



National Trust

News and events for winter/spring 2020

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Little joys to accumulate in 2020

The Vyne (Hants)

The Vyne's mindfulness trail is designed to encourage a more reflective pace, asking a series of thought-provoking questions as you travel to various points in the gardens. The Simply Be trail takes you to a number of peaceful places in the grounds where you can sit and relax, or walk in peace. (11 Jan - 9 Feb)

Waddesdon (Bucks)

Local wellbeing practitioner Matt Rodda will lead mindfulness walks around the gardens at Waddesdon. There's also a dawn chorus event at its aviary in May when visitors can experience the garden before opening when the place is populated by birds rather than people.

Hughenden (Bucks)

Hughenden is holding drop-in activities throughout the spring to connect people with 'the need to see things growing'. Children will be able to experience being in the garden through all their senses by sowing their own seeds. The rangers are also running guided dawn chorus walks.

Mottisfont (Hants)

At Mottisfont [pictured below], there are spots beloved by staff and volunteers that have a particularly soothing and restorative quality. A new mindfulness map shares these special places, encouraging you to slow down and take in the view (13 Jan-29 Feb).



'The need of air, the sight of sky and of things growing'



This year is the 125th anniversary of the National Trust. For 125 years, each generation has come together to look after the nation's special places, for everyone.

For our founders, it was how beautiful green spaces benefited people that was key. As Octavia Hill put it in 1888: '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 and not to be dispensed with without great loss.'

In our increasingly busy, increasingly urbanised, increasingly digital world, these founding principles feel even more relevant today. Who doesn't feel instantly energised after stepping out of centrally-heated fogs into the brittle sunshine and crisp air of a winter's day?

The sight of a duckling waddling after its mother evokes tender emotions. Catching an unexpected shower of fragrant spring blossom can spark a moment of unbridled joy. The relief and satisfaction of heaving reluctant legs to the top of a hill for a glorious view is air-punchingly good. We all need it. Put simply, everyone needs nature.

This year, our places are all planning more ways to help us experience nature and those little joys that accumulate into a healthier, happier you. Look out for wellness gardens, dawn chorus walks, chatty cafés, community planting days, star-gazing, yoga and tai chi in the gardens.

In our region, one of the anniversary celebrations is a wave of song, lighting up like beacons across the region. An anthem is being commissioned with lyrics provided by National Trust supporters to be sung by community choirs on Saturday 16 May.

The wave of song will start at **Alfriston Clergy House** in East Sussex, the first built property to be acquired by the National Trust in 1896. When the song has been sung there, the baton will be taken up by another property, and so on, finishing at **Waddesdon** in Buckinghamshire.

See What's On for details of participating places and how to get involved.



There are more details about events on property websites

London news



2020 begins with a brand new way to enjoy your National Trust membership in London. The National Trust Partners scheme is expanding. From January, the Royal Observatory joins the 12 existing places where members can receive a discount on entry. Overlooking the River Thames, the Royal Observatory is best known for the major role it played in the history of astronomy, navigation and even time itself, as the home of GMT (Greenwich Mean Time).



An interactive exhibition based on the much-loved children's book 'The Tiger Who Came to Tea' arrives at Osterley Park on 11 January. With it comes the chance to play with a life-size tiger, delve into a dressing-up chest or make 'tea' in a fully interactive play kitchen. Bigger kids will also be able to explore Judith Kerr's wider life and work, including access to childhood drawings that show how she developed into an acclaimed artist and story teller.



As spring arrives, a seasonal transformation begins at our places across London. In the 300 year-old orchard at Fenton House, a delicate display of 'pom-pom' blossoms dangle gently from branches while a blaze of blue tulips add a splash of colour on the ground. 500,000 bulbs burst through at Ham House to create a tapestry of colour that begins with vibrant crocuses and concludes with magnificent muscari.

Spring also sees a new 'garden room' at Red House beginning to take shape. A re-imagining of the planting vision of William Morris and Philip Webb, this new space brings the indoors out. Co-created with the community, the garden room also features commissions by contemporary designers.



For more information on the above and other news from London head to nationaltrust.org.uk/london

Mottisfont art



Mottisfont's exhibition season opens with Comedy and Commentary (18 Jan - 19 Apr), which showcases the distinguished history of contemporary British cartooning. You'll come across plenty of topical characters, including Boris Johnson and Donald Trump, in a show that explores social and political preoccupations that have gripped the nation. Humour is at its heart, with funny,

beautifully drawn works from the likes of Matt of the Telegraph, Mike Williams of Private Eye, and Ronald Searle.

Equally thought-provoking is the third exhibition in the series Faces of Change (2 May - 5 July), a partnership between the National Trust and National Portrait Gallery. It explores the ways in which migration has

shaped our national identity and culture for centuries. Through a diverse selection of portraits from the National Portrait Gallery's Collection, you'll encounter the personal stories and rich contributions of people who have made the UK their home, from the sixteenth century to today.

Elsewhere at Mottisfont, beautiful multi-media installations take you on journeys into the past. Casting Light [below] by Heinrich & Palmer (Red Room) uses light, 3-D laser scanners, video projection and sound to peel back 800 years of architecture. Inspired by Mottisfont's heritage as a place of pilgrimage, sonic artist Hywel Davies has created Pilgrim - a sound experience in the Beech Circle and Gardener's Cottage combining Japanese percussion, bass-baritone voice, and intimate accounts of personal journeys. From May in the Cellarium, Surface Tensions by Simon Ryder uses virtual reality to explore Mottisfont's relationship with the famous river Test.



Cliveden's Gilded Gardens return

The gilded gates of Cliveden's Ferneries will once again open in March to showcase a two-month show of narcissi. The two horticultural displays, curated by Cliveden's garden team, will change throughout March and April as early daffodils are replaced by mid- and late-season varieties.

'I've had such fun choosing the narcissi for 2020 - we've discovered some rather special and wonderfully pretty varieties which really demonstrate the incredible variation of daffodils,' says Senior Gardener Matthew Palmer. 'We're displaying 60 varieties in the Ferneries, 35 new and rarely seen, plus lots of old favourites.'

Carpeting the slopes and verges around the formal gardens are many thousands of naturalised narcissi. Last year many of them were 'blind', meaning they sent up leaves as normal, but no flowers. Matthew explains: 'This was most likely due to the hot summer of 2018, but this year has been kinder to our daffodils and we hope that the 'rest' year will help them put on an impressive display in 2020.'

From January, narcissi fans will be able to purchase eight different varieties grown in Cliveden's nursery from the gift shop.



New Stowedrops route

A trip to see Stowe's snowdrops is an essential winter pilgrimage for many. Stowe is one of the best places to see carpets of the delicate bell-shaped flowers nestling in the folds of the frosty landscape.

This year, there's a new map and route to follow in Stowedrop season. New paths are being opened to explore formerly hidden areas of the garden where snowdrops blanket the banks between Lamport Garden and the Gothic Temple. The new route also takes in the best winter views that are revealed after the leaves have fallen.

Snowdrops are not the only iconic flower to find en masse in the garden. After big community bulb planting efforts in the last two years, visitors to Stowe can enjoy a sequence of colour from bright winter aconites by the Grotto and Captain Cook's monument to pockets of daffodils and anemones on the rocky banks. On a trip to Stowe in spring you'll also see turks head tulips, crocuses and snakeshead and imperial fritillaries blooming in front of the backdrop of the Grecian style temples.

Maps for the new Stowedrops route are available 15 January - 22 March

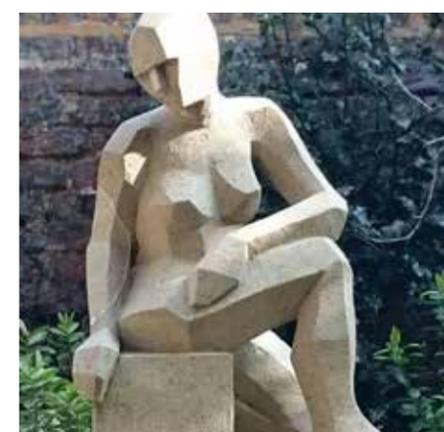
New art in the Chapel

Sandham Memorial Chapel hosts three, very different, exhibitions this spring, each one inspired by Stanley Spencer's famous paintings. Saturated Space (11 - 29 March) celebrates exciting new pieces by eleven artists from Chapel Arts Studios in Andover.

Look out for Ruth Facey's delicate wire sculptures of entangled words that appear to scuttle along the picture rails. Printed and dyed clothing, and collaged images fill the bathroom. At the launch event on 11 March

there are live performances of movement and dance, and you'll also find Tony Spencer's Icosahedra sculpture - a 'healing' wooden enclosure where you can immerse yourself in calm energy.

James Dunnett and Robert Fitzmaurice are exhibiting carving, and mixed media art in Of Geometry and Gods (8 - 26 April). And from 8-31 May, West Berkshire and North Hampshire Open Studios celebrate the Chapel's connection to its creative community with an exhibition by local artists that features glass, jewellery, paintings and sculpture.





The joy of birdsong

You don't have to know the words of a song to appreciate the music. Likewise, you don't need to know the name of a bird to be uplifted by its song, or be a twitcher to enjoy watching birds wheeling and soaring in a winter sky.

Canadian psychologist Eric Berne said: 'The moment a little boy is concerned with which is a jay and which is a sparrow, he can no longer see the birds or hear them sing.' This is taking the notion to its extreme, but sometimes in our human desire to categorise and make sense of the natural world, we can forget it's OK to simply notice our surroundings and enjoy the way they make us feel.

A murmuration of starlings pulsing and swirling in a roiling, complex pattern at dusk is no less of a spectacle for knowing the collective term. The ghostly form of a barn owl flashing by on silent wings on a winter's night is arguably more

startling and wondrous for not being aware that the site is a likely hunting ground for raptors.

That said, the National Trust wouldn't be the largest conservation charity in Europe without a few nature nerds amongst us. Knowing about birds and their habitats allows our rangers to plan their land management to favour birds and any species in particular that need our help.

For instance, migratory birds like waxwings, fieldfares and redwings seek refuge from the harsh winters of their homeland on New Forest heaths, and on Stockbridge Down. During winter conservation work, ranger teams are careful to leave some scrub to provide them with shelter and berries for food. Likewise, on the Bradenham estate in the Chilterns, rangers are replanting hedges to help red-listed farmland birds such as yellowhammer, corn bunting and skylarks.

Spring is a great time to appreciate birds, as our fairweather visitors are returning for the summer. The call of a cuckoo is the classic sign of spring, but often it's our native blackbird who is first with his burbling song.

Look up at this time of year and you'll see the migration underway. Millions of birds are on the move, urgently heading home to reclaim their breeding grounds. Vismigging (visible migration watching – it's a thing!) is easy and you don't need any technical knowledge. Just head to a high spot on a spring walk such as Ivinghoe Beacon or Coombe Hill in the Chilterns, or to a coastal promontory such as the Needles headland or Compton Coast on the Isle of Wight to watch flocks of brave migrants winging their way north.

For bird walks with an expert guide, check out the dawn chorus walks this spring at a National Trust place near you.

Early Flower Fest



Not all gardens sleep in winter. Hughenden's winter-flowering shrubs in the West Bank Garden scent the icy air of the new year with sweet perfume and Cliveden's Water Garden is sculptural on a frosty day.

Stowe is famous for its 'Stowedrop' season, complemented by cyclamen and then snakeshead fritillaries in spring. Snowdrops carpet the riverside path at Mottisfont too. Later, fragrant hyacinths and narcissi litter the grounds.

Pale, lemon-coloured Primroses brave the chill of February at Hughenden and Osterley to be outshone by the daffodils taking centre stage as we move into March. There are thousands of yellow nodding heads in The Vyne's walled garden and at Cliveden, where rare narcissi are celebrated in horticultural displays.

At Ham House, half a million bulbs create a spring flowering sequence of early purple crocus, romantic pastel-coloured tulips and vivid muscari in an intense drift of colour.

Tulips are the order of the day at Hinton Ampner. Look out for frilly candy-pink Ten Bosch in the Sunken Garden, and in the Kitchen Garden tangerine-pink Dordogne.

Fluffy blossom is a wonderful sight in the orchards at Fenton House, Stowe, Hughenden, The Vyne, Greys Court, Sandham Memorial Chapel and Mottistone Gardens on the Isle of Wight. Mottistone Gardens opens seven days a week for the very first time from 7 March.

Bake...

Rhubarb, orange and almond slice

This is a lovely recipe using the first forced tender stems of early spring rhubarb.

Makes 12 slices



Ingredients

450g self raising flour
450g caster sugar
1 large orange
225g fresh rhubarb
1 tsp baking powder
450g butter, softened
6 medium eggs, beaten
pinch salt
110g demerara sugar
110g flaked almonds

Method

- Line a 30cm rectangular deep sided baking tray with greaseproof paper.
- Heat oven to 150°C.
- Cut rhubarb into small chunks and cook on a low heat in a small saucepan until the rhubarb is tender. No need to add liquid as the rhubarb releases a lot of liquid when it starts to cook, don't overcook as you want to keep the lovely chunks.
- Cut up the orange and place in a food processor until chopped to a pulp.
- Cream together the sugar and butter until light and fluffy then add the orange pulp and mix well.
- Add the flour and baking powder to the sugar and butter mixture and stir the eggs in gradually.
- Spoon the mixture into your baking tin. Top with the cooked rhubarb, sprinkle with demerara sugar and scatter the top with flaked almonds.
- Bake for about 30-40 minutes until firm to the touch.

Good served warm with clotted cream as a pudding, or allow to cool for a lovely afternoon tea treat.

Why not send us a photo on Twitter @southeastNT or Facebook? Or email lse.customerenquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk



What your support means to us

'Wow – what a milestone – 125 years of the National Trust! Thanks to you, here we are in 2020, still caring for special places where people and nature can thrive. All these years on from saving our first building Alfriston Clergy House, 136 of the 500 places we look after today are here in the South East.

Though the challenges we face may be different to those of our founders' times, special places still offer us a space to switch off and be in the moment. That's something that feels particularly important in our part of the country where life is so full on. We have lots you can get involved in throughout the year and I'm particularly looking forward to joining in with our 16 May choral activities. Everyone's welcome, including non-singers like me. What a chance to get absorbed and forget about anything else besides following a tune.'

Nicola Briggs, Regional Director

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 Supporter Group? 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.

Search 'supporter groups LSE' on the National Trust website or phone Viv Tobitt, Supporter Groups Co-ordinator on 01932 339496.



Conservation in action



Coleshill parkland plans

After more than 60 years of slumber, plans are afoot to bring the sleeping beauty of Coleshill back to life.

Four hundred acres of parkland in the charming Oxfordshire village are returning to National Trust management. Part of the wider Buscot and Coleshill estates, this historic but largely forgotten landscape was once the setting for one of the great houses in England – Coleshill House. In 1952, before the estate came into the care of the National Trust, and just as restoration work was coming to an end, the 17th century manor was tragically destroyed by fire.

The house and formal gardens may be long gone, but the panoramic contours of the parkland are rich with history and wildlife. From the cool dark corridors of

the Long Shrubbery, the parkland sweeps down to the flood meadows of the river Cole. Riverbank restoration is planned to recreate the river meadows with habitats for otters, voles, wild flowers and nesting birds.

Fencing will be removed and the arable field will be allowed to revert to wooded pasture and wildflower meadows, opening up the landscape for conservation grazing and public access. With the help of donations and volunteers, there are plans to find lost paths, follies and features, restore the ha-ha and conserve the old pet cemetery.

For details of how to donate, get involved or find walks that cross the parkland, please visit the Buscot and Coleshill website.

Curbridge new wood

Centuries-old Hampshire bluebell woods feeling the impact of encroaching urban development and recreational pressure have been given a lifeline. An £85,000 donation from SC Johnson has funded a new 10-acre native wood at Curbridge National Nature Reserve on the banks of the river Hamble. The recently planted trees, including wild service and field maple, oak, lime and cherry, will take pressure off the reserve's veteran woodland, fragile from soil erosion and compaction, and unable to regenerate naturally away from the estuary's edge.

New rides and glades will provide open areas for wildflowers and grasses, creating vital habitats for bats, butterflies, dormice and other endangered wildlife at Curbridge – a reserve with international levels of protection. There's a pond too, and a path network that allows the local community and other visitors to walk and play in the heart of this green oasis, as it matures into a lasting legacy for wildlife.



Chastleton garden restoration

You wouldn't become a gardener if you liked a quick fix. Chastleton's Garden Management Plan is 25 years old and it's only now that its long-term plans are coming to fruition with the Wilderness Walk and the Best Garden restoration projects.

The Wilderness Walk was created in response to rainy months in autumn and spring when the garden sometimes had to close. This was to preserve both visitors and grassy paths from the damaging effects of slippery mud. Thanks to a blurry, historic

photo, the garden team knew that a hard-standing path had once existed.

Head Gardener Rosy Sutton explains: 'The volunteers and myself went hunting for a path down the West side of the gardens. With pointy sticks in hand we started scraping back the turf which had consumed it 20 years before. We managed to expose a hard path which lead down to the wilderness, a beautiful tree-lined walk which is filled with snowdrops in the spring and cow parsley in the early summer.'

Now, the garden team is extending the season of interest with autumn-flowering bulbs and spring-flowering scented shrubs so that when Chastleton reopens, visitors can enjoy this walk with its new perspectives on the garden and house.

You can also watch the progress of the Best Garden as it enters year two of the three year project to restore the topiary and recreate cascading Arts and Crafts style borders.

Chastleton reopens on 4 March.



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