



# Everything speaks

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National  
Trust

## Reasons to return

Programming is a way of structuring and layering the activities that take place at a property throughout a year. Done well, a programme is reflected across an entire property, involves the whole team, and focuses our hard work on activities that bear fruitful results.



# Let them leave wanting more

An effective programme will turn first time visitors into second time visitors, occasional visitors into regular visitors and regular visitors into loyal supporters.

The ability to attract repeat visitors has been described as a blissful state. When people visit regularly, we can build a relationship with them, forming loyal and emotional connections. It gives members a sense they're getting value for their membership and non-members a compelling reason to join. Budgets are met or beaten, income raised can be invested in the property, and teams can get inventive in creating new experiences for visitors.

In this guide we explain some approaches to programming that will help you reach this promised land, describing how to build a programme on different levels – by day, week, season, year and by theme – and then presenting some examples to inspire you. Applied well, we know these methods work for outdoor and pay-for-entry places alike: the results demonstrated by the case studies speak for themselves.



If you'd like this information in an alternative format

email: [tony.berry@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:tony.berry@nationaltrust.org.uk)

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# Repeatability

Why would anyone who visited last week, last month, or last year want to visit again?

The essential purpose of a programme is to make people want to repeat their visit. Some aspects of a place's experience will naturally attract people back time and again: a gorgeous walk, a stunning view or a convenient spot for lunch. We need to find ways of making these inherently repeatable features even more compelling.

Other aspects may be perceived as one-off experiences – the interior of a house, for example. Our task is to find ways of making these more static features come alive in new ways to inspire people to return.

## Enter... programming

This is where programming comes in. A programme is a way of creating and organising new experiences of your property, and presenting them in a way that appeals to your target audiences, making promotion much easier. A programme can be made up of simple adjustments to the things you already do (feeding the deer every afternoon), or it can include ambitious and all-consuming activities that might stretch across several seasons or years.

## Make the one-off repeatable



The Corfe Castle team created a Medieval Village living history experience throughout the summer of 2014. The experience was designed around a six-month programme (April–September) with monthly themes. 'Have a go' activities and demonstrations were available all day every day, inspired by different aspects of medieval life. There were three talks a day and twice-daily knighting ceremonies.

**Events, activities, exhibitions, talks, tours, demonstrations, temporary interpretation and changes to your presentation are all ways to stimulate new interest and attract new audiences to a familiar setting.**

**But don't just plan one-offs – create activities that are regularly repeated and then keep refreshing them (rather than reinventing them). See the 'Stop, start, continue' graph on page 6.**

## Make the repeatable more appealing



The play field at Attingham keeps everyone in the family happy. It's a short, surfaced walk from the car park for the grown-ups but also manageable for little legs and buggies. The play area with swings and slides gives the kids space to let off steam, there are opportunities for natural play and a woodland obstacle course nearby. Plenty of seating is provided for the adults too and refreshments are available.

**Tune into the natural rhythms of your property and the features that people will want to come back to enjoy. Develop what you've already got in place to create an offer you can market.**

**Examples include: cycle rides, walks and other outdoor pursuits; views, picnic spots, play areas; wildlife and animal feeding times; restaurant, cafe and shop (why not?); garden blooms and other natural features.**

## 'Splash!' Cragside Water Festival



'Splash!' established a theme and a visual identity to tie together all water-related activities at Cragside.

**The team at Cragside worked out that they needed to do more to attract families over the summer holidays. Their goals were to improve on VE scores, build visitor numbers and offer something new for local audiences.**

Targeting Explorer Families in particular, and inspired by the property's history of experimentation with hydroelectricity and hydraulics, they conceived of 'Splash: Cragside Water Festival'. Dancing fountains were installed in the lake; water-based activities included a water fight, toy duck races and other water play.



The mass waterfight by Cragside's lake was a programme highlight.

Attracting families in summer

### Results

**As a result, the VE score for Explorer Families in August 2012 shot up to 86% (up 25% on the previous year) and the retail and catering returns were up 12-13% on the previous year. Actual visitor numbers showed a modest 3% increase.**

## Sheringham case study



© Rosemary Bird

Outdoor seasonal calendar

Sheringham's seasonal calendar is repeated each year, with small tweaks to update it.

**You don't need a large property or a big budget to run an effective programme.**

Sheringham's team have evolved a seasonal calendar, structured around the natural rhythms of the landscape park. Every week there is a park run on Saturday at 9am, attracting over 100 people a session. Fortnightly,

the Acorns Group for parents and toddlers meets to do something fun outside. Seasonally, the rhododendrons in bloom are a feature in spring; free 'Things to do Thursdays' for children are organised over the summer; seasonal changes are explained on guided walks in the autumn; and shoreline views are a feature in winter.

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# The rewards of good programming

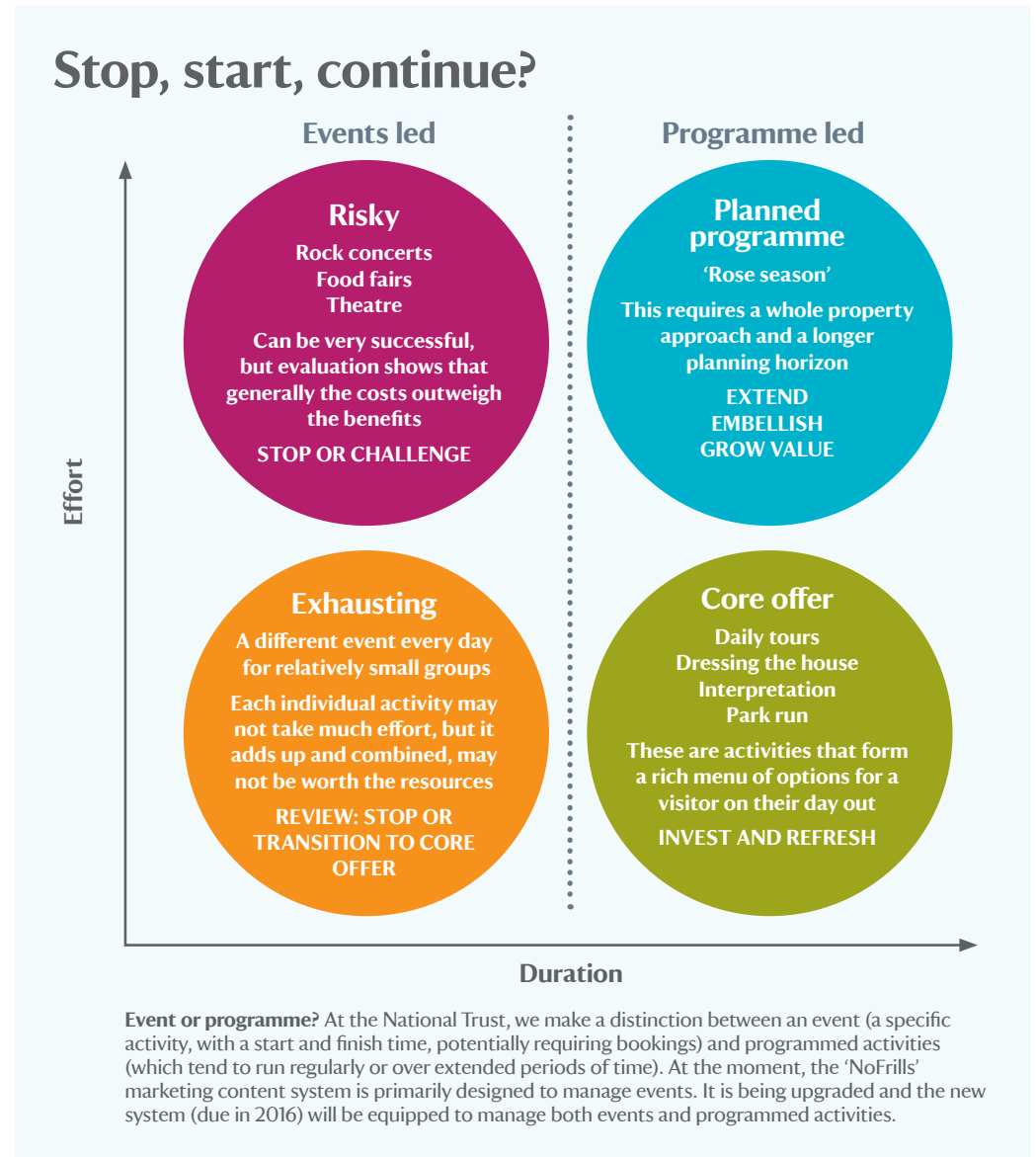
Here's a reminder of how programming can help you (and a few pitfalls to avoid).

## Good programming can...

- Improve performance – higher visitor numbers, higher visitor experience scores, longer dwell times (increasing secondary spend), more memberships.
- Shift perceptions – people may not expect the National Trust to play host to a bikers' convention, for example. A word of caution though: if this is your rationale for running a high risk event (see diagram on the right), make sure you have a really strong case.
- Establish more control – enabling teams to manage seasonal variations in visitor traffic, zone different areas for different audiences, and improve capacity at peak times.
- Broaden appeal – for example better engagement with local communities in the winter months, more activities for families in the holidays.
- Keep the spirit of place alive – this should be the primary inspiration for your programme content.

## And a few lessons learned...

- Fewer is better – evaluation shows that we reap more benefits when we run fewer events that last longer. We want to move away from activities that take a long time to set up and run for short periods.
- Stay focused on your core offer – don't be afraid of staying determinedly focused on the main attraction of your property – most people go to Chatsworth because it's Chatsworth, not because they're going to an event.
- Events and activities don't have to be one off – when you're thinking about creating a new experience, consider whether it could become part of your core offer.
- Be patient – it can take a while for new approaches to take root. Don't lose confidence if you try something new and it isn't an instant hit. Sometimes popularity takes a while to build, and after all, if we don't take some risks, we'll never do anything different.



# Where to begin: who, how many, when?

Start by understanding your current visitor patterns to identify the peaks and troughs in your visitor numbers – throughout a day, a week and the year.

As you analyse current patterns, think about:

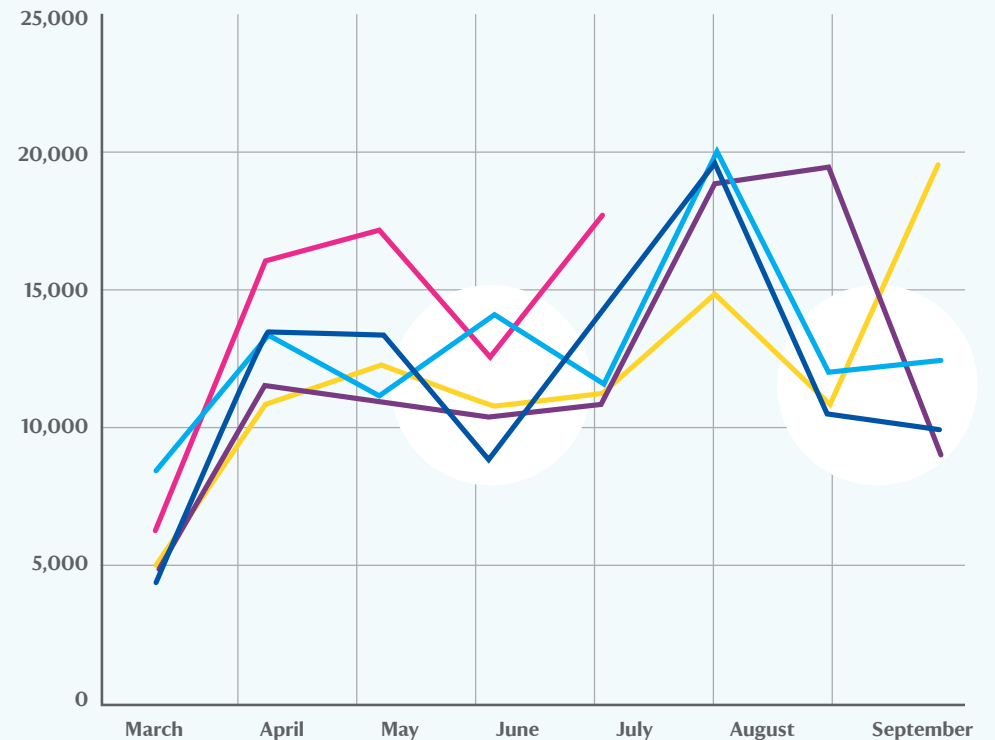
- **The shape of your visitor traffic** – what's the pattern on a weekday, weekend and across a year?
- **Which visitors are coming when** – for example, you may have lots of young Explorer Families first thing in the morning, more Curious Minds later in the day? The *Appealing on different levels* handbook will cover our target audience segments in depth, or you can refer to your property business plan and VE Consultant.
- **Your current events and activities** – question whether they are offered at the right times for your audiences?
- **Capacity crunches** – for example, how manageable is the lunchtime peak in your restaurant? How could your programme relieve pressure?

- **Longer stays** – how can you increase the length of a visit ('dwell time')?

Once you understand the current pattern, decide where there's room for improvement and plan what shape you'd like your visitor traffic to be. There's no one right way of doing this – use what you know about your audiences (weekend versus weekday visitors, summer tourists versus local winter visitors), any local or regional highlights, plus your ideas about where you have room to grow or improve (in terms of space, content and audiences) to create a plan that will work for your property.

Think about how you can ease pressure when it's busy and spread risk (for example, when events or activities are weather-dependent) by making better use of the 'off peak' times or 'off piste' places. You can work with a number of different models, described on page 9, or if you prefer, evolve a shape of your own...

## Knole visitor figures 2009-2013



- Visitor numbers 2009
- Visitor numbers 2010
- Visitor numbers 2011
- Visitor numbers 2012
- Visitor numbers 2013

### Room for change?

This analysis of visitor traffic at Knole enabled the team to see the capacity for growth in March, June to July, September and in the winter months.

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# How to plan your programme

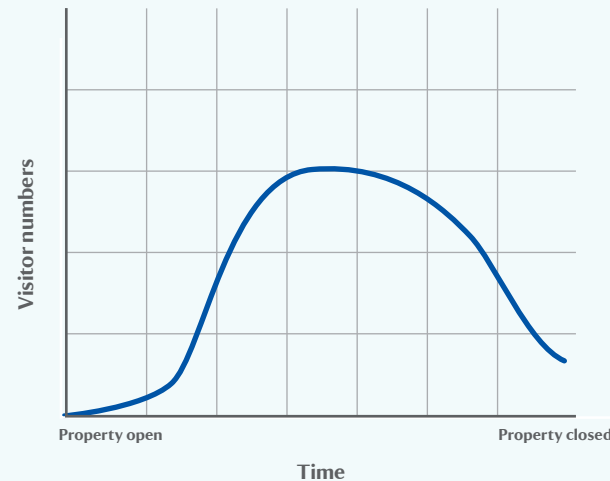
Begin with the questions below as you develop your programme. Then refer to the programme structures and case studies presented in the rest of this guide for inspiration...

## 1. What business problem are you trying to solve?

Pinpoint what you want your programme to achieve. Do you want to attract more visitors at different times of the year? Or to attract visitors to under-used areas? To strengthen your appeal to a specific audience? Or to find ways to provide for audiences with different needs?

## 2. What's the current pattern and 'shape'?

To design a programme, step back and look at the current shape of a place's visitor traffic as described on page 7, and understand why people visit and what will make people visit more (see the *Appealing on different levels* handbook for insight).



### Ask yourself:

- What's your weekday visitor shape?
- What's your weekend visitor shape?
- What's your annual visitor shape?

## 3. What's the desired shape?

Having understood where there's room for growth or change and determined who you want to attract, decide the best shape of visitor traffic for your property (see page 9), looking at ways to encourage people at off peak times and to places off the beaten track to increase capacity.

## 4. What's the structure of your programme?

Consider the various approaches (for instance, by audience, by theme, by time) to structure your programme. You can layer different elements to build your daily, weekly, seasonal and annual pattern, as well as thinking long term.

## 5. What's worked well elsewhere?

You don't need to reinvent the wheel: there are national tools and programmes, such as the Marketing Communications Plan (pages 10-11) and Trust New Art (page 14) that you can use. There are great examples set by other properties. And if you want to get really technical, there is specialist consultancy support. Talk to your Visitor Experience Consultant for more information.

## 6. How will you promote your programme?

Not covered in this handbook, but nevertheless essential. See the *First Impressions* handbook, and speak to your Marketing Consultant for advice.

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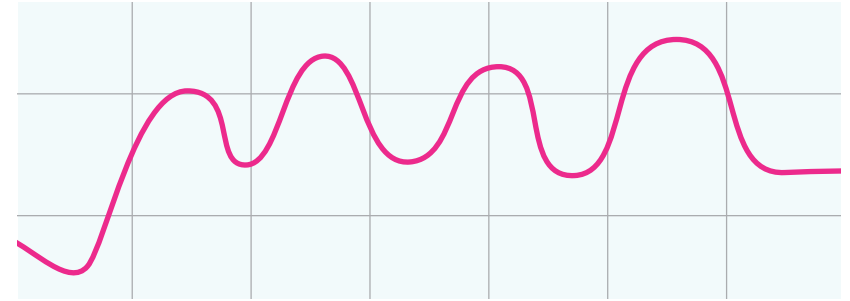
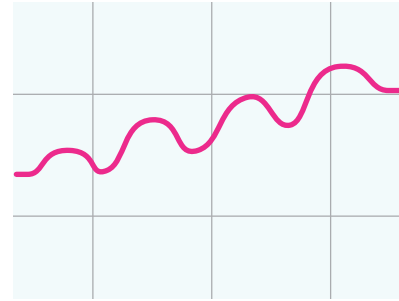
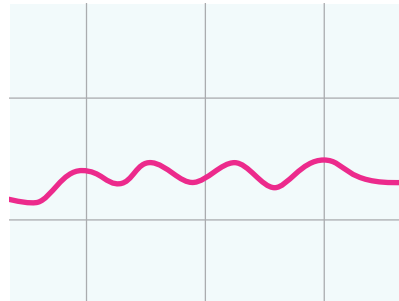
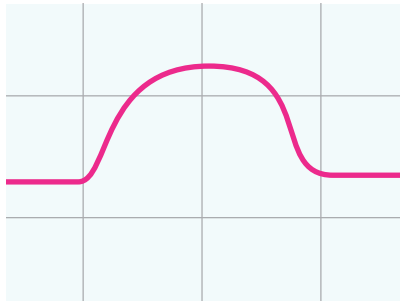
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## What's your desired shape of visitor traffic?



### The mountain

Some programmes are designed around a single major one off event, for instance the National Biker Convention at Tattershall Castle. In general we find that single events can be labour intensive, high risk and have low return on investment. But there are always exceptions to the rule. For example, Easter is a national programme that's hard work for a short period of time, but it's become an event our visitors expect us to do well.

### The 5-a-day

Your programme could look like a steady pulse, composed of daily routine activities that feel like fun. At Wimpole Farm, visitors can help feed, groom and clean out the animals. The time and frequency of the activities are adjusted to fit the day's visitor shape.

### The ripple

The rhythm can work across weeks and months as well as throughout a day. Some programmes are structured with regular events, such as weekly drop-in craft activities for families or monthly talks by rangers or members of the house team.

### The mountain with foothills

If you are staging a major event, make it more sustainable by building activities around it. For instance, you might run a series of warm up events in preceding weeks, or outreach events off site, or follow up activities. For example, in the run up to an exhibition, a property could set up a series of artist talks and workshops.

### The string of fairy lights

This is a series of jewel-like events, linked by a governing idea. For example, a series of candlelit poetry readings at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park by Simon Armitage or string quartets in the chapel four times per year.

### The Knickerbocker Glory

Alternatively, you could hold a series of events that reflect different layers of a theme (which may appeal to different audiences). For instance, a series of gallery exhibitions, running for eight weeks, several times a year (see Mottisfont case study on page 15).

### The calendar

Many programmes are structured around seasonal highlights, such as Easter (see pages 10-11). If this is your approach, find a way to make your contribution distinctive. For example, Cotehele has established a reputation for its extravagant 60ft long Christmas garland.

### The six peak challenge

We don't have to confine a programme to just one place – why not think on a regional or national scale? Can we create a series of momentous and memorable experiences at selected places across the whole of the National Trust?

# Planning by season

There are several devices you can use to structure your programme, including themes, target audiences and of course, the Marketing Communications Plan framework. Here, the 2016/17 plan sets out a series of flexible marketing phases across the year. By overlaying these phases onto your programme, you can make the most of regional and national campaigns.

The phases laid out in the 2016/17 Marketing Communications Plan are designed to lead audiences on a journey to deeper engagement. Shown here alongside some questions to consider when you're planning activities, the themes are broad enough to fit to your place's individual programme, which should be inspired primarily by spirit of place.

## On the intranet...

See the full Marketing Communications Plan at [http://intranet/intranet/supporters/resources\\_comms\\_logistics/national\\_campaigns.htm](http://intranet/intranet/supporters/resources_comms_logistics/national_campaigns.htm)

## INSPIRE January-February

### Make a plan

**Marketing theme:** *Inspire.* Cycling along a woodland trail, planning future activities with the Trust, holidaying in a lighthouse keeper's cottage. This time of year is all about inspiring people with ideas for simple, enjoyable things they can try over the next 12 months.

**Seasonal celebrations:** Valentine's Day, Shrove Tuesday, New Year

**Programming focus:** We want to inspire people with things they can do with the Trust in January and February as well as in the year ahead. What are the highlights at this time of year? Is there a walk that shows the place at its wintery best? What will inspire families to visit during February half-term?

**Indoors:** Is there anything new you can tell audiences about now? What programmed activities might inspire them to 'save the date' for the future. Are there any characters that changed the course of history, stories that changed lives or inventions? Has your place been the inspiration for anything – works of literature, paintings? Or could it be the inspiration for any new art?

**Outdoors:** What can people see, explore, discover only on a winter walk? You could suggest downloadable or guided walks, views that can only be seen through the bare winter trees, or wildlife to spot. What else could inspire people to 'get active' after the holiday season? Which of the '50 things' activities are best to do in half-term and why?

## DISCOVER March-April

### Try something new

**Marketing theme:** *Discover.* The air is getting warmer, the evenings lighter and new exhibitions are opening across the country. In this phase, we want people to dust off those winter cobwebs and discover the possibilities for adventure – both indoors and out. Tell them what's new this year and invite them to experience it.

**Seasonal celebrations:** Easter, Cadbury Easter egg hunts, Mother's Day

**Programming focus:** This phase is about inviting visitors to see or do something new at your place, or see a familiar aspect in a new light. It's also about showing how your place changes with the seasons: can you highlight new life (flowers, lambs) and show the place 'waking up' in spring?

**Indoors:** Do you have any new exhibitions, displays or objects for visitors to see? What might have changed slightly? Have you refreshed or added any new trails, walks or talks? What can families do in poor weather? Can you put the spotlight on conservation work?

**Outdoors:** What are highlights in the wildlife and nature at your place this coming spring, and where are the best places for visitors to enjoy them? It might be banks of daffodils or the sight of migrating birds returning. What are your plans for the entire two weeks of the Easter holiday (not just the bank holiday weekend)?

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## EXPLORE May-June

### Repeat an experience

**Marketing theme:** *Explore.* Having got a taste for new experiences, we want people to explore even further. That could mean travelling to different parts of the country, becoming more familiar with local places, or ideally both.

**Seasonal celebrations:** May Day, Summer Equinox

**Programming focus:** This season is about encouraging visitors to take the next step on their journey with your place. What can you offer to tempt them off the well-worn track from visitor reception to the café? Are there parts of the estate or the house waiting to be explored? If visitors ticked off some of their '50 things' in February half-term, what's next on the list? Or, if they're seasoned adventurers, can you tempt them with a better tree to climb, or a bigger hill to roll down?

**Indoors:** How can visitors explore the wider estate? Where should they go and how should they get there? Are there attics, cellars, rooftops to explore (if it's safe to do so)? What opportunities are there to play? Are there games indoors or outdoors? How can we deepen connections?

**Outdoors:** Why should visitors choose your place to complete some of their '50 things'? Do you have the best bridge for pooh sticks, or the best hill for flying kites? What are your gardeners up to at the moment that people could see or join in with? What looks particularly spectacular? Is there anything new or changing in your garden?

## PLAY July-Aug

## CREATE Sept-Oct

### Form a habit

**Marketing theme:** *Play.* Throughout the sunniest months, we'd like the places we look after to feel like home from home to thousands of people. We want them to see themselves less like visitors and more like residents.

**Marketing theme:** *Create.* We want people to keep feeling energised into the Autumn, whether it's outdoor activities in the late summer sun, indoor harvest fairs, half-term camping trips or Hallowe'en parties.

**Seasonal celebrations:** Harvest, Michaelmas, Halloween

**Programming focus:** Throughout these phases we want to form deeper connections: in the summer months we want to highlight opportunities to relax and enjoy our properties; in the autumn we can encourage people back to see how the place changes when the season turns.

**Indoors:** Are there any games people can play indoors during summer? Is there anything they might not expect to see, a 'wow' feature they shouldn't miss? When it gets colder will you light open fires to create a cosy atmosphere? Will you have any autumnal exhibitions or displays?

**Outdoors:** What opportunities are there to play outdoors and relax at your place during July/August for families and adults alike? What are your '50 things' activities for summer and autumn (for half-term)? How can people enjoy the last of summer outside? Tell us about your best autumn walks – are there any good photo opportunities?

## TRADITIONS November-December

### Create an emotional connection

**Marketing theme:** *Traditions.* Christmas is a time when people celebrate old traditions and create new ones. So it's the ideal moment to engage them with the traditions of places we look after. Make this connection even more emotional by imbuing our seasonal activities with authenticity, tradition and a sense of our cause.

**Seasonal celebrations:** Bonfire Night, Stir Up Sunday, Christmas, New Year's Eve

**Programming focus:** Let's share the festive traditions of National Trust places and invite visitors to share their own. The spirit of place will determine how you bring Christmas to life, the style of the decorations, the traditions you recreate, or the spaces for families and friends to be together.

**Indoors:** What traditions are associated with your place's past? What will you invite visitors to see or do? Are you decorating the house? Sharing seasonal recipes, carolling, making decorations? What personal Christmas traditions can visitors fulfil on site? Christmas shopping at a Christmas market? Festive food? A visit to Father Christmas?

**Outdoors:** Are there any activities programmed between Christmas and New Year? Beautiful winter walks? Places that offer a retreat away from the festive hustle and bustle? Would your property have played a role in local celebrations, for example providing food, trees, holly? Can visitors get involved, for example, making wreaths, gathering greenery?

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# Planning for Christmas

Christmas can be a magical highlight in a property's programme. It can also be an exhausting headache, putting lots of pressure on your team and the fabric of your property.

## It's a team effort

We're learning more every year about how to perfect our approach to Christmas. What we do know is that any major activity will work best when every team is involved in its planning and delivery. It takes cross-departmental knowledge to understand what needs to happen when (retail orders for Christmas should be made almost a year in advance, for example), to manage capacity and to make every aspect of the experience feel high quality.

Your visitors at Christmas are highly likely to be a local repeat audience, often people showing off their local National Trust place to visiting family and friends. This means they will really appreciate seeing your property in new light. So refresh your interpretation and consider a different visitor journey for Christmas.

## On the intranet...

See the Christmas microsite at [www.nationaltrustchristmas.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrustchristmas.org.uk)



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## Case Study A Blickling Christmas



From the end of November onwards, 22 Christmas trees lit Blickling's main driveway, creating a magical welcome and drawing the interest of passers by.



Costumed volunteers were central to the experience and prepared festive treats for visitors to taste.



Visitors were invited to try some traditional festive food, based on recipes passed on by the house staff from the 1930s.



The house route was different at Christmas, with most of the decorations put together by volunteers and local flower arrangers.

**The Blickling team created 'A Blickling Christmas' in 2014. The celebration ran over the first three weekends of December, with the property open between 11am and 5pm every day. There were also two ticketed evening candlelit events, entertainment, mulled wine and mince pies.**

Every day, the programme was slightly different. Outside, there were reindeer, carol singers and a brass band. In the house, 'The Diggers' (a volunteer group) staged costumed interpretation, and mulled wine and festive food were plentiful. At different times, the house was filled with the music of hand-bell ringers or harps or singers, or hurdy-

gurdies. Visitors were invited to leave their own Christmas memories on a 'traditions tree', which was set up in the Temple. On the third weekend, a marquee provided a forum for family entertainment including puppet shows, music and Christmas theatre.

### The feedback

The events attracted a very different mix of visitors – more Explorer Families, a much higher number of day trips, more repeat visitors and more people staying for a full day.

In terms of survey results, the house was rated as more 'warm and friendly' than usual, but there were drops in ratings

in other areas, most significantly, 'Very Enjoyable' which scored 52% against an annual average of 67% (results extrapolated from 122 respondents). What the team learned was that when over 2,000 visitors arrive a day, some aspects of the experience begin to creak at the seams. The most grumbles were about the overflow car parks (fields not up to the job in winter) and the catering.

The team are already factoring this into plans for Christmas 2015, when they will aim for slightly lower visitor numbers, offering paying visitors and members a higher quality experience. The marquee set up for family entertainment, they decided, was not worth the investment.

## Results

Financially, the occasion was a great success, pushing Blickling ahead of budget in terms of visitor numbers and property contribution:

- 12,176 visitors ahead of budget
- 210 new memberships
- £129,947 higher property gross income (at a cost of £35,185), resulting in £94,762 net contribution

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# Trust New Art

From art exhibitions and installations, to performances and writers-in-residence – you can spark interest in new audiences by introducing contemporary arts as part of your programme.

Contemporary arts either inspired by your property, or as a form of interpretation can:

- Bring the spirit of place to life at places with a tradition of art and creativity, such as at Mottisfont, Petworth, A La Ronde, Hardy's Cottage and Ickworth.
- Attract arts audiences from nearby cities and creative rural areas. The Tyntesfield team has built strong relationships with Bristol's arts organisations, enabling them to tap into arts audiences for their year-round arts programme, while Trelissick works closely with the creative community at nearby Falmouth University.
- Encourage visitors to explore our places in a new way. Fountains Abbey

and Studley Royal's 'Folly!' invites visitors to discover installations in the water garden follies (see case study, page 20-21).

- Provide creative reasons to return in the shoulder months. Mottisfont's year-round arts programme has transformed its visitor year, while Nymans is fast becoming known for its winter art in the gardens.

The Trust New Art programme of contemporary arts inspired by our places is led by Tom Freshwater, supported by a partnership with Arts Council England (2014-18).



© Paul Blakemore

**'Paradise' at Tyntesfield, 2014:** London Fieldworks created the 'Assault Tower' (main image) as part of a fictional landscape in which animals overrun the environment. Below, 'Golden Abundance' by Nina Saunders dominated the aviary – a lavish chandelier circled by a sparrow hawk-human hybrid. And artists Owen Griffiths and Fern Thomas created 'The Green Room' (right), an outdoor space for reflection and learning.

## On the intranet...

For more ideas and information, visit: [http://intranet/intranet/pages/i-con-contemporary\\_arts.htm](http://intranet/intranet/pages/i-con-contemporary_arts.htm)



## Mottisfont exhibits

©Lichfield



Newly-wed Jagers – just one of the iconic prints featured in Mottisfont's exhibition 'Lichfield: a life through a lens'.

**In the past, crowds came to Mottisfont to see the roses in June. It was a brilliant spectacle but a risky business model, with the year's finances depending on one month. So the team set out to attract visitors to the house and gardens all year round.**

Inspired by Mottisfont's history as a meeting place for artists, the team started to mount exhibitions in 2010. They converted some rooms that weren't part of the visitor route into gallery spaces and now run a programme of five exhibitions

a year, each targeting different audience groups.

Louise Govier, Mottisfont's Visitor Experience and Communities Manager, explains their 2014 programme: 'We knew that our Curious Minds would love Lord Lichfield's portraits (January to April), while our Explorer Families would want to see original illustrations by Quentin Blake over the summer. We also extended the experience through creative family trails, talks and other activities, as well as retail and catering tie-ins.'

©Michael Breakey



Michael Breakey's design for a Christmas 'icicle tree' – programme themes extend across the property.

Variations  
on a theme

### Results\*

**In 2009 there were 162,000 visitors. In 2014 there were 270,000 visitors and a more even pattern of visitors throughout the year. The operating contribution was £1.5million, £530,000 above budget, £130,000 up on the previous year.**

\*Results also attributed to a move to 363 opening

## Conservation in action

Showcasing  
conservation



**Every conservation project we embark on is an opportunity to engage people.**

Attingham's Picture Gallery is one of the property's highlights. So when the team were faced with the prospect of the Gallery being filled with scaffolding for months during a reroofing project, the team were keen to maintain visitor enjoyment.

They designed an interpretation scheme that gave visitors a closer look

at the structural work, old and new. 'Rooms on the first floor were also used to explain the history of Nash's original roof and the technicalities of the new roof design, and showed live progress via a webcam,' said Helen Royall, Conservation, Engagement and Facilities Manager. 'As a result, the impact of the scaffolding (which potentially could have been so negative) turned into a dramatic positive experience, and was consistently ranked as one of the most enjoyed aspects of our visitors' day.'

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# Anniversaries and themes

Think both literally and laterally about how your property might mark an anniversary or a cultural moment in time.

A great character, a discovery or an innovation, a book, a film, a war. There's no end to the list of sources that could inspire a theme to flavour your programme.

It's useful to gather information on the local, national and international celebrations coming up over the next five to ten years and keep this list updated. As well as marking significant events that took place at your property, look out for historic anniversaries as well as cultural and current events that might resonate with the spirit of place (see the 'relevance' section in the Everything Speaks *Theory* handbook).

Trends, politics, conflicts, film and book launches are just some things to keep your eye on.

Below, we've listed a few anniversaries coming up over the next few years. More property specific anniversaries are compiled on the intranet (see below), but the list could be as long as a piece of string. Encourage everyone in your team to keep their antennae up.

## On the intranet...

A list of anniversaries specific to National Trust properties is available <http://intranet/intranet/pages/org-anniversaries.htm>

Other useful links include: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/default.stm>

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Petworth's 'Mr Turner' exhibition coincided with the opening of Mike Leigh's film starring Timothy Spall. Events at Runnymede were timed to celebrate 800 years since the signing of the Magna Carta. Dunham's Sanctuary exhibition used 100 years since the start of the First World War as its hook. At Hardwick Hall, the programme is honouring the 400th anniversary of the death of Arbella Stuart.



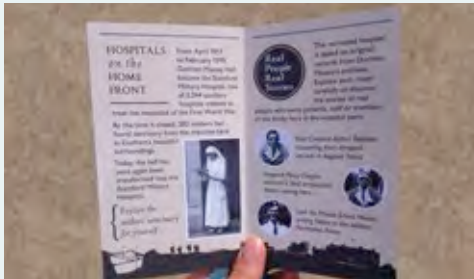
The British Museum's 'Behind the headlines' series is a good example of an open-ended programme designed to respond to current events.

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<p><b>100 years:</b> Einstein's Theory of Relativity</p> <p><b>100 Years:</b> the Battle of the Somme</p> <p><b>300 years:</b> Isaac Newton discovered the true nature of light</p> <p><b>200 years:</b> the birth of Charlotte Bronte</p> <p><b>400 years:</b> William Shakespeare died</p>	<p><b>50 years:</b> the Benson Report, the First Acorn Camps were held, and the following acquisitions: Sissinghurst, Cornish Engines, Llanrhiddian Marsh, Rhossili Down and Golden Cap</p> <p><b>100 years:</b> the Russian Revolution and the Battle of Passchendaele (WWI)</p> <p><b>200 years:</b> the death of Jane Austen</p>	<p><b>50 years:</b> the Countryside Act and the acquisition of Dunwich Heath</p> <p><b>100 years:</b> women first get the right to vote in Britain and the end of the First World War</p> <p><b>200 years:</b> Humphry Repton died</p> <p><b>300 years:</b> birth of Thomas Chippendale</p> <p><b>400 years:</b> death of Sir Walter Raleigh</p>	<p><b>50 years:</b> acquisition of Felbrigg and Lundy Island</p> <p><b>75 years:</b> D-Day landings</p> <p><b>100 years:</b> the Treaty of Versailles</p> <p><b>200 years:</b> birth of Queen Victoria and John Ruskin</p> <p><b>500 years:</b> Magellan set sail to circumnavigate the world and the death of Leonardo da Vinci</p>	<p><b>50 years:</b> the establishment of NT Enterprises and the acquisition of Scotney Castle</p> <p><b>75 years:</b> the end of World War II</p> <p><b>100 years:</b> the acquisition of Scafell Pike (memorial to dead of WWI) and Cerne Abbas giant, and the deaths of Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley (founder) and Alfred Parsons (garden designer)</p>
				<p><b>125 years:</b> the National Trust was founded</p> <p><b>150 years:</b> the death of Charles Dickens</p> <p><b>200 years:</b> George IV accedes to the throne</p> <p><b>250 years:</b> Captain Cook reached Australia</p> <p><b>400 years:</b> the Mayflower landed in America</p>



# Case Study Dunham Massey commemorates the First World War

Changing perceptions



© National Trust Images/James Dobson



© National Trust Images/Emma Wilson



© National Trust Images/James Dobson



We set the scene on the visitor's journey from the car park to collecting their tickets. The admission ticket highlighted seven individual stories to follow.

Within the house, we recreated the hospital layout and brought the spaces alive with actors, who existed in character in their parallel world.

The actors periodically performed 'happenings' – scenes based on research.

We recreated the operating theatre – the low lighting and audio visuals created a dramatic space.

**'I dreamt up 'Sanctuary' one evening in 2011 when I had drunk more red wine than I should have (Gigondas Saint Gayan 2007 for anyone seeking inspiration).'** *Stephen Adams, General Manager, describes the experience.*

'Sanctuary from the Trenches' was triggered by our VE scores for Emotional Impact and Story. They were dire. We knew we had to do something to improve results, so we identified our key stories and decided to tell them in depth in an innovative way. One of these stories was the period when Dunham was used as a

military hospital during WW1 – and with the Centenary (2014) fast approaching, it was too good an opportunity to miss.

## What we did

It took two and a half years from conception to delivery. We set up a project team and got many of our 500 volunteers on board researching our archives. We faithfully recreated the spaces, and working with professional script writers and actors, we designed an authentic, immersive experience (described above).

## The outcomes

Both 'Emotional Impact' and 'Story' scores have increased dramatically and visitors regularly talk of being 'incredibly moved, almost in tears'. Sanctuary has been

described as 'light years ahead of anything the Trust has done before', which means we have to accept that people will love it or hate it (and the minority who hate it, really hate it).

## Lessons

It has shown us that people respond to something that challenges the norm, but whatever you do, make sure people can relate to the content. I truly believe we have moved the goalposts. Returning to the way we showed Dunham pre-Sanctuary is not an option – the team here wouldn't want it and the visiting public perhaps expect something different.

What I learned was: do your research; give yourself time; trust your team; be brave; and just go for it!

## Results

**We began by hoping to cover our costs, but in the end we made a healthy profit of over £500,000.**

- Visitor numbers were up by 54.1%, with paying visitors up by 84.6%.
- In 2013 we welcomed 88,000 visitors to the house. In 2014 we had 90,000 in the first ten weeks alone. In total, visitor numbers more than trebled.
- We are the first Trust property to be short listed for the Art Fund Museum of the Year.

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# Sport

Attracting new and local audiences

Regular and structured sports activities, such as beginner runs, guided cycle rides and ‘prambles’ for parents and their baby buggies, are great ways of encouraging repeat visits.

Since 2012, we have had a partnership with Sport England in place, which will last until at least July 2017. This partnership has been set up to attract more people to take part in sport on or around our properties, which can have the benefit of attracting new visitors (especially local audiences and Explorer Families) and members, and raising Visitor Enjoyment and secondary spend.

Sometimes simple is most effective: sports boxes placed in gardens, full of traditional games for children, are proving to be very popular. And it’s not just the outdoors that can provide a setting for sport – Wimpole hosts Tai Chi classes inside!

If you think sport could fill a gap in your programme, contact Cathy Cook or Melissa Handford to make a connection with your local Sports Development Partner.

**Run...** Whatever the pace, an organised run encourages local audiences to enjoy our places.

In the 2014-2015 winter season, the first series of Night Runs took place at 12 properties, beginning in Osterley in October and ending at Speke in March.

The Night Run events are designed to appeal to local audiences at quieter times in the year. It’s a format that appeals to seasoned runners (who like to try something different) as well as new runners (who like the idea of an adventure and running a shorter route). Seeing the property by torchlight adds to the adrenalin. The runs create opportunities for secondary spending too, for instance extending catering hours, and offering twilight activities in the house to keep spectators entertained.

The feedback on the 2014-2015 Night Run series was ‘staggering’. As many as 400 runners signed up for each run, and with 52,194 unique visitors to Night Run content on our website, the series looks set to get bigger and better.



# Cycling



## Paddle... Can you invite people to enjoy a stretch of water?

At Croome in 2013, visitors were invited to instructor-led canoeing taster sessions, giving people the chance to try something new and experience the park in a way people would have done in the 18th century. The sessions were popular with families, who could splash about out of earshot from the quieter lakeside.

## Ride... Could you create a cycle trail through your woodland, parkland, coast or estate?

Over the last few years there has been a renaissance in cycling. With more people than ever keen to explore places on two wheels, consider some of the benefits: cycling is a year-round, all-weather activity that appeals to new audiences, attracts people back, and may help you make the most of existing visitor facilities.

The Cycle Trails Programme is now underway to build extensive cycling trails at Badbury Hill, Blickling, Calke, Croome, Ickworth, Nostell Priory, Osterley, Saltram, Kingston Lacy, Wallington and Wimpole.

Based on the outcomes of this first phase, the scheme is looking to develop a second phase. Could your place be added to the list? The Cycle Trails Programme is led by Nick Walmsley, supported by a partnership with Sport England (2015-18).

### On the intranet...

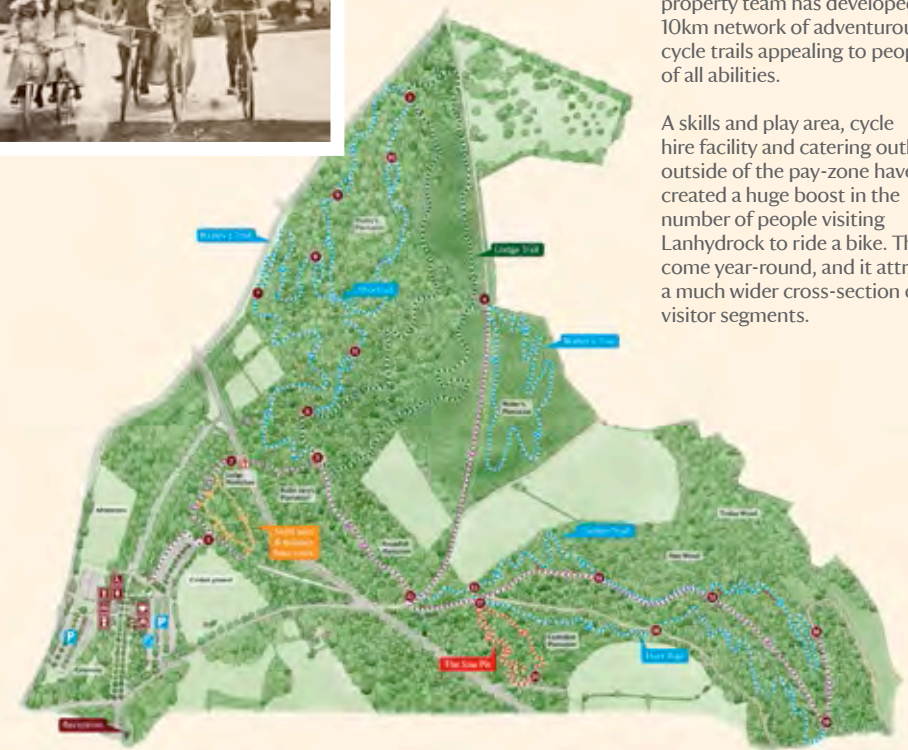
Cycle Trails Programme information:  
<http://intranet/intranet/pages/acc-cycling.htm>

## Lanhydrock cycle trails



The archive picture shows Lanhydrock House's former inhabitants, the Agar-Robartes family, cycling at the property. Almost 100 years later the property team has developed a 10km network of adventurous cycle trails appealing to people of all abilities.

A skills and play area, cycle hire facility and catering outlet outside of the pay-zone have created a huge boost in the number of people visiting Lanhydrock to ride a bike. They come year-round, and it attracts a much wider cross-section of visitor segments.



# Reasons to explore Fountains Abbey's 'Folly!'

'Often overshadowed by its more famous neighbour Fountains Abbey, the dramatic Studley Royal Water Garden is a Georgian masterpiece, and the reason the estate is a World Heritage Site.'  
*Chris Fowler, General Manager*

How can you entice visitors to explore the less visited parts of your site, encourage them to stay longer, return and understand the full story of a place? To rebalance their offer, the team at Fountains devised 'Folly!', a three year programme that began in April 2015 and is designed to bring the stories of Studley Royal Water Garden to life.

The Garden was the height of fashion in its day. It was created by John and William Aislabie as a work of art, a place of escapism and pleasure. The follies were built to draw the attention of invited guests to carefully composed and spectacular vistas.

That sense of purpose and theatre has been echoed in the first year of the 'Folly!' programme. Three artists have created four installations in the folly buildings (see right),

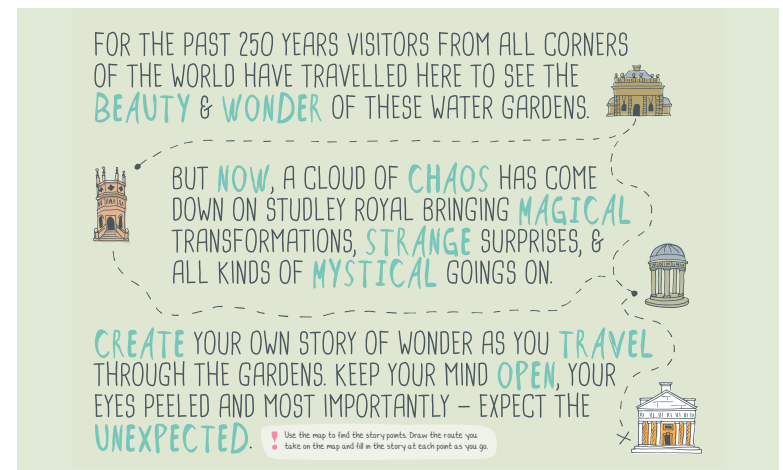
inspired by the stories associated with the place and their setting.

At the end of their first summer, Visitor Experience and Marketing Manager Alexa Morton said, 'We are targeting the Explorer Family and Out About segments with this exhibition. So far, we are delighted to see an increase in their VE scores and May and August 2015 were record breaking months for us. Visitor income is up £185,000 for the period and we've seen a 24% increase in visitors staying for more than three hours.'



Encouraging people off the beaten track

**Opulence and eccentricities**  
Promoted via a dedicated leaflet guide (above right) and a separate family-friendly map (right), visitors now have new reasons to explore the more remote and secluded follies, which feature art installations and previously untold stories.





Artist Simon Costin was drawn to the story associated with the Temple of Piety, which tells of a prophecy urging the family of Fountains to throw a party in honour of the ancient gods. The magical shrine reflects the temple's magical setting.



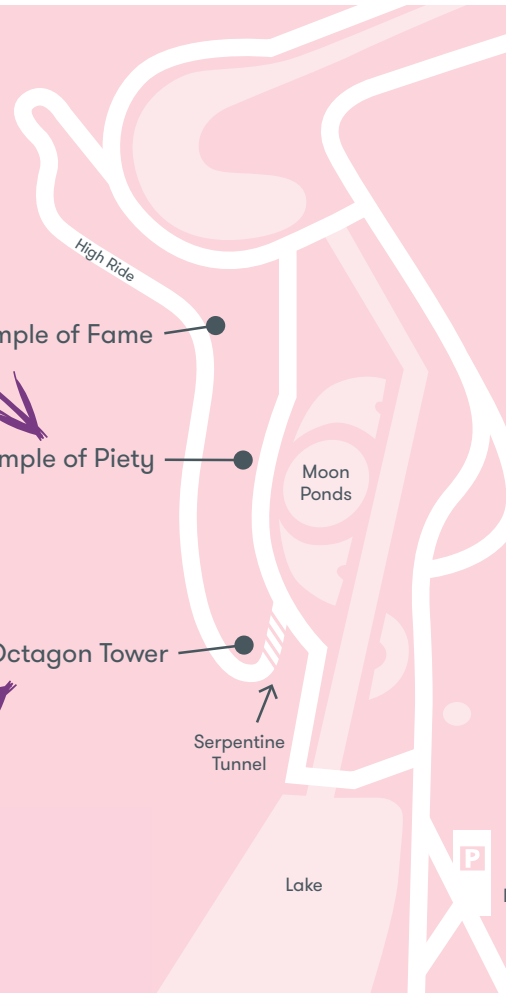
*Scavenger* by Gary McCann dominates the Banqueting House. It is theatrical, like the follies and questions the relationship between people and the landscape – who is really dominant?



Banqueting House

*'We loved the follies in the follies! What a great idea. More please!'*

*'One of the best exhibitions I've seen here.'*



Temple of Fame

Temple of Piety

Moon Ponds

Octagon Tower

Serpentine Tunnel

Lake

To the Deer Park



The Octagon Tower is a small look-out point, but Irene Brown turns the perspective inwards and creates an 'infinite cavern' with her 'Hall of Mirrors'.



# Seasonal spectacles

## Anglesey Abbey

‘The biggest message I’d give people is that programming is about working as a team’

*Amanda Crack, General Manager*

Anglesey Abbey’s General Manager explains the evolution of a strong and successful programme: ‘When I arrived here over four years ago, we were running a lot of small events that delivered very little yet left a few staff feeling exhausted.

‘To ease this strain and even out the visitor pattern, we developed an approach that involved doing fewer, better versions of events. Our programme (a ‘string of fairy lights’, see page 9) establishes three moments in the property’s calendar; all put a spotlight on the changing features of the Abbey’s magnificent grounds.

‘Our next step is to think about how we fill October, when we want to reflect an autumn theme, and then May, which is our biggest challenge. As we continue to evolve our programme, we need to maintain a healthy balance for the team. Even though the events are fun and more rewarding, they are still a lot of work.’

Anglesey Abbey’s annual programme											
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Snowdrop Festival							Dahlia Festival			Winter Lights



First comes the Snowdrop Festival in late January, when 270 varieties of snowdrop burst into life across 114 acres.



The Dahlia Festival was reconfigured in 2014 (see details on the right).



Launched in 2011, the Abbey’s Winter Light show runs for three weekends from the end of November each year and has become a sell-out attraction.

**Can everyone at your property talk to visitors about what’s happening across the site?**

Many properties hold special briefings in advance of busy periods to give the whole property team an overview of what’s on for different audiences. Find ways to keep the whole team updated.

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 Establishing a strong calendar

## The Dahlia Festival

Anglesey's dahlia borders have always been a highlight of the year. In 2014, the property team rethought their traditional Dahlia Festival, which had been a week-long event focused on the gardens. They breathed new life into the format, extending the celebrations to two and a half weeks and continuing the theme across the property.

In the first two weeks of September 2014, Anglesey Abbey was veritably dahlia-tastic. The reception area was adorned with flowers. Visitors were invited to pick a dahlia head and add it to the 'Dahlia Line', which led from the welcome building through the gardens to the Abbey. There were dahlia arrangements throughout the house, restaurant, shop and plant centre. There was even dahlia bread. Pop up art installations appeared in the gardens, which changed in the second week of the festival.

As a result, visitors returned with families and friends, giving a significant boost to results (see below).

### Results

	Sept 2013	Sept 2014	% increase
Property income	£106,518	£154,414	44%
Visitor numbers	11,526	18,580	64%
VE score	59%	70%	20%



**Dahlias everywhere:** Anglesey Abbey's 2014 Dahlia Festival was a team effort across gardens, reception, house, restaurant and shop. 'Imaginative', 'fascinating' and 'beautiful' were some of the words people used to describe their day.

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