



JAMESTOWN

AN ENGLISHMAN'S NEW WORLD

Story and Photography by *Martyn Goddard*

A MAN WALKING HIS small dog approached from the misty salt marsh, his waxed coat buttoned tight against the north wind on the exposed Norfolk coast. To his right, the square-rigged sailing ship *Juno* was beached, waiting for the tide in Blakeney. My rendezvous with Major Jocelyn Wingfield would provide the starting point for a road trip through history and the dawn of English colonization of the New World.

May 2007 was the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Jamestown Settlement in Virginia, and Major Wingfield not only has

written a noted book on the subject, he is also a collateral descendant of the first president of King James I's new colony, Edward Maria Wingfield. The Norfolk village was well chosen, as privateers from eastern England formed the syndicate that helped finance and crew the three ships that sailed west in the winter of 1606. Admiral Christopher Newport, Captain John Smith, and Captain Bartholomew Gosnold executed the daring and at times tempestuous expedition.

My chosen vehicle for the adventure—both in England and in America—was Triumph Motorcycle's latest Tiger 1050 sports tourer. Collecting the motorcycle from its Essex base, I soon savored the power and comfort of Hinckley's newest offering as I traveled north via M11 deep into East Anglia. The machine, with sumptuous suspension, dealt with Britain's less than perfect road surfaces, and the new inline-triple offered 112 horsepower and lashings of midrange power with



a downshift and rising rev counter for passing on the rather busy A1065 road section near Swaffham.

Having researched his family's colonial past for forty-three years, Major Wingfield was a fountain of knowledge. E.M. Wingfield

Captain Jocelyn Wingfield with his dog Teasle and the sailing barge *Juno* (inset) in the background.





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01: Beaumont family with the Tiger parked outside Otley Hall.

02: The Great Hall at Otley.

03: Ian Beaumont mowing the lawn with Otley Hall in the background.

subscribed £88 to the venture in 1606, £7650 in twenty-first-century money or roughly the price of the Tiger, which gave me pause for reflection on The Blakeney Hotel's balcony overlooking the heritage coast and setting sun before a thoroughly enjoyable dinner.

As ever, my plan was to meander along small country roads enjoying the sights, smells, and challenges. The B1113 and B1077 from

Hethel via Debenham to Otley is a case in point, sinuous and flanked with Barbie pink timber-framed houses exhaling smoke from wood-burning stoves and surprisingly traffic-free for this crowded isle.

I arrived at Otley Hall, the Grade 1-listed Tudor Manor House, which was not only Captain Gosnold's uncle's home but possibly also served as the nerve center of the Virginia Company. The Captain was



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the unsung hero of the colonial project, as without his endeavors and connections the New World would have become a Spanish colony. Greeted by the present owners, the Beaumont family, I wandered around the manor and it seemed



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Departing like Bartholomew, my Tiger headed south to London. I jockeyed with evening commuter traffic; the luggage boxes, thirty-seven inches wide, made for careful maneuvering toward Browns Hotel tucked in Albemarle Street Mayfair.

Otley Hall was the nerve center for the Virginia company, and its character remains intact today.

incredible that a member of the English aristocracy would risk such a privileged life to end up dying of scurvy just four months after landing in Jamestown. However, the younger sons of gentlemen, with no fortune to inherit, were encouraged to seek their own. Catherine and Ian have created a venue for weddings and corporate events without changing the character of the Tudor gem that is Otley Hall.

Motorcycles are my preferred way to travel in the capital city, as they are exempt from the draconian congestion and parking charges. London's ever-growing population of 250,000 was to trigger the search for the New World at the accession of James I. Today it is 7.6 million.

Browns, founded in 1837, is one of London's latest boutique hotels. I doubt if it is accustomed to guests rolling in on two wheels, but Paul

Jose, the doorman, was suitably impressed by my Caspian Blue luggage when I entered the reception area.

Luxury hotel rooms are to savor after a long day in the saddle, however, I had a dinner date with my wife Beverley that night. We met in the Donovan Bar, dedicated to the photography of Terence Donovan, who was an east-end boy made good, photographing icons such as Audrey Hepburn. While sampling the dizzying selection of cocktails, you could appreciate what a fine photographer Terence was. One giant print over the bar brings together British jazz greats of the 1960s. Next was the grill sampling, Chef Glayzer's fine cuisine, and the service was friendly and attentive. A day's travel couldn't get much better.

London was awakening as I rode toward St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate church, parking in Snowhill Smithfield where John Smith once lived. The Newgate church is the resting place of Captain Smith, and the south window celebrates his endeavors. Looking up at the vivid-colored window donated to the church by Bradford Smith in 1968, the base panels illustrate the three vessels used on the voyage: *Discovery*, twenty tons; *Susan*



01: Tiger parked outside Browns Hotel entrance.

02: Donovan Bar at Browns with White Lady cocktail in the foreground.



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Constant, one hundred twenty tons; and *Godspeed*, forty tons. Captain Smith stands above the ragtag collection that crossed the Atlantic. John Smith has a large brass plaque in the south choir with his epitaph inscribed from the original tomb destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666. The baroque atmosphere was enhanced by two musicians rehearsing the allegro by Benedetto Marcello for a lunchtime concert.

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Piccadilly Circus
from the seat of
the Tiger.





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St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate is where Captain John Smith is laid to rest, but the burial place of Pocahontas is unknown.

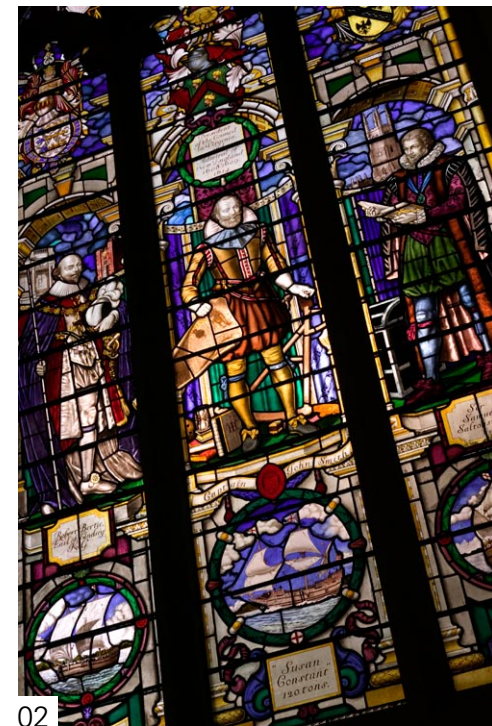
My ride east through the traffic-clogged streets was to London's Museum in Docklands, which was staging a Jamestown exhibition. A full-size replica of the *Discovery* was moored outside the museum, which is housed in the West India Docks company's warehouse. The ship is tiny by modern standards, and the guide pointed out that a company of twenty-two boarded for the journey. Travel conditions were cramped and harsh, but the small vessel came into its own once in Virginia, surveying the Chesapeake River.

Entering the warehouse, I made for the exhibition. Wandering around the atmospherically lit groups of exhibits, it was possible to appreciate the economics and politics of Stuart England's expansion. A tour guide explained the navigational technique to the New World: "Sail south until the butter melts, then turn right."

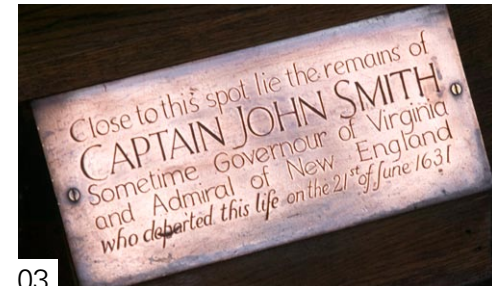
Gravesend was my next stop. The A2 is a fine example of an urban freeway, and I made good progress, ever watchful of the swarm of speed cameras. St. Georges

church is of note as the resting place of Pocahontas, daughter of Powhatan, chief of the Algonquin tribe. Pocahontas is revered for her role in assisting relations between the two diverse cultures in the rapidly changing New World, and for pleading for the life of Captain John Smith. In 1616 she was welcomed to the court of James I, but fell ill off the Kent coast returning home. The beautiful Georgian church has a statue and window dedicated to the princess, but the location of the grave is unknown.

Continuing east, my destination was Reculver, a hamlet on the North Kent coast near Whitstable where the Reverend Robert Hunt, parish vicar, abandoned his wife, and after indiscretions, joined the expedition. There is no travelers' route on the south bank of the Thames, so I twisted the right hand and took the A2/M2/A299, pressing on until I could see the twin twelfth-century towers of the abandoned seventh-century monastery sited on a cliff overlooking the Thames

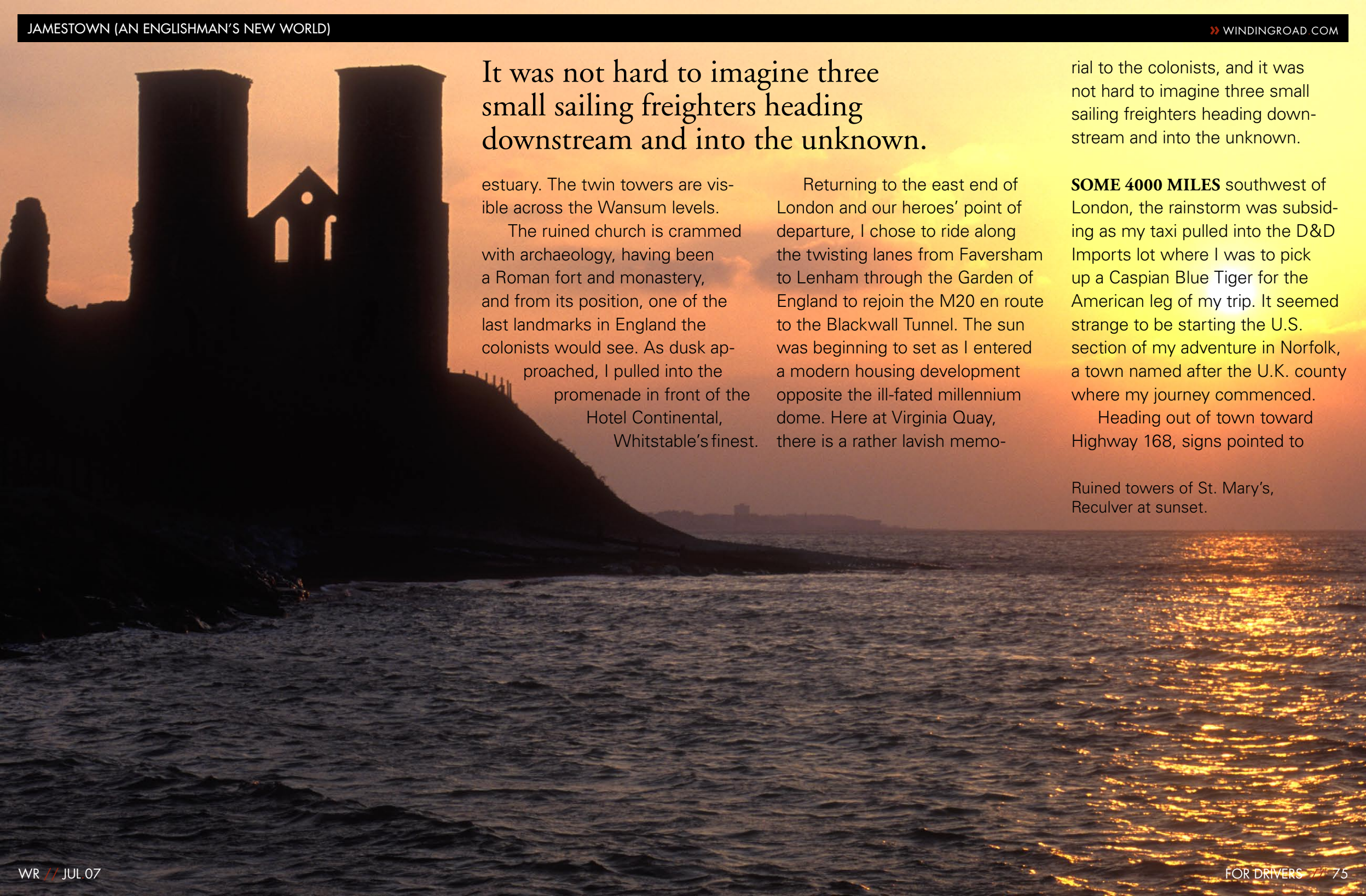


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01, 02, & 03: St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate church. Commemorative window and plaque to John Smith and the Jamestown endeavor.



It was not hard to imagine three small sailing freighters heading downstream and into the unknown.

estuary. The twin towers are visible across the Wansum levels.

The ruined church is crammed with archaeology, having been a Roman fort and monastery, and from its position, one of the last landmarks in England the colonists would see. As dusk approached, I pulled into the promenade in front of the Hotel Continental, Whitstable's finest.

Returning to the east end of London and our heroes' point of departure, I chose to ride along the twisting lanes from Faversham to Lenham through the Garden of England to rejoin the M20 en route to the Blackwall Tunnel. The sun was beginning to set as I entered a modern housing development opposite the ill-fated millennium dome. Here at Virginia Quay, there is a rather lavish memo-

rial to the colonists, and it was not hard to imagine three small sailing freighters heading downstream and into the unknown.

SOME 4000 MILES southwest of London, the rainstorm was subsiding as my taxi pulled into the D&D Imports lot where I was to pick up a Caspian Blue Tiger for the American leg of my trip. It seemed strange to be starting the U.S. section of my adventure in Norfolk, a town named after the U.K. county where my journey commenced.

Heading out of town toward Highway 168, signs pointed to

Ruined towers of St. Mary's, Reculver at sunset.

Tiger parked,
Bonner Island
Bridge over
Oregon Inlet.

Inset: Kill Devil
Hill, home of the
Kitty Hawk. Chil-
dren pass bronze
dedicated to Wilbur
and Orville Wright.

familiar place-names—Portsmouth, Suffolk, and the Isle of Wight. I soon left the metro area, but wind gusts of 50 miles per hour swirled around the bike, making for scary riding. A touch of irony was the blue hurricane evacuation sign, south to what was, in an English adventurer's eyes, Virginia, but in the modern United States is North Carolina.

The lusty triple took me south to Cape Hatteras on the outer banks, past the location of the first failed at-tempt

by Elizabethan England to gain a foothold in the New World, Roanoke Island. The landscape looked familiar as I crossed the bridge from Point Harbor onto the barrier islands made of sand dunes, which have held a tenuous existence for a mere 12,000 to 16,000 years, being formed and reformed by the Atlantic Ocean crashing on its eastern shore, and hurricane winds from the south. The stilted vacation homes that nestled in the dunes also looked

as though they might be temporary if nature let loose.

I turned off Route 158 at Kill Devil Hill, location of man's first flight. On December 17, 1903, at 10:35 a.m., Orville Wright made the world's first powered flight. The Wright brothers, Wilbur and Orville, bicycle shop owners and dreamers, have a memorial park on the site of their epic achievement. I joined the steady stream of visitors and climbed the giant sand dune where the granite monument looks over the first flight path.



A few miles south at Nags Head, I cruised the old highway and booked into a decidedly preseason colonial motel, which painters were remodeling for the tourist invasion. This is a modest



hostel, but its beachfront rooms with a view and location next to the fishing pier are special.

Continuing south across the elegant Bonner Bridge to the Pea Island wildlife refuge is where land and sea merge; the road had patches of sand blown by the storm, and I mused that the optional ABS might have been useful. The thin sandbar is a ship graveyard, with more than 600 vessels floundering. To the south is Cape Hatteras, site of America's tallest lighthouse, which had to be saved from the Atlantic Ocean itself in 1999.

The landscape looked familiar as I crossed the bridge from Point Harbor onto the barrier islands.

I tiptoed from the Cape Hatteras bed-and-breakfast to make it for dawn on the vast beach before the ride north. In 1587, an attempt to create England's first colony was promoted by Sir Walter Raleigh. John White landed more than 100 colonists on Roanoke Island and a settlement was built. I thought my Tiger motorcycle was aptly named, as Sir Richard Grenville's flagship was named Tyger on the ill-fated

venture. John White was not only governor, but also an accomplished artist, and it is his album of watercolors that gives us the only visual record of the Garden of Eden that greeted the Europeans on arrival.

I decided to detour the Roanoke festival gardens, as I had Jamestown ahead, but looking at White's paintings of the Native Americans makes you think it was only to the colonists that this was a New World. Illustrations of villages and methods of fishing, farming, and religion paint a picture of an ordered society. John

White returned home for supplies and promotion, delayed until 1590 in returning due to a little matter of the Spanish Armada, only to find the Lost Colony, as there was no trace of the population.

I went around Albemarle Sound, then skirted Norfolk to the 460 west at Wakefield, then north on Route 31 through Sussex and Surrey counties to the Scotland ferry terminal. The twenty miles



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01: Riding away from Cape Hatteras lighthouse.



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02: Triumph on beach with dunes.



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03: Nags Head Beach.



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04: Edenton, N.C., the Baker House and group of high school kids in revolutionary uniforms.



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It is here that I almost certainly met up with the remains of Gosnold.

to Scotland was a chance to press on, as the smooth blacktop was traffic-free. You could have been in Norfolk in the U.K. if it wasn't for the shotgun shacks and the signs substituting "plantation" for "farm."

Like the first English, my approach to Jamestown Island was by water. I was aboard the ferry *Williamsburg*, which connects Route 31 and passes close to the landing site where John Smith's statue looks south across the river. Historians had pronounced Jamestown dead, but in 1994 Dr. William Kelso dug his first ten-foot-square trench, and artifacts from 1610 were found. Thirteen years later, 700,000 finds including ceramics, tools, trade beads, and skeletons dating back to the bottom layer of 1607 were discovered. This was the original fort site once thought to have been washed into the James River. Discovered and now-surveyed dark stains in the soil revealed the location of bulwarks and postholes,

dimensions conforming to a contemporary account drawn by a Spanish spy. The work continues.

I leaned over a rope, and there was Dr. Kelso supervising the latest trench, happy to field questions from the tourists as part of his original project concept. Many of the finds can be seen in the Archaearium (ar-key-AIR-I-um). It is here that I almost certainly met up with the remains of Gosnold, found buried with his captain's staff, brought eerily to life by a "meet the ancestors"-type forensic re-creation. Work continues on the twenty-two-acre site. However, to mark the 400th birthday, much of the stockade has been re-created in the past six months using the posthole soil staining, and a new visitor center is being built.

The Jamestown Settlement re-creation, across a causeway to the original town, boasts ships, fort, and actors, all of whom bring their take on the hard life 400 years past. In the vicinity, my bed-and-breakfast inn extended the same time-warp experience—four-poster beds, period decor, and a hearty homemade breakfast. I bet Gosnold and his 103 comrades would have checked in given the choice.



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01: Replicas of ships that made the voyage from England.

02: Dr. Kelso at Jamestown.

03: Actor demonstrates the matchlock.



Nearby to the east is Jamestown, the original site of the first permanent English colony in North America. On 14 May 1607, a group of just over 100 men and boys recruited by the Virginia Company of London came ashore and established a settlement at Jamestown Island. They constructed a palisaded fort there within the territory of the Paspahegh Indians, who with other Virginia Indians had frequent contact with the English. In 1619 the first English representative legislative body in North America met there, and the first documented Africans arrived. Jamestown served as the capital of the Virginia colony from 1607 to 1699. Historic Jamestowne preserves this original site and the archaeological remains.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES

Author and 1050-cc Tiger reach Jamestown historic marker after 1150-mile journey through England, North Carolina, and Virginia.

