



National Trust

News and events for autumn 2019
Herefordshire | Shropshire | Staffordshire
Warwickshire | West Midlands | Worcestershire

Near you



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It's crunch time!



As the summer sun fades and the morning mists begin you know autumn is on its way. It's the season of colour, cosiness, fungi and harvest and it's a great time to be outside. You can experience the changing seasons at our places across the West Midlands.



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In Herefordshire, chat to the Senior Gardener at Berrington Hall and learn all about dahlias at their Dahlia Delights events (every Monday in September). At Brockhampton, its harvest time and you can make it a family affair as you pick apples and damsons. The estate is home to one of the oldest varieties of damson and heritage apple trees. During October it's half term and activities have a spooky theme. At Wightwick Manor and Gardens in the West Midlands there is a Halloween pumpkin trail and house trail (26 Oct to 3 Nov). Croft Castle and Parkland in Herefordshire will host the School of Sorcery (selected dates during half term) where you can take part in broomstick training, wand making, pumpkin carving and spooky tours, if you dare. In Warwickshire, Baddesley Clinton, Coughton Court and Packwood all have fiendish fun and frights with their Halloween trails (check What's on and website for details).

After the busy summer months, September and early October are great months to visit at a quieter time, particularly in the week. And why not try your hand at volunteering? Lots of places need help in the autumn, collecting fallen leaves or gathering the harvest.



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

Follow us...

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



#NTMidlands

Autumn is impressive at Attingham Park in Shropshire, as are the deer in the Deer Park on the estate. The herd feeds on acorns and conkers and you can see the bucks rearing on their hind legs to knock the branches with their antlers for more food as they fill up before the rut. Hanbury Hall in Worcestershire has lots of activity in the gardens in autumn as the citrus plants are put in the orangery for winter, hardy plants in the formal fruit garden are wrapped up ready for the colder nights and bulbs are planted in the parterre for spectacular colour in the spring. At Croome, also in Worcestershire see if you can spot the majestic birds of prey in the skies above the parkland and why not visit the bird hide to watch the birds including nuthatches, blue tits and great tits as they feed?



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



From the Director for the Midlands



In the northeast of the USA, the turning of the leaves in autumn is an event that causes people to get out and marvel at the autumn colours and attracts tourists from across the country. Our last few autumns have seen leaf colours which almost rival that of our American cousins and so I encourage you to take a leaf out of their book, if you will excuse the phrase.

In the Midlands we are fortunate to also have some of the oldest trees in the UK, which you can read more about in this issue. Some of the trees at Croft Castle were already old when the adjoining landscape of the Fishpool Valley was being designed and you can read more in this issue about how we are restoring it. We are also playing a part in providing some trees for our descendants to enjoy, such as at Brockhampton, where we are creating a new area of orchard as part of our long term vision for the estate.

Whatever your plans, I wish you a fruitful and colour filled autumn.



Brockhampton Orchards

Andy Beer

Reimagining Orchards at Brockhampton

Autumn at the Brockhampton Estate in Herefordshire is always an important time of year – it's time to harvest damsons and apples that are still at the heart of agricultural life in the county.

This year, autumn is extra special as work gets underway to create the first of three orchards designed by artist Walter Jack and landscape architects Rathbone Partnership.

With funds from the Postcode Earth Trust, raised by players of the People's Postcode lottery, as well as support from Arts Council England as part of Trust New Art, the National Trust's programme of contemporary arts, lost Victorian orchards will be brought back to life.

A mixture of traditional Herefordshire apple trees will be planted alongside unusual and rare varieties, specially chosen to tell the story of the eating apple. Artist Walter Jack explains, 'These circular orchards tell the story of the fruit at Brockhampton and where it began a few miles and a few thousand miles away. This is about the geographical connections that are the extraordinary story of fruit.'

The paths and orchard rooms in two of the three fields will be developed and planted this year, with the remainder planted in 2020. This work will be done with the help of community groups and supported by ignite cic, a Herefordshire based not-for-profit community interest company, focusing on bringing communities together and empowering people to be creative and healthy.

The second orchard on a neighbouring tenant's farmland will be planted as part of their ambition to diversify and to create more nature friendly habitats. A large number of traditional varieties of damson trees will be planted along with new meadow grass which will include native wildflowers to encourage a diversity of pollinators such as bees and butterflies.

Lead Ranger, Nick Hinchcliffe says, 'Together with the lowland wildflower meadows that will surround the trees, these orchards will improve the quality of the land and create habitats that encourage biodiversity. We're excited to be sharing this experience with visitors and our local community, working together to create the orchards, care for them and enjoy their produce.'



© Walter Jack Studio/
Rathbone Partnership



© Trust New Art

To learn more about the project and discover opportunities for you to get involved, visit

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/brockhampton-orchards

Restoring heathland for wildlife at Kinver Edge

At Kinver Edge in Staffordshire there is a pocket of wilderness that buzzes with life; bees and butterflies hum by day, lizards bask in the sun and bats swoop through the air at night hunting moths while woodcock forage on the ground.

Sadly, there are only a few small pockets of this heathland habitat left in the Midlands; a fraction of what once spread across the landscape. Iconic species including adders, tree pipits and cuckoos that depend on these spaces face challenging times – they need space to thrive. After recently being gifted neighbouring land at Blakeshall Common, there is an ambitious proposal to restore much more of this exceptional wildlife habitat at Kinver Edge.

The land is currently managed as a non-native conifer plantation which isn't ideal for indigenous wildlife so the plan is to fell 48 acres of these crop trees and graze

the land with traditional longhorn cattle. This will allow the heathers, gorse, birch and oak trees to naturally regenerate, which in turn will reinstate the heathland. This work will not only support the wildlife that currently inhabits the Common, it will also encourage the return of iconic species such as nightjar and woodlark.

With the support of fellow organisations, the RSPB and the Wildlife Trust, this important restoration plan will give people the opportunity to connect with nature in a healthy, wildlife-rich landscape full of birdsong, buzzing bees and reptiles darting across the sand.

Visit Kinver Edge to explore this heathland landscape for yourself, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/kinver-edge and find out more about this exciting nature restoration plan at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/blakeshall-vision

Book a unique break

Looking for some ideas for a holiday this autumn and winter? There are holiday cottages across the Midlands set in amazing locations including places of natural beauty and within the grounds of historic houses.

Stay in a unique property with history and stories to tell and start your visit from the front door.



To book your break, call the team on **0344 800 2070** (local call rates apply) or send an email to cottages@nationaltrust.org.uk

A day in the life of... Nigel Smith, Landlord of The Fleece Inn, Bretforton, Worcestershire

To find out a bit more about The Fleece Inn, visit

www.thefleeceinn.co.uk

I have been landlord of The Fleece Inn in Worcestershire for over 17 years. As soon as I visited in 2002 to view the pub, I knew it was for me. The building is a medieval half-timbered longhouse which originally sheltered a farmer and his stock; it was first licensed as an Inn in 1848.

The charming features of the pub can also present challenges - maintaining the fabric of a building in its original state does mean that we're not perhaps as comfortable

as a modern pub. The low doorways have been bumped by many heads but it all adds to the pub's charm and uniqueness.

After 17 years I am still wowed by the look on people's faces as they enter and experience The Fleece. This is the thrill of running the pub.

We strive to celebrate the traditional English pub culture and build our event calendar around this. We host numerous traditional and unusual events such as the

annual asparagus festival and Morris dancing which draws locals and visitors from further afield alike. Keeping this experience alive is really important to me and my team.

I was really surprised to learn that the National Trust owns pubs when I became the landlord and it's amazing to think that every pint pulled puts funds back into the Trust to conserve historic buildings like The Fleece. Do come and see us soon.

TOP FIVE

AUTUMN COLOUR WALKS

Autumn is the season of colour. Our places are ablaze of golds, reds and browns. Below is our pick of top five walks to spot seasonal colour.

To find out more visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/autumn-walks-wmids



1 Clent Hills, Worcestershire

Clent Hills is regarded as the green lung of Birmingham, so why not escape city life with a visit to this green oasis? Enjoy a bracing walk and marvel at the autumn colour along with the panoramic views.

2 Hanbury Hall, Worcestershire

Autumn is a great time for a walk through the gardens and parkland at Hanbury Hall where sweeping lawns are surrounded by rolling countryside. The wide variety of trees provide wonderful autumn colour and the resident wildlife may just pop out to see you too.

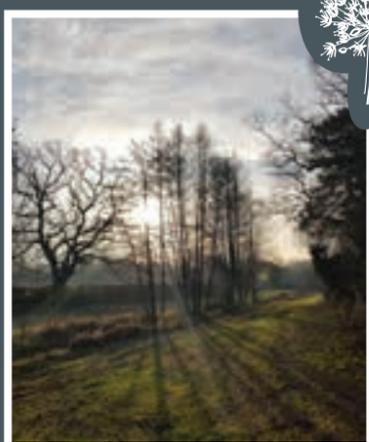


3 Dudmaston, Shropshire

From the golds of the lime trees to the reds and yellows of the Acers, there's an abundance of autumn colour to be seen at Dudmaston. There's also the chance to experience the transformation of the woodland at nearby Comer Woods, perfect for a stroll, cycle or run.

4 Biddulph Grange Garden, Staffordshire

Autumn colour can be viewed at its finest at Biddulph Grange Garden. From Britain's oldest Golden Larch in the Chinese garden to the renowned reds of the Acers set against the red and gold Chinese temple, it is a spectacle not to be missed.



5 Packwood House, Warwickshire

Breathe in the autumn air with a gentle stroll across the Warwickshire countryside to St Giles Church and discover its connection to the last private owner of Packwood, Graham Baron Ash. With towering oak trees, a palette of vibrant shades waiting to be discovered and an array of wildlife to see.

...and don't forget to share your adventures with us

@NTMidlands @NTmidlands #NTMidlands

New walks to discover in Fishpool Valley

As part of our ambitious restoration project to revive the picturesque Fishpool Valley at Croft Castle in Herefordshire, two new walks for you to discover have opened.

Pop on your walking boots and feel the crunch of autumn leaves underfoot as you explore historic paths brought back to life, old carriage-rides, far-reaching views and newly restored dams and cascades.

You'll also be able to pick up a picturesque pocketbook to accompany you on your walk. This will guide you through

the wooded valley and provide a further insight into the landscape's rich and varied history, including its industrial past.

The Fishpool Dingle walk and Highwood walk will both take you past the Gothic pumphouse; don't forget to step inside and explore the inner workings of this picturesque structure. Thanks to our supporters, urgent conservation work was carried out on the building and it's now open for the first time in many years.



To find out more about the Fishpool Valley project at Croft Castle and learn more about the new walks visit

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/fishpool-valley-walks

The heat is on to save Charlecote's collection

A historic property with a riverside location sounds idyllic but for the team at Charlecote Park in Warwickshire it can be a conservation battleground.

Charlecote is home to one of the best libraries in the National Trust due to its collection of indigenous books, acquired over many centuries by the Lucy family. For example, the Shakespeare second folio (1632) and the unique presentation copy of *Institutio Principis Christiani* by Erasmus which was given to Henry VIII in 1516. However, antique plumbing is damaging the collection, allowing mould and pests to breed. We need your help to raise money so we can update the old, inefficient heating system and save Charlecote's rare books and wallpaper.

Jessica Wolverson, Senior House Steward explains, 'Mould and pests thrive in damp conditions and despite our best efforts, we can see evidence that these pests are spreading. Installing a new heating system would provide a controlled and stable environment for the collection. It would significantly halt the current threat, reduce the decay and save our treasured pieces.'

The project is being funded entirely from money raised at Charlecote, from every rug or jar of honey bought in the shop to every coffee or cake bought in the tea-room. Thank you for your support.

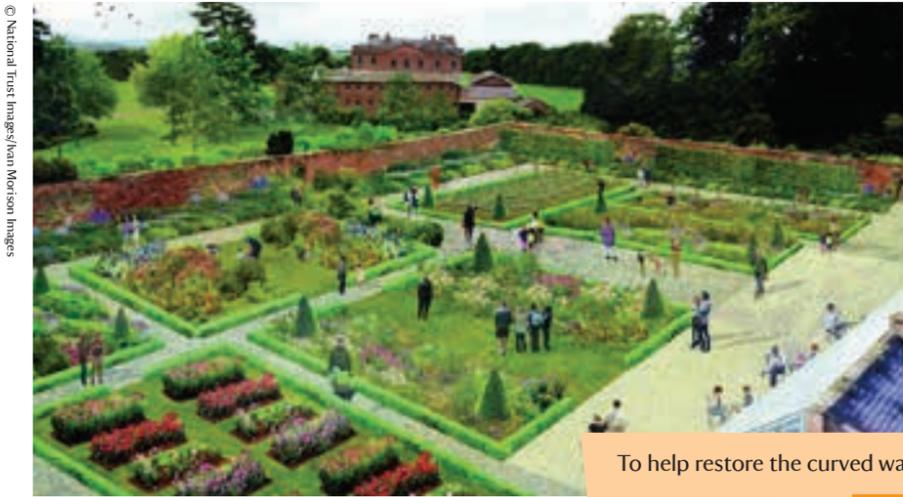


You can help preserve Charlecote's historic pipes by donating directly, buying a raffle ticket from Charlecote's visitor reception or donating online by visiting

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/charlecote-heating-project

Walled garden back in our care

'Capability' Brown's final curved walled garden at Berrington Hall in Herefordshire is back in the care of the National Trust, after over 120 years of being used as a home for livestock by the tenant farmer.



To help restore the curved walled garden at Berrington please visit

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/Berrington-walled-garden

Berrington's walled garden and pleasure grounds were Brown's final landscape design and the curved garden is one of only two left surviving in the country. It is also the only one of its kind open for you to explore.

Now that this section of the garden is back in our care, we can begin the vital conservation work that is desperately needed on the walls so that we do not lose this historically significant piece of Georgian heritage.

We cannot do this alone, however. We're currently raising money to fund the work, which you can directly support on your next visit. For the next two years, the curved garden will tell the story of its life as a working kitchen garden and then as a farmyard through creative horticultural installations and plantings.

News in brief

Specialised visits at the Back to Backs

A team of 12 volunteers at the Birmingham Back to Backs have been working with the Solihull Mental Health Trust to offer special visits for people with dementia. The regular guided tours aren't suitable for people with the condition so the volunteers sit with visitors in one of the houses instead, using the coal fire, candles and a cuppa, along with some artefacts, to spark conversations.

Find out more about visiting the Birmingham Back to Backs at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/birmingham-back-to-backs

Restoring Croome's Rotunda

The next stage of conservation work is underway on the historic Rotunda, at Croome in Worcestershire designed by 'Capability' Brown and built between 1754 and 1757. The paint on the ornate plasterwork, created by Francesco Vassali, had deteriorated and analysis of this original paintwork showed that it was once painted grey. A generous donation and legacy has enabled us to repaint the interior, recreating its original splendour.

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

Helping to get Packwood back on the tiles

This year, Packwood is fundraising to carry out vital conservation work on the beautiful Delft tiles in the Ireton bathroom. In September, one of Packwood's volunteers, Martin Tranter, ran the Great North Run to help raise money to repair this iconic part of the collection.

Learn more about the Delft tiles and Martin's story here www.nationaltrust.org.uk/packwood-tiles

Getting more from your membership

In September and October we're trialling Membership Service points at Biddulph Grange Garden in Staffordshire, Upton House and Gardens in Warwickshire and Berrington Hall in Herefordshire. Do come and see us if you want to have a chat about how you can get the most of your membership, get more involved at your local property and find out how you can sign up to get the latest news, stories and events straight to your inbox.

Appreciating our ancients

Ancient trees are immensely valuable to wildlife, and whole ecosystems can be found within a single tree. Tree cavities provide homes for roosting bats and hole-nesting birds, rare fungi and special insects can be found in decaying wood, and lichens, ferns and mosses adorn the bark. Our parklands are especially notable for these majestic trees. They are often remnants of a former landscape that were incorporated into the design of the parkland and in many cases would have been mature trees before the historic buildings of the property had even been conceived.

Some of the largest trees I have seen are at Croft Castle in Herefordshire, the oldest of which is the gnarled 'Quarry Oak' with a trunk over 12m in girth! Since 2013, Croft have been saving some of their ancient trees that had become swamped in conifer planting over the past century, and restoring around 120 acres of the former wood-pasture habitat. This project will help the old oaks thrive for many more years, and hundreds of young broadleaf trees have been planted to take their place in the future.

Another fantastic place to appreciate trees is the woodland at Wenlock Edge in Shropshire. The woodlands here provide a

home to dormice and amongst the ash and hazel are a small number of ancient Large-leaved Lime pollards, some over 9m in girth. While limes are often planted in parklands, the Large-leaved Lime is rarely seen as a native woodland tree. An even rarer tree, the Black Poplar, can be found on the floodplains in Shropshire, and the National Trust have been planting trees with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust to help this species thrive at Attingham and Dudmaston in Shropshire and the Batch Valley on the Long Mynd.

By Andrew Perry, Ecologist

 @NTMidlands

Facebook Live: Join us at Kedelston Hall in Derbyshire, 10 October at 1pm to chat to Midlands Wildlife and Countryside Consultant, Carl Hawke, about why veteran trees are so important to our parklands and wildlife and the changes they go through at this time of year.

Reviving the past

To find out more visit

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wightwick-manor-and-gardens

The gardening team at Wightwick Manor, in the West Midlands, have been working hard to showcase the Arts and Crafts heritage of its gardens.

New planting and path work, carried out over the spring and summer, is revealing the wonderful texture and detail so typical of the period; and displays of old photographs from the donor family archives reveal how the garden was initially created.

Head Gardener Cat Sobolewska said: 'A particularly interesting element of this work has been the re-making of our beautiful

Thomas Mawson inspired footbridge. A skilled team of carpenters at the nearby Dudmaston estate have recreated the bridge using wood from Attingham Park. The Arts and Crafts movement championed the concept of skilled craftsmen working with local materials so this exciting project has continued this ethos.'

The bridge itself was funded using money left for the property by the donor family, the Manders, and from generous donations from Wolverhampton and Sutton Coldfield supporter groups.



© National Trust / Cat Sobolewska

Upton in Miniature



Volunteers at Upton House and Gardens near Banbury have spent the past two years making and furnishing a 1:12 scale representation of the National Trust property. The replica has 14 rooms in total which have been decorated and furnished by 89 incredible volunteer makers from across the world - one dedicated crafter sent items all the way from America.

Volunteer Co-ordinator Ellen Turnock was impressed with the incredibly high standard of the miniature items they received.

She said: 'The standard of workmanship has been incredibly high and we're extremely grateful for all the time, effort and hard work that was put in by all of our makers.'

Michelle Leake, House and Collections Manager, added: 'This project adds to the sense of belonging that the act of making creates for visitors, volunteers and staff alike.'

The dolls' house is currently on display in the Picture Room. Make sure you come and see it before it moves on after Christmas.

For more information, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/uptons-dolls-house If you'd like to volunteer, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/mids-volunteering

For membership queries please call 0344 800 1895 If you require this information in alternative formats, including the Talking Newsletter, please telephone 0121 224 7460 or email: mi.customerenquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk