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PEMBROKESHIRE NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 55 Spring 2024

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN



Jane Mason

Our winter season of PNTA speakers has drawn to a close and our monthly Thursday event at Crundale has proved very popular with more than 60 people attending each time. A highlight for many of us was listening to Ann Garside speaking without notes and visuals about Agatha Christie. We can now all look forward to an interesting spring and summer programme of guided walks and visits. I hope to enjoy a day with many of you on our special day coach trip to Llanerchaeron. A lot of PNTA members may have visited this Georgian house and country estate before but I am sure our guides will make this visit something special, with the addition of a guided talk at the amazing Geler Jones collection in the afternoon.

After discussions with the Pembrokeshire National Trust, we are delighted to announce that the PNTA 25th anniversary

year donation of £5,000 is to be given to Stackpole to create and install two large woven willow Victorian figures strolling with their dog. They will be located in front of the summerhouse as you walk into the Lodge wood garden and create a sense of place, taking us back to the days the Cawdor family would stroll with family and friends. The project is to include plinths and maintenance to the sculptures if required. We are hoping there might be sufficient funds to help with the repairs to the rose arch metalwork. We have also offered £500 to Southwood to add some gravel to the new path to Roch.

Thank you to all members who have paid this year's PNTA membership, taking our total to about 275 members. We are keen to recruit more members, so if you are able to deliver some A5 promotional fliers in your neighbourhood or put up an A4 poster, please email me and request the files to print out. We now require everyone on a walk or visit to be a PNTA member, so an added incentive to join. New people or guests joining us on a walk, can simply fill in a membership form and pay the great value membership of £5 per person.

If you are not receiving the mailchimp monthly PNTA update by email and wish to do so, please email Sheila Ashton (robashon95@yahoo.co.uk) our membership secretary. It is a good reminder about events coming up and we

are also trying to include news about National Trust events in Pembrokeshire. Ideas for speakers and visits always welcome.

Wishing all going on the PNTA tour to Kent and Sussex a great time and all of you an enjoyable summer season.

Jane Mason
jmason@fastmail.com
Chairman

Reports:
Visit to Stackpole Gardens,
25th September 2023

We were blessed by the weather on this visit - temperature just right and no gales or rain. Everyone arrived in time for coffee in the marquee and 13 of us set off on the walk, with 5 choosing a relaxing time in the garden. An orderly group walked down to the 8-arch bridge with a vain hope of seeing an otter.



Looking out from the 8 arched bridge.

We followed the path along the water and up to the outbuildings of Stackpole Court, looking at the display of the history and nature there. Walking through the woods, Andrew told us about the planting that our Association had provided. We saw the trees that included Medlar, Mulberry and a Spindle.



Crocodile on the walled garden

Back at the garden we enjoyed our lunch and then Debbie took us on a conducted tour. We were told the history of the gardens over 200 years and some of the history of Stackpole Court from the building of it by the Cawdors to its demolition when the debris ended up under the oil refinery. Debbie also mentioned that the garden could have ended up as a Butlin's holiday camp but was now going to be a vineyard and that they have over 30,000 visitors a year.



Debbie guides us through the walled garden.

It was good to share one of our favourite places on such a lovely day.

Photographs: Andrew Weaver
Report: Lyn Humphries.

PICTON CASTLE 28TH NOVEMBER 2023

On Tuesday November 28th over twenty PNTA members gathered outside Picton Castle ready to be shown inside to begin our Candlelight Tour of the Castle. It was so lovely to be able to walk from the car park to the castle in the dark surrounded by lights that set the scene for our visit. We were able to enter through the main door and were invited to first of all meet in the great hall - where we could spot the drinks and mince pies waiting for us at the end of our visit. The castle had been bedecked with Christmas decorations and put us in a very festive mood.

Rhiannon set the scene telling us the background to the castle and the people that had owned and lived in it since it was first built as a medieval castle started in 1280 by the Wogans to the now beautiful 18th century home where the Phillips family have lived since 1491.



The Main Hall

Having had a quick look at the hall, we were to return there later, we visited the library. I know that many of us would love to spend a lot more time in there! In the middle of the library there is a star painted on the floor. A few of us were able to stand on the star and when talking you and only you can hear your voice echoing. I tried it and yes it works!

We were then able to go upstairs to the little chapel which would have been well used by the family as there is no church

nearby. It is a lovely little room and on display was a portable font - so beautiful and so special. This was a very rare piece as it is china.



The Dining Room

Back downstairs we were shown the dining table fully decked out in Christmas fashion and looking very special. The fireplace in this room was very interesting as it showed animals that some of the family had seen on their travels abroad. As it was explained to us this was 'pre Attenborough' so the carvers were relying on a description to execute their work. The polar bear did have a tendency to resemble a dog and the beaver had a flat face but to be able to reproduce these in this country gave the fireplace a charm and significance all of its own.

We then walked through to the hall where the log fire was burning enticingly and were invited to have some mulled wine or spiced apple juice and a mince pie. These were very well received and the chat that we had with each other over our food and drinks made a lovely social occasion. Did you spot the Renoir that featured on Fake or Fortune?

This was a delightful ending to the evening. We had had a lovely look around this beautiful house and it was so interesting to have an opportunity for a chat about the house with Rhiannon our guide and two of the volunteers who were on hand with the drinks and mince pies.

Report: Angela Jones

Reports on Autumn/Winter talks 2023/24

October 5th 2023

Ocky White Dig

Andrew Shobbrook Project Officer for the Dyfed Archaeological Trust.

Andrew first started working for the Trust in 2005 but after several years working for other archaeological organisations throughout the UK, he returned to the Trust in 2019. Andrew supervised the archaeological excavations at the Western Quayside development in Haverfordwest in 2022 and more recently he has been involved with a proposed project to redevelop Haverfordwest Castle. Andrew has a wide range of interests covering the history and archaeology of west Wales as well as the Romano British and Early Medieval periods of the UK in general. He also has a keen interest in Medieval castles and anything to do with military history.'

In 2022 DAT Archaeological Services carried out a 7-month excavation below what was the old Ocky White department store building in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. The archaeologists revealed the remains of a well-used cemetery, a cemetery believed to be associated with the Dominican medieval friary of St. Saviour's, whose exact location has until now never been ascertained. The remains of more than 300 burials were excavated by the team of archaeologists, as well as the first phases of St Saviours Friary, established in the early 13th century.

Report: Jane Mason

November 2nd 2023 Cancelled due to weather conditions. This talk will now be in October 2024

Kate Barrett Heritage and Learning Director, Picton Castle Gardens

Thursday 7th December 2023

Glyn Harries- Community Heritage Officer for Tenby Museum & Art Gallery
Ten Historical Figures of Tenby History.
This talk will now be on 7th November 2024

January 5th 2024

John Archer Thomson - Vancouver Island Bears and Whales

Once again John transported us on one of his epic journeys, illustrated by stunning photography. We journeyed with him from Vancouver city up along the coast, marvelling at the tree lined waters, mosses lichens and pinewoods and some stunning Orca and brown bears. We then hopped on a ferry across to Vancouver Island and headed to a National Park and Telegraph Bay, where we had close encounters with black bears, harbour seals and most stunningly of all a group of sea otters. Finally, a long drive down to the busy city of Victoria with its colonial buildings, we all felt we had experienced some of the essence of west coast Canada. While others who had visited the same places enjoyed reminiscing. Although a vast country with extensive open spaces, climate change and pressure from man is imposing change on wildlife in Canada too. But John was complimentary about their respect for nature and their surroundings and the importance of eco-tourism.



Report: Jane Mason

Photograph: John Archer Thomson

February 1st, 2024

Anne Garside, Agatha Christie - War time and Wales.



Anne, who now lives in Fishguard, but has lived and worked all round the world, gave an entertaining and interesting talk which set the scene of Agatha Christie's life and many of the 66 detective stories and 14 short stories she wrote and published. We also learnt about Agatha's connections and the ongoing family connections to Wales. Agatha married when young to Archie Christie and they had one child Rosalind before their marriage broke up. On a later trip to visit the famous archaeologist Leonard Woolley in the Middle East, Agatha met Max Mallowan an archaeologist and they married in 1930. During the war he was in the RAF Voluntary Reserve and spent several years in North Africa in comparative luxury. Agatha lived in Hampstead and trained as a nurse in the First World War. Training as a dispenser she gained extensive knowledge in poisons.

Agatha's daughter by Archie, Rosalind, married later in the war, with only one week's notice, Major Hubert de Burgh Pritchard from a well to do South Glamorgan family with a mansion in Colwinston, Glamorgan. They had one baby, Matthew and in 1944 Rosalind's husband was reported missing in action and then later that year it was found he had been killed. Agatha supported her daughter looking after the baby, travelling every second week on a difficult war time journey by train to Wales. By this time Agatha had eight houses including her property on the Dart in Devon, Greenways. She enjoyed decorating and furnishing but

was told by Rosalind she did not want help exotically decorating her Welsh home. Agatha became close to her grandson Matthew and she gave him the royalties of her play which opened in 1952 in Dundee. It was the Mousetrap so he benefitted for a long time. In 1998 Matthew, who lives in South Wales, established a Trust which has given over £1million to cultural organisation in Wales including the Welsh National Opera and the Millennium centre. Greenways was given to the National Trust in 2000 by Rosalind and it opened in 2009 after a £3 million pound renovation. Anne encouraged us to visit and see the exquisite paintings in a frieze in the Greenways library made with military paint during the war.

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/devon/greenway>

"This relaxed and atmospheric Georgian house is set in the 1950s, when Agatha and her family would spend summers and Christmases here with friends, relaxing by the river, playing croquet and clock golf, and reading her latest mystery to their guests. The family were great collectors, and the house is filled with an important and varied collection of ceramics, Tunbridgeware, silver, and books, including first editions of her novels. It is also home to archaeological artefacts acquired in the Middle East where Agatha accompanied her husband, archaeologist Max Mallowan on excavations. In the library a frieze was painted in 1944 when the house was requisitioned by the US Coastguards as part of the preparations for D-Day."

Report: Jane Mason

March 7th 2024

Carol Owen National Park Ranger for North Pembrokeshire

Carol has worked for the National Park for 27 years and enthusiastically explained her role in the Northern area of the Park where the boundary goes inland into the Gwaun valley.

She said that our coastal path is a gem which was 18 years in the making. To create it a lot of negotiation had to take place with landowners and a small bulldozer was driven all around the edge to create the path we know today. Carol showed us photographs of how during Covid this had soon become overgrown and has to be regularly maintained by the Rangers. Now the fencing has been established along the boundary, this allows farmers coastal grazing which has improved habitats for wildlife such as choughs, which like to peck at anthills. Carol outlined several large conservation projects she has been involved in around North Pembrokeshire. At Penlan the forest was purchased with a special fund and after six winters of felling she showed us pictures illustrating the dramatic change from a deep, dark larch forest to open land with heather and gorse. Other projects include working with landowners to clear areas of scrub and undergrowth and plant with specially grown wildflowers such as scabious. The National Park act as facilitators lending farmers equipment and animals such as goats, which are now equipped with GPS trackers. Another project known as “Stitch in time” is tackling the plant invasive species knotweed and Himalayan balsam in the Gwaun valley. This has now expanded across Pembrokeshire. Finally, Carol discussed her work with National Park Archaeology Officer and local schools. They looked at and recreated digitally two circular iron age monuments and then carried out an art project. This is now looking to be developed further by linking into QR codes at different historical sites in the National Park.

Report: Jane Mason

April 4th 2024

Robert Davies - Templeton Historian
50 shades of Pembrokeshire’

Robert a former medical researcher who has worked in radiology, began his talk by explaining the title, which is related to the 50 colour shades of Wales created by artist Emily Mackenzie during Covid.

Robert, whose interest in photography developed as a young boy, took us on a delightful afternoon of ramblings around Pembrokeshire. He believes photography is in the eye of the beholder and his stunning colour photography introduced us to some new corners of delight in our County. Influenced by Ansel Adam’s, a landscape photographer of the American West, Robert talked and illustrated his photography through themes of mudflats and estuaries, rivers and streams, places of antiquity, hills and moorland, ancient woodland, the Milford Haven waterway, and the upper reaches of the Cleddau and evening light. He ended his talk with a slide show which provided a very peaceful Pembrokeshire mindful moment.



Cwm Yr Eglwys - Courtesy of Dr Robert Davies

Report: Jane Mason

SUMMER WALKS & DAY TRIPS 2024

Three walks have been arranged for this summer. A booking system remains in place. Please give name/s of all walkers and contact details when booking to enable pre or post walk contact if necessary. Your place/s will be confirmed. Please cancel your place if you are subsequently unable to attend.

Please note that all attendees must be current members of PNTA. (NT Insurance requirement.) Any of your guests or extra friends/family will have to join PNTA at the start of the walk if not completed in advance. PNTA recruitment forms will be available at the start of each walk.

The booking contact for the walks is Steve Drinkwater. Email:
steve.drinkwater68@gmail.com
Phone: 01834 869970.

Saturday 25th May 2024 – 1030-1200 hrs (approx.) Llangwm Village History Walk
Booking for this walk opens on Saturday 18th May. Bookings via Steve Drinkwater
e-mail: steve.drinkwater68@gmail.com
Phone: 01834 869970

Local historian, Graham Stephens, will be leading a walk-through part of the village of Llangwm and along the adjacent foreshore, including the slipway at Black Tar. Graham has lived in the village for most of his life and has a fund of local knowledge and anecdotes relating to the locality. The route is approximately 2-3km. Please wear sturdy boots as the foreshore can be muddy. **The walk is not suitable for dogs.**

We will meet at the Cottage Inn car park (Satnav SA62 4HH) where we have permission to park our cars at 1015 hrs for a prompt start to the walk at 1030hrs. The pub will be open on our return at about 1200hrs and meals and/or drinks will be available. PLEASE order meals in advance. This will be immensely helpful to the landlord, Matthew, as they do not usually provide meals at lunchtime. The pub phone number is 01437 891494. It is also possible to use Facebook Messenger to contact Matthew – see *The Cottage Inn, Llangwm* on Facebook.

Monday 1st July 2024 – 1030 -1200hrs (approx.) NT Southwood Estate - Habitat Enhancement
Booking for this walk opens on Monday 26th June. Bookings via Steve Drinkwater
e-mail: steve.drinkwater68@gmail.com
Phone: 01834 869970

Lead Ranger, James Roden, will lead a guided walk across part of the NT Southwood Estate. This will be an opportunity to see areas of the estate which currently do not have any public access, where new habitats and species are being encouraged to develop through natural processes and naturalistic grazing. The walk will also take in some of the historic features on the estate, as well as the new footpath which links into Roch. The route is approximately 2-3km. Please wear sturdy boots as it can be very muddy. **The walk is not suitable for dogs.** There are no toilets in the vicinity – nearest public toilets are at Newgale.

We will meet in the large layby on A487, immediately after leaving Roch village, heading towards Newgale, on the left, immediately after passing Hancocks agricultural contractors. Please arrive by 1020hrs so the walk can leave promptly at 1030hrs. The Victoria Inn, Roch (nearby) is willing to open for us at lunchtime but would much appreciate if meals could be ordered in advance. Phone: 01437 710426. Website:
thevictoriainnroch.com

Saturday 28th September – 1030-1200 hrs (approx.) NT Marloes Mere - Habitat Restoration and Enhancement. Booking for this walk will open on Saturday 21st September. Bookings via Steve Drinkwater
e-mail: steve.drinkwater68@gmail.com
Phone: 01834 869970

NT Nature Recovery Ranger, George Mee, will lead this walk starting at Marloes Mere, looking at the recent major enhancement works, September is a great time to watch birds at the mere – bring binoculars or telescopes if you have them – hopefully we'll see a variety of ducks, waders, and raptors. We'll continue from here to Watery Bay Rath, and its iron age fort. We'll have a look at some of the coastal habitats in this area, and see how our brilliant NT tenants are managing the

land. We'll search for cought, pupping seals and migratory birds as we return along the coast path to Runwayskiln. This walk will be approximately 3-4km in distance, the majority of the route is relatively easy walking, on flat ground. Please wear sturdy boots. **The walk is not suitable for dogs.**

We will meet in the NT car park for Marloes Sands. (Satnav SA62 3BH) There are public toilets nearby, at Runwayskiln - the start and finish of the walk will pass by these. Please arrive at the car park by 1020hrs so the walk can leave promptly at 1030hrs. It is hoped that refreshments may be available at the adjacent Runwayskiln Cafe, we hope this can be confirmed nearer to the date of the walk.

TRIPS

June 12th Trip to Hilton Court. Arrive between 10.30am -11am. Coffee is available to purchase in the cafe. Time for a leisurely walk through the woods and gardens and hopefully a peaceful sit by the water. Entrance to the garden is £5 each. Lunch - sandwich with crisps, hot drink and homemade shortbread £10. Choice of sandwiches, ham and mustard, cheese and pickle, egg and cress and chicken and bacon. As there is now only limited admission to Hilton Court, we will have the cafe and gardens to ourselves. Please wear sturdy shoes as the path are not suitable for heels or light footwear. To register for the visit and give sandwich orders please contact Lyn Humphries on 01646 621159 or e mail lynb.humphries@gmail.com before the end of May.



Lily pond at Hilton Court

June 27th Day trip by coach to Llanerchaeron, last visited by PNTA in 2016.



Llanerchaeron is situated 24 miles north-east of Cardigan and comprises a small, elegant Georgian villa designed by John Nash in 1790, with a walled garden and farmyard lake set in 750 acres of parkland. The visit will include a guided tour of the house followed by a garden tour. There will be a lunch break in the onsite café. After lunch a volunteer will show us around the Geler Jones exhibition shed which contains a treasure trove of early 20th-century agricultural and domestic machinery and implements, as well as horse drawn carts and carriages, and a magnificent steam engine named 'Glenys'. Alternatively, if you wish to walk on the estate you are free to do as you please during the afternoon. There are four walks between 1 and 1.8km.

A coach will be provided to take us there and back and the cost per person will be around £20pp, depending on numbers. The coach will leave Haverfordwest Rugby Club at 8am (ample parking) and Fishguard Bus Station at 8.30am. There will be a comfort stop in Cardigan en route, arriving at Llanerchaeron at 10.30am.

If you wish to go, please download the Booking Form on page 18 and return to Graham Brace at grahambrace@btinternet.com

CRESSELLY HOUSE



On Thursday 15th August we have arranged a visit to Cresselly House in Cresselly. Home of the Allen family for 250 years, the fine stone façade of Cresselly House presents a lovely symmetry as you approach the house from the main drive. The three-storey centre section, built in 1770, is flanked by two-storey wings added nearly a hundred years later and was the work of Clarke and Holland of Newmarket, Suffolk, who also worked for Lady Catherine Allen's brother, the Earl of Portsmouth. The house contains good plasterwork and fittings of both periods. Cresselly is a handsome and inviting old country house with a long history of hospitality and good living. The visitors' book, going back a hundred years, records the regular arrivals and departures of aristocrats and gentry invited for country and sporting gatherings, and the same tradition of welcoming the guest is enthusiastically carried on today by Hugh Harrison-Allen, who will be our guide. The tour of the house will begin at 2.30pm. There will be a charge of £5 per person (payable at Cresselly House) and numbers for the visit will be restricted to 25 persons. It is intended to arrange a get-together for lunch in Lawrenny before the visit at a venue to be decided. Further details of this visit will follow later in the Mailchimp bulletins.

If you wish to visit Cresselly House please contact Graham Brace at grahambrace@btinternet.com

NATIONAL TRUST NEWS



Rhian Sula General Manager for Pembrokeshire.

Dear All,

As I write this piece, the sun is shining, the birds are singing and spring is certainly on its way. It's not been the easiest of winters with months of constant rain, flooded paths and mud just everywhere, but with Easter on the horizon we all have a spring in our step, as we look forward to welcoming lots of visitors to our properties and hopefully some warmer weather on its way.

This winter we have been busy inducting new staff and it's great that Sally Orritt has really settled into her new role as Visitor Experience and Operations Manager and is really loving the Pembrokeshire way of life. We have also been busy setting up the Freshwater West car park project and a project looking at how we can best deal with the silt issues at the Stackpole Lakes. Both projects have been assigned a Project Manager and we look forward to updating you on their progress in the next six months.

We had a great start of season meeting at Dale and the rain stopped just in time for us to have a look at how the Marloes Mere project has been progressing. It was lovely to see so many staff and volunteers attend and there was a real buzz about the season ahead.

I have been in post for nearly twelve months and even though there is still so much to learn, I am loving the role and

really excited to spend some more time with the teams and getting to know some of our places a bit better.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Best wishes
Rhian

Countryside Management Report

Report from George Mee Nature Recovery Ranger.

It's mid-March, and spring has sprung, as the singing chiffchaff and bounding wheatears attest, despite the dreary, wet weather we've had over the winter. I'm George, I've now been in post for 9 months, as Nature Recovery Ranger, working on nature related projects across Pembrokeshire. I'm immeasurably impressed by the conservation work the team here in Pembrokeshire have been and are undertaking. We've now got a full ranger team, with Jim, our new Conservation Grazing Manager in post, who'll introduce himself later. I'm really excited to see what we can achieve over the next year now that everyone has settled into new roles! Here I thought I'd highlight some of the most interesting, impactful projects we've been working on this year.

Marloes Mere

This spring, National Trust Cymru are celebrating a significant project milestone in the restoration of Marloes Mere wetlands to benefit nature and people. This recent phase of the ongoing Pembrokeshire based project has seen 1.5 hectares, or an area about three times as big as a football field, of precious habitat restored. With deep-water reservoirs reconnected to surrounding shallower wetlands and improvements made to path networks.

This work builds on over 20 years of habitat enhancement work carried out by

the Trust's tenant farmers at Trehill Farm on the Mere. Previous works have included the creation of scrapes and pools, cutting

management of rushes and conservation grazing with traditional cattle to improve the wetlands condition.

The Marloes Peninsula is nestled on the very western edge of Wales. Overlooking the Celtic Sea, the area offers dramatic coastal landscapes and habitats, with expanses of coastal heathland and the hidden gem of Marloes Mere.

Designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the Mere is vital to a diverse range of wetland birds and wildlife and home to some particularly rare plants such as the three-lobed crowfoot as well as ten different sedges grasses and marsh orchids.

The winter months bring an array of wildfowl including mallard and teal ducks, declining species such as lapwings and golden plover and other migratory waterbirds. Whilst in the summer resident insects such as dragonflies, including the emperor dragonfly, damselflies, beetles and the great green bush-cricket fill the marshland.

However, agricultural reservoirs dug in the 1970's had left their mark on the landscape. Now, with support from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the tenant farmers at Trehill Farm work continues to improve wetland habitats at Marloes Mere.

Mark Underhill, National Trust Cymru's Countryside Manager for Pembrokeshire said:

"In this first phase of restoration work on the Mere we have removed a large amount of natural material that was placed there when the reservoirs were excavated in the 1970s. This has opened up the landscape and the views across the mere are now fantastic.



Views across Marloes Mere January 2024

It has also revealed nearly 1.5ha of wetland that has been buried for the last 50 years and reconnected the shallows of the Mere to the deeper waters of the reservoir. This will improve the wetland habitats and boost a wide range of flora and fauna.” But it’s not just nature that will benefit from this recent work, visitors now have new and improved access to the reformed wetlands.

The relocation of 500m of wet and muddy footpaths onto higher, drier, ground has improved links to the Mere and popular Wales Coastal Path. In addition to this access routes from Marloes Sands car park are now suitable for all-terrain mobility scooters (trampers), connecting to Runwayskln and places to view impressive wetland vistas and wildlife watch.

Mark Underhill Countryside Manager for Pembrokeshire adds:

“Access to nature and beauty has proved to be essential to our health and wellbeing. By improving the network of footpaths at Marloes Mere we are increasing access to this wonderful wetland on the edge of Wales for everyone to enjoy.”

Plans are afoot to further develop this project. The new route, and the excavated material from the bunds offers an opportunity to create and diversify the habitats available in the area. We envisage a route alongside the mere, where you’ll be walking through a myriad of habitats, patches of scrub, trees and grasslands, interspersed with ponds. Along this route we plan to create viewing areas, which will each give a unique view across the mere. We plan to upgrade the Britton hide, offering a better, more accessible viewing facility to appreciate this spectacular place. Donations towards the restoration of Marloes Mere Wetlands were received from the Waterloo Foundation, Natural Resources Wales, The Langdale Trust and private donations.

Stackpole TWIG



Alex Shilling reports:

The Stackpole TWIG (The Woodland Investment Grant) Project, funded by Welsh Government, has now reached its halfway point with a full year of works improving the woodland for biodiversity and people now behind us. Some of the highlights so far include planting more than 4000 trees through community volunteering events, replacing remnants of the Grand Fir plantations which have been resident in the estate woodlands since the 1960s. Some of these trees have also replaced large areas of woodland that have lost their cover as ash dieback has taken hold, boosting the recovery in those areas and creating a more diverse and resilient woodland for the future.

Another major achievement of the project so far has been to survey and start to tackle the huge population of INNS (Invasive Non-Native (plant) Species). Focussing largely on the laurel, rhododendron, and Himalayan honeysuckle, which have proliferated across the estate woodlands since their introduction to gardens and pheasant pens during the Cawdor era, our contractors have been targeting the core areas of the estate, with plans to continue with follow-up treatments and spread to the more remote estate woodlands this year.

In Caroline Grove, the TWIG project will also deliver some innovative Natural Flood Management (NFM) interventions this autumn through the felling of trees into and across the stream channel to create informal leaky dams. Despite flooding not being a specific issue on our site, the techniques involved with NFM provide some excellent solutions to silt management as well as boosting

biodiversity by improving the condition of alder carr woodland.

It is not all about nature conservation either, with the small wood-shed in Castle Dock car park, which dates back to the 1830s, receiving a new roof and repairs to the stone work. In the coming months there will be further developments here, with interpretation specialists being engaged to design and deliver ideas for new innovative ways to interpret the woodlands and engage visitors with the opportunities and importance of wooded estate.

There are other exciting projects underway at Southwood and Castlemartin. These will be reported on in the Autumn edition of the PNTA newsletter.

TUDOR MERCHANT'S HOUSE Report from Melanie Knapp Senior House & Collections Officer



Before we start our new season, I think we should celebrate on the success of 2023. We have welcomed in excess of 14,000 visitors, encouraged new members and enjoyed excellent feedback from visitors, hearing regularly comments such as “the guides were fabulous, so friendly and informative” and “took my grandchildren and the staff were kind and did everything to make their visit fun, exciting and educational”.

As soon as we closed in early November work started on our Garderobe Roof repair and we can now report that our roof is much more watertight following further

gutter replacements. A new drainage soakaway has been installed and the digging out of the trench gave us some more “finds” to add to our existing collection. Our builder Finn has done a brilliant job and also doubled up as our Merchant for our Christmas photo shoot.



Garderobe Roof repair

This year we opened for our Tudor Christmas on the first two Fridays and Saturdays in December. We felt that the event went very well and visitor numbers were good considering we only opened for four days instead of six last year. We welcomed more local people both members and non-members!

Our 2024 season started earlier with our Volunteer Recruitment Coffee morning and Start of Season meeting followed by reopening on the 15th February when we had over 200 visitors in our first week. We have extended our opening days on the shoulder months and are now open three days a week until the end of September. (Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday 11-4). We then drop down to two days in October and will open for Christmas in December. We can offer school and group visits on other days on request.

We have kept our admission prices the same again this year and continue to welcome a lot of visitors gaining free admission with various media passes etc. These means that the Trust can play its part in ensuring everyone can access the benefits of contact with Nature, Beauty and History at a time when it's needed most. Through various recruitment campaigns and Angela Jones's tour of local history

groups we have welcomed three new volunteers to the TMH team. This will help support our existing gaps and cover holidays and long-term sickness.

In February S4C spent the day filming at TMH for a new series “Cartrefi Cymru”, which is a series looking at homes throughout history and our house exactly fitted their Tudor criteria. We will be informed later in the year when it is likely to be aired.

We also had a group tour of Tenby Museum as we want to work more closely with our local museums in future. We will reciprocate as soon as a date can be arranged!



March will be a busy month with training our new volunteers, a visit to Aberglasney Gardens and then Easter. The garden is looking extremely tidy and colourful and now has a new bench which was kindly made by Michael a Colby volunteer. Our garden volunteer has also started to utilise some space at Colby to grow on plants for TMH which is an exciting new project for this year.



TMH Garden displaying the new bench

COLBY WOODLAND GARDEN

Report from Steve Whitehead Head Gardener.



Despite a very wet winter which presented considerable challenges, a huge amount of work was accomplished by Garden Staff, Volunteers, contractors and the Pembs Ranger Team, which has set the garden up really nicely for the coming year.



Snowdrops at Colby

Snowdrops struggled a little with the constant downpours, but the daffodils and fritillaries are coming through now and the huge amount of clearance of brambles and fallen timber in the Westwood over the winter has left huge swathes of newly exposed bluebells shooting through, ready for what we hope will be the best ever display at Colby.



Fritillaries at Colby

Some of our amazing Colby Volunteers have been busily repairing, restoring and rebuilding wooden and concrete benches and urns that have been in a sorry state for a while and these are now being returned to their old settings, (or to new ones) across the garden. Willows and dogwoods which have provided fantastic winter colour are being coppiced as I write, ready for a fresh crop of bright young shoots this year. New plants have been added to the collection and new trees carefully placed to fill in the gaps from our losses to storms over the past three years.

The thinning of goat willows at the bottom of the meadow will be high on the list of work once the nesting season is properly over. Re-planting with Swamp cypress and other moisture lovers has already started here, thanks to a lovely local family who donated three excellent trees in memory of their loved ones and all got stuck in and mucky helping to plant them. We have more rare-cultivar moisture - loving trees from the NT Plant Conservation program ready to go in here this spring too, as soon as the water levels drop far enough!

This year we'll be working on thinning the Holly thickets in the Eastwood to provide more opportunities for the rare *Sorbus torminalis* population up there, which is a small but very important native grove. We'll also be putting more work into re-jigging paths and drains to avoid (as much as possible) the sort of flood damage we've constantly had to repair this winter.

We're also looking forward to restoring the raised beds and getting the Walled Garden wall re-pointed and made safe come Autumn.

All our major fund-raising efforts this year will be towards getting the gazebo fully restored and re-opened as the rightful jewel in Colby's crown.

It's been difficult juggling the swampy conditions with the increasing number of groups using the garden this Spring. The Darwin Centre, West Wales Rivers Trust, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, several local schools and local scout and brownie groups are all now using the place to help immerse greater numbers of children learning in nature. This may be difficult to accommodate at times but may also be the most important thing we do, if nature is to have a future in the UK.

On the staffing front I'm sorry to say that Geraint is still on long term sick leave waiting for treatment, but our wonderful volunteer Amy is now on board as a proper member of staff, working alongside Nick and Christine five days a week to shoulder the workload. Amy is making huge strides in all areas, especially on the plant recording system which we're finally getting properly to grips with at Colby. All in all, the ghost of Covid-neglect is well and truly laid and the garden is looking better than I ever remember it. Whatever you do, don't miss the bluebell display at Colby this year!



Daffodils at Colby

Megan Evans
Stackpole Estate Welcome Manager



‘A day in the life of a Stackpole Estate Welcome Manager’

As you can probably imagine, no two days are the same here on the Stackpole Estate and with a role that’s strongly linked to the seasons, I thought an insight into ‘a year in the life’ might be more encompassing of what my role entails... all squeezed into a couple of paragraphs!

In December and January, I’m very much focussed on recruitment, with our Recruitment Day and interviews taking place in January, while February and March are all about implementing an effective induction and training programme for the new Welcome & Service Assistants and making sure they’re settled in before the Easter holidays.

Before we know it, Easter arrives and we focus our efforts on Colby Woodland Garden’s Easter trail, but the beaches at Stackpole remain very popular and the Welcome team can be very busy. The May bank holidays follow, with the Whitsun half term being one of our busiest weeks, the warm sun usually makes an early appearance and everyone’s on holiday and flocking to the beaches all at once, as opposed to spread across the 6 weeks of the summer holidays. By late July, the Welcome team are well versed and have lots of experience behind them ready for the school summer holidays. The summer holidays can be a haze of extreme weather (rain or shine), high visitor numbers, managing traffic jams, occasional incidents or accidents, and a lot of team camaraderie and support. We take a quick breather in

September, but as an organisation our focus quickly turns to budget planning for the next financial year. Seasonal contracts end on 30th September, and October, November and December are a time for reviewing the previous season, planning for the next and completing compliance tasks before it all begins again.

While seasonal aspects of my role are predictable, each year inevitably brings its own set of challenges. Day-to-day my role (based here at the Stackpole Estate Office) is also highly reactive – fixing car park machines, changing shifts due to adverse weather, reacting to incidents, dealing with complaints, helping staff or volunteers and whatever else might come my way!

Despite this, there are a few constants, such as providing an excellent visitor experience, managing my staff and volunteers effectively, event programming, compliance, rota planning, to name a few. I manage a team of up to 8 Welcome & Service Assistants, 1 Assistant Manager (the wonderful Ruth) and a dedicated team of 20 volunteers. My patch covers the 5 main visitor points across the estate, Stackpole Quay, Stackpole Court, Bosherton Lily Ponds, Broad Haven South and Freshwater West. I feel very fortunate to have found a role that balances my previous experience with new challenges, while also engaging my love for nature and a desire to get outdoors and work on the ground. I feel even more privileged to be working at the Stackpole Estate, with its breathtaking vistas and diverse landscape.



Freshwater West -photograph Andrew Weaver

PNTA WEBSITE

The Association has a website at www.pembsnta.org.uk It contains information about the Association, our Events Programme, the Newsletter and Association news items. We hope it will be useful to existing members and attract new members. Together with email and MailChimp, it helps us provide up to date information for members.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

If you intend to renew your membership and haven't yet done so, would you kindly send a cheque for £5 (single) or £8 (double) to the Membership Secretary - Mrs Sheila Ashton, Pondmeadow, Wiston, Haverfordwest SA62 4PR. (01437 731525), or better still, complete a standing order form which is available on the PNTA website. Subscriptions run from January to January. Your effort will be much appreciated.

CONTACT BY EMAIL

We are continuing to increase our use of electronic communications. If you have an email address and are not receiving messages, such as **MailChimp** from us, or have just started an email account, please email our Membership Secretary, Sheila Ashton at robashon95@yahoo.co.uk

MAILCHIMP

I aim to send these email updates at approximately monthly intervals. These are mainly reminders of forthcoming events, but include other bits of news that I hope will be of interest.

If you have been missing out, but would like to subscribe, please email me at andrew.pnta@gmail.com

If you have already provided an email address but are not seeing Mailchimp, please check your junk/spam file.

NEWSLETTER BY E MAIL.

This edition of the newsletter is being sent out by e mail unless you have specifically asked for a paper copy.

This will enable the society not only to save money on paper and postage (and of course do our bit to save trees) but also allow us to contact you at short notice when we are able to arrange events.

Some of you will already be receiving Andrew's messages via mailchimp and of course the newsletter is always published on the website, but an e mail with the newsletter attached would be straight to your inbox.

We are of course, aware that not all members have access to a computer or an email account and therefore the newsletter will be sent out to you through the postal service unless you opt for the digital service.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

Your officers and committee members are as follows (* Officer):

CHAIRMAN* Jane Mason

VICE-CHAIRMAN* Sheila Ashton

TREASURER* Stephen Flather

SECRETARY* Annie Weaver
Tel: 01646 831323

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
Sheila Ashton
Tel: 01437 731525

MAILCHIMP Andrew Weaver
Tel. 01646 831323

NEWSLETTER Marilyn James
Tel. 07968044479

P.R. Jane Mason

DAY TRIPS Graham Brace

WALKS Steve Drinkwater
Tel. 01834 869970.

COMMITTEE Lyn Humphries
Pat Morgan

PNTA Day Trip
to NT Georgian House and Estate
Llanerchaeron, Ceredigion.

Thursday June 27th 2024



This will be a relaxed and informative visit, with time to socialise or walk on the Estate if you wish and is for **Pembrokeshire National Trust Association Members only**.

Llanerchaeron is situated 24 miles north-east of Cardigan and comprises a small, elegant Georgian villa designed by John Nash in 1790, with a walled garden and farmyard lake set in 750 acres of parkland.

Our draft schedule is as follows:

8.00am - coach departs Haverfordwest Rugby Club (Free parking).

8.30am - coach pick up Fishguard Bus Station (behind Co-op supermarket).

There will be a comfort stop in Cardigan en-route.

10.30am - arrive at Llanerchaeron for Welcome by House Manager.

Guided visits to the house and garden. If we are a larger group then this will be split in two and swap over.

1pm approx. - There will be a lunch break in the onsite café or picnic in the gardens.

2.30pm - A volunteer will show us around the Geler Jones exhibition shed which contains a treasure trove of early 20th-century agricultural and domestic machinery and implements, as well as horse drawn carts and carriages and a magnificent steam engine named 'Glenys'. Followed by tea and short round up outlining plans and challenges facing Llanerchaeron.

Alternatively, if you wish to walk on the estate you are free to do as you please during the afternoon. There are four walks of between 1 and 1.8km.

4.00pm - The coach will depart the car park at 4 pm.

The cost for the coach trip is £20 per person.

Entry to the house is free to National Trust Members.

For non NT members house entry is £9 per person payable on the day.

If you wish to bring a guest they would need to become an Association member...at a very reasonable price! No dogs are allowed.

If you have any queries regarding this trip please contact Graham Brace at grahambrace@btinternet.com or phone 07398 532174.

Please complete and return the Booking Form below by 30th April (latest) to:

Graham Brace, Guildford House, Butterhill, Llangwm, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA62 4JP.

I/We wish to go on the day trip to Llanerchaeron on June 27th at a cost of £20 per person.

I/We understand that this is non-refundable.

Name..... Name.....

I/We wish to pay by (tick which appropriate) BACS ☐ CHEQUE ☐

Bank Details for BACS payment:

Business Account: Pembrokeshire National Trust Association

Account no: **90390992** Sort Code: **20-37-82** Reference: **Llanerchaeron**

I/We enclose a cheque for

£

I/We wish to be picked up at (tick which is appropriate) HAVERFORDWEST ☐ FISHGUARD ☐

Mobile Phone Number Email.....