



**National
Trust**

Dorothy Una Ratcliffe Artist/Illustration Fellowship Acorn Bank, Penrith

Deadline for applicants: Monday 30 November 2015, 5pm

Artist Brief

Acorn Bank is offering a 3-month fellowship for an artist/illustrator (individual or collaborative) during the spring months of 2016. This is an unusual residency opportunity in an extraordinary National Trust site in Cumbria, the former home of Dorothy Una Ratcliffe - an author, poet and patron of the arts. Artist/illustrators at any stage in their professional careers, who are not currently studying, are welcome to apply.

Acorn Bank is keen to continue Dorothy Una Ratcliffe's ethos and commission an artist/illustrator to spend time at the site and produce a body of work in response to the natural environment and rich wildlife of Acorn Bank. Now in its second year, the fellowship has previously been awarded to Chichi Parish.

The selected artist/illustrator will be provided with accommodation on site. While the primary aim of the fellowship is to offer an artist time and space to research and develop their practice, there is also a potential opportunity to exhibit within the house and on the wider estate throughout the 2016 summer season. At this stage all ideas are welcome.

Background information

Best known for its comprehensive herb collection and traditional fruit orchards, Acorn Bank is a tranquil haven with a fascinating industrial past. The mostly 17th century house was built on the site of an earlier Knights Templar building, and was the home of Dorothy Una Ratcliffe, until she gave it to the National Trust in 1950.



Dorothy Una Ratcliffe was born Dorothy Clough in 1887. She was a remarkable woman with an interesting and colourful life. She called herself the 'lady of a million daffodils' and was responsible for planting the great sweeps of daffodils behind Acorn Bank House. She had a passion for the wild landscapes of the Yorkshire Dales and Westmorland and the birds and wildflowers within them. She married three times, first as a very young woman to Charles Ratcliffe, nephew of Lord Brotherton of Leeds. This was not a happy marriage and she took to writing as a refuge, and wrote many books, poems, plays and stories about Yorkshire and Westmorland, often in dialect. She also wrote travel books and was a keen sailor and an early caravanner. She accompanied Lord Brotherton on his travels and assisted him in amassing his collection of art and medieval manuscripts, which are now in the University of Leeds's collection. He was a childless widower and she acted as his hostess. After his death she obtained a divorce and married her great love Captain Noel McGrigor Phillips.



Dorothy Una Ratcliffe at the helm of Sea Swallow

They bought Acorn Bank together in 1934 and renamed it Temple Sowerby Manor, restoring the house, which Dorothy filled with her art collection. They restored the gardens introducing ironwork and statuary and created a wildflower and bird reserve on the bank behind the house. Sadly Noel, who had been wounded in Gallipoli during the Great War, died in 1946 and in 1950 Dorothy gave Acorn Bank to the National Trust without its contents, which were dispersed, much of her collection going to Leeds City Art Gallery. She moved to Scotland with her third husband and died in 1967.

Throughout 2016 the National Trust is also celebrating the legacy of another extraordinary woman who lived and worked in Cumbria, Beatrix Potter, marking the 150th anniversary of her birth in 1866. A near contemporary of Dorothy, Potter was 21 years older and also loved the wild landscapes of the North. There are interesting parallels as well as complete contrasts in their two lives and their approaches to the constraints placed on women of their times.

Best known as the author of the much loved Peter Rabbit books, Potter was also a scientist, botanical illustrator and in later life a farmer and conservationist. She had an enormous influence on the work of the National Trust in the Lake District. When she died in 1943 aged 77 she left over 4000 acres of land and 15 farms to the National Trust for the benefit of the nation.

The fellowship has three main aims:

- To offer an artist/illustrator time and space to make work in response to this National Trust site.
- To celebrate two extraordinary women with a passion for the countryside who lived in what is now Cumbria in the early 20th century.
- To broaden visitors understanding and enjoyment of the natural environment of Acorn Bank.

Fees, Resources and Duration

The successful applicant will receive a grant of £2,500 (inclusive) which is intended to cover 3 months residency at Acorn Bank, although it is possible to extend the stay over a longer period (4-5 months) by negotiation. Accommodation is provided on site and will comprise a bed sit/small flat, plus a small studio space within the house. There may also be the opportunity to run workshops for visitors to Acorn Bank with a separate fee by negotiation.

Key Dates

Monday 30 November 2015, 5pm	Deadline for applications
Tuesday 15 December 2015	Shortlisted artists' interviewed at Acorn Bank, Penrith
Wednesday 16 December 2015	Applicants informed of outcome
Late February-end of May 2016	Fellowship period

How to Apply

If you would like to apply for the **Dorothy Una Ratcliffe Artist/Illustration Fellowship** please submit the following information.

- A current CV (up to two sides of A4).
- An initial response to this brief (up to one side of A4) describing your current artistic practice, the reasons for your interest in this residency and how the opportunity will impact upon the development of your artistic practice.
- Documentation of your recent work. Up to 5 JPEG images of your work (each no larger than 1MB) with an accompanying list of details (title, year, materials, dimensions) of all works presented. Any film or video work should be submitted on a showreel uploaded to Vimeo or Youtube. Audio work should be uploaded to Soundcloud. Video/audio showreels should be max. 5 minutes in length.

Please send your CV, statement and documentation/weblinks to Hannah Pierce, Contemporary Arts Programme Manager, National Trust: Hannah.pierce@nationaltrust.org.uk using the subject line 'Acorn Bank Fellowship 2016'. **N.B Our email attachment limit is 10mb*

Selection Criteria

Selection for interview will be based on the following criteria:

- The quality of your artwork and ideas.
- Your reasons for applying for this fellowship and need for a period of research and development.
- Your interest in working in the context of Acorn Bank and a willingness to discuss and share your ideas.

The selection panel will include Acorn Bank and National Trust staff and advisors.

Interviews will take place at Acorn Bank on Tuesday 15 December 2015. Those unable to travel can be interviewed by conference call. Reasonable national travel expenses to interviews can be reimbursed by National Trust on the submission of receipts.

Research

Please note that Acorn Bank will be open during weekends only from 2nd November to 20th December. Free access is offered both at weekends or during the week to individual artists who wish to undertake a site visit for research prior to submitting an application. Please email Sara Braithwaite, Property Manager if you wish to take up this offer with details of when you wish to visit. Sara.braithwaite@nationaltrust.org.uk

Please check opening times on the Acorn Bank website <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/acorn-bank/visitor-information/>