

January-20



Dear Club Members,

2020 marks the 125th Anniversary of the founding of The National Trust. They're one of the UK's largest charities and care for many historic buildings, places, and areas of countryside.

One of their founders was a woman called Octavia Hill. Throughout her life she campaigned for social reform, and worked to improve the lives of people in the ever growing urban parts of the country. She believed that accessing nature was vital for good well being. She campaigned to ensure that public rights of way remained open and also wanted to stop the destruction of the old buildings that form part of our cultural heritage.

She was born in 1838, the granddaughter of Dr Thomas Southwood Smith. A leading early Victorian public health campaigner, he spent his life working to give the urban poor access to better housing. Her parents were also social reformers and were followers of Robert Owen (who was born in Newtown near to where I live, more links to him in the further references). When her fathers business failed her mother took charge of the household, and encouraged all her daughters to take jobs. Octavia ended up running a workroom at a Christian Socialist co-operative managed by her mother. Octavia organised middy meals for her workers, visited them when they were sick, and took them on nature study walks around London Commons.

As she grew older her socialist connections grew, she developed friendships with the pioneering Christian Socialist minister Frederick Denison Maurice, radical thinker John Ruskin and the anti-capitalist critic and author Charles Kingsley. Ruskin purchased properties in her name, and Octavia ran them as a friendly landlord. She still expected the rent to be paid, but was willing to take a lower return on the investment in order to improve and maintain the building (very unusual amongst urban landlords at that time). As time went on she stepped outside her own property interests and joined a campaign to save Swiss Cottage Fields in London from development. Even though that campaign failed, later campaigns to save Parliament Hill Fields, Vauxhall Park and Hill Fields were successful. In 1895 she became one of the founders of the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty. The Trusts aim- "so that green spaces could 'be kept for the enjoyment, refreshment, and rest of those who have no country house.'"

In 1895 the Trust acquired it's first piece of land, Dinas Oleu in Barmouth, a section of the Welsh coast where we walk regularly. It was donated by Mrs Fanny Talbot, a widow who had inherited land and money on the death of her husband. She was a friend of Octavia Hill, believed in her vision of making sure that open spaces remained accessible to all. From these 4.5 acres the Trust has become Europe's largest conservation charity, and the views are spectacular. Looking out over the 58,000 acres in Snowdonia owned by the Trust and some of the 196 miles of Welsh coastline also in their care.

Another woman, Beatrix Potter, was another major donor to the Trust, and worked alongside them in her lifetime. When she died she left much of her Lake District estate to the Trust, Beatrix Potter featured as the inspiration for the January 2016 club fibre.

Octavia did much good in her lifetime, but by modern standards she would still be regarded as conservative in her politics. She believed that social inequality was best tackled by private enterprise and charity rather than by the government. She was against the welfare state, free-school meals, council housing, and a universal old-age pension.

Your colour inspiration this time comes from a paint company who used to work with the National Trust; Farrow & Ball took colours that had been found during the restoration of old houses and turned them in to a modern paint range, but one that could be used sympathetically in old houses. Their collaboration with the Trust has now ended, but the inspiring range of paint colours remains, and has carried on expanding. You can find the list of 7 paint colours that match your fibre in the Further Reading section.

I'm going to end the letter this month with a quote from Octavia, which is still perfect for our modern world.

'We all want quiet. We all want beauty . . . we all need space. Unless we have it, we cannot reach that sense of quiet in which whispers of better things come to us gently.'

Happy Spinning

Katie

Further Reading-

Robert Owen-

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Owen

Inspired by New Lanark, the textile mill established by Robert Owen in Scotland-

<https://hilltopcloudshop.co.uk/collections/cambrian/products/textile-heritage-new-lanark-100g-cambrian-welsh-x-bfl-wool>

New Lanark-

<https://www.newlanark.org>

History of the National Trust-

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/lists/our-history-1884-1945>

The first piece of National Trust owned land-

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/trails/dinas-oleu-walk-barmouth>

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/south-snowdonia/features/our-beginnings-at-dinas-oleu>

Beatrix Potter and the National Trust-

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/beatrix-potter-gallery-and-hawkshead/features/beatrix-potter-the-lake-district-and-the-national-trust>

https://www.hilltopcloud.co.uk/uploads/5/5/0/2/55028183/jan_16_letter.pdf

Farrow & Ball

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/03/18/the-luxury-paint-company-creating-a-new-kind-of-decorating-anxiety>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/such-subtlety-such-elegance-such-good-taste-1579808.html>

<https://www.farrow-ball.com/paint-colours>

<https://www.farrow-ball.com/our-story/our-history>

Paint Colours-

Arsenic (featured in the October 2015 TT club as Scheele's Green) https://www.hilltopcloud.co.uk/uploads/5/5/0/2/55028183/oct_15_tt_letter.pdf

London Clay

Calke Green (Found in the Breakfast Room at Calke Abbey <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/calke-abbey>)

Sudbury Yellow(Found in the Staircase at Sudbury Hall <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sudbury-hall-and-the-national-trust-museum-of-childhood>)

Hardwick White (Created to touch up the lime wash at Hardwick Hall <https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hardwick-hall>)

Cook's Blue (the colour in the pantry at Calke Abbey)

Fibre Content- In case your parcel is missing the label
37.5% BFL, 12.5% Swaledale, 50% Merino