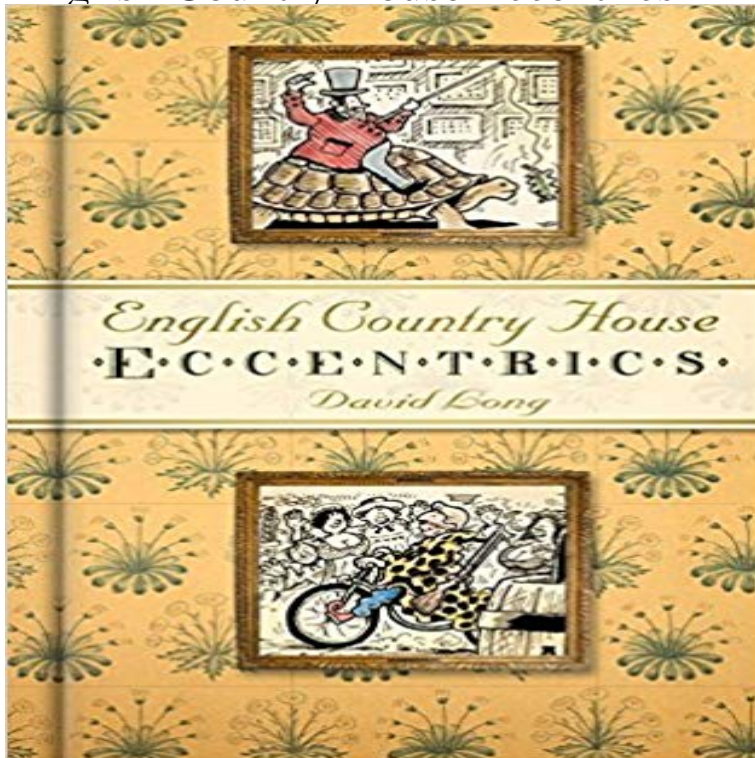


## English Country House Eccentrics



Alighthearted, witty, but factual biographical account of the eccentric lifestyles of the builders and residents of 100 country houses. Extraordinary buildings require extraordinary people, and over the centuries historic houses have produced more than their fair share of oddballs. Insulated from the outside world by vast wealth, rolling acres, and the social status that a title implies, aristocrats have always been able to amuse themselves and now the reader by pursuing idiosyncratic interests and manias to the point of eccentricity. The 12th Duke of Bedford, for example, preferred parrots to people, forcing his children to steal the birds food to make up their meager rations, while the 5th Duke of Portland paid his staff a bonus on the understanding they would never speak to him. The Hon. Henry Cavendish inherited £200 million at today's values, but never spent more than five shillings on dinner, while more recently the 2nd Lord Rothschild spent weeks training a team of zebra to pull his carriage up the Mall and into Buckingham Palace. This unusual history lifts the lid on all that's bizarre, implausible, unthinkable, and downright wacky about glorious heritage homes and their unusual occupants.

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