

## Good Morning,

So much has happened since my last Editorial I hardly know where to start – but suffice to say it's been another massive period for Strictly Elvis UK and I wouldn't have the space to mention it all anyway... even if I could remember it! Following the Thames Cruise, the two tours (Germany and the USA) in August, the Elvis Festival in September (where our two Hollywood leading ladies proved what 'Stars' they really are), we ended the year with a wonderful Elvis Ball in Leicester celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the '68 Comeback Special. The Kings Hall of the Mercure Grand Hotel looked as pretty as a picture – as did the guests, all dressed in their finery. We started the evening with messages from the great and the good of the Elvis world – including missives from the Director Steve Binder, from Elvis' cousin Billy Smith, Dick Grob, Karen Arrington the widow of DJ Fontana, from Charles Stone, Larry Geller, Ed Hill, Terry Blackwood and from Sam Thompson. Then we tucked into a traditional Thanksgiving feast followed by live music from Jenson Bloomer and Mondo Carne and a DJ double-act of Mark Monaghan and Steve Bloomfield giving us an excellent all-Elvis Disco and a good few laughs as well. I have to say I love these 'posh frock' occasions so we'll definitely be having another within the next couple of years.

One piece of wonderful news was the awarding of the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Elvis. This is the highest civilian honour in the USA (the equivalent to a Knighthood in the UK) and it seemed such a shame that none of the Presley family were in attendance; something I'm sure they will regret. Regardless of politics, this honour is awarded by the President to so few people – and only to those who have made a serious contribution to the USA – whether it be in

the field of culture, sport, peace or another significant achievement. It was clearly long overdue for Elvis and can you imagine how he would have felt to have received it personally? What was heartening tho' was to see Jack Soden collect it on Elvis' behalf. As CEO of Elvis Presley Enterprises since it was formed in May 1990, and involved in the operations at Graceland for some 8 years before that, Jack has been a good friend to Elvis fans and an excellent protector of Elvis' legacy... and so it was fitting that he should collect the posthumous award. This will have given him a lasting and poignant memory of his work for Elvis.

Now looking ahead we have a busy year of activities awaiting – including a visit to Paris, some 39 years since we last arranged a trip there for a European Elvis Convention. I'd intended it to be in June but I'd forgotten (duh!) about the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup Football Finals taking place there for most of the month (using huge amounts of hotel rooms) so we're heading there in May instead – full details are enclosed in this Newsletter together with brochures for the fabulous USA and the Germany tours in August. If you're thinking about 2019 being the year you visit Graceland then see inside about the advantages of travelling with the Elvis Travel Service. Can I also mention the next Elvis Festival (leaflet also enclosed) as this will be our 40th Festival – quite some landmark for us and needless to say we intend for it to be the biggest and the best yet. We've already booked the TCB Band and the Imperials to perform, plus we'll have a great line-up of other bands and Elvis Guests. Reserve your place as soon as you can as it's bound to be a sell-out success.

Elvis revealed to the Memphis Press Scimitar in 1966 "there's something about Christmas and being at home that I just can't explain, maybe it's being with my family and friends". So this Strictly Elvis family of Carol, Neil, Mike, Yaz, Sam, Mark, Steve and myself would like to wish you and yours a happy and healthy Christmas and a truly wonderful 2019.

T  
Cheers for now  
B

David J. Wade



# DIARY UPDATE

## ELVIS BIRTHDAY BASH AT PRESTWICK AIRPORT

Saturday 12th January 2019.

Arranged annually by The Elvis Touch Fan Club of Glasgow this is a great get-together of Elvis fans from mostly Scotland but also from all over the UK. With a live band plus all-Elvis Disco, the function room at the passenger terminal of Prestwick Airport (remember that's the only place in the UK that Elvis ever set foot) celebrates Elvis' Birthday of a few days earlier with this rockin' and fun night. Tickets available from Paul or Linda Downie on 07947 659 144 and for details of accommodation contact the Elvis Travel Service/Strictly Elvis UK on 01473 621 564

## MEMPHIS SPRING BREAK

4th-10th April 2019

Our second superb Spring Luxury Break to Memphis. Included is a full day visit to Graceland which includes the mansion tour plus visits to the aircraft, the car museum and other exhibits, a fabulously packed day tour of the Elvis sights of Memphis plus the option of heading south to Tupelo to visit Elvis' Birthplace and to enjoy the sights there. Time too to take an optional sightseeing cruise on the Mississippi River, visit Jerry Lee Lewis' ranch and to explore Memphis – including famous Beale Street. You'll be staying at the luxurious Guest House at Graceland and be able to enjoy the great Elvis experience that our holidays are renowned for. Just a few places left – phone 01473 621 564 for more details

## PARIS OOH LA LA!

3rd – 6th/7th May 2019

Elvis loved Paris – and so will you. There's a choice of a 4 or 5 day break travelling by Eurostar or by air and staying at a modern 4 Star hotel. We've included a sightseeing tour of this beautiful city and included the Elvis sights too. Optional tours include an evening cruise on the River Seine coupled with a visit to the famous Moulin Rouge nightclub. There's also the opportunity to spend a whole day in Disneyland Paris. Full details are included in the centre of this Newsletter.

## ELVIS RIVER CRUISE ON THE THAMES

Sunday 21st July 2019

Come 'rollin' down the river with us on this superb Elvis River Cruise arranged by Elvis in Essex and Strictly Elvis UK. It's a 4 hour cruise aboard the Dixie Queen, the largest passenger pleasure boat on the Thames. On board we'll have an all-Elvis Disco with DJ's Mark Monaghan and Steve Bloomfield plus live entertainment from Rockin' Dave Riley. Tickets are £25 (same price as 2018) from Strictly Elvis UK, Tel: 01473 621 564

## ELVIS 42ND ANNIVERSARY TOURS

Memphis and Tupelo - 12th to 21st August 2019

Memphis, Tupelo and Texas 12th to 29th August 2019

A choice of two great tours for August 2019 – the short tour featuring Memphis during Elvis Week and including a full day at Graceland plus another day seeing all the Elvis sights of Memphis plus lots of free time to explore at will before visiting Elvis' Birthplace in Tupelo. Or take our longer tour that includes all that plus another 9 days touring Texas to see the Elvis (and more!) sights in Dallas and Fort Worth, Fort Hood, Waco, San Antonio, Gonzales and Houston. Full details are enclosed with this Newsletter.

## BAD NAUHEIM & FRIEDBERG

15th to 19th August 2019

A glorious long-weekend in the spa town of Bad Nauheim where Elvis lived whilst stationed at the US Army Base at nearby Friedberg. Join in the fun as the Elvis Fan Club of Germany plus the local Tourist Office put on a wonderful Elvis Anniversary event with concerts, classic car and Harley parades, Elvis movies, special guests stalls and attractions. Full details are enclosed with this Newsletter.

## ELVIS FESTIVAL – 40TH PARTY EVENT

13th – 23rd September 2019 – choice of durations.

Celebrate with us the 40th Elvis Festival that we've organised here in the UK. With a top class line up of bands and guests (including the TCB Band and the Imperials!) this is going to be the biggest and the best yet. And this year you can choose to stay for 3, 4, 7 or even 10 nights! Further details are enclosed with this Newsletter.

## ELVIS 85TH BIRTHDAY TOUR

January 2020

No final details yet but we couldn't let Elvis' 85th Birthday pass without a party could we? And that party will take place in Memphis and in Las Vegas as we plan to have 5 days over the Birthday period in Memphis (remember the Christmas lights will still be on at Graceland!) before heading west to enjoy some desert sunshine, sightseeing and shows in exciting Las Vegas. Further details will be included with the next Newsletter.

## FIND US ON...



Facebook: The Elvis Presley Travel Service/Strictly Elvis.  
Twitter: @ElvisTravel

# ELVIS SUPREME ON THE DIXIE QUEEN

## BY MIKE DAVIS

My daughter Sam and I arrived bright and early on Sunday 29th July at Butlers Wharf on the River Thames to make sure our lovely riverboat, The Dixie Queen, was ready for our Third Annual River Cruise. Because of last year's sell out, this year we went for the biggest passenger boat on the river. The weather at first was not good, cold strong wind and showers but by the time we left the wharf to go pick up our Elvis family the wind had dropped, the rain stopped and the skies brightened. Thank you Elvis, I knew you would work your magic.

Tower Bridge lifted for us for the first of three occasions and we docked at Tower Pier to collect our eagerly awaiting 400+ Elvis fans. Elvis was singing loud and clear as our DJ Mark Monaghan is already in action. Within a few minutes the cameras were clicking away as Tower Bridge lifted once again to take us down past Greenwich. It's strange but I felt very proud that this iconic bridge was being raised for Elvis Presley and his fans; it was almost like a salute to the world's greatest entertainer.

The Dixie Queen's magnificent interior was now full of happy dancing fans and the bars busy with pints being pulled...on the lower deck a chance to relax watch the sights and listen to Elvis ballads, next time we will have Elvis on screen for you so you can chill after a dancing session on the upper deck. Plenty of

choice for you.

We had one of the partners on board from Elvis In Essex's charity, The National Holiday Fund for Sick Children, he thanked us for our support. We raised £200 on the day and Elvis in Essex proceeds from the Cruise will also go to the charity.

On the second hour of our 4-hour cruise fans' favourite Rockin' Dave Riley entertained us with his large repertoire of 50s/60s numbers; the dance floor remained full throughout. The final two hours was Elvis at his best all the way. Neil Cameron via his tablet was sending images of cruise all round the world; the response was amazing, hundreds of fans wishing they could join us.

The final act was American Trilogy, it was surely the best any of us on that day had experienced, the colour and the noise was amazing I thought the roof would come off our boat. That's The Wonder Of You lot! - it was all outside again to watch Tower Bridge being raised, this time the Captain giving the crowds on the bridge a blast of the ship's horns.

It was a unanimous vote of a great afternoon from all on board so Elvis in Essex and Strictly Elvis will be doing it all over again on the 21st July 2019.



Strictly Elvis UK is the Newsletter of Strictly Elvis UK and the Elvis Travel Service – trading names of David Wade Ltd, an organisation that has led the way in Elvis holidays and events for 46 years. Founded in 1972 David Wade Ltd is registered with Elvis Presley Enterprises Inc and works closely with them to keep Elvis' legend alive and to promote Graceland. The names 'Elvis', 'Elvis Presley', 'The Guest House at Graceland' and 'Graceland's Chapel in the Woods' are registered to Elvis Presley Enterprises Inc with the USPTO.



# MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET

BY CAROL PUGH

This August we undertook a tour with a difference, of course it was an Elvis tour (we only do Elvis!) But we wanted to add a twist and that was to include a little something from the other 3 members of the Million Dollar Quartet, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis.

We took advantage of British Airways new direct Dreamliner flight into Nashville and set about our visits to the Country Music Hall of Fame (via the Elvis Star set in the Music City Walk of Fame), the Ryman Auditorium and the Johnny Cash Museum where we always get the warmest of welcomes from Randall Bart the Manager there. We dropped by the Sun Records Cafe next door where another friend of the Elvis Travel Service, EPE Artist Betty Harper was waiting to say Hi to the group. The last visit of the day was to RCA's Studio B and this time our dear friend from The Imperials, Royce Taylor, met us and produced one of the highlights of the tour; with lights dimmed we gathered at Elvis' piano and Royce sang Sweet, Sweet Spirit, it was so magical that even the Studio B guide was completely lost for words.

From Nashville we made our way to Bon Aqua - perhaps a place not familiar to many but hugely

significant in the Million Dollar Quartet story as it was home to Johnny Cash. Our first stop was the local store, now a Museum and Concert venue where we were met by Johnny's nephew and grandson who did an impromptu concert for us, amazing the group as they sounded so uncannily like Johnny himself. From there a short coach ride took us to the ranch owned by Johnny and June Carter Cash. It was a beautiful place and was obviously loved by the Man in Black himself. Soon Jackson Tennessee was calling, the home of Carl Perkins and the Rockabilly Hall of Fame, here we saw the pair of original Blue Suede shoes, had guitar lessons on Carl's own guitar and played D J Fontana's drums...experiences that you can only dream about!

Next it was onto Memphis and all that this city has to offer including a revised 9 hour tour of Elvis Memphis with sights that not even Teddy our driver who lives in Memphis knew about, ending up at a party at the Circle G which included ice cream at the lake and strolls to the bridge, stables and cross whilst listening to live music.

We left Memphis to visit Nesbit, Mississippi and Jerry Lee Lewis' Ranch; a unique experience seeing the home, the gardens and the many cars of the Killer himself, as well as lots of original Sun memorabilia. Next stop Verona and the Town Hall where Gladys and Vernon were married.





Our last few days were spent in one of our favourite places – Tupelo. Our new hotel was right opposite the Mississippi Alabama Fairgrounds and the evening we arrived there was a party hosted there for the town and all of our group were invited. How surreal to be sitting watching concerts in the very spot that Elvis played his concerts in 1955 /56 as ‘The Hands’ statue stood outlined against the night sky. The next day was our full tour of Tupelo which included a visit inside Lawhorn Elementary school with an opportunity to stand on the school stage. The last night we had our farewell party at Johnnies Drive In, where else? And who should join us but Guy Harris, Elvis boyhood friend, telling stories of what it was like growing up in Tupelo with Elvis, Gladys and Vernon in the very place that it all happened - an evening that will stay long in the memory.



To finish the tour we headed through Alabama to Tuscaloosa where Elvis played in 1972, 73 and 75. We were allowed access to the auditorium, which had barely changed since those 1970’s concerts. That evening there was a concert scheduled there and so the stage was being constructed and yes, you guessed it, on the very spot that Elvis played so once again we duly piled onto the stage and saw the auditorium as Elvis would have, making sure before we left to visit backstage and the dressing rooms.

It was a fascinating tour through Elvis’ younger years and an opportunity to experience the places that some of rock’n’roll’s greatest stars, lived, loved and laughed. We were privileged to be accompanied by people who were close to them and who were willing to share that insight with us, long live rock’n’roll.



# BAD NAUHEIM & FRIEDBERG

BY NEIL CAMERON

August saw the Elvis Travel Service back in Germany to enjoy the festivities of the European Elvis Festival and with the heatwave that we experienced in the UK this summer evident in Germany too we were in for a fab time.

After smooth flights into Frankfurt and a quick transfer to Bad Nauheim and our top class hotels, many of the group was straight out again to the small, but very plush, cinema in the centre of town where we joined in with the Worldwide simulcast of the 68 Special. This was made even more of a momentous occasion by the 100 fans who sold-out the showing, being joined by legendary singer, and one of the star's of the Special; Darlene Love.

As it was the night of the 16th, we then made our way up to the Elvis memorial to pay our respects with fellow fans from all around the world.

Friday saw us up bright and early and after a sumptuous buffet breakfast we were off on our walking tour of Elvis sights in the town. As always we meticulously research all of our tours and we are constantly adding more and more sights, making this the most comprehensive Elvis tour of Germany. We saw all the major places of Elvis interest; where he lived, shopped, visited and had some of his most iconic photos taken.

And as is the way with the Elvis Travel Service, we also had a little treat in store for everyone too with a visit inside the Grunewald Hotel – Elvis' home for a number of months. This was the first time that our group had toured inside and we were invited up to the room Elvis had lived in. Due to a preservation order the hotel's interior fixtures and fittings are all original – meaning that much of it is exactly the same as when Elvis lived there.

With the whole group in attendance, we also laid our floral tribute by the Memorial on behalf of all of our Elvis Family.

The rest of the day was then spent enjoying the activities of the Festival and soaking up the sun in the beautiful park or in one of the many outside cafes or bars.

We headed off to Friedberg on Saturday morning, taking the short journey on the local train (where the group naturally entertained the locals with a rendition of the 'Frankfurt Special' in our carriage)

This was another very special day, and again an experience that you only get with the Elvis Travel Service, as we boarded an authentic 1950's coach and, escorted by a number of vintage cars and authentic military vehicles, we were able to tour inside Ray Barracks which has long since closed and been out of bounds since the US Army left over a decade ago.

We had an amazing tour inside the instillation before the icing on the cake – as we were able to get inside the actual barrack block that Elvis stayed in for the first few nights after he arrived in Germany. This has never been open to the public before and so was an amazing exclusive for our Travel Service group. All of this was being filmed by a local TV crew and our adventures were then shown on the evening's news broadcast.

With plenty going on in the town with the Festival, we weren't short of things to do and the next couple of days were taken up taking in the sights and sounds of this fabulous little town.

We've said it before and this year's tour really proved it - outside of Memphis, Bad Nauheim is the best place to spend the August anniversary. We hope you can join us for a future Elvis in Germany tour.

The Elvis Travel Service will be back in Germany in August 2019 – see enclosed brochure for more details.



# Elvis IN PARIS

OOH LA LA

**ELVIS**  
TRAVEL SERVICE

3RD - 6TH / 7TH MAY  
2019

(BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND)

A CHOICE OF A 3 OR 4 NIGHT BREAK

OPTIONAL  
DISNEYLAND  
PARIS TRIP



# Our Itinerary.

## Day 1. Friday

Late morning departure of our Eurostar train from London's St Pancras Station to Paris, arriving at the Gare du Nord in the early afternoon. Here a coach will be waiting to transfer us to our hotel. Evening free.

## Day 2. Saturday

Morning panoramic tour of Paris – we'll see the major sights of this elegant city such as the famous Eiffel Tower, the Notre Dame Cathedral, the Arc de Triumph, the River Seine and historic Montmartre with it's beautiful Basilica of the Sacre Couer but also we'll be including the 'Elvis sights' of Paris – where he stayed whilst on furlough from his Army duties in Germany and other places that he visited.

Afternoon at leisure and this evening we have a Elvis Paris Gala Evening with the Elvis – My Happiness Fan Club of France with entertainment by Rockin' Dave Riley plus an all-Elvis Disco with DJ Mark Monaghan.

## Day 3. Sunday

Full day at leisure – come and explore one of Europe's most stunning cities. Take a stroll along the River Seine, book a place (we'll do it for you) to go to the top of the iconic Eiffel Tower, sit and enjoy a coffee at a pavement café just watching the world pass by or shop for souvenirs of your visit.

This evening we have an optional hour-long cruise along the Seine to see many of the famous Paris landmarks illuminated and this is followed by a visit to the Moulin Rouge, the nightclub-theatre that Elvis attended. Here you'll enjoy the show and a glass of champagne before returning to the hotel.

\*Prices accurate at time of preparing this brochure (1st October 2018) but subject to minor adjustment when May 2019 prices are known.

## Day 4. Monday

Time for those on the 4 day break to return home on the afternoon Eurostar to London arriving back into St. Pancras Station in the early evening.

For those taking the 5 day break there's another full day at leisure – ideal for those wanting to enjoy the magic of Disneyland Paris or more time to enjoy the sights and sounds of Paris – a visit to see the Mona Lisa at the Louvre Museum perhaps, to take a stroll along the Champs Elysees or visit the awesome Palace of Versailles. Evening at leisure.

## Day 5. Tuesday

Morning free to relax or to take your last look at this incredible city. In the early afternoon we head for the Gare du Nord to join our Eurostar train to London arriving into St Pancras Station in the early evening.

## Optional Tours:

Evening Sightseeing Seine Cruise plus visit to the Moulin Rouge. Paris looks so different at night when the sun is setting or the monuments and historic buildings are illuminated and as we glide along the Seine you will learn of the history and significance of these. Then it's a visit to the world-renowned Moulin Rouge in the heart of Montmartre – where we'll enjoy a glass of champagne before enjoying the show – a spectacle of dance, costumes (some somewhat skimpy!!) and music. Excursion cost £135\* inclusive of the guided sightseeing tour, Moulin Rouge visit, return transfer to the hotel and guide and driver gratuity.

## Disneyland

With transfers by train to the Park itself we'll have the whole day to enjoy Disneyland Paris and its sister park, the MGM Studios. Lots of rides, shops and shows – all culminating in a spectacular fireworks display. Excursion cost £125\* inclusive of return rail fare and admission to both parks.



# Our Hotel.

We've chosen the 4 Star Novotel Paris Est for this Paris Break – a combination of modern facilities and good quality but at a great value price. The hotel is in the Bagnolet area of north-east Paris, 5 minute walk from the Gallieni Metro Station which offers a 15 minute train ride into the very heart of the city. This 600 room hotel offers large, modern rooms all with en-suite facilities. It has a restaurant and bar, a gymnasium and 24hr snack-bar/shop. There is free wifi and all rooms have a flat screen TV. The rooms (all Superior) have one double bed or, if needed as a twin (or for triple use), the sofa also converts into a separate bed.



		4 Da
y	5 Day	
Single room		£57
8	£628	
Double or Twin occupancy		£44
8	£478	
Triple occupancy		£42
8	£448	

(under 'The tour price is inclusive of' amend to)

Standard Class return Eurostar service between London and Paris

3 or 4 nights accommodation inclusive of breakfasts and taxes at the Novotel Paris Est hotel

Return coach transfers between Paris Gare du Nord Station and the hotel

A half day panoramic tour of Paris incorporating the Elvis 'sights'

A Gala Evening with the Elvis – My Happiness Fan Club

Driver Gratuities

The services of experienced Elvis Travel Service Tour Managers

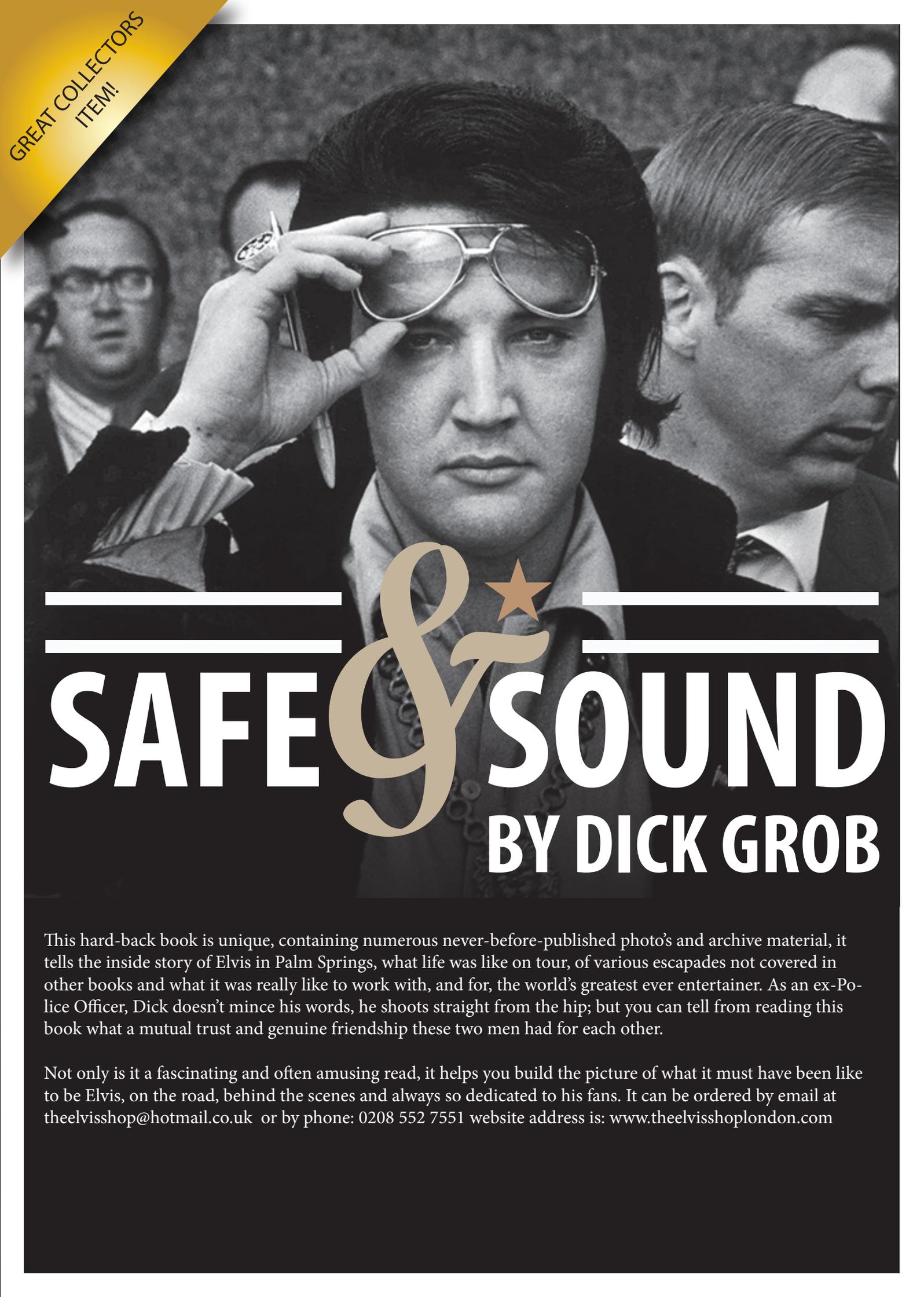
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If you would prefer to travel by air to/from Paris we can offer you flights from Heathrow or regional airports at a supplementary price. We can offer Heathrow return flights for a late morning flight out and a late afternoon return for a supplement of £60 per person but from regional airports we can only quote you for those at the time of booking as the airlines are continually changing the prices. Please state your preference on the reservation Form and we will contact you for your approval with the price and available flight times.

(under Passports and Visas)

Change 'German Embassy' to 'French Embassy'

GREAT COLLECTORS  
ITEM!



**SAFE & SOUND**  
BY DICK GROB

This hard-back book is unique, containing numerous never-before-published photo's and archive material, it tells the inside story of Elvis in Palm Springs, what life was like on tour, of various escapades not covered in other books and what it was really like to work with, and for, the world's greatest ever entertainer. As an ex-Po-lice Officer, Dick doesn't mince his words, he shoots straight from the hip; but you can tell from reading this book what a mutual trust and genuine friendship these two men had for each other.

Not only is it a fascinating and often amusing read, it helps you build the picture of what it must have been like to be Elvis, on the road, behind the scenes and always so dedicated to his fans. It can be ordered by email at [theelvisshop@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:theelvisshop@hotmail.co.uk) or by phone: 0208 552 7551 website address is: [www.theelvisshoplondon.com](http://www.theelvisshoplondon.com)

# Graceland

ON YOUR OWN OR WITH A GROUP.  
WHICH IS BEST?  
BY DAVID WADE

Here at Strictly Elvis UK we regularly get asked whether it's better/cheaper to visit Graceland on an individual holiday or with a group. Whilst it's difficult for us to be completely impartial (our Elvis Travel Service has been running group tours to Memphis since 1972!) we do appreciate that not all Elvis fans can travel at times when our tours are operating so we are always happy to give advice to those people who want to 'do their own thing'. Here are some of the advantages (and disadvantages) of doing it either way. In the end it's very much 'horses for courses' as one type of holiday will suit some whilst the alternative will suit others.

Let us start with the positives and negatives of the individual holiday that you might book direct online or have the arrangements made through a travel agent. This is where the flights, hotel, possibly car hire and visits are all booked separately (although on some online sites you can book more than one together) but you'll be travelling on your own (ie with your family or friends). The positives of doing it this way are that it can (but not always) be cheaper, that you can travel on the day that you choose and not when a tour operator wants you to, and also you are free to make up your own itinerary and not have that decided for you. Sounds good, but then look at the negatives. You, or someone in your group or family, will have to take responsibility for setting up the holiday and collecting the money – and that full payment usually has to be made upon booking so best get the money up front. Do you really know which are the best hotels or the safest areas? The online sites won't tell you this and very few travel agents would know one Memphis hotel (or area) from another, and we have had lots of examples over the years of people being placed in hotels or areas that are totally unsuitable. Remember if a hotel is cheap then there's probably a good reason for it.

And how will you get around? Hiring a car is the best option simply because the bus service in Memphis is poor (takes nearly an hour to get from Downtown to Graceland using public transport) and taxis can be expensive and, during peak dates or times, hard to find. And who will drive?



Are you or one of your group confident enough to drive in a USA city, are happy to always be the "designated driver" (the drink-drive laws in the USA are far more onerous than in the UK) and, just as important, will all of your party want to do the same thing at the same time?

Okay, so let's be fair and now look at the positives and negatives of a group tour. There are many large tour operators offering trips to Memphis and some will even advertise them as an 'Elvis Tour' but beware, this is merely a sales ploy to get people/fans to book on what is basically their 'Deep South Tour' so you'll also have to visit many other cities that might not be of interest to you but, worse, you'll probably only stay in Memphis for 2 or 3 nights maximum. Not all of these operators actually include admission to Graceland, and few would include other Elvis sights. So be careful who you book with. Another potential negative is that all tour operators (inc the Elvis Travel Service) will have a limited programme so will only operate on certain dates. The Elvis Travel Service for example will usually have a tour over Elvis' Birthday in January or the Anniversary date in August simply because that when most fans want to visit Graceland (and it's when EPE put on a programme of Elvis events, talks and Concerts) but will also often add additional shorter duration trips at other times of the year such as in April or over Thanksgiving in November. Also, beware of holiday companies selling 'down to a price' and not 'up to a quality' - by that we mean that there are many operators who are happy to use lower grade hotels or reduce what's included just to get down to a price that they believe will be attractive to you, the customer, in the knowledge that travellers are always looking for a bargain (aren't we all?) but can be easily fooled by this tactic. Some don't even include Drivers/Guide tips and the traveller is then told what they are 'expected' to give!

As for the positives of taking an Elvis tour with a recognised Elvis specialist operator obviously we can only talk on behalf of the Elvis Travel Service as we have no idea what others may or may not provide but these are the main points to bear in mind.

The holiday arrangements are done for you so you don't have to agonise over which are the best flights, which hotel to use or will it be in a safe area?

You'll only pay a deposit on booking, not the whole amount

You are handing over the responsibility to professionals who 'know their stuff' and in the unlikely event of anything going wrong then they'll sort it out – flight delays, lost baggage, overbooked hotels. Also, with a Tour Manager accompanying the tour, if you or one of your party becomes ill then they'll be there to help...or rather they are on an Elvis Travel Service holiday.

The itinerary is pre-set so you know which days you'll be doing what and can plan the rest of your visits etc around that. You'll see so much more, especially as the Elvis Travel Service Tour Managers are genuine fans and delight in showing you the Elvis sights and sharing their Elvis knowledge with you. No driving, waiting for taxis or additional expense.

The Guest House at Graceland downtown shuttle no longer operates during the day and the 'free' (you are expected to tip!) Sun Studio/Rock'n'Soul Museum/Graceland Shuttle is small and on a 'first come-first served' basis so can leave you in line for a considerable time...hours even. Is that how you want to spend your holiday? The Elvis Travel Service will always lay on a free Shuttle Service between Graceland and Downtown for its passengers – timed to fit in with any events that you are likely to want to attend.

All Admission charges are included and no tips are expected. On some tours the Elvis Travel Service will offer an occasional Optional Excursion but these are clearly shown, can be purchased in the UK and are always at a lower price than could (if it were possible!) be purchased locally.

And do you know what the most important 'positive' is? It's the camaraderie that surrounds the holidays.....no-one feels left out, you could travel on your own and within just hours will feel like one of the 'family'. The Tour Managers are there for you, will make sure that the group blend together as one and will ensure that you get the most out of your holiday. Nothing to do in the evening? Then join the Tour Managers as they head to a restaurant or to Beale Street – you'll find that most of the group will do the same, as experiencing Elvis and Memphis when it's done as a group is just so much more fun.

This article was written by the Strictly Elvis UK founder David Wade in answer to the many questions that we receive regarding traveling to Memphis. David probably knows Memphis better than most having first taken groups there in 1972 and he has been back every year since – most years many times. Just as important tho' is the fact that he has been an Elvis fan since he was 7 years old and a Tour Manager since he was just 19 years – a great combination for someone who has taken more people to Memphis than anyone else.





Most years when taking the Elvis' Memphis Sight-seeing Tour we point out the Sam Phillips Recording Studio – no, not the famous Sun Studio on Union but the one that Sam opened in 1960 just a stone's throw away on Madison Avenue when the older premises just got too small. This new studio took 2 ½ years to finish and allowed Sam to bring in the latest equipment, better control heat and humidity and combine offices with studios, control rooms as well as editing and mastering suites. As Sam himself said at the time “We are fully equipped to perform the finest recording techniques now, and are prepared for any new innovation that may come along. In our experience, and in the opinions of many professional people who have already visited the new studio, we have one of the best equipped and most versatile recording studios, not just in the South, or even in the nation, but in the world”. Sam Phillips was justly proud and the list of music stars who have recorded there reads like the Who's Who of the recording industry. The studios are still owned by the Phillips family.

I have to admit to being (nicely) surprised when in early September I received an email from Jerry Phillips to say that he'd written and produced a song featuring Elvis and recorded by Country Music star Dale Watson. It was entitled 'Elvis Was A Love Affair', it also featured the voices of The Blackwood Brothers and could we help promote it in the UK? You bet we could...with a first ever UK airing at the Elvis Festival the following week and the Phillips family also rushed over a copy signed by Jerry for us to auction for Charity at the event.

I'm not a lover of tribute-type records (many are too maudlin for my cynical ears) and so I was doubly surprised to hear that it wasn't so much a 'tribute' but a beautifully written and performed song about a fan's love for Elvis.

You could have heard a pin drop as we played it at the Festival and I urge you to give it a listen on <http://smarturl.it/ElvisWasaLoveAffair> or on YouTube or buy it here <https://goo.gl/UR6DxF>. As Jerry himself said “ To most people, Elvis was the King of Rock'n'Roll but to many he was their first love. He was their first love in the 1950's and remained so even 'til today. Many girls and women of today still feel the same way. 'Elvis Was A Love Affair' is a tribute to those who loved and still love 'The King'”



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For booking info go to [www.dalewatson.com](http://www.dalewatson.com)

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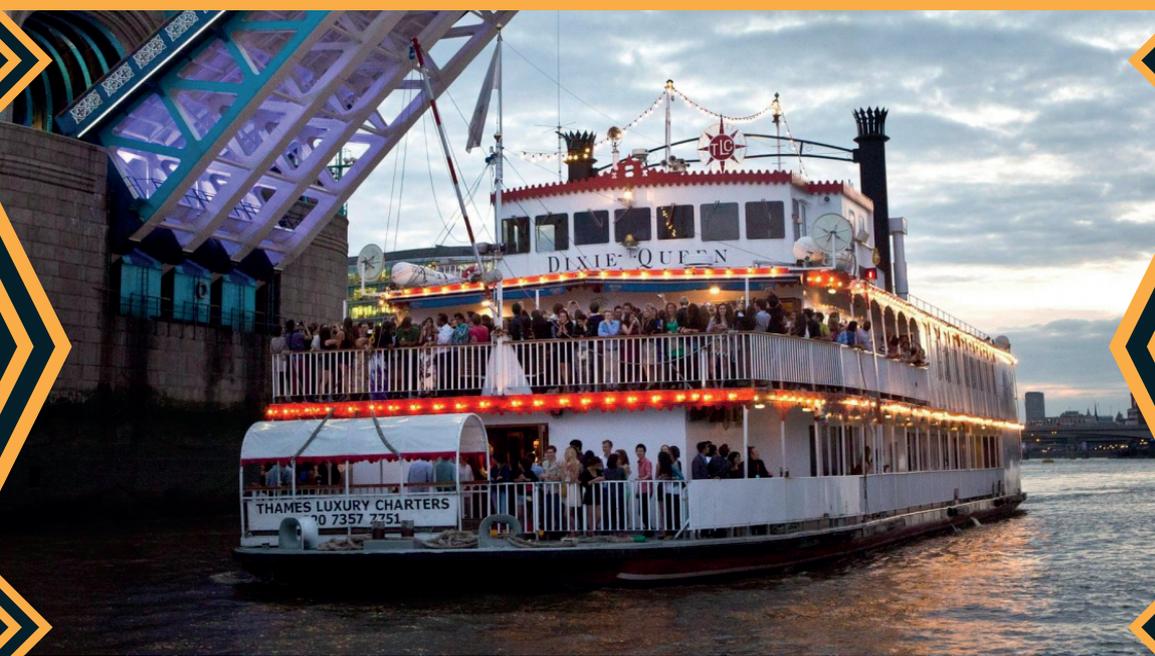
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