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The Courtauld

Looking Back, Looking Forward:

The Work and Legacy of Mark Girouard

**The Courtauld Institute of Art
26 October 2024**

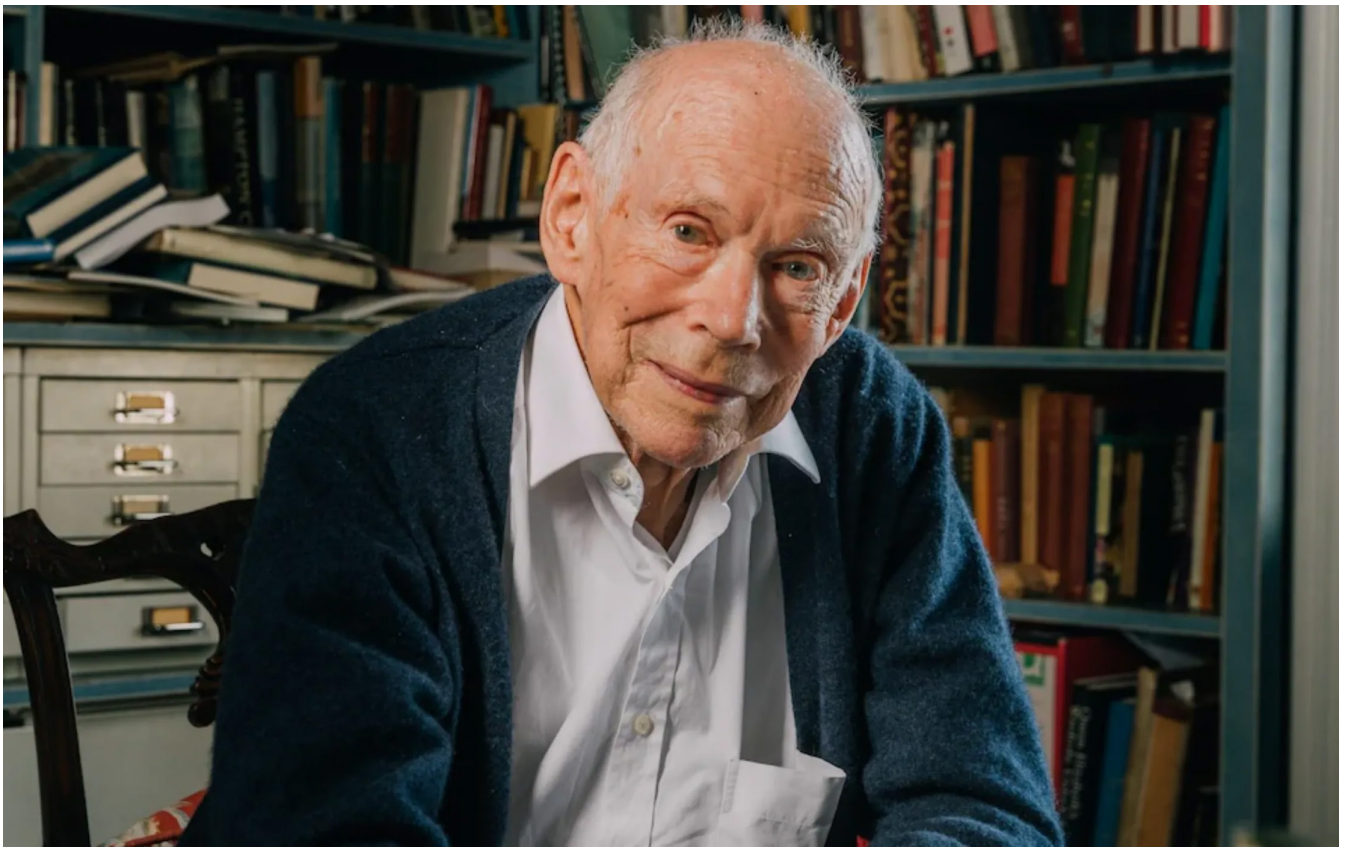


Image: Mark Girouard at home in Notting Hill
CREDIT: Daniel Gould/Country Life/Future PLC

Introduction

This symposium – organised jointly by The Courtauld, the University of Kent, and the SAHGB – celebrates the extraordinary work and legacy of Mark Girouard (1931-2022), one of Britain’s greatest architectural historians, whose work continues to revolutionise the scope and perceptions of the discipline both within academia and beyond. Mark’s knowledge and expertise were as eclectic as they were ground-breaking, whilst his infectious passion and willingness to share them with, and foster them in others, was truly remarkable. It will provide an opportunity for some of the leading architectural historians of Britain and Ireland to both reflect on how the vast corpus of Mark’s work has influenced their own thinking in the past, and, most importantly, to present new research and novel insights within the various fields impacted by Mark’s writing. The symposium has been planned to take place as part of the foundational year of the SAHGB’s Girouard Fund, established in Mark’s name to support publications, research and programmes in architectural history.

This event is in collaboration with SAHGB.

Organised by Dr Manolo Guerci, Reader in Architecture at the School of Architecture, Design and Planning, University of Kent; Dr Kyle Leyden, Lecturer in Early Modern Architecture and Visual Culture and Prof. Elizabeth McKellar, President of the SAHGB.

University of
Kent

Architecture
Design and
Planning (ADP)

SAHGB

Programme

Saturday 26 October

10.00-10.30 Registration opens

Coffee and tea provided

10.30-10.50 Opening remarks, and introduction to the day

Manolo Guerci, University of Kent; Mark Hallett, The Courtauld; Dorothy Girouard.

10.50-11.30 Keynote 'Life in the English Country House: old contexts, new directions.'

Maurice Howard, University of Sussex. Introduced by Manolo Guerci.

11.30-13.15 Session I - Interpreting the Early Modern Period

Chaired by Manolo Guerci, University of Kent

Gordon Higgott, independent architectural historian

'Inigo Jones and the Vitruvian panelled Door.'

Emily Cole, Historic England,

'The Country House State Apartment.'

Margot Finn, University College London,

'Country Houses as Company Houses.'

Frances Sands, Sir John Soane's Museum,

'Space Explorers: thoughts on Mark Girouard's interdisciplinary approach to architectural history.'

13.15-14.00 Lunch

Provided for all attendees with ticket purchase

14.00-15.25 Session II - The Irish Country House

Chaired by Kyle Leyden, The Courtauld

Patricia McCarthy, independent architectural historian,

'Dinning and wining in the Irish Country House.'

John Martin Robinson, Architectural Historian and Officer of Arms,

'James Wyatt at Curraghmore.'

Edward McParland, Trinity College Dublin,

'Mark Girouard's idea of Ireland.'

15.25-15.45 Tea Break

Coffee and Tea provided

15.45-17.05 Session III - Reflections on the Victorian and Modern Periods

Chaired by Elizabeth McKellar, President of the SAHGB.

Andrew Saint, former General Editor, The Survey of London,
'The Pubs Book'.

Michael Hall, The Victorian Society,
'Sweetness and Light and The Return to Camelot'.

Alan Powers, University of Kent, London School of Architecture,
'Writing about Modern Architecture'

17.05-17.35 Round Table - Where Next?

Jeremy Musson, Historic Houses Foundation

Manolo Guerri, University of Kent

Kyle Leyden, The Courtauld

17.35-17.40 Concluding remarks

Elizabeth McKellar, President of the SAHGB

17.40 Drinks reception

Abstracts

Keynote | Maurice Howard', University of Sussex, 'Life in the English Country House: old contexts, new directions'

Mark Girouard's most widely acclaimed book transformed the way we looked at the interface of the style of buildings and their everyday use. In this paper I will attempt to place this great achievement in the period of its germination and publication, into the broader context of the writing of social and political history, and trace something of its impact on the design of later books on social-art historical themes and indeed on the huge media interest in these subjects today.

Maurice Howard is Professor Emeritus of Art History at the University of Sussex and in his early wandering years taught at Pennsylvania State University and the University of St Andrews. He is the author and co-author of many publications on 16th and 17th century British architecture, painting and the applied arts. He is the former Chairman and President of SAHGB and Director and President of the Society of Antiquaries of London.

Session I – Interpreting the Early Modern Period

Gordon Higgott, independent architectural historian, 'Inigo Jones and the Vitruvian panelled door'

The classical precedents in Vitruvius for panelled and folding doors intrigued Inigo Jones, who had trained as a joiner as well as a painter. He discovered these in his copies of Daniele Barbaro's 1567 Italian edition of Vitruvius, with plates by Palladio, and his copy of Philander's 1550 Latin edition, now lost. Aside from identifying the mouldings and panel divisions of temple doors (Book IV, chapter 2), and pursuing them in his copies of Palladio's *I quattro libri dell'architettura* (1601) and Scamozzi's *L'idea della architettura universale* (1615), he discovered two-leaf folding windows (*fenestrarum valvata*), which Vitruvius states were used by the Greeks in dining rooms, opening onto gardens (Book VI, chapter 6). Jones appears to have been responsible for the early use of such French windows in England, at Queen Henrietta Maria's garden villa, the 'Queen's House', at Greenwich Palace, in 1632-40, and at her rural retreat, Wimbledon Manor, in 1640-41. His favoured type of folding door, with raised and fielded panels, is a known group of six designs, drawn by John Webb in c. 1648, which he approved for the doors of the state rooms in the south range at Wilton House.

Gordon Higgott is an independent scholar specialising in architectural drawings and design practice in early modern Britain. He has catalogued collections of drawings at Sir John Soane's Museum, St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, the Royal Institute of British Architects, and Chatsworth House. He has published widely on the work of Inigo Jones and is currently preparing a critical edition of Jones's annotated copy of Palladio's *I quattro libri dell'architettura* (Venice, 1601) at Worcester College, Oxford. For many years he was a historic buildings inspector at English Heritage (now Historic England).

Emily Cole, Historic England, 'The Country House State Apartment'

This paper will consider the Elizabethan and Jacobean state apartment - the 'best' rooms in the Early Modern country house, as seen at buildings including Hardwick Hall, Hatfield House, Bramshill and Audley End. The paper will cover the decoration and planning of the state rooms, and will discuss their relationship to the planning of the country house as a whole. Above all, however, it will focus on the use of the state apartment - a subject which was of particular interest to Mark Girouard.

Emily Cole is a Senior Investigator for Historic England. An alumna of The Courtauld, she is the author of several architectural texts including *The Grammar of Architecture* (2002); *A Concise History of Architectural Styles* (2003); *Lived in London: Blue Plaques and the Stories Behind Them* (2009); *Architectural Details: A Visual Guide to 5000 Years of Building Styles*; and the Historic England publication *Stevenage: Pioneering New Town Centre* (2021). Her current research focuses on pubs, country houses and royal progresses.

Margot Finn, University College London, 'Country Houses as Company Houses'

This paper explores the acquisition, refurbishment and use of country houses by the East India Company's ruling classes, c. 1770–1830s as a mechanism for 'naturalising' colonial wealth and power. It asks what motivated this investment, what aesthetic choices it encouraged (and discouraged) and how Company families and later stakeholders revised their stately home histories in the Victorian and later periods.

Margot Finn is Astor Professor of British History at UCL. Her research on the impact in Britain of the East India Company (including its impact on stately homes and country house cultures) has resulted in a publications that include the open access volume of essays, *The East India Company at Home, 1757-1857*.

Frances Sands, Sir John Soane's Museum, 'Space Explorers: thoughts on Mark Girouard's interdisciplinary approach to architectural history'

When asked why I pursue architectural history as opposed to the other arts, I typically call attention to architecture as the container for human activity. To study architecture is not merely an enjoyment of changing form, structure and style, but a study of the evolving wants and need of mankind. This interdisciplinary approach of an architectural-cum-social historian was championed - if not innovated - by Mark Girouard within his numerous published works. Girouard's approach to our discipline has paved the way for many of us to branch out into a more subtle approach to the study of architecture than our forebears, in which architectural, social and anthropological history exist in parallel.

This paper will use a short book review, written by Girouard in 1983/4 for *The New York Review*, and revolving around the subject of Sir John Soane, as a case study to illustrate his interdisciplinary approach. Frankly, Girouard's text is more of a miniature treatise on Soane

that it is a book review, and illustrates not only his nuanced methodology, but also the breadth of his knowledge. He writes with absolute clarity and accuracy about Soane - his architecture, his background, even his state of mind - and all this about an architect who fell outside of Girouard's purported areas of specialism.

Frances Sands is the Curator of Drawings and Books at Sir John Soane's Museum, London, where she has worked since 2010. Prior to this Fran studied for a PhD at the University of York. Her research interests lie in seventeenth- to nineteenth-century British architectural drawings. She has written various exhibitions and publishes and lectures widely. She has also served as a trustee or in an advisory capacity for various organisations including the SAHGB, Mausolea and Monuments Trust, Grinling Gibbons Society, ADAM Architecture, the Split Institute of Art History, and the National Trust's specialist advice network.

Session II – The Irish Country House

Patricia McCarthy, independent architectural historian, 'Dining and wining the Irish Country House'

From ancient times, hospitality has been a hallmark of the Irish. The 18c was a time of peace, after the political unrest and destruction of buildings in the previous century, when landowners, together with their architects, planned houses for themselves and their families. Castletown, built from 1720 by William Conolly, Speaker of the Irish of Commons, was a pivotal event in Irish architectural history as the first and, arguably, the finest Palladian house in Ireland. For landowners, the plan was ideal: the extended frontage to the house, the kitchen and services at a remove in one pavilion, and the convenience of the stables in the other, was a major talking point among those who were planning their own houses, in which they intended to entertain, just like their forebears.

Patricia McCarthy is an architectural historian and author of *Life in the Country House in Georgian Ireland* (2016) - published by Yale University Press, and influenced by Mark Girouard's iconic *Life in the English Country House* - and '*A favourite Study*': *Building the King's Inns* (2006). She has published widely on eighteenth and early nineteenth-century architecture in a number of books and publications such as the *Irish Arts Review*, *Country Life* and *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*. Her most recent book, *Enjoying Claret in Georgian Ireland: A History of Amiable Excess* (2022), looks at the vast quantities of claret consumed by the well-heeled in Georgian Ireland.

John Martin Robinson, Architectural Historian and Officer of Arms, 'Mark Girouard and Curraghmore'

The talk will blend genealogy and architectural history and show how Mark's interest in architecture and architectural history developed out of his family background and experience, especially his youth, spending his school and university holidays with his aunt (Evelyn Duchess of Devonshire) at Hardwick and his mother's family at Curraghmore in County Waterford, after his mother, Lady Maude de la Poer Beresford was killed in a motor accident in 1940.

His interest in Robert Smythson came from the former, and his major work - the revelatory *Life in the English Country House* - was inspired by his own experience. He was interested in the glorious Georgian architecture of Curraghmore throughout his life. Just before his death he became interested in the discovery of new archival material at Curraghmore, showing that James Wyatt's work there dated from 1770-71; much earlier than previously thought, and making it some of Wyatt's earliest work. This has ignited a re-assessment both of Curraghmore and also of Wyatt's

Irish works.

Mark's family was a British Imperial family. His grandfather Sir Percy Girouard was a Catholic French Canadian descended from the minor nobility of Brittany, sparking his interest in French houses which resulted in his *Life in the French Country House* of 2000. Sir Percy Girouard was a colleague of Kitchener in Africa, a railway engineer, administrator and soldier who built the railway across the Nubian Desert, was involved in the Boer War, and became the High Commissioner of Nigeria. His maternal grandfather, the Marquess of Lansdowne, was Governor General of Canada and his house, Bowood, provided an Adam balance to Wyatt in Ireland.

John Martin Robinson is a herald, genealogist, historian and architectural historian. He worked for the GLC Historic Buildings Division from 1974 until its abolition in 1986, and was employed by English Heritage for 2 years.

He has been an architectural writer in *Country Life* for 50 years. His over 30 books include the biography of James Wyatt, a study of Georgian Model Farms, the Oxford Guide to Heraldry, the History of the Travellers Club, the quincennial history of the Dukes of Norfolk, a biography of Cardinal Consalvi, an edition of the 6th Duke of Devonshire's Handbook to Chatsworth, and numerous monographs on Houses churches and royal palaces. He was a trustee of the Lakeland Arts Trust for 20 years, served on the Lake District Committee of the National Trust for 10 years, was vice chairman of the Georgian Group (founding the Young Georgians and the casework committee), chairman of the Westminster Cathedral Art and Architecture Committee, and a trustee of Arundel Castle, Wilton House, and Burghley House, where he is currently writing a history of the house with photographs by Ashley Hicks. He has advised on the restoration of numerous historic buildings. He is a landowner in the north of England with urban property in Preston and Blackpool (shops offices flats and a car park) and 3 farms including fishing on the River Lune, a mobile phone mast at Whittle, woodlands and an SSSI of European significance noted for its rare orchids and 200 species of moths/ butterflies.

Edward McParland, Trinity College, Dublin, 'Mark Girouard's idea of Ireland'

Mark Girouard maintained close connections with Ireland and its architecture throughout his life. His mother, Lady Blanche Girouard, was a daughter of the 6th Marquess of Waterford and became a renowned figure in the Celtic Revival at the beginning of the twentieth century. As a result, Mark spent a great deal of his childhood and wartime adolescence being shipped between relatives living in the great houses of Ireland, in particular his grandfather's seat at Curraghmore in Co. Waterford - a fascinating and ancient house with romantic origins in the twelfth century, later extended and remodelled in various phases by (among others) Richard Castle, James Wyatt and Samuel Usher Roberts. His interests in Irish architecture - and particularly that of the Irish 'Big House' - bore fruit in a large body of work, much of which remains the definitive word on his chosen subjects. This talk will critically examine Mark's writings on Irish architecture and place them in the context of the network of Irish connections he built up during his career. Attention will be given to the efforts of Mark and a number of others critically concerned with the fate of Irish architecture during the 1960s and 1970s to help establish an Irish Victorian Society - a short-lived but nonetheless influential period in Irish architectural history. It will examine his characterisation of the Anglo-Irish world his mother had inhabited through architectural patronage and more widely, and it will put all of this into the context of the past and more current British contexts to assess his impact and continued influence in Ireland.

Edward McParland: Fellow emeritus of Trinity College Dublin; author of *James Gandon* (1985), *Public architecture in Ireland 1680-1760* (2001), *The language of architectural classicism* (2024). Co-founder with Nicholas Robinson of The Irish Architectural Archive.

Session III – Reflections on the Victorian and Modern Periods

Andrew Saint, former General Editor, The Survey of London, 'The Pubs Book'

Victorian Pubs is Mark Girouard's most companionable book. If Mark was often a lone scholar, the pubs book reveals him at his most sociable, wide-ranging and demotic, eager to find out about ordinary folk's tastes and habits, intrigued by beer, its production and statistics, and zestful about an urban architecture that had to be dealt with in a quite different way from the exalted country houses of his previous endeavours. The book developed out of London pub crawls undertaken with many friends. Foremost among them was the dedicatee, 'P F Fellow Drinker' – Peter Ferriday, a fellow-founder of the Victorian Society, now almost a forgotten figure. But a whole team of friends, helpers and photographers assisted Mark with this delightful yet deeply scholarly book. Now that more than fifty pubs a month are closing, it is timely to revisit and enjoy Victorian Pubs over again.

Andrew Saint was Professor of Architecture at Cambridge between 1995 and 2006, and then General Editor of the Survey of London until 2015. He has written five independent books and is currently concluding a study of Waterloo Bridge.

Michael Hall, The Victorian Society, 'Sweetness and Light and The Return to Camelot'

This paper will discuss *Sweetness and Light* and *The Return to Camelot* in terms of the unified view of late-Victorian culture they present, linked in particular by ideas about gender. On re-reading them, they appear as if they form a sort of diptych, although one does not know whether Mark ever conceived of them in that way.

Michael Hall: Between 1989 and 2004 Michael Hall worked for Country Life as successively an architectural writer, Architectural Editor and Deputy Editor. He has since been Editor of Apollo (2004–10) and The Burlington Magazine (2017–24) and is acting chair of the Events Committee of the Victorian Society, which he joined in 1982. Among his books are *The English Country House from the Archives of Country Life* (1994), *Waddesdon Manor: The Biography of a Rothschild House* (3rd ed., 2012) and *George Frederick Bodley and the Later Gothic Revival in Britain and America* (2014). He is writing a queer history of the National Trust and two essays in the catalogue for the forthcoming exhibition on Philip Webb at the Bard Graduate Center, New York, and the V&A.

Alan Powers, University of Kent, London School of Architecture, 'Writing about Modern Architecture'

New houses were among the subjects covered by Mark Girouard during his time on the staff of Country Life from the late 1950s to the mid 1960s. He continued to write for journals, including the Architectural Review and the Times Literary Supplement, covering a variety of subjects in reviews and campaigning pieces. His longest connection with an individual architect was with James Stirling, beginning with a review of his Florey Building in Oxford in 1972, and leading eventually to his biography, *Big Jim*, in 1998. During these years, Girouard also studied architecture at the Bartlett School as a mature student and designed a school for Camden, an unexpected diversion from his more familiar activities.

Alan Powers has published widely on all aspects of 20th century architecture and design in Britain and worldwide, including *Britain* in the series *Modern Architecture in History* (2007); *100 Years of Architecture* (2016); and *Bauhaus Goes West - Modern art and Design in Britain and America* (2019). He was a regular architecture columnist for the Spectator and a frequent contributor to *Country Life* and *Crafts*. He lectures at New York University in London and the University of Kent. A Trustee and former Chairman of the Twentieth Century Society, he remains involved in the Society's campaigns for education and conservation.

Notes: