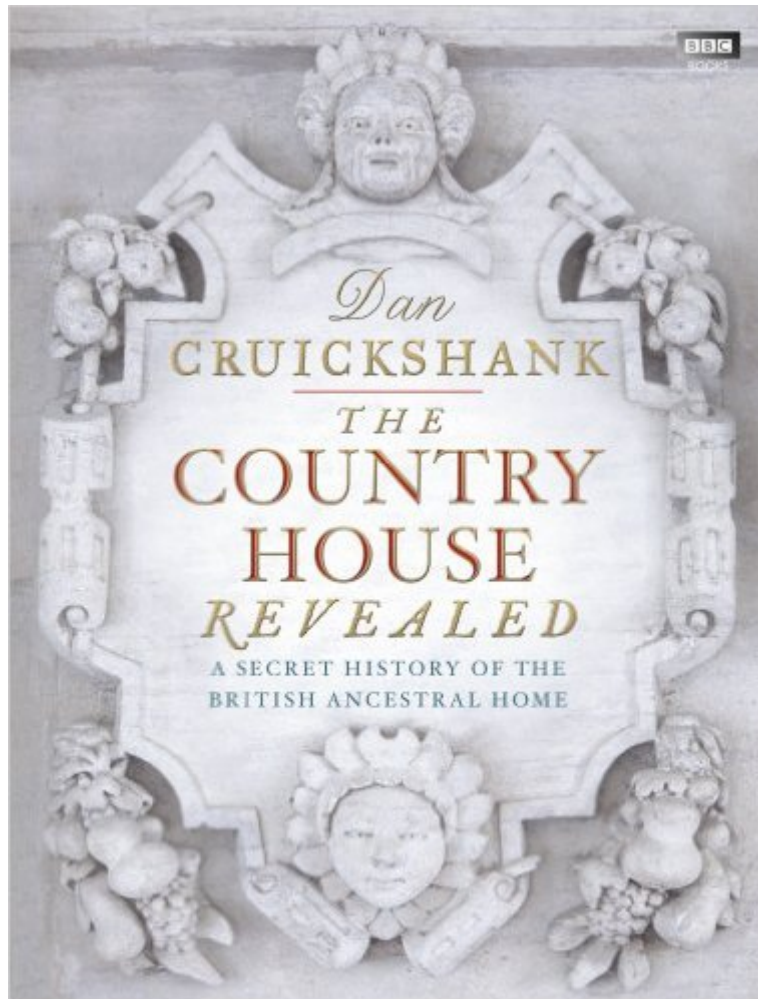


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The Country House Revealed: A Secret History Of The British Ancestral Home



Synopsis

Dan Cruickshank uncovers the secret history of six of Britain's greatest private country houses, each never-before seen on television, and none open to the public. Spanning the architectural history of the country house from the disarming Elizabethan charm of South Wraxall, the classical rigor of Kinross in Scotland, the majesty and ingenuity of Hawksmoor's Easton Neston, the Palladian sweep of Wentworth Woodhouse with over 300 rooms and frontage of 600 feet, the imperial exuberance of Clondeboyne, through to the ebullient vitality of Lutyens's Marshcourt, the stories of these houses tell the story of the English nation. All are buildings of the greatest architectural interest, each with a fascinating human story to tell, and all remain private homes that are closed to the public. But their owners have opened their doors and allowed Dan Cruickshank to roam the corridors and rummage in the cellars as he teases out the story of each house—who built them, the generations who lived in them, and the families who lost them. Along the way he has uncovered tales of excess and profligacy, tragedy, comedy, power, and ambition. And as these intriguing narratives take shape, Dan shows how the story of each house is inseparable from the social and economic history of Britain. Each one is built as a wave of economic development crests, or crumbles. Each one's architecture and design is thus expressive of the aims, strengths, and frailties of those who built them. Together they plot the psychological, economic, and social route map of the country's ruling class in a rich new telling of this island story.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you are fascinated by the history of British design and architecture, this book, based upon the PBS series, details the history of six British country homes which were not open to the public when the book was written. They are of a variety of styles and have colorful histories which are a microcosm of Britain's larger history as a nation. They include the history of the homes and the families which inhabited them. They include: South Wraxall ~ built in the early 15th century, located at South Wraxall in Wiltshire, England. Kinross, Scotland ~ a Palladian masterpiece built by William Bruce for his own home. Sadly, he never occupied it. Easton Neston ~ a country house in Northamptonshire, England. It is in Baroque style designed by the architect Nicholas Hawksmoor. Wentworth Woodhouse ~ largest private home in England, located in South Yorkshire - 250,000 square feet of space with longest facade in Britain. Clondeboyne, Northern Ireland ~ current home dates from 1801. Marshcourt ~ designed by Lutyens. Made out of chalk - recently decorated by Robert Couturier. Each home has a distinct personality and style. Author Dan Cruickshank provides a comprehensive discussion of the houses' distinguishing features and their life through the years. The book is about 1/2 text and 1/2 photos and is well-designed. For those who love the history of old homes, it is a fascinating read. It will make you want to view the series on which it is based.

I am a person of few words on this sort of thing... I did like this very much and it's worth the price, which is discounted here on . It is great to have an English Country House book that covers Wentworth Woodhouse. The text is quite good, it is not a coffee table book, which makes it more readable in size. There are many color photos on almost every page. I am glad to add it to my collection.

Awesome book. I really enjoyed this one. Great narrative and fabulous pictures.

This was a gift for my sister. Our family name is Wentworth and when I saw this series on our local PBS I had to get this for her (the series was not shown in her area). Was looking for the DVD of the series, but (so far) it's only available in the UK. This was the next best thing for her to see Wentworth Woodhouse.

More for architectural fans.

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