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PEMBROKESHIRE NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION

www.pembsnta.org.uk

NEWSLETTER No. 42 OCTOBER 2017

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Autumn greetings after a very successful summer.

Thanks to your support of PNTA events, we were able to give a donation of £3000, at the AGM, to support local National Trust projects.

Our summer evening walks took us where that money will be used at Marloes, Colby and Stackpole.

At Marloes, on a glorious sunny evening, Ranger Matt Thompson showed us the site of the former YHA hostel, at Runways Kiln, and discussed the development plans. On another warm evening, Manager and Head Gardener Steve Whitehead, showed us the expanding network of footpaths at Colby and explained the ongoing process of wildflower generation and establishment of wildlife corridors around Little Craig Y Borion.

Although the weather for our Stackpole visit was less clement, members donned appropriate clothing as Head Ranger Chris Oliver led us to some tucked away corners of the estate to discuss the bronze and iron age settlements.

Thanks to Jim Price for co-ordinating those events.

The tour to Harrogate, in May, featured a full coach load of members. The Crown Hotel served us well providing a good base for the varied excursions. Although umbrellas were needed at times, our spirits were not dampened.

Tim Sims-Williams put on two fine summer trips. There were plenty of takers for the excursion to The Mint at Llantrissant, with progression to Dyffryn NT. The second event filled a boat for the journey from Neyland to Haverfordwest. The upstream travel took time waiting for sufficient tide to allow access to the quay near the Bristol Trader, but after supper the return in the twilight was swift.

Our season of talks got off with a bang as Bill Cainan fired his musket and gave us a taste of the life of the Red Coat Soldier.

Read on in the newsletter for more detail on these activities. There is the option of looking back on events, with added pictures, on the "Latest News" page of the website pembsnta.org.uk.

Both the website and this newsletter give information on what is in store. Arnold Williams has set up a varied programme of talks, to see us through the shorter days. Remember that these are now on the first Thursday of the month. Guests are welcome, so tell your friends.

On the horizon is the tour in May 2018, featuring Lancaster and the Lake District.

I look forward to seeing you at some of our future meetings.

If you want last minute e mail reminders about the programme, but are not receiving them, please let me know.

Andrew Weaver

REPORT ON 2017 SUMMER PROGRAMME EVENTS

Tuesday April 11th – AGM followed by a talk from **Mark Underhill, NT Countryside Manager for North Pembrokeshire**, on ‘**Tracking the Sociable Lapwing in Turkmenistan**’ – **Mark Underhill**

Mark has just joined the NT as Countryside Manager for North Pembrokeshire replacing Andrew Tuddenham who has taken on wider responsibilities with the NT in Wales. He previously worked for RSPB Cymru and in 2015 took a sabbatical break to join a ‘field study’ looking at the migration routes of Sociable Lapwing (SL for the rest of this report).

The study was trying to find the causes of the serious population decline of the SL in the early 2000s. Its main breeding ground now is the steppes of Kazakhstan but studies have found no particular problems there. More recent studies have looked at other SL migration routes. There is a western flyway to Arabia and Sudan with a staging site in the Caucasus, and a less well known eastern flyway to Pakistan and North India with a staging site along the border between Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The Amu Dara river (Oxus to the ancients) runs through this area.

Mark’s expedition was seeking to understand what problems the SL might have in this resting area. The expedition had to be in two groups since Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are hostile to each other and it is virtually impossible to cross directly between the two countries. However, modern electronic communication meant the two groups could be in constant contact.

Satellite maps showed the local terrain was arid steppe but with significant areas supporting agriculture made possible by large irrigation channels built in the Soviet era. There was an initial concern that migrating SLs, numbered in thousands, could fly through the area without being spotted. However birds soon appeared and

settled to a behaviour pattern that was similar from day to day, feeding in the steppe and roosting in the agricultural area. It was not clear why they did this as it involved a circa 50km round trip. A possible reason was that they were more at risk of predator raptors in the steppe. The SLs were indeed social and did not get upset by 4x4s driving among them. The expedition saw more SLs than expected, in the region of 6 to 7 thousand which could well be half the species total. The study did not find any evidence that this part of their migration would have caused the earlier population loss.

Mark can now settle to a less exotic, but more comfortable life in Pembrokeshire. He is unlikely to have problems with ‘Cardis’ on his new border.

PNTA SPRING TOUR to SOUTH YORKSHIRE - Sunday 14th to Thursday 18th MAY 2017

We had our largest Tour group this year with 50 members participating. There were some rainy spells to cope with but everyone was equipped for the weather and it did not spoil our enjoyment.

Sunday was spent travelling to Harrogate but we took a break at Erddig, a NT property near Wrexham. It was a fine house in 18th and 19th centuries but the Yorke family wealth declined in the 20th century with the family living in ‘genteel poverty’. However there was much to see both ‘below stairs’ and in the family rooms. The walled gardens have been fully restored to their formal 18th century design with lakes, pleached lime trees and, espaliered apples and pears. They were a pleasure on a sunny afternoon. After leaving Erddig we travelled directly to Harrogate and booked in at the very comfortable Crown Hotel.

Monday morning saw us on the way to Ripon Cathedral, an imposing sight from the surrounding countryside. The current Cathedral was built in the 12th and 13th centuries in the austere Early English style.

However our tour guides explained that the first stone church on the site was commissioned by St Wilfrid in 672. Its crypt is still accessible in the current building and may well be oldest site of continuous worship (13 ½ centuries) in England.

We then drove to Fountains Abbey and the Studley Royal Water Garden. It is a World Heritage Site now owned by the NT. Building the Cistercian Abbey commenced in 1132 but its magnificent tower was only completed a few years before the Dissolution. Our guides took us through the mediaeval history and explained the working of the Monastery and the different categories of monks involved.

The Water Garden is adjacent to the Abbey. It was created in the early 18th century by the Aslabie family. It is a series of lakes which are beautiful in their simplicity. The Aslabies bought the Fountains Abbey ruins to add to the view.

Tuesday was spent in Harrogate. In the morning we had conducted walking tours round the town. It was explained that the purpose of Harrogate is to attract visitors and get them to spend money. This started in 1571 when the Tewit Well was recognised to have mineral water properties deemed good for health. Over time 88 wells have been discovered with waters tasting from awful to diabolical, but all doing you good. You can bathe in them as well. The town has many splendid buildings providing leisure activities, shops and hotels. It also has Betty's Tearoom which has to be experienced by all visitors, including us.

In the afternoon there was a choice of visiting the RHS Harlow Carr Garden or have a bus tour of the local countryside. Both were enjoyed.

Wednesday was spent wholly at Harewood House. Getting through the gate was a test of nerve for our driver, John. Knowing that it was likely to rain, most of us explored the gardens in the morning. The Himalayan Garden was the

most eye-catching with many rhododendrons in flower. The House had some splendid State Rooms with valuable pictures, furniture and carpets. There was also a display of costumes from the recent 'Victoria' series. Unfortunately the kitchens and other service areas were not open as they were being used for filming.

Thursday was primarily about driving back to Pembrokeshire. However we did visit Shugborough near Stafford. Management of the estate was transferred from Stafford County Council to the National Trust last November and the Trust has a major task on its hands to bring it up to its normal standards of presentation. It would be interesting to go back a few years hence to see how the Trust has managed it..

We arrived back pretty well on schedule. The trip was deemed a great success by all of us. Andrew and Annie were congratulated for their effort and organization.

TRIPS

Tim Sims-Williams organised two very good trips this summer..

Thursday June 15th - Royal Mint Llantrisant and Dyffryn House and Gardens.

We had a fine day, sunny and breezy but with traffic problems. Our first stop was Llantrisant, now home for the Royal Mint. After a security check, which seemed most interested in the contents of ladies handbags, we were led on a tour of the stages of manufacturing coinage. We watched the processes, with our guide explaining the detail of what was happening. There was a special emphasis on the new £1 and £2 coins and some of the anti-forging techniques used. Our tour finished with the opportunity to look around the Royal Mint's museum which took us through the history of British/English coinage from Saxon times up to today. There was some wistfulness in seeing more money than we had ever seen before, but not being able to touch it.

We moved on to Dyffryn, where there was a buffet lunch waiting for us, and then split into 3 groups for guided tours of the gardens. There had been a large house at Dyffryn for many centuries but in 1891 it was bought by John Cory whose family had accumulated much wealth from the South Wales Coalfield. John Cory employed Edward Mawsom to design a new garden. The House and Garden grew in grandeur through the Edwardian era but then went into gradual decline after the 1st WW. The Cory family died out in 1937 and the estate had a number of owners. In 2012 the NT took over stewardship from the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

The gardens had retained the Mawsom design but the Council did not have the resources to properly maintain them. Since 2012 the NT has made giant strides in returning them to their past glories. Interestingly much has been achieved by using volunteer gardeners and, as we went around and chatted, we were impressed with their commitment. The garden was made up of many 'rooms', all different but all looking very good.

Restoration of the House has not moved so quickly. The work requires specialist skills which cost money. Volunteers are not a viable solution. Work is progressing, especially the Entrance Hall with its spectacular stained glass window. However there is a long way to go.

Tuesday 25th July 2017 - Afternoon and evening return Boat Trip on the River Cleddau from Neyland to Haverfordwest with a pre-booked supper at the Bristol Trader.

This proved to be a very popular outing. The Dale Sailing boat was licensed for 40 passengers and all places were taken. We were sorry to disappoint members on the waiting list who were not able to join us.

The boat left Neyland just after 4.30pm, pretty well on time, and was due to arrive at Haverfordwest at 6.30pm. A high tide was needed as there was not much margin in the depth required for the boat to reach

its destination. It was a beautiful evening and the views were superb as passed Lawrenny, Benton Castle, Llangwm, Picton Point and Little Milford. Our enjoyment was aided by helpings of Prosecco with which we wished Tim Sims-Williams a happy 80th birthday. Things started to go awry as we approached Haverfordwest. The boat was getting close to grounding and our captain had to halt our progress until the tide was higher. He explained that the high pressure system which was making the weather so enjoyable had lowered the tide height by a half metre. Tim with his naval background was not entirely convinced of this. However the tide finally allowed us to tie up at Haverfordwest an hour late.

We had our meal at the Bristol Trader and re-embarked on the boat at 8.45pm. There was a speedier return to Neyland and, maintaining the party spirit, we shared Tim's Birthday Cake.

WALKS

May 9th – Marloes – Matt Thomson

On a beautiful evening, Matt's tour of the Marloes area updated us on the various schemes the Trust is progressing. Our first stop was the Runwayskiln building which the YHA handed back to the NT. Plans are progressing to renovate the buildings to create accommodation and a café, but there is no definite opening date yet.

Our next stop was at Marloes Mere where the lake had many swallows feeding. The 'birding' community has asked the NT to install a further hide which will improve their viewing by looking down the length of the Mere. Matt is progressing this.

We then moved to areas where the NT and its tenant farmer are trying to carry out heathland regeneration. Reduction in the fertility of the soil is needed so that heather and other plants can thrive. This in turn will add allow greater biodiversity. Work has been going on for a number of years with varying success but Matt was able to point out areas where heather was starting to thrive.

We reached the coast at the Ragh Iron Age Fort, looking across to Gateholm. Matt had been involved with Tony Robinson and his Time Team when they filmed their excavation on the site and he described some of their finds.

Our return 'home' gave us a spectacular walk along the cliffs at Marloes Beach. The tide was right in and the sea very blue. The sun also brought out the colour of the rocks which in turn were covered with swathes of flowers; golden gorse, blue squills, yellow kidney vetch and the pink of thrift and campion. It was a wonderful way to finish the evening.

June 20th – Colby/Craig y Borion Farms - Steve Whitehead

As Steve reported in the last Newsletter, Craig y Borion Farm has now been taken in-hand by the Trust which is using the opportunity to make a number of changes as to how the farm is managed, and in creating new footpaths to improve public access across the Colby Estate.

On another warm evening Steve took us on a walk across both Craig y Borion and Little Craig y Borion farms. He explained that Craig y Borion, like most other farms in recent decades, has been intensively farmed with the loss of much of its biodiversity. He showed us where it is planned to establish new woodlands on areas of marginal land and to improve the hedgerows, both of which will be of value to birds, bats and other fauna. In time he would like the wildlife corridors of hedges and woods across the farm to connect to woodlands on neighbouring properties.

Meadows will also be managed to bring back traditional meadow plants. Steve explained how the meadow enrichment is being carried out. The process cultivates strips along field edges and then spreads 'green mulch', hay brought from farms which still have traditional meadows that carry the seeds he wants to see grow. The next year a new strip of 'home grown' meadow is mown and spread on a further prepared field strip. The process will be

repeated yearly until the team is satisfied they have achieved their objective.

Steve then took us to Little Craig y Borion Farm House which has been renovated and is now used as accommodation for volunteers who have working holidays on the estate. It has been done very well both inside and in the adjacent 'veg' garden. The two 'volunteers in residence' dished out glasses of homemade elderberry cordial, much enjoyed on a hot summer evening.

Stackpole – Eastern Arm of the Lakes and Stackpole Warren – Chris Oliver

After the lovely evenings of our two previous walks, the fates decreed a damp walk this time. Chris took us down the Eastern Arm and onto Stackpole Warren to understand some of Stackpole's early history. Our first brief stop was the Grassy Bridge. Chris explained that, before the Cawdors created the lakes, this was a sheltered tidal inlet. It was an attractive site for pre-history settlers, for whom the sea was their main means of transport over many millennia.

Having clambered up onto the Warren, Chris pointed us to an area of uneven land which was the site of an Iron Age (circa 800 BC – 50 AD) settlement. Excavations had found hut circles which would have been home to a farming community. The two nearby Iron Age Promontory Forts at Greenala and Fishpond Camp indicate they could have had some troublesome neighbours.

Our next stop was the Devils Quoit, a standing stone that was part of a Bronze Age (circa 2500BC to 800BC) settlement. Excavations had found living accommodation but the most remarkable find was the grave of a woman in crouch position. It was the only grave found in the area which suggests she was a lady of some importance.

Chris also commented that archaeologists had found signs of settlement going back through the Neolithic (circa 4000 BC to 2500BC) and Mesolithic (circa 8000BC to

4000BC). These were mainly flint remains which must have been brought to the area since Pembrokeshire has no flint in its geology.

The walk was not all archaeology as Chris pointed out an array of dune and unimproved grassland plants. He was delighted that the PNTA has donated funds for an information board for this part of the Estate.

PNTA Lunch on Friday October 6th at Lamphey Court Hotel

The Lunch was well attended with 45 members present and the hotel looked after us very well. Our guest for the day was Richard Turner, a retired Senior Inspector for Ancient Monuments at Cadw, who has researched and written a book about Lamphey Palace. Before lunch he took us on a guided tour of the Palace explaining the buildings, when they were built and their use, and about which Bishops of St Davids had most influenced the Palace's development.

After lunch he gave us a talk '**WORK, REST AND PRAY- The Three Residences of the Medieval Bishops of St Davids**'

The Bishops of St Davids had three palaces in Pembrokeshire; St Davids, Llawhaden and Lamphey. They were built, in stages between the 12th and 15th centuries with each serving different aspects of the Bishops roles. Bishops were generally appointed from wealthy families. They often had other remunerated state positions, as well as their bishoprics, and expected their residential apartments to be of a high standard.

St Davids Palace, adjacent to the Cathedral, was the focus of the Bishops religious responsibilities (PRAY) having been a shrine to St David for 500 years before the Norman cathedral was built. The remains of the Palace we see now were built in the 14th century by Bishop Gower. As a result of bad building practice a large section of roof collapsed and was never replaced.

Llawhaden Castle, in addition to its defensive role, was the centre for the Bishop's administrative responsibilities (WORK). He was also a Marcher Lord responsible for administration of secular law. Both religious and secular courts were managed from Llawhaden, which also housed a records store and prison.

Lamphey was the Bishop's palace for relaxation (PLAY). In addition to its living apartments, it had gardens and a large estate from which the tenants had to provide their tithes. Lamphey was significantly the most valuable property for the Bishop. There was also a park for hunting.

All this came to an end with King Henry VIII's dissolution. The Palaces were sold off. Lamphey was bought by the Devereaux family, the Earls of Essex. Robert Devereaux, the favourite of Good Queen Bess who ultimately lost his head, grew up there.

There was also an interesting twist in the tail for Llawhaden. In the 1880s it was bought by a group named the Pembrokeshire Ancient Monuments Society whose aim was to stop the degradation of Pembrokeshire's ancient buildings, In a way, it was a forerunner to the National Trust.

Many thanks to Annie and Sheila for an enjoyable event.

WINTER PROGRAMME 2017/18 TALKS

Talks will be held on the first Thursday of the month in the Crundale Community Hall starting at 2.30pm.

Because of the Lunch in October, we had our first autumn talk in September.

September 7th 'The Redcoat Soldier of 1751' – Bill Cainan

Bill was Curator of the Regimental Museum of The Royal Welsh in Brecon. He talked about redcoats in the Hanoverian period – what they wore, their equipment and how they fought. He arrived and gave his talk wearing an

authentic uniform with a variety of authentic weapons. He described the items of uniform which were a soldier's only clothes. Every 2 years he would be given a new coat, red in colour, because it was the cheapest and easiest way to manufacture the rough woollen cloth at the time. Fish paste was used for waterproofing.

A soldier's life expectancy was 6 years. However, if he lost his front teeth and was unable to bite off the end of the paper cartridge, he would be discharged. Soldiers each carried 7 cartridges, protected from the rain, which were remade every day. Even so around 10% failed to fire. This was the origin of the terms 'flash in the pan' and 'sideburns'.

He explained that the success of the British soldiers was attributed to their modus operandi. The French, our traditional enemy, favoured attack and started firing from about 80 metres. The British soldier was trained to stand his ground and only fire when ordered by the sergeant when the foe was 30 metres away. Given the inaccuracy of musket fire, and the time to load a cartridge, this achieved better results. 'Standing your ground' while under fire took courage and any soldier who disobeyed was subject to 20 lashes. This was a more frightening prospect than facing the enemy.

Bill then took us outside and proceeded to terrify the inhabitants of Crundale with shots from his very impressive musket.

Thursday November 2nd – 'The Natural History of Skomer, above and below High Water' – John Archer Thomson

John is a coastal ecologist and was Assistant Head of the Dale Fort Field Centre. He has talked to us twice about the geology and ecology of the Pembrokeshire coast but this time will talk about Skomer and its ecology.

We hope that Cathy Orchard from the St Davids NT Shop will be attending with a range of stock for sale. (See MailChimp for confirmation). This

should give us an early start for Christmas shopping and the chance to help the NT. If you think you are likely to make purchases, please can you arrive earlier than usual so that the start of the Talk is not delayed.

Thursday December 7th – 'Wildlife in Madagascar' – Julian Cremona

Julian is a former head of the Dale Fort Field Centre and retired five years ago. This has allowed him to travel to places such as Madagascar and Costa Rica to study their ecology. He is also an able photographer as he demonstrated when he talked to us last winter about a trip to Costa Rica. We can expect some superb pictures.

Thursday January 4th 2018 – 'The First Smalls Lighthouse' – Martin Roberts

Martin trained as a teacher but now works at Castell Henllys. Last year he was asked to talk to a group of US lighthouse keepers who were planning to visit 50 lighthouses in Wales. He chose to talk about the Smalls Lighthouse, off the Pembrokeshire Coast, since they could not visit it. He will tell us the fascinating story he told them.

Thursday February 1st – 'The Radical Corset Maker' – David Dando

David gave us a fascinating talk two years ago about Tenby born Lina Hamnett, the 'Queen of Fitzrovia'.

He gives you the following clues to his subject this time:

He was trained to make corsets

He wrote three best sellers

He influenced the American Revolution

He emerged in the French Revolution

He worked with the mighty

He infuriated the many.

Thursday March 1st – 'The Art of Collecting Antiques' – David (Dai) Evans

Dai is the Director of Picton Castle and has had a long interest in Antiques. He will talk to us about judging the value of

antiques and some of the wiles of the trade.

Thursday April 5th – AGM and Talk.
Details to be announced in the Spring Newsletter

SPRING TOUR TO LANCASTER AND THE LAKE DISTRICT
MAY 13-17th 2018

From feedback forms on recent tours, the Lake District has repeatedly been a popular request, and the PNTA tour has not been there before.

Annie and I recently returned from a reconnoitre there, when we were able to sample hotels and attractions. Because it is a popular destination, the cost for hotels in the region is high. For this reason we have opted for a hotel adjacent to the university campus, at Lancaster. This offers a good standard of accommodation, with a significant moderation of cost. It is close to the M6 which leads to a swift and scenic drive to the Windermere area.

The tour will last 5 days (4 nights) and will leave on Sunday 13th May and return on Thursday 17th.

The provisional itinerary is as follows:

Day one: Travel by coach north to the Lancaster House Hotel. (Stop off places en route, yet to be decided, for the outward and return journey.)

Day two: A cruise on the Coniston Lake Gondola, run by the National Trust. An optional stop at John Ruskin's former home, Brantwood. Then on to Grasmere, with free time maybe to:

- wander the lakeside through to Rydal Water,
- visit Dove Cottage (William Wordsworth's home) and museum,
- take the 10 minute stroll to Allen Bank NT,
- or just enjoy the shops and cafes of Grasmere.

Day three: A visit to Sizergh Castle, a National Trust property with both house and gardens to explore. This will be followed by a boat trip on Lake

Windermere. If time allows we will call into nearby Holehird Gardens.

Day four: Blackwell, an unusual house on the slopes above Lake Windermere, that is a prime example of the Arts and Crafts movement, then on to Holker Hall, near Grange over Sands, with house and gardens.

Day five: Journey back to Pembrokeshire.

The Lancaster House Hotel will be our base for four nights. The price includes a three course dinner (with menu choice) and use of the leisure facilities (swimming pool and gym).

Also included in the price are the entrance fees to Holker Hall and Blackwell, plus the boat rides on Coniston and Windermere. Although the Steam Gondola is run by the National Trust, a charge is made, even for NT members, to pay for the upkeep and running costs of the boat. Entry fees for the optional visits to Brentwood and Dove Cottage are not included.

The tour will be, as usual, conducted under the auspices of Richards Brothers.

The cost of the trip is £460 per person. There is a single room supplement of £70. (£17.50 per night). The price presumes National Trust Membership. Non Members would need to pay for entry to NT properties such as Sizergh, and others that we might visit.

There is a booking form included in this newsletter, which also quotes our contact details if more information is required.

Andrew Weaver

NT NEWSBOARD

Steve Whitehead, Mark Underhill, Chris Oliver, and Angela Jones have sent us information about Trust activities around the County.

Colby Woodland Garden

Steve Whitehead reports:

Another batch of rare plants is arriving to really boost the botanical interest in the garden. The trees and shrubs are all from the National Trust's own Plant Conservation Centre and are scarce cultivars of plants propagated from National Trust sites around the whole of the UK. It is really exciting to be bringing such rarities into our plant collection.

Little Craig-y-Borion

The work on stabilising the old outbuildings around the restored farmhouse continues. Lots of working holiday participants have now had a chance to join in the work and learn some traditional lime building techniques along the way. There's still plenty more to do. But we can see the dove-cote tower coming back together and when that's finished we'll have more room to store the logs that heat the building and come straight from wind-blown trees in the estate woodland.

Craig-y-Borion Farm

The farm has finally been re-let. Leigh and Kelly have a proven record of farming for high nature status and animal health, and they already have a flock of high health status sheep grazing the pastures at the farm (plus a new Welsh-sheepdog puppy to train!). Half of the farmland has been kept in-hand so that we can ensure even bigger gains for nature in our farming landscape. Lots more wildflower seed has been purchased from local sources and the light harrowing and sowing in of the seed is about to start.

Along with much wider and richer wildflower margins on many of the pastures, over-wintering bird-food seed mixes will also be sown along the woodland edges to really help out the

farmland bird-life. We hope to work closely with our new partners at Craig-y-Borion on the southern half of the farmland as well, to get just the right grazing pressure to really bring the grasslands back to high species diversity.

Invasive species have been a real nuisance this year, with large amounts of volunteer time given over to balsam pulling across the estate. Japanese knotweed continues to be a problem too, despite valiant efforts by working holiday volunteers and the 1st Kilgetty Explorer Scouts the problems continue. We're now looking closely at some of our knotweed infestations and working with contractors to try and destroy some of them for good.

Colby estate Woodland

Fencing work and gate replacement across Craig-y-Borion Farm is nearing completion and this has helped us create over 6 Hectares of new high-diversity woodland. All of the planting so far has been done by volunteers and there's more to do this Autumn. A new woodland strip joining Craig-y-Borion woods with Little Craig-y-Borion woods is an important part of the plan for joining habitats up across the farmland. In future years our many bat species will have sheltered flight paths and many other species will benefit from the wildlife corridor.

North Pembrokeshire

Mark Underhill reports:

Hello! This is the first report I have written for the PNTA, but I did have the pleasure of meeting some of you at your AGM in April when I gave a talk about a trip I made to Turkmenistan in 2015 in search of the sociable lapwing.

It was at the AGM that this year's generous donations from the PNTA to the NT were announced. I was pleased to hear that one of the projects chosen was for interpretation boards at the former Youth Hostel at Marloes (Runwayskiln). NT (in partnership with tenants) are developing Runwayskiln as a new accommodation hub and café for Marloes

Sands. The works to convert the former outbuildings at Runwayskilyn into a café are nearly complete and we hope to have secured new tenant-partners by the end of the year. Work can then start on the fitting out of the café and installation of interpretation ready for an opening at Easter 2018.

One of the key attractions to visitors to Pembrokeshire is our stunning coastline and the NT is privileged to look after some of the most naturally spectacular and culturally rich stretches of coast in North Pembrokeshire. This summer has been a busy time for our teams running the car-parks at Porth Clais, Marloes and Martin's Haven as well as our shop and information centre in St David's. As the summer season draws to a close, I am pleased to report continued high numbers of visitors through our car-parks and shop who have always had a fantastic welcome from Cath Orchard (our Commercial Manager) and her shop and car-park team. Well done to Cath and her team who are able to use this welcome to raise financial and other support for NT and our cause.

This last 6 months has seen our farm at Southwood come of age as a visitor hub, with the new car-park now fully open and providing access to several kilometres of new trails that link the coast-path to the car-park through the farm. We have dramatically increased visitors to Southwood through three exceptionally well attended special events. Our Cadbury's Easter trail attracted nearly 400 visitors (a record for Southwood), whilst two '50 Things' events each welcomed over 180 visitors, many of whom spent a full-day exploring the farm through our activities.

The headline events at Southwood have been just the tip-of-the ice-berg for Phil Sadler our "Activity Ranger"! With the season just coming to a close we have not yet counted all our visitors and evaluated our events. However, we know 2017 has seen us run more events at more of our places than ever before: From crabbing at

Solva and wildflower walks at Treginnis, to sea-kayaking around Dinas Island! We have been able to inspire our members and other visitors with the amazing places we look after. We have used our experiences this year to start to plan a similarly exciting and ambitious programme for 2018!

Finally, conservation! From my perspective, the summer of 2017 will be remembered by flaming June and the stunning display of sea thrift, sea campion, kidney vetch and other wild-flowers on the coast between St Justinians and Porth Clais. These flowers are a direct result of pony and cattle grazing on these cliffs. The NT owns over 60 miles of the North Pembrokeshire coastline and focus over the summer has been ensuring this grazing is producing the results we want and planning where we will put the stock next. Stock-grazing is also vital in the conservation of chough. North Pembrokeshire is one of the strongholds of chough in the UK and one of the few places where their population continues to grow, helped hugely by the sympathetic management of NT and our tenants. Chough feed largely on insects which they find in tightly grazed coastal grasslands or the stubble of spring sown cereals just behind the coast-path.

Which brings us back to Southwood! Southwood is our home farm for Pembrokeshire and the base from which our coastal conservation grazing scheme is run. As well as the hub for our major events, Southwood is also where we house our cattle in winter and where we have been making silage for winter feed during this summer. Our new livestock ranger Andrew Williams has spent a busy six months at Southwood as our herd of Welsh Black cattle continues to grow. Five new calves were born at Southwood this year some of whom will be retained to build the herd. We now have about 22 animals that will spend the winter at Southwood before being put out to graze key conservation sites next summer.

Stackpole and Gupton Farm

Chris Oliver reports:

Another incredibly busy summer has come to an end. Throughout 2017 there has been a significant movement towards bringing forward the National Trust Land and Nature strategy. In essence this is a focus on bringing priority habitats (including grassland and woodlands) throughout the NT to the highest possible level. Here at Stackpole much of that focus has been on our grasslands which this year has seen some ups and downs. Our two hay meadows at Broad Haven have flourished once again and yellow rattle (known as the meadow maker) is thriving particularly in the lower meadow (at the end of the overflow car park). Yellow rattle is a hemi parasite feeding on grasses, species from the daisy family and the pea family. Over time research shows that this fascinating little plant can suppress grass distribution by 60%. Not only do we have a successful hay meadow developing but large numbers of rattle mean a seed source which can be used to create further unimproved grasslands in other areas within the estate.

An excess of yellow rattle will be particularly relevant in late summer 2018 when seed will be collected and distributed at some of the newly in hand field at Gupton. Three new areas have now undergone management regime changes and in the future will be managed as unimproved grassland the new area covers around 9 Ha, which will nearly double the existing grassland area.

This autumn and winter you will notice a slight change in management regime, which will manifest itself in the form of increased levels of winter grazing on the conservation areas of the farm. The aim here is to maintain coverage of cropped grass throughout all the dune reversion areas, which will mean less competition for the species we are encouraging. By not introducing additional feed to these cattle nutrient input will be limited. Once there

is no more grass the cattle will be moved off.

This winter we will be hoping to undertake a large project to move a ¼ of the western arm path along the lily ponds inland by several meters, this is to compensate for the erosion of the bank, which in some places is becoming an issue. The work is proposed to take the next four years and will affect the majority of the path along the western arm and parts of the eastern arm, so please be aware that at times access will be limited and temporarily more muddy than usual!

As is normal for this time of year our thoughts turn in part to the estates woodlands. A new coppice coup will be established in Hill Lodge Wood and will be completed primarily by volunteers using traditional methods to fell and process the timber.

The new trees planted over the last two years in Castle Dock and Cheriton Bottom are coming on well. Our aim was always to reduce the number on conifer and make native broadleaves the dominant trees with the woodlands. At this point we are well on the way to achieving that goal with more broadleaved native species growing in both woodlands than there have been since the National Trust took the estate on in the 1970's.

As always I welcome any comment or questions. Please just stop one of the ranger team if you would like to know anything about what is happening on the estate.

Tudor Merchant's House

Angela Jones reports:

The Tudor Merchant's House has had a good season welcoming, as usual, many people including many overseas visitors.

Over the season we have worked to develop the house further by introducing outside visits for staff and volunteers. We have had an in depth look at St Marys Church which is and would then have been very important and have now widened this to look at the town Tudor style. We have

also been to Tredegar House to see how a big house would have worked. These thoughts always feed into the house to help us to be able to talk about the house and tell the stories with as much information as possible. We are a good team who feed in their thoughts and we are all able to discuss how we can develop the property. Recently we have been working on the stories behind the Tudor nursery rhymes – and adding them to our talks with people. As staff we have a ‘Table Talk’ about 11.15 am in the morning (term time) when we have sufficient people in – these are enjoyable chats that last for about 15 – 20 minutes and tell more of our story and we now have a volunteer that takes the talks too when he is in the house. He has also taken part in delivering outside talks to different groups which has gone very well. Our staff and volunteers here have also been busy catching up with things that help to make the house the house! We have created more clothing for dressing up – many days you will find some Tudor people upstairs! Our research base continues to grow and we have worked hard to develop the understanding of the wall paintings downstairs in the reception area – more on that later. The guidebook has now gone to the printers and tells the story of TMH and how it fitted into Tenby. It should be out with us by the 1st of October. The wall paintings have had a lot of conservation work this year, 3 weeks in May, and again we have Peter Martindale who did some earlier work on the walls coming back to work with us in October. The north wall is now much drier and safer. The plaster had come away from the stone wall and had to be encouraged (!) to move back towards the wall. It is now much improved. The next piece of work will be the wall behind the reception desk which is a wooden wall and the lathes are in need of attention together with other bits of the wall. If you would like to see this in action please come along in ½ term week

starting the 30th of October and Peter can tell you more about it.

We are busy selling raffle tickets still and these and membership sales are going well. The reception area will hopefully have its new till in January which, although we have to learn the ropes with this, will help us in our work!

So another busy season that seems to have gone in a flash. Looking forwards we have October ½ term in prospect, a TMH by candlelight on 1st November. Come and have the hairs stand up on the back of your neck and our Tudor 1500 style Christmas this year with a Lord of Misrule. Please do ring for dates and times and come and see what is going on.

EVENTS AUTUMN/WINTER 2017

National Trust Pembrokeshire

Kate Rees has sent us a list of events at the various properties. All events can also be viewed online at:

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/search?query=pembrokeshire&type=event

COLBY WOODLAND GARDEN

Seed gathering at Colby Woodland Garden

Sunday 17 September, 10.30am-12.30pm and 2pm-4pm

Join our head gardener and learn about the woodland's collection of trees and their seeds. As part of the guided session, you'll also be able to gather and plant a seed of your own to take home and nurture!

£3 per person, normal admission charges apply. Booking essential - 01834 811885

Autumn colour woodland walks

Wednesday 18 October and 25 October, 10.30am-12.30pm and 2pm-4pm

Colby comes alive with colour in autumn! Join us for a guided woodland walk to enjoy golden views and find out more about our magnificent Acer trees.

£3 per person, normal admission charges apply. Booking essential - 01834 811885

Hallowe'en lantern making and spooky nature trail

Tuesday 31 October, 11am-3.30pm
Join us for Hallowe'en lantern making, then use your lantern to help guide yourself around the spooky nature trail. Find all the answers and claim your small prize.
£4 per child, normal admission charges apply. Booking essential - 01834 811885

Winter fair

Saturday 18 and Sunday 19 November, 10am-4pm
Get festive and start your Christmas shopping with us at the annual winter fair. Have a browse and enjoy a range of stalls offering local art, craft and homemade goods.
Free admission.

NORTH PEMBROKESHIRE

Seal pup walks at Martin's Haven

Saturday 7 October, 2.30pm-4.30pm
Friday 27 October, 2pm-4pm
See the annual arrival of seals and their pups below the cliffs of the Deer Park on a two-mile guided walk with a National Trust ranger.
£5 per adult, £2.50 per child
Booking essential - 01437 720385

Seal pup walk at Treginnis Peninsula

Saturday 21 October, 11am-2pm
Visit the west side of the Treginnis Peninsula with our ranger on this 5km walk and look out for seals on beaches..
£5 per adult, £2.50 per child
Booking essential - 01437 720385

Seal and porpoise spotting at Treginnis Peninsula

Wednesday 25 October, 11am-2pm
Visit the west side of the Treginnis Peninsula with one of our rangers on this 5km walk and spot seals and possibly porpoise swimming through Ramsey Sound.
£5 per adult, £2.50 per child
Booking essential - 01437 720385

Hallowe'en at Southwood Farm

Tuesday 31 October, 11am-4pm
Have a happy Hallowe'en at Southwood Farm! Follow our spooky trail into the woods and around the farm then get stuck in with craft activities.
Free entry

Christmas fair at Southwood Farm

Saturday 9 December, 10.30am-4pm
Celebrate the festive season at Southwood; find finishing touches and last-minute Christmas treats around the 19th century farm range. Make a wish on our wish tree and uncover the story of Southwood at the shearing shed exhibition.
Free admission

STACKPOLE

Lakeside wildlife walk at Stackpole

Wednesday 4 October and 1 November, 7am-9am
Discover Stackpole's resident wildlife on this early morning walk and talk around Bosherton Lakes. Warm up afterwards with a breakfast bap and hot drink at the Boathouse Tea-room.
£8 per person (including breakfast roll and hot drink)
Booking essential - 01646 623110

Barafundle Bay Trailathlon

Sunday 8 October, 10am-12.30pm
The Barafundle Bay Trailathlon returns for its second year! Run, make a splash and get muddy with an adrenaline-fuelled day of sporting activity on the Stackpole Estate.
£15 per adult, £10 per child and £40 for a family of four
Booking essential - 01646 623110

Bushcraft drop-in day at Stackpole

Monday 30 October, 11am-3pm
Have a go at bushcraft with our drop-in day of activities. Learn the basics of woodland survival with our rangers.
£5 per child, normal admission charges apply

Hallowe'en hijinks at Stackpole

Tuesday 31 October, 11am-3pm
Have scarily good fun at Stackpole this Hallowe'en with lantern making workshops and a creepy woodland trail. Don't forget to dress up in your spookiest costume!
£6 per child
Booking essential

Festive fun run at Stackpole

Sunday 17 December, 10.15am-12pm
Burn off those Christmas calories with a festive fun run around the Stackpole Estate; choose from 1.5 miles, 3 miles or 6 miles. Enjoy a mince pie in the Boathouse Tea-room afterwards
Free event

TUDOR MERCHANT'S HOUSE

Pomander making at Tudor Merchant's House

Monday 30 October to Sunday 5 November, 11am-5pm
Get hands-on with history this half-term at the Tudor Merchant's House. Dress up, play 15th century games and have a go at pomander making.
£1.50 per pomander, normal admission charges apply

Tudor Merchant's House after dark

Wednesday 1 November, 7pm-8.15pm
See the Tudor Merchant's House after dark; listen to chilling tales by candlelight as we share stories from the 15th century.
£10 per adult (suitable for ages 16+)
Booking essential - 01834 842279

PNTA WEBSITE

The Association website at www.pembsnta.org.uk contains information about the Association, our Events Programme, Newsletter and Association news items. We hope it will attract new members and, together with email and MailChimp, help us provide up to date information for members.

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Your membership subscriptions are due for renewal on Jan. 1st 2018. Thanks if you have already completed a Standing Order or paid by other means. If not, will you please send a cheque, with the form attached to the Newsletter, to the Membership Secretary. Subscription rates are unchanged at £5 for Individual and £8 for Family Membership. If you would like to pay by Standing Order, please ask the Membership Secretary for a form. (Telephone No. 01437 731525)

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 robashton95@yahoo.co.uk.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS - 2017/18

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

CHAIRMAN*	Andrew Weaver Tel:01646 831323
VICE-CHAIRMAN*	Jim Price (Newsletter and Walks) Tel: 01646 661344
TREASURER*	Margret Price Tel: 01646 661344
SECRETARY*	Annie Weaver Tel: 01646 831323

GENERAL MEMBERS

MEMBERSHIP SEC	Sheila Ashton 01437 731525
TALKS	Dr. Arnold Williams 01437 720169
TRIPS	Tim Sims-Williams 01348 811412
P.R.	Jane Mason Tel: Andrew Weaver 01646 831323

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

If you wish to renew and do not have a standing order, please fill in and return to:

Sheila Ashton, Hon. Membership Secretary, PNTA,
Pond Meadow, Wiston, SA62 4PR

I/We wish to renew our membership

Individual members	£5	_____
Family members	£8	_____

I enclose a cheque for £ _____ made payable to PNTA

Signed _____ Dated _____

BOOKING FORM FOR PNTA SPRING TOUR 13TH - 17TH MAY 2018 TO LANCASTER AND THE LAKE DISTRICT

We will be staying at the **Lancaster House Hotel**, on the outskirts of Lancaster, near the University. It is a short distance from the M6 so offers good road links to the southern Lake District.

Our activities whilst there are subject to alteration, but are likely to include:-

- The steam gondola on Coniston Water
- Free time to explore Grasmere
- Sizergh Castle and Gardens NT
- A Cruise on Lake Windermere
- Possible visit to Holehird Gardens
- Blackwell House (a product of the Arts and Craft Movement)
- Holker Hall and Gardens near Grange over Sands.

We will be travelling with Richards Bros.
Stop off visits en route and pick up points are still under consideration.

Those who are not National Trust members would need to pay the entry fee for NT properties visited. The price of entry to optional visits e.g. Brantwood near Coniston, and Dove Cottage at Grasmere, is not included.

THE COST WILL BE £460 pp (single supplement £70).

This includes a 3 course dinner, bed and breakfast, and the use of the leisure facilities at the hotel. Fees for the Gondola at Coniston, Windermere Cruise, Blackwell House and Holker Hall and Gardens are also included.

We need the booking form and cheque for the deposit (**£50 per person**) by **November 30th**. Final payment will be due at the beginning of March. (Travel insurance is not included.)

Return form and cheque for deposit made out to PNTA to Dr. A Weaver, Larks Rising, Kiln Park, Burton, Milford Haven, SA73 1NY

Name/ Names _____

Address _____

Phone number _____

email address _____

Single _____ Double _____ Twin _____ room (Please tick)

Please phone Andrew and Annie Weaver 01646 831323 or email annielweaver@gmail.com or andrewj.weaver@yahoo.com if you have any queries.