



THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION

Americans in Alliance with the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland

NICHOLAS ASHLEY-COOPER, 12TH EARL OF SHAFTESBURY



Nicholas Ashley-Cooper in the Handel Room at St Giles House in 2010, before the restoration work begins © Dan Annett



The Sunk Garden at St Giles House © 2018 by Justin Barton

NICHOLAS ASHLEY-COOPER, 12TH EARL OF SHAFTESBURY

Monday, October 22 | 6:00 p.m.

Reception and book signing at 5:30 p.m.

\$35 members; \$45 non-members

Location: Longue Vue House and Gardens, 7 Bamboo Road

Nicholas Edmund Anthony Ashley-Cooper graduated from the London Business School with an M.B.A. After an early career in music in New York City, he inherited the earldom in 2005 and has since then overseen the restoration of the family seat, St Giles House. He is an extreme athlete, running marathons to benefit charitable organizations addressing the needs of people with disabilities—including races across the Sahara, Atacama and Gobi deserts. He is the first Shaftesbury in 50 years to live in the house, alongside his wife Dinah and their three children.

The Rebirth of an English Country House: St. Giles House

In 2012, Nicholas Edmund Anthony Ashley-Cooper, the 12th Earl of Shaftesbury, and his wife became the first people to live in St Giles House, Dorset, since the death of his great-grandfather in 1961. The Grade I listed building had been the family home since the 1400's, but like many English country houses, it fell into disrepair following World War II. The family relocated nearby, selling many of the house's exquisite pieces of furniture and objects. St. Giles House, slowly crumbling, appeared on the English Heritage "Buildings at Risk" register due to its perilous state of near collapse. As the Earl explained, "the world had moved on, leaving the house behind to fall slowly into ruin." After several family tragedies, Nicholas unexpectedly inherited the title and house at age 26. Rather than shying away from the daunting house project—which in some areas had no electricity or plumbing—the new Earl was determined to make St. Giles inhabitable as his family home. His award-winning restoration first described in the *New York Times* and in *World of Interiors* is now illustrated in a new Rizzoli book (September 2018). Lord Shaftesbury's talk will explain his sudden inheritance, as well as describe his personal trials and tribulations, and eventual successes with the renaissance of St. Giles. He will show dramatic before-and-after photos, from the interiors to the grounds and gardens, which offer a front row seat into the house's dramatic transformations. The result is a testament to his resilience to honor his family's past while embracing 21st century living.