



National Trust

Summer Newsletter 2019
Northern Ireland



Near you



Ploughman's Hill at Mount Stewart last summer



Take a walk on the wild side this summer

More than just pretty to the eye, wildflower meadows play an important role in maintaining a healthy eco-system, providing food and a home for a variety of wildlife.

In the last few years we have created 15 extra hectares of wildflower meadows and verges in Belfast, Fermanagh, Cushendun, and Castle Ward, bringing our total meadows to over 40 hectares – that's about 80 football pitches of meadows in Northern Ireland!

As well as meadows, we manage wildflower rich dune systems, peatlands, woodlands, wetlands, gardens, hedgerows and orchards - all important for the survival of pollinators like bees, moths and butterflies.

Our Wildlife Adviser, Melina Quinn is encouraging everyone to discover one of our wildflower meadows this summer and if possible, create your own wildflower space at home too.

'A walk through a meadow to see our native grasses and wildflowers in bloom can really lift the spirits,' Melina explains. 'Wildflowers however are not simply pretty to look at but

make a big contribution to the health of other wildlife too. They attract a huge variety and number of pollinating insects including butterflies, such as meadow browns, small coppers and common blues, as well as hoverflies and bees. The National Trust has signed up to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and are dedicated to making our outdoor spaces pollinator friendly.

'Unfortunately our pollinators and other insects are not faring well in today's environment. Several high-profile scientific reports, based on long-term surveys show catastrophic declines; the term 'Insectageddon' has been coined to capture the seriousness of the problem. Insects are critical to the survival of the rest of the living world; they pollinate our crops and wild plants, control pests, decompose and recycle organic matter and provide food for many of our birds, fish, amphibians and mammals.

'This is where you can do your bit to help nature too. By taking a few simple

steps you can turn your garden into a haven for wildlife. Try planting pollinator-friendly flowers, trees and shrubs in your garden flowerbeds, planters or window boxes. Check out the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan guide for gardens at www.pollinators.ie which has great tips and recommended plant lists. Make simple bug hotels to attract insects into your garden and leave part of your lawn uncut and see what wildflowers appear – you may be pleasantly surprised!

Take time this summer to celebrate our wildflower meadows and enjoy some of these special places throughout the season.

Rowallane Garden – bluebells are followed by splashes of yellow in kidney vetch and bird's-foot trefoil. Then starry whites of eyebright and chickweeds appear, with the pale pink spikes of the common spotted-orchid appearing in July and the purple haze of devil's-bit scabious blossoming in late summer.

Castle Coole – look out for knapweed, self-heal, oxeye daisy, plantain and orchids,

including the rare greater butterfly orchid. These wildflowers have thrived following a change in the way the land is managed. Instead of being maintained as lawn, the meadows in front of the house and along the drive are now cut just once a year, giving the flowers a chance to flourish and set seed.

Castle Ward – we'll be leaving unmown areas across Castle Ward this summer to provide food and shelter for our native pollinators. Why not spend some time in our recently created 'Broad Meadow' where yellow rattle and common orchid are already beginning to flourish, and see how many varieties of butterfly and bee species you can spot. Alternatively, come along and join our ranger team in some of their survey and monitoring tasks.

Minnowburn – meadowsweet, orchids, buttercups, yellow rattle and vetches are among the flowers and

grasses that can be found, providing a home for moths, flies, bees and butterflies and a host of other wildlife.

North Coast – White Park Bay and Giant's Causeway are also home to species rich grasslands with a diverse range of wildflowers such as frog orchid, meadow cranesbill, devil's-bit scabious, twayblade, meadow vetchling, harebell, kidney vetch, lady's bedstraw, pyramidal orchid and the common spotted-orchid.

Mount Stewart – once a potato field, the 14-acre site at Ploughman's Hill was seeded with a meadow mix of 21 varieties creating an impressive pictorial meadow including poppies, cornflowers, corn marigolds and ox-eyed daisies. The mix contains annuals for an exceptional display in the first year with perennials which get better and better from year two onwards, so we should be in for a treat this summer!

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Fundraising for Mussenden Temple



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Dog-friendly café at Castle Ward



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Meet our Mourne Rangers

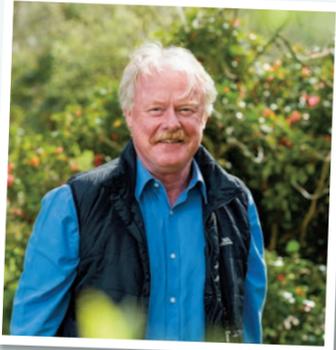


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Holiday ideas at home



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Dates for your diary





In the picture

Dr Bob Brown OBE
Regional Chairman

The world is littered with committees and boards that work away almost unseen, but do important jobs none the less. Well, here's one for you - the Northern Ireland Regional Advisory Board (RAB to its friends) is a group of volunteers who have agreed, as the name suggests, to give advice to our team in Northern Ireland about issues, challenges and of course opportunities, lying before the Trust.

The National Trust wouldn't be the healthy and vital organisation it is without volunteers. Their efforts permeate almost every area of our operations, be it telling stories in fine houses, repairing dry stone walls in the hills, encouraging new members, and just about anything else. In essence the members of the RAB are pretty much the same - they're volunteers. For them, the task is to act as critical friends for the whole Northern Ireland team. So, in the next couple of paragraphs I'll try to share what we are not, and more importantly, what we are.

Firstly, we aren't a bunch of isolated boffins directing the actions of the various National Trust teams about the country. We can't, and don't want to, have any executive function at all - the key is in the word 'advisory'! In a sense that's the way we like it, because it allows us to think freely, as the saying goes, 'outside the box'. This is really important, because the Northern Ireland teams are working flat out, getting stuck into work programmes of all sorts (especially at the time of writing this, preparing for summer). RAB's task is to lift our heads up, take a sideways look at what lies before the Trust, how it is working, scan the horizon for challenges and opportunities, spot weaknesses, build strengths, and help the Trust to steer a course through all of these.

What does this actually mean in practice? In recent years we've advised on fundraising opportunities, resolving the pressures on the Giant's Causeway and North Coast, nature conservation all over the Trust's lands (especially in relation to farming), coastal erosion and how to increase access to our coasts, issues emerging from Brexit (OK, a fair bit of guesswork here), how to ease traffic in Castle Ward, suggest potential acquisitions around the country, general staffing issues, and even how to look after that fabulous Norman motte in Mount Stewart.

The RAB draws its members from a diverse range of interests - farming, finance, museum and tourism experience, gardens, nature conservation, countryside access, local knowledge, digital interpretation, planning, Government issues, and so on. Members are appointed for three years, with another three if agreed.

I'm delighted to say we have just added five new members to the Regional Advisory Board, bringing us to 11, a very healthy pool of experienced and committed volunteers from which the Trust will benefit from their expertise immensely. Speaking on behalf of RAB members old and new, we look forward to guiding the Trust through a very successful 2019 and beyond.



Connecting People and Places Sustainably

Stunning and staggeringly beautiful landscapes, majestic mountains, rugged coastlines, and the most friendly and passionate people you will ever meet. That's how I hear visitors to Northern Ireland describing 'our wee country'.

The appeal of our amazing places are no longer the preserve of those who live here. Over the last five years Northern Ireland has seen consistently increasing numbers of international visitors wanting to experience it for themselves and that is likely to continue. Our confidence and pride in our heritage has blossomed. Economically it has given us a boost and tourism is now our largest contributor to GDP.

However, the growth in numbers visiting Northern Ireland and National Trust sites brings with it the challenge of how to ensure those who visit continue to have great experiences. Increasing numbers visiting some of our most sensitive sites has impacted the very structure of these places as can be seen in the erosion of the paths leading up to Slieve Donard and on the island at Carrick-a-Rede. People who live close to some of our busiest sites are finding their way of life changed due to

the large numbers coming to their towns and villages. This sometimes hidden and unseen impact can be positive, but we know this isn't always the case.

Being aware of this, the National Trust in Northern Ireland has taken a number of actions. While not set up as a tourism organisation, we find ourselves through our conservation work and ownership, managing some of the most popular natural, built and cultural heritage sites here. Working with our partners in Tourism NI, Tourism Ireland, government, Council representatives and key tourism partners we have started the conversation about the need to look ahead, and manage our sites in a responsible way.

Collectively we have recognised that we don't want to end up in a situation like Venice where over tourism is now a big issue, so we have to plan now. We have developed a clear policy for sustainable tourism and started the debate with our partners on what that means in terms of developing tourism here differently. If we can put in place the right strategic tourism management structure in Northern Ireland, we will be able to protect the places we hold dear for future generations.

I am delighted that later this year we will be jointly hosting an international conference to consider further how best to do that. We will be learning from others, as well as sharing our experiences, to make sure that Northern Ireland continues to be a must-see destination, but not at the cost of the people, heritage and experiences we offer.

Will we ever go back to a few thousand people visiting the Giant's Causeway each year having welcomed 1.1 million last year? I doubt it. Can we manage the numbers visiting and give those visitors the best possible experience, while sharing the economic benefit with others? Absolutely! Can we ensure that visits to National Trust places continue to grow and do so sustainably without damaging the places that poets like Heaney were inspired to write about? We must!

Heather McLachlan
Regional Director



Local craft: A GIANT success

The retail team at the Giant's Causeway have once again smashed their sales targets for 2018 and have attributed their success, in no small part, to their strong focus on local craft.

The Giant's Causeway retail offer provides a unique landscape where Northern Ireland's artisans and crafters can showcase their range of beautiful gifts, imagined, designed and uniquely made in Northern Ireland, to a broad range of international visitors. Visitors are guaranteed to find an extra special souvenir to treasure their trip to the Causeway Coast.

Alastair Walker, Operations Manager said: 'This is a tremendous achievement for the retail team here at the Causeway.'

'The team have a very clear understanding about the part they play in helping to look after special places and they are driven and passionate about coming up with innovative ways to constantly achieve.'

'Year on year, since the new Visitor Centre opened in 2012, the team have honed the commercial offer, with a strong focus on local craft. We are very proud that 80% of our craft range is now made in Northern Ireland. This success means that almost £600,000 of our Made in Northern Ireland range was sold in 2018, generating significant income for local businesses. We have had the privilege of helping local craftspeople turn their vision into a reality and to help them sustain and grow their small businesses.'



Restoring Mussenden Temple's floor

Restoration work on the floor at Mussenden Temple is due to begin in autumn 2019 with the project expected to cost £20,000.

The domed Temple was originally designed and built for the niece of the 4th Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry - Frideswide Bruce in 1785 and forms part of Downhill Demesne. Based on the Temple of Vesta in Italy, Mussenden Temple once held the Earl Bishop's library and today the Temple is a must-see attraction on the North Coast, welcoming over 50,000 visitors every year and playing host to numerous weddings, concerts and events.

This iconic 17th-century building has stood the test of time very well over the last few centuries with annual surveys and monitoring in place to assess its precarious cliff-edge position. However at some time all historic buildings require some TLC

and Mussenden Temple's floor is now in urgent need of repair. Around half of the original limestone flagstones remain, the vast majority of which are cracked, and many of the newer replacement stones are in need of cleaning and repair.

Due to the historic value of the Temple, conservation experts Cliveden Conservation will be carrying out this intricate work for us in September/October. The restored floor will cost approximately £20,000 and we have launched a fundraising campaign to help us raise the money needed. As a conservation charity, protecting special places for ever, for everyone is at the very heart of what we do and it's thanks to the support of our members and visitors that we are able to fund this important maintenance work. For more information visit nationaltrust.org.uk/downhill-demesne-and-hezlett-house.



New Queen Anne tour reveals Castle Coole's historic past

Learn more about Castle Coole and the history hidden beneath your feet on a guided walk of the original house built on the estate, before Castle Coole as we see it today.

The original estate in 1707 would have been very different to the one you see today with major developments being made by the owner, Col. James Corry, who inherited the land from his father. The Queen Anne House was built and large additions made to the estate including a large walled deer park which has now mostly been lost.

Later in the mid-1700s came the formal gardens, sunken bowling green and

water garden with a canal, parts of which can still be seen in the landscape. The double oak-lined avenue was added and remains the main entrance to the estate today with several of the ancient oaks still standing along the main drive.

The area of the Queen Anne site is highlighted on property maps and signage but during the summer you will be able to enjoy guided walks of the grounds to learn about the history of the estate before the current house was built in the 1790s.

Visit nationaltrust.org.uk/castle-coole or contact 028 6632 2690 for more information.

Doing busy better



The Giant's Causeway and Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge are popular tourist attractions



Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries and in recent years Northern Ireland has seen significant growth in international visitors keen to experience our warm welcome, rich history and stunning landscapes. Statistics from Tourism Ireland show that in 2017 nearly 2.2 million visitors from overseas were welcomed to Northern Ireland, an increase of over 40% since 2012.

Many of Northern Ireland's most iconic landmarks such as the Giant's Causeway, Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge and Mussenden Temple are under our guardianship, and we have been entrusted to look after these places for ever, for everyone. More international tourists coming to Northern Ireland, means more people wanting to visit

these special places which presents us with both opportunities and challenges.

An increase of overseas visitors to our places provides income which goes directly back into the ongoing conservation and restoration of the places you love; it also provides us with an opportunity to share our cause with a global audience. More visitors also means we need to look at how we manage busy periods at our sites, where appropriate introducing measures to ensure we provide everyone with a great experience, whilst looking after these special places for generations to come.

We recognise that the warm welcome provided by our local communities in Northern Ireland is one of the reasons this part of the world is such a special

place to visit. With government having set ambitious targets for continued tourism growth, we will be working with local communities and other agencies to make sure that this is done in a sustainable way. We want to ensure that tourism growth benefits local communities; that visitors continue to have great experiences, and that our world renowned natural environment is respected and protected. We recently introduced online ticketing at Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge so visitors (and members) can book a ticket weeks in advance, helping to manage visitor numbers to the site and local area. We'll also be looking at other practical ways to improve your visitor experience, including traffic management and parking solutions, improved catering and better facilities.

Q&A with Esther Dobbin Our first Responsible Tourism Manager in Northern Ireland



Q: What will your role involve?

A: In Northern Ireland we are committed to helping look after the places where people live and we have developed a Sustainable Tourism policy as part of that. This role of Responsible Tourism Manager will operate at a property level at the Giant's Causeway and Carrick-a-Rede, two of our busiest sites, in order to take that policy and implement it on the ground. We need to celebrate the value of local heritage and green spaces and enable people to make a difference, looking after and protecting the local places they love. Community is at the heart of responsible tourism, if you have a tourist destination which is a happy place to live, it will also be a happy place to visit.

Q: Is tourism a bad thing for Northern Ireland?

A: Tourism can certainly cause adverse effects on the environment and create many challenges for the host community. The success of the Giant's Causeway and Carrick-a-Rede as a tourist destination has certainly created challenges and issues for local people. This role has been created as a recognition that we cannot

continue to grow exponentially without managing our success and making sure that tourism is used to benefit the environment and local community. The benefits can be economic, but there must also be socio-cultural benefits, such as training and development opportunities and the use of the tourist product to showcase local talent, such as local craft or skill. It should be about raising the profile of the local area as a whole, not just the tourist attraction that brings people there.

Q: What are your priorities now?

A: The first thing we need is to better understand what impact tourism is having on our sites. We need to establish what the physical and environmental impacts are; to consider the visitor experience at the destination; and the socio-cultural effects on the local community. We want to have a clearer picture of the impact of our sites on the community and region in a holistic way so that our decisions are best informed to allow us to truly protect our special places and provide opportunities for generations to come for the communities they sit within.



Mina Lenox-Conyngham The last lady of Springhill House

We have introduced a new guided tour at Springhill designed to reveal more about the extraordinary life of Mina Lenox-Conyngham. Listen as our guides recite anecdotes about the life she led as the last Lady of Springhill House. Hear the music she wrote and see the style of clothing she would have worn in the early 1900's.

Born in 1866 in Rockdale House near Sandholes, outside Cookstown, Mina was a very talented and steadfast individual who had an overwhelming love for her family. She lived through the Great War and World War II and threw herself into helping others, finding strength to support her causes from home. Locally, she raised funds for supplies and huts to be built for the Ulster regiments during the Great War and she facilitated the US Army while they requisitioned the grounds at Springhill some 30 years on. Strong-willed and never shy to speak up, Mina put pen to paper to write 'Old Ulster House', now considered to be the 'go-to' book on Springhill. She also showed skills musically and penned the song 'Moneymore Fair'. Mina died in 1961 at Springhill, a life spanning over nine decades. She was the last of the Lenox-Conyngham's to live in the house before it was placed in our care.



New dog-friendly café at Castle Ward

We have opened two new dog-friendly areas at Castle Ward, so your whole family can enjoy a day out together. The Trailhead Café is our new dog-friendly hub on the estate. Located in our historic farmyard and beside the loughshore, it's the perfect spot to pop in with your pooch for a coffee and sandwich on your walk. Alongside the café, we're also introducing a dogs-off-leads area where your dog can run and play freely before you head down to the Trailhead together for a treat. Find out more on our website.



We're working to keep Portstewart Strand free of plastics

Tackling plastic pollution at Portstewart Strand

Our North Coast team are embarking on a mission to rid Portstewart Strand of single-use plastics. To help us achieve this momentous task we have teamed up with three local schools – Portstewart Primary School, St Colum's Primary School and Dominican College. We will be working together with these schools at the heart of our community to talk about the issue of plastic pollution in our oceans and discover solutions

for tackling the problem together. Each primary school pupil is also making an eco-brick which will then be used by the pupils of Dominican College to create thought provoking sea sculptures. These will be displayed on Portstewart Strand on World Oceans Day, Saturday 8 June, when the campaign will be officially launched. Why not come to the beach on 8 June to see their eco-brick creations and join us in a litter pick on the Strand.

*We now have over 95,000 members
in Northern Ireland – thank you for
being one of them.*

A volunteer examines a box of glass plate negatives



New light shed on Mount Stewart's darkroom

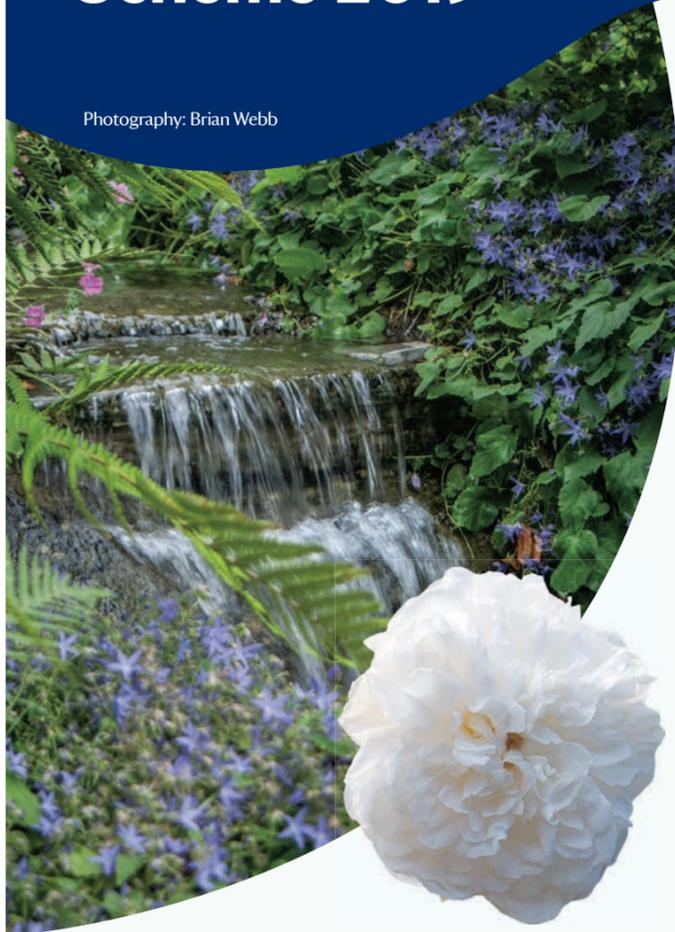
Mount Stewart, the glamorous neo-classical home of the Londonderry family underwent a huge restoration programme several years ago, and during this time we acquired hundreds of family objects from the original collection. Among these was the darkroom collection of avid photographer Theresa, Lady Londonderry, with boxes of her glass plate negatives.

Over the next few months a team of volunteers will be carefully cataloguing, cleaning and digitising these negatives in view of visitors, and learning more about the people and places they depict.

The project will be aiming to identify a number of people shown in the images as well as subjects photographed by Lady Londonderry. Once the work is completed, an exhibition of some of the images is planned for 2020.

National Trust Ulster Gardens Scheme 2019

Photography: Brian Webb



Open gardens offer a rare opportunity to explore the secrets of hidden and private gardens not usually open to the public. For 2019 the Ulster Gardens Scheme has brought together a spectacular array of gardens which are yours to explore this summer. Whether you're a keen gardener eager for some helpful tips, or you simply enjoy discovering the splendour and beauty of unusual plants, there is something for everyone to enjoy in these charming gardens. While you're there, browse the plant stalls for a special plant to add to your garden at home, or relax with a cup of tea.

Admission £4

All funds raised help support National Trust gardens in Northern Ireland

It is regretted that dogs cannot be admitted even on a lead and that National Trust Membership Cards are not valid for entry to private gardens open under the scheme.

 [UlsterGardensScheme](#)
 [@UlsterGardensScheme](#)

www.ulstergardensscheme.org.uk

May

Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 May, 2-5pm

Mr Sam Harrison,

Beechgrove, 12 Castle Avenue, Castlewellan, BT31 9DX

A plantsman's garden, developed over a period of 35 years. Year round interest is maintained through a wide range of colourful and unusual plants. The garden is arranged in peninsulas of trees and shrubs which jut onto the lawns, providing attractive vistas and shelter to many specimen plants. Features include a summer house, pond, island beds, woodland walk and a stumpery. Selected seating enhances the benefits of the scented plants. The garden is wildlife friendly, with birds and butterflies in abundance. Mostly suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: Located within Castlewellan Forest Park. The garden entrance is the first road on the left (approximately 200 metres) inside the main gates. Castlewellan Forest Park is signposted in the centre of Castlewellan town.

Plant stall

Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 May, 2-5pm

Mr Stephen and Mrs Pat Hey,

Riverside House, 7 Crevenish Road, Kesh, BT93 1RF

An informal, flower-filled garden that backs onto the Kesh River, located just moments from the centre of the village. The garden illustrates the huge amount of interest that can be created in a relatively small space by inventive owners through the planting of fruit, vegetables, greenhouse, summerhouse, herbaceous plantings, and a variety of flowering shrubs. New views and interesting items surprise the visitor at every turn, from a raised fish pond to re-used historic elements and a beehive. Not generally suitable for wheelchairs due to grass paths and graveled areas.

Location: 90 metres from the centre of Kesh. From Enniskillen: take the A47 and join the A35 from Irvinestown to Kesh. From Omagh: take the A32 and then the B4 into Kesh. **Note:** There is no parking available at the property. Parking is available on public roads and in car parks in the village. The area immediately outside the property can accommodate a very small number of disabled visitors and may be restricted to a drop off zone.

Plant stall/teas

Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 May, 2-5pm

Mr Michael and Mrs Geraldine Galloway,

1 Ballytrustran Road, Downpatrick, BT30 7AQ

This unique seven-acre garden lies in Lecale, four miles east of Downpatrick and was created by the late Dr Magill over the last five decades of the twentieth century. He transformed a disused quarry into a large sheltered amphitheater surrounded by trees and shrubs. The present owners have maintained and improved the garden, noted for its collection of rhododendrons. Views into the garden as well as the surrounding countryside are obtained from a circular path through the trees around the quarry rim. Considerable peripheral planting of native trees has been carried out. The garden is partially suitable for wheelchairs and children must be strictly supervised due to the dangerous cliff faces.

Location: From Downpatrick: follow the B1 Ardglass Road. At the Downshire Hospital, continue straight ahead on the Ballyhorman Road. At the next crossroads after Ballyalton, turn left into Ballytrustran Road and the garden is on the right.

Plant stall/teas

June

Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 June, 2-5pm

Dr Richard and Mrs Heather Burns,

232 Windyhill Road, Macosquin, Coleraine, BT51 4JN

An unmanicured, wildlife-friendly, woodland garden set on a hillside with a level area close to the house. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: From Londonderry and Limavady: take A2 to Coleraine. At Killane and Windyhill roundabouts, continue on A2. Garden is approx. 7.5 miles from Windyhill roundabout, on left. Watch for Ulster Gardens Scheme signs from Windyhill roundabout.

From Ballymoney and Coleraine: At Lodge Road roundabout take ring road west, signposted Cookstown A29. Cross river and at Strand Road roundabout, the dual carriage becomes three lanes, take centre lane and continue on A29 signposted Cookstown. At next roundabout (Greenmount) move into right lane and take third exit signposted Castlerock. Continue on this road to Carthall roundabout and turn left. This is Windyhill Road. The garden is approx. 3.4 miles from roundabout on right. Watch for Ulster Gardens Scheme signs from Greenmount roundabout.

Note: Some off-road parking may be available.

Plant stall/teas

Saturday 22 June, 2-5pm

Mr T McCaw and Mr T Raju,

Fernhill Cottage Gardens, 44 Dunmore Road, Spa, Ballynahinch, BT24 8PR

A new plant lover's garden developed by the owners over the past 5½ years, overlooking Slieve Croob. The garden is on an exposed windy site with themed island beds and borders having spring bulbs, woodland plants and colourful perennials, shrubs, trees and an orchard. Thoughtful mix of planting extends the gardening year. Not suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: From Ballynahinch: take the A24 towards Newcastle. After the 30mph speed limit (leaving Ballynahinch), turn right onto Spa/Castlewellan (Spa Road). Continue for 1.5 miles entering Spa crossroads. At the crossroads turn left onto Dunmore Road. The garden is on the left 0.6 miles after Spa crossroads.

Plant stall/teas

Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 June, 2-5pm

Joy and Maurice Parkinson,

154 Ballyrobert Road, Ballyclare, BT39 9RT

Maurice and Joy Parkinson have, over the past twenty years designed and built this unique garden on the site of a 16-acre seventeenth-century farm, steeped in local and national history. The original cottage, barn, and farmyard have been sensitively integrated within a six-acre, Robinsonian style garden containing one of the Province's most extensive plant collections laid out in sweeping borders and intimate settings. Delightful features including the traditional entrance, a fairy tree, a 'hole' tree and a two-acre 'spiral', sit handily alongside a formal garden, lawns, lake, streams, orchard, meadows and woodland. This garden was selected by the BBC to demonstrate high quality naturalistic gardening and by the Guardian newspaper as one of the top ten secret gardens in the UK. Tours and demonstrations on both days will illustrate techniques of wildlife and 'naturalistic' gardening. See www.ballyrobertgardens.com. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: Situated on the edge of Ballyrobert village on the B59 between Corrs Corner roundabout at Glengormley and Ballyclare.

Plants stall/teas

August

Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 August, 2-5pm

Mr and Mrs J Rafferty,

The Mill House, 140 Ballynashee Road, Glenwherry, Ballymena, BT42 2EW

This serene five-acre country garden was featured in BBC's 'Greatest Gardens' with Helen Dillon and Diarmuid Gavin in 2015. Woodland plantings of beech, oak, spruce and silver birch are linked by stone paths, approximately half-a-mile in total, with seating at points of special interest. The paths have been extended through a small copse of silver birch under planted with mostly woodland plants including magnolias, azaleas, hydrangeas and hundreds of candelabra primulas. The shady riverside walk defines the area between the Glenwherry River and an old mill race which feeds two ponds. The larger pond, approximately 0.5 acre, has an island and a boat jetty and is surrounded by raised beds on two levels filled with an eclectic choice of plants. From the top of the rhododendron walk, with

over 140 rhododendrons, there are wonderful views across countryside designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Location: The garden is situated on the Ballynashee Road, half a mile from the main Ballymena/Larne Road (A36). Approximately 10 miles from Ballymena and 10 miles from Larne. From Ballyclare: take the Colin Road (B94) to the Five Corners pub. Take the second road on the right ((Sawmills Road). Drive approximately one mile to crossroads and turn left onto Ballynashee Road. Drive 2.8 miles to bridge, garden is on the left. From Broughshane: take Rathkeel Road (B94) towards Ballyclare. After approximately six miles at T junction turn left onto A36. After approximately three miles, turn right onto Ballynashee Road. House on right. (Please park on Ballynashee Road.)

Plant stall/teas

Please note these are private houses and gardens with no Public Disability Parking.

Ulster Gardens Scheme Review Evening

Thursday 14 November 2019 at 7.30pm

The Old Courthouse, Antrim

Join members of the Ulster Gardens Scheme Committee and garden owners for our very popular annual review, when we look back at another successful season's garden visiting on behalf of the National Trust, and enjoy a light supper.

Admission: A charge of £5 per person will be made, to avoid a drain on National Trust funds.

Pre-booking is essential, as numbers are strictly limited.

Contact The Old Courthouse on 028 9448 1338 to book.





National Trust

Gardens Open by Appointment 2019

These gardens are open by appointment in aid of the National Trust gardens in Northern Ireland. This scheme is in addition to the established Ulster Gardens Scheme of fixed day openings.

Admission £4

Antrim

10 Riverside Road, Bushmills, BT57 8TP

A large garden with deep borders and unusual plants and shrubs. Woodland walk, snowdrops, primroses, bluebells, scillas etc. large lawn, facing south with country views.

Location: From Bushmills take the Castlecat Road. After approximately one mile, turn right onto Riverside Road. Continue for 0.75 miles and turn left at house on left onto drive. Garden at end of drive, approx. 200 yards.

Tel: Mrs Pam Trail for appointment on 028 2073 1219 or 0792 2795 6720

Open all year

17 Drumnamallagh Road, Ballymoney, BT53 7QX

An interesting garden with unusual plants, scree, crevice garden, stone troughs, herbaceous border, pond and a stream. Featured in the Greenmount Gardens television programme and listed in Shirley Lanigan's book, The 100 Best Gardens in Ireland. Plants for sale.

Tel: Mrs Dorothy Brown for an appointment and directions to the garden on 028 2766 2923

Open April – end September

11 Sallagh Road, Cairncastle, Ballygally, Larne, BT40 2NE

A two-acre plantsman's garden situated on the Antrim Coast, featuring a number of paths that wind through maturing woodland. Includes several small ponds with an extensive collection of herbaceous plants, bulbs, shrubs and trees, many of which have been propagated by the owner. Also a large collection of hellebores. Parking limited. Not suitable for children. Partial wheelchair access.

Location: From A8 Belfast to Larne Road: turn left on B148 for Cairncastle at new Millbrook roundabout. After approximately four miles, leave B148 at 'Old Dairy' (yellow cottage), and fork left onto Sallagh Road. House is 0.75 miles on right, below road. From A2 Coast Road at Ballygally: from rear of Ballygally car park turn left and drive approximately 1.75 miles to T junction. Turn left again onto B148 and then, shortly after, sharp right onto Sallagh Road access.

Tel: Mr and Mrs D Ledsham for appointment on 028 2858 3003

Open April – end October

13 Ballynagar Road, Ballyvogy, Ballycastle BT54 6PW

This country garden near Ballycastle, on a 0.5 acre site, is approximately 400ft above sea level with a stunning view of the sea and Kenbane headland. The garden is designed for the prevailing environmental conditions and to protect each section from the severe winds, structured windbreaks have been created from ceanothus, potentilla, fuchsia, escallonia, weigela, cistus and conifers. From the first snowdrops, daffodils and primulas in the main garden there is a continual mass of colour until early autumn with lilies, agapanthus, alliums, azalea, hydrangea and many more. At the end of the garden a number of small paths lead through a large rockery of mature plants and rhododendrons to a fruit tree area. Another area of the garden is planted with a wide variety of hostas, apple trees and other mature shrubs. Due to limited car parking and narrow road, groups are limited to 10 and regrettably unsuitable for wheelchairs.

Location: Drive through Ballycastle, pass the Marine Hotel on left, take second exit at the roundabout onto the A2 and follow signs for Cushendall. Two miles onto Ballyvogy (Hunters Pub on corner) continue on A2 for 0.75 miles, Ballynagar Road is on the right. Drive approximately 0.75 miles and arrive at first bungalow on the right.

Tel: Tom and Penny McNeill for appointment on 077 5419 0687

Open late May – September

3 Ballyutoag Hill, Nutts Corner, Crumlin, BT29 4UH

Holly House garden is an area of six acres created out of farmland over the past 17 years. The garden comprises woodlands, herbaceous borders and an iris garden where thousands of spring and summer bulbs have been planted. There is an alpine bed, wildlife ponds and a newly planted shrub and woodland garden. Also, in contrast to the traditional parts there is a modern contemporary garden.

Location: From Belfast: go to Carlisle Circus and take the Crumlin Road and follow signs for Crumlin/International Airport (A52). After three miles, reaching the Horseshoe Bend, continue approximately four miles. Turn left onto Ballyutoag Hill and the garden is the first entrance on the right. From the West: From Moira M1 roundabout follow signs to International Airport and after 11 miles come to Nutts Corner roundabout. Take the road to Belfast (A52) and after four miles turn right onto Ballyutoag Hill. The garden is the first entrance on the right.

Tel: Mr Will Hamilton for appointment 028 9082 5967

Open May – September

Armagh

7 Mount Charles North, Bessbrook, Newry, BT35 7DW

This garden is in the delightful eighteenth century village of Bessbrook. A connoisseur's garden with a superb collection of alpines and clematis, cleverly planted with herbaceous plants and shrubs. There are alpines in troughs and a recently added crevice bed.

Location: From Belfast: take the A1 for Dublin then take the A27 turn-off for Newry. At the roundabout take the 3rd exit under the bridge (signposted A28 Markethill/Armagh). At the 2nd roundabout take the 2nd exit (sign posted Craigmore/Bessbrook 2). At crossroads at Millvale Arms turn right onto B133, after 0.6 miles take first left past Vauxhall Garage, Bessbrook BT12. 0.3 miles past the Gospel Hall turn left through the iron gates at railings. The garden is five minutes from the main Belfast/Dublin A1.

Tel: Mr and Mrs W McKelvey for appointment on 028 3083 8006

Open May – August

Down

3 Brooklands Park, Manse Road, Newtownards, BT23 4XY

A compact garden with emphasis on trees, shrubs, roses and herbaceous perennials grown to attract birds, bees and butterflies. Showcasing an extensive range of plants and features aimed to enhance and intrigue. The garden has been artistically planted to give year-round interest and the colourful, broad herbaceous border is an attractive feature at the front of the house. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: From Dundonald follow the A20 to the roundabout at Ards Shopping Centre. Take the first exit onto Blair Mayne Road North. Turn left into Manse Road. Continue until you reach Brooklands Park on the left.

Tel: Miss Gillian Downing for appointment on 028 9181 5263

Open April – September

77 Magheratimpany Road, Spa, Ballynahinch, BT24 8PA

This delightful 25-acre garden includes a cottage garden, woodland with shade loving plants and a rock garden. There is a wonderful collection of trees and a wildlife pond. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: South of Ballynahinch A24. 200 yards past the Millbrook Lodge Hotel turn right on to the Ballymaglave Road, towards Spa. Turn left on to Magheratimpany Road and Number 77 is on the left hand side.

Tel: Dr and Mrs Colin Tindall for appointment on 028 9756 2812

Open May – September

'Glenkeen', 12 Dunevly Road, Portaferry, BT22 1NB

This is a 12-year-old, informal, half-acre garden with a variety of interesting plants. The delightfully colourful garden includes soft fruits and vegetables and is wildlife friendly with bee hives. Woodturning studio, dolls' houses and local crafts for sale. Open 10am to 4pm during Creative Peninsula Week with refreshments available.

Location: From Newtownards: take the A20 main Newtownards to Portaferry Road. Approximately 6.5 miles from Kircubbin turn left into Dunevly Road (opposite Lough Cowey Lake sign) Number 12 is just over one mile on the left at a U bend. From Portaferry: take A20 road towards Newtownards. Dunevly Road is just over two miles on the right.

Tel: Ann and Mike Miall for appointment on 028 4277 2418

Maximum group of 15 people

Open June, July and August

'Forth Cottage', 67 Lisnacroppin Road, Rathfriland, BT34 5NZ

This cottage garden has been extended and revamped over three generations of gardeners in the family. The changes reflect the greater variety of cottage type plants available in the 21st century and ideas inspired by many garden visits. The south facing rose garden, in front of the nineteenth-century part of the cottage, is planted for year-round interest and gravel mulched for ease of maintenance. On the terrace, inside the walled garden, crevice style alpine troughs give spring interest, and gravel paths wind through the beds. The middle lawn is original field grass, with curving beds and a west facing rock solar. The bottom garden is mostly wild flower planting, with the working area, compost bins and the 'rompers and roamers bed'. The garden is largely wheelchair friendly with plenty of seating available. Car parking limited.

Location: From the A1 take the B10 Rathfriland Road. Go 7.5 miles, then take a right turn up a steep hill onto Lisnacroppin Road. After two miles on Lisnacroppin Road, the garden is on the right. Parking on right after the cottage. From Rathfriland: go two miles on the B10 and turn left onto Lisnacroppin Road.

Tel: Mrs Helen Harper for appointment on 028 4065 1649

Maximum group of 10 people

Open May – July

Old Balloo House and Barn, 15-17 Comber Road, Balloo, Killinchy, BT23 6PB

Gardens of approximately one acre, developed around a late Georgian house and outbuildings, leading down to the River Blackwater. The garden immediately around the house, created in the mid-20th century, has been restored and extended by the current owners. A wide range of plants is placed artistically, within the different spaces. Winding paths take you through the garden where spring bulbs, especially daffodils, cherry and apple blossom, primula, flowering shrubs, roses, clematis and specimen trees abound. The planting offers carefully framed views within the garden and to the surrounding farmland. Herbaceous material is used throughout the garden as under planting or in the New European Perennial style. Many of the plants have been propagated on site. The garden includes many interesting features such as a water-trough cascade, feeding a rill, which empties into a pond. Please note that part of the garden is not accessible to everyone due to the steep incline. Unsuitable for young children and wheelchairs.

Location: Between Comber and Killyleagh on the A22 (on crossroads opposite Sofaland).

Tel: Lesley Simpson 028 9754 1485 or Moira Concannon 078 1141 6642 for appointment. Maximum group of 6-8 people.

Open April – June

Londonderry

'Hampstead Hall', 40 Culmore Road, Londonderry, BT48 7RS

A fascinating city garden in the suburbs of Derry. It is comprised of a Japanese style garden, an Italian garden and a formal garden in front of an elegant Georgian House. A new area is under development. Described and illustrated in Shirley Lanigan's 'The 100 Best Gardens in Ireland'. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: Follow the signs for the city centre after crossing the Foyle Bridge. After double set of traffic lights take second right into Baronscourt. House is third driveway on the right.

Tel: Mr Liam Greene for appointment on 028 7135 4807 (evenings)

Groups only

Open May – end September

Tyrone

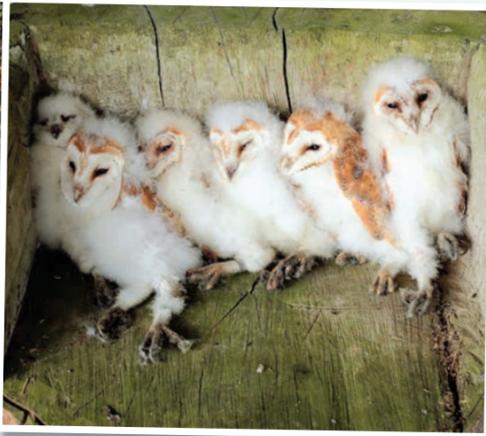
Tattykeel House, Doogary Road, Omagh, BT79 0BN

A country garden of approximately 1.5 acres created over a 25 year period, planted with conifers, shrubs, roses and perennials. There is a sheltered seating area, a Japanese influenced area, interesting features and a collection of well grown climbers on the house. The garden was featured on the BBC television series 'Greenmount Gardens'. Mrs Ward runs a very interesting craft studio at the house. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: Tattykeel House is approximately 2.5 miles from Omagh on the south side of the A5 Omagh to Ballygawley Road. There is a sign at the entrance gate.

Tel: Mr Hugh and Mrs Kathleen Ward for appointment on 028 8224 9801

Open May – July



Barn Owl boxes installed at Castle Ward

On a particularly wet Friday in late winter, Alan and Gavin from the Northern Ireland Raptor Study Group (NIRSG) braved the elements to erect new barn owl boxes in the West Park at Castle Ward. The two met Danielle, Mark and Paul from the Castle Ward ranger team and took them through the careful process of finding the perfect spot for the new boxes supplied by Ulster Wildlife Trust.

Alan and David explained the state of Northern Ireland's barn owl population: 'There are only three known nesting sites of barn owls in Northern Ireland. We estimate that there are between 20 and 50 breeding

pairs based on sightings, so any we can add to the total is fantastic. Their habitats have been lost over the years due to intensive farming, pesticide use and the decline of native hedgerows but sites like Castle Ward with this kind of species-rich grassland are perfect for barn owls to hunt and nest.'

Barn owls were last thought to be nesting at Castle Ward over 20 years ago. This special place has been selected as a prime site for their reintroduction due to our ongoing commitment to improving the land in our care. With an emphasis on reduced grass mowing, habitat creation over the past four years and a return to

species rich grassland, we hope barn owls will be tempted to return to Castle Ward in the next few years. Five boxes have now been put up around the estate and more are being built by local Downpatrick Men's Shed group later in the year.

Get in touch with the NIRSG if you:

- Have barn owls on your land
- Know of a nesting site
- Would like to get involved with raptor surveying

If you'd like to support the barn owl population with your own box, or would like to find out more visit www.barnowltrust.org.uk.



Kitchen Garden secures National Lottery funding

We're delighted to announce that Florence Court has received a grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund of £374,800 for an exciting project to restore the Kitchen Garden in the estate's Walled Garden to its 1930s character and atmosphere.

Made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, the project will see the reinstatement of two glasshouses on the footprint of the two original glass structures revealed in archaeological excavations carried out in 2014.

One of the new glasshouses will be dedicated to horticultural production and the second will provide a sheltered space for volunteer learning and community use. The garden will also be returned to full horticultural production in empathy with its historic planting schemes.

Commenting on the news Jim Chestnutt, General Manager at Florence Court said: 'We are absolutely delighted to have secured funding from the National Lottery for this project which aims to attract and involve the community and volunteers with their heritage through the restoration of Florence Court's historic 2-acre kitchen garden by reinstating the two glasshouses demolished in the 1970s and the horticultural restoration of the planting schemes.

'The funding will also provide vital support for the delivery of an exciting activities programme to engage a far reaching and diverse audience with this special place. I look forward to welcoming everyone to Florence Court during the delivery of this two-year project as the glasshouses and garden take shape.'



The dream job with a view... Meet Katie and Marc, our two new Mourne Rangers...

Imagine your working day started with a 4km hike to the top of Northern Ireland's tallest mountain. That's exactly the scenic commute two members of our South Down ranger team will be taking daily, in their new roles as Mourne Rangers.

Marc Vinas Alcon and Katie Taylor have the best 'office' view in Northern Ireland as they start a two-year, £250,000 project to repair the eroded path ways on Slieve Donard and Slieve Commedagh.

Not only a source of literary inspiration, the Mournes are home to a varied range of rare plants and habitats which we work hard to look after. The delicate montane heath, bog pools and specialised species which thrive there are part of why the mountains have been designated as a Special Area of Conservation.

As visitor numbers to the Mournes continue to grow, the delicate ecosystem of the mountains has started to show signs of wear and tear which is where the Mourne Rangers come in. Focused on the Saddle area, the project will see the pair repairing 'braided' trails, where walkers have created multiple routes and re-landscaping some of the areas around the paths to ensure protection of the surrounding environment.

Marc began as a volunteer at Murlough National Nature Reserve, and worked as a Boardwalk Ranger there last year, but found himself 'keeping an eye on the mountain' from his vantage point in the dunes. Katie already knows the area well, most recently working on the Mourne Wall project with Mourne Heritage Trust and appearing in the BBC programme 'The Chronicles of Mourne.'

As well as the difficult physical work of repairing the paths and bringing the materials to the site each day, the project will face other challenges as Katie explains, 'Weather is going to be an issue, we can't always guarantee perfect sunshine when we're up here, and the path needs to be repaired whether there's a hailstorm or snow.'

It is a big job and Marc and Katie need help. They are looking for a passionate team of volunteers who love the Mournes as much as they do, to help them out.

If this sounds like your dream job, give Murlough National Nature Reserve a call on 028 4375 1467 to chat about volunteering as a Mourne Ranger.

Follow the work of the Mourne Rangers on their Twitter account at @NTMournes and find out more about the project at nationaltrust.org.uk/the-mournes.



Members of the National Trust Team at Mount Stewart, Nerve Belfast Creative Learning Centre, and Ards Rural Youth Forum with the Mayor Richard Smart at the launch of the Woodland Trail

Giving a new voice to Mount Stewart's trails

If you take a walk along the yellow woodland trail at Mount Stewart you will notice some new wooden signage created thanks to the work of the Ards Rural Youth Forum.

Using the theme behind the Woman and Power: Faces of Change exhibition, the group of teenagers worked with Nerve Belfast Creative Learning Centre to explore what it means to have a voice, identity and power. They then choose quotations around this theme which inspired or challenged them and designed and laser-cut the words onto large discs of tree trunk to be used along the trail.

Starting at the Shepherds Hut and turning left onto the woodland trail, you'll find these thought provoking installations along the way.

Tammi Peek, Volunteering, Learning and Community Involvement Officer at Mount Stewart said: 'It has been fantastic working with Ards Rural Youth Forum and Nerve Belfast on this project. Engaging young people with the work that we do and helping them find 'their place in our places' is very important to us. They have added something new to Mount Stewart which will surprise and delight our visitors as they walk out on the demesne.'



Every time you visit and scan your membership card, that place receives a credit that goes towards the upkeep of the property. Thank you.

THE BIG FIVE

New projects keeping us busy in 2019 and beyond...

In 2018 we spent £17 million on conservation, that's £2,000 every hour and we plan on spending even more looking after the places in our care in 2019. As a result, you may notice a lot of activity at our places over the coming months as we invest in our properties to improve our conservation efforts, improve the experience for our visitors, and ensure they continue to remain open for people to enjoy.



1 Giant's Causeway and Carrick-a-Rede

After the completion of the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre in 2012, millions of people from over 150 countries have been drawn to the Giant's Causeway and Carrick-a-Rede. As we approach seven years since the Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre opened we are looking at what we need to do next.

Firstly, we are commissioning an independent study into the capacity of the sites and the surrounding area. The results will help us understand visitor numbers, behaviours and movements into and within the surrounding landscape, as well as measure the impact visitors may or may not be having on these spaces.

Secondly we are creating a masterplan for the future, using the results as key inputs. We're not sure what this plan will look like just yet but we are excited to work with the community, our members and our visitors from around the world to make sure we're offering the best possible experiences for everyone, one's that complement our conservation mission and protect these special places for ever.

2 Mount Stewart

Since the acquisition in 2014 of the wider Demesne at Mount Stewart we have already invested close to £1million restoring the historic walks, stabilising existing structures and restoring features, but there's much more to come.

We have embarked on an exciting journey to conserve, enhance and restore Mount Stewart's built and natural heritage, creating a world class visitor experience for all to enjoy. At its heart are the Walled Kitchen Gardens and the Georgian Farm complex which will be the primary focus of our project and will include new visitor welcome facilities, retail space and a new and welcoming tearoom offer. Beyond this, the project will also develop the infrastructure and facilities needed to support our growth ambitions and will seek to increase the relevance of Mount Stewart within the community.



3 Florence Court

The original Kitchen Garden is being redeveloped; bringing life and vibrancy back to this historic feature of the estate in a project driven by the community and volunteers. Detailed plans and designs have been put together to recreate how this garden would have looked in the 1930's including the installation of two lean-to glasshouses. This is an ambitious project and we are delighted to have secured funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, alongside much valued funds from a number of supporters to help us deliver this vision.

4 Crom

At Crom, we are working with other organisations as part of The Lough Erne Landscape Partnership (LELP). Just over £2 million has been set aside by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to support LELP deliver a range of strategic and community based activities and projects from 2018 to 2023. Through this project we will be reinstating 10.5km of historical pathways increasing public access to these 18th-century historical walking grounds. A natural play area will be created and a programme of events will take place to encourage the local community to become involved in heritage activities and a citizen science programme.



5 Murlough National Nature Reserve

We are looking to create a visitor experience and welcome that will inspire people to recognise how special Murlough is. As an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and a National Nature Reserve, there is so much to teach both young and old about this unique place. Currently we are starting our design stage, engaging with visitors and drafting up options for how we can make the most of this natural site.

Keep an eye on our website and social media channels for regular project updates throughout the year, none of which would be possible without your support as members, so thank you.



Fundraise for your favourite place

From wonderful family homes like Springhill House, to the natural beauty of the Mourne Mountains and iconic built heritage such as Mussenden Temple, we care for some of Northern Ireland's most precious places.

All of this is only possible thanks to the passionate support of our members, visitors, donors, supporters and pledgers. However, to ensure these special places are still around for future generations to enjoy, we rely on ongoing support.

If you want to show your support and help raise funds for the places you love, our new fundraising pack is the perfect place to start.

Whether through undertaking a personal challenge, running a quiz night or holding a coffee morning, your fundraising will make a difference. To order a pack visit nationaltrust.org.uk/features/fundraise-for-us or call our fundraising team on 01793 817443.



Holiday somewhere truly special

Our new Strand House holiday cottage in Cushendun is now available for bookings. Get away from it all at this Cornish-style coastal cottage right in the heart of the Glens of Antrim.

Step through the bold red stable door of this cottage to discover the quirky internal layout. Take in the sea views from the bedroom or head outside to feel the sand between your toes on the wide sandy beach. Families, history enthusiasts and walkers will love the secluded location.

Situated in the heart of Cushendun with majestic views of both the

ocean and the countryside, this cottage sleeps five people.

The Bunk House at Castle Ward has had a makeover and is ideal for large families or groups (sleeps 14) who want to get close to nature this summer.

If you want something unique, why not spend a night or two in our pods at Crom, Fermanagh where you can wake up next to the marina and enjoy the sun setting over Lough Erne in the evening.

Search National Trust Holidays for more inspiration on places to stay in Northern Ireland.



Mary Gorman at The Argyry with Tina McCrory, Commercial Support Consultant

Celebrating our successes

Northern Ireland performed brilliantly in the National Trust Retail Awards for 2019, outshining other regions to pick up two top awards and a runner-up prize. Our winners were Mary Gorman at The Argyry who won 'Best Customer Service' award and Kirsty Brown and the Mount Stewart shop who scooped 'Winner of the Best Overall Shop' award. Bob Kane and the team at Giant's Causeway Visitor Centre shop were runners-up in the 'Best Shopping Experience' award.



Happy 10th anniversary to Springhill's Community Allotments

Over the past ten years, the walled garden at Springhill has grown into a community-led escape from the stresses and struggles of modern life. The ethos of the allotments is that of well-being, friendship and enrichment, with many local families growing within its walls, and going on to volunteer with us. Originally the dream of Sophie Atkinson, Springhill's Area Ranger, the Community Allotments at Springhill now house 27 plots plus a polytunnel, shed and summerhouse. We will be running various events during the year to mark the occasion, so keep an eye on our website for details of how you can help us celebrate this great achievement.

Festivals, music and the arts

Castle Ward

21 June
Midsummer Music
Enjoy an evening of music at Castle Ward on the longest day of the year. Watch the sun setting over the shores of Strangford Lough as you while away the evening listening to the music.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4488 1204
7.30-10pm
Adult £10 Child £5
Member Adult £10 Child £5

The Argory

Every Sunday in July and August
Lazy Sundays
Come and join us for laid back tunes and relaxation. Chill in the Courtyard while the kids are entertained and feast on our summer BBQ.
BBQ is an additional cost.
1-4pm
Normal Admission Members Free



Mount Stewart's bears can't wait to see you at the Teddy Bears' Picnic

Crom

6 July and 10 August
Music by the Lake
Join us for a relaxing evening and listen to local musicians by the shores of Lough Erne.
Online Booking Essential
Visit nationaltrust.org.uk/crom
7-10pm
Adult £12 Child £5
Member Adult £12 Child £5

Castle Ward

12-13 July
Pirates Picnic
'Ahoy me hearties', we are back from sailing the seven seas for another fun-filled day at Castle Ward. Captain Ward is looking for some swashbucklers to join him as he makes you 'Walk the Plank'. Come in pirate costume and prepare to seek out the hidden treasure.
1-5pm
Normal Admission Members Free

Mount Stewart

12-13 July
Teddy Bears' Picnic
Bring along your favourite teddy and join Little Red Riding Hood. Pack a picnic or treat yourself to something delicious from our caterers. Dress up and enjoy a day full of activities for all ages.
11am-4.30pm
Normal Admission Members Free



Enjoy the spectacle of kites at Downhill Kite Festival

Downhill Demesne

29 July-4 August
Kite Festival
This high flying spectacle returns as a week-long event. Award-winning kite displays, stunt kite performances and synchronised kite teams make this a festival not to be missed. See website for daily programme details.
12noon-5pm
Normal Admission Members Free

Not to be missed

Mount Stewart

7-8 September
Mount Stewart Conversations Festival
This festival returns with a colourful line-up of debates, performing arts, musical activities and more. The two-day programme includes a series of talks by BBCNI and an international line-up of culture, conversation and arts from partners Beyond Skin and Seedhead Arts. Supported by Ards and North Down Borough Council.
Free entry with a charge for some events. See website for details.



Mount Stewart Conversations Festival

Muck-in days

Murlough NNR

29 June
Ragwort Challenge
Get the whole family involved and crown the champion ragwort remover as our rangers try and remove as much ragwort as possible in one day. Meet at Keel Point concrete standing
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4375 1467
10.30am-1pm
No Charge Donations Welcome



Help our rangers remove ragwort

White Park Bay

29 June
Picnic and Pulling
Pack up a picnic and assist our ranger team with some ragwort pulling for an hour or more. Learn about why we need to remove most of the ragwort but not all of it.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 7084 8728
10am-4pm
No Charge Donations Welcome

Strangford Lough

7 September
Ards Beach Clean
Lend us a hand and help clean marine litter. This will be a good opportunity to learn about local wildlife with a ranger. Suitable for children aged 8 years plus with accompanying adult. Wellingtons advisable
Meet at the Floodgates car park, Newtownards
Contact 028 4278 7769
1-2.30pm
No Charge Donations Welcome



Join us for a beach clean

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Gardening

Rowallane Garden

15 June
Flower Pressing Session
Get ready to learn about the techniques of flower pressing. Our gardeners will show you how and why it's important to press flowers, and share a few tips on how to speed up the process.
11am-12noon
Normal Admission Members Free

Springhill

16 June
Garden Fair
A great opportunity to stock up on all your shrubs and plants, herbs and other specimens native to Springhill. Take a look at our community allotments, enjoy a tour of Springhill's gardens and get some gardening tips from our rangers.
11am-4pm
Normal Admission Members Free



Take a summer garden tour at Mount Stewart

Mount Stewart

21 July
Summer Garden Walk
Enjoy a tour with our gardening experts and discover the colours and scents of a summer garden.
Meet at Mount Stewart reception
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4278 8387
11am-1pm
Adult £10 Child £5
Member Adult £10 Child £5
Normal Admission Applies

Downhill Demesne

17 August
Downhill's Secret Gardens
Ranger led tour of Downhill gardens. Learn more about the historic walled garden and lost arboretum, now coming back to life.
Meet at Bishop's Gate
Booking Essential
Contact 028 7084 8728
2-4pm
Normal Admission Members Free

Nature and wildlife



Minnowburn

8 June
Meadow in a Bottle
Join our ranger to create your very own wildflower sensory bottle to take home and learn all about the wildflower meadows at Minnowburn. Meet at Minnowburn car park
11am-1pm
No Charge Donations Welcome



Go on a butterfly safari at Portstewart Strand

Portstewart Strand

6, 20 July and 10 August
Butterfly Safari
Join our rangers on the hunt to catch and identify the dunes' fluttering residents. Nets provided.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 7083 6396
2-4pm
Adult £2 Child £1
Member Adult £2 Child £1

Murlough NNR

6 July
Jo's Walks - Duneland Flowers
A walk in search of the specialised flowers of Murlough's duneland on a long ramble through the coastal dunes.
Meet at Keel Point concrete standing.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4375 1467
2pm
No Charge Donations Welcome

Mount Stewart

17 July and 7 August
Bug Detectives
Join in as we get out our magnifying glasses and discover a whole world of bugs and beasties... just where could those little critters be hiding? This is a drop off activity for children aged 5-11 years
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4278 8387
1.30-3.30pm
Child £8

Portmuck

3 August
Whale Watch
With an outstanding panoramic view, the Portmuck clifftop path is an ideal place to go whale watching. Bring binoculars and telescopes if you have them. Experts will be on hand to offer tips.
Meet at Portmuck car park
2-5pm
No Charge Donations Welcome

Springhill

16 August
Batty Bonanza
Learn more about the bats that make their home in and around Springhill and make something batty to take home.
7.30pm-late
Normal Admission Members Free

Murlough NNR

17 August
Outdoor Adventures - Mini beasts
Become a mini explorer for the day and discover the many different insects at Murlough. Meet at Keel Point concrete standing
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4375 1467
2pm
No Charge Donations Welcome

White Park Bay

23 August
Go Wild with the Rangers
Join our rangers for a morning of fun and adventure on White Park Bay.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 7084 8728
10am-12noon
No Charge Donations Welcome



See what bugs you can find

Something different...

Castle Coole

14 June
Queen Anne Afternoon Tea Experience
Join us in the beautiful Breakfast Room at Castle Coole for an exclusive afternoon tea experience. Ticket includes admission.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 6632 2690
2pm
Adult £25 Member Adult £25

Florence Court

20 July
Pop-up Camping
An overnight camping experience on the front lawn at Florence Court. A campfire with entertainment, BBQ and an estate walk is included.
Online Booking Essential
Visit nationaltrust.org.uk/florence-court
Check in time 6pm
Adult £20 Child £15
Member Adult £20 Child £15

Mount Stewart

27 July
Family Bike and BBQ
Bring the whole family for an evening of cycling and BBQ fun. Ticket price includes one burger or hotdog plus a soft drink. Please bring your own seating or picnic blankets.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4278 8387
5.30-9pm
No arrivals after 7pm please
Adult £8.50 Child £8.50
Member Adult £8.50 Child £8.50

Alternative formats: telephone 028 9751 0721 or email ni.customerenquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk

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