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Avon Education Foundation visits Downton Abbey exhibit

Took bus to Winterthur Museum in Delaware to explore opulent estate

Members and friends of the Avon-by-the-Sea Education Foundation [AEF] enjoyed a bus trip to Winterthur Museum in Wilmington, Delaware, on Thursday, Aug. 21.

The trip was highlighted by an exhibit of costumes from the popular period television drama, "Downton Abbey." The exhibit was the capstone event in AEF's summer enrichment series, which included related programs on World War I and the gilded age novel "The American Heiress."

Winterthur, the former home of chemical and munitions magnate Henry Francis du Pont, features Mr. du Pont's expansive collection of American decorative arts, displayed in the palatial 175-room house in which the du Pont family lived until 1951.

A docent-led tour of several magnificent rooms followed a narrated tram ride through the former estate's 60 acres of lush gardens, widely regarded as among the nation's best.

Guests were then free to explore the special costume exhibit, running exclusively at Winterthur through January. From the hand-beaded gowns of the Countess of Grantham and her daughters to the kitchen staff's crisp pinafores, the exhibit's 40 costumes evoked the lifestyle of turn-of-the-century British aristocracy.

Photos

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Eileen Nolan [from left], Tess Neilsen and Peg Geiger, all of Avon, checked out 'Costumes of Downton Abbey' at Winterthur Museum last week, an exhibit of the costumes worn in the popular period television drama 'Downton Abbey.' The trip to Winterthur, Delaware, was organized by the Avon Education Foundation. *Photo courtesy SUSAN ANNITTO*

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Photos and artifacts from the museum's permanent collection interspersed throughout the exhibit illustrated how the wealthiest Americans of the era, such as the du Ponts, enjoyed an equally lavish lifestyle.

The Avon-by-the-Sea Education Foundation [avonbytheseafoundation.org] is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting educational and enrichment opportunities for residents of the community.

For information about becoming a member, contact Michele Gioia at 914-572-6988.

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