

National Trust Press Release

Images are available here  [Lanhydrock Long Gallery re-opening press shots](#)

Lanhydrock re-opens to visitors after yearlong Long Gallery ceiling conservation project

- Lanhydrock house and garden re-opens to visitors on 1 March
- Visitors can see the fully conserved ceiling for the first time
- The 17th century Long Gallery at Lanhydrock in Cornwall is among the most spectacular in Europe
- Conservation of plasterwork ceiling depicting Biblical scenes, birds, exotic animals and mythical beasts took a year to complete
- Visitors can also see the intricate Antwerp Cabinet, which has also returned to the house following conservation work



The house and garden at Lanhydrock in Cornwall re-opens on 1 March. Visitors can see the spectacular Long Gallery ceiling, which can be seen for the first time following a yearlong conservation project.

At 35 metres (116 feet) long, the barrel-vaulted ceiling of the Long Gallery at the National Trust's Lanhydrock in Cornwall took conservation experts months to clean centuries' worth of dirt and discolouration and to carry out delicate repairs.

"It's been a huge project, and I can't wait for visitors to be able to see the completed ceiling in all its glory," says Nicola Heald, Senior Collections & House Manager at Lanhydrock. "The conservation team have done an amazing job: from applying new distemper to repairing unicorn horns, the difference to the ceiling is staggering."

The Long Gallery ceiling can be found alongside a new exhibition about the construction of the Long Gallery, the people behind it, and some of the treasures of Lanhydrock's collection. Visitors can also enjoy the ceiling from specially commissioned couches, allowing people to lie down and look up at the exquisitely detailed mouldings.

Comprising 24 panels with scenes from the Old Testament Book of Genesis, including Adam and Eve, Noah and the Ark, the Life of Jacob, and David and Goliath, they are surrounded by more than 350 different species of animals, as well as beautifully moulded plants and mythical beasts.

Created for Lanhydrock's former owner, John Robartes, between 1620-40, the ceiling is a masterpiece of Jacobean plasterwork. John Robartes and the craftsmen took inspiration from manuscripts in his library and from printed drawings.

New research has shown that the beasts on the ceiling were copied directly from a book by Edward Topsell, a clergyman who published several books containing real and fantastical animals. A copy of the book is now on display as part of a new exhibition on the ceiling.

"We're so lucky to be able to display a copy of Topsell's book," continues Nicola Heald, House and Collections Manager at Lanhydrock. "Looking at the illustrations and comparing them to the animals on the ceiling, it's clear how closely the craftspeople of the ceiling were using it."

"These animals weren't just created as a talking point either. John Robartes was a devout Christian and the animals were used to show an appreciation of God through his creation of such magnificent creatures."

As well as Topsell's book, highlights of Lanhydrock's nationally significant book collection are also on display, including an intricately embroidered prayer book belonging to Lucy Robartes, wife of John Robartes, which also includes notes in her handwriting.

"Lanhydrock's library is one of the most significant in the National Trust. All 3400 books, as well as all the furniture, had to be moved for the work to take place in the Long Gallery. It's taken us all winter to put everything back," Nicola continues. "It's great to be able to feature some of these fascinating books for the first time this year."

The Long Gallery ceiling wasn't the only conservation project for Lanhydrock last year. The Antwerp Cabinet has also returned to the Long Gallery, following 275 hours of conservation and research at the Royal Oak Foundation studio at Knole. The cabinet dates from around 1660 and shows off the best of skilled craftsmanship and precious materials from the time. The conservation of the Antwerp Cabinet was generously funded by the Royal Oak Foundation.


Lanhydrock house is open daily to visitors 11am-5pm from Saturday 1 March. For further information and opening times visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lanhydrock

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Notes to editors:

For further media information please contact: Harriet Pinches, harriet.pinches@nationaltrust.org.uk or 07717 941424 or SW Comms, Louisa Reeves, louisa.reeves@nationaltrust.org.uk

Images:

Images can be downloaded here:  [Lanhydrock Long Gallery re-opening press shots](#). Only to be used in conjunction with this press release. Credit and caption as per file name.

About Lanhydrock

In 1620, the land at Lanhydrock was sold to Sir Richard Robartes. Richard was regarded as the 'wealthiest in the west', having inherited a fortune of £300,000 from his father. Richard planned and began work on a large manor house but died soon after. His son John continued the project including The Long Gallery ceiling, the whole house being completed by 1651.

Lanhydrock is a quintessential country house and estate, with the feel of a wealthy but unpretentious family home. After a devastating fire in 1881 the Jacobean house was refurbished in high-Victorian style, with the best in country house design and planning and the latest mod-cons. Discover two sides of Victorian life: from the kitchen which offers a thrilling glimpse into life 'below stairs', to the luxurious family areas, elegant dining room and spacious bedrooms which reveal the comforts of 'upstairs' living.

The extensive 30-acre garden enjoys year-round colour. There are beautiful herbaceous borders, a fabulous formal parterre and colourful higher gardens filled with camellias, magnolias and rhododendrons. The estate is well worth exploring too, with ancient woodlands and tranquil riverside paths. There are also off-road cycle trails, with special routes for families and novice riders, and you can even hire a bike from us to make the most of this opportunity.

About the National Trust

In January 2025 the National Trust marked its 130th birthday by launching its new 10-year strategy *People and Nature Thriving*.

Founded in the late 19th century to preserve the natural environment from the ravages of industrialisation, then adapting to save scores of country houses from dereliction in the wake of the World Wars, the charity is now ramping up its efforts to address the new national need: the climate and nature crises. This strategy, which will guide the charity's work and direction from 2025-2035 and beyond, focuses on three key goals:

- Restore Nature
- End unequal access to nature, beauty and history
- Inspire more people to care and take action

Restore Nature: The Trust will work in partnership with environmental organisations, farmers, landowners and local communities to create 250,000 hectares of nature-rich landscapes, an area one-and-a-half times the size of Greater London, both on Trust land and off it. This will be the biggest contribution to addressing the catastrophic decline in nature the Trust has made in its history.

End unequal access: The places we care for were once only enjoyed by a few, but we now welcome more than 150 million visits each year. However, many people don't have enough nature in their lives to be healthy, or enough cultural experience to feel valued. We need to break down the barriers – whether practical or emotional – that stop people from being able to benefit from green spaces, nature, heritage and culture.

Inspire more people: These goals are ambitious, and it will be the work of many, not the few, to achieve them. The Trust is aiming to inspire millions more people to care for and take action for nature and heritage in the next decade, by giving their time, voice or money to the cause.

The plans follow the largest public consultation ever carried out by the National Trust, with more than 70,000 people – including members, volunteers and industry partners – sharing their views on the Trust's work and direction.

Read more about the National Trust's strategy [here](#).