



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.

