



National Trust

News and events for winter / spring 2019  
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Head to [nationaltrust.org.uk/hampshire](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/hampshire) (or substitute your own county name) for the highlights in your region

## Whatever the weather



When rain clouds are gathering and you just know that the mischievous wind will find the gaps in your clothing as soon as you step out of the door, it's tempting to use the weather as an excuse to stay on the sofa. Don't! Embrace the weather as part of the experience and you might find a new perspective on places you thought were so familiar.

When brief days offer little in the way of energising light, it's more important than ever for our mental and physical health to get outside and experience the beautiful places on our doorstep. We shouldn't let the weather get in the way. In fact, our Great British unpredictable weather is something to be celebrated. What on earth would we have to talk about without it?

More importantly, different weather can give you a whole new perspective on a place. Imagine your favourite walk in summer with the humming of insects, the swish of your feet through grass and views hidden by walls of green.

How different it is on a snowy day in that dense silence of winter. Every sound is muffled except for the crunch-creaking of snow under your feet. The air is sharp against your face, fizzing with fine snowdust which catches like crystals on your eyelashes. The green wall is gone and unseen views are revealed like magic. Skeleton trees are silhouetted like sculptures against ash-white skies and their shadows stretch long across the ground.

Why would you want to miss that intense experience, so different from the one you had on your summer visit?

Even rain can be a blessing if you take a moment to properly experience it. A hike in the rain is great for that 'I'm the king of the world!' exhilaration of battling the elements. And the sweetness of the warmth and hot tea in the café afterwards – heaven.

But there's a gentler way too. A peaceful potter round a garden to the rhythmic pit-pat of raindrops on your hood is a lovely thing. There's something about having your head cocooned in waterproofs that focuses the vision. Maybe it's the lack of peripheral sound or sight, but you start to notice things like the polished colours of wet leaves or the gathering of a drip, pausing before it falls. And afterwards, the reflection in puddles and that special, wonderful smell of ground after rain.

The Norwegians have a saying; 'There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes.' Bring it on and let's get out there.

## Great places for weather-watching

There are some places that come alive in extreme weather. Others simply reveal a different perspective. These weather-washed beauties are definitely worth pulling on your coat for.

For more ideas about where to go in your area, visit [nationaltrust.org.uk/berkshire](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/berkshire) or substitute your own county name.

### Stowe on a frosty day

A frosty morning in the Grecian Valley at **Stowe** shows Capability Brown's work to magnificent effect. The dusting of white highlights the graceful crests and folds of the landscape which draw your eye on to the focal points at each end of the valley.

### The Vyne in the rain

On a drizzly day, fat, grey clouds gather low over **The Vyne's** wetlands, adding a brooding layer of drama. A peaceful silence descends once you're inside the bird hide, while in front of you a busy winter scene plays out with migrating birds vying for space with the locals on choppy waters.

### Tennyson Down as storms roll in

In stormy weather on the Isle of Wight, the **Needles Headland** makes the hairs on your arms stand on end. The wind whips around your face as you strive on to your goal; the stately Tennyson Monument. From this high point, look on to a churning sea as huge waves crash against the vertical cliffs.

### Morden in the mist

Set your alarm clock to discover atmospheric mornings at **Morden Hall Park**, while wildlife stirs in the meadows and tree-lined parkland. As the sun rises, see low-lying mist over the historic River Wandle, nudging the feet of picturesque iron bridges.



# London News



This January, new heritage attractions will join the existing National Trust London Partner Scheme for 2019, opening up fresh opportunities for National Trust members in and around London. In total, 12 partners will offer discounted entry to members all year. Here are some highlights to look out for:



**Strawberry Hill House** is an example of Gothic Revival architecture with a story to tell through its inhabitants, design, collection and restoration. Bought and transformed in 1747 by Horace Walpole, a pivotal figure in society, literature, art and architecture, it still houses a vast collection of treasures. The garden is open and free to visit all week so there's plenty to occupy a full day, or drop by for events and exhibitions all year round.



In Greenwich, the **Queen's House** is a former royal residence built in the early 1600s. Home to an internationally renowned art collection, Inigo Jones' architectural masterpiece is said to be the first classical building in the UK. Entry is free, then for enthusiasts there are bookable expert tours with discounts for National Trust members.

While you are in Greenwich you could head over to one of our long-standing London Partners, **Cutty Sark**, the celebrated historic sailing ship built in 1869.

Explore the ship, hear stories of life on board and walk beneath the original hull then head to the main deck for spectacular views across London. Let your little ones take the helm at the ship's wheel, climb into the crew's bunk beds and meet her famous figurehead Nannie the Witch. They now serve afternoon tea beneath Cutty Sark's copper-plated hull too.



Find out more about the scheme at [nationaltrust.org.uk/london](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/london)



## Ham House's garden refresh

**Head gardener Rosie Fyles is redesigning Ham House's once-opulent 17th century formal garden in Richmond. She wants the vast manicured lawns to work harder for nature and people so they will once again inspire a 'wow' from today's garden lovers.**

Visitors to Ham House in the 17th century would have been in no doubt that their hosts were people of great wealth and taste. From the grand front entrance to the extravagant interiors, everything was designed to impress. The gardens were no exception.

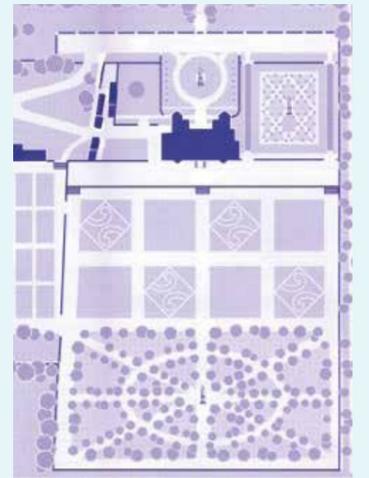
After taking a moment to admire the Great Hall, visitors would have been ushered through to the mansion's south front, the ideal vantage point to look out over

Ham's walled garden, with its huge expanse of perfectly-manicured lawns. To the 17th century eye, this was a truly awe-inspiring sight, possible only through the dedication of an entire team of gardeners.

Moving forward a few hundred years, Rosie is making it her mission to reignite that sense of awe and wonder for today's visitors, improving the space for all. This year, using modern design and planting techniques, she is creating a brand new display of

exuberant colour and shape using natural varieties of crocus, tulips and muscari, and introducing wildflower meadows to the formal setting.

'We want to create a garden area that generates that 'wow' again,' says Rosie. 'We also want to be sure that what we are doing is good for nature, and for the people who come here, especially in London where green space is at a premium. We hope people can take ideas away for their gardens at home too.'



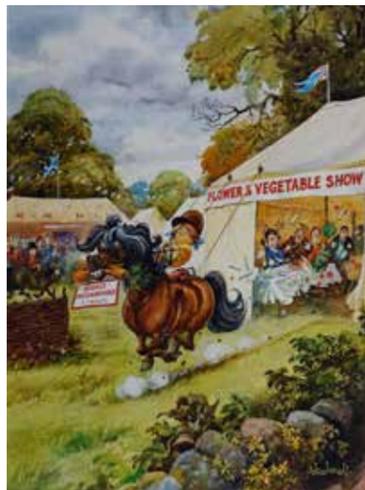
## Thelwell: Laughter and Landscapes

A welcome return to the world of Norman Thelwell, this new exhibition at **Mottisfont** features plump ponies, social satire and idyllic local landscapes.

There are plenty of old favourites on show – follow the antics of popular characters Penelope and her mischievous pony, Kipper, as they cause chaos around the countryside. There are hilarious observations of country life pursuits too, from visiting stately homes, to fishing and sailing.

The exhibition features designs for book covers and ceramic models as well as rare merchandise ranges including a 'plump pony' rocking horse.

The exhibition also looks at Thelwell's paintings of the English



countryside, particularly the landscape of south Hampshire. These beautiful artworks include his reimagining of Mottisfont, Romsey Abbey, and the River Test at Timsbury. Many of the paintings have never been shown in public before, including a selection of early sketches. The artist's paint set is also on display.

The exhibition includes child-friendly labels, and over February half-term, a Country Capers activity trail in the gardens.

*Thelwell: Laughter and Landscapes exhibition, 5 January to 22 April*

## Cliveden's Gilded Gardens

Every spring, hundreds of thousands of narcissi bloom in shades of buttery yellow, pale cream and burnt orange at Cliveden. Twenty varieties of daffodil have already naturalised in the garden. These range from the delicate little sunshine-yellow Narcissus minor found near the Blenheim Pavilion, to the white Narcissus 'Mount Hood' in the Water Garden which grows to a regal 45cm.

For 2019, the gardeners have planted 5,000 new wild, native bulbs to extend the naturalised areas and are showcasing 57 brand new varieties of different styles and sizes.

'The new narcissi, including several rarely seen varieties, will be showcased within the Ferneries. Flanked by the gilded gates, there'll be a horticultural show-inspired display of narcissi in terracotta pots with identification tags. The tiered display has been planned to include plants which flower at different times from February until the end of April. The aim is that if people visit multiple times in that period, they'll be able to enjoy different flowers each time,' says senior gardener Matthew Palmer.

Narcissi enthusiasts will be able to buy from the gift shop many of the different varieties displayed in the Ferneries and grown in Cliveden's own nursery.



## New sensory maps at Waddesdon

This winter at **Waddesdon** there are new ways to connect with nature. A sensory map and adventure backpacks will encourage visitors to experience the gardens in different ways.

Particularly designed for young children or those with learning disabilities, the sensory map explores nature through senses such as touch, smell, sound and sight. The map unlocks Waddesdon's landscapes and

corners of the grounds that might not previously have been explored. Listen carefully to the birds sing in the Aviary, feel the texture of tree bark and take note of the light and shade when walking down Miss Alice's Drive.

New backpacks for different age ranges are available to borrow to help families embark on an adventure around the gardens through guided creative and multi-sensory activities. The contents of

the backpack steer investigation of themes at Waddesdon such as birds, architecture, trees and colour during a visit.

Inspiring visitors to look more closely at nature, there'll be opportunities to create poetry and art influenced by wildlife, as well as a nature photography competition that will run from January to April. A winner will be picked by professional photographer Lillie Spibey, founder of Sharp Shots Photography.



*Waddesdon's garden and grounds are open weekends and school holidays in the winter. The house reopens in March.*

# A splash of colour in spring



Many of us look forward to the displays of spring bulbs at our most cherished National Trust places. Making the trip to see them is an annual pilgrimage, signalling the start of a new year. Here's where to find a splash of spring near you...



At **Stowe** in Buckinghamshire, snowdrops have their own season. Stowedrop time sees carpets of the pure white bells in the Elysian Fields, Sleeping Wood and Lamport Garden.

And it's not just snowdrops this year at Stowe. In autumn, 335,000 bulbs were planted by the garden team with help from volunteers. New flower meadows of snakeshead fritillaries, two types of cyclamen and carpets of bluebells can be enjoyed this spring.



The colour starts early in Buckinghamshire with **Hughenden's** newly restored West Bank Garden. The winter-flowering shrubs are at their best in January and February and the sweet box fills the cold air with its perfumed scent before the primroses come through in early spring.

Meander along the riverside pathways at **Mottisfont** at the beginning of the year and you'll see the beautiful results of a planting programme of 16,000 snowdrops.



For daffodils, head to **The Vyne's** walled garden in Hampshire. You can even buy sunny bunches for sale in the wooden kiosk with proceeds going towards the upkeep of the garden.

**Cliveden** in Buckinghamshire is also celebrating its daffodils in a big way this year. The Gilded Gardens programme sees 5000 new wild native daffodils planted and 57 new varieties showcased within the gilded gates of The Ferneries.

At **Osterley** in west London, the main drive and gardens are lined with snowdrops followed by the first primroses by the temple of Pan. Across the woodlands and meadows, daffodils then bluebells take centre stage.

Tulips are the order of the day in **Hinton Ampner's** walled garden in Hampshire. Look out for Gavota's creamy petals with a rich maroon stripe and in the sunken garden, the soft orange-rose flowers of **Apricot Beauty**.



## Make...



Seed-bombing is a great way for guerrilla gardeners to spend a rainy day. You can make your seed bombs in the warm and dry in the morning, then get out in the fresh air to lob your grenades in barren waste ground or abandoned planters in the afternoon. Rain helps the bomb break apart and the wildflower seeds to germinate and grow into habitats and food for pollinators.

### Seed bombs

#### What you need:

Flour  
Soil or peat-free compost  
Water  
Native British wildflower seeds  
Mixing bowl

#### Method:

- Mix 10 parts soil or peat-free compost to 1 part flour
- Slowly add water and mix gradually until the mixture becomes sticky like dough
- Add your wildflower seeds and work them into the dough
- Roll into a golf-ball size ball.
- Leave to dry and then they're ready to throw.



Be responsible about where you lob so that you're creating patches of colour and joy, not more work for those who look after the spaces.

## Watching out for wildlife



As much as we all love a splash of colour, our gardeners' winter-spring planting schemes are not just for show. Early-flowering spring bulbs are a great nectar resource for nature's annual early risers.



Warm winter days bring slumbering insects out of hibernation. It's not unusual to see adult hibernator butterflies such as red admirals, peacocks and small tortoiseshells on the wing and brimstone butterflies are a welcome flash of acid yellow on a grey February day. They need sugar-rich nectar for energy to fly and appreciate the service stop of a snowdrop, crocus, cyclamen or wood anemone for refuelling.

Early spring bulbs are also vitally important for bees and other pollinators such as flies and hoverflies. Newly emerged queen bees are waking up and nosing around for new homes at this time of year. They need nectar for energy and then the protein-rich pollen to feed their larvae.

Adding a few bulbs to your garden scheme will help keep the pollinators

fueled until more flowers arrive in spring. Or if you don't have a garden, you could think about preparing a few pots of bulbs. With a bit of forward planning you could keep the colour (and pollinator food) going from February to April. Just be sure to buy bulbs without chemical fertilisers or pesticides to ensure we're giving our pollinators the best possible start to the year.



## What your support means to us...

says Regional Director, Nicola Briggs



"Nature may be sleeping as our places take on a dreamy appearance with the misty skies and frost of winter, but indoors they're a hive of activity. The winter months are also when we get stuck into core conservation tasks, such as deep cleaning fixtures, fittings and collections.

It's quite a job and one we certainly couldn't manage without our dedicated army of volunteers. We're so grateful for their help and delighted when they share how much they get out of their experience, from building on their skills and learning new ones, to socialising and making a difference.

If you'd like to volunteer with us, do get in touch with your local property. We couldn't do it without you so thank you for your support and I hope to see you on a behind-the-scenes tour soon."



# Conservation in action



## Tapestry room transformed

In The Vyne's tapestry room you'll find yourself surrounded by mythical scenes of Eastern folklore. But these beautiful images are actually moving light projections because the room's original tapestries are undergoing urgent conservation.

Failing historic repairs and warped backings were putting a huge strain on the fragile 300 year old fabrics. They were created in 1720s London when fascination with the exotic Far East was at its height. So, last spring, after months of preparation, the

tapestries journeyed to Belgium to have decades of grime gently washed away. They are so heavy they had to be rolled and hung on a supporting bar to prevent the fabric crushing itself in storage.

Now back in the UK, textile specialists have begun the painstaking task of conserving the exotic characters, wildlife and plants that make up scenes like the Oath of the Peach Garden, which captures the moment when three ill-fated heroes swear allegiance to the powerful Han Dynasty.

We hope to have all six tapestries back at The Vyne by 2021 but we're still fundraising for £35,000 toward the total £382,000 cost of the project.



## Book conservation

The books we treasure reveal a lot about us, and it's the same with the 400,000 plus titles we care for in the Trust. Many collections were built up by successive generations of families, and their interests give us an intriguing insight into our cultural heritage as well as individual personalities.

With more than 160 libraries, we've got our work cut out, but regular



inspections are essential to prevent irreversible damage. Woodworm larvae bore holes through entire books, and mould can stick book leaves together permanently, like glue. Over-cleaning books results in abrasion, so we use the gentlest methods: a soft-haired brush and low-suction vacuum cleaner (dusters catch on loose materials).

At **Basildon Park** and at **The Vyne** we're restoring our entire libraries. At The Vyne, that's 2,419 books restored to their shelves, following a major roof project. Each book is condition-assessed and photographed, and we're doing it in front of visitors so we'll be able to share any intimate margin scribbles and letters from the past as we uncover them.

*Helen Sanderson, House and Collections Manager, The Vyne.*

## Tour behind the scenes

This winter we have a variety of behind-the-scenes tours including a 500-year old country house in urban Hackney and museum hacks in rural Oxfordshire.

There are bookable tours for the first time at **Sutton House** in Hackney. Local guides reveal the unexpected surprises in oak-panelled chambers, cellars and courtyards and share compelling new insight into the house's history.

At **Greys Court** in Oxfordshire, the house team is running a series of

museum hack tours where visitors are in the driving seat, plus behind-the-scenes tours where visitors get to peek in the attics, nursery and store cupboards.

At **Claydon** you can 'waxercise' with the house team in January or book on a behind-the-scenes tour in February whilst the house is closed. Check property websites for details.



## Wetland wonders



New Year's Day is always a real highlight in the birding year. Those that keep an annual list start with a blank sheet and every bird is a new one. January and February are a great time to see birds that over-winter here.

**Morden Hall Park** in South London is lucky to have some special winter visitors. Our resident birds are joined each winter here by egret, water rail and snipe. Tread quietly and the boardwalk allows you to get really close to these shy creatures. You can explore under your own steam and there's a board to note your bird spots, or there

are different nature trails created by our rangers to follow.

The winter months are also our opportunity to do some essential wetland maintenance. Having partially drained the area in autumn, we cut back sections of the wetland vegetation each year on a rotational basis. This ensures that the wetland won't revert to woodland and make our wetland wildlife homeless.

At **Newtown**, Isle of Wight, we help wetland birds at the Seabroke hide. In autumn,

water levels in the scrape are lowered to provide more mud for wading birds like redshank to feed. In March, the levels are raised to protect nesting black headed gulls from fox predation.

Morden Hall Park is running free bird watching events for the Big Garden Birdwatch (19 & 20 January) plus a drop-in bird trail and crafts in February, including bookable bird box-making sessions for all ages (20-22 February).



## Meet like-minded members

If you like making the most of your National Trust membership and enjoy some company on your outings, why not join your local Supporter Group? These are groups of Trust members who live near you and get together for talks, walks, outings, day trips and even holidays.

Wherever you live, there's a group within reach, waiting to give you a warm welcome.

Search 'supporter groups LSE' on the National Trust website or phone Viv Tobitt, Supporter Group Co-ordinator on 01932 339496.

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