



DRACULA IN ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND

with Dacre Stoker, great grand-nephew of Bram Stoker

UK

May 25th-31st 2023



Dacre Stoker, the great grand-nephew of novelist Bram Stoker, is organizing a literary expedition to celebrate 126 years since the novel *Dracula* was published. For the past 15 years, Dacre has made a thorough analysis of his uncle's work and discovered exciting details in his research and writing of his famous novel.

England and Scotland are the destinations for this celebratory expedition, as this is where Bram Stoker spent much of his writing time. Dacre is himself a best-selling author and continues the family's literary tradition, revealing exciting facts about each local connection to the writing of the novel *Dracula* throughout the journey.

During this trip we will visit places that played a big role in Bram Stoker's life, in his research and writing of the novel. We will experience the coastal town of Whitby, with its iconic abbey ruins. We will also explore Cruden Bay in Scotland, the picturesque fishing village where Bram wrote most of the novel. There will be other interesting stops on our journey, to provide a perspective of the history and culture of the area.

Good to know before the tour

Some of the hikes in Whitby and Cruden Bay can be strenuous and will require waterproof, above the ankle, footwear. May's weather in Yorkshire and coastal Scotland can be unpredictable, so waterproof rain gear and layers are recommended.





DAY 1 D

Meet your host Dacre Stoker and your fellow travelers at York Railway Station/York Minster. We get onboard a private coach/minibus (depending on the size of the group) and travel towards Whitby. On the way, we stop for lunch at Robin Hood's Bay, where we take lunch in the form of "a capital 'severe tea' in a sweet little old-fashioned inn", just like Mina Murray and Lucy Westenra, in the novel. Arriving in nearby Whitby, we check in at a charming guesthouse close to the heart of town. Dacre leads a leisurely evening stroll through the harbour to get acquainted with the Gothic-Victorian atmosphere that attracted his famous relative, Bram Stoker, during his holiday in 1890. We reenact the paragraphs of Mina's walk, trying to save Lucy, reading excerpts from the novel as we pass by. Welcome dinner is then served in the building where Bram Stoker is believed to have discovered the very name "Dracula", in a historical book. This used to be a private library, but is nowadays a restaurant with a nice view towards the harbour and towards St. Mary's Churchyard.

DAY 2 B, D

We start the day with a walking tour to visit the iconic attractions related to "Dracula": Royal Crescent, Whitby Abbey, St. Mary's Church, 199 steps, Whitby train station, Bram Stoker bench and pass by the Whitby Museum. Together with Dacre, we are led by a knowledgeable local guide. We conclude the tour at the foot of the 199 steps below Whitby Abbey. Free time to visit the local shops and lunch on your own: our guide and Dacre are happy to share their local knowledge and recommend good restaurants in the area. After a leisurely spent afternoon, we regather with the group, for a festive dinner, to celebrate the exact day of the publication of the novel Dracula, May 26th, 1897.

DAY 3 B, L

On the way to Scotland, we will make a coffee stop at Alnwick Castle, a filming location of Harry Potter and Downtown Abbey. Further north, we arrive in Jedburgh, birthplace of Emily Gerard, uncovering her decisive influence upon Bram's writing. Lunch is served here in the quaint little town. We are accommodated at the atmospheric castle-like Kingsknowes. Dinner on your own.

DAY 4 B, D

We continue our way north and arrive in Edinburgh in the early afternoon. We visit the Writers' Museum and get acquainted to this fascinating town during a short walk. Dacre gives a talk on Bram Stoker's friendship with Scottish personalities such as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Passing by impressive Edinburgh Castle, you may have lunch on your own. We then depart towards Cruden Bay, on a scenic ride through coastal Scotland. We have a short coffee stop on the way, at Glamis Castle, where legends of vampire maid circulate for decades, and where the ghost of Macbeth is said to be haunting (no entrance). We arrive to the small village of Cruden Bay in the evening. Check in and dinner at the Kilmarnock Arms, the same hotel where Bram Stoker himself was a guest in 1893.

DAY 5 B, L, D

We start at the Kilmarnock Arms Hotel with an exciting beach walk with our local expert and author Mike Shepherd, who unearthed many interesting details about Bram's stay in Cruden Bay while writing his novels. We will be recreating Bram Stoker's daily "writing inspiration" walks. Enjoy the places Bram visited when he wrote



"Dracula". We will also visit places mentioned in two of his novels based in Cruden Bay, *The Mystery of the Sea* (1902) and *The Watters Mou* (1895). The schedule for today is tide and weather depending and the sequence of the activities will be updated about one month before departure. Lunch at the hotel or sandwich picnic. Today, we will also walk to the ruins of Slains Castle, whose interior is considered the source of inspiration for the description of Dracula's Castle. We have a great view of the facade, while Dacre and Mike reveal pictures of the octagonal room shown in Chapter 2 of *Dracula* (access to the ruins is prohibited due to safety risks). Enjoy some free time to explore Cruden Bay at your own pace, or to re-read some of the pages of the novel in the afternoon. A Bram Stoker-inspired festive goodbye dinner will be served later at the Kilmarnock Arms Hotel.

DAY 6 B, D

We check out from Cruden Bay, stopping by to admire the amazing landscape of the Bullers of Buchan. We also pass by Stirling Castle (no entrance), located 250 feet above the plateau on an extinct volcano, which incidentally reminds of the location of the fictional Castle Dracula, a detail that Dacre will be analyzing throughout the trip. Lunch is served on the way. We check into a quaint guesthouse in Airdrie, childhood town of Emily Gerard. Dacre has a talk about the influence of her work upon Bram Stoker's novel.

DAY 7 B

We leave the area of the Scottish Borders, heading towards York. We stop for a lunch-on-your-own break in historically important Carlisle, back in England. We arrive to York in the afternoon and say goodbye.



PRICE

for a group of 5-15 pers: 2780 €/pers, including:

- accommodation 6 nights in double occupancy in top rank hotels
- transfers by private coach/minibus
- activities, entrance fees according to program
- Dacre Stoker as tour leader & Dracula expert
- meals according to program (6 breakfasts + 7 lunch/dinners, mentioned above as **B/L/D** for each day) excluding all beverages, except for the welcome drinks mentioned in the program

The price excludes: flight, insurance, single room supplement, beverages, gratuities for staff (tips), flight, excursions or activities other than those mentioned.
Single room supplement: 395 €

Please note that all activities are subject to change, due to local conditions. We can assure you that Experience Transylvania and Dacre Stoker strive for the perfect experience for you as a guest, which is why we might change certain activities for better or more appropriate ones, in case the itinerary, the weather conditions or the safety of the sites require it.

Deadline for all bookings: January 30th 2023

Seats on this tour are limited!

By submitting your booking request, you simply inform us of your wish to join this tour. At the moment, this submission does not involve any obligations for you as a tentative guest. The contract between you as a traveler and Experience Transylvania as an organizer starts only when you've received the final program, along with the terms & conditions, and when you've paid your booking fee amounting 300 € (non-refundable).

Email us at nora@transylvania.se if you have questions.



Booking form:

<https://form.jotform.com/213332818998367>

