



National Trust

Spring 2020
Northern Ireland



Near you



Leap for nature in 2020



2020 is a landmark year for the National Trust – it is our 125th as a conservation charity. As a region, we greet this ‘quasiquicentennial’ in great health having met the milestone of 100,000 members. Thanks to each and every one of you for your continued support.

Reaching these milestone moments reinforces that the need for beauty and space remains as relevant today as when we started. By focusing on people and place, we hope to be what everyone needs when they need it; a fun day out, a haven to relax, a sanctuary to reflect or an opportunity to connect.

This year we will continue to connect people and place by showcasing how nature can improve your wellbeing and quality of life. By embracing our wonderful natural landscapes, we all have much to gain, and the natural world has never needed our attention more. That is why these intertwining issues are at the heart of our ten-year strategy for ‘Restoring a healthy, beautiful, natural environment’.

We have been motivated by this February’s extra day to galvanise additional action. Our ‘Leap for Nature’ encourages you to make a personal promise to help, because if we all take more notice of nature, we can begin to help it recover.

We have picked five pledges to inspire you. Select one or more, or even create your own, and then share your promise with family and friends. Maybe they will join in too.



I promise to...

1. Reduce my energy use by turning down heating/wearing a jumper/using draught excluders/switching off lights.

On page 5, discover how energy efficiency in your home saves the environment and your pocket.

2. Enjoy the benefits of cold fresh air by getting out for a winter run/walk and spotting winter wildlife.

On page 7, find our top trails to get you fit and boost your mood.

3. Reduce food miles/waste/packaging by growing my own veg /eating seasonally/making a window box/helping in a community garden.

On page 3, read about our Field to Fork initiative and the perfect seasonal cake to bake.

4. Create new homes for wildlife by letting the grass grow/taking part in No Mow May/leaving a wild patch/putting up a nest box for birds.

On page 2, unearth the State of Nature and what we are promising to do to help.

5. Celebrate the return of spring by going out to look at blossoms/listening to the dawn chorus.

On the back page, browse events so we can all celebrate spring together. Visit nationaltrust.org.uk/ni to explore more great days out.

Promises picked, it's time to spring into action this February with a 'Leap for Nature' – we couldn't ask for a better birthday gift.



In the picture

Dr Bob Brown OBE
Regional Chairman

Two major publications came out last autumn, and provoked discussions throughout the National Trust and much further afield. Let me run them past you...

In September last year, the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA to its friends) published a discussion document on an environment strategy for Northern Ireland, with the strap-line: 'A living, working, active landscape valued by everyone'. It's difficult to dispute the philosophy behind that aspiration.

The document appears to be genuinely open-minded, and seeking views and contributions to further iterations, and that's very welcome. But it could have done more.

The strategy needs to have much stronger ambition than is currently evident; many of its statements would have been interesting and controversial in the 1970s. But today's audience, aware and concerned about climate change and mass extinctions of species and their habitats, expect something more proactive. All the work undertaken by many government and non-government bodies like the National Trust, to address real issues with real actions, for example in the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy, seems completely forgotten.

The publication of this document coincided (roughly) with the publication of the 2019 State of Nature report, which makes bleak reading. UK wide, 15% of our species for which we have data are under threat of extinction, whilst 2% are already gone. In Northern Ireland, whilst our breeding birds have done well (good news for a change!), we've lost about 38% of our overwintering waterfowl – the birds that make Strangford Lough and other places such wonderful winter spectacles. There are declines in the condition of many terrestrial protected sites, and at sea only 4.5% of protected areas are under favourable management.

Our excellent teams working in some of NI's most special places are striving and succeeding in bringing our own lands up to high conservation standard. But as research from Germany shows, islands of quality wildlife will have only limited success unless the land and sea-scapes around them are also good for wildlife. Indeed poor quality terrain has been seen to act as a 'sink' for the richer wildlife within a site.

So if we are going to have a 'living, working, active landscape' and one where special places like ours reach their full potential, the environment strategy will be very important. Will it join the other strategies gathering dust on government shelves? We will work hard to ensure that doesn't happen.

Bob Brown

Restoring nature and sustainable land management

As the environment and the decisions around how we manage our land attract more attention in society, it is clear that the role and work of the National Trust becomes more and more important.

In Northern Ireland, agricultural land makes up 75% of the total landscape, so has a fundamental role to play in stewarding our environment and in shaping its future sustainability. Worrying global headlines about the reducing numbers of harvests, due to soil degradation, leave us looking for solutions to what are generational and long-term challenges. Some of these have been raised by the State of Nature report, described in Bob's article. In Northern Ireland, we are the largest single landowner apart from government. A large percentage of this is designated land, thus protecting the most important plants, animals and birds we have.

A recent report brought forward by the RSA Food, Farming and Countryside Commission highlighted the need for more recognition across government of the importance of a healthy natural environment (clean air, water, flood protection, recreation for health and

well-being and carbon capture to mitigate climate change) for the benefit of society. The report makes clear that investing in safeguarding or restoring a healthy environment at source is much more cost effective than addressing 'downstream' impacts of environmental degradation. Working with nature, rather than against it, will bring better and more sustainable results. This, along with better and independent environmental governance in NI, is going to be key going forward. Another central theme was the connection, or rather lack of it, in the relationships between how we farm, produce and eat food; how we care for our health and the environment, and how we sustain rural communities. This is a complex system that has people at its heart and there was broad agreement that the current system isn't working and that needs to change.

The inextricable links between land management and nature are clear. To help move the recommendations from the



report forward, we will continue to play our part including working with our 77 tenant farmers and the wider farming community to improve connections between people and the land. We will increase our efforts to link our communities with the land and nature both where they live and beyond. This report confirms the need for action. This issue of Near You celebrates the amazing work which our teams across Northern Ireland are already doing and the actions we are taking to move forward the change that is needed. Your continued support in this is key to our work in restoring nature. Thank you!

Heather McLachlan

Heather McLachlan
Regional Director

Checking nature's pulse

We have known for decades that nature is in decline but two major reports put the cold hard facts in black and white. The two landmark 2019 health checks made depressing reading at both a global and local scale.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature confirmed that extinction now threatens a third of all assessed species across the planet, concluding that human civilisation is in jeopardy from the accelerating decline of the Earth's natural life-support systems. The State of Nature Report painted a stark picture of the loss of wildlife. The report collated the best available data on the UK's biodiversity. It revealed that 11% of the 2,450 species found in Ireland are classified as threatened and therefore at risk of extinction from Ireland.

Key findings for Northern Ireland included a 43% decline in the abundance of nine butterflies since 2006 and a 38% decline in the 36 wintering waterbird species since 1988. The report found a 66% increase in the abundance of 41 breeding bird species since 1994, however the majority of these are not threatened, and therefore this does not reflect the long-term decline in farmland birds, as reported in Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland (2014 to 2019).

So, what pressures are being put on nature? The State of Nature report shows that the intensive management of land has a large part to play, alongside climate change, pollution, urbanisation and other factors. The good news is that nature can bounce back. We are actively playing our part to restore nature. Our current Land, Outdoors and Nature Programme focuses on restoring a healthy, beautiful, natural environment and we see this as a timely opportunity to deliver more for nature. We are working with farmers, governments and partners on trialling new methods and approaches for a nature-friendly farming system. To halt and reverse documented species decline, we aim to increase the number and size of habitats on our land. This in turn will make the land and water (and the species these support) better able to adapt to climate change. Your membership helps make this possible so thank you!

NORTHERN IRELAND'S BIODIVERSITY IS DECLINING



SINCE 1970...

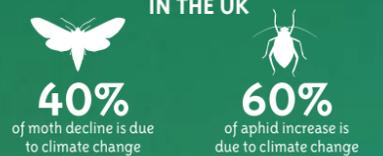
More species in the UK have seen their populations decrease than increase:



We have seen big changes in where the UK's wildlife is found:



CLIMATE CHANGE IS HAVING AN INCREASING IMPACT ON NATURE IN THE UK

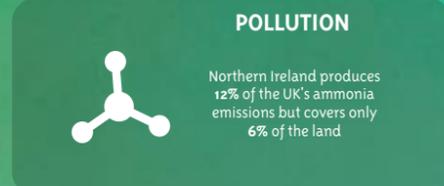


The UK's kittiwake population has declined by 70% since 1986 as climate change has reduced the availability of sandeels, a key food source in breeding season

Migratory birds are arriving and laying eggs earlier:

Swallows are arriving in the UK 15 days earlier and breeding 11 days earlier than they did in the 1960s. Great tits lay their eggs on average 11 days earlier than they did in 1968.

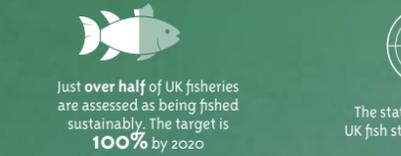
AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO HAVE THE BIGGEST POSITIVE IMPACT ON NATURE IN NI



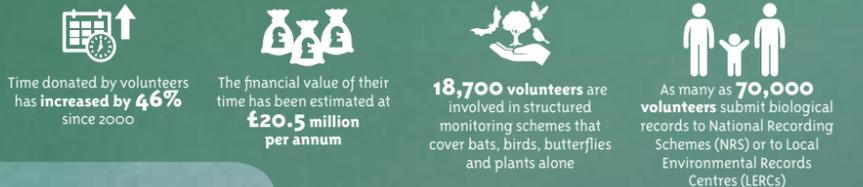
INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES



FISHERIES



PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR CONSERVATION IN THE UK CONTINUES TO GROW



However, public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK, as a proportion of GDP, has fallen by 42% since a peak in 2008/9



The hidden value of nature

“...the need of quiet, the need of air, the need of exercise, and, I believe, the sight of sky and of things growing, seem human needs, common to all...”

National Trust founder, Octavia Hill

The belief that ‘Everyone needs nature’ was at the heart of Octavia Hill’s famous words. Nature is valuable to us in many ways. While benefits such as food production and fresh water are obvious, we may not appreciate the less noticeable benefits such as improved air quality and the positive impact of nature on health and wellbeing.

A recent study carried out in partnership with Northern Ireland Environment Link identified the hidden value of nature at two urban green spaces in the Belfast area, one of which was the National Trust site at Minnowburn. Minnowburn is in the heart of the Lagan Valley Regional Park on the southern edge of Belfast. This type of study, known as a natural capital assessment, considered different elements of nature, their benefits and their monetary value to society. The study estimated that

in 2018, Minnowburn provided benefits to society worth over £2.7 million. This was over 66 times the cost of maintaining the site. The most significant benefit identified was its contribution to people’s health and wellbeing. With over 145,000 visits each year, many of these visits met the required standards of intensity and duration of physical activity required for quality-adjusted life years. In this way, these active visits combined to deliver estimated annual savings of over £1.8 million to the NHS.

As we develop our understanding of the many benefits provided by nature, we are committed to using this information in order to better manage our sites. This will ensure that nature can thrive and that the benefits of nature can be enjoyed for ever, for everyone.



Ahead of the herd

Castle Ward has become the first National Trust property in Northern Ireland to deliver a field to fork initiative. Dexter beef, which has been raised sustainably on the estate, is available to visitors on a seasonal basis through the café at Castle Ward. The exciting partnership between the National Trust and tenant farmer, Alan Laughlin, is a fantastic example of what can be achieved through an effective working relationship.

‘We were passionate about working with Alan because it helps us reconnect the public to where their food comes from, highlighting the link between good food, health and the environment’ said Paul Livingstone, our Lead Ranger.

Over recent years, Alan’s rare breed of Dexter cattle have been transforming the grasslands

on the estate known as Tullyratty ASSI to achieve Paul’s nature ambition for the site. Through the management practice known as conservation grazing, these cattle have been able to create the needed conditions to promote a wild array of wildflowers, which in turn provide nectar sources for our native pollinators and attract insects which then act as a food source for farmland birds. Their usefulness in delivering conservation management is however only part of the story. These cattle, which are raised on the estate and are pasture fed only, present themselves as a highly sustainable beef product, raised to high environmental and welfare standards. It is with these credentials that Alan diversified his farm and created his own Dexter beef business where he sells direct to customers, creating a high value niche product.



Spring recipe

Lemon Courgette Cake

Spring into the season with this lemon courgette cake. A little healthier than your average treat, the courgette keeps the mixture light and moist. The recipe is a great way to use garden produce or leftovers from the farmer’s market. The tea-room at The Argory even added thyme to their café creation.

Ingredients

- 200g Grated courgette
- 140g Caster sugar
- 1 Egg
- 110ml Vegetable oil
- 200g Plain flour
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 1/2 tsp Bicarbonate of soda
- 2 tsp Baking powder
- 1 tsp Ground cinnamon
- 1 Lemon zest

Method

1. Pre-heat oven to 160°C
2. Mix together courgette, sugar, egg, lemon and oil in a bowl. In another bowl, mix together all the dry ingredients – flour, salt, bicarbonate of soda, baking powder and cinnamon. Combine the two mixtures until just blended.
3. Pour into a greased loaf tin and bake for 45 minutes.
4. Leave to cool in tin for 10 minutes before turning out.
5. Optional topping – mix lemon juice with 2 tbsp caster sugar and drizzle over cake whilst hot.

Indulge in more delicious treats this spring with a visit to our cafés.



Sowing the seeds of success

Well done to the Florence Court Kitchen Garden volunteers who received a ‘Highly commended’ Certificate at the 2019 British Museum Marsh Trust Awards. Created to recognise the contribution of volunteers from across the UK, it was their dedication, innovation and excellence in engaging with the public that reaped success. Through the Trust’s education programme, 2,500 primary school children have visited the Kitchen Garden as well as local colleges supporting students with learning difficulties. With international groups like the American Horticultural Society also making visits, the standard of groups being attracted to the Kitchen Garden also stood out. If you’re interested in volunteering at Florence Court, please e-mail jade.blair@nationaltrust.org.uk



Young volunteers add a splash of colour to Divis

One chilly week last November, a group of local young people worked with street artists, Dermot McConaghy (DMC) and Eoin McGinn (EMIC) from Seedhead Arts, to create a colourful piece of art on the front of the old Nissen Hut at Divis in Belfast. Over four days, its faded façade was transformed by their creative response to the landscape.

The young people's experience of Divis and other wild places, a view of the mountain skyline from across the city and a poem by conservationist, John Muir, all inspired the design. Dermot explained how the group had collaborated: 'What I like about this type of project is that we have to solve a problem visually through people coming together, having a discussion, putting ideas into a concept and developing that into a design for a wall. Then you get to take that design and paint it live. Everyone gets to nurture the idea until it comes to a finished piece.'

The volunteers were all participants in a 12-week initiative run by the Prince's Trust at Colin Glen, which provides opportunities for people aged 16–30, who are not in employment, education or training. As part of this programme, the group were challenged to develop a project of benefit to the community which develops their skills, confidence and employability. This team chose to brighten up and bring life to the old Nissen Hut at Divis Mountain car park.

'It was a great opportunity for our two organisations to get together and work on a project that gives the young people from an urban space the opportunity to interact and take ownership of the rural environment,' explained Jerome O'Loughlin, Team Leader with the Prince's Trust at Colin Glen.

A member of the group, Rachel, described how being involved had impacted on her: 'Despite living fairly close by, this was my first time at Divis

and Black Mountain. We went to the summit for ideas for the design – the 360° view was inspirational. Street art was a new experience for me, and I was apprehensive at first. However, I would definitely seek out opportunities to repeat this in the future. It has especially helped me with a pessimistic outlook on winter.'

We would like to say a big thank you to all the volunteers who braved the chilly, and sometimes wet weather, to transform the old Nissen Hut and inspire others to explore the nature on our doorstep. Group volunteering is one of a number of ways that youth and community groups help us shape and look after the wild landscape at Divis and Black Mountain. To find out more, visit nationaltrust.org.uk/divis-and-the-black-mountain

Follow activity on Divis and Black Mountain on Facebook and Instagram @nationaltrustbelfast

New interactive nature trail at Bishop's Gate

The ranger team at Downhill Demesne and Hezlett House have created a new interactive nature trail at Bishop's Gate to help children make a deeper connection with nature. Five features have been placed along the trail to activate the senses, inspire creativity and create homes for invertebrates, offering even more reasons for all ages to engage with our wonderful woodlands.



Paving the way at Mount Stewart

Spring 2020 will see the opening of the final section of the seven mile boundary walk at Mount Stewart Demesne. The new section is within the north-eastern part of the estate linking Fort Hill to Moat Hill. All this hard work means that the public will now have access to this special part of the estate for the first time. The walk passes through an historic landscape of mixed farmland, woodlands, and archaeological remains that has largely remained unchanged. There is a wealth of wildlife to be seen and if you are very lucky, you may even get a glimpse of one of the elusive pine martens, which have recently re-established themselves on the estate.

The ranger team at Mount Stewart Demesne have been working hard since 2015 to restore the network of historic trails to their former glory. The project would not have been possible without the dedicated team of regular volunteers who turn out each week, no matter what the weather.

Visitors to Mount Stewart can now enjoy a network of over 12 miles of walking trails. With all-terrain mobility scooters, red squirrel hide, natural play area and the largest cluster of Geocaches in Northern Ireland, there is something for all interests and abilities at the estate this spring.



Restoring the floor at Mussenden

We were floored by the result of our recent conservation project at Mussenden Temple. Working in partnership with Cliveden Conservation, we restored the floor inside the iconic building. The impressive transformation took a month to complete and would not have been possible without the support of our members. Brian Bentley (pictured), the Head Conservator on the project, was delighted with how the work progressed.

A team of three conservators started in the Temple by steam cleaning all of the

cracks and setting them with a colour matched pneumatic grout. In the centre of the floor, a build-up of an unknown substance was taken away for analysis. This came back as a non-toxic and natural sediment which the team then carefully removed. Using a fine diamond grinder, they evened the floor surface back to its natural state. The final phase saw the team carefully grind back the surface abrasions on the newer stones and replace the smaller outer stones that were beyond repair. Visit Mussenden Temple to admire the floor up close.





Low-carbon life – tips to be more energy-efficient at home

Reducing our energy use is a great way to start lowering our carbon footprint. As a charity, we are committed to playing our part in limiting the long-term damaging effects of a changing climate. One way we are doing this is by focusing on how we use energy at our places. We have set some ambitious targets, such as generating 50% of our energy needs from renewable sources and reducing energy use by 15% in 2020. In Northern Ireland, we are working hard to go beyond our energy reduction target through simple, practical changes and by building energy efficiency into what our people do every day. We are installing more efficient heating control equipment in our visitor centres, offices and holiday cottages, and upgrading all our traditional light bulbs to modern efficient LED types. Much of this activity you can replicate at home.

Here are our top six tips to reduce your carbon footprint and your bills.

1. Illuminate savings. Shed a little light on your savings by turning them off. Lighting typically accounts for 15% of your home's electrical demand. Turning lights off when not in use can help you save big. LED bulbs are typically up to 80% more efficient than traditional bulbs. With different colours to choose from, they can also help add the perfect ambience to each room.

2. Charged and ready. Did you know that when a device like your mobile phone reaches full charge, it continues to use electricity? Known as trickle charging, it is best to disconnect your battery when it is

topped up. This will not only save energy but also help save your device.

3. Don't just stand-by. TVs and game consoles consume as much electricity when left on stand-by as in use, so switch off appliances at the plug.

4. Be water wise. Not overfilling kettles, cutting one washing load a week and using a bowl to wash up can shore up savings. While doing the dishes, you can plan your next National Trust visit.

5. Chill out. A thermostat drop of one degree can save up to 10% of household energy use. Keep doors and windows closed when your heating is on to prevent your system working harder than it needs. Closing internal doors and moving furniture away from warm radiators also helps save energy.

6. Warm up. Our bodies are natural heat producers but we only heat up when we get moving. Desk jobs and sofa slouching means we don't move as much as we should. Get active and you'll tackle climate change and your fitness. Make it a weekly routine to go for a walk or a cycle at your nearest National Trust property.

There are many more ways to save energy and be energy efficient but hopefully these everyday tips are practical ways to get you started. The main thing to remember is that no matter how small you think the impact will be, it all makes a difference.



Explore and Play at Rowallane Garden

Have you visited the new Explore and Play area at Rowallane Garden yet? Located in the Pleasure Ground, this exciting area has been designed for children to get outdoors and be adventurous. With intricate wooden sculptures, the new Explore and Play area has been made using completely natural materials. Fallen trees have been reimagined as climbing frames, activity dens have been made from branches and stepping stones have been inventively fashioned from tree stumps and logs. Beams and obstacles offer graduated risks and challenges that are sure to leave younger visitors feeling very proud of themselves. Visit Rowallane Garden this spring to enjoy what our talented staff and volunteers have created.



The moon shines bright at Mussenden

No words are needed at Downhill Demesne this February as Mussenden Temple welcomes 'Silent Light', an impressive new dark sky, light installation by artists James Russell and Hannah Plumb. As torchlight illuminates your pathway across the clifftop, see the elusive and distant moon brought near with this special ticketed experience.

Cloaked within the circular Mussenden Temple, which exudes the presence of an observatory, this unique creative collaboration evokes the eight phases of the moon by creating images from dirt and lichen on broken glass. When layered precisely on top of each other, the 'Stained Moons' produce the image of light and shadow reflecting back to us from the Earth's Moon.

Running from 9 to 23 February 2020, tickets can be booked online at nationaltrust.org.uk/ni



'Sunshine' is here to stay

After months of cold weather, sunshine is once again shining in County Tyrone. 'Artificial Sunshine', the stunning neon light installation by Northern Irish artist Kevin Killen, is now on permanent display in The Argory outside Dungannon.

In 2018, the team at the historic house took the bold decision to commission a contemporary light installation to replace the West Hall chandelier during its conservation in London. Lit up by its bright reception, the team redesigned and relocated 'Artificial Sunshine' within the North Wing at the end of 2019. Mounted on the wall in the service stairs, the stunning neon-sculpture has evolved to

suit its new space while maintaining the spirit of the original design. The last owner of The Argory, Mr Walter Albert Neville McGeough Bond, lived here and housed his collection of modern art, so its permanent new home continues the tradition of welcoming modern art into the house.

Wanting to continue Mr Bond's legacy of 'collecting the art of others' and the story of Acetylene Gas, we believe this is an artwork which Mr Bond would have supported and a project he would have encouraged. Take a guided house tour of The Argory this spring and admire 'Artificial Sunshine' in its new home.



Mending the Mournes

By ranger **Clare O'Reilly**

Before moving to Northern Ireland, I knew of the Mournes through literature, images of beautiful peaks and popular hiking paths. The importance of these mountains to Northern Ireland was clear, as the taxi driver from the airport emphasised to me (repeatedly!) on the way to my new home. I had arrived in the dramatic surrounds of Murlough National Nature Reserve as a volunteer, excited to learn from the expertise of the existing ranger team, and to be part of the project working throughout 1,400 acres in the Mourne Mountains.

I learnt how path repairs protected vital, delicate habitats while allowing for a sustainable route to withstand

Follow the adventures of Clare and the Mournes ranger team on Twitter @NTMournes

increasing footfall. After several months on the team, I was brought on as the new Mountain Ranger, working alongside fellow Mountain Ranger Marc Vinas-Alcon. Since inception in January 2019, the project has maintained solid progress. 500m of path and 25 drains are complete so far, with landscaping blending the work into the mountain's natural beauty. We've used drones to map erosion, undertaken regular surveys on specialised species to monitor protection requirements and have successfully secured another £40k grant from DAERA using the Challenge Fund. Through the project, we have strengthened our relationships with other Mournes stakeholders like Mountaineering Ireland and Mourne Heritage Trust, with

whom we share our vital research. The team has been lucky to learn from the expertise of Upland Path consultant, Matt McConway who has over 25 years of knowledge including similar projects on Ben Nevis.

Our proudest achievement is the incredible contribution of our volunteers who have committed over 1,500 hours of support, come rain or shine. Currently they are helping us repair the next 300m of the most heavily waterlogged and scarred landscape on the Glen River Path. Exciting progress will be made in the next few months as we move back up towards the saddle between the summits of Slieve Commedagh and Slieve

Donard, and helicopter lifts will bring in tonnes of local stone to use in repairs. Unique, satisfying, and with a real sense of responsibility, this job brings new challenges and rewards every day. I get to be a part of a team of dedicated staff and volunteers who work tirelessly toward the same goal, and I could not imagine doing anything else.

Step into Clare's boots for the day by booking a place at one of our 'Mending the Mournes' events this spring. See our 'Have a go' days on the back page.

Unravelling fashions at Mount Stewart

All our property teams continuously care for our wonderful collections. For the team at Mount Stewart, these seams have been expanded to include the arrival of a fantastic costume collection. Items from the estate of Lady Mairi Bury add a new and potentially vast element to our existing collection. Supported by fascinating anecdotes and knowledge from Lady Mairi's daughter, Lady Rose Lauritzen, this new collection provides personal insight into the family who lived here as well as the changing tastes and fashions of the twentieth century.

Highlights include Edith, Lady Londonderry's Oriental Robe, c.1900-1940. This opulent Chinese robe made from red and green silks incorporates high quality decorative panels of Peking knot-work, much loved in traditional Chinese embroidery. Another beautiful piece is a sterling silver, crystal and turquoise belt buckle, c. 1925 which has a strong Egyptian influence.

Over the next 18 months, the team led and advised by Freelance Costume Curator, Helen McAnaney, hope to have reviewed, catalogued, and made publicly accessible the approximately 3500 items on our Collections Online.



Conservation of shifting goalposts

Newcastle, at the foot of the Mourne Mountains in County Down, is a seaside resort famed for its sandy beaches. However over recent decades, its iconic golden sands have actually been shifting down the coast of Dundrum Bay towards the extensive dune system of Murlough National Nature Reserve. Such changes not only affect people but force species and habitats to move with the sand or vanish completely. Given its populations of seals and seabirds, we need to understand what is happening, and why, so we can plan to protect Ireland's oldest nature reserve.

Researchers from the School of Geography and Environmental Sciences at Ulster University have stepped in to help and are leading the investigation of coastal processes that shape Dundrum Bay. Over a period of three years, they will measure how the shape of the beach is changing from month to month using GPS technology mounted on quad bikes to survey the beach at low spring tides.

They will also use computer modelling of wave conditions to see how wave energy is distributed along the coast and near shore areas. They will examine under-average conditions up to storm wave scenarios to fully investigate what is forcing these



changes to the sand levels. The data will help build a computer model to predict how Dundrum Bay is likely to respond to future climate and sea level changes.

This research is part of the €5.98m Marine Protected Area Management and Monitoring (MarPAMM) project that is supported by the EU INTERREG VA Programme administered by the Special EU Programmes Body. If you see the team around, and time allows, the researchers are happy to discuss their work with walkers and National Trust members.

Wonder Walks

Share your photos with us using [#nationaltrustni](#)

If your 'New Year, New You' fitness goals have fallen from focus, let the arrival of spring and the lure of the perfect picture re-inspire you. With trails that boast breathtaking views, here are four insta-worthy walks that will motivate you to lace up those walking shoes.

Divis and the Black Mountain

With the wide open sky above and Belfast below, the view from this five mile walk is worth it. A wilderness on the city's doorstep, there's a great mixture of environments to explore. With tarmac roadway towards the masts, wooden boardwalk across the bog and open countryside across the top, your mind will be as motivated as your legs.



@marks_outside

Giant's Causeway

With the wild wind howling along the jagged cliffs, spraying salt into the air, head out across the dramatic grassland overlooking the Causeway bay. The red trail is a bracing clifftop walk which offers spectacular views of the world-famous Causeway Coast. You'll have the option to walk to the Amphitheatre viewpoint (five minutes) joining the Causeway Coast Way (Yellow Trail) at the top of Shepherd's Steps or taking a circular trail by joining the Blue Trail.



© PressEye

Florence Court

This challenging hike takes you through the wild forest, rising above the canopy for an unforgettable view of Fermanagh's glistening lakes and hills. This red forest park trail rewards walkers with views across Fermanagh and beyond. Keep an eye out for the Lady's Well and have a closer look at the famous Yew Tree which is mother to millions. Following the Claddagh River along the Riverside Walk, you'll face a winding climb to the stunning viewpoint.



@BelmoreCourt

Murlough National Nature Reserve

With the Mourne Mountains providing a dramatic backdrop, follow sandy paths and heathland tracks on the North Point and South End trails. At around three miles each, you might spot seals on the shore and seabirds fishing at this impressive County Down location. With views in all directions, find yourself on boardwalks meandering through sand dunes and soaking up views of Dundrum Castle and the Mourne Mountains.



@dkeanephotography

Read more about each of these walks, and many more, on our website nationaltrust.org.uk/ni



Walking near cattle on Divis

If you're a regular walker on Divis and the Black Mountain, the free grazing cattle are a familiar sight. Whether you've smiled back at your cud-chewing companion or found your heart-rate rising a beat, it's always wise to act safely around livestock.

The mountain boasts blanket bog, wet and dry heath and grassland with a diverse range of grasses, wild flowers and fungi. This unique habitat supports several species such as Skylarks, Irish Hare and a wide variety of Waxcap Fungi. Without the grazing cattle on the mountain, the land would revert to scrub and these precious species could be lost. We work closely with local tenant farmers to select breeds which are traditionally more docile. During the most sensitive times of year for cattle, like the current breeding and rearing season, we keep cows with young calves in dedicated enclosures away from public trails.

Having just been let outside, livestock are full of the joys of spring. Here's what to keep in mind when walking near cattle.

1. Look ahead and plan your path. If you see cattle ahead, don't put yourself at risk by walking close to them, pick a route that lets you walk around them and avoid getting between cows and their calves.
2. The biggest potential danger stems from contact between cattle and dogs. Cows see dogs as a much greater threat than humans. They become more agitated around them. They will become instinctively aggressive if they perceive this as a threat to their young so keep dogs on a lead.
3. Move past cattle carefully and calmly. Be prepared for the cattle to react to your presence, especially if you have a dog. Don't panic or run. Most cattle will stop before they reach you. If they follow, just walk on quietly and quickly.
4. If you sense a threat, keep moving but don't run or turn your back to the animal. If you have a dog, let the lead go so you can reduce the danger to yourself, and both get to safety separately.

Keep us informed of any problems or incidents you may experience by emailing the Belfast team at divis@nationaltrust.org.uk



Capture the beauty of nature

We asked local photographer, Paul Moane who regularly visits our places for his top five tips to capture the perfect picture. Put them into action this spring and share your photos with us on social media [@nationaltrustni](#)

Working as a photographer in Northern Ireland is quite special. Within a two hour drive lies a diversity of landscapes. From our stunning rugged coastlines with sandy beaches to the local mountains with bogs, peatlands and lakes – we do have it all.

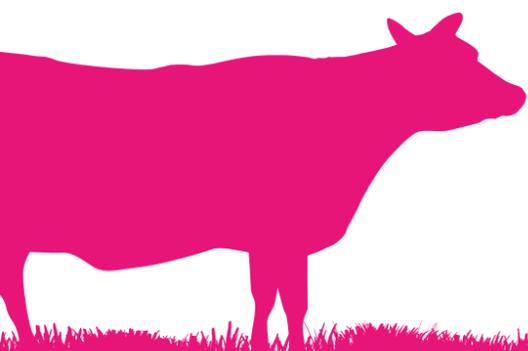
1. Plan ahead. Set your alarm and get up early to make the most of the day ahead. Sunrise or sunset offer the warm tone that gives photographs a real magical look.

2. Observe. Look at the colours, light and landmarks around you. Use scale, perspective and the patterns of the surroundings. Bring the camera close to flowers and foliage. Experiment using pathways, rivers or landmark buildings to lead the viewer in.

3. Weather watch. The weather can change very quickly, so be prepared for all the elements on one day. Embrace the wet weather, photograph reflections in puddles, patterns on a crisp morning, silhouettes of trees and the dramatic light of the sun breaking through the rain. Experiment with sunlight, shoot into it to produce rays of light/flare.

4. Keep it simple. Simple scenes can be stronger. Rather than capturing a lot of details in the one picture, take a few different versions of the same scene. Using one interesting element in the image and leaving plenty of space can be powerful.

5. Go for it. Get out there. Learn to see things differently – colours, scale, patterns, perspective in the great outdoors. Capture our stunning landscape in the different seasons and, most of all, enjoy your photographic journey.





Spring 2020 Highlights Northern Ireland

National
Trust

To browse the full list of spring activities, visit nationaltrust.org.uk/ni
Event details are subject to change. To avoid disappointment, please visit nationaltrust.org.uk/ni to confirm details.

What's on

Saint Patrick's Day

Giant's Causeway

Saint Patrick's Day

Tuesday 17 March, 9am–6pm

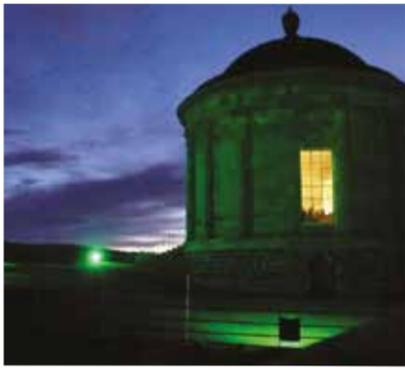
Take a hop and a skip across the world-famous stones this Saint Patrick's Day. Tap your toes to traditional Irish music and dancers before following the leprechaun trail down to Northern Ireland's only World Heritage Site. Meet at Visitor Centre.
Normal Admission Members Free

Mussenden Temple

Mussenden Lights

Tuesday 17 March, 7–9pm

Perched on the North coast, see the iconic Mussenden Temple join world-famous landmarks in lighting up the night sky for Saint Patrick's Day. Pack a torch and your camera to capture the Earl Bishops Library in a different light for one night only. Meet at Lion's Gate.
No Charge Donations Welcome



Eye-catching art

The Argory

Argory Art Talk

Thursday 26 March, 7pm

Join the house and collections team and discover more about Mr Bond and his love of modern art. During the evening you will have the opportunity to see 'Artificial Sunshine' in its new, permanent location as well as some never before seen works of art from his collection. Complimentary refreshments included.
Booking Essential
Contact 02887 784753
or email argory@nationaltrust.org.uk
Normal Admission Members Free

Easter



Pick a day out near you

Mount Stewart

Saturday 4 to Sunday 19 April, 11am–4pm

Scurry down to Mount Stewart for the Easter holidays and see if you can spot Ruby Red and her friends as they celebrate spring.
Normal Admission Members Free

Rowallane Garden

Saturday 4 to Sunday 19 April, 10am–6pm

Get competitive and challenge family and friends to a race on the front lawn including the classic tradition of egg and spoon racing.
Normal Admission Members Free

Castle Ward

Monday 6 to Sunday 19 April, 11am–4pm

Explore the Secret Shore Nature Trail and get creative with the spring themed activities. Make a day of it by visiting the farmyard animals.
Normal Admission Members Free

Castle Coole

Monday 6 to Sunday 19 April, 11am–4pm

Enjoy some Easter fun as you follow the trail around the grounds to solve the nature clues and complete the Easter trail.
Normal Admission Members Free

North Coast

Easter on the North Coast

Monday 6 to Sunday 19 April, 12noon–4pm

Roll up your sleeves and have a go at nature based activities with events for all ages across Downhill Demesne, Hezlett House, Portstewart Strand and Cushendun. Discover sand sculpting, sensory tree trails and walks with our rangers. Tick off some of the 50 things to do before you are 11¾.
Normal Admission Members Free

Springhill

Easter at Springhill

Monday 6 to Sunday 19 April, 11am–4pm

Put a spring in your step as you enjoy springtime activities and discover the nature trail and play areas.
Normal Admission Members Free

Springhill

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Monday 6 to Sunday 19 April, 11am–4pm

Put a spring in your step as you enjoy springtime activities and discover the nature trail and play areas.
Normal Admission Members Free



Florence Court

Monday 6 to Sunday 19 April, 11am–4pm

Enjoy some Easter fun as you follow the trail around the grounds to solve the nature clues and complete the Easter trail.
Normal Admission Members Free

Crom

Monday 6 to Sunday 19 April, 11am–4pm

Enjoy some Easter fun as you follow the trail around the grounds to solve the nature clues and complete the Easter trail.
Normal Admission Members Free

The Argory

Easter at The Argory

Monday 6 to Sunday 19 April, 11am–4pm

Hop over to The Argory this Easter and go wild in the play park, enjoy crafts and games in the courtyard and take part in our nature trail. Enjoy traditional games on the front lawn.
Normal Admission Members Free

Ardress

Friday 10 to Sunday 19 April, 11am–4pm

Bounce over to Ardress this Easter to say hello to the friendly farmyard chickens. Enjoy the nature trail around the orchards and grounds.
Normal Admission Members Free



Leap for nature

Derrymore

Birdsong and Bluebells Dawn Chorus

Saturday 25 April, 5am

Rise before the lark and experience an amazing spring dawn chorus on an early morning guided walk through the beautiful Derrymore Woods. End your walk by tucking into a hearty cooked breakfast in Bessbrook.

Booking Essential

Contact 02887 784753

or email derrymore@nationaltrust.org.uk

Adult £10 Member Adult £10

Price includes breakfast

Mount Stewart

Dawn Chorus Walk

Sunday 3 May, 4.30–8am

Rise before the lark and experience an amazing spring dawn chorus. Wander through the woodlands with our expert ranger and discover the bird song as it echoes through the trees. As the estate awakes, tuck into a hearty breakfast.

Booking Essential

Contact 02842 788387

Adult £8 Child £5

Member Adult £8 Child £5

Price includes breakfast

Ardress

Apple Blossom

Sunday 10 and 17 May, 11am–5pm

Set in the heart of the Orchard County, Ardress will celebrate Armagh's rich apple-growing traditions. Enjoy apple teas in the threshing barn, sample MacIvors cider, make floral garlands and explore the orchards on a guided tour.
Normal Admission Members Free

'Have a go' days

Castle Coole

Annual Spring Bulb Plant

Sunday 8 March, 12noon–4pm

Roll up your sleeves and help us plant over 100,000 snowdrops in Fermanagh in 2020. Suitable clothing and footwear essential.
Normal Admission Members Free

Downhill Demesne

Wild Garlic Foraging Walk and Workshop

Saturday 14 March, 11am–2pm

Whether you're a top chef or home cook, garlic is a kitchen staple. Pick your own wild garlic on this foraging walk and have a go at making wild garlic pesto. Tuck into a wild garlic inspired lunch and take home your pesto to use in your own kitchen.

Online Booking Essential

nationaltrust.org.uk/downhilldemesne

Adult £25 Member Adult £25

Mournes

Mending the Mournes

Saturday 28 March, Saturday 18 April, Saturday 16 and 30 May, 9.30am–3.30pm

Looking for an adventure? Come help our mountain ranger team complete vital repairs to the Glen River path on Slieve Donard. Learn traditional path work skills such as stone-pitching and heathland re-profiling and help look after one of Northern Ireland's most iconic locations. Suitable outdoor clothing essential including sturdy steel toe cap boots.

Booking Essential

Contact 02843 751467

or email mournes@nationaltrust.org.uk



Rathlin

Ranger for the Day

Friday 8 May, 10am

Carry out practical conservation work and discover the wildlife that call Rathlin home. Join our ranger team to look after the landscape and trails at Ballyconaghan and discover how we work with the tenant farmer. Price includes ferry crossing.

Online Booking Essential

Book by 1 May at nationaltrust.org.uk/cushendun

Adult £25 Member Adult £25

Meet like-minded members

If you like making the most of your National Trust membership and enjoy some company on your outings, why not join your local Members' Association? These are groups of Trust members who live near you and get together for talks, walks, outings, day trips and even holidays. Wherever you live, there's a group within reach, waiting to give you a warm welcome.

North Coast

Stephanie Craig

07771 930211

North Down and Ards

Margaret Curral

02890 424136

Belfast

Mary Stanley

02891 460393

stanleymarya699@gmail.com

Fermanagh

Jenny Cecil

02866 387988

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

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