

The Holkham Gazette

Pedal Norfolk here again!



Over the bank holiday weekend 2nd to 4th May, Pedal Norfolk arrives back at Holkham for family fun on two wheels. Bicycles, riders, food, drink and trade stands will take over the estate which is hosting the third annual three-day cycling festival.

There will be rides of all distances for all levels of cyclists. Sportive riders can look forward to 100 mile routes on Saturday and Sunday, plus a tough 50 mile hilly route on Monday. Yes, Norfolk definitely has hills, and this route goes up lots of them! Last year 79 people rode the whole 250 miles over the three days.

For those who want to take it a bit easier, there are 20 and 50 mile routes each day. Last year we had a seven year old who rode his first 50 miles, so these routes are suitable for young or older cyclists.

At registration, each rider will be provided with a map card and a timing chip before they cross the start/finish line. All the rides will be signposted and supported with feed stations, magic spanner

mechanics in case of punctures or mechanical faults, and recovery teams will be close by for assistance.

While the cyclists are experiencing superb rides through the beautiful countryside of Norfolk, the festival will also include a wealth of entertainment and activities to ensure visitors of all ages have a truly memorable weekend. Matti Hemmings from Nickelodeon's *Get Your Skills On* will be here with his amazing stunts on two wheels. Children can have a go on the BMX, off-road and cyclo-cross trails. They're tougher than you think! There will also be a climbing wall, Spider Mountain and Doctor Spinoff's tricky tricycles.

Once again Norwich-raised Emma Pooley, Olympic and Commonwealth Games medallist and world Duathlon Champion, will be joining in the rides. Emma is planning to cycle the full 250 miles. She'll also join in an evening question and answer session.

For those who want to take part in the full three days, there are camping pitches available in the park at Holkham, offering a unique opportunity to stay in this beautiful and natural setting. Tickets are on sale now, so book your place at Pedal Norfolk. Go to www.pedalnorfolk.co.uk for all prices, tickets and information.



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Behind Closed Doors: a year in the life of a working estate

Magnum photographer Chris Steele-Perkins had unrestricted access to Viscount and Viscountess Coke's home and the estate over the course of a year. The result is a collection of intimate photographs in an exhibition that portrays the reality of living and working on a country estate in the 21st century.

Chris has captured aspects of the estate that are rarely visible to visitors; a glimpse into a world that is both familiar and extraordinary, showing how a young family, over 250 employees and 21 different businesses live and work together in one of England's most beautiful landscapes.

The charismatic photographs range from informal pictures of Viscount and Viscountess Coke with their young family, to the gamekeepers on shoot days dressed in their famous bowler hats, to the team of gardeners working throughout the seasons. The housekeeping team cleaning and caring for the many rooms in the hall and the colour and vibrancy of the seasonal functions and events are also portrayed.

The exhibition can be viewed on Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays from 12noon to 4pm until 31st October. Admission is included in the hall and walled gardens ticket.

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FOR DETAILS OF A TALK
BY MAGNUM PHOTOGRAPHER
CHRIS STEELE-PERKINS
ON THE EXHIBITION

Cyclist and triathlete Emma Pooley is a very busy woman!

BY SARA PHILLIPS,
EDITOR

Emma Pooley retired from professional cycling in 2014. Has she kicked back and relaxed? Far from it. She has spent the last few months in Australia training hard for her new sporting love, triathlon. She took part in the Challenge Philippines triathlon in February and took gold, over 10 minutes ahead of her nearest rival. I persuaded her to answer a few questions about her first love, cycling, and her involvement with Pedal Norfolk at Holkham.

"What most impresses me about Pedal Norfolk is that it celebrates cycling in so many ways and at all levels – it's a really super family event, with activities for children and non-cyclists, but also challenging

sportive rides. It has something for everyone and it really emphasises the fun and sociable sides of the sport. I was really happy last year to see my Mum taking on the 50 mile sportive on her heavy, slow, hybrid bike (she meant to do the 20 mile route but got lost!) I was so proud of her!

"Cycling is booming in the UK at all levels – there's a lot of talk about racing and the positive example of Olympic success (which is wonderful) and lycra and expensive bikes.... but it's about a lot more than that. Cycling is also growing as a form of transport and quite simply, for fun. I think a lot of people have realised that they don't have to race, nor wear lycra, or have a carbon bike – cycling really can be enjoyed at all levels. It's also great exercise!

"I'm especially happy to see how many women in the UK are getting into cycling. I hope that the Olympics and Commonwealth Games showed that it's fine to get sweaty and muddy and try hard, if that's what you want to do, it's not "unfeminine". There are more and more women joining cycling clubs across

the UK and signing up to sportives... it's great to see. I hope it will tie in with the increasing profile and publicity around women's professional bike racing, for example with the Women's Tour of Britain.

"I miss Norfolk when I'm away! I'm very lucky to be able to train and compete full-time and it's a wonderful opportunity to travel the world to race, but it means I can't spend as much time here as I'd like. Occasionally I'll get a pang of homesickness and wish I were home. There's some beautiful riding round Norfolk too, and so much I still have to explore.

"I'm really happy with my move to triathlon: head-to-head bike racing is exhilarating and thrilling when it goes well, but it's also often nerve-wracking! I feel so grateful for all the opportunities and luck I had in cycling, and for my amazing experiences, and I'm really happy I could retire from cycling satisfied. But I haven't lost the drive to race and train hard, and I've been longing to run more for years, and now with long-distance triathlon and multisport I get to chase that dream. I can't believe my luck!"





Talk by Chris Steele-Perkins

Learn about the background of Holkham's exhibition and meet the photographer himself for a talk and presentation on the evening of Wednesday, 15th April. Chris Steele-Perkins will be describing how over a period of twelve months he worked to capture unique, behind-the-scenes photographs at Holkham. The year Chris spent here is the subject of his tenth book, launched in November 2014, entitled 'A Place in the Country'. During the talk Chris will show photographs from the book and talk about his experience of working at Holkham; the pleasures, the problems and the solutions. There will be a question and answer session following the interval and an opportunity to purchase signed copies of Chris's book.

Tickets cost £18 and include a glass of wine or soft drink. At 6.15pm the evening will begin with an opportunity to view the photographic exhibition in the Statue Gallery, followed by the talk at 7pm in the Saloon. The interval and drinks will be held in the Marble Hall.



Getting the view back!

Thanks to the removal of overhead power lines running across the marshes from Wells to Pinewoods Holiday Park, visitors to Wells beach and the pinewoods now have an uninterrupted view of the wide open skies for which this area is famous.

With 19 wooden poles and associated cable, the overhead lines were clearly visible, interrupting views of the fields and fresh water marshes. UK Power Networks removed about one and a half kilometres of overhead cable and worked to lay replacement underground cables, as part of the £115,000 project funded by Ofgem.

The route from Wells to Holkham Beach is incredibly popular, particularly for people walking along the sea wall or using the miniature railway.

Estelle Hook, policy and partnership officer for the Norfolk Coast Partnership said, "The Norfolk Coast Partnership has been delighted to develop this scheme in the Norfolk Coast AONB, working closely with UK Power Networks and the Holkham Estate. The removal of these overhead lines and their poles has opened up the beautiful views looking from the Wells sea wall across the marshes towards Lady Anne's Drive. The results have also greatly benefitted the large numbers of wildfowl and wintering birds which use the marsh, by removing the risk of collision with the lines."



Gilder's gold fingers!

Viscount Coke's younger brother, the Hon. Rupert Coke has been at work in the hall. He has been expertly applying over £5,500-worth of 23.5 carat gold leaf to the window surrounds, door pediments, columns and dado rails in the North State Sitting Room and North State Bedroom as part of the ongoing conservation undertaken year-round at Holkham. The impressive bed has also received the attention of the gilders – Rupert's colleague has restored and gilded it to magnificent effect. The task of gilding both rooms was a big one and Rupert worked very long days and weekends to ensure that the work was completed before the hall opened at the end of March.

However, it was worth the work – the gold has enriched the room in a way that nothing else could, astonishing when you consider that the gold leaf that Rupert works with is only 1/250,000th of an inch thick or approximately 0.1 microns. A stack of one thousand sheets of 0.1 micron gold leaf is the same thickness as a typical piece of printer paper.

Rupert has been doing this often physically demanding work for a number of years. To be a good gilder you need to be observant, precise, creative, have a steady hand and a lot of patience. Half the work is in the correct preparation of the surfaces to be gilded, after which he applies the sticky liquid known as 'size' to the surfaces for the gold to adhere to. He then has a window of opportunity of 12 to 48 hours in which to apply the gold leaf.

When you next visit the hall, take a look, the effect is superb. Or visit the Holkham website www.holkham.co.uk and follow the links to the YouTube channel where there is an interesting video of Rupert at work gilding.

Ancient House gets ready to welcome guests

The conversion of Ancient House in Holkham village is almost complete. Robson Construction Limited has done a superb job of converting the building into ten much-needed additional spacious bedrooms for The Victoria. The soft furnishings specified by interior designer Julia Laidlaw have been put in place, along with the furniture that estate project co-ordinator Johanna Tennant has been sourcing from antique shops and auctions over the last year.

Four of the larger rooms will have attractive sitting rooms appealing to families and guests who are looking for their own private, quiet space.

The façade of the building reflects the care that has been spent on it, much of which has been repointed. Extensive restoration has been undertaken and traditional building materials such as lime mortar have been used. A new hedge of *Quercus ilex* (Holm Oak), imported from Italy, has been planted and at the back of the building is a beautiful enclosed lawned area, where guests will be able to sit and relax.

The Victoria and Ancient House have benefitted from Holkham's drive to save energy – they are both heated by the third biomass boiler on the estate and Ancient House uses very low energy LED lights. The refurbished building has a lot of insulation, both for heat conservation and sound and as a result is quiet, warm and welcoming.

Bookings for Ancient House are being taken now and it opens on 1st May 2015.





Join Jools and the Proms for two evenings of entertainment

This summer the open-air concerts at Holkham feature Jools Holland and his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra on Saturday 29th August and The Last Night of the Proms hosted by television presenter Fiona Bruce on Sunday 30th August.

We are delighted to welcome back Jools Holland and his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra for a night of jazz and blues following the success of their last show in 2013. Jools' special guest will be Marc Almond. This year's 20-piece orchestra will accompany Ruby Turner, Louise Marshall, Mabel Ray and drummer Gilson Lavis. Jools Holland leads the orchestra in a musical catalogue to capture all tastes. A boogie-woogie party not to miss!

The south park at Holkham is also the backdrop to the Last Night of the Proms concert. The English

National Philharmonic Orchestra will perform popular classical music joined by Fiona Bruce as compere for the evening. The orchestra will accompany soprano Clare Ormshaw and tenor Lee Bradley, whilst conductor Ben Crick will try to keep the audience under control! Sing some of Britain's best-loved patriotic pieces and watch as the evening draws to a conclusion with a spectacular fireworks display.

Gates open at 4.30pm on both evenings so you can set out your picnic and soak up the atmosphere before the concerts begin at 7.30pm. Tickets for both shows can be purchased at advance booking rates from www.livepromotionsconcerts.co.uk at £39.95 for Jools Holland and £29.50 for the Last Night of the Proms. Tickets are also available from the Holkham ticket office. For more information visit www.holkham.co.uk



Beautiful things!

Daughter of the 7th Earl of Leicester, Lady Laura Paul has built up a successful jewellery business offering women a collection of contemporary designs that are elegant, versatile and affordable. Easily reached from her stylish website, she aims to make jewellery an essential and considered part of any feminine wardrobe.

The business is wholly her own. Laura meets with designers to source the pieces she wants to sell, orders them, arranges photography when they arrive, runs the website and processes all the sales – Laura is very much a one-woman band!

Her secret is in having a good eye in what will appeal to women and the affordability of her collection enables them to buy for themselves, something she feels very strongly about. Her pieces range in price from £20 up to around £130.

To see the range, visit Laura's website www.laurapauljewellery.co.uk. Laura is offering a 15% discount to readers, valid from the date of publication until the end of April. To take advantage of this offer enter the code KL3FTS at the checkout.



What's on locally...

'Get Growing' in the walled gardens

Plant a broad bean to take home and see how big it grows!
Sunday 29th March to Sunday 12th April from 10am to 4pm. Excludes 3rd to 6th April

Easter Fun at Holkham

For all the family.
Friday 3rd to Monday 6th April from 10am to 5pm

Walking Women

Meet at the Beach Café, Wells.
Tuesdays 7th April, 2nd June at 10am

Guided Walk on the National Nature Reserve

Meet at Lady Anne's Drive, Holkham.
Tuesday 21st April at 10am

Pedal Norfolk Cycling Festival

Saturday 2nd to Monday 4th May

Walking Women, Holkham Park

Meet at the Ticket Office.
Tuesday 5th May at 10am

Guided Walk on the National Nature Reserve

Tuesday 19th May at 10am

Chamber Music at Holkham

Saturday 25th April at 7pm
Laura Samuel, violin,
Simon Rowland-Jones, viola,
Alasdair Tait, cello
Carole Presland, piano

Saturday 23rd May at 7pm
Christian Blackshaw, piano

Saturday 6th June at 7pm
Cavaleri String Quartet

Spring Tours of the Private Gardens

Guided by our landscape team.
Sunday 24th May at 11am, 1pm and 3pm

Park Discovery Day

Pond Dipping in Holkham lake. What lies beneath the water?
Tuesday 26th and Thursday 28th May at 10am and 1pm



Walled Gardens Discovery Day

Discover the plants and wildlife that live in this unique habitat.
Wednesday 27th May at 10am and 1pm

Deer Discovery Walk

A guided walk to learn some interesting facts about the herd of deer in Holkham park.
Wednesdays 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th June at 11am and 2pm

Open Farm Sunday

Get involved in this national event and learn about modern-day farming at Holkham.
Sunday 7th June from 10am

Guided Walk on the National Nature Reserve

Meet at Lady Anne's Drive.
Tuesday 16th June at 10am

50 mile sportive cycle ride

Raising money for Burnham Market Nursery School. Passes through Holkham park. Entries online at www.britishcycling.org.uk/events/details/126977/Burnham-Market-Nursery-School-Mid-Summer-50.
Sunday 21st June

Holkham Country Fair

Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th July from 10am



For more information about Holkham events go to www.holkham.co.uk

The Victoria's head chef Nik Hare at the East Anglian Game & Country Fair

The East Anglian Game & Country Fair is an annual, two-day, family event held at the Norfolk Showground, Norwich. This year's show will take place on 25th and 26th April. We are delighted to say that Nik Hare, head chef at The Victoria, has been asked to give a cookery demonstration in the Cookery Theatre and Food Hall on the Saturday at 4pm.

Nik's cooking is part of the current revival of British food but his culinary start is solidly based in French cuisine. He trained in France and it is this French discipline and skill that he has brought to The Victoria. Nik uses the very best local ingredients, much of them from the estate such as venison, vegetables from the farm and walled gardens, all prepared with elegant simplicity.



Progress at the walled gardens

The walled gardens at Holkham are divided into 'rooms' and one of these is the spectacular 'Arena of Plants' which is entering its third year since it was laid out and planted. At the end of this growing season, Landscape Department manager Phillip Oldham and his team will lift many of the plants which have reached the end of their first flush of vigour. The rootstocks of these plants will be divided and they will be replanted. This treatment invigorates the plants, increases their number and means that any gaps in the beds are filled, leading to a better show in subsequent years.

The room planted with a vineyard is coming on well. Dene Wood, who has recently been appointed head of the walled gardens, explained how this year's growth on the young vines will be bent down and tied to wires. Any grapes produced this year will be disposed of, as the plants are not yet old enough to start producing useable fruit. The beds around the vineyard will be planted this year with Mediterranean plants – it is a very warm spot in the garden and the idea is to put in plants that evoke a feeling of cool and calm.

Another of the rooms is going to be transformed into a jungle! Phillip and Dene want to make an area of lush grass in the centre, surrounded by as many exotic plants, shrubs, trees and palms as they can get hold of. They have plants on order from Morocco and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, among other places. There will be banana plants, Ethiopian yams and other tropical palms, as well as smaller plants that are more at home in a jungle, than in Norfolk. They are sure that this new planting will thrive, as the walled gardens have their own microclimate and are sheltered by high walls, making perfect growing conditions for plants such as these, that won't survive in any Norfolk garden. As these plants are tender, planting will start once the danger of frost has passed.

Links with local schools have been strengthened and Phillip is delighted that a number of students from Alderman Peel High School in Wells have been studying for their NVQ in gardening, which includes a lot of practical work in the walled gardens themselves. If the students are successful, their new qualification could lead them to Easton College if they decide to take their studies further. Continuing the success of last year, children from Burnham Market Primary School are once again designing planting schemes for some flowerbeds. The landscape and the education departments work closely together and there are plans for an increased number of school and college visits this year.

The walled gardens has a roster of around 30 people willing to volunteer for a few hours a week. If you have some free time and would like to become a volunteer, please contact Dene by email d.wood@holkham.co.uk

Garden tasks for the spring

- Mulch your garden with a good thick layer of organic material – 7 to 10 cm (3 to 4 inches) if you can. This will cut down on the number of weeds, warm the soil, make it more moisture retentive and improve its structure, adding in nutrients so that they are available to your plants.
- You can sow summer cabbage, cauliflower and early round peas now – start them off in pots on a windowsill and they will be ready to plant out when the weather improves. You can also plant Jerusalem artichokes and sow parsnips directly into the soil where you want them to grow.
- Prune your hydrangeas now before spring growth really starts.
- If you are lucky enough to have a greenhouse or conservatory, and if you grow peaches or nectarines, help them to pollinate by dusting pollen from plant to plant.
- Plant broad beans now – why not come along to the walled gardens before Sunday 12th April (excludes 3rd to 6th April) and take part in our 'Get Growing' event and take a newly-planted broad bean home – see the Holkham website for more details.
- Cut *Miscanthus* back now – but don't cut into new shoots
- You can be chitting your potatoes, ready for planting out, and onion sets can go in.



Woodland play area now open for toddlers too!

The woodland play area at Holkham has been a great success since it opened in 2013. However, up until now there have been age restrictions on the equipment, which has meant that the younger children have had to watch enviously as their older siblings get to climb, swing, run and balance.

This year sees the installation of new equipment specially designed for the little ones to enjoy. There is a new sand pit, a toddlers' swing set and a ground play section.

New activities for older children have been added too with a stepping stone bridge, a crawl tunnel and an amazing split-level tower. Now everyone can find something to play on.



Open-air cinema

Sit back and enjoy the big screen. On 23rd and 24th May, courtesy of Luna Cinema, we are bringing two popular films to Holkham – *Mamma Mia!* and *Top Gun*.

Saturday 23rd May – Mamma Mia! (PG)

Showing in the walled gardens. Come and sing along to all those ABBA hits.

Sunday 24th May – Top Gun (12A)

On the north lawn opposite the hall it's the turn of Tom Cruise to take your breath away.

Gates open at 7.30pm each evening so that you have time to picnic before the film which is due to commence at 9pm.

Tickets are £12.50 for adults and £8.50 for children aged between 5 to 15, available from www.thelunacinema.com and also from the Holkham ticket office.