



National Trust

News and events for autumn and winter 2018
Herefordshire | Shropshire | Staffordshire
Warwickshire | West Midlands | Worcestershire

Near you



© National Trust Images/John Miller/Archie de Sera

Changing colours and nature's harvest

Autumn is the season of spectacular colour, fungi and harvest and it's a great time to get outside to make the most of the fading summer sun as the morning mists begin. You can experience the changing seasons at our special places across the West Midlands.



Attingham Park in Shropshire is the perfect place to get active in the outdoors; great for your health and well-being. The orienteering course will help to sharpen navigation skills and is suitable for all age groups. There are running paths for a gentle jog or a vigorous run and they're great for taking in the autumn colours. Dudmaston, also in Shropshire has Harvest Week (8-14 Oct), you can help pick and press the bounty of apples from the orchard, sample the juice and take a bottle home. Close by, at Kinver Edge and The Rock Houses in Staffordshire, the lesser horseshoe bats begin returning to the Rock Houses to hibernate and if you're lucky you may spot one flying in the sky above.

In Worcestershire, migrating birds

stop off at Croome and from the bird hide you can see blue tits, nuthatches and great tits feeding, you may even see green and greater spotted woodpeckers. At Clent, savour the sweeping views and see the best of the autumn colour on the Autumn Colours Ramble (10 & 28 Oct). While at Hanbury Hall, rich autumn colours fill the trees, in particular the horse chestnut trees near the Stableyard - great for conkers too.

In Warwickshire, head to Packwood House to see the late colour in the herbaceous borders including the vivid purple and violets of the asters and the sound of bellowing deer fills the parkland at Charlecote Park as the fallow deer rutting season begins.

The veteran trees at Croft Castle and Parkland in Herefordshire

are a blaze of colour, including the 1,000-year-old quarry oak and The Weir Garden in Herefordshire harvests pumpkins, squash and seasonal veg as the garden prepares for winter.

If you're retired or taking time off work, why not visit our places during the week in the autumn? Take advantage of a quieter time perhaps by reading a book in the gardens or try your hand at visitteering - lots of places need help to collect fallen leaves.

Whether you're visiting or volunteering, your support helps us care for special places in the Midlands. Thank you.

Follow us...

or your local National Trust place on social media. Share your days out with us and get the latest updates on summer events and activities



Halloween happenings

There's frighteningly good fun to be had during October half-term with pumpkins, ghosts, ghouls and creepy crawlies.

There will be fiendish fun and frights at Coughton Court in Warwickshire with their outdoor trail (25 Oct - 4 Nov on open days), while at Attingham Park in Shropshire, discover a new take on Halloween, with their Woollen Woods crafts (27 Oct - 4 Nov). At Croft Castle and Parkland in Herefordshire dress to scare for the Halloween Spooktacular (27 & 28 Oct) with ghost stories, spooky trails and broomstick racing

and at the Brockhampton Estate also in Herefordshire you can make your own broomstick (30 Oct) in time for the following night. During half-term Wightwick Manor and Gardens in the West Midlands has spooky story-telling and crafts and dare you brave the spooky tunnel in the garden at Biddulph Grange Garden in Staffordshire (27 Oct - 4 Nov)?

Take a look at the What's On pages for more Halloween fun near you.



For details of all there is to see and do, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/midlands or take a look at the 'What's On' section



From the Director
for the Midlands



© National Trust

Welcome to the autumn edition of Near You.

It is not an exaggeration to say that countryside faces the biggest change in a generation prompted by the Agriculture and Environment Bills and you may have noticed that we are actively engaged in conversations to try and get the best possible outcome. I generally find that actions speak louder than words, so you will see in this issue that we are doing our best in the Midlands to work with farmers and other partners to hold on to the landscapes that we love, as well as find future uses of land that allow people to make a living. We already have some great examples that demonstrate how you can produce food in a much more nature friendly way, as highlighted at Attingham Park.

However, sometimes acquiring really special pieces of land is the only way to ensure that beautiful places can survive and we believe that this is the case for our last remaining hay meadows in the White Peak, which we have been able to do thanks to some generous legacies. We will be thinking a lot about remembrance this autumn and I hope that those people who left legacies specifically to acquire land in the Peak District will feel that we have done their wishes justice. When I visited on a June day, surrounded by flowers and the song of a curlew, I could honestly think of no better way to be remembered.

Andy Beer



© National Trust Images/Attingham

Attingham Estate flourishes thanks to nature-friendly farming

Conservation-friendly farming on the Attingham Estate in Shropshire has resulted in it being designated a site of national importance for endangered insects.

Farming in a way which benefits nature has seen a boost in wildlife and is improving the land at Attingham Estate in Shropshire.

By working closely with our tenant farmers, the neighbouring farmland is thriving with life; and together with the parkland, the estate is now recognised as nationally important for scarce and endangered insects.

Tiny but mighty beetles known as saproxylics, or deadwood invertebrates, are flourishing due to farmers helping us to protect veteran trees and retaining, where safe, fallen deadwood. 160 species of these insects have been recorded, busily helping to decompose old wood, recycle nutrients and providing an important food source for birds and mammals.

Bob Thurston, Attingham's Countryside, Park and Gardens

Manager, said: 'Earlier this year the BBC reported on how saproxylics are among the "most threatened insect groups in Europe," so our survey results are astounding.'

Nature-friendly farming is increasing on the Attingham Estate, which covers nearly 1,600 hectares (4,000 acres) of parkland and several farms.

One tenant farmer, Alastair Home-Roberts, has recently started growing his arable crops in a more sustainable way by introducing a no-till drilling system. Instead of cultivating the land, the new crop is directly drilled into the previous crop residue. This reduces soil loss, as there is less exposure to heavy rain or wind, and decreases carbon release by not exposing the soil to the air. Alastair is also monitoring earthworm numbers to determine an improvement in the soil.

There has also been a significant

increase in the creation of flower-rich meadow, on land formerly cropped with cereals and potatoes, alongside the rivers which run through the estate. These areas are providing habitat for birds, pollinators and invertebrates as well as protecting the watercourse and acting as flood plain.

Our Food and Farming Consultant Richard Wheeldon said: 'Attingham is a prime example of nature friendly farming working on a landscape scale. It's great to see a group of farm tenants working so well with each other, alongside our Ranger team and Estate Manager, to create and enhance these fantastic landscape features.'

'It's wonderful to see agriculture and nature working together. Attingham still continues to produce milk, meat, honey, cereals, pulses, vegetables and timber whilst also providing so much for nature.'



Farming family in focus

Attingham Estate tenant farmers Richard, Julie and Simon Adney have introduced many conservation friendly methods to their farming practices such as reverting areas of land, previously used to grow arable crops, to grass.

They have reintroduced pedigree Hereford cattle, the traditional breed grazed by the fifth Lord Berwick of Attingham, who was a pioneer of this breed with paintings of his prize-winning pedigree herd on display at Attingham Hall.

Reverting areas of land back to grazed pasture has seen a significant increase in wildflowers, including orchids. Richard said: 'We are very passionate about ensuring that we manage the land in a way that is productive, not only in-terms of agricultural output, but also for the benefit of nature.'

The husband, wife and son team manage 89 hectares (220 acres) of land at Attingham as well as farming a mixture of tenanted and owned farms nearby.

Championing female creativity

A famed artist moved into Wightwick Manor in the West Midlands to create her own personal response to the suffrage movement.

Kate Charlesworth, who for over 40 years has drawn for feminist, LGBT and alternative publications, is taking part in the 'A Room of One's Own' project, taken from Virginia Woolf's essay of the same name; which is giving artists the freedom to create art inspired by five National Trust places.

Continuing in the Wightwick tradition of celebrating women and their artistic achievements, Kate has developed a personal creative response

to Wightwick's women; the Suffragists who held meetings at the property during the struggle for female suffrage and the Mander family, who supported the cause.

She said: 'The Manders were an extraordinary family who not only fought for women's rights in Parliament but also researched and collected the works of inspirational female Pre-Raphaelite artists.'

'I've had the great good fortune to love my work and to support myself by that work - as an illustrator, cartoonist and graphic novelist.'

'The nature of the job has meant that as an accidental social commentator I've had a wonderful opportunity to represent women - and other 'minorities' - in strong and positive lights and, where appropriate, with humour... and almost all of it created in a room of my own.'

A *Room of One's Own* runs until the end of this year.

This project forms part of our national Women and Power programme marking 100 years since the Representation of the People Act that gave some women the right to vote for the first time: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/midlands-women-and-power

A day in the life...

Holly Kemish, Assistant Fundraising Consultant

I work across the Midlands region, from the Lincolnshire coast to the Welsh borders, so a typical day for me can often start with a drive out to a property. It is a real pleasure and privilege to be able to work in some of the most beautiful places in the region and I find it exciting and inspiring to work with property teams to develop ways that supporters like you can be involved in our work.

I help properties with their raffles and second-hand bookshops so I am often asked questions about these

important aspects of fundraising. I think people are surprised by how successful the National Trust second-hand bookshops are in the Midlands; last year we raised nearly £300,000 to look after our special places, at the same time as helping our visitors enjoy a 'new' read.

Also on a typical day I will be helping properties to plan for events as part of the 'Inside the Trust' programme, which is organised for supporters who have pledged to leave a gift in their will or for those who regularly donate and support

our work. I also spend a lot of time looking into other sources of funding for important projects across the region. At the moment I am working with, amongst others, the Attingham Park, Sunnycroft and Berrington Hall teams.

You can find out more about the projects at these properties by following the links:

Find out more information about Attingham's Walled Garden Glasshouse appeal at: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/appeal/atinghams-walled-garden-glasshouses-appeal

[nationaltrust.org.uk/appeal/atinghams-walled-garden-glasshouses-appeal](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/appeal/atinghams-walled-garden-glasshouses-appeal)

Support Berrington's Walled Garden and Pleasure Ground project by visiting: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/appeal/berringtons-georgian-garden-restoration

Thank you for your support.



© National Trust/Phillip Abram

One of the glasshouse at Attingham Park

TOP FIVE

Places to find fungi

Autumn is the perfect time to explore our places and find rare fungi, and you can be part of our plans to look after places where you can spot them. Here's our selection of fascinating fungi, but remember to leave them for others to find. To find out more visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/midsfungi

1

Kinver Edge and the Rock Houses Staffordshire/ Worcestershire

The mixture of heathland and woodland on Kinver Edge allow many species of fungi to flourish. Look on fallen branches for the unusual yellow brain fungus – it appears as an almost fluorescent, crinkled, jelly-like substance. Known in folklore as witches' butter, finding this fungus on your home meant you had been cursed by a witch! Wood blewits, a more appetising mushroom species, are pale violet and can be found in the woods.



Yellow brain fungus



Scarlet elf cup

2

Wenlock Edge Shropshire

The brightly coloured scarlet elf cup can be found amongst the mosses on the damp woodland floor at Wenlock Edge. True to its name, this fungi forms a small cup shape that is a deep, glossy red on the inside. Other aptly named fungi here include the poisonous beechwood sickener, appearing with a red cap and white stalk, and the amethyst deceiver. The latter is a vibrant purple when fresh, but fades to brown with age making it harder to identify.

Long Mynd Shropshire

3

Many upland sites have escaped ploughing and fertilisers and can have ancient grasslands that are good for waxcap fungi. The colourful parrot waxcap starts off bright green and then turns to shades of yellow, orange and purple! Another species on the Long Mynd is the pink waxcap, also known as 'the ballerina', as the pink cap can resemble a twirling tutu. Other fungi on the hill include golden spindles, which appear like yellow fingers reaching out of the soil.



Pink waxcap

4

Croome Worcestershire

The old trees in Croome's parkland support a range of fungi, particularly species associated with wood decay such as chicken of the woods. This spectacular bracket-forming fungus creates brown cubical rot which hollows out tree trunks. Another Croome speciality is the wrinkled peach which grows on elm logs. Until the onset of Dutch Elm Disease in the 1970s, mature elms were a prominent feature of the Croome landscape and their legacy lives on through this now uncommon fungus.



Chicken of the woods

5

Croft Castle and Parkland Herefordshire

Croft's woodlands and parkland are rich in fungi, particularly the Fishpool Valley where over 500 species have been recorded in recent years by members of the Herefordshire fungus group. These include many rarities, notably the oak polypore, a very rare and legally protected bracket fungus associated with ancient trees – for which Croft is a top site. One of the richest areas of the Valley is the beech 'hanger' on its eastern slopes.



Piptoporus quercinus

...and don't forget to share your fungi finds with us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram



Restoring flora and fauna at Hopesay Hill

Hopesay Hill in South Shropshire is now flourishing with wildlife, less than a year since grazing levels were reduced.

Having taken the land back under Trust management, a decision was taken to work with a local grazier who only grazes sheep and cattle during the summer months, which is better for nature conservation.

As the images show, the initial results are very positive with an abundance of wildflowers shown here in late May.

Trust Ecologist, Caroline Uff said: 'I visited Hopesay Hill in late May to check on the condition of the vegetation. It was flowering in response to the lower grazing levels. There were banks of creamy yellow mouse-ear hawkweed flowers and violet heath speedwell. Plants such as pignut – hard to find on Hopesay Hill in the past – were holding their white flowers tall above the grasses. In the wet boggy areas, the insectivorous round-leaved sundew was just unfurling its leaves.

It's a wonderful sight.'

Sarah Jiggins, Assistant Rural Surveyor, said an agreement was in place with a local grazier to ensure that the condition of the land continues to improve.

She added: 'The number of stock is lower than previously and it is hoped that by having a mix of cattle, which graze and trample differently to sheep, the hill will continue to thrive.'

Countryside Manager Peter Carty said: 'There are thousands of violets, never been seen in 30 years. We've also spotted heather flowering for the first time as well as large amounts of harebell and tormentil; all benefiting from a temporary cessation in grazing.'

Discover more about how we look after the Shropshire Hills: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/caring-for-the-Shropshire-Hills



Heather



Round-leaved sundew



Things are shaping up at the Roundhouse

Over the coming months the Roundhouse is set to be transformed into one of Birmingham's must-see places – a vibrant new destination from which to explore the city by foot, bike or boat.

The former stables and stores, built in 1874, is a curious survivor at the heart of Birmingham's canals. Its distinctive shape was the result of an architectural competition and the resulting building is one of the city's many great examples of civic pride. Thanks to a £2.5m investment from the National Lottery we plan to restore the nineteenth century gem from the roof to the cobbles, installing power and heating throughout the building and creating a beautiful 'oriel' window onto the vibrant canalside.

Our pioneering partnership with the Canal & River Trust is about to put the Roundhouse firmly on Birmingham's cultural

map: when it opens to the public next year, the Roundhouse will offer tours, events and activities that connect to the wider city and canal network. The building will also host a café, office space and activity operators. Some members may have had a sneak preview of our tours, and the Roundhouse's creative team of staff, volunteers and partners plan to keep the magic alive even whilst the building is closed for construction.

The Roundhouse is one of a range of new collaborations and partnerships in Birmingham through which the National Trust is seeking to play its part in supporting special places that hold an important place in the heart and heritage of the city.

Keep up to date with progress at The Roundhouse at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/Roundhouse-conservation-begins

Further afield

Rare meadowland saved in the Peak District

Two areas of farmland in the Peak District, with rare wildflower rich hay meadows and wildlife rich grassland, have been saved for the nation.

Thanks to legacies left to us by generous supporters, we've been able to buy High Fields near Longshaw and Greensides Farm near Buxton, meaning we can now protect these very special areas of the Peak District for the future.

Species rich grasslands, like those found at High Fields and Greensides, are a vital part of our landscape as they support a wide variety of wildlife and plants. Despite this, they have declined by around 97% over the last century, largely due to the intensification of farming.

Rare examples of limestone pavement are also a feature on both farms, supporting a number of ferns and wild flowers. High Fields also has a few dewponds, originally created as watering holes for livestock, which now provide a wonderful wetland habitat for newts.

Jon Stewart, General Manager for the Peak District, says: 'This is the type of landscape we'd never be able to protect without the financial help of our supporters and we owe them a huge debt of gratitude.'



© National Trust/Ion Harman

The power of representation

The National Trust Museum of Childhood, with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, is proud to be offering display space to Museumand, a unique, vibrant, creative organisation dedicated to commemorating and celebrating the Caribbean contribution to life in the UK.

The exhibition is displayed on homely 'bedroom shelves' and in our project gallery's conservation space. Displays feature our black dolls and related collections, from a 1915 Topsy-Turvy doll to our newly acquired 1974 Lt. Uhura doll, alongside a film that explores views of black dolls.

Thank you to Lottery players, who have helped us to make this project possible, and also to Museumand and all the volunteers who have helped us to put this exhibition together.

The exhibition will run until 4 November and we'll be celebrating Black History Month, with 'Have Your Say Saturday' on 6 October.

Commemorating the Great War



November sees the centenary of the end of the First World War. Properties throughout the West Midlands will be marking this historic occasion in various ways, highlighting the impact that the Great War had on them and the people connected to them.

In Warwickshire, Coughton Court is exploring women's work, duty and political agency during the First World War through the stories of four Coughton women. The Coughton community was a hive of activity throughout the war years, as women led the local effort to support soldiers on the Western Front.

Packwood House's last private owner, Graham Baron Ash served in the First World War, as a Balloon Observation Officer. This was a particularly dangerous role, and an exhibition presenting Ash's diary and

war experiences has been installed and can be viewed until 11 November.

Charlecote Park is looking at the effects of the First World War on the Lucy Family and the surrounding village including stories of local residents and soldiers, along with the impact it had on the estate.

In Herefordshire, Croft Castle's Women and Power exhibition highlights the stories of ten key women linked to Croft, including Dorothy Kevill-Davies and Ann Page Croft who both contributed significantly to the war effort on the home front from 1914-18.

You can read more about all of these stories and the impact of the war by visiting www.nationaltrust.org.uk/the-great-war

News in brief

Breaking the mould at Charlecote Park

With its riverside location, the library at Charlecote Park in Warwickshire has a constant battle against mould, which needs addressing each autumn. In November, the House Team will don protective suits and masks, and take the books off the shelves to assess and document their condition. The books are then delicately cleaned using a pony hair brush in a fume cabinet to remove the mould before returning them to their shelves.

Visit during November to find out more about what we're doing to look after Charlecote Park. Visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/charlecote-park/features/selling-books-to-save-books

Charlecote NIB (from Sam H) does this need a vanity url?

Pre-book your Christmas mansion visits at Attingham

Visitors to Attingham Park in Shropshire this Christmas will need to pre-book timed tickets to enter the mansion for the first time.

To keep every visit special, there will be three timed slots each day, from 1 - 23 December, to experience the sights and sounds of the atmospheric and festively decorated 1940s Christmas.

There is no need to book a ticket if you are only visiting the grounds and estate, or stopping in at the shop or café. For details visit: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/attinghampark

Ceramic Landscape at Croome

Artist Amy Jayne Hughes will create a new exhibition at Croome, on display 24 September. With support from the Royal Worcester porcelain team, the exhibition will consist of vases based on 18th century floral designs. There will be particular focus on the decoration from pigments extracted from the Royal Worcester Porcelain set currently on show in the Golden Box at Croome

For more information visit: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/croome

Volunteering



Volunteers help bring places to life

The opening of two new places, the Shugborough Estate in Staffordshire and The Firs - Birthplace of Edward Elgar in Worcestershire, has seen over 270 new volunteers sign up to support our work in the Midlands. They joined around 11,500 volunteers who gifted 965,000 hours of their time last year to caring for our places across the region and our newest properties have offered a range of new ways for people to get involved.

Kate Gibbon, Volunteering Co-ordinator at Shugborough said: 'We opened in March 2017 with 120 volunteers and now have a fantastic team of 360 working across the Estate. The farm has been particularly popular with young people keen to get experience in this area for future study and work. We're still looking to grow our team too, especially with sharing our stories with visitors across the Lichfield Apartment, Servants' Quarters, Mansion and Park Farm.'

At The Firs, new opportunities have seen volunteers getting involved in looking after the



beautiful cottage garden, in caring for the collection and helping in the new tea-room and shop. Musically talented volunteers have also joined the team and are keen to offer concerts and recitals.

Kirsty Bothma, Operations Manager at The Firs said: 'We want to provide the best visitor experience for everyone who walks through our door, and there are endless possibilities for people looking to join a passionate and enthusiastic team.'

Interested in getting involved? Search for volunteering opportunities at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/volunteer or contact your local property.

Get crafty this Christmas

Christmas is the perfect time to get your creative juices flowing and make decorative items which can become part of your family's tradition.

Lots of our places are offering the chance to make something festive with a ceramic penguin workshop at Charlecote Park in Warwickshire (10 Nov); while at Dudmaston in Shropshire, why not craft your own 4ft willow reindeer (10 Nov)?

There's also wreath making at Biddulph Grange Garden in Staffordshire (4 Dec - 7 Dec) or create your own Christmas rag

wreath at the Birmingham Back to Backs (17 Nov - 8 Dec, Sat only).

At Upton House and Gardens in Warwickshire, you can bead an art deco angel (27 Nov), and Charlecote Park is offering the chance to create willow angels (9 Dec).

Join in the lantern making workshops at Shugborough Estate in Staffordshire, and then take part in one of the spectacular Lantern Parades (1 Dec - 23 Dec).

For details on these and lots more festive activities and events, see the What's On section.



© National Trust/David Gardner

Berrington's dress fit for a king

In 2016, an extraordinary discovery was made - an exquisite dress of the finest silk woven with gold thread. The dress was hand made over 200 years ago for Ann Bangham; the first key woman at Berrington Hall in Herefordshire, and the wife of Thomas Harley its creator and original owner.

With no known portrait of Ann, the dress, an 18th-century Court Mantua, in a delicately fragmented form, represented an opportunity to research and learn more about Ann, her life at Berrington and the role and life of women during the 18th century.

The hard work to piece together the dress and the life of Ann began in 2017 and thanks to the many hours spent on the project by volunteers and the property team, Ann's story is now on display at Berrington, along with her dress. The conservation work on the dress is on-going, and this can be viewed in action when you visit.

In addition to the conservation and research undertaken, Herefordshire

based artist Lorna J Brown shared her response to Ann with 'Eye am She' an exhibition inspired by the unknown facts about Ann and traditions and culture of society during the 18th century.

Discover more about the exhibitions, the dress and the hard work from our dedicated volunteers that made this all possible at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/berrington-volunteers



© National Trust/Eleanor Dobson

Your membership matters

Did you know, the places you love receive £2.50 each time you visit? For membership queries please call 0344 800 1895

If you require this information in alternative formats, including the Talking Newsletter, please telephone 0121 224 7460 or email: mi.customerenquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk