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’ve created 15 extra hectares of wildflower meadows and verges in Belfast, Fermangh, Cushendun, and Castle Ward, bringing our total meadows to over 40 hectares – that’s about 80 football pitches of meadow 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, butterflies and moths.

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 spikes of yellow in kidney vetch and bird’s-foot-trefoil. Then starry whites of eyefright 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 lawns, 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 unknown 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 crane’s-bill, devil’s-bit scabious, 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-eye 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!
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 is no longer the preserve of those who live here. Over the last few 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 Shane Donard and on the Island at Carrick-a-Rede. People who love 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 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 overt 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 this means in terms of developing tourism here differently. If we can put in the right strategic planning and management, 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 11 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 ports like Carrick-a-Rede 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 idea of 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 tuned 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 £60,000 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 craftspersons turn their vision into a reality and to help them sustain and grow their small businesses.‘

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 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.

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 Venus 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 flags 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 Glennon Conservation were called out to carry 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, 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-hozier-house.

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

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. Here’s one for you – the Northern Ireland Regional Advisory Board (RAB) to its friends 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 free 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 with you 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 around the country. We can’t, and don’t want to, have any executive function at all – the key is in the word ‘advisory’. To some 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 team 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 been 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 coastlines, 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 term if agreed.

I’m delighted to say we have just added five new members to the Regional Advisory Board, bringing us to 21. A very healthy pool of experienced and committed volunteers from which the Trust will benefit from their expertise immensely. Speaking on behalf of the RAB members old and new, we look forward to guiding the Trust through a very successful 2019 and beyond.

Very healthy pool of experienced and committed volunteers from the which the Trust will benefit from their expertise immensely. Speaking on behalf of the RAB members old and new, we look forward to guiding the Trust through a very successful 2019 and beyond.
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, while 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.

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 wore, and see the darkroom collection of some of the images is planned for 2020. Once the work is completed, an exhibition of visitors, and learning more about the people and places they depict. 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.
**Ulster Gardens Scheme 2019**

**Photography:** Brian Webbe

**www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ni**

**National Trust**

**Ulster Gardens Scheme 2019**

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 exactly open 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 reported 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.

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**May**

**Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 May, 2–5pm**

Mr Sam Harrison, Beechgrove, 12 Castle Avenue, Castlerock, BT43 9DX

A plantation’s garden, developed over a period of 55 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, preceding attract the vistas and shelter to many spring-flowering Features include a summer house, pond, island beds, woodland walk and a sitting. Additionally 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 Castlerock Forest Park. The garden entrance is a foot path on the left (approx. 200 metres) inside the main gate. Castlerock Forest Park is signposted in the centre of Castlerock town.

**Plant stall**

**Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 May, 2–5pm**

Mr Stephen and Mrs Pat Vey, Riverside House, 7 Crevenish Road, Kesh, BT73 1BF

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 vines and interesting items surprise the visitor every year, from a raised fish pond to re-used historic elements and a beehive. Not generally suitable for wheelchairs and children must be strictly supervised due to the dangerous fish tanks.

**Location:** From Downpatrick, follow the A1 Downpatrick Road. At the Downshire roundabout, continue straight ahead on the A4, passing through the town of Downpatrick. Continue for approx. 1.5 miles until you reach the A48. Turn right onto Timberyard Road, then the first right into Enterprise Road. This is the garden entrance. The garden is on the right.

**Plant stall/teas**

**Saturday 25 and Monday 26 May, 2–5pm**

Mr Michael and Mrs Geraldine Gallaway, 1 Ballystruan Road, Downpatrick, BT35 7AQ

This unique seven-acre garden lies on Leacale, four miles east of Downpatrick and was created by Mr and Mrs McCaff in the last five decades of the twentieth century. He transformed a disused quarry into a large sheltered amphitheatre bordered 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 circle path through the trees around the quarry rim. Considerable peripheral planting of native trees has been carried out. The garden is principally suitable for wheelchairs and children must be strictly supervised due to the dangerous fish tanks.

**Location:** From Downpatrick, follow the B1 Downpatrick Road. At the Downshire roundabout, continue straight ahead on the A4. Take the first exit right onto Ballynahinch Road. On the next crossroads after Ballynaclay, turn left into Ballystruan 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, Maccosquin, Coleraine, BT47 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 Killowen 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 Stran 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 Castlereagh 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.

**Plant stall/teas**

**Saturday 15, 16 and 17 June, 2–5pm**

Mr & Mrs J McCord, 154 Ballyrobert Road, Ballyclare, BT39 9RT

A new plant lover’s garden developed by the owners over the past 5 years, overlooking Silver Craig. The garden is 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 Ballymena and Windyhill roundabouts, continue on A65. At Windyhill roundabout, on left. Watch for Ulster Gardens Scheme signs from Greenmount roundabout.

**Note:** Some off-road parking may be available.

**Saturday 22 June, 2–5pm**

Mr & Mrs M Caw and Mr T Raja, Fernhill Cottage Gardens, 44 Dunmore Road, Spa, Ballynahinch, BT24 8PR

A new plant lover’s garden developed by the owners over the past 5 years, overlooking Silver Craig. The garden is 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 Ballymoney: take the A24 towards Newcastle. After the 30mph speed limit (leaving Ballynahinch), turn right onto Spa/Castlewellan 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, 1B Ballyrobert Ballynahinch Road, BT39 9RT

Maurice and Joy Parkinson have, over the past twenty years designed and built this unique garden on the site of a 6.5-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 ‘belfry tree’ and a ten-acre ‘spiral sit haphazardly alongside a formal garden, lawns, lake, streams, orchard, meadows and woodland. The 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 B19 between Comber Corner roundabout at Glenmore and Ballyclare.

**Plant stall/teas**

**August**

**Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 August, 2–5pm**

Mr and Mrs J Rafferty, The Mill House, 140 Ballynahinch Road, Glenenrowan, Ballymena, BT42 3ER

This serene five-acre country garden was featured in BBC’s ‘Greatest Gardens’ with Helen Dickson and Diarmuid Gavin in 2010. Woodland plantings of beech, oak, spruce and silver birch are linked by stone paths, temporarily halted in a woodland glade. The garden is open under the scheme 2019 as ‘The Old Courthouse, Antrim’ (Drumcliff, BT43 3RL).

**Plant stall/teas**

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

**Ulster Gardens Scheme Review Evening**

Thursday 16 November 2017 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 summer’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.
Antrim

3 Ballysuffrig Hill, Nuss, Corner, BT29 4HL

A hill farm garden with an extensive collection of perennials and shrubs, climbers and trees, also a pond. The garden comprises woodlands, herbaceous borders and an in-ground garden. It is designed for the prevailing environmental conditions and to protect each section of the garden. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: From Ballysuffrig Hill take the Ballysuffrig Road. Continue to the second entrance on the left, turn left onto drive. This is a suitable garden for the whole family. It is a large garden with a great variety of plants. It is a great place for families with young children.

Tel: Mrs Dorothy Brown for an appointment on 028 3880 1234

Open May – September

Admission £4

Londonderry

Taggart's, 77 Magheratimpany Road, Spa, Ballynahinch, BT24 8PA

This delightful 25-acre garden includes a cottage garden, woodland with shade plants and features aimed to enhance and intrigue. The garden has been artistically planted with herbaceous plants and shrubs. There are alpines in troughs and a wildlife pond. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: From Belfast: go to Carlisle Circus and take the Crumlin Road and follow signs for the city centre after crossing the Foyle Bridge. After three miles, reaching the first double set of traffic lights take second right into Tawnagh Road. House is third entrance on the right.

Tel: Mr Hugh and Mrs Kathleen Ward for appointment on 028 9754 1648 or for further information on 028 9754 1614

Open May – end September

Old Ballinbo and House, 15-17 Comber Road, Ballin, Sillyke, BT27 6PB

Gardens of approximately one acre, developed around a late Georgian house and walled gardens, 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, chrysanthemum and specimen trees abound. The planting offers carefully framed views within the garden and to the surrounding farmland. Herbsaceous material is used throughout the garden in a style planting 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-tough cascade, seating and seating, which are nestled into a pool. Please note that part of the garden is not accessible to everyone due to the steep incline. Suitable for young children and wheelchair.

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

Tel: Lesley Simpson 028 9754 1648 or Malia Constance 078 0494 6642 for appointment. Maximum group of 6-8 people.

Open April – June

Tyne

Tatykyle House, Doogary Road, Omagh, BT79 0BN

A country garden of approximately 1.5 acres created over a 25 year period, planted with conifers, shrubs, rocks and perennials. There is a shaded seating area, a Japanese influenced area, interesting features and a collection of well groomed shrubs on the house. The garden was featured on the BBC television series ‘Gardens of Ulster’. Mrs Wardrup has a very interesting craft studio at the house. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: Tatykyle House is approximately 2.5 miles from Omagh on the south side of the A4 Drugh to Ballygawley Road. There is a sign at the entrance gate.

Tel: Mr Hugh and Mrs Kathleen Ward for appointment on 028 6224 9010

Open May – July

Tyne

3 Ballysuffrig Hill, Nuss, Corner, BT29 4HL

A hill farm garden with an extensive collection of perennials and shrubs, climbers and trees, also a pond. The garden comprises woodlands, herbaceous borders and an in-ground garden. It is designed for the prevailing environmental conditions and to protect each section of the garden. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: From Ballysuffrig Hill take the Ballysuffrig Road. Continue to the second entrance on the left, turn left onto drive. This is a suitable garden for the whole family. It is a large garden with a great variety of plants. It is a great place for families with young children.

Tel: Mrs Dorothy Brown for an appointment on 028 3880 1234

Open May – September

Tel: Mrs Dorothy Brown for an appointment on 028 3880 1234

Open May – September

Admission £4

Antrim

River 10 Riverside Road, Bushmills, BT57 8TP

A large garden with deep borders and unusual plants and shrubs. Woodland walk, summerhouse, pergola, scilla, etc. Large lawns, facing south with country views. Location: From Bushmills take the Coast 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: No Pan Tellus for an appointment on 028 2073 1239 or 077 2995 6720

Open all year

17 Drummanlagh Road, Ballycastle, BT53 7XQ


Tel: Miss Dorothy Brown for an appointment and directions to the garden on 028 2766 2921

Open April – October

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

A two-acre planters garden situated on the Ards Peninsula, featuring a number of paths that wind through mature woodland. Includes several beds and 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 fuchsias. Parking limited. Not suitable for children. Partial wheelchair access.

Location: From 1 All Ballygally turn onto drive. After 0.75 miles turn left onto Ballycastle at new roundabout. At roundabout follow signs to International Airport and after 11 miles come to Ballygall roundabout. Take the road to Ballycastle (A20) and after five miles turn right onto Ballygall Hill. The garden is the first entrance on the right.

Tel: Mr William Hamilton for appointment 028 9882 2097

Open May – September

Armagh

7 Mount Charles North, Broughshane, Newry, BT35 7QW

A delightful garden with a wide variety of perennials, shrubs, lake and gravel paths wind through the beds. The middle lawn is original field grass, with some meadow plants available in the 21st century and ideas inspired by many garden visits. The garden is designed for the prevailing environmental conditions and to protect each section of the garden. Planting is done by the current owners. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: From Ballygall take the A1 for Derry then take the A27 turn-off for Newry. At the roundabout take the 3rd exit under the bridge (approached A29 Market Hill). After a right turn into a small road, turn left onto Ballygall Road. At the roundabout follow signs to International Airport and after 11 miles come to Ballygall roundabout. Take the road to Ballycastle (A20) and after five miles turn right onto Ballygall Hill. The garden is the first entrance on the right.

Tel: Mr and Mrs Mckelvey for appointment on 028 3013 8006

Open May – August

3 Brooklands Park, Marske, Manorstown, BT23 4XW

A country garden with emphasis on trees, shrubs, roses and herbaceous perennials grown to attract birds, bees and butterflies. Showcasing an extensive range of plants and flowers, a variety of plants have been adopted for 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 Donisthorpe follow the A20 to the roundabout at Ards Shopping Center. Take the A21 to the roundabout and follow signs into Marske. Continue until you reach Brooklands Park on the left.

Tel: Mrs Gillian Milliken for an appointment on 028 7915 2265

Open April – September

77 Magheratimpany Road, Spa, Ballynahinch, BT24 8PA

This is a 12-year-old, informal, half-acre garden with a variety of interesting plants. Plants are available in the 21st century and ideas inspired by many garden visits. The garden is designed for the prevailing environmental conditions and to protect each section of the garden. Planting is done by the current owners. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: From Dundonald follow the A20 to the roundabout at Ards Shopping Center. Take the A21 to the roundabout and follow signs into Marske. Continue until you reach Brooklands Park on the left.

Tel: Mrs Gillian Milliken for an appointment on 028 7915 2265

Open April – September

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, rocks and perennials. There is a shaded seating area, a Japanese influenced area, interesting features and a collection of well groomed shrubs on the house. The garden was featured on the BBC television series ‘Gardens of Ulster’. Mrs Wardrup has a very interesting craft studio at the house. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: Tatykyle House is approximately 2.5 miles from Omagh on the south side of the A4 Drugh to Ballygawley Road. There is a sign at the entrance gate.

Tel: Mr Hugh and Mrs Kathleen Ward for appointment on 028 6224 9010

Open May – July

Forth Cottage, 47 Lisnacroppin Road, Rathfriland, BT34 5NZ

This cottage garden has been tended and cleaned up over the past 15 years. The garden comprises woodlands, herbaceous borders and an in-ground garden. It is designed for the prevailing environmental conditions and to protect each section of the garden. Planting is done by the current owners. Partially suitable for wheelchairs.

Location: From Dundonald follow the A20 to the roundabout at Ards Shopping Center. Take the A21 to the roundabout and follow signs into Marske. Continue until you reach Brooklands Park on the left.

Tel: Tom and Penny McNeill for an appointment on 028 7499 0467

Open Late May – September

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

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.
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 that our new Mourne Rangers enjoy each morning as they take up their new roles as Mourne Rangers.

Marc Vinas Alonso and Katie Taylor have been working at Murlough National Nature Reserve in Down as a volunteer and ranger team respectively. They are looking for a passionate team of people to help them out.

The project will see the pair repairing the paths and bringing the surrounding environment back to its natural state.

On a particularly wet Friday in late 2018, 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.

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.barnowlni.co.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 £47,000 for an exciting project to restore the Kitchen Garden in the estate’s Walled Garden to its 1930s, character and atmosphere.

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.”

Every time you visit and scan your membership card, that place receives a credit that goes towards the upkeep of the property. Thank you.
New projects keeping us busy in 2019 and beyond.

In 2018 we spent £7 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 capacities 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 that complements 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 £3milion 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 facilities, retail space and a new and welcoming tea-room 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, 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 passed down 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/ni/features/fundraising-for-us or call our fundraising team on 07931 877443.

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 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 Bank 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 one of 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.

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 Askinson, 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.

Celebrating our successes

Northern Ireland performed brilliantly in the National Trust Retail Awards for 2019, outrivaling other regions to pick up two top awards and a runner-up prize. Our winners were Mary Gorman at The Argory 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.
Summer 2019 Highlights
Northern Ireland

Event details are subject to change. For a full list of activities, please visit nationaltrust.org.uk/ni

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 7083 6396
7.30–10pm
Adult £12 Child £5
Member Adult £10 Child £5

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

Causeway Coast
6 and 10 July
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/ni
7–9 pm
Adult £12 Child £5
Member Adult £10 Child £5

Mount Stewart
12 July
Pirates Picnic
‘Away me bearsies’, we are back from sailing the seven seas for another fun-filled day at Castle Ward. Captain Ward is looking for some washbackers to join him as he makes you ‘Walk the Plank’. Come in pirate costume and prepare to see out the hidden treasure.
1–5 pm
Normal Admission Members Free

Downhill Demense
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

Nature and wildlife

Minnowburn
8 June
Meadow in a Bottle
Join us as we create your very own wildlife sensory bottle to take home and learn all about wildlife in your local Minnowburn car park.
11am–1pm
No Charge Donations Welcome

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

Murlough NNR
6 July
Jim Blaikie – Duneland Flowers
A walk in search of the specialised flowers of Murlough’s duneland on a long rugged through the coastal dunes.
Meet at foot point concrete standing
Booking Essential
Contact 028 6375 1467
2pm
No Charge Donations Welcome

Mount Stewart
17 July and 7 August
Bug Detectives
Join us in we set up our magnifying glasses and discover a whole world of bugs and beetles... just where could those little critters be hiding? This is a drop in activity for children aged 8 years and under.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4278 8387
11am–11:30am
Child £3

Carrickfergus
6 July
The Argory House & Gardens
An evening of stargazing at The Argory House and Gardens. Booking Essential
Contact 028 6375 1467
7.30–10pm
Adult £12 Child £5
Member Adult £10 Child £5

Mount Stewart
9–15 August
Mount Stewart Conversations Festival
This festival returns with a colourful line-up of debates, performances, arts, musical activities and more. The two-day programme includes a series of talks by key figures and an international line-up of culture, conversation and arts from partners Beyond Skin and Seedshead Arts. Supported by Arts and North Down Borough Council.
Free entry with a charge for some events. See website for details.

Gardening

Rowanville 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

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–4pm
Adult £10 Child £5
Member Adult £10 Child £5
Normal Admission Appplies

Mount Stewart
15 August
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This festival returns with a colourful line-up of debates, performances, arts, musical activities and more. The two-day programme includes a series of talks by key figures and an international line-up of culture, conversation and arts from partners Beyond Skin and Seedshead Arts. Supported by Arts and North Down Borough Council.
Free entry with a charge for some events. See website for details.

What’s on

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

Muck-in days

Shankill NNR
29 June
Raiguel Challenge
Get the whole family involved and crown the champion raiguel remover as our rangers try and remove as much raiguel as possible in one day. Meet at Keel Point concrete standing
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4787 9759
10.30am–5pm
No Charge Donations Welcome

White Park Bay
29 June
Pleco and Pulling
Pack up a picnic and assist our ranger team with some raiguel pulling for an hour or more. Learn about why we need to remove most of the raiguel but not all of it.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4787 8728
7–8 September
No Charge Donations Welcome

Strangford Lough
7 September
Aeolus Beach Clean
Join us as we clean up 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. Welshingtons advise Meet at the Floatglades car park, Newtownards.
Contact 028 4787 7599
1–2.30pm
No Charge Donations Welcome

Something different...

Castle Coole
16 June
Queen Anne Afternoon Tea Experience
Join us in the beautiful Breakfast Room at Castle Coole for an exclusive afternoon tea experience. Ticket includes entrance to the House.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 6602 2960
2pm
Adult £25 Member Adult £25

Downhill's Secret Gardens
20 July
Flower Pressing Session
Join our rangers for a morning of fun and 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.
9am–1pm
Normal Admission Members Free

Mount Stewart
27 July
Queen Anne Afternoon Tea Experience
Join us in the beautiful Breakfast Room at Castle Coole for an exclusive afternoon tea experience. Ticket includes entrance to the House.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4278 8387
5.30–7pm
No arrivals after 7pm please
Adult £88 Child £88
Member Adult £80 Child £80

Mount Stewart
30 July
Kite Festival
Come and join us for a relaxing evening and listen to local musicians by the shores of Lough Erne.
Online Booking Essential
Visit nationaltrust.org.uk/ni
7–9 pm
Adult £12 Child £5
Member Adult £10 Child £5

Mount Stewart
31 July
Queen Anne Afternoon Tea Experience
Join us in the beautiful Breakfast Room at Castle Coole for an exclusive afternoon tea experience. Ticket includes entrance to the House.
Booking Essential
Contact 028 4278 8387
5.30–7pm
No arrivals after 7pm please
Adult £88 Child £88
Member Adult £80 Child £80

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

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Published by the National Trust, Northern Ireland Regional Office, Rowanville Stabley, Saintfield, Ballynahinch, Co Down BT24 7LH.

Telephone: 028 9751 0721 Registered Charity No. 205846 Director: Heather McLachlan Editor: Tara Craig

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