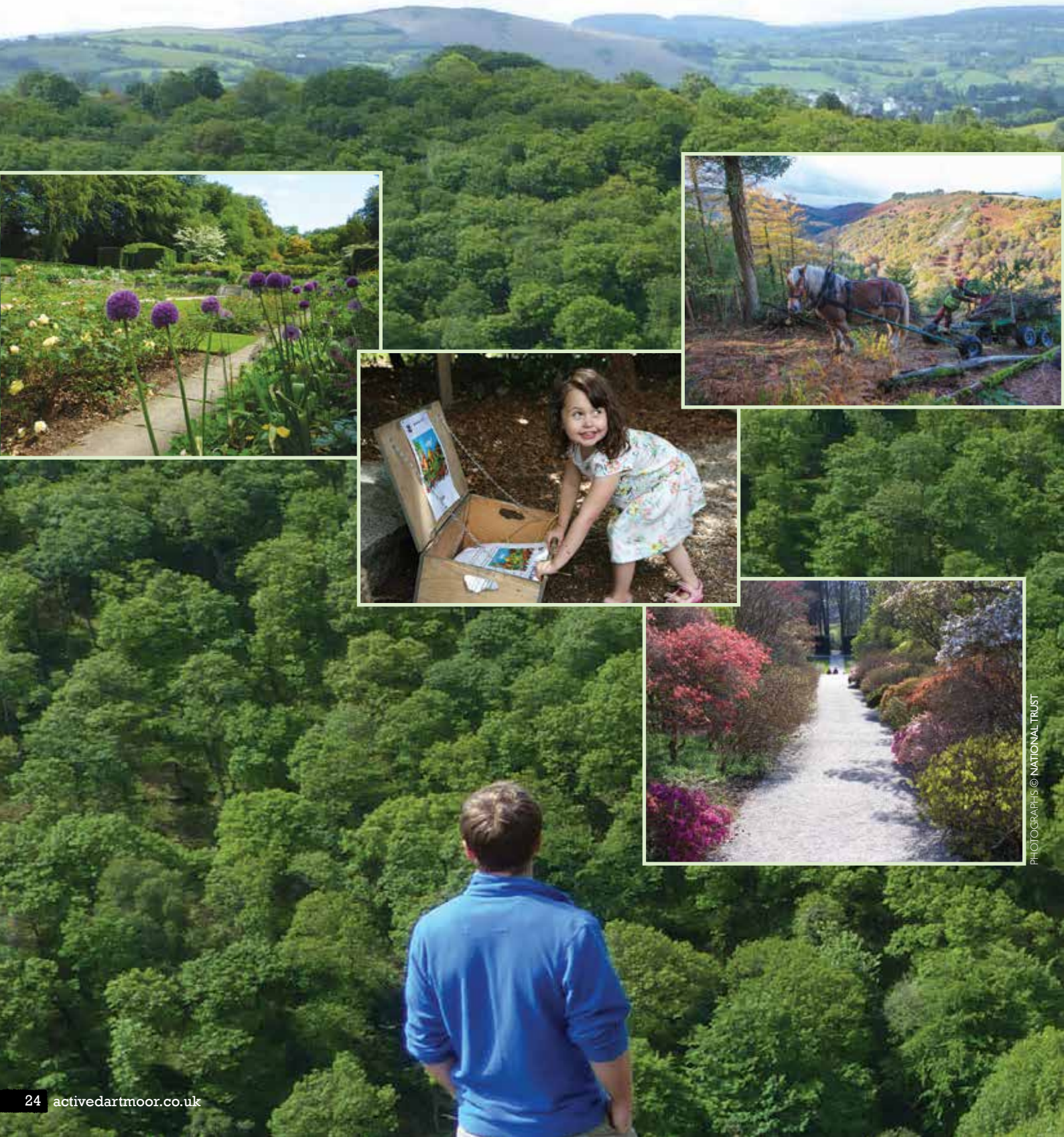


Castle Drogo

Walks, Castle, Café



Perched above the Teign Gorge looking out over Dartmoor stands a windswept country home that looks as ancient as the landscape it's set in: Castle Drogo. However this remarkable building, built by Sir Edwin Lutyens for self-made millionaire Julius Drewe, is only 100 years old - the last castle ever built in England.



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The castle has suffered from structural problems ever since it was built resulting in major leaks and water damage throughout the building. By 2012 water was also starting to rust the steel infrastructure making the need to save the building urgent. Following a massive fundraising appeal, the building project was begun in earnest in 2012 and now, 5 years later the project is entering its final phase.

To make the castle watertight, the asphalt across the roof is being removed and replaced with a waterproof system. To install it all the parapets and structure above roof level have to be dismantled and rebuilt – 2600 granite blocks weighing 680 tonnes. Each individual block of granite is numbered so that it can be put back in the exact same place. The walls are being cleaned and repointed using lime mortar and the 913 windows containing approximately 13,000 panes of glass are being removed, stripped down, rebuilt and then reinstated.

For 2017 the rooms within the castle have been redisplayed to tell the stories of the Drewe family and the building work. In the Drawing room displays of family objects such as war medals and a teddy bear tell the story of how the lives of the five Drewe children changed over time. In another part of the castle art and design group Mdesign have brought to life the stories of the building work 100 years ago and now through interactive displays.

Surrounding the castle there are miles of footpaths through the Teign Gorge as well as around the garden and grounds to explore. A gentle stroll from the castle will take you to Sharp Tor where there are sweeping views down the gorge and out of Dartmoor. A longer walk will take you into the ancient woodlands and along the River the Teign.

A bit further down the gorge in Fingle woods the walk up to Wooston castle takes you up a steep climb, but it's worth it as when you reach the top, you can stand in the newly cleared Iron age hill fort and take in the views down the gorge just like the people living there thousands of years ago would have done.

After all that walking you then have the perfect excuse to refuel with a hearty lunch or a delicious slice of cake in the Drogo café. The café, shop, garden and gorge are open daily 10am-5.30pm (closed 24-26 December).

The castle will be open daily from 6 March and, as well as the chance to see inside the castle, there will be the rare opportunity for those with a head for heights to climb the scaffolding viewing tower. Standing at 15-metre high the viewing tower allows visitors to take in a bird's eye view of the roof.

For more information visit nationaltrust.org.uk/castle-drogo ■

