



hiddenireland

The Hidden Ireland began as a diverse collection of like-minded historic private homes under one umbrella so that they could collectively announce their existence to the wider world. The concept proved a tremendous hit.

Hidden Ireland owners have much in common, not least the knowledge of just how hard it is to keep a big house going, and their determination to do so. These houses are also hard to find, often notoriously so. This possible negative was ingeniously reincarnated as a glowing positive with the creation of the 'Hidden Ireland' brand, at once allowing those who visited such places to feel blissfully privileged to have found such a secret sanctuary. For overseas visitors seeking the definitive retreat, such houses offer an ideal opportunity to escape, to lock oneself away in the mini-kingdom of an ancient and sometimes rather eccentric Irish estate, to pull on some welly boots and wander out into a private wonderland of mossy woodlands, trout-filled rivers, sweet-smelling pleasure grounds and flourishing walled gardens.

Words: Ally Bunbury



This year Hidden Ireland celebrates its 25th anniversary. The group now numbers over thirty privately owned houses, encompassing lakeside Georgian mansions, coastal fishing lodges, converted linen mills, Victorian rectories and elegant city centre hideaways. They all offer exceptionally comfortable, and usually rather big, bedrooms, in which the beds are often four-poster and sometimes canopied. Breakfast and dinner tend to be traditional, wholesome and frequently delicious, served up with ingredients gathered from the surrounding area. And thence it is over to the guests to head out and explore the surrounding parklands and gardens, or absorb the rich history of these homes.

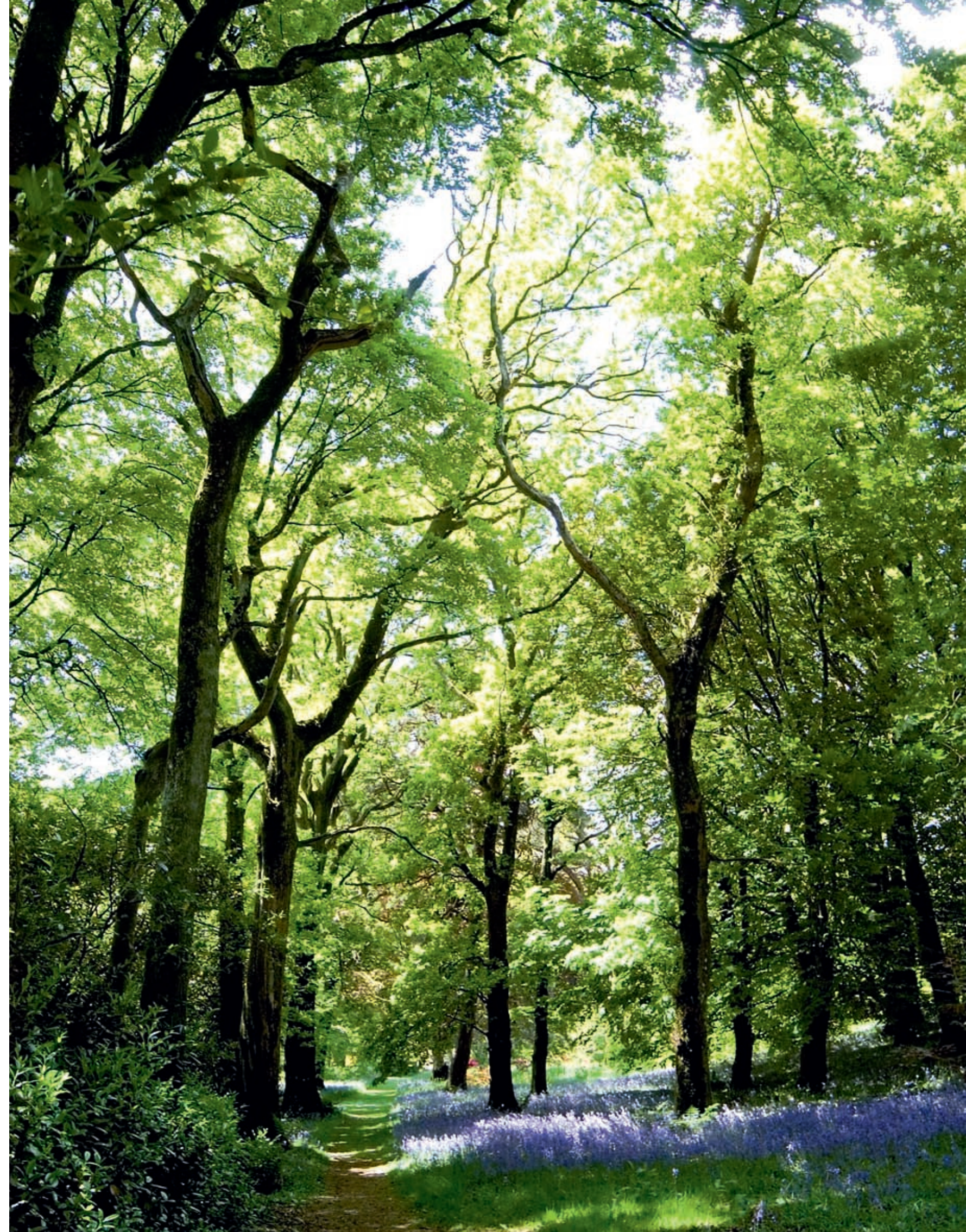




Ballyvolane is a classic Hidden Ireland house and has known three families; the Coppingers originally lived here in a much older building from sometime during the middle ages, until the land was acquired by the Pyne family in the early 18th century. The Pynes built the present house and lived there until 1955, when it was bought by the late Cyril Hall Green and his wife Joyce, on their return from Malaya, where Cyril had managed rubber plantations since the 1930's. Ballyvolane was passed on to Cyril's son, Jeremy, who ran it as a mixed tillage and dairy farm until the mid 1980's when it became one the founding members of the Hidden Ireland.



Ballyvolane was managed as a successful country house guesthouse by Jeremy and his wife, Merrie until January 2004, when the reins were handed to his son Justin and his wife, Jenny. Four generations of the Green Family now live at Ballyvolane.





The foot of history is everywhere deeply impressed upon Ireland. But for an insight into how life might have been for the upper classes in centuries past, or indeed for the pure romance and enjoyment of old style hospitality in sumptuous, old world locations, the Hidden Ireland certainly offers a thought-provoking alternative.

www.ballyvolanehouse.ie

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