



National Trust

News and events for spring 2020
Herefordshire | Shropshire | Staffordshire
Warwickshire | West Midlands | Worcestershire

Near you



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Step into Spring

With the festivities of Christmas long forgotten, and the bleakness of winter starting to fade, spring is a welcome change of the seasons. Nature awakens from its slumber and the signs of spring begin to emerge with buds on the trees, bulbs pushing through the ground and new life beginning.



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



#NTMidlands



In Shropshire, stimulate the senses with the sight and smell of the wild garlic on the slope at Wenlock Edge; at Croome in Worcestershire see the swathe of bluebells in the parkland; while at Greyfriars, also in Worcestershire, the garden may be small but the tulips are a particular spring highlight. At Brockhampton in Herefordshire, experience the 'festival of blossom' - it's a very special time of year for the orchards as clouds of white damson blossom surround the manor house, followed by the blushing blossom of the apple trees.

New life is synonymous with spring with lambs being one of the seasonal highlights. At Charlecote Park in Warwickshire, see the jacob sheep with their new born lambs; while at Attingham Park in Shropshire, the fallow deer are descendants of the original herd of Attingham and you can see the deer dropping their antlers and shedding their coats ready for summer; at Carding Mill Valley and the Long Mynd, also in

Shropshire the sound of the returning migrant birds fills the valley with birdsong and at Shugborough in Staffordshire calves are being born on the working farm.

In Warwickshire, see the cream and purple faces of the hellebores in the herbaceous borders at Packwood, at Coughton the best place for bluebells is Timm's Grove which is covered in a sea of shimmering bluebells from late April to mid-May and see the cute ducklings on the moat at Baddesley Clinton.

During the school holidays don't forget to tick off those '50 things to do before you're 11¾' activities that are happening at lots of our places.

The highlights for this season are spring flowers, new life and trees in bud, a sure sign that spring has arrived. You help us protect these signs of spring. Thank you.



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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



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It's our birthday! 125 years ago three individuals established an institution to stand up for the simple idea of nature, beauty and history for everyone.

We have decided to mark the year by doing something simple, which is to celebrate nature through the year, following the passing of the seasons and getting outside for a walk as much as possible.

Our founders were really forward looking people, responding to the needs of the time and trying to anticipate what future generations would value. They thought big but didn't let big thoughts get in the way of taking action.

Our present concern is the environmental crisis and our response to it is also to take action:- to create new landscapes as well as restoring degraded ones, whether that is creating new hay meadows near the Long Mynd or responding to environmental changes such as ash dieback that is badly affecting Wenlock Edge and Dove Dale.

The other area where we are taking action is to extend our work into urban areas. This often means working in partnership with others and I am delighted to see the progress that has been made on the Gala Pool at Moseley Road Baths in Birmingham.

Andy Beer

Everyone needs nature



Providing 'Stepping Stones' for nature



A success story

Butterflies and bumblebees flitting in the sunshine, mountain pansy bobbing in the breeze, dormice snuggling-up in their nests and the bubbling sound of the curlew; this is the Shropshire Hills as it should be, buzzing with life.

Together with other conservation organisations, farmers, landowners and community groups, we are restoring hedgerows, hillsides, roadside verges and streamside wetlands to create 'stepping stones' of wildlife habitat across the landscape.

The Stepping Stones Project focuses on land between two upland heathland sites – the Long Mynd and the Stiperstones. Thanks to support from players of People's Postcode Lottery and two significant donations, work is under way.

An award of £165,555 from People's Postcode Lottery is being used to help to co-ordinate the conservation work carried out by several local groups including the Marches Meadow Group, Restoring Shropshire Verges Partnership, Caring for God's Acre and four local community wildlife groups.

Together with local farmers we are developing and testing a model to create Whole Farm Plans, where local farmers explore ways of managing their land in ways that create a healthy natural environment as an integral part of a profitable farm business.

We have also managed to increase our own land ownership with the recent purchase of three meadows and a hillside Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Fir Tree Farm, thanks to two bequests donated specifically for the purpose of land acquisition at the Shropshire Hills.

Peter Carty, our Countryside, Parks and Gardens Manager for South Shropshire, said: 'This is a fantastic opportunity to expand upon the good work of the previous landowner, who started to create flower-rich meadows which offer homes for a variety of wildlife and at the same time deliver healthy soil and natural water management.'

The Stepping Stones project is part of a 50-year vision to reduce the loss of wildlife and restore the 220km² Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) into a species-rich, healthy and beautiful landscape. We are working closely with our partners Natural England, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, the AONB Partnership, NFU, CLA, local landowners, farmers and community groups to realise this ambition.

For much more information visit



www.nationaltrust.org.uk/stepping-stones

Jinley meadows, on the north-east corner of Long Mynd, were purchased by the Trust in 2014, and are now flourishing as flower-rich hay meadows.

Less intensive grazing and the grass being cut and baled for winter fodder, has dramatically improved the condition of the land.

By changing the land to hay meadows many varieties of wildflowers are thriving which are attracting butterflies and bees. The three meadows at Fir Tree Farm will be managed in a similar way and results should be achieved in five years' time.



2014



2019



The National Trust was founded on 12 January 1895 by Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley, with the first Midlands place, Duffield Castle in Derbyshire, following shortly after in 1899. That first acquisition has grown to where we are today in the Midlands; including managing 30,000 hectares of land, providing access to 31 countryside estates, caring for over 30 historic mansions and houses, working alongside over 11,000 volunteers and having the valuable support of just under one million members. We're also playing a role in looking for new and innovative ways to care for local, everyday, historic and natural places in urban areas, like the Roundhouse in Birmingham.

This year is a special year for the Trust as we mark our 125th anniversary and we'd like you, our Midlands supporters, to help us celebrate.

Life today is busy with many obligations, sometimes too many obligations, so time out to focus on our happiness and health are essential. Octavia Hill once said: 'The need for 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'. This connection between nature and our wellbeing is never truer than today.

For those simple pleasures in life the sound of bird song must be one of the best.

At The Weir Garden in Herefordshire, listen for the enigmatic cuckoo. While in Shropshire, catch the woodpecker drum at Wenlock Edge and experience the sheer joy of swallows flying in the grounds of Wilderhope Manor.

Make 2020 the year to look after your wellbeing. For much more information on how you can get closer to nature visit

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/MidlandsNatureMoments



A day in the life of... Lizzie Pellowe

Shugborough's new Apprentice Gardener

I feel very fortunate to be the first National Trust Garden Apprentice at Staffordshire's Shugborough Estate. Since starting my role in September, I have been busy contributing to the ongoing maintenance and helping to design planting schemes for the many wonderful gardens.

The gardens at Shugborough are a significant part of the estate's history, from the Grade II listed walled garden full of colourful produce, to the breath-taking formal garden behind the mansion and the impressive arboretum with oaks from around the world scattered throughout.

I've had lots of opportunities to develop my skills and knowledge with the support of a fantastic team and a college course. From helping to redesign the herbaceous perennial cut flower beds to learning all about plant identification, this role has offered me hands-on experience, kick-starting my new career in a smooth but exciting way.

We're currently embarking on a major restoration project in the South Walled Garden so it's an exciting time to be working here.



To find out more about the gardens and the restoration plans. Visit:

nationaltrust.org.uk/shugborough

Get out into nature this Easter



Bring the whole family together this Easter and treat your loved ones to the magic of our Cadbury Easter Egg Hunts!

Get ready for a long weekend of fun and discovery as you spot the first signs of spring and experience nature bursting into life at the special places the National Trust looks after.

Become a nature detective to follow the clues and finish your adventure with a delicious, chocolatey treat.

In partnership with

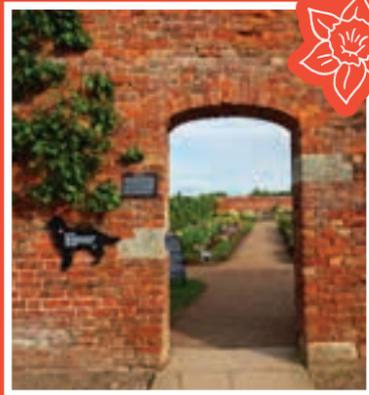


TOP FIVE

DOG-FRIENDLY WALKS

We are a nation of animal lovers and dogs are our best friend. Dogs are welcome at many of our places, below is our pick of walks to bring your four-legged pooch.

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



1 Attingham Park, Shropshire

Whether it's your regular dog walk or you're exploring for the first time you'll find walk routes from 1 to 3 miles long in the parkland at Attingham Park. Dogs on short leads are also welcome in the Walled Garden during the months of spring you can see blooming hyacinths, daffodils, irises, vibrant tulips, and a National Collection of Camassias at its best in May.

2 Charlecote Park, Warwickshire

Breathe in fresh air at Charlecote Park this spring and enjoy walkies in acres of green parkland from 9am every day. Spot birds feeding their young, ducklings, goslings and cygnets paddling along the river, calves in Camp Ground and little lambs in April. Explore the sights and scents in the garden as colourful spring flowers are in full bloom, then grab a hot drink at the Wood Yard café with dog-friendly seating.



3 Clent Hills, Worcestershire

Clent Hills are the perfect place for you and your four-legged friend to get out and about this spring. The dog-friendly walk gives you the chance to let your pooch off the lead and run free. The circular walk takes you through fields and woodland and offers some stunning panoramic views. Time it right and you may get a chance to see the carpet of bluebells that adorn the hills every spring.

4 Dudmaston, Shropshire

Four-legged friends are very welcome at Dudmaston. Bring your dog for their daily walk in Comer Woods or for a change of scene, come and explore the Dingle and Parkland walks. Pass by the pools and look out for great crested grebes performing their distinctive courtship dance on the water.



5 Packwood, Warwickshire

Join us for a walk at Packwood with your furry companion this spring. Take in views of the canals, rolling fields and enjoy a spot of bird watching in the woodlands. From a circular walk taking in the Baddesley estate to a family friendly stomp through our welly walk there's a walk suitable for all creatures great and small. After your stroll, head to the café patio to sit back and put your feet (or paws) up.

At the heart of Birmingham

Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND
LOTTERY FUNDED

Through pioneering partnerships in Birmingham we're playing our part in supporting special locations.

From May the Roundhouse, in the Ladywood area of Birmingham, will open as a base for the community and visitors – a place to meet, relax or begin an adventure through the city by foot, bike or water. This unusual horse-shoe shaped building has been brought back to life by our partnership with the Canal & River Trust and made possible by a £2.5 million National Lottery grant and £196,000 of Historic England funding.

Moseley Road Baths is the oldest Grade II* listed pool still open for swimming in the UK but the baths are at risk. A 'coalition' of

organisations including the Moseley Road Baths CIO, National Trust, Birmingham City Council, Historic England, the Friends of Moseley Road Baths, and World Monuments Fund, are working together to create a new future for the baths.

To celebrate the restoration of the Gala Pool roof (funded by Historic England and Birmingham City Council) we've been working with Moseley Road Baths CIO on a contemporary art commission by Juneau Projects. Specular Reflecular, part of Trust New Art, the National Trust's programme of contemporary arts, launched in February and is a visually stunning artwork rooted in the local community.

Find out more information about the Roundhouse opening weekend www.roundhousebirmingham.org.uk and about Moseley Road Baths Specular Reflecular art project www.moseleyroadbaths.org.uk



Shining a light on the Dark Museum

Attingham Park in Shropshire has the largest collection of Royal neo-classical Italian furniture in Britain, dating to the early 1800s. It was introduced to Attingham by the third Lord Berwick, William who brought it with him on his return from Italy where he had been a diplomat, and where it had previously belonged to the Queen of Sardinia. Over the centuries pieces have become detached from the furniture and a spotlight is being shone on these pieces in the 'Dark Museum', a one room exhibition in the Mansion.

The losses will be charted through time using reproductions of the vintage labels, as well as the more modern reports from recent years, explaining the damage that is still happening today. Highlighting the process of recording and reacting to damage, the

careful saving and storing of 'bits and pieces', the display also makes it clear that not every bit has survived and not all damage can be fixed.

Helen Rowse, House and Collections Manager explains more, 'We've called the exhibition the Dark Museum as you'll be able to see items that don't normally see the light of day due to their condition. Visitors often see items being conserved and the results of that work, but they don't always see the items before that happens. These precious items may appear worn or broken - they might have been damaged for a variety of reasons so it's a chance to share with people the impacts of damage to items through touch, water spillages, exposure to sunlight and wear and tear from moving, handling and sitting.'

You can visit the Dark Museum exhibition now, for details visit

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/attingham-park

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

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Darling Daffodils

Daffodils are a classic harbinger of spring, providing a welcome splash of colour at a time when the dull monochromes of winter are still very evident. Hundreds of different varieties have been cultivated, creating a huge diversity of shades, sizes and flowering periods.

One of the best places to see early-flowering varieties in profusion is The Weir Garden near Hereford, where the sheltered south-facing bank above the River Wye can be covered in yellow blooms in February. However, my personal favourite remains our native wild daffodil *Narcissus pseudonarcissus*. Its charms are more subtle than those of the bigger, blousier varieties

which have been derived from it, but it possesses a natural diversity of shades of yellow and makes an unforgettable sight when flowering en masse.

Sadly it is not so easy to find large drifts of wild daffodils as once it was, as many populations in grassland have been lost to cultivation, but it remains locally frequent in woodlands – including Croft Castle and Parkland's Fishpool Valley in Herefordshire, where rangers and volunteers have rescued and relocated a fine patch of bulbs which were at risk of being submerged when one of the dams was repaired as part of the valley's restoration project.

Simon Barker, Wildlife Advisor



The art of the Arts and Crafts Garden

When we think of a quintessentially British garden with its hollyhocks and roses, the kind of garden we saw illustrated as children, we are thinking of an Arts and Crafts Garden. With its garden rooms, secret corners, its topiary and butterflies and bees, this is the romantic image that fills our imagination.



During 2020 a new exhibition will look at the development of the Arts and Crafts garden; from its roots in William Morris's Kelmscott Manor garden, through watercolour illustrations, seed catalogue design and children's book illustrations, to the two men responsible for Wightwick Manor's in Wolverhampton garden design, artist and garden designer Alfred Parsons and the landscape architect Thomas Mawson.

Head Gardener Cat Sobolewska said: 'This is the perfect opportunity to celebrate the way in which our garden reflects the wonderful quality and variety of the arts and crafts collection in the house. 2020 is the centenary of the death of Alfred Parsons which feels to us like the perfect opportunity to show the way that trends in garden design were influenced by what was happening in the world of art.' A new garden leaflet and children's trail will help to explain the links as well as garden walks and talks throughout the seasons.

To discover more, visit

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

Rooted in Place: connected to home

At Upton House and Gardens in Warwickshire, we're bringing the outside in this spring. Step into an immersive art installation, inspired by the words of Peter Montefiore Samuel, 4th Viscount Bearsted, when he wrote home during WWII: 'I can shut my eyes and sniff and imagine myself lying on the lawn at Upton with the smell of flowers and the humming of bees, and no one to bother me.'

Each year, thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we care for the majestic cedar trees that have stood guarding the south lawn for over 300 years. As a symbol of resilience, they provide a place of shade and safety on hot sunny days and clearly evoked strong images of home for the viscount during his time in Egypt.

Until 5 May, we invite you to sit, lie, stop and dream beneath the cedar trees whilst in the sheltered space of our gallery.

Find out more about Rooted in Place exhibition at

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/upton-rooted-in-place

Helping nature thrive at Brockhampton

Brockhampton is nestled in the Herefordshire countryside and is surrounded by orchards and a farming landscape. Thanks to support from players of People's Postcode Lottery and Arts Council England, plans to restore a healthy, beautiful natural environment at Brockhampton and to help nature thrive are making progress.

The ambitious plans include the creation of three new orchards, reversion of arable land and grassland to lowland meadow, restoration of hedgerow as well as the replacing of old or installing new fences across the estate.

Improving biodiversity is at the heart of the project. Arable grass which is used for grazing is only made up of two or three species of grass, the traditional meadows that have been sewn are a mix of at least seven. Wider variety supports a broader mix of beneficial insects – including hardworking pollinators like bees and butterflies. In turn, an abundance of insects will encourage more birds and small mammals to make their homes in the hedgerows that have been planted.

To learn more about the project and its developments, please visit

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/reimagining-orchards



Last winter, teams of volunteers supported by the property team planted hundreds of new trees. These will form the centre piece of the property's Reimagining Orchards project that will tell the story of traditional orchards and the impact that they have had on Brockhampton, Herefordshire and further afield.

The property has also worked with the Herefordshire Meadows Group to host joint bumble bee identification training, teaching the staff and volunteers who will support our habitat monitoring.

Area Ranger Nick Hinchliffe said: 'This work will have such a positive impact on the natural environment at Brockhampton and will deliver real benefits to our visitors, supporters and wildlife too.'

News in brief

40th anniversary celebrations

40 years ago this spring, we welcomed visitors to Dudmaston in Shropshire for the first time. Back in 1980, the house and garden was open just two afternoons a week, with 'homemade teas' served between 3-5pm. To mark the anniversary, the property is hosting 'Hart of the Wood', a year-long art project and one-off performance in celebration of Dudmaston's woodland heritage.

On 28 March, Badesley Clinton in Warwickshire celebrates its 40th anniversary of being in the care of the National Trust. Join us this year and find out all about the people who lived here, how it came into the National Trust's care and the work that has been done since to restore and look after this special place.

A carpet of crocuses

As though somebody has sprinkled jewels on the grass, every spring crocuses appear like shining amethysts on the lawn of Benthall Hall in Shropshire. The crocuses were first introduced to the garden by tenant George Maw, an industrialist with a keen eye for botany. His book 'A Monograph of the Genus *Crocus*' is on display in the Hall – visit Benthall in March or April to see his detailed watercolour illustrations and to enjoy the real crocuses themselves heralding the arrival of spring in the garden.

For more details visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/benthall-hall

Coventrys and Art at Croome

Works from famous artists such as Allan Ramsay and Sir Joshua Reynolds feature in Croome in Worcestershire's new 'Coventrys and Art' exhibition. Portraits, from Croome's own collection and private collections, showcase the history of the Coventry family from the turn of the 17th century to present day. A new commission from Malvern contemporary artist Antony Bridge and artworks by artist Lincoln Taber, a member of the Coventry family, can also be seen.

Further information on the exhibition can be found at www.nationaltrust.org.uk/coventrys-and-art

Busy for bees at Kinver Edge

This spring the Ranger team at Kinver Edge in Staffordshire will be busy making homes for bees – but this doesn't mean building hives. From a distance the grass at Kinver Edge looks like a freshly mowed lawn, but get closer and a network of little holes are revealed in the sand – these are the nests of bees that live in tunnels in the soil.

In the past, farm waste was discarded on this important wildlife space, so now the staff and volunteer Rangers are scraping back the top layer of grassy earth to reveal the soil below again, creating miniature sandy cliff faces that the bees can burrow into.

To learn the best techniques for creating these scrapes the National Trust staff and volunteers visited local Staffordshire Wildlife Trust site Highgate Common, where they have already dug out several of these bee homes.

Experts will be monitoring the success of the project at Kinver Edge with a full bee survey this summer, but anyone can enjoy the sight of these little creatures buzzing in and out of their holes in the ground on a warm day.

To find out more, visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/kinver-bee-homes
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