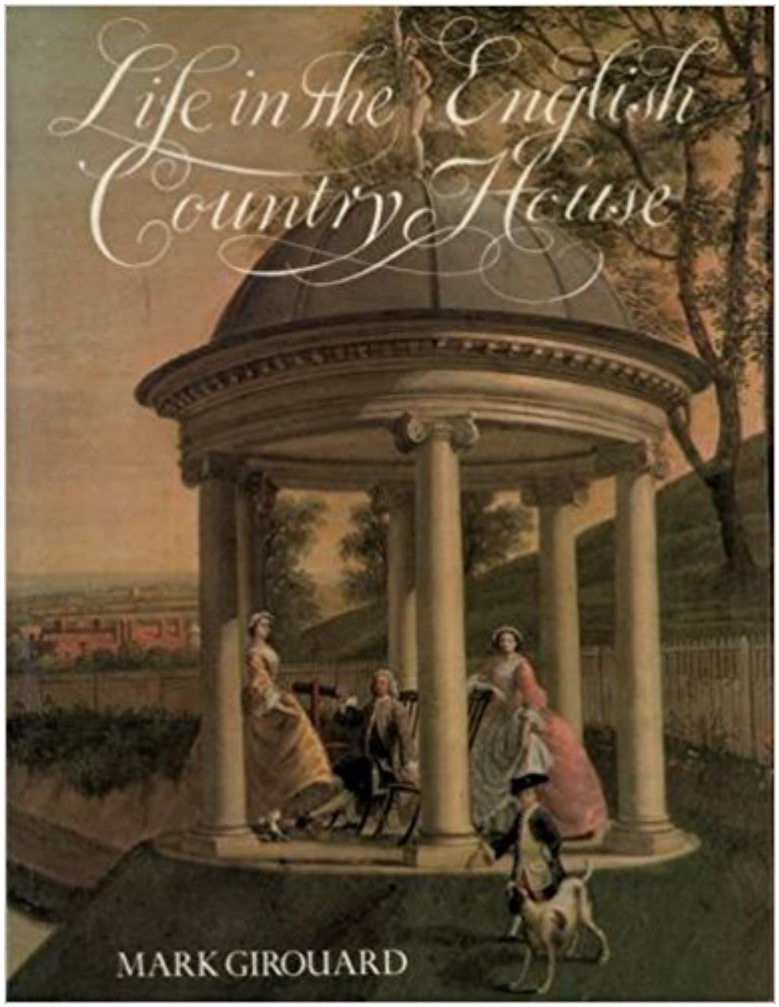
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Life In The English Country House: A Social And Architectural History



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Synopsis

Based on the author’s Slade lectures given at Oxford University in 1975-76.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Mark Girouard is one of Britain’s leading architectural historians. His books include The English Town, Cities and People, The Victorian Country House, The Return to Camelot, Robert Smythson and the Elizabethan Country House, Victorian Pubs, Sweetness and Light, and Town and Country. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

If you wish to read extensively on the evolution of the English country house from the Middle Ages to the 20th century, this is an erudite, lucid and compelling read. Written by Oxford architectural historian, Marik Girouard, his narrative illustrates how social, political and economic changes were reflected in the architecture. He provides the context for the evolution in style which fascinates.He provides a perspective on the life of the upper class in England for over 500 years. You see how they dined, entertained, slept, socialized, and interacted with their servants, tenants, King and Queen and villagers. There are accompanying images - about 250 with 33 in color. I would have liked more color images, but wouldn’t have wanted to sacrifice much of the text for it. There were enough images to support the author’s major points.Some of the details which fascinated:* the word ’parlour’ came from monastic context in the monks’ telling rooms - the word came via the French parler: to talk* in the 1600’s it was more important to be witty than learned. Folks admired ’the device’ or ingenuity which appeared in their homes, too* closets weren’t initially clothes-storage

place - closets were for the owner’s private space where he/she met his/her closest friends and occasional romantic liasons* Elizabeth I had her own homes, but preferred to stay in others - if a Lord or individual got too powerful or rich, she and her entourage would stay with them and cause financial hardship* Libraries weren’t originally in house plans until after the 1600’s as most owners didn’t own too many books, and book learningwasn’t as important until later* Symmetry represented divine order - as many marriages were arranged for political and financial regions, male and female had their own rooms and spaceThere are many more fascinating details in this book. It is highly informative, and might take a second reading to grasp it all. You will feel you are sitting in an engaging class on architectural and social history at Oxford while reading this book

A great book with lots of details. Perhaps more for the student of architecture than history itself. Would have liked more illustrations and pictures, but overall a good book.

Covers the development of the English country house in detail, with particular attention to the internal lay out. Two small criticisms - 1 - this is a solid, academic, rather "dry" book which perhaps should be read in conjunction with Girouard’s " A Country House Companion," which would appear to be all the bits he left out of this, and is, on its own a "slight", "wet", gossipy book. 2 - in both books I feel he is much more comfortable on his medieval history than on his 1870-1950 history. Having said that, you will go away from this book with a thorough understanding of how living in a hall, developed into living in a drawing room, and how so much about our homes today has deep roots.

an older fascinating social history filed with good history and marvellous antecdotes, and good art comment; very interesting

Given as a gift based on WSJ review. The recipient thought the book was excellent. I intend to buy a copy for myself based on his rave review.

Clear, concise, with amazing illustrations, this was a fascinating read from page one to The End. The sections were well organized and the author deserves credit for making what could have been a boring read, lively and informational.

excellent .

Just what I always wanted to know....It brings you back into the times of Mr.Darcy, yet it is more the just entertaining. Great book!

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