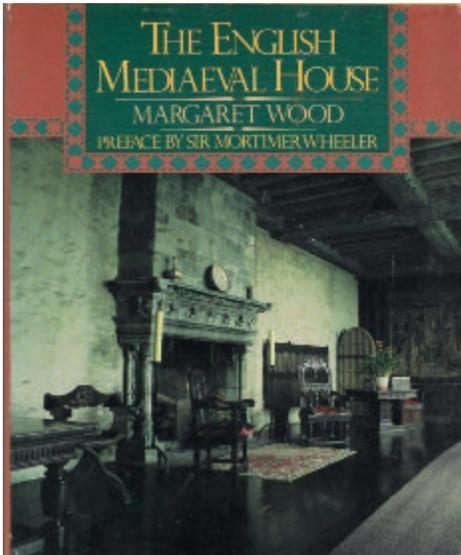




Margaret Wood (1908 - 1981)



was able to get Mortimer Wheeler to write a preface to her book in addition to her own fascinating Introduction. Dr. Wood continued with her association of the RAI, the BAA, the Society of Antiquaries and the Vernacular Architecture Group well into the 1970s.

The *English Mediaeval House* (xxx+ 448 pp) was 30 years in the making. When it was published it drew most favourable reviews (e.g. Spittle 1965, *AJ* 122, 254-255 and *Speculum* Vol. 41, No. 2, April 1966 (University of Chicago) written by Professor Urban T Holmes. The book has been reprinted many times since 1965 and is readily available in the second-hand market at bargain prices. I have seen it with at least five different covers, but the original publisher was Phoenix House. My own copy is by Bracken (1985). The book originally cost £8. 8s, equating to £180 today.

Dr. Margaret Wood MA D. Litt FSA (Mrs E. G. Kaines-Thomas) (1908-1981) was educated at Henrietta Barnett School, Hampstead, and Bedford College for Women, (now part of University College London). After graduating and in her twenties, she took part in archaeological excavations under the leadership of Sir Mortimer Wheeler (1890-1976) and met her future husband (E. G. Kaines-Thomas) during a congress of the British Archaeological Association in the 1930s. In fact she noted later: 'Especially fortunate have I been in my parents, who did all they could to encourage me in this chosen work, and a special thanks to my husband who has helped not only with the [measuring] tape, but by reading and discussing the chapters, and whom I first met outside a Norman window (at Sherborne Castle) on an archaeological congress'.

A regular contributor to archaeological journals (RAI, BAA) over a long period, she wrote a number of Ministry of Works (now English Heritage) guides (see the *Bibliography*). Dr. Wood probably met Mortimer Wheeler at UCL and joined him at the Society of Antiquaries sponsored excavation at the Roman settlement of Verulamium in 1930-34. Much later, in the 1960s, preparing her *magnum opus*, the *English Mediaeval House* she

Needless to say, *The English Mediaeval House* is magisterial, and a desk-top essential for any castellologist. The plans, plates and drawings are extremely valuable, and her archive (see below) should be mined in the future. Equally important are her two further essential research tools: *Norman Domestic Architecture* and *Thirteenth century Domestic Architecture in England*. She lived at an enviable time when most owners of private manors and historic houses would happily show specialist interested parties around and allow photography. Rarely any more, and her photographic archive should now be accessible to all. One of her guidebook's sites, Donnington Castle, was only a stone's throw from her home in Donnington Deene. The highlight of the unmanned site, the gatehouse, is rarely open for visitors, but the CSG hope to arrange a small group visit later in the year (2022) at a small cost. Please email the editor to go on the 'interest' list.

The *EMH* volume has become a timeless classic in the study of medieval architecture and will remain so for many decades to come. It took huge courage at the time, with Turner and Parker's still superb four-volume work '*Some Account of Domestic Architecture*', 1853 constantly looking over her shoulder.





Margaret Wood (1908 - 1981)

The Ministry of Works guidebooks

The four buildings listed are still under the management /ownership of English Heritage, and have been free-entry sites for many years. As a consequence the guides that Margaret Wood wrote for these sites have not been updated and are still listed as 'further reading', on the respective EH site and should remain so. They remain invaluable. The EH online listings also give short useful descriptions and histories. There has been much discussion recently on the definition or classification of some of these Norman halls, and whether they should be termed more accurately as 'chamber blocks'. The following first-floor halls have now been reclassified (see Hill and Gardiner, Part II)* as chamber blocks according to their criteria: Framlingham; Christchurch; Burton Agnes; St Mary's Guild; Boothby Pagnell and John's Gloriette, Corfe. Just six out of the 23 halls listed by Wood. The differences are subtle and minimal and most who visit would normally consider these spaces as 'halls', albeit usually smaller than most. The EH website still calls them [private] halls, as indeed they are, but not as communal set piece 'great halls' as we generally think of them.

Historic England

Historic England has in its possession at Swindon the archive of material collected by Margaret Wood over her many years of research. HE. note on their website: *Domestic houses from medieval period onwards*; National scope, with emphasis on southern and midland counties: Received via the Kaines-Thomas estate. Provenance: Archaeologist, specializing in medieval period domestic architecture. Much of the documentary material and correspondence relates to the Vernacular Architecture Group, of which M. Wood was a member.

Content: This collection contains the following materials: Photographs (Negative): 4,775 Photographs. (Print): 600.
<https://historicengland.org.uk/imagesbooks/photos/collection/KA101>

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