

Kirkby Lonsdale and District Civic Society

Spring Course 2022

The English Country House **By Roger Mitchell**

A three ½ day course studying the English Country House
Saturday 19th March
Saturday 26th March
Saturday 2nd April

THE ENGLISH COUNTRY HOUSE

Country Houses are rather more than big houses in the country. They are power houses, the seats of the great landowners who dominated their area, ran their county and played a central role in the government of the country. This state of affairs lasted until the end of the 19th century and the period from the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 to the death of George III in 1820 was perhaps the golden age of country house architecture. The country house was at the cutting edge of architectural fashion and sophistication, displaying the wealth and power of the ruling classes. The contents and collections provided evidence of their money, their travels and their taste. Great noblemen were likely to have several country houses and yet needed to spend most of the year in London attending court and parliament. Their country houses are magnificent, but not necessarily homely or personal. Country gentlemen and their families were more likely to be year round residents and often it is those smaller houses that we find most attractive and most enviable.

This course will look at the full range of country houses, analysing both their social and their architectural history over six centuries. It will be fully illustrated with Powerpoint presentations including archive material as well as modern colour images. The approach will be chronological and the topic fits very conveniently into 3 half days.

Day1 – Part 1 The late Mediaeval and early Tudor Country House

Day 1 – Part 2 – The Elizabethan and Jacobean Country House

Day 2 – Part 1 The Stuart and Baroque Country House

Day 2 – Part 2 - The Georgian Country House

Day 3 - Part 1 – The Victorian Country House

Day 3 – Part 2 - The Country House in the 20th and 21st Century

Information sheets with ideas for further reading and for visits will be provided for each session but for those who like to do a bit of preliminary work, here are a few thoughts.

BOOKS – There are numerous books on Country Houses but, for me, two stand out

M.Girouard Life in the English Country House (1978)

S.Jenkins England's Thousand Best Houses (2003)

INTERNET - Almost all Country Houses now have their own website and many of them are excellent, and often quite individual. Google will get you almost everywhere but good general starting places are www.nationaltrust.org.uk, www.english-heritage.org.uk and www.hha.org.uk (the Historic Houses Association (HHA) represents most houses in private ownership).

VISITS – Tourists have been visiting country houses since the 18th century. Today there are approximately 1,000 country houses that open to the public in England and perhaps another 400 in Wales, Scotland and Ireland. Some of these only open their gardens or are only open occasionally. Somewhere around 500 houses open regularly – 150 belong to the National Trust and 50 (some ruined) belong to English Heritage. Many of the greatest ancestral houses like Chatsworth and Castle Howard are now educational trusts and are protected from inheritance tax. The rest are in private or institutional ownership, including some that are used as schools or hotels.

VENUE

The course will be held in Barbon Village Hall from 1.00 to 4.00pm. For information on the hall including directions see the web site. The address is: <http://barbonvillagehall.strikingly.com>

Refreshments will be served in the break between the lectures

TUTOR

Roger studied History at Oxford and Fine Arts at Leeds. He was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to travel and study in the USA. Former College Vice - Principal who now lectures for Liverpool University and for Adult Residential Colleges. Organises and leads country house study tours and tries to find time to do research on British and American Country Houses.

The course is open to all at a cost of £30/£40/£15 . Members £30/£15 Non Members £40

You can also attend for just one day if numbers allow. Cost is £15 for a one day attendance.

Due to Covid the course numbers may be restricted. Covid procedures as applicable.

If you wish to attend the course please complete the details below and return to

Margaret Bunch, Berryby Cottage, Barbon, Kirkby Lonsdale LA6 2LR

Telephone: 015242 76494

E mail: mjabunch@aol.com

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Telephone Number:

E mail:

I am attending 3 half days

I am attending one half day. Date attending.....

We will then send details for payment once we have the required numbers for the course to go ahead.