,000 acre site, turning it from swamp land into a magical kingdom. What does EPCOT stand for and why was it so important to Walt? Why are there underground tunnels below Disney and who is allowed to use them? You'll be amazed by this story of one of the world's true visionaries.

Love and Laughter with Lucille Ball

Considered one of comedy's greatest legends, Lucille Ball is forever synonymous with her '50s sitcom, *I Love Lucy*. In this presentation we'll watch some of her greatest TV moments but also look at her life off camera, and her legacy for future generations of female comedians.

The Beatles and the British Invasion of 1964

On February 7, 1964, four young men from Liverpool arrive on a Boeing 707 at the recently renamed John F. Kennedy airport. Two days later they appear for the first time on the Ed Sullivan show and Beatlemania takes hold. In this presentation, we look at the rise of the Beatles and how they paved the way for other British bands including the Rolling Stones, Manfred Mann, Petula Clark and the Dave Clark Five. Sing-alongs strongly encouraged!

Film and Television

Villages On Screen

Miss Marple hails from St Mary Mead. The Crawley family live on the Downton Abbey estate. Chief Inspector Barnaby solves crimes in Midsomer. And Doc Martin practices in Port Wenn. We'll go behind the scenes and explore the picturesque village settings for these and other British television shows. We'll also play true or false with strange village names and try to pronounce the longest place name in the UK.

Famous On-screen Animals: From Rin Tin Tin to Babe!

Some of the most beloved films and television had real animals as the stars, or co-stars. In this presentation, we remember some of our favorites, from Petey, Lassie, Rin Tin Tin, and Toto to Mr Ed, Tonto and Trigger. We'll also look at the history of the MGM lion and discover which film featured 500 real animals, including a pig as its star!

And the Oscar goes to...

Some of the best-known and loved songs of the past 80 years came from the movies. In some cases we know the song but not the movie, and in others we can't imagine the movie without the song. We'll sing along to Oscar-winning songs from movies including Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid, Breakfast at Tiffany's and Titanic. We'll also learn some Oscars trivia along the way.

Literary Locations

The Mystery of Agatha Christie

The famous novelist was once embroiled in her own mystery when she disappeared from home in 1926. Despite an extensive search she remained missing for 10 days. Did she disappear during a 'fugue' state? Was it a nervous breakdown? A publicity stunt? Or an attempt to embarrass her husband. We'll attempt to solve the case and explore more of Christie's fascinating life.

Famous Literary Locations

From windswept Cornwall, to the rugged Yorkshire Moors, the beautiful Lake District, to the Ashdown Forest, literary authors have taken their inspiration from the stunning landscapes of the British Isles. We'll explore the settings for the books of Jane Austen, Daphne Du Maurier, Beatrix Potter, Virginia Woolf, A.A Milne, and more. Join me and share your own favorite books and writers.

London Life

The Sights and Sounds of London

Take a tour of England's capital city and explore some of the most famous landmarks, including Buckingham Palace, the London Eye, the Cabinet War Rooms and Trafalgar Square. We'll travel by bus, tube, taxi and on foot to experience the wonders of London, old and new.

The Secrets of London

Jump onboard this insider's tour of London and explore the places and stories that the tourist guides never mention. Discover the dragons of the City of London, what it takes to become a black cabbie and see the smallest statue in the world. You'll also learn where Londoners go for their fish and chips and the best place to enjoy the great English fry-up!

Explore London's Historic Markets

During the 19th Century, markets were at the heart of London life. We'll explore some of the most famous, including Covent Garden, Spitalfields, and Billingsgate. How have the markets transformed themselves in the 20th and 21st centuries and what will you find today at stalls along Portobello Road, or Petticoat Lane markets?

Inside Claridge's Hotel

It started life as a single house, but Claridge's was soon transformed into an art deco masterpiece favoured by royalty and the most distinguished figures of every generation. We'll explore its history, from a visit by Queen Victoria, to the roaring twenties to becoming a Hollywood 'home from home'. Into the 2000s, Claridge's has kept its edge, becoming the 'it' hotel for a new generation and housing multiple Michelin starred restaurants.

Treasures of the Thames

Feel history beneath your feet as we explore the fascinating story of mudlarking on the River Thames. From its 18th century origins, when the poorest Londoners foraged the foreshore for anything they could resell, to modern-day mudlarkers who pull on their wellies to discover archeological treasures. You'll never look at mud the same way again!

Touring Westminster Abbey

The sacred walls of England's most famous church hold a thousand years of stories, secrets, and history. Step inside and together we'll explore this remarkable landmark. See the resting places of the most influential monarchs in the Abbey's history, from Edward the Confessor to Henry VII. Listen to the famous bells, the beautiful pipe organ, and the world-renowned choristers. And learn about the Grave of the Unknown Warrior, the Coronation Chair, and the literary figures commemorated at Poet's Corner.

Exclusive Secrets of London's Department Stores

Harrods, Liberty, Selfridges, Harvey Nichols and Fortnum & Mason make up London's big five shopping emporiums. Each has a fascinating history of ownership, prestigious patrons and more than a few scandals. We take a stroll through the magnificent food halls, peer into the stunning window displays and talk about some of the most famous purchases ever made from Harrods.

The Tower of London

Ever since William the Conqueror built the White Tower in 1078, the Tower of London has played a prominent role in English history. It is home to a thousand years of bloody history and is one of Britain's most iconic landmarks. Locked within its 15-foot thick, solid stone walls are medieval murals, evidence of wild and exotic creatures, skeletal remains and secret messages left by prisoners.

This presentation uncovers the secrets and the history of the Tower of London, including the famous Beefeaters and the ravens who can never leave.

Music and Musicals

Greatest Dance Crazes - Part 1

They're the tunes you can't stop humming and the dance moves your feet never forget! In the first of this two-part series we start in the 1920s with the Tango and the Charleston and then move through the 1930s and into the 1940s, the Swing era. We'll talk about the origins of the dances, the performers who made them famous, and even try out a step or two.

Greatest Dance Crazes - Part 2

They're the tunes you can't stop humming and the dance moves your feet never forget! In the second of this two-part series we start in the 1950s with the Stroll, the Bunny Hop, the Madison, and American Bandstand. From there we head into the swinging '60s and end with a touch of 70s disco! We'll talk about the origins of the dances, the performers who made them famous, and even try out a step or two.

Texas Music Legends

Few states have as rich a musical history as Texas. From Buddy Holly to George Strait, Janis Joplin to Willie Nelson, some of the greatest musical acts of the last century are homegrown Texans. We'll sing along to many of the classics including Waltz Across Texas, Bobby McGee, El Paso and Pretty Woman. We'll also look at the influence of some other famous Texans including Carol Burnett and Gene Roddenberry.

Motown – soundtrack of the 60s

It has been 60 years since the founding of Tamla Records and the start of the Motown sound. No other record company in history has had such an enormous influence on music and culture. We'll relive the 1960s and play songs from The Supremes, The Temptations, Smokey Robinson, the Jackson Five and many more.

Musicals Part 1: From Oklahoma to the Sound of Music

In this fun and engaging presentation, we explore and sing along to musicals from 1943 to 1959, a period known as the Golden Age of Broadway. We start with Oklahoma, the first collaboration between Rodgers and Hammerstein and continue with the most famous songs from The King and I, My Fair Lady, West Side Story and the Sound of Music. Along the way we'll learn some fascinating facts about the 'Great White Way' and about theater superstitions.

Musicals Part 2: From Cats to the Lion King

This presentation explores many of the more recent musicals, from the 1960s to the 2000s. We'll sing along and watch clips from the biggest Broadway hits of the Bob Fosse, Stephen Sondheim and Andrew Lloyd Webber years. Musical singalongs include Fiddler on the Roof, Cabaret, Chicago, Annie, Evita, Cats, A Chorus Line, Phantom of the Opera and The Lion King.

A Look Back To...The 1950s

It was the decade of I Love Lucy, the crowning of Queen Elizabeth, the birth of Mr Potato Head and the first of Ray Kroc's golden arches. In this presentation we go year by year, discussing events and inventions, movies, stars and songs. We'll sing along to number one hits including Vaya Con Dios, Sh-Boom, Rock Around the Clock, Mack the Knife and many more.

A Look Back To...The 1960s

It was the decade of JFK, Beatlemania and the British Invasion, Woodstock, the birth of new dance craze The Twist, and the greatest achievement of the first man on the moon. In this presentation we go year by year, discussing events and inventions, movies, stars and songs. We'll sing along to number one hits including Stand By Me, I Want to Hold Your Hand, Wonderful World, I Got You Babe, Sweet Caroline and many more.

Seasonal

A Victorian Christmas

Some of the most popular Christian holiday traditions started with the Victorians, and in particular the publication of Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol. In this presentation we look at the origins of decorated Christmas trees, the sending of cards, carol singing and the first sighting of Santa Claus. Enhanced with tastings of delicious mince pies, the sharing of Christmas crackers, and maybe a little mulled wine!

Weird & Wonderful Holiday Traditions

From intricate radish sculptures in Mexico to a bucket of KFC in Japan, we'll explore the wonderful (and sometimes terrifying!) ways the holidays are celebrated across the world. Watch out for Krampus and La Befana.

Welcoming the New Year

How do you bring in the New Year? In Scotland it's with Hogmanay and Auld Lang Syne. In Denmark it's throwing broken dishes on your neighbor's doorstep. In Spain it's eating 12 grapes at the stroke of midnight. We'll explore these and other traditions, and share a few celebratory treats.

The Royal Family

A Royal Jubilee

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee. We'll experience some of the celebratory events that marked her incredible 70 year reign and end with a champagne toast to a truly remarkable woman and an extraordinary life.

The Rebel Princess & Royal Sister

Long before the rebellious Prince Harry came on to the scene, Princess Margaret – the younger sister of Queen Elizabeth II – established herself as the royal family's wild child. Known in the press for her vivacious personality and antics, Margaret was the headline maker and her love life was full of scandal and intrigue. But beyond the headlines, what was life really like for this complex woman? We'll watch clips from rarely seen interviews and hear from some of Margaret's closest friends and allies.

Growing Up Royal

Get a glimpse into life as a young member of the royal family. Starting with Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret and leading up to the current royal household, we'll talk about traditions and expectations as well as playtime, birthdays, school days, and public outings. We'll look at photos from the Royal Archives and the private collections of the Royal Family, as well as rarely seen film footage.

Fashioning a Reign

Created for the 90th Birthday of Her Majesty The Queen, a stunning display of dresses at Buckingham Palace span the period from The Queen's childhood in the 1930s to the present day. This presentation walks you through the collection and the remarkable life of the world's longest reigning monarch. It also includes insights into the secret signals Queen Elizabeth II uses to communicate to her staff.

Royal Scandals and Romances

In this presentation we discuss some of the most prominent stories of love and loss within the British royal family. This includes Princess Margaret's doomed affair with Group Captain Peter Townsend, and King Edward VIII who gave up the throne for American divorcee Wallis Simpson. We also remember Princess Diana whose desire for a fairytale marriage with her Prince Charming ended in tragedy.

Diana, Princess of Wales

In 1997 the world was shocked by the sudden and untimely death of Princess Diana. The week that followed was one of the most extraordinary in British history. The outpouring of grief had never before been seen and some say that it changed the character of both the English nation and the royal family. We look at the life of Princess Diana, her legacy and the impact of her loss on her beloved boys, Prince William and Prince Harry.

A Celebration of British Royal Weddings

We look back at some of the highlights of royal weddings over the past 70 years. Starting with the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to Prince Philip in 1947, we'll then talk about her sister Princess Margaret's wedding, the young Lady Diana Spencer, and most recently her sons Prince William and Prince Harry. Wedding traditions, fascinating stories, and unusual facts are covered in this uplifting presentation.

Travel

Iceland: Land of Fire & Ice

From bathing in the waters of the healing Blue Lagoon to views of the stunning Northern Lights, Iceland is a magical place to visit. We'll explore the sights, enjoy some of the flavors (but not fermented shark!), and learn about Neil Armstrong's connection to the island.

Take the High Road

Take a tour of the Scottish Highlands and islands. As we roam this haunting, historic land we'll talk about kilts, clans, castles, tossing the caber and more. And we'll sample a few essentials, including shortbread and the 'water of life', also known as Scotch!

Oh Canada!

Travel to the Great White North, land of stunning scenery, incredible wildlife, and multicultural cities. We'll explore the best of Canada, from the majestic Rockies and the awe-inspiring Niagara Falls to Churchill, the Polar Bear capital of the world, and Winnipeg - which gave part of its name to a famous bear. Along the way, we'll enjoy a few of Canada's most famous treats.

Viva Espana

Travel to Spain, the home of beautiful sights, sounds, and flavors. In this program we explore the culture and history of Spain from the stunning architecture of Barcelona to the world's biggest tomato food fight, La Tomatina. We also enjoy some traditional music, learn the secret language of the Spanish fan and discover what links Salvador Dali and lollipops!

Ireland: Beyond the Blarney Stone

A trip to the Emerald Isle is an unforgettable experience. Join us on a tour that includes the stunning Dingle Peninsula, the famous Blarney Stone, the oldest pub in Ireland, and a few hidden gems. Accompanied by traditional Irish music, a slice of the famous soda bread and maybe a sip or two of Guinness!

What Happens in Vegas...!

Las Vegas is renowned for gambling, mega resorts, big name entertainers and drive thru weddings. But how did this little city in the Mojave desert become the metropolis it is today? We'll start from the building of the Hoover Dam and a three-mile dusty road nicknamed the 'Strip'. And hear stories about Bugsy Siegel, Howard Hughes, the Rat Pack and much more.

Weird & Wonderful

The Most Expensive Objects Sold at Auction

Do you have a few million dollars to spare? We'll go to world-famous Christie's and Sotheby's Auction houses to bid on Marilyn Monroe's 'subway' dress, Marie Antoinette's pendant, da Vinci's notebook, and even a piece of royal wedding cake. Who spent \$450 million and what did they buy?

The Most Unusual Hotels in the World

How far are you willing to go for a different holiday experience? Would you spend a night in a crane? How about an igloo with real ice beds? In this presentation, we visit some of the most unusual hotels in the world and see if there really is something for everyone! Includes stunning photos of the Null Stern 'hotel without walls' in Switzerland, the Crane Hotel in Amsterdam, the IceHotel in Sweden, and Giraffe Manor in Kenya.

How Famous Landmarks Might Have Looked

We can picture most of the world's famous landmarks - the Eiffel Tower, the Sydney Opera House, the soaring Washington Monument. But these familiar attractions could have ended up looking very different indeed. Here we reveal original designs and alternative plans for some iconic monuments so you can see them as they might have been.

Iconic Hats and Famous Heads!

From Charlie Chaplin's Bowler to Jackie Kennedy's Pillbox, hats have a strong association with those who wore them, both on-screen and in real life. In Part One, we'll discuss some of the most iconic styles, their origins, and famous customers. We'll also try on a few hats ourselves.

Hats of the World: Boaters, Berets, and Bush Hats!

The French have the Cloche and the Beret. Russians have the fur Ushenka. Mexicans have the Sombrero. We'll share the history and culture of some of the world's most iconic hats, and the movies and individuals who made them famous. Come and try on a few for size!