



The Institute of Classical Architecture & Art

**NORFOLK, YORKSHIRE & SCOTLAND:
COUNTRY HOUSES OF SIR EDWIN LUTYENS & SIR ROBERT LORIMER
May 17 – 25, 2012**

Arranged by Classical Excursions

Architectural historian and Lutyens tour leader *extraordinaire* Paul Waite opens the article he wrote for the Institute's Fall 2011 issue of The Forum with this comment, "The theme of our tour for the ICAA [May 19 – 26, 2011] was diversity, suitability, dexterous skill, and craftsmanship. Of course we were looking at the work of Sir Edwin Lutyens...."

Paul, who is a trustee of The Lutyens Trust, will expand upon this theme by taking us this time to such North England counties as Norfolk and Yorkshire and to Scotland. He has arranged for us to see another glorious array of private country houses by Lutyens, but also to introduce us to the architectural treasures of Scottish architect Sir Robert Lorimer, who is known as "the Lutyens of Scotland".

Lutyens (1869 – 1944) is considered one of England's greatest and most prolific architects with more than 600 commissions in Great Britain, Europe, South Africa, India and the United States. Beginning at the age of nineteen with little formal education or architectural training, his career lasted more than half a century, from the time of Queen Victoria to World War II.

Michael Barker states in his booklet *Sir Edwin Lutyens*, "His work, while romantic in inspiration, became classical in discipline, yet complex and often abstract in design, and was always executed with excellent craftsmanship, using fine materials." Lutyens is an icon with American architects and designers, especially as the architect of fabulous country houses, for their originality and durability of style.

Sir Robert Lorimer (1846-1929) began his architectural career in the office of Scottish Revivalist architect Robert Rowand Anderson and in 1893 formed his own practice. By this time Lorimer had developed an enthusiasm for the Arts and Crafts Movement, becoming committed to the unity of art and nature in architecture, and delighting in materials and the richness of textiles and color.

With the decline in popularity of the Arts and Crafts Movement around 1900, Lorimer turned his attention to several large-scale country-house commissions, mainly designed in the Scots Baronial style. The outbreak of World War I restricted the demand for large new houses and his attention shifted to restoration projects, an area of expertise for which he had gained a reputation, and to significant public works.

Paul concludes his article for The Forum, “Writing about architecture is not easy, even photographs or scholarly research won’t come close to doing justice to a brilliant design—and certainly you never get a feeling for scale until you have walked around, and in, a building. The tour participants, having taken the opportunity, were richly rewarded...” Paul assures us that this will be the case again this coming May.

The Institute of Classical Architecture & Art in collaboration with Classical Excursions has arranged an exclusive eight-day tour with special access, again thanks to Paul, to country residences by Lutyens (Gledstone Hall, Heathcote, Lindisfarne Castle, Grey Walls among them) and Lorimer (Ardkinglas Estate, Kellie Castle, Hill of Tarvit Mansionhouse among others), some privately owned and normally not open to the public. The excursion will also offer lectures by scholars and specialists. Accommodations will include charming rural inns and hotels, and meals in equally atmospheric country restaurants.

SELECTED TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Houses by Sir Edwin Lutyens

Overstrand Hall, Cromer, North Norfolk, 1899, is the earliest example of Lutyens’ vernacular work outside the counties surrounding London. The fountain court is at the center of an enclosed quadrangle that has walls built of rough, unsquared flints, a material common to the area, marked by horizontal bands of roofing tiles and window mullions of red brick. Timber framing is used elsewhere.

The Pleasance at the town of Overstrand, 1899, Lutyens had to incorporate two existing houses lacking architectural distinction, though he was able to mask them with his own unique style of angled bay windows ascending two or three floors and steeply pitched roofs. The entrance porch of Ionic columns and pilasters is given significance with a heading of a shield of arms having attractive lambrequins.

At **Gledstone Hall**, 1926, located in the Yorkshire Moors, Lutyens is at his best during his Classical period. This is a relatively small country house designed on a grand scale. The subtle blend of symmetrical facades and views are matched by the nobility of the interior with its striking black and white scheme, including a powerful example of alternating marble treads of the main staircase. The Ionic entrance portico has side walls pierced by arches in the Palladian style. On the garden side there are twin loggias spaced between the center block and protruding wings. The two-tier gardens were laid out of the advice of Gertrude Jekyll.

Heathcote, Ilkley, Yorkshire, 1906, is a grand house situated on four acres, its distinction being the architect’s talent to raise the quality of design above that of neighboring buildings while

making it sufficiently akin to them. Lutyens has carried out an exterior theme here that can be found, for instance, at Marshcourt, i.e., a relatively unembellished entrance façade contrasting with an architecturally elaborate one on the garden side. The tall, full three-floor central block with its centered arched entrance door and side bays is set back from a pair of two-story wings and slightly protruding one-story wings. Lutyens creates one of his distinctive floor plans, a somewhat more elaborate scheme than that found at The Salutations.

Sion Hill, Kirby Wiske, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, 1912, not by Lutyens or Lorimer, but designed by York architect Walter H. Brierly, the country house is in the elegant early 20th century Wrennaissance style with extended wings and furnished with collections of antique furniture, paintings and ceramics.

Lindisfarne Castle, Holy Island, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, 1912, is a restoration of a ruined fort dating from 1572 and rising from a high rock. Lutyens' first castle commission, the structure is approached by a ramp and flights of stone steps that lead to various levels of the castle's exterior platforms and interior floors. Christopher Hussey writes in his book *The Life of Sir Edwin Lutyens*, "...there is no hint of faking and so of make believe: the new masonry is as generously devised as the old but its profiles are not copies, they are solutions attained by reviewing the old mason's traditions afresh: the romance is real."

Whalton Manor, Morpeth, Northumberland, 1909, was the melding of an odd assortment of residences all facing a village street. To the left of a new entrance archway is the kitchen services and to the right are the various reception rooms. Particularly attractive are the vaulted undercroft of the archway and the rugged classical motif of the stone hall. Beyond the archway is the court with a long pergola closing it off at the far end. Above on the second floor are the upper hall, dining room, bedrooms and servants quarters. Lutyens devised ingenious solutions for a particularly difficult problem at Whalton Manor.

At **Grey Walls**, Gullane, Scotland, 1901, Lutyens followed the example of local buildings by incorporating exterior walls of rich cream rubble and roofs covered with grey Dutch pantiles, sections of which make up the window lintels as well. The drive crosses the property on the diagonal through a walled garden to the symmetrical semi-circular entrance front of the house which is punctuated by tall chimneys and flanked by low pavilions. The chief rooms, located behind and to the right and forming an H plan, are light and Classical. Combined with outbuildings, Gray Walls appears to have a well-planned, singular charm.

Houses Designed or Restored by Sir Robert Lorimer

The original part of **Lennoxlove House**, Haddington, East Lothian, Scotland, dates back to the 15th century when the L-plan tower house known as Lethington was constructed and today forms a corner of a larger structure expanded in the 17th, 19th and 20th centuries. Within the tower is the magnificent Great Hall which Lorimer restored and added the imposing fireplace at one end. He also refurbished other parts of the house, returning it to something more in keeping with the changes and additions made in the 17th century. Lennoxlove contains a major collection of antiques and portraits, including works by van Dyck, Canaletto, Raeburn and others.

Kellie Castle, Pittenweem, Fife, Scotland, basically a T-shaped structure, the ancient castle was a ruin when the Lorimer family headed by James Lorimer, Professor of Law at Edinburgh University, rented the property starting in 1878. James' son, Sir Robert, was instrumental in much of the restoration work, designing plaster ceilings, painted paneling and furniture. The previous Great Hall was transformed into a classically styled drawing room.

Hill of Tarvit Mansionhouse, Cupar, Fife, Scotland, 1906, was designed by Lorimer in a classical style, replacing an earlier house but retaining its service wings. It is one of the few houses created by him to retain much of the decoration and furnishings that he had selected, as well as his original design. The house is surrounded by 279 acres of formal and informal gardens, woods and parkland.

Marchmont Estate, Greenlaw, Berwickshire, Scotland, 1914-17, is a Palladian house dating from 1750. Lorimer was commissioned to make various alterations: a top floor was added and given dormer windows and a mansard roof; flanking pavilions were connected to the house; the entrance was more conveniently relocated on the ground floor with an added porch. Internally the main staircase was removed and substituted by a two-story open hall and a new grander staircase was relocated. A grand double-story music room was created out of the stable wing.

Ardkinglas Estate, Cairndow, Argyll, Scotland, 1907, is regarded as Lorimer's masterpiece. The original achievement is still evident as the house remains largely unaltered. The owner, Sir Andrew Noble, insisted on the most advanced technology. Ardkinglas has a comparatively well-lit, low ground floor with the main living rooms on a loftier floor above where large windows overlook the gardens and Loch Fyne. The gun room, oval study, library and billiard rooms are on the ground floor. Lorimer designed and commissioned plasterwork, wood paneling, carved newels, door handles and electroliers. A few pieces of the Lorimer furniture remain in the house.

(Subject to changes and additions.)

Land Cost: \$4,250. Single Supplement, \$600.