

## Survival and Revival: The Country House in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

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**Start date** 24 June 2016 **End date** 26 June 2016

**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge

**Tutor** Dr Kerry Bristol FSA **Course code** 1516NRX073

**Director of Programmes** Emma Jennings

**For further information on this  
course, please contact**

Public Programme Co-ordinator, Clare Kerr  
[clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk) or 01223 746237

**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

Kerry Bristol is senior lecturer in history of architecture at the University of Leeds, where she has taught since 1999. Her research interests encompass the history, historiography and methodologies of British and Irish architecture and sculpture between c.1600 and c.1840. Her special interests are British and European Neo-Classicism, patronage and the rise of the architectural profession, women as patrons and consumers in the long eighteenth century, and country house culture between the Elizabethan era and the present day (including their role as museums in the twenty-first century). She is currently researching and writing a book on everyday life in the eighteenth century at Nostell Priory and researching a study of public sculpture in Leeds and the West Riding.

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## Course programme

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### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

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|---------------|---|
| 19:00         | Dinner  |
| 20:30 – 22:00 | Session 1: <b>Introduction:</b> The Country House and 'Heritage' Before and After World War I |
| 22:00         | Terrace bar open for informal discussion  |

### Saturday

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 07:30         | Breakfast   |
| 09:00 – 10:30 | Session 2: <b>Between the Wars.</b> In this class we will discuss the early years of <i>Country Life</i> magazine and The National Trust, exploring those aims and objectives they held in common and how their attitudes to the future of the country house developed.         |
| 10:30         | Coffee  |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | Session 3: <b>World War II and Decay and Destruction in the 1950s and 1960s</b> focuses on a difficult time for the country house, when high taxation and low levels of public interest resulted in dereliction and demolition.   |
| 13:00         | Lunch   |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | Free  |
| 16:00         | Tea   |
| 16:30 – 18:00 | Session 4: <b>Opening to the Public.</b> In this session we will look at how opening to the public proved to be the saviour of many houses, and the ways in which new marketing techniques were exploited at houses such as Woburn Abbey, Beaulieu and Longleat.                |
| 18:00 – 18:30 | Free  |
| 18:30         | Dinner  |
| 20:00 – 21:30 | Session 5: <b>Making 'Heritage' Pay in the 1970s and 1980s</b> continues our exploration of the ways in which houses were displayed to the public, the role of the interior decorator, and the pioneering efforts of V&A staff to turn back the clock at Osterley and Ham House |
| 21:30         | Terrace bar open for informal discussion  |

### Sunday

|       |           |
|-------|-----------|
| 07:30 | Breakfast |
|-------|-----------|

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 09:00 – 10:30 | Session 6: <b>Restore, Recreate or Reinterpret?: The 1980s and 1990s.</b><br>This class will use houses such as Calke Abbey, Althorp and Houghton Hall to compare and contrast the different approaches to displaying 'history' and 'heritage' in these crucial decades. |
| 10:30         | Coffee   |
| 11:00 – 12:30 | Session 7: <b>Into the 21st Century</b> brings the story up to date using successes such as Tyntesfield and Dumfries House to explain why some heritage campaigns succeed and others fail.   |
| 12:45         | Lunch  |

**The course will disperse after lunch**

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## Course syllabus

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### Aims:

This course aims to introduce students to:

1. The visual and textual documentation relating to country house history in the twentieth century;
2. Changes in attitude towards country houses and their owners that took place before and after WWII;
3. How country house owners have adapted to survive;
4. The role exhibitions and the National Trust have played in raising awareness of the country house as part of our heritage;
5. Different methods of display and interpretation of country houses and their contents.

### Content:

Country houses rank among the most visited heritage sites in Britain, protected by government legislation and public demand, yet many houses have been demolished and their collections continue to be sold off. This course will question whether the twentieth century was one of doom and gloom or one in which successful country house owners adapted to survive. Key areas to be considered are the impact of *Country Life* magazine, the National Trust's Country Houses scheme, and exhibitions such as the *Destruction of the Country House* and *Treasure Houses of Britain*. Students will be encouraged to draw on their own experiences as country house visitors and consumers of 'national heritage'.

### Presentation of the course:

To introduce students to the history of country houses in the twentieth century, each session will include an illustrated lecture and an opportunity for students to draw on their own memories of country house visiting.

### Outcomes:

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

1. Determine for themselves whether the twentieth century was one of 'doom and gloom' or 'adapt and survive';
2. Identify times of key change in country house history, e.g. the foundation of the National Trust's Country Houses Scheme, the *Destruction of the Country House* exhibition;
3. Identify ways in which country houses have been presented to the public, e.g. as a family day out, as elite culture, as an educational 'upstairs, downstairs' tool through which visitors can explore the past.

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

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| Author                                  | Title  | Publisher and date   |
|---|--|--|
| Aslet, Clive                            | <i>The Last Country Houses</i>   | New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982 (and later editions) |
| Bedford, John, Duke of                  | <i>A Silver-Plated Spoon</i>   | London: Cassell & Co., 1959 (and later editions)                       |
| Bedford, John, Duke of and George Mikes | <i>How to Run a Stately Home</i>   | London: Andre Deutsch, 1971 (and later editions)                       |
| Cannadine, David                        | <i>The Decline &amp; Fall of the British Aristocracy</i>                                       | London: Penguin, 1990 (and later editions)                             |
| Cornforth, John                         | <i>The Country Houses of England 1948-1998</i>   | London: Constable, 1998  |
| Cornforth, John                         | <i>The inspiration of the past: country house taste in the twentieth century</i>               | Harmondsworth: Viking in association with Country Life, 1985           |
| Harris, John                            | <i>No Voice From the Hall. Early Memories of a Country House Snooper</i>                       | London: John Murray, 1998  |
| Harris, John                            | <i>Echoing Voices. More Memories of a Country House Snooper</i>                                | London: John Murray, 2003  |
| Lees-Milne, James (ed)                  | <i>The National Trust: a record of fifty years' achievement</i>                                | London: B.T. Batsford, 1945  |
| Lees-Milne, John                        | 'The Early Years of the Country houses Scheme', in <i>The National Trust Year Book 1976-77</i> | London: Europa Publications, n.d., pp.81-87.                           |
| Littlejohn, David                       | <i>The Fate of the English Country House</i>   | Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997                                  |
| Lowenthal, David                        | <i>The Past is a Foreign Country</i>   | Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985 (and later editions)       |

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|--|--|---|
| Mandler, Peter                                   | <i>The Fall and Rise of the Stately Home</i>               | New Haven and<br>London: Yale<br>University Press, 1997 |
| Miller, James                                    | <i>Fertile Fortune. The Story of Tyntesfield</i>           | London: The National<br>Trust, 2003                     |
| Strong, Roy, Marcus<br>Binney and John<br>Harris | <i>The Destruction of the Country House 1875-<br/>1975</i> | London: Thames and<br>Hudson, 1974                      |

### Website addresses

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 18 April 2016