Tour A: Harrington Aviation Museum
The Carpetbagger Aviation Museum, formed in 1993 by the Harrington Aviation Museum Society, is housed in the Group Operations Building at Harrington airfield. Displays, exhibits and a video explore the work carried out primarily during Operation Carpetbagger, delivering agents and supplies to resistance groups in Occupied Europe during WWII. Other displays cover the British Special Operations Executive’s work from their Bedfordshire base at Tempsford, and also Harrington’s role during the Cold War; the visit will include the chance to view the blast walls of the Thor missile site via a 0.5km walk across farmland. The Northants Aviation Society Museum, located in a former Paymaster nissen hut, also houses the remains of recovered World War II aircraft and other items of equipment and memorabilia.
http://www.harringtonmuseum.org.uk

Tour B: Northampton Boot & Shoe Quarter and Phipps Brewery
Northampton had some 200 shoe and leather factories when the boot and shoe industry was at its peak around the time of WWI. Many of these buildings remain, albeit adapted to other uses, often set in amongst the Victorian terraced housing. A walking tour of part of Northampton’s Boot & Shoe Quarter will look at the features of some of these buildings, how they were used, and the history of companies that occupied them.

The walking tour will be followed by a visit to a modern brewing facility set up by Phipps NBC in 2014 in the former 1883 Ratliffe & Jeffery Albion Brewery buildings in Northampton. ‘Phipps’ and the ‘Northampton Brewery Company’ (NBC) were names associated with brewing in Northampton from 1817 through to 1960; ironically, the Ratliffe & Jeffery Albion Brewery was closed down by Phipps some 100 years ago. The buildings had been used by a leather firm in the intervening years.
http://www.phipps-nbc.co.uk

Tour C: Rushden Transport Museum and Irchester Country Park
Rushden Transport Museum opened in 1986 in the rooms of the Victorian Rushden Station, which has been restored to reflect its glory days as an important hub for local merchants and manufacturers at the height of the boot and shoe trade. A section of railway line is used to run a small selection of locomotives. The museum also includes a variety of road artefacts, ephemera and memorabilia that help demonstrate the history of transport within the context of Rushden and its near neighbours. The station bar will be open during our visit.
http://rhts.co.uk/
Moving on to Irchester Country Park, we will have the chance to explore the 200 acre site of Irchester Ironstone Company's Wembley Pit. A variety of ironstone quarry features remain, including tramway routes, calcine clamps and the impressive final face of the gullet. The park also contains the Irchester Narrow Gauge Railway Museum, which is home to a collection of exhibits and industrial artefacts, including steam and diesel locomotives and displays about ironstone quarrying.

Monday 28th August, 09:00 – 18:00

**Tour D: Shuttleworth Collection, Old Warden and Jordans Mill, Langford**

Based at Old Warden aerodrome, the collection of aircraft and cars that was amassed by Richard Ormonde Shuttleworth has been open to the public since 1963. It contains some of the last airworthy aircraft of their type that still survive, and includes vintage aircraft from 1909 to the 1950s; Edwardian vehicles, early dogcarts and 1930s–1940s cars; motorcycles and penny farthings; and an assortment of agricultural vehicles.

http://www.shuttleworth.org/the-collection

After lunch (included in the price), we move on to Jordans Mill, which has been owned by the Jordans family (the UK's fourth largest cereals manufacturer) since 1893. Milling has taken place at the site since Domesday, but a major fire shortly after the Jordans’ purchase means that the current mill dates to the later 1890s, with a Carter Roller Mill System installed in 1899. Production now takes place in nearby Biggleswade, with the mill turned into a heritage centre spread over four floors in 2013. The journey back to Moulton will include a drive-past of the Cardington Hangars, home of the UK’s airship industry.

http://jordansmill.com

**Tour E: Leighton Buzzard Light Railway and Shuttleworth Collection, Old Warden**

The Leighton Buzzard Light Railway, built to a 2’ gauge and measuring 5.6km long, has served the sand quarries north of the town since 1919. It was at its commercial peak in the late 1940s and early 1950s, regularly transporting 20 train loads of sand per day, but ceased as a commercial operation in 1981. The Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway Society, however, will be celebrating its 50th anniversary of running pleasure trips in 2017. We will have a reserved compartment for our journey, with 25 minutes at the far end to view the range of static engines and wagons that are kept there, as well as displays about the Simplex Locomotives and the military narrow gauge railways. We will also have a guided view of the engine shed, which contains most of the society’s steam locomotives as well as a photographic display of the line and its construction.

http://www.buzzrail.co.uk
In the afternoon, we have lunch (included in the price) at Shuttleworth and a tour of the Collection, based at Old Warden aerodrome (see Tour D). The journey back to Moulton will include a drive-past of the Cardington Hangars, home of the UK’s airship industry.

http://www.shuttleworth.org/the-collection

Tuesday 29th August, 09:00 – 18:00

Tour F: Bletchley Park and National Museum of Computing
Bletchley Park is an internationally renowned heritage site designed to preserve the important story of the Codebreakers during WWII. The Bletchley Park Trust was formed in 1992 to preserve the site as a museum, and an £8 million restoration project was completed in 2014. This restoration project has seen the transformation of the formerly derelict wartime codebreaking building, Block C, into a visitor centre, while the iconic but once derelict Codebreaking Huts 3 and 6 were also restored. Other exhibits include the only fully operational Bombe rebuild (the electro-mechanical device used to mechanise the process of breaking Enigma), and the world’s largest and most comprehensive public display of Enigma machines. On the same site, the National Museum of Computing covers 70 years of computing, with a chance to see computers being maintained and repaired behind the scenes. The museum tells the wartime codebreaking story which led to the building of Colossus, the world’s first programmable, while the rest of the museum traces the development of computing to the present day. Lunch (not included in the price) can be obtained from a range of cafés at the site.

https://www.bletchleypark.org.uk
http://www.tnmoc.org

Tour G: Blisworth Tunnel, Stoke Bruerne Canal Museum and Weedon Royal Ordnance Depot
We start with a boat trip through the 2,813m Blisworth Tunnel on the Grand Union Canal. It opened in 1805 as the last link in the Grand Junction Canal, connecting London with the Oxford Canal. The brick-lined tunnel is wide enough for two narrow boats to pass, and is the longest such tunnel in Britain. This will be followed by a visit to the Canal Museum at Stoke Bruerne, occupying a former canalside corn mill and operated by the Canal & River Trust. It gives an overview of the history of canals, with displays covering their construction, operation and maintenance plus life on the canals, including traditional canal decorative painting.


After lunch at the Boat Inn (included in the price) we visit the remains of the former military depot at Weedon Bec. Its construction began in 1804 as the first inland central store and distribution point for small arms, ordnance and other equipment, at the time Napoleon was threatening to invade England. It had its own branch of the Grand Junction Canal, a gatehouse complete with portcullis over the canal entrance, and a series of warehouses each side of the canal basin. Disused by the military for some years, the site is in now in commercial use.

http://www.weedon1914-1919.co.uk/weedon-royal-ordnance-depot
Tour H: Wolverton Railway Works and Milton Keynes Museum
The Wolverton Works opened in 1838 at the midpoint between London and Birmingham, with the new town of Wolverton built around it. It grew to become the largest carriage works in the UK, employing 5,000 people, and has built and housed the Royal Train since 1869. The Works continued to thrive beyond WWII until the early 1960s, when it was downgraded to a repair facility and its workforce halved in size. The reduced scale of works meant that parts of the site were converted into housing and a Tesco supermarket in the later 20th century, as the carriage maintenance works consolidated its operations in the western end of the site. Further demolition is planned within the next few years, and our walking tour of the complex represents a last chance to see much of what still survives.

After lunch (included in the price), we will also see an exhibition relating to the Wolverton Works at the Milton Keynes Museum. Housed in a Victorian farmstead, the museum began as a collection of materials salvaged from farms and factories that were demolished during the construction of Milton Keynes. Originally run solely by volunteers and with very limited opening times, a fire in 1996 served as a catalyst to expand the museum, which reopened in 1998 with new exhibits and additional visitor facilities. The museum covers the history of the Milton Keynes area from 1800 onwards, with an eclectic mixture of exhibits including printing presses, a working telephone exchange, an Anderson shelter and the world’s largest steam tramcar.

Tour J: National Lift Tower and Church’s Shoes, Northampton
In the morning we visit the National Lift Tower in Northampton. This 127m high lift-testing tower was constructed in 1982 for the Express Lift Company, using a revolutionary continuous concrete cast process. Closed in 1999, and threatened with demolition, today it is once again used for testing lifts and for other types of research, including escape systems for offshore platforms and vessels, new systems for underwater cranage, and telecommunications. The tour will include a talk about the building’s history and a tour of its workings, including a ride to the top.

After lunch (included in the price), we visit the factory of world famous-footwear manufacturer Church’s Shoes who have been making shoes in Northampton since 1873. The present building dates from c. 1900 and has been the home of Church’s Shoes since 1957. Here, Church’s manufactures high-quality traditional Goodyear welted shoes using mainly the same processes that their Victorian forebears would recognise. Church’s has recently acquired the adjacent former tram and bus depot, which will be adapted for additional production capacity.