There is no better time than autumn to explore the magnificent forests and ancient woodland in our region. Nick Marsh, the Woodland Restoration Project Manager for the East of England tells us of some of the best places to visit and how we’re helping restore and care for these special landscapes.

Across East Anglia we are fortunate to have a wide range of superb woodlands and wooded habitats, from ancient woodland which has existed continuously since 1600 AD, to parkland and woodland pasture containing some impressive veteran trees. Many of these are intrinsically linked to our historic homes and gardens and provide the perfect sanctuary in which to escape.

Ashridge Estate in Hertfordshire sits on the edge of the Chiltern Hills and is a 5000 acre estate with a mix of open wood pasture, chalk grassland, Grade II registered parkland and large clusters of oak and beech woodland. It provides some stunning autumn scenes and colours and is a wildlife paradise for any intrepid naturalist. There are impressive open glades and rides, with plenty of places to just sit, contemplate and take in its breathtaking beauty.

Ickworth’s woodland provides a natural backdrop to the pleasure gardens and parkland areas of the estate, containing a network of rides and walks with lots of veteran trees to be discovered. Ask the team about the walking route that takes you alongside ancient woodlands and across the River Linnet, providing a beautiful, elevated view of the surrounding parkland.

Whilst much of our woodland across the East of England is in good condition, we are transforming some areas for the benefit of wildlife. Many of our estates were planted with conifer back in the 1950s and 60s, some on ancient woodland (much prior to the National Trust’s management). This was standard practice at the time as it was seen as a way of generating a future income. Unfortunately, non-native conifer trees were often planted in dense blocks on unsuitable ground and without proper management. We are now restoring many of these areas with native broadleaved trees which provide the best habitat for invertebrates, birds, butterflies and ground flora.

Over at Wimpole, why not explore Cobbs Wood, with ancient woodland and a medieval moat? The Belts, a continuous band of woodland within the Wimpole farmland, also has many mature trees and is part of a designated site of special scientific interest for its population of bats. For historic parkland and woodland settings, then Blickling, Felbrigg and Sheringham estates have incredible scenery, some close to the Norfolk Coast path trail with maritime pine woods. Blickling boasts amazing small-leaved lime veterans across the formal parkland which turn a vibrant yellow in the autumn. Felbrigg has 580 acres of extensive woodlands with many estate walks. The Victory V avenue of beech is a spectacle of copper-brown in the autumn and a great place for an exhilarating walk.

For more information on your nearest woodland or how to get involved in helping to care for our special places then visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Hoo's waiting for you?

This summer, we unveiled a completely new way of experiencing Sutton Hoo, which has been possible thanks to a £4 million investment in cost; not living close to sites or having opportunities and distractions than ever reluctant to allow their children to roam road traffic mean that parents are more squeezing out time for other clubs and the permission to be a latchkey kid. I was born lucky: my family, teachers and pretty, the landowner who instigated those digs 80 years ago, you can delve further into the story of a find continue to explore Sutton Hoo today, you knew about our Anglo-Saxon roots, to the discovery that would change everything we always something to see.

Ever wondered just how big an Anglo-Saxon burial ship might be? Our full-size sculpture of the ship that went on to become the burial ship might be? Our full-size sculpture of the extraordinary treasures found buried alongside King Raedwald, and learn about the interned and detailed work of the craftsmen of the day and how they used gold, silver and precious stones to create a helmet, sword and objects special enough to accompany his long into the afterlife.

Ancient landscape, new experiences

Everyone welcome

Autumn / Winter 2019  www.nationaltrust.org.uk/eastofengland

You'll soon see the difference: there are more trees and plants, we've removed the path to the beach and re-planted the area with native species. The beach will be more accessible for wheelchair users, and the sea views will be even more spectacular.

Visit Ickworth this autumn and you'll discover the famous bedroom building looking rather different from usual. Work is now underway on a £4 million conservation project at Ickworth, which is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, to restore and improve the north range of the house. The project will see external walls and doors restored, and the north range made more accessible. The house will be closed to visitors during the conservation work, but the south range will remain open.

Shire horses move in at Wimpole

Everyone will welcome the return of the Shire horses. There are now 13 of them, and they are moving in to the Wimpole Estate. The horses have been brought from the Scottish Highlands, where they are used to work in the countryside. They are sure to be a popular attraction for visitors.

Restoring the saltmarsh

The sea bank on the south side of the island is now fully settled into its new home. Harry, Jacqui, Luke, Morphy and Quintin are now all enjoying a larger area to roam and a hot shower! The new slaves allow visitors to get closer to these gentle giants and learn more about the work they’re doing on the farm. With daily tours, regular grooming and demonstrations it’s always something to see.

Protecting Paycock’s House

A three year project to redesign the interior of Paycock’s House in Coggeshall begins in September. Phase one of the project is to supply Ickworth in the north exterior of the 18th century Tudor town house. Linenmaking is a traditional preservation to linen plants which protects the interior while keeping it breathable. It’s been redeveloped with framed热播为了保护和保存织造的内部外部, a new roof will be installed and the first floor will be fully restored.

The Ickworth Hotel- exclusive autumn midweek offer

Exclusive to National Trust members only. Enjoy a one-night, dinner inclusive, autumn midweek break from just £199 for two people. For stays from Sunday to Saturday, book by Thursday until 9 December, to include dinner, a Suffolk cream tea and a full English breakfast. For further details, please call 01284 735350, or visit www.ickworthhotels.co.uk/special-offers.

Ickworth uncovered

It’s been three years since a dormer window spectacularly collapsed at Ickworth Hall and a structural weakness in the roof was exposed. Since then, we’ve been busy behind the scenes and at the end of this year, work will begin in earnest, as we undertake the most ambitious conservation project we’ve ever undertaken at Oxburgh.

Raise the roof at Oxburgh Hall

The work, which will take two years and cost £500,000 to complete, will involve bringing the roof out to the roof, window and chimney, securing Oxburgh’s future and the collection housed inside. In preparation, we’ve already started to repair the contents and base researched pain finishes and softpans, some of which are very early examples. In order for us to carry out the work, a highly skilled engineer-designed scaffold will be erected from the ground up. The design, which is small, has had to overcome the added complication that the 500 year old building is surrounded by a moat. We can’t drain the moat for any significant length of time and we can’t punch the clay base of the moat, so our engineers have devised and tested ingenious ways of spreading the load using large sandbags.

The project is able to take place thanks to the generous support and fundraising appeal. The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded us £112,900, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, to provide a new and exciting way of taking people deeper into Oxburgh’s story from 2020, called Endurance. The Wolfson Foundation has also given us £103,000 to repair the medieval gatehouse. To watch the space.

Raising the roof at Oxburgh Hall, from the top of the tower and the Royal Burial Ground, from the top of the Shire horse of many hoes is now fully settled into its new home. Harry, Jacqui, Luke, Morphy and Quintin are now all enjoying a larger area to roam and a hot shower! The new slaves allow visitors to get close to these gentle giants and learn more about the work they’re doing on the farm. With daily tours, regular grooming and demonstrations, it’s always something to see.

Historic skills breathe life back into fire damaged cottages

In 2016, a spire from a wooden bower led to a fire that destroyed a row of thatched cottages on the Blickling Estate. Thankfully nobody was hurt, but those living in the cottages lost many of their treasured possessions. The buildings themselves also required significant restoration. So we set about working with specialist craftsmen to repair and refashion as much of the original building fabric as possible. Surprisingly, a significant amount of timber was salvaged; every cut into built has been re-established and reinstated. We’ve worked with a team of ash, oak and Elm to match the originals and used lime plaster with white stucco to improve the cottages thermal efficiency. Amass enough forms of heating panels to meet the need for open fires on the crowning glory is the work of a team of thatchers.

Everyone welcome

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Autumn comforts

As the air begins to chill and the days draw in, autumn is a time for keeping warm and cozy. Whether it’s lighting a fire for the first time or grabbing thick coats and scarves and heading out for a bracing walk, there are plenty of ways to welcome the season.

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Or, if apples a-peel to you, we have bumper crops here in the East. Enjoy tastings and juicing at Blickling’s apple weekend from 28 - 29 September or enjoy Oxburgh’s orchard harvest at their apple day on 21 September. Take some home to turn into a warming crumble.

We’re coming to that time of year when the last bronzes and golds of autumn have faded away, and we might be feeling a little bleak as winter sets in. Let us brighten your day with illuminated landscapes and experiences that will showcase some of our favourite places in a new light.

Enchanted Felbrigg
Felbrigg Hall, Gardens and Estate
Friday 6 - Sunday 8 and Friday 13 - Sunday 15 December, 3 - 7pm
The story continues at Felbrigg as we celebrate the beauty of nature in winter. With new installations that include smoke, spotlights and glitter balls, it’s a magical experience not to be missed.

Christmas Through the Ages
Blickling Estate
Saturday 30 November – Friday 20 December, 11am - 7pm
Enjoy the colours, smells and sounds of Christmas across the estate. Begin your visit with the iconic tree-lined driveway before stepping inside to explore the house filled up on great food and take part in the drama of lighting this very special place. Experience the trees, the house, the mill, Qviy water and our many statues lit up in a truly captivating way.

Ickworth’s Light Nights
Ickworth
Friday 22 November – Friday 6 December, 4.30 - 8.30pm
This winter, visit Ickworth’s Italianate garden that glows. Awaken with a sensory and light based trail capturing the magic of a gothic Victorian Stumpery. Make the most of your evening with delicious food and artisan drinks – a great combination for the perfect night out.

Winter illuminations

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For the ultimate treat, why not tuck yourself away in one of our holiday cottages? With log fires and plenty of character, they’re particularly snug in the autumn months.

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