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First National Trust farm shop at Polesden Lacey advertisement

Explore Polesden Lacey

By [Lauren Margrave](#)
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POLESDEN Lacey is much more than just a mansion with a garden.

During the past three years the estate in Great Bookham has been home to a dozen contractors working to refurbish the visitor facilities.

But now they have all gone, the former gift shop has been transformed into a restaurant and the first National Trust farm shop has opened its doors, the National Trust site has more to offer than ever.

Travelling along the sweeping driveway towards the main house gives you a chance to appreciate the magnificence of the estate, which was formerly owned by Margaret Greville.

The ambitious widow rose from obscure origins to attain political influence, great wealth and friendship of loyalty.

An inveterate traveller and relentless celebrity-hunter, she could be both discreetly charitable and personally waspish.

She bequeathed Polesden Lacey and most of her other property to the National Trust in 1942, in memory of her father.

As you wander around the grounds Mrs Greville's quirky presence is still very much alive - with the restoration of her pet's graveyard and statues in her memory.

Thought has even been given to the type of foods Mrs Greville would have served in her kitchen and the way she would have treated guests dining at her table.

As part of the refurbishment the first National Trust farm shop was opened at Polesden Lacey earlier this year.

The shop aims to support the excellence of regional British farming and produce by offering customers the finest seasonal food and drink from around the countryside.

Products include meat from resident farmer Steve Conisbee, wine from Denbies Wine Estate, cakes from Crosbies in Wormley and mayonnaise and chutneys from Godalming based Le Mesuriers.

With so much to explore, one day is simply not enough time to completely unwind and appreciate the tranquil setting.

This is one of the reasons why the National Trust made the former gardener's cottage, buried deep in the grounds, available to the public to rent.

This quaint cottage is situated just beyond the rose garden and opposite the iris garden, affording panoramic views across the deep valley to Ranmore Woods.

Renovated in 2001, the cottage is one of 300 open to the public across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Outside the ivy covered house looks like something out of a fairytale and it has been so sympathetically restored that stepping inside is like taking a trip back in time.

But looks are deceiving because although its décor reflects times-gone-by, the cottage features all the mod cons to make your stay as comfortable as possible.

And the best thing about renting it is that when the clock strike 5pm and the estate closes you have got the grounds to yourself.

Prices to rent the cottage, which sleeps six people, start at £498.

For more information on Polesden Lacey and to find out about events going on at the estate, such as the festival in July, visit www.nationaltrust.org/polesdenlacey

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