

## **If Walls Could Talk**

**Presented by James Thompson**

### **Lecture Agenda:**

#### **26 March 2026 – Course Introduction and the Romance of the English Castle**

- **The contribution of King Arthur**
- **The earliest: Tintagel and Camelot**
- **Winchester Castle**
- **“The French Connection”: 1066 and all that**
- **Warwick Castle**
- **King William’s Norman Skyscraper: 1080**
- **Castle Rising**
- **Norman Postlude: Leeds Castle**
- **North Wales’s enchanted castle Conwy**
- **Scotland the Brave: Edinburgh, Glamis, Dunvegan and their legacy**

#### **2 April 2026 – Early French Chateaux and “The Chateaux Country”**

- **Ivry La Bataille**
- **Sainte Chapelle for fortress Paris**
- **The Louvre: from castle to palace**
- **Fontainebleau**
- **The vital importance of the Loire River**
- **Chateau de Langeais and Chambord**
- **Blois et Cheverny**
- **Amboise and Azay-Le-Rideau**

#### **9 April 2026 – Henry VIII and the English Country House**

- **Politics at Leeds Castle**
- **If Walls Could Talk: Grace and Favour at Hampton Court Palace**
- **Rival bastions of power: Hever Castle**
- **St James’s Palace London**
- **The majesty and tragedy of Whitehall Palace**
- **Nonsuch**
- **The tragedy at Fotheringay Castle**
- **Stately homes – Woburn Abbey, Downton Abbey, Fonthill Abbey**
- **“The Three Vanbrughs”: Castle Howard, Blenheim, Seton Delaval**

**16 April 2026 – Palaces as Power: Building in the Age of Absolutism**

- The rise of Imperial Madrid
- The Escorial – and the glory of Philip II
- The Louvre revisited
- Vaux Le Vicomte and the twilight of French aristocracy
- The chateau at Saint-Cloud
- The Versailles of Louis XIV and V
- The Versailles of Louis Philippe: “All the Glories of France”
- The mission of Gérald Van der Kempe and Jackie Kennedy

**23 April 2026 – Castles and Palaces in Imperial China and Japan**

- A great fortress for China
- The massive fort the Yongle Emperor built
- The political significance of “a summer place”
- The samurai tradition in Japan
- Great Japanese castles
- The work in castles of filmmaker Akira Kurasawa

**30 April 2026 – Early American Great Estates**

- Historic Colonial Williamsburg
- Stratford Hall
- Mount Vernon
- Liberty Hall
- Monticello
- Arlington

**7 May 2026 – American Mansions of the Gilded Age**

- The Breakers
- Biltmore
- Oleana
- Winterthur of historic Delaware
- Kykuit, the Rockefeller estate; Sleepy Hollow at Tarrytown
- Hearst Castle and the Golden Age of Hollywood
- Falling Water – Frank Lloyd Wright’s masterpiece

**14 May 2026 – Great Estates of Ontario and Canada, Drawing Conclusions**

- Hatley Castle in BC
- In Ontario: Dundurn Castle, Bellevue, Batterwood House
- In Toronto: Rosedale, Summerhill, Dovercourt, Casa Loma, Spadina, Oaklands, Glendon Hall and the F.P. Wood Estate
- Big Question: If you had a chance to live in any of our great residences, which one would you like to occupy?
- Reviewing books for ongoing reading