







National
Trust

Cotswolds Volunteer Newsletter

December 2017



We are looking forward to seeing you all at the End of Year Get Together at Chedworth on 8 December where, in a slight change to the usual, we'll be putting on a 'bring and share' lunch with the office and ranger teams bringing along something tasty as a special thank you for your help. It'll be the opportunity to thank all of you for your contribution to the work carried out across the portfolio this year, we've been able to undertake countless conservation projects that we simply wouldn't have been able to do without you.



Please do contact Caroline with your ideas and contributions for future editions, by email caroline.allanson@nationaltrust.org.uk or phone 01452 810057.

The Stroud Landscape Link Project

In 2010 Professor Sir John Lawton produced a report for the government in which he reviewed the state of our country's wildlife sites. He concluded that "there is compelling evidence that England's collection of wildlife sites are generally too small and too isolated, leading to decline in many of England's characteristic species." The State of Nature report, published in 2016, confirmed what most of us knew, that the dramatic and unprecedented loss of wildlife habitats that we had seen in the 20th century had not been reversed, and that we are continuing to lose habits and species. To address the issue we need to create more spaces for nature and make our network of wildlife sites bigger, better and more joined up. This mantra underpins the National Trust's Land Outdoors and Nature strategy that now drives our conservation work.

The Stroud area is known for its varied and distinctive landscape with its steep sided valleys, plateau commons and the dramatic Cotswold escarpment overlooking Gloucester and the Severn Vale. The area supports some of the most important and richest unimproved grasslands in the country, as well as significant areas of beech woodland on ancient sites.

The twentieth century saw the fragmentation, degradation and loss of a large percentage of the unimproved limestone grassland for which the area has long been famed. Some large blocks still exist, such as Minchinhampton and Rodborough, both of which are owned and managed by the National Trust. Whilst much of the woodland was cleared from the Cotswolds long ago, an unusually high number of ancient woodland sites have survived on the steep slopes of the Stroud valleys and Cotswold escarpment. However changes in forestry

practices, planting up with non-native species and in some cases a lack of management, has had a detrimental effect on the woodlands as wildlife habitats.

I have been given the exciting opportunity of taking up a three year role managing a project that aims to deliver landscape scale conservation across the Stroud Valleys. Working with our team we will:

- Work with partners on a landscape scale, looking beyond our boundaries, to develop a shared vision and strategy that will deliver the Lawton principle of more, bigger, better and joined up wildlife sites across the Stroud Valleys.
- Deliver land improvements and connectivity incrementally when opportunities arise throughout the project and taking other opportunities as they arise which may include a large landscape partner grant application or appropriate acquisitions
- Ensure that our own countryside properties are meeting the Trust's aspirations and can be shown as exemplars of conservation principles
- Raise the profile of the National Trust as a conservation body, educate and inspire both locally and nationally

A real challenge, over the next few years I will be reporting on progress with the project.

David Armstrong,
Landscape Link and Partner Lead

New faces ...

James Gomery, Ranger, Cotswolds

I am very excited and privileged to introduce myself as a new regular National Trust Ranger based at Ebworth supporting the Area Rangers for the Cotswolds region. I thought I would take the opportunity to write a quick few lines about myself;



I joined the National Trust in April 2014 where I worked as a ranger based at Sherborne Park Estate where I had the privilege of helping to look after some fantastic countryside as well more recently helping the National Trust and the BBC deliver Spring and Autumnwatch—what a privilege!

I grew up in South Africa but returned to the Gloucestershire Countryside with my parents and sister all the way back in 1999. (Hence the twang)

I've had a long term fascination with reptiles and amphibians – so please share with me any adder sightings or stories!

I am delighted to take up this position helping to look after the stunning Cotswold countryside and look forward to meeting you.

Kate Jones, Livestock Ranger

Thank you for the warm welcome to the National Trust! My role will be predominantly focusing on the cattle around the sites - really looking forward to getting involved!



I have a deep rooted interest in agriculture - having grown up on a dairy farm in Canada (and later in Devon) and following this interest to Harper Adams University where I studied agriculture business. From here I worked in the marketing department of a chicken company - a great experience but a tad too far removed from agriculture for my liking! This spurred the decision to search for a role more closely linked to farming, hence my recent move to the National Trust.

Aside from work I am a great lover of hiking, seizing every opportunity to take my enthusiastic springer spaniel into the countryside! I also enjoy running and occasionally force myself to take part in various races - which I almost always kick myself for after!

I am so pleased to be at Ebworth and look forward to meeting you soon!

... some changes

Laura Riley, Area Ranger, Ebworth and Crickley

Following the changes in our portfolio at the beginning of the year there have been some positive developments within our team. We have seen the recruitment of new volunteer roles that help us deliver all aspects of our work. Our countryside team has additional support from Lisa as Visitor Engagement Manager (VEM) and Rachel as our Facilities Manager (you may be pleased to hear she is looking to improve the Ebworth toilet system!).



Dave our Lead Ranger is managing Max and Richard and is also leading our Stroud Landscape Link project. Matt was promoted to Lead Ranger, managing Tim and recruited myself as Area Ranger for Ebworth and Crickley and Kate as Livestock Ranger to manage our herd of Belted Galloways alongside Mark.

I started with the team three and a half years ago as Ranger. Working with volunteers and staff in our portfolio has enabled me to develop my skills and this

paid off when I was offered the Area Ranger role for Ebworth and Crickley. Changes in my role have enabled James to move across from Sherborne to Ebworth as Ranger to work on different sites and build upon his skills. Sherborne have recruited a new member of staff to support where James has left off.

All the changes speak of new opportunities to build our potential as a countryside portfolio. There is a feeling of strength developing in our team and we are building on how we work together at our countryside properties associated with Sherborne, Ebworth and Newark Park.



If you are interested in seeing how the volunteer experience works at our other properties speak to your volunteer manager about spending a day with a different ranger

Volunteer survey—the results are in !

THANK YOU to everyone who took the time to complete the volunteer survey in September. The really good news is that compared to last year, you told us that you're enjoying your volunteering more, you feel more empowered and more satisfied. When asked whether you'd recommend volunteering with the Ebworth team a whopping 68% strongly agreed, compared to just 46% last year. 68% of you also said that the management team at Ebworth are approachable – an increase of 14% on last year.

We still need to do better though. We need to give

you more opportunities for training and development, to consult with you more and give you opportunities to meet and share ideas with other volunteers. You'd also like to know more about the Trust's strategic objective of looking after what we've got.

There's lots for us to get stuck into! Over the next few months you'll hear more about our plans to improve your volunteering experience at Ebworth. There'll also be opportunities for you to get involved in some ideas and action planning sessions, watch this space!

Other news

Autumnwatch has come and gone like a flurry of autumn leaves.. one minute the BBC were here, and the next they were gone again! We had a fantastic half term week which coincided with the broadcast, this time with the studio in the barn at Northfield Farmyard. With some rain and blustery days, we welcomed visitors on our guided ranger walks, some days seeing the car park completely full from mid-morning onwards. All of this would not have been possible without the help and support of our Naturewatch volunteers. I would like to say a special thank you to everyone who generously donated their

time during this second part of the project: Roz, Melissa, Michael, Zoe & Cara came back after Springwatch, and also welcomed Gavin, Irene, Claire, and Patti and David from Lodge Park.

Feedback from the BBC has been really positive, up to 2 million viewers tuned in each night to watch the programme. We are now reviewing how it all went, and also planning for **Winterwatch**, which will be on screens between the 29th January and the 1st of February 2018.

Clare Frater, Project Officer at Sherborne Park

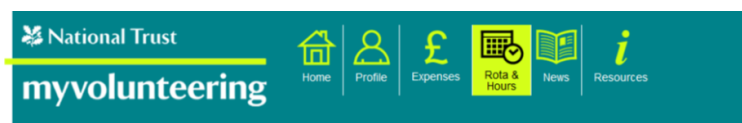
and finally ...

If any help is needed with the *MyVolunteering* system please don't hesitate to contact Caroline she can usually be found in the Ebworth office every Tuesday from 9.30-4.30pm and contactable on 01452 810057 and available at all other times via email: caroline.allanson@nationaltrust.org.uk

Logging your hours (<https://myvolunteering.nationaltrust.org.uk>)

Logging hours helps us locally to recognise and reward hours given in the form of volunteer cards and long service awards. At each year end we are also required submit total hours to head office.

To log your hours:



- Click on Rota and Hours at the top of the page and then click on the link to 'Log your hours'
- Using the drop-down menu select your role
- Enter your hours providing a start and end date. This may cover one day or a longer period.
- Use the Notes section to provide detail of your volunteering.
- Click on 'add your hours'. From here you can add another set of hours or make any changes before submitting.
- Click on 'send hours'. This will automatically update your records.

If you need to make any changes once your hours have been, for example to delete any duplicate entries, please contact Caroline.

Travel expenses

Just a reminder that volunteers can claim expenses to cover travel, to and from the place of volunteering, up to a maximum of 25 miles for the round trip, the rate used is usually 33p per mile which covers fuel and maintenance.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year