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PEMBROKESHIRE NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER No. 53

Spring 2023

FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN

Greetings

A warm welcome to the increasing number of new members. We hope you enjoy this newsletter and the events that we offer.

My thanks to ongoing members for your continued support.

It has been rewarding to see plenty attending our recent talks. Our thanks to Jane Mason for putting together such a varied programme. Jane has already lined up the speakers for the 23/24 season!

In this Newsletter you can read about the walks that Pat Morgan has arranged, and the visits organised by Angela Jones and Pat Benson.

Lyn Humphries has teed up another visit to Hilton Court in late spring. This follows on from the very enjoyable visit last summer, strolling the gardens, woodland and lakeside, followed by a sociable sandwich lunch.

Later in the year (November 16th) we will have a lunch to celebrate 25 years of PNTA. Lhosa Daly, the new Director for Wales NT, is looking forward to joining us on that day. Further details will appear in the autumn newsletter.

Our congratulations to Jonathan Hughes on his appointment as Assistant Director for South Wales. He has been a great support to PNTA, as Manager for Pembrokeshire NT, right from the start. At least we are still in his patch - a very large patch that now extends up to Powis Castle!

It won't be long before the PNTA Tour sets off for the Cambridge area. We look forward to visiting lots of National Trust properties, plus Bletchley Park.

In addition to those individuals mentioned above, my thanks also go to Annie for researching the tour, organising lunches and other secretarial duties. Steven kindly looks after our finances, Sheila efficiently looks after our membership and Marilyn expertly puts together the newsletter, as well as tending the website. Lyn's input and advice is valued, from her extensive experience of PNTA activities.

We are very grateful to the National Trust staff for taking time to provide reports for this newsletter, so that we can keep abreast of developments.

Although I will be stepping down as chairman, in the autumn, I am confident that our committee will maintain the strength and sociability of PNTA.

Thank you for your support. Your membership helps the Association to function. We manage to raise a bit of money and our donations to Pembrokeshire NT are very well received. In addition, second hand books help to raise further funds for the local NT.

Wishing you all a bright and healthy late spring and summer.

Best wishes

Andrew



Lhosa Daly Director for Wales NT
Photo courtesy of Lhosa Daly



Jonathan Hughes
Assistant Director for South Wales

Reports of Autumn/Winter Talks

Pembroke Dock.

One of the most forgotten towns in Pembrokeshire History.

Gareth Mills October 6th 2022

An enthusiastic and strong case was put forward during this interesting talk for the elevation of Pembroke Dock in our history books.

Gareth explained that this historic town was in the 19th Century the most important dockyard in Britain, launching 253 ships and 5 royal yachts for Queen Victoria and was the first Royal dockyard to have an iron foundry on site.

The town had no history before 1814 and it was not until 1834 that Pembroke was divided into Old Town and Pater (Pembroke Dock) and it was not until 1974 it became a Government entity.

The development of the dockyard led to the town being established on a grid pattern with tree lined avenues and by 1831 had a population of 3,000. The Erebus, which led expeditions to the Arctic and Antarctic and the first ships of the Japanese navy, were built in the town and great jamborees were held when new ships were launched.

The growth of the town and its shipbuilding industries led to further development in the area with a defensible barracks built in the 1849s above the town, two Cambridge gun towers at each end of the dockyard and many fortifications around the Milford Haven estuary including 18 Palmerston forts. From 1814 to 1926 the town had a huge military presence, with 57 regiments stationed there. It was at the end of WW1 that the decline began as ships moved to steam power and the docks were not large enough to build them. A resurrection of fortune came about in the 1930's when the RAF used the dockyard and subsequently

the Sunderland flying boats were based there, the military presence meant the town became a target for bombing during WW2. Another resurgence to the town came about in the 60's and 70's with the oil industry followed by a further decline.

Gareth explained how in his research he found that little mention is made of the town's important contribution to military history in the Maritime Museum of Wales; the National Waterfront in Swansea.

He believes this important industrial heritage should have pride of place in our Pembrokeshire heritage and it is now the Pembroke Dock Heritage Centre that is working hard to address this. Please visit and support this important resource for the area which makes a great family outing.

Gareth concluded by telling us about the Millennium Falcon star ship which was secretly built in Pembroke Dock in 1979 for the Empire Strikes Back film. Now a new attraction at the Heritage Centre, the historical background to the construction can be learnt about during a visit and this is fully supported by the Chief Executive of Lucas films, a Pembrokeshire girl!

The Port of Haverfordwest

Simon Hancock November 3rd 2022

Simon, Haverfordwest local historian and museum curator, talk showed us that the County town we know today owes its origins to the water and the Flemish. It is telling that the Mayor of Haverfordwest today is also the Admiral of the Port.

Simon first explained that the town first existed due to its Geography - a wide point and a bridging point and with access to the sea as the highway. However, it was the Flemish who developed Haverfordwest in the early 13th century and it is believed Tankrad founded the town. There were three waves of Flemish migration as the Flemish population were relocated by Henry 1 - and they aided the Norman baron's conquest. Flanders at that time was very heavily populated - and the Flemish as the entrepreneurs of Mediterranean Europe, brought the woollen industry with them and so the growth of the town.

In 1328-57 - Haverfordwest had the monopoly of the export of wool for the whole of South Wales and it grew to the largest town. The town's name came from Hafer meaning goat and then ford. In 1394 the West part of the name was added when Richard 11 stayed at the castle. In 1493 the French kicked the English monarchs out. Ships traded from France, Spain, Portugal as well as Ireland and Bristol and other goods were brought in such as wine, which allowed women to become entrepreneurs trading wine. Other trade included 1,000s of rabbit taken from Skomer to Haverfordwest and then shipped to Bristol.

In 1248 - the Black Death hit Europe and killed a third of the population. Hence the Customs returns and wealth of Haverfordwest dropped. Edward 1 or Longshanks stayed two nights in the town with his wife Eleanor of Castile in 1294. She acquired the whole of the Lord of the Manor of Haverfordwest and was the richest Queen. In 1405 Owen Glyndwr besieged the town and fought Henry IV's expeditionary force and laid siege to the castle. It took decades for the town to recover. Other notable visits included George 1V who came to Haverfordwest - because of storms he could not get to Ireland, so he landed at Milford then took a coach.

Some of the medieval gates were still standing in 1760, but are now all demolished by the Council and little architecture retained. Cartlett Brook flows under County Hall and there were rows of merchants' buildings along the shore and river was very high. The 1700s brought tobacco imports and sugar from Antigua, Jamaica and the Caribbean. Haverfordwest was still a major international port.

In 1825 the town was very prosperous. There was a Georgian refit, and the town became known as little Bath. A new bridge was built which was previously a wooden swing bridge. Haverfordwest was a town of old quays.

Other industries developed in the town. The Dominican friary became an ironworks foundry which made agricultural equipment and milestones and naval equipment. Prendergast was a cotton mill which became a paper mill and there was Tin plate making and the Importation of limestone for coal and culm business. Quay street had a tannery for 100 years and was a very cosmopolitan place. In 1853 saw the arrival of the railway and access to the town grew in a different way. In 1917 one and a half acres near the river was reclaimed as a productive garden. The population was some 7,000 people but very zoned. By 1917 no more boats were recorded at the port.

Haverfordwest is now entering a new era in its history. A large new investment project includes the development of the former Ocky White store as a food centre and recreation area. Now a large regeneration is taking place, creating a walkway from the Spitfire Museum up to the castle and around castle, which will include a flagship Pembrokeshire information centre with cafe to direct people to other Pembrokeshire attractions.

Report by Jane Mason

The Bishop's Palace, St David's

Amanda Canby-Lewis Lead Custodian December 1st 2022

Following a past Pembrokeshire Association visit to the Palace, we asked Amanda to come and speak to us. She began her talk with "People are what matters" and told us about the people that had caused the Palace to develop over the years. She explained the Palace has many stories to tell about the people who worked and lived there and recounted the find of a jeton playing piece from the 1300s, which fell out of the concrete where builders had lost it all that time ago. Amanda explained the Bishop's Palace has 6th century origins, being originally a Celtic monastic settlement in the shape of a beehive nearer Whitesands- with one communal hall - where learning and religion went hand in hand. Following Viking raids the settlement was dropped further down the valley.

The current Bishop's Palace mostly dates from the Norman period around 1115. Gerald of Wales said he was entertained in the Bishop's Cleece (Court). In 1172 Henry 11 visited to atone for the death of Thomas A Beckett. St David's was seen as the gateway to Ireland and had many visitors en route. In 1328 under the Bishop Henry de Gower the palace started to grow with archways and arched parapets and social links were formed with Swansea Castle, Lamphey and Southern Spanish influences. Gower was a prelate of high standing and he decided to build an additional hall. He built the other two wings in nineteen years and the Hall is one of the biggest in Britain. At the same time Lamphey Palace with its fishponds, was built to entertain their favourite guests which illustrated the importance of entertaining and social interaction between families and power.

By 1300 the Palace was complete with the Great Chapel area and Great Chamber for functions and the Great Hall was also the court. There was also the Bishop's private chapel and solar and on into the Bishop's Hall the Powerhouse with the kitchen in between the two halls. There were separate doors for different functions and the whole palace was built over a series of undercrofts. The Palace operated in this way until 1536 and the dissolution of the monasteries. Bishop Barlow was appointed the first Protestant Bishop. The Great Hall was

then closed to make economies and the lead roof stripped. This income probably provided the dowries for his five daughters.

In 1633 the last chapter meeting was held and other people started to use the Palace . Uses included a market garden, cattle grazing, tennis courts. In 1932 the Cathedral handed responsibility to the Statutory Ministry of works. Now the buildings are the responsibility of Cadw.

Cadw have 132 scheduled monuments in Wales with Pentre Ifan one of the first. During covid they were able to undertake work to check the sandstone in the worst worn areas at the Palace. A team of master Masons has been employed and part of their remit is to record using cards and digital records and each piece of stone repaired is numbered.

A children's trail has now been implemented so do plan to visit with your families.

Report by Jane Mason

Tenby Tudor Merchant's House

Angela Jones. Thursday 5th January 2023

About forty attended including many new members, who were given a warm welcome. Angela, a PNTA member, knows her subject well having worked as the manager at this National Trust property. After an interval she has returned as a staff member and volunteer.

As well as giving a guided virtual tour of the house, Angela referred to life in Tenby in Tudor times, when the water carrier had to walk a mile to fetch the water from St John's spring, and archery practice at The Butts was compulsory.

Jasper and Henry Tudor hid in Tenby, following defeat at the Battle of Tewkesbury, before escaping to France by boat. They spent 14 years in exile before a victorious return.

Of the Tenby merchant himself, little is known as many written records in Tenby were burnt, having become damp, in storage.

The merchant would have relied on boats akin to The Matthew, a reconstruction of which can be seen at Bristol.

He would have traded in wool, wine and spices, at a time when nutmeg was highly prized as it was thought to "cure the plague".

Angela showed pictures of the house dressed for Christmas. another photo showed the bed (made in recent years by NT craftsmen from a fallen oak) of a type that would have been used in Tudor times by the adults in the house, sitting up to go to sleep.

As flat bottom boats gave way to vessels with keels, Tenby became a less important port, due to its tidal variation. It went into the doldrums until it reinvented itself as a resort.

The artwork of Charles Norris (1779-1858) gives a visual record of Tenby through that time. Angela also showed pictures of the items donated across the years by PNTA, that are still to be seen. These include the buffet cabinet, the cushions that each tell a story of Tudor times, and the more recent flame effect fires.

Report by Andrew Weaver



Flame effect fire



Model of the Tudor Merchant's House



Buffet Table

India and Tigers

John Archer-Thomson

2nd February 2022

John delighted a packed Crundale Hall with a tour of the wildlife of India's National Parks and colourful photography of wildlife and stunningly beautiful tigers.

On this chilly Pembrokeshire day, John took us to sultry India and a trip through the Ranthambore National Park. One of the biggest and most well-known parks in India, about 130km from Jaipur covering about 500 square kilometres. A huge fort towers over the park and the many wild animals and bird life wander through ruins of a bygone era. John explained that conservation projects are now working on the whole ecosystem to support the food chain for all wildlife and top predators like the tiger. The tiger is under huge pressure from enormous numbers of livestock. John showed us pictures of Samba and spotted deer, marsh

crocodile, the Nilgi Asia's largest antelope, Langa apes and yes, he showed us glimpses of tigers in the undergrowth.

His trip moved on to the Bharat bird sanctuary. Formed in 1956 this extensive park is home to more than 360 specials of birds including geese, waders and raptors. John illustrated these with some stunning photography, and he particularly enjoyed seeing peacocks in their native surroundings. From here he moved onto the Taj Mahal, the stunning white marble mausoleum built in 1631 to house the tomb of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan's favourite wife. John's stunning photograph was taken very early in the morning, and he felt this monument was more beautiful in real life.



Taj Mahal Photograph by John Archer Thomson.

John's next stop was Kanha India's biggest National Park. Formed in 1955 it is in Madhya Pradesh which is in the central Indian highlands. The tiger and wildlife reserve is nearly 2000 sq km and the meadows, streams, jungle and mountains make for excellent wildlife watching. John showed us pictures of the Gaur, Asia's biggest wild cow.

John then moved on to the Bhandhavgarh National Park known for its large population of royal Bengal tigers. A smaller and less visited it was only declared a National Park in 1968 and became a tiger reserve in 1993. John then treated us to some superb pictures of tigers which he was fortunate to experience including a male and female enjoying each other's company.



Finally, John concluded his Indian tour at the Khajuraho Group of Monuments. More than 100 Hindu and Jain temples which are now part of a UNESCO world heritage site.

Photographs by John Archer Thomson
Report by Jane Mason

CHERISH PROJECT Investigating the edge of Wales

Louise Barker, Toby Driver

March 2nd 2023

Louise and Toby explained that CHERISH stands for Climate, Heritage and Environment of Reefs, Islands and Headlands. The purpose of CHERISH was to make a complete record of the state of the edge of Wales so the changes that happen through global warming and rising sea levels could be monitored.

Areas that have been surveyed include archaeological sites and promontory forts of which there are 120 in Wales and 60 in Pembrokeshire. With aerial photography and surveying they had been able to build 3D maps of islands, marine mapping had been undertaken and shipwrecks examined, one being the “Bronze Bell” wreck which was carrying marble from Italy.

Grassholm where 32,000 Gannets breed, had been surveyed and pottery from 2,000 years ago had been found. A shipwreck on Marloes sands had also been investigated. For 6 years they have been working to make this wonderful record which will enable the coast of Wales to be monitored over the coming years. A fascinating presentation.

Report by Lyn Humphries



Albion Wreck
Crown Copyright CHERISH Project



Caerfai Excavation
Crown Copyright CHERISH Project



Grassholm Crown Copyright CHERISH Projec

Report: A Visit to Tudor Merchants House Tenby.

On the 7th of December Pembrokeshire National Trust Association were invited to the Tudor Merchants House in Tenby to view it dressed for Christmas and to hear about a 1500 Tudor garden.

The house looked lovely in its finery – we expected to see the hustle and bustle of a 1500 merchant and his family but sadly no. But the house was ready for his arrival none the less! A Tudor Christmas lasted for 12 days and started on Christmas Eve when the Yule log would have been sourced and dragged home to then be decorated with ribbons and fire cones and lit. It had to be big enough to burn for the 12 days without going out so care had to be taken. But no sourcing huge logs for us.

We are so fortunate that we have two fires that we use for Yule fires and both of which have very kindly been bought from funds raised by the Pembrokeshire National Trust Association – thank you.

We were able to look at the merchants table that was set ready for a meal and Angela warned us about the troublesome sprout! In 1500 people thought that the devil may get mixed up in the sprout leaves which is why people put a cross on the stem to guard against any problems - and we thought it was to help them cook!

Then Mair gave us a talk on how to build a Tudor garden using our little garden here at Tudor Merchants as a guide.

Tudor gardens are divided into 3 – house, kitchen and medicinal areas. Mair created her garden on the floor on the 1st floor as we sat around and watched. The outside garden was divided using wattle so wattle was used here. One of our Tudor Merchants house model served as a visual aide to allow us to see the garden in situ.



Mair showed us the type of vegetables that would have grown in the garden although it was mainly the servants who ate them with the merchant's family preferring sugar, cream and meat although everyone would have used the plants in the house and as medicine. She talked about how we could use many of the plants; for example, lavender was an aide to sleeping well but also you could make lavender water and rosemary that helps to aid the memory and is used in funeral wreaths and in wedding bouquets. We were told about Hilary Mantel writing in 'Bring up the Bodies' when she wrote about Thomas Cromwell who had rosemary bushes outside his study window. A very versatile plant as it can be used for cooking, in cosmetics and as medicine. Catnip was shown and we were told about a wide variety of uses that it had in particular that it was used in the medieval period by hangmen – to give them strength!

We were given an insight into how people names plants and shown Lungwort – shaped like a lung with the spots on it representing a diseased lung and it was highly regarded for lung complaints.

Ivy enjoys being in our garden and is predominant by the house. In Tudor times the juice of an ivy from either its leaves or stem were widely used to relieve piles, warts and verrucae known as a hardness of the skin.

Queen Elizabeth 1 was very keen on Sweet Cicely and would have it in her bedroom as a decoration but would not allow anyone to boil woad within 6 miles of where she was as the smell was not overpowering!

To allow visitors to gain further information about the garden Mair has developed a full set of labels detailing all the plants that have ever been grown in our garden. These list the English name and then the uses for that plant. On the other side the Welsh and Latin names are recorded.

Examples of how plants grown in the garden could be used in dyes was shown. The root of the madder plant was shown producing, after several dyeing's, a dark brown cloth whereas woad again after several dyeing's produces a blue. The everyday people in each area would use whatever plants was freely available to dye so in Tenby many clothes were dyed brown but in Carmarthenshire where madder did not like growing woad was used to produce blue cloth.

The names and uses of these and many more plants were taught orally to usually females who would then be able to use this knowledge. John Gerard who published his *Historie of Plantes* in 1597 – all 1484 pages relating to the use of plant and gardening and would have been a book to be relied on by the developing literate Tudors.

A very interesting talk showing us how plants were used and even today some of their uses are still evident – willow and foxglove. The former for use in pain relief and foxglove used as a base for heart complaints. It was made extra special through the creation of a 'mini' Tudor Merchants Garden' where we could all see and then visualise our 1500 garden.



Mair placing the plants in the model garden.

Photographs Angela Jones.

Report by Angela Jones

Visit To HILTON COURT Thursday 27th April 2023

Meet for coffee between 10.30am and 11.00am, for a relaxing visit.

Entrance to the garden is £5.00 and sandwiches will be available for £6.00 Choice of sandwiches, egg and cress, ham and mustard, cheese and pickle and chicken and bacon.

To register for attendance and to order sandwiches please contact

Lyn Humphries on 01646 621159 or

e mail lynb.humphries@gmail.com by 20th April

SUMMER WALKS & DAY TRIPS 2023

The following walks have been arranged in the hope that we can enjoy good summer weather while participating in some gentle exercise and have the opportunity to learn more about our Pembrokeshire countryside.

The booking system remains in place again this year. Please give your name and contact information to enable pre or post walk contact if necessary. Your place will be confirmed. Please cancel your place if you subsequently are unable to attend.

The booking contact for the walks is:- Pat Morgan

Email themorganhouse@btinternet.com

or Phone/text 07866242924

Thursday May 4th 10:30am to 12:30pm (approx.). Marloes walk

Booking for this walk opens on Thursday April 27th Bookings through Pat Morgan.

e mail: themorganhouse@btinternet.com Phone/Text 07866242924

Chris Evans, a knowledgeable and enthusiastic geologist who is well known to us will lead our walk at Marloes which is a classic locality of Southern British geology. The cliffs expose Lower Palaeozoic sediments and volcanic successions and are of Silurian age sitting below the Old Red Sandstone (Devonian age). We will see examples of the three main Marloes rock groups, lava flows and stratified volcanic pyroclastics, fossilised coralliferous beds and the grey sandstones group in which we see 'Three Chimneys'. The history of nearby Gateholm and Skokholm islands will also be shared.

We will meet at Marloes National Trust car park (NT recommended satnav SA62 3BH) at 10:15am to ensure a prompt start at 10:30am. Runwayskilin restaurant /cafe which is a short walk from the car park will be open for refreshments if desired at the end of the walk.

Wednesday June 7th 1.30 pm

Lamphey Bishops Palace with Terry John and a cream tea at Lamphey Hall afterwards
Come and have a look around the palace with Terry who used to work there and knows it very well. Find out about the characters who have links to it and some of its tales. Afterwards let's go to Lamphey Hall and have a cream tea!

Booking essential cost £3 for the palace visit and £15 for the cream tea . Book with Angela angieprobertjones@hotmail.com or 01834 450658

The car park at the palace is quite limited but there is additional parking at Lamphey Village Hall

**Wednesday June 21st 6:30pm to 8pm(approx.). A Summer Solstice walk at Llangwm
Booking for this walk opens on Wednesday June 14th. Bookings through Pat Morgan.
e mail: themorganhouse@btinternet.com Phone/Text 07866242924**

We look forward to further exploring the village of Llangwm with Graham Stephens as our guide once more. Leaving The Cottage Inn car park, the walk takes us initially along a tarmacked lane (approximately half a mile) to Black Tar Quay. We make our way along the foreshore to Edwards Pill then on to Pill Parks rugby field and the Village Green. From here it's a short walk back to The Cottage Inn car park. Graham will be sharing his extensive knowledge of the area including origins of place names, river trade and fishing, press gangs and if time permits a short visit to St Jerome's Church.

We will meet at The Cottage Inn car park (satnav SA62 4HH) where we have permission to park our cars at 6:15pm for a prompt start at 6:30pm. The Cottage Inn will be open on our return and bar meals and drinks will be available if desired.

**Thursday July 13th 2pm to 3:30 pm(approx.) A walk through Little Milford Woods
Booking for this walk opens on Thursday July 5th. Bookings through Pat Morgan.
e mail: themorganhouse@btinternet.com Phone/Text 07866242924**

National Trust Ranger Matthew Thompson will lead us on a gentle stroll around the woods and explain the previous, current and planned future management of the woods. The effect of Ash die back disease in the woods and where it's control fits within the National Trust tree safety management policy will be shared together with some tree identification techniques.

We will meet at the Little Milford Woods National Trust car park (satnav SA62 4ET, carry on past the church and the car park is about 300 metres on your right.) at 2pm. You may like to bring a picnic chair and light refreshments to enjoy some time having a chat after the walk.

Wednesday September 13th 12.30 pm

'Off Limits' Tour of St Davids Cathedral - looking at some parts that are behind the red ropes! There will also be a trip to Parc y Twys to view the gatehouse exhibition and the opportunity to watch the bell ringers at 3 pm as they practise. During the tour we will be able to visit the refectory to have a cup of tea.

**Booking essential cost £10 limited to 25 people. Book with Angela by 7th Sept.
angieprobertjones@hotmail.com or 01834 450658**

NATIONAL TRUST NEWS



Report from Mark Underhill Countryside Manager for Pembrokeshire

It's mid-March and very wet! Yet listening to the plaintive call of the mistle thrush through my window, I am reminded that spring is just around the corner! The mistle thrush will soon be making its nest in our woodlands and is an appropriate introduction to the work we have undertaken in 2022 and are planning in 2023 our woodlands in Pembrokeshire.

The Stackpole Estate is the “jewel in the crown” of the National Trust portfolio in Pembrokeshire with an exceptionally diverse landscape which is of European importance for nature conservation. The 238ha of woodlands are an important part of the estate, especially those around the Stackpole Lakes which are part of the National Nature Reserve (NNR), a Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Map 1).

Map 1: Stackpole Estate Woodlands



All 28 compartments of woodland on the Stackpole Estate (Map 1) have been managed at some time in their history for timber production and ornamental design and therefore vary considerably in character and form. The largest compartments are to the north of the eastern

arm of the Bosherton Lakes: Castle Dock & Hill Lodge, Cheriton Bottom and Caroline Grove.

We need our Stackpole woodlands to be ecologically healthy and robust not only to store carbon, but also to provide critical refuges for wildlife struggling to adapt to climate change (healthy and functioning ecosystems are more resilient to pest, diseases and other pressures brought on by the climate emergency).

A great deal of work has been undertaken over many years to remove much of the commercial forestry that was planted in the mid-1900's, and to restore a more natural deciduous woodland structure. However, there is still more work to do, and in particular, the woodland management plan for Stackpole identifies invasive non-native plant species (INNS) as a major problem, with a significant spread of species such as laurel, rhododendron and pheasant-berry at the expense of native woodland flora.

With this in mind, I am delighted to be able to tell you that we have been successful in securing a £250,000 grant from Welsh Government (WG) to invest in improving the woodlands across the estate over the next seven years (until December 2029). **The Woodland Investment Grant (TWIG)** is a Welsh Government (WG) scheme that aims to create, restore and enhance woodlands. It is part of the National Forest for Wales programme and is jointly funded by WG and the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF).

The heart of our project is the eradication of the invasive non-native species (INNS), that are slowly choking the woodlands across the estate. Specialist contractors will map all of the affected areas, starting in May this year, and then treat or remove the invasive species over a period of two years. There will then be a further 5-years of maintenance works to tackle any persistent infestations. We hope that by 2029 we will have eradicated over 95% of invasive non-native species in the woodlands at Stackpole, which will allow the native woodland to regenerate a thriving understorey which, in turn, will be great for the regeneration of the woodlands and the special wildlife they support.

Further work will include restructuring of the woodlands by removing dead and dying conifers and ash, thinning, softening edges, and replanting more native broadleaf species. Access will be improved by widening or clearing pathways with creeping vegetation allowing greater usage.



The old Forester's Hut in Castle Dock car park

A topographical survey of Caroline’s Grove will inform future work to increase biodiversity in the valley by creating a wetland area that will slow down the flow after rainstorms, allowing the silt to settle and reducing the nutrient and slit load into Stackpole Lakes.

At Castle Dock we plan to renovate a disused stone forester’s hut to create a space for bilingual interpretation with solar lighting, carved wooden seating, and bike racks. This will create a focal point for visitors and improve understanding of the role woodlands can plan in climate change mitigation (see photos above).

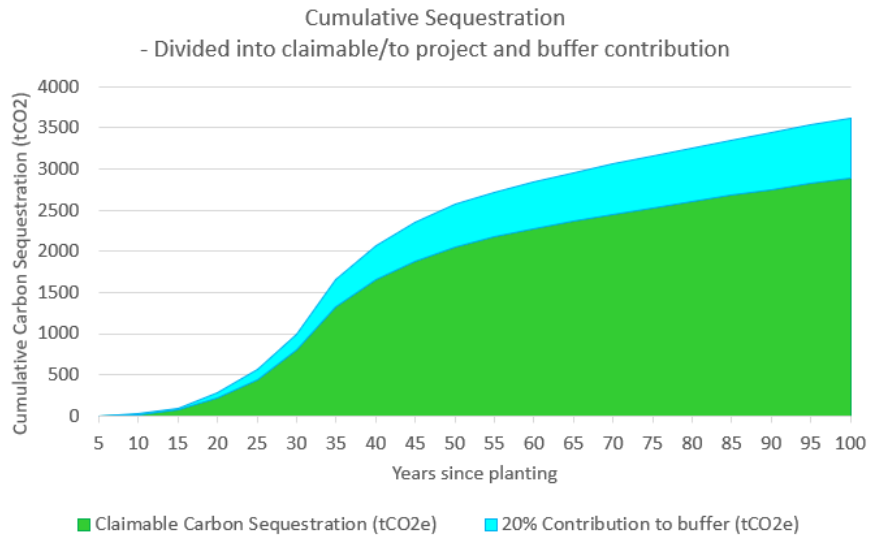
All of the above work will be managed by Alex Shilling who has taken a step up to Area Ranger on a three-day-per week secondment to manage the project (congratulations Alex!).

Keeping with the woodlands theme, I am really proud of the contribution that Pembrokeshire has made to the National Trust’s ambition to establish 20 million new trees by 2030 as part of our strategy aim to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2030. Over the last 12 months, we have planted approximately 54,000 trees across our places in Pembrokeshire! Twenty-eight thousand at Mount and Barn Fields, 17,000 at Cwmrath (both farms on the Colby Estate), 6,000 on the Southwood Estate and a further 1,500 at Gupton and Stackpole (as part of the TWIG project).



Planting trees and creating ponds on the Colby Estate in 2022 and 2023

So, what does that mean in terms of our Net Zero strategy? Our Wildlife Advisor has calculated that planting 54,000 trees will sequester around 8,000 tonnes of CO2 in total by around 2070, but only about half of that by 2030 because in the first 20 years after planting carbon sequestration rates are quite low, and then they increase rapidly from years 20 to 50 (see the example calculation from Mount & Barn Fields left)



Here is where we begin to see the scale of the challenge that faces us. The current total carbon emissions of National Trust’s operation in Pembrokeshire are estimated at 8,700 tonnes CO₂e every year!

So, planting 54,000 trees is a great step in the right direction, but we will need to do much more if we are to meet our target of Net Zero by 2030. Much more not only in terms of planting trees, but also in reducing the emissions at source, primarily through changing the ways we manage our land as the largest source of emissions is from farm animals on our farms.

It is important to recognise that our tree-planting ambitions are not just about carbon. Native broadleaved woodlands, wood pasture, hedgerows and traditional orchards are all Priority Habitats that will significantly increase the value of our land for nature, contributing to our L&N ambition and addressing the crisis in biodiversity.



Planted trees, pond creation and the planting scheme from Mount and Barn Fields

In addition, when we are designing our planting schemes in Pembrokeshire, we take every opportunity to introduce extra wildlife features such as wide rides, woodland glades, and ponds. This is really well illustrated by our planting scheme for Mount and Barn Fields (see below) where we have included, rides, glades, and orchard and 15 ponds. It will be a real pleasure to watch this site mature over the next few years. A great deal of wildlife will colonise the site in a relatively short space of time, but working for the National Trust we have the privilege of thinking very long-term: Will one of the oaks planted at Cwmrath be a gnarled, veteran oak standing unchallenged in the midst of a dense forest alive with birdsong in a thousand years' time? That's quite an inspiring thought!

Mark Underhill
17 March 2023

TUDOR MERCHANT'S HOUSE

Report from Melanie Knapp Collection and House Manager.

The team at TMH opened its doors for the first three weekends of December for our Christmas Past and Present event and children were invited to visit Father Christmas to write a letter and receive a present. The house was decorated inside and out in the garden with twinkling lights and candles with staff and volunteers telling the story of how Tudor families celebrated Christmas. We were very lucky to be supported by people from Stackpole and Colby on each of the days who enjoyed dressing up and joining in with the fun! Our team of volunteers helped in wrapping up all the presents and decorating the house. In early December we welcomed members of the NTA to see the house decorated, our lovely new fire in the kitchen (thank you) and enjoy a talk on the garden by Mair.



Pembrokeshire N.T. members enjoy a talk from Mair Coombes Davies

At the beginning of January, we had our Christmas lunch at The Dial Inn at Lamphey and on the 21st of February we held our Start of Season meeting for all of the house team in readiness for opening on the 2nd March.



We have decided to open our new season without pre-booking tickets as a trial. This does give us some logistical challenges; however initial feedback has been very positive from our visitors, and we have already seen a healthy increase in numbers especially with non-members. We have also reintroduced a house trail for children and plan a garden-based activity for Easter.

Initially we will be open Thursdays and Saturdays in March and then this year we will be open on Tuesdays as well from April throughout the Summer until the end of August. Three of our volunteers attended the Recruitment Day at Stackpole as we are currently looking for new volunteers to support us with the house tours. We are also planning various other social events which will include a holiday in Cornwall later in the year which is currently being planned by Angela Jones. After several visits from our Building Surveyor, we now have a schedule of works after having the ivy removed in January which is incredibly positive news.



Mair has been especially busy in the garden replacing the rotten edging timbers and planting the new mulberry tree.

We are all looking forward to another busy year and hope to see you all again soon.

Melanie Knapp
Collections and House Manager

COLBY WOODLAND GARDEN



Report from Steve Whitehead Head Gardener.

At Colby Woodland Garden over the winter we've been busily catching up on removing timber from wind-blown trees that have come down over the last few years.

Most of this gone to form a gigantic habitat pile in the field above the Westwood, along the western border of the garden. This field, and others around it, have also been planted with hundreds of young trees as part of our habitat improvement work across the Estate.

We managed to clear large carpets of bluebells in the West wood that had become over-grown with brambles under the tangles of fallen logs, so the bluebell display should be superb this Spring.

The daffodils that were planted throughout the meadow last year are beginning to flower and the carpets of snowdrops along the stream that were smothered during covid have been unearthed over the winter and are looking fantastic. Happily we managed to get the mowing and hay-gathering done properly at the end of last Summer (the weather doesn't always play ball) and also spread lots more wildflower seeds, so we're betting the wildflower interest in the Meadow will be even better in 2023. Let's hope we don't go quickly into drought conditions and have a nice long flowering season.

We've had a fantastic spawning season for the frogs this year, so the ponds should be full of tadpoles before much longer. With all the deepening and de-silting we managed to achieve last year the ponds should also retain enough water for good survival rates, even if we do get a repeat of last Summer's drought.

This March the garden team have been busily replacing steps and re-gravelling paths throughout the garden and things should be looking ship-shape by Easter when the crowds arrive.

In the walled Garden "Bella the Bee" has a new coat of woven willow, and we finally have a plan to restore the gazebo to its proper glory, though we may have to put up with scaffolding for a while, as the roof will need to be removed so we can re-home the bees that have taken up residence and fix the water ingress issues.

The broken Cherub statue has gone away to specialist stone restorers and we look forward to having it back in its proper place later in the year. As usual Christine and her Volunteers have the borders looking prepped and ready to explode.

Some of the timber from windblown trees we have managed to drag out of the woods in good lengths. This will soon be on it's way to West Wales Maritime Heritage Conservation Society in Pembroke Dock to be seasoned for use in restoring some of the old wooden boats they're working to save.

The birds are checking out nest sites, daffodils, camellias and cherries are in flower, Spring is looking good!"



Photograph by Andrew Weaver



Our Secretary tries out the recently donated swing at Stackpole

Autumn/Winter Talks 2023/24

Please note that these talks may be subject to change.

October 5th 2023

Fran Murphy of Dyfed Archaeology Society
Excavations and Skeletons in Haverfordwest

November 2nd 2023

Kate Barrett Heritage and Learning Director, Picton Castle Gardens
The unusual life of Cesar Picton, an enslaved Senegalese child who lived at Picton Castle after being given to the Philipps family as a 'gift'. Cesar went on to become a wealthy and prominent member of Georgian society and the talk intends to uncover how and why this happened.

Thursday 7th December 2023

Glyn Harries- Community Heritage Officer for Tenby Museum & Art Gallery
Ten Historical Figures of Tenby History

January 4th 2024

John Archer Thompson - Vancouver Island Bears and Whales

1st Feb 2024

Anne Garside - Agatha Christie in Wartime and Wales
During the Second World War, the Queen of Crime worked as a dispenser in a London hospital, Agatha made tortuous train journeys from blitzed London to the Vale of Glamorgan to support her daughter and baby grandson. She later assigned to grandson Mathew the royalties from a play that her agent assured her would run for all of six months. Mathew Prichard, who still lives in Wales, created a charitable trust from the proceeds. Returning home from one particularly gruelling journey to Wales in early 1945, with a pair of kippers for supper, Agatha heard a strange clanking noiseTo solve the mystery join us...

March 7th 2024

Carol Owen National Park Ranger for North Pembrokeshire
Speaking about the National Park in North Pembrokeshire

April 4th 2024

Robert Davies - Templeton Historian
50 shades of Pembrokeshire'

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

It is not surprising that with such a disruptive year, that there are still membership fees owing for 2023. 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 robashton95@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* Andrew Weaver
Tel: 01646 831323

VICE-CHAIRMAN* Sheila Ashton

TREASURER* Stephen Flather

SECRETARY* Annie Weaver
Tel: 01646 831323

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
Sheila Ashton
Tel: 01437 731525

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NEWSLETTER Marilyn James
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P.R & TALKS. Jane Mason

VISITS. Angela Jones

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