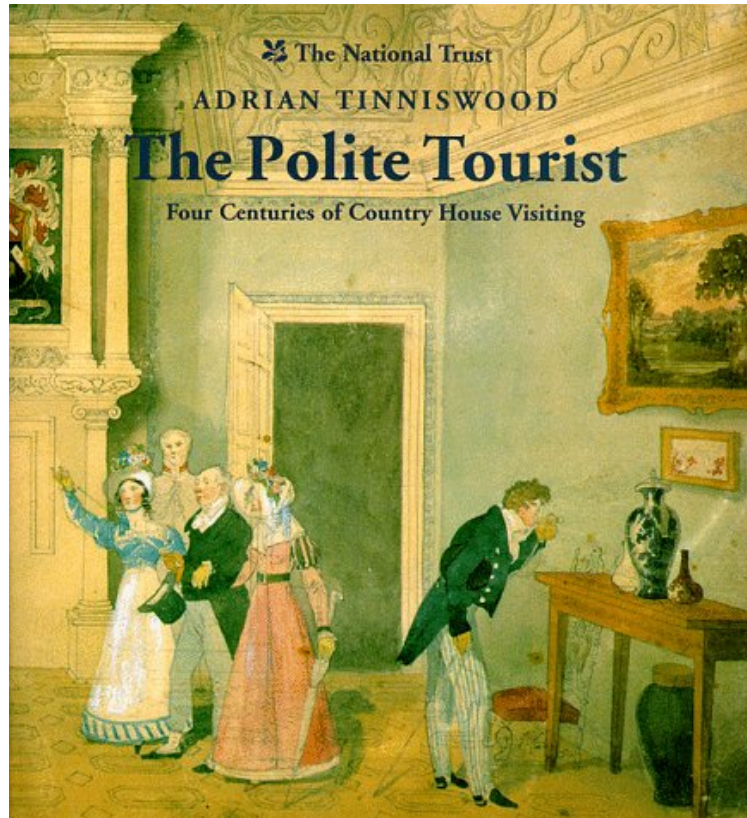


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The Polite Tourist: Four Centuries of Country House Visiting

Adrian Tinniswood

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Adrian Tinniswood : The Polite Tourist: Four Centuries of Country House Visiting before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Polite Tourist: Four Centuries of Country House Visiting:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Great for the Austen fan or Country House researcher By Jill Although I'd been intrigued by the description of Elizabeth Bennett and the Gardner's visit to Pemberley in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (but no, it certainly isn't Lizzie's first encounter with Darcy!), and another favorite book, Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, contains several references to public visitors at Manderly, I nevertheless persisted in thinking of it as a modern phenomenon, something that only occurred since the homes ceased to be private homes and instead became National Trust properties; my perception has been admirably changed once and for all thanks to this book. It is as the other reviewer notes a beautiful National Trust publication but also has a great deal of well researched historical information on the subject of country house tourism. The author covers Gilpin-style "picturesque" tourism well, which I was very interested in. The illustrations are sublime - period paintings, watercolors, and modern photos - of particular note is a c.1805 watercolor of visitors picnicking near Stowe, overlooking the Temple of the British Worthies, then later in the book, a photo of the temple today - fascinating. I also now understand why so many country houses in Britain can boast "Elizabeth [I - the Queen, not Bennett!] slept here." The book is quite a bargain here. I found it to be a good companion to Mavis Batey's *Jane Austen and the English*

Landscape, which I got around the same time. 9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Great reading for the "stately home" fan. By Michael K. Smith. Tourism in Britain started with pilgrims seeking out the tomb of Thomas Becket at Canterbury, expanded with a renaissance of topographers and antiquarians poking into odd corners of the country, and broadened again with the arrival of foreign visitors in London on the Continental Grand Tour. But the heart of this lovely book is the practice in the 18th and 19th centuries by owners of stately homes of allowing visitors to inspect the premises when they (the owners) were not in residence. (Think Elizabeth Bennett's first encounter with Mr. Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*.) The Victorians also loved mysterious and romantic locations like Stonehenge and the Roman baths at Bath, and they loved to listen to (and frequently accept uncritically) the bizarre legends associated with them. (No, Julius Caesar did not build the White Tower!) Like all books I've read that were published by the National Trust (without which most of these tax-heavy properties would probably have been torn down decades ago), half the enjoyment is in the hundred-plus illustrations and the seventy color plates. A beautifully produced addition to English social history. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Tasteful tourism and 400 years of it. By S. Smith-Peter. The main point of this book is that people have been traveling to see stately homes for 400 years at least. Instead of a modern phenomenon, such travels come out of the tradition of pilgrimage. So, those who go to see the National Trust's properties are taking part in a hallowed tradition. This certainly makes a good argument from the Trust's point of view, but it also makes sense historically. Of course, the book doesn't foreground the class politics of such visiting. The earlier history of travel to houses must have to some extent required a certain level of status on the side of the visitor. But then again, part of the argument is that such travel elevated the traveler in any case. The book is profusely illustrated and gives a real sense of how intellectual trends, particularly Romanticism, influenced both the building and reception of houses. It is an advance on many books that focus on the individual genius of architects, as we see here that political and economic motivations are not something that just started to influence these houses, but were there the whole time.

Country house visiting is one of Britain's favorite leisure activities. For more than five centuries, historic buildings have opened their doors, inviting the tourist to step inside. Elizabethans strolled around palaces, royal and private, like Hampton Court and Hardwick Hall, while Georgians appreciated the classical refinement of properties like Kedleston Hall and Osterley Park, admiring the treasures brought back from the Grand Tour. With the help of sumptuous illustrations, Adrian Tinniswood takes the reader on a grand tour around the historic houses of England, and discovers how, throughout the centuries, the idea of national heritage has developed.

...an entertaining and scholarly account of the shifting ground that the country house and its ever-increasing throng of admirers have occupied. -- *The New York Times Book Review*, Angeline Goreau