

## The Director-General's Statement

Fiona Reynolds  
Director-General



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# Continuing to inspire and delight

Our properties continue to inspire and delight.

Each year about fifty new ones, large and small, are added to the Trust's portfolio, and we find new ways to make each of our properties relevant to the needs of the communities we serve.

For all of us in the Trust this is a labour of love.

### **A demanding year ahead**

In less rosy economic circumstances, with costs rising and public expectations growing, the year ahead will be demanding as well as exciting. It will be difficult to find the resources to do everything we want to do. We will have to prioritise and rigorously bear down on costs.

We will continue to follow our three priorities: to lead in the regeneration of our countryside and towns; to deepen our understanding of the meaning and value of heritage; and to make sure education and lifelong learning are at the heart of everything we do.

### **Leadership in the regeneration of our countryside and towns**

The Trust, with over 250,000 hectares of land and 1,500 tenant farms, has the unique strength of an organisation which can practise what it preaches. Rural communities need leadership in a time of crisis. Our pioneering Farming Forward

programme demonstrates that economic viability can be combined with environmental best practice.

Over the coming year, we will develop more whole farm plans, local food initiatives and farm-based education and training. Our practical experience will help the Government to deliver on the promises set out in its Sustainable Food and Farming Strategy and Rural White Paper. Trust estates like Killerton in Devon and Brockhampton in Herefordshire will demonstrate new approaches to land management which respect and enhance the environment.

We will also promote the importance of domestic tourism to the economy, and show how much our historic and natural heritage can contribute to local communities. Where we have a presence in our cities, we will play an active part in their cultural renaissance, and we plan to increase our profile in London.

### **Brockhampton**

The Brockhampton Estate in Herefordshire is being used to demonstrate new approaches to land management which enhance the environment.

NTPL/ROGER HICKMAN



**New look publications**

The National Trust Handbook and the Magazine were completely redesigned during the year; both received a complimentary response. The Handbook is now printed in colour throughout, with charts to simplify information about opening times.

**Deepening our understanding of the meaning and value of heritage**

The public thirst for understanding our roots in the past has never been stronger. Our properties can bring our history and culture to life much more vividly for visitors than is possible in print or on television. We will find new ways to open up this experience to the widest possible audience, through better interpretation, through a new themed advertising campaign and through using the performing arts.

The historic environment matters not just for its own sake, but also for the economic and social benefit it brings. At Tyntesfield, for instance, we will show how a large country estate can help to enrich the lives of today's communities. All kinds of people, from young offenders to pensioners, will be able to develop new skills and understanding through involvement in the restoration, conservation and management of the property.

Our plans to acquire and open up Divis Mountain high above Belfast will be an inspiring moment for the Trust in Northern Ireland. For two years we have built up support for the project across the divided communities of west Belfast with the help of organisations like the Shadow Belfast Hills Partnership. This visionary scheme has a special significance for people who, for two generations, have been unable to look down on their city from the summit of the mountain which overshadows it.

Also in Northern Ireland we are organising a Commission of Inquiry into the planning system, the inadequacies of which have long been a concern to the Trust. In Wales, as a direct outcome of a conference organised by the Trust with the Welsh Environment Minister, a major report has been published on the historic environment. Next year we will make sure both this and the report on the State of the Historic Environment in England are taken forward and acted on.

**Education and lifelong learning**

Last year an ambitious Learning Vision was approved by the Council. This year will see its first fruits. With the generous support of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) we launch The Untold Story, an innovative education project. Ten properties will work with local communities to uncover and tell stories about the past and develop the skills of those participating.

We will also complete a major audit of all our education activities, and review the way we interpret our properties to visitors. We want the experience of a National Trust visit to be involving and revelatory, using best practice and innovation to achieve the very highest standards of education and interpretation.

In the autumn BBC Television will broadcast a five-part series on a year in the life of the National Trust. Film-makers have followed staff as they manage places as diverse as Tyntesfield, Stonehenge and John Lennon's childhood home in Liverpool, exploring some of the issues and challenges facing the Trust.

None of this could be achieved without the support of more than three million members, tens of thousands of volunteers and the zest and professionalism of our staff. The Council's report which follows provides snapshots of an enormously successful year. It demonstrates how we are delivering on our objectives, and how we intend to inspire and delight new generations of visitors, notwithstanding the financial challenges we face.

Total membership (millions)	
1983	1.1
1987	1.5
1991	2.1
1995	2.3
1999	2.5
2003	3.1

20 June 2003