

## Episode 5: Linda's Story

(0:02 - 0:19)

Welcome to the Landmark Chronicles. For 60 years, the Landmark Trust has rescued historic buildings at risk and turned them into unforgettable places to stay. To mark this milestone, we teamed up with National Life Stories at the British Library to record the stories of six long-standing members of staff.

(0:20 - 1:00)

The full interviews are now available in the British Library Archive, and we've turned some of the highlights into podcasts, giving you a behind-the-scenes glimpse of life at Landmark. Episode 5, Linda's Story As the longest-standing member of staff at Landmark's head office, Linda Millard has worked at the heart of the organisation for 42 years and is well known to many supporters through her work in the development team. In this episode, Linda sits down with a pile of old Landmark newsletters and takes us through five decades at the charity, as its many milestone moments interweave with the twists and turns of her own life and the demands of a changing world.

(1:01 - 1:17)

So I was born in Maidenhead at the Canadian Red Cross Hospital in 1966. So my mother grew up in Maidenhead. I think she was born in Maidenhead as well.

(1:17 - 1:48)

She trained as a hairdresser and then as I was growing up, she looked after us, my brother and I, and she sort of worked at home. I grew up in Pinkleys Green. So we lived next door to, I had an aunt on one side, so my dad's mother, my grandmother, actually attached to us in the sort of semi-detached house that we lived in, and then another aunt had some houses that she rented out.

(1:48 - 2:17)

So I think they'd been in the area for quite a long time, and I mean, yeah, it was great because my grandmother was a great cook. So I remember because she was only next door, you know, again, going around there, and she had a great tradition of having friends around on a Sunday afternoon where she would cook afternoon tea and scones and everything. So if we were very lucky, there was some left over and we were able to go, or she'd bring them round or whatever.

(2:17 - 2:35)

So it was quite good because the gardens were joined. So, you know, we were always sort of popping around or playing in my nan's garden because that's where our swings were and all of that sort of thing. So yes, up until I was, must be 20, 21, I think I'd lived there in Pinkleys Green, yeah.

(2:35 - 2:59)

My father grew up in Maidenhead. He spent sort of lots of time, because of where he lived in Pinkleys Green, was near the thicket, and he spent lots of time outside with his catapult shooting things. Pigeons, I think, mainly, but, you know, just aiming at, I don't know, trees or whatever it was.

(3:00 - 3:24)

But I think, you know, by the end, he was quite good shot and doing lots of things, you know, making whistles out of hazel twigs and, you know, all sorts of things. So, but he was a great walker. And he also, I suppose, just through his love of nature and birds and things, he, you know, he could tell through birdsong what bird it was, you know, he could identify them very quickly and easily.

(3:25 - 3:41)

So, yeah, going on a walk with him was always quite interesting, sort of, you always learn something, which is good. So my first school, so my infant school was Orwyn. So the next school I moved to was Courthouse Junior School.

(3:41 - 4:04)

I think that's where I sort of developed my interest in sport. So, yes, from Courthouse, I then moved to Newlands Girls' School, which was a comprehensive, I think originally it had been the girls' grammar school. I really got into my sport, particularly hockey, really enjoyed hockey, although played netball, tennis and for the school teams.

(4:05 - 4:25)

So as we became more senior in the school, we were then encouraged to help younger pupils. So going along in our lunchtimes to help, you know, coach younger players, umpiring, you know, all sort of the different aspects of the team. And then Friday lunchtime, we started an indoor hockey team as well, because we just couldn't get enough hockey.

(4:26 - 4:56)

So I know that I didn't want to go to university because I wasn't that academic and probably perhaps didn't have the confidence to be able to do that or confidence in my ability to be able to go to university. Um, nobody in my family had been in the past. I was aware of Sir John and Lady Smith and Shosterbrooke Estate because every year, I think it was every year, they had a steam fair in Shosterbrooke Park.

(4:56 - 5:16)

My grandfather worked on the airfield as well. Most people locally were aware of the Smiths because of the, you know, the farming and the land, you know, the land that they owned and things like that. And then, yes, I was looking for a job and something came up at Landmark, which I think my grandfather made me aware of.

(5:16 - 5:35)

I mean, I think it was advertised in the local paper and the main advertiser. And I think he knew John Ewers, who was the property manager then, because he lived close to the airfield and obviously in conversation, it came up. So then I applied for the job of receptionist and PA to the properties manager.

(5:36 - 6:03)

And so I joined Landmark in the December 1984, just after I'd left school. So I went in and so John Ewers was there, the then director, Jonathan Welfare, and the director's PA, Sheila. So I remember sort of sitting in, I can sort of visualise the office, which is now I think the director's PA's office, overlooking, looks onto the church and the lead fountain.

(6:03 - 6:18)

So I remember going in there and being interviewed. From memory, you know, very warm people, you know, and something that would interest me. I just thought, OK, well, this is going to be a job that looks quite interesting.

(6:18 - 6:29)

You know, it's relatively local. At that point, I didn't, I wasn't driving. So I had to rely on parents, mainly my mum, to take me there because there was no public transport or anything.

(6:30 - 6:45)

So, well, I remember the first day I arrived on the 10th of December at, I think, ten to nine. There was nobody in the office, nobody else was there, apart from the caretaker at that particular point. And that was a stage where we didn't have answer phones.

(6:45 - 7:03)

So if we had any overseas calls, she would also pick up the phone out of hours. So I arrived and Sue came out. And so the first thing as I arrived, oh, there's a call from the States, could you just take it? So this is my first day, first introduction.

(7:04 - 7:36)

So I did manage to, you know, speak to this person. And I think I took the number or something and got somebody to call them back when colleagues came in eventually. So the booking office consisted of two people, Brenda and Elizabeth, and they started at 9.30. Yeah, so Sue, the caretaker, who the lady I first met when I went in with the phone call, used to bring us coffee at 11 o'clock and tea at three o'clock with a biscuit and chocolate biscuits on a Friday.

(7:36 - 7:48)

I do have, you know, within those first couple of weeks, memories of Sir John coming in because he was running the estate. So Shottlesbrook estate, the farm and everything as well. So his farm manager used to come in on a Monday morning.

(7:49 - 8:13)

So Sir John was there every Monday. Met his farm manager at 9 to 9.30. And then 9.30, other, so the architect and advisor and other architects and visitors then came to see Sir John to sort of do landmark or manifold and landmark business, I think. And then they used to go up to the house for lunch at one o'clock where Ladysmith was.

(8:13 - 8:43)

And so, yeah, normally they've concluded all their business by, well, I'm sure it carried on over lunch, but sort of by 2, 2.30, everything had been sort of finished. He was very tall and because I'm sort of five foot six and he's well over six foot, you know, he was always very smartly dressed in either a business suit, sort of city suit or tweeds or something like that. And just, you know, I'm not frightened of him, but I suppose in awe of him because of, you know, who he was and all the things that he was and had done.

(8:44 - 9:01)

Yes, no, he was always very keen on meeting new staff. And I think he was aware of my grandfather's connection with the airfield and things. I think if he knew of a connection, he would always sort of acknowledge that, took a keen interest in, you know, what you were doing or whatever it was.

(9:02 - 9:34)

So within the two weeks of me joining, I had the first Christmas party or gathering, I suppose it was, at Dean's Yard. Sir John had an office at Dean's Yard, I think it was a hang up from when he was an MP, from historian and lots of legal people were based there. Every year there was a gathering of all the housekeepers, gardeners, landmark neighbours, architects, quantity surveyors and sort of any other interested people that the Smiths would invite just before Christmas.

(9:35 - 10:08)

You know, I didn't sort of travel into London very much and just, yeah, the excitement of all of that. And I suppose, yeah, another memory of that first, those first two weeks at work is that I got paid as well. So, you know, the most I'd ever been paid, you know, I'd only been there a couple of weeks, but I thought, oh, well, this is quite good.

I'm quite enjoying this. So sitting at my desk, so I had a door to one side on the right, a window into the sort of courtyard, lead fountain area overlooking the church in Wisteria. And then in the corner was the franking machine.

(10:08 - 10:22)

So all the post, because obviously everything then was by telephone and post. So I had to frank all the letters and send out all the handbooks. Obviously, you know, priority was the telephone, so I'd have to answer that within sort of three rings and, you know, announce all the calls.

(10:23 - 10:37)

Then when the post arrived, normally about half nine, ten o'clock, I used to open all of that and date stamp it, that sort of thing, and distribute it. So cheques came in for handbooks. The handbooks were sort of A5 size then.

(10:38 - 11:04)

So when I joined, we hadn't had a new handbook since 1977, because Sir John didn't have time to write a new handbook or, you know, new entries for all the new buildings. So a year later, I joined, I went up to the booking office. We had a short paragraph, maybe sort of two or three line description, black and white photograph on a couple of A4 sheets by the telephone.

(11:05 - 11:20)

So we used to read out the description of this new building. I think we might have done some photocopied sheets that we could perhaps send out if people wanted a bit more information. But normally, if people were asking about this particular building, you'd read the description and go, oh, that sounds nice.

(11:20 - 11:39)

And they'd book it. Yeah, so it wasn't until, I think it was 1987, that Sir John allowed Charlotte Haslam, who was the then historian, to help him rewrite the handbook. At that particular stage, we were probably opening six or seven buildings, new landmarks a year.

(11:39 - 11:46)

So just the growth and the amount of calls coming in. Then they created a new post within the bookings team. So I went up there.

(11:47 - 12:08)

So the booking office was where the middle window is with two old style telephones with a dial that you stick your finger in and it sort of switch around with very long leads. And there were boards on either wall dividing more. And so each property was written down one side and then the year across the top.

(12:08 - 12:23)

And then so each provisional booking was written with a black pen. And then when a deposit came in, it got a yellow sticker. And then when the balance was paid, all the property was paid in full, it got a green sticker.

(12:23 - 12:40)

There were some very sort of keen, loyal landmarkers that, you know, some people, I suppose they liked collecting the buildings. So as soon as there was some new ones, that was it. You know, they wanted to go and stay in them.

(12:40 - 12:56)

In the late 80s, we'd have a staff outing once a year. So the first one I remember going on was we were flown to Fort Clonk, which is on Alderney. And we were the whole of the Shotton office.

(12:56 - 13:05)

Some of the people from the London office came as well. And we flew over to Fort Clonk for the day to see it. I think Sir John and Lady Smith liked a party.

(13:05 - 13:29)

And I think they felt it was important that everybody, you know, came to one place to, so that they all felt part of the, you know, the landmark family, as it were. And yeah, could exchange ideas or, you know, and just meet each other because everybody was so, you know, all around the country, they wouldn't necessarily get to sort of see each other. So that was a nice thing.

(13:31 - 13:41)

I think it was always a very flat structure and always is. I don't know how it continues to be a very flat structure at Landmark. So you can talk to anybody, you know, anybody could talk to Sir John and things like that.

(13:41 - 13:59)

And the same with the director, that you could, you know, approach them and they would equally be happy sort of approaching you rather than doing it through a sort of chain type

thing. They'd just come and ask you directly. By the end of 1992, there were 137 landmarks, including, well, at this stage, only one in Italy, the Piazza di Spagna.

(13:59 - 14:18)

And sleeping from, you know, one person up to 15 was the largest building that we had. And that was at the end of 1992. So then moving on to the autumn of 1993, that's when His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, as he was then, now he's obviously King Charles III, but he became Landmark's Royal Patron in 1993.

(14:19 - 14:36)

And again, I think that was part of the growing up process of Landmark, that it was beginning to gradually sort of stand on its own two feet. So him becoming a patron was all sort of part of that process, I think. There was a great boost for Landmark, the Channel 4 travel programme that's called Travelog.

(14:36 - 14:50)

There was a feature about Landmark Holidays in this particular TV programme. So we had several hundred requests for the handbooks. And because, you know, it was a relatively small amount of staff, everything was done in-house.

(14:51 - 15:05)

Everybody was packing handbooks or printing labels or whatever it was. So we then, I think we printed 3,000 additional copies of the handbook. But then in January 93, we also appeared on the BBC Holiday programme.

(15:06 - 15:25)

So by the end of February of that year, we'd sold the entire year's stock of handbooks. Also in 1993, this was the year that the Landmark Supporter Scheme was founded. So later they would become the Landmark Friends, but originally they were called Landmark Supporters.

(15:25 - 15:42)

Michael Johnson, who is sort of the founding friend, was a volunteer who'd approached the director. So Michael actually volunteered to run the scheme for us, so it wouldn't be sort of an administrative burden on the charity. Yeah, and then that just sort of went from strength to strength, really.

(15:43 - 16:10)

So now moving on to 1994, and this is actually the centenary year of Wallingford Hockey Club. So at this particular stage, I am social secretary, but I masterminded the, I suppose, particular event where, you know, there was a mayor came and various people from England Hockey and sort of presidents and vice presidents and that sort of thing. So just through my experience in sort of bookings and, you know, organising people.

(16:11 - 16:30)

And this was also the year that the Villa Saraceno in the Veneto would be opening at Easter 1994. So, you know, it was quite a, yeah, big overseas year, 1994 for Landmark. We were also talking and finalising the arrangements for the opening of Casa Gridi, which is in Florence.

(16:31 - 16:55)

So, yeah, so now we're moving on to 1997. This unfortunately was another sort of turning point, I suppose, for Landmark in that on literally, you know, the very start of the new year on the 3rd of January that Charlotte Haslam passed away from meningitis, leaving, you know, two young sons and a very young daughter. So that was quite a big sort of change for Landmark.

(16:55 - 17:31)

And certainly for Sir John and Lady Smith, you know, how are we going to sort of navigate our way sort of beyond Charlotte? So Charlotte had devoted nearly 20 years of her life to Landmark. She carried out historical research into various buildings, which came our way, and also edited successive editions of the Landmark handbook and latterly writing most of them. So extracts from Sir John's obituary, she had a very just appreciation of what the Landmark Trust is all about, how everything at each property should be perfectly done, be unaffected, indeed unnoticeable.

(17:32 - 17:47)

And gradually she played more and more of a part in appraising buildings offered to us and in deciding how to treat them. For some years, she was also one of the trustees. So yeah, that was quite a sad time for Landmark.

(17:47 - 18:04)

So in the spring of 1996, Heritage Lottery sort of stepped in again, helping with the purchase of the Grange because that was in danger of being bought up by developers. David Alexander also joined to oversee. He was sort of head of the buildings team to see all the repair and maintenance.

(18:04 - 18:24)

We were actually seeking a professional fundraiser to help secure funds on a larger scale rather than it just being the director and some marketing officer doing that. So in the autumn, the new fundraiser, Jackie Wilson, had been appointed. That's when I then moved on to a new role.

(18:24 - 18:33)

Still at Landmark and became assistant to the head of lettings that was then. So that's Jonathan Thompson. So that was sort of part of my role.

(18:34 - 18:44)

And then I was also assistant to the press and PR manager, Constance Barrett. So that's 1998 when I think I'd spent almost 10 years in the booking office. I think it was just time for a change.

(18:45 - 19:11)

So using, I suppose, the knowledge and things that I gained working in the booking office, I was able to help Jonathan with the sort of head of letting. So thinking about marketing and also, you know, sort of dealing with any sort of customer complaints and things and anything else that came across his desk. And then also using my knowledge of Landmarks for the press and PR side of things.

(19:12 - 19:28)

If somebody wanted to write about a particular landmark, how we used to have the images stored was on a slide. So we'd have to loan out these slides for them to reproduce them. Before sort of digital photos and that sort of thing and negatives, what have you.

(19:28 - 19:49)

So we're talking about the millennium, there were more and more inquiries and been coming in. And so at this stage, we actually then thought about how we were going to deal with that to try and make it fair to allocate the buildings to everybody who wanted them. So it'd been decided there was going to be a 10% increase in prices for that period of time.

(19:50 - 20:14)

And then people were going to be invited to add a donation of their choice, which would, the donation would be part of the Landmark Millennium Fund, which was going to be used towards the restoration of a new building. And that was going to be the same for the Lundy Fund was created. And all the Lundy bookings would go to help something specifically on Lundy Island.

(20:15 - 20:31)

This is the first time that [www.landmarktrust.co.uk](http://www.landmarktrust.co.uk) first appeared. The landmark website goes live. In 1998, you could order handbooks via email and the website contained very general information.

(20:32 - 20:47)

Obviously, it was sort of toe in the water and we didn't know how it was going to be sort of taken and developed. The supporters group were renamed Friends in 1998. I just felt it sort of reflected a little bit better what the group were actually doing.

(20:48 - 21:18)

So then in spring of 1999, so we then announced the Millennium building that was going to be funded through the Millennium donations was going to be Beckford's Tower, which is on Lansdowne Hill in Bath. I was because we were at that particular point, part of the role of press and PR were arranging open days and things as well. In March 2000, I moved to become Development Assistant and Events Coordinator.

(21:18 - 21:42)

So I joined the fundraising team. So there was a need for an administrator and sort of events manager to look after all the sort of fundraising related events that were beginning to happen through, you know, the corporate side of things and just through the supporter schemes that were developing. We were raising money for Ockenleck.

(21:42 - 22:06)

We were very lucky that a sort of an individual benefactor supported handsomely for that. So we did an event for this benefactor. So the building was on site and we did a picnic on a building site with, you know, some white tablecloths laid out in the library and sort of 30 people for some silver service lunch amid contractors and high vis jackets and all sorts of things.

(22:06 - 22:23)

So yeah, everybody was sitting in their hard hats, which was quite fun. So we also launched the landmark patron scheme. So that was, so people who would pay £1,000 per annum for sort of in exchange for regular updates and various other benefits.

(22:24 - 22:40)

There was lots and lots going on that particular year. I think on a personal point of view, I'd also split up from my long-term boyfriend and I was also in the process of, you know, moving house. And so I moved back as I moved from Goring Heath back into Wallingford.

(22:41 - 23:02)

So this particularly busy year, we launched the landmark appeal, which was to raise £10 million over a two-year period. The launch party that we had at Bury Brothers and Rudd, there was a wine auction update. So one of the lots was for a successful bidder to win their weight in good ordinary claret from Bury Brothers and Rudd.

(23:03 - 23:28)

So this successful bidder turned up at the St James's shop and there's a quite famous set of giant coffee scales in the shop. So this chap turned up wearing ski boots, an Irish guard's bearskin and a navel grey coat, obviously to weigh as much as he possibly could. So I think he tipped the scales at 17 stone, six pounds.

(23:29 - 23:35)

So he won that in wine, a good ordinary claret. The evening was a great success. So we raised over £36,000.

(23:36 - 23:46)

So that was great news. So then we're moving to 2002. We were also fundraising for Freston Tower.

(23:47 - 24:15)

So a new building which had been given to us by the owner, Claire Hunt. And so this, the appeal was further boosted by Landmark staff and others who ran the British 10k road race in London to raise over £4,000. And then one brave, brave soul is dressed and has got Freston Tower, a model of Freston Tower sitting on his head and he ran the whole 10k with that on his head and we still got it in the office.

(24:17 - 24:29)

Actually, the end of that year, I went travelling. So I, so very generously, the head of fundraising gave me sort of nearly four weeks off. I saved up for my holiday.

(24:30 - 24:45)

So I travelled to Australia originally with a girlfriend for part of the time and then met sort of family friends and did some other travelling on my own, mainly the east coast of Australia. But included Melbourne and visited Canberra and stuff as well. So yeah, so that was great.

(24:46 - 25:03)

And then I come back and meet my future husband at a New Year's Eve party. And that's the same year that I became development manager. So I moved from sort of development

administrator to looking after friends, patrons and legacies at that particular point for Landmark.

(25:03 - 25:25)

So I think I was probably given a little bit more autonomy in some of the letters and things that I was actually doing for the patrons. So I was then, so I'd then become more involved in the friends side of things. So helping the volunteers, I suppose being the liaison between the volunteers and Landmark, you know, passing on any sort of Landmark news or messages that we wanted the friends to get particularly.

(25:26 - 25:38)

We're now spring 2003. So we've got six new Landmarks opening their doors. So that brings the total of Landmark buildings available to let to 175.

(25:39 - 26:02)

Now moving to 2004. So on a personal note this year, I, well the end of the previous year, I got engaged to my future husband and I got married in the June. So I now became from, I was Linda New and I now became Linda Millard, which is slightly ironic because, you know, I know Landmark is in my blood, but I actually even changed my initials to become LM as well.

(26:03 - 26:15)

So quite a big year for me in everything that was going on. So in addition to getting married, I also moved house in the December. So then we go to 2005, which is Landmark's 40th anniversary year.

(26:16 - 26:30)

So we had over 20,000 people went to the open days for the 40th anniversary. It was recognised that Landmark had sort of now come of age and was raising its own funds. So it was, you know, really well standing on its own and supporting itself.

(26:30 - 26:45)

This year we opened 40 Landmarks on the 14th and 15th of May, which coincided with the founding of Landmark. And London included a special day trip on that day as well. We had visits from our royal patron.

(26:45 - 27:03)

He went to the Grange and then two weeks after that, he went to Denbighshire to see the landmarkers who were staying in Dolbella Deer at the time. So he sat down and had afternoon tea with them and then he planted a walnut tree in the orchard. So obviously he's Prince of Wales.

(27:03 - 27:21)

He takes a keen interest in everything in Wales. We won a Europa Nostra Award for dedicated service to heritage conservation through our 40th year in recognition of all the heritage work, basically. And we announced that from 2006 short breaks would be offered all year round.

(27:22 - 27:37)

I think this is the first year we actually introduced a regular email update. So as well as the printed newsletters, there would be an email update as well. But people had to sign up for that if they were interested in doing that.

(27:38 - 28:01)

At the end of 2005, Lady Smith retired after 40 years as a trustee, which was marked by her receiving an OBE for services to conservation. So although she wasn't a trustee, she was still involved in often printing and selecting designs and colour schemes for some of the landmarks. We did have a 40th anniversary party for staff at Shops of Brook.

(28:02 - 28:19)

So there was a big marquee in the park and all the staff were invited. And 29 staff were awarded for long service. I think the longest serving, which had been 36 years, went to Joyce and Amos Marshall, who were housekeeper and gardener, respectively, at Wortham Manor.

(28:20 - 28:37)

And to Lady Percy, Richard Percy, who'd overseen all the provision of books in landmarks. So they both had done 36 years. So I think collectively, the 29 staff had clocked up 674 years helping landmark to give buildings a new future.

(28:37 - 28:45)

So I think at that stage, I think I'd just done 22. So there was, you know, fly fishing on the lake. There was carriage rides up and down the drive.

(28:45 - 28:53)

There were visits to the church. The offices were open. And I think there was some crafts demonstrations and things as well.

(28:54 - 29:06)

Although not to the extent that the silver jubilee there'd been. For the patron side of things, that was, I suppose, sort of the next level up in that they were probably a little bit more involved. So they had more regular updates and things.

(29:06 - 29:17)

But we had, and we had events for them. There was also an annual director's lunch. So the director, they gave a speech and an update to the patrons and they were able to ask questions about what was going on and that sort of thing.

(29:18 - 29:34)

So yes, it was what was set up in 2000. And then, you know, other schemes were introduced, guardians and other schemes and the raffle as well. I think ideas sort of come through, but I think it just, we just needed to work through, you know, how economically viable they were.

(29:35 - 29:44)

And, you know, would they be good for Landmark? So yeah, always lots of ideas. I think we always said we had, I remember a folder, in fact, in the filing cabinet, you know, sort of fundraising ideas. Let's just put those in there.

(29:45 - 30:03)

So on the 28th of February, 2007, unfortunately, Sir John died at the age of 83. He'd been, you know, he had been ill for some time, but still quite a sad day, quite sombre at Landmark on that day that I remember. And Martin Drew wrote a wonderful sort of eulogy.

(30:04 - 30:16)

And, you know, he said that, you know, everyone at Landmark feels a deep sense of loss at the passing. It was, yeah, it was quite a sort of a moment, I think, although, you know, Sir John hadn't really been involved that much. It was still his baby, I suppose.

(30:17 - 30:30)

So yeah, he was very much an inspiration. And obviously we were all enormously proud to work for the organisation that he'd created. So there was a memorial service for Sir John later on in that year at Eton.

(30:30 - 30:44)

The Eton Choir sang Handel's Messiah and that sort of thing. So yeah, lovely occasion. We're nearing the completion of Clavell Tower, the wonderful, iconic sort of eye-catcher right on the edge of the cliff at Kimmeridge Bay.

(30:44 - 30:51)

So that's all very exciting. And there's sort of slight trepidation. I remember, you know, is it going to let? Because you can't drive to it.

(30:51 - 31:10)

You have to park at the bottom of the cliff and walk up the side of the cliff edge, potentially in the dark with a backpack on and all your belongings to get to this tower. So we didn't know, you know, how is that going to be received? It was just a landmark for two. But I think, you know, just generally, I think we were more aware that the UK was going into recession in 2008, towards the end of 2008.

(31:11 - 31:26)

And we were sort of, you know, really thinking how, you know, we've got to keep everything going. So there were areas of sort of slight restructuring within landmark staff. We were just trying to try and make it more efficient and obviously cost saving and stuff like that.

(31:26 - 31:38)

So yeah, sort of challenging, worrying times, I think. So now we're going on to 2009. So it's actually in July 2009 that the first online booking system was introduced.

(31:39 - 31:55)

And very quickly, it was sort of almost 50% of bookings were being made via the website. It was quite basic sort of search information. But the fact that you could actually do it online yourself without having to phone the booking office because everything else had to be done by the booking office before then.

(31:55 - 32:18)

Peter, the director, is talking more about sustainability. You know, he's talking about the installation of heat pumps, air source heat pumps, highlighting landmark accessibility by public transport, again, to, you know, the greener issues and things like that, getting to places. We're encouraging local recycling and just, you know, actively asking customers to think about their energy consumption.

(32:19 - 32:40)

I think generally the country we're being, as a nation, I suppose we're more aware of it because, yeah, sort of times where we were getting into recession. At the end of 2009, Gail went on maternity leave. At the end of November, celebrated the birth of my precious daughter and inspired by many trips to Dorset in previous years through fundraising for Clavel.

(32:41 - 32:59)

So Sean and I decided to name her Tess after, I just thought it was a Dorset name, Thomas Hardy and all of that. So, yeah, so we called her Tess. So she arrived by emergency C-section and my wonderful colleague, Anna, so she arrived on a Friday evening at 10 o'clock.

(32:59 - 33:17)

So poor Anna had to go into the office on a Saturday because lots of patrons were very keen to know, you know, what was happening with me. So Anna had to write to all of these people and say, yes, that everything was well and that, yeah, we'd got a baby daughter. I suppose it feels more like a landmark family.

(33:17 - 33:38)

You know, obviously not everybody, you know, wants to be that involved in things, but, you know, a lot of them do want to be sort of part of that and know about you personally rather than, you know, it's just the organisation. So, yeah, lots of cards and messages and things like that from them, which is wonderful. I think she was about six months old and we went on to a landmark, Manor Farm in Norfolk.

(33:39 - 33:51)

So that was her first experience. So she was six months old, her first landmark. So I sort of picture her, you know, her bath time in the bath at Manor Farm and her in a high chair in the building as well.

(33:51 - 34:12)

And yeah, I remember my father taking her, he had sort of a collapsible box on wheels that with a long handle and, you know, putting her in there and then wheeling her into the building, which she thought was great fun. Yes. So when I did go back to work in later in 2010, so I came back part time.

(34:13 - 34:42)

So I was just doing three days, but we were very lucky in that both my parents and Sean's parents were able to look after Tess. So, yeah, I would either, because my parents live quite close to Landmark, so I was able to, you know, drive to work, drop her off for the day and then they would sort of bring her back later or something. OK, then moving on to 2011 and I do remember we had a director's lunch at Astley Castle during these works.

(34:43 - 35:01)

So we had, there was, I don't know, 60 or 70 patrons in hard hats and high vis jackets sitting down, eating a lovely lunch, buffet lunch amongst all the workmen and all of that sort of thing going on. So, and director Peter gave a speech and things like that. So, but they absolutely loved it.

(35:01 - 35:14)

So, you know, they were calling around the scaffolding and, yeah, so that was a good, an interesting day as well. So, and also this year is Martin Drury retires. So we announced Martin's successor, Neil Mendoza.

(35:14 - 35:29)

So Neil had joined the board in 2010. His background was in publishing and the arts and he stayed in many landmarks with his family. The other new trustees, should I say, were Dr Anna Kay, Sir Laurie Magnus, Charles McVeigh III and Martin Stancliffe.

(35:30 - 35:50)

So, yeah, a bit of a change sort of going on for Landmark. And I, yeah, personally, I think I was maybe less aware of everything that was going on, whereas before, when it was so much smaller, I was aware of everything that was going on. And I suppose the trustees were a bit like that as well, that they were maybe taking, not taking a step back, but perhaps being less involved in the everyday stuff.

(35:50 - 36:05)

It was, you know, the bigger, more strategic stuff that they needed to sort of think about a bit more, I suppose. So in March, the director, Peter, stepped down after 16 years at the helm and then our new director was introduced. So that's Dr Anna Kay.

(36:06 - 36:26)

So she joined us in the summer, stepping into very large shoes, which if anybody can remember Peter Pierce, he was about six foot four and so literally had very large shoes. So, and Anna is very sort of petite and, you know, probably only a size four or something like that. Anna was already a sort of enthusiastic Landmark herself, having stayed in the buildings.

(36:26 - 36:44)

And obviously she was a trustee. And so her first act as director was quite a big one, in that she presided at the opening of Astley Castle, which opened in the July of 2012. At Astley, there's a, sort of a large coffee table.

(36:44 - 36:55)

Anyway, so she jumped up on top of this so that everybody could see her, which was, she thought was very funny. Well, Erin, so did everybody else. So the restoration of Belmont, there's property in Lyme Regis.

(36:55 - 37:17)

The funding for that particular scheme for the Belmont Appeal, there was a lady called Sheila Preston, whose legacy helped complete all of that. So she was an avid Landmarker,

having stayed in over 100 buildings herself, along with her husband, George, and their poodles. I mean, she was just so enthusiastic and just loved everything that Landmark did.

(37:17 - 37:43)

And in fact, when I met George to collect the cheque that Sheila had left us, he showed me great pride. In the porch of their home, he'd replicated some pargeting, which is a special external plasterwork, which I think is peculiar to sort of Norfolk and Suffolk buildings. He'd replicated some pargeting, incorporating some of their poodles and things, I think, in the porch of their home.

(37:44 - 37:56)

They'd also had a flag made. So when they went to stay at the Grange, they raised, I think it had a poodle on it. So instead of the usual flag at the Grange, they hoisted their own Landmark presentation.

(37:57 - 38:12)

We'd sent them a complimentary handbook because they'd stayed in lots and lots of Landmarks as a sort of small thank you for their loyalty and things. And I don't think they'd let us know that they'd left us a gift in, or that she'd left us a gift in her will. So it sort of came as a bit of a surprise.

(38:13 - 38:32)

And then the value of it as well was very much a surprise. And then it's, I think it's really important to, if you can, sort of then demonstrate to the remaining family and things where the money's been used. So where we can, we try and do that and take them on the journey, sort of seeing the building restoration.

(38:32 - 38:44)

And if they're able to come and visit and things like that. If not, I'll just give them updates and things like that. And then obviously they're remembered in the history album and things like that, as well as in our commemorative book, People Have Left Us A Gift.

(38:44 - 39:06)

So we're more focusing on legacies and gifts in will side of things and gifts in memory. So, I mean, I'm still very much involved in the patrons and the friends side of things because the people who've let us know, for anybody who does let us know that they've left a gift, we offer them or invite them to become honorary friends. But it's just a small thank you while they're here that we can say, you know, that we can give them.

(39:07 - 39:21)

2014, we launched the Craft Apprenticeships Appeal. So this is a new thing for Landmark. So in collaboration with the Prince's Foundation for Building Community, we establish an annual Prince's Foundation Craft Apprenticeship.

(39:22 - 39:49)

So when we launched it, so the apprentices would benefit from sort of structured training within the established and highly respected programme that was run through the Prince's Foundation. So that combined practical experience with working on our own sort of craft team on Landmark specific projects. So when we launched it, we were sort of hoping for

funding for one apprentice, but it was so successful, we managed to fund three apprentices, which was amazing.

(39:49 - 40:02)

In May, the golden weekend happened. So at 3pm on Saturday, the 16th of May, Kerry Andrews Anthem for Landmark rang out. So I was based at Princelet Street in Spitalfields.

(40:02 - 40:18)

So Sean and I went there to help out. On Saturday, the little local rainbow group, I think there were four to seven year olds, so a group of about 30 of them all turned up with parents and carers. So it was quite a lot of people, as well as all the people coming for the golden moment.

(40:19 - 40:31)

So they all sort of managed to squash into the tiny little kitchen. So just before three o'clock, they sort of emerged from the kitchen and sort of took their place in the garden. So Neil Mendoza, our chairman, was also at Princelet Street.

(40:31 - 40:48)

So he made a sort of short speech thanking everybody for coming and for their support. And then he introduced the anthem and then all these little rainbows sang the anthem. So when I was upstairs taking photographs and, you know, thinking about all of the, or imagining what it's like at all the other Landmarks and things.

(40:49 - 41:01)

So there were lots of photos shared after the event of all these people sort of gathering around, listening to the anthem. So it was very exciting. A tiring weekend, but just, yeah, very proud of everything that Landmark had achieved during that weekend.

(41:04 - 41:25)

So unfortunately, this year coincided with this sort of sad passing of two sort of Landmark, true friends of Landmark. So Sonia Rolt, who was the first furnishing manager and laterally helped as librarian to many Landmarks in Wales and West Midlands. And then Clare, Lady Percy, who set up the Landmark libraries and wrote many of the Scottish history albums.

(41:25 - 41:36)

Yeah, I think they sort of passed away within a couple of months of each other. There's a new Channel 4 TV series featuring various buildings. It's called Restoring Britain's Landmarks.

(41:37 - 41:53)

So that's included, sort of followed the work. And it featured Anna Kay, our director, John Evitts, our furnishing manager, and Alastair Dick Cleland, who was the conservation manager as they sort of travelled from Landmark to Landmark project. I think that was a series of about six programmes.

(41:55 - 42:03)

2017. So just personally, unfortunately, sad news at the very beginning of the year. So after a painful battle with cancer, my father-in-law passed away.

(42:04 - 42:10)

In January. So it was quite, yeah, a sort of sad start to the year. So it was quite challenging for everyone.

(42:11 - 42:28)

But on a more positive note, we were able to move from our house in Crommarsh, back at the other side of the river into Wallingford. We'd seen this house the previous summer and fell in love with it and the garden particularly. I love gardening, so could see sort of lots of potential there.

(42:28 - 42:42)

And the fact that we've got a sort of chalk stream running at the back of the bottom of the garden and access to the wildlife and the birds, which are obviously inherited from my father, I should think, and my family. It's not a historic house, so it's sort of in landmark terms. I mean, obviously, it will be a landmark of the future.

(42:43 - 42:56)

But yeah, sort of late 60s house, just on a quiet close. And I think potentially what swayed it, I think, was the fact that my mum and dad had a sort of fascination for kingfishers. So whenever they were on holiday, they always tried to find somewhere where there were kingfishers and go and see them.

(42:57 - 43:07)

So, but the fact that we've got kingfishers at the bottom of the garden was just, yeah. So then going on to 2018. So yeah, sad year for my family.

(43:08 - 43:16)

So my father passed away in the May. So mum had sort of been looking after him at home. And yes, I sadly passed away on May.

(43:17 - 43:25)

So that was quite a hard time for us all. 2019 is the golden anniversary of Lundy. Just personally, a sort of a landmark moment for us.

(43:26 - 43:52)

We acquired our beloved Bella, our spring espanol, who was a retired gun dog. She sort of changed our lives, but was extremely well behaved, but I think enjoyed the move from sort of being in permanent kennels to family life. 2020, which is obviously, you know, thinking about the wider world, the sort of COVID-19 is coming to the fore.

(43:52 - 44:05)

So I was lucky enough to take Sean, Tess and my mum to stay at Kingswear Castle, which is the landmark just in Dartmouth. And that was in the sort of late February. So just before we sort of went into lockdown and things.

(44:06 - 44:18)

So wanted to stay there. I went to the builder's party when we'd actually restored it many, many years ago. Yep, so now going into sort of tension is building around COVID.

(44:19 - 44:40)

So luckily enough, our sort of IT department had already started rolling out laptops for everybody. You know, thinking about what might be coming. So when we did get the announcement in March that everybody had to work at home, we were able to, you know, with the wonderful IT team, just sort of carry on without any sort of hitches and things.

(44:40 - 44:52)

So, I mean, it was quite a big thing for everybody, just very worrying times. And but, you know, how the business was going to be affected, because obviously we had to close everything. Nobody could go and stay in the buildings.

(44:53 - 45:11)

So obviously on the 23rd of March, we announced the closure of all landmarks, including everything on Lundy, because obviously it was the only way to keep our guests and staff safe. The bookings team, you know, made contact with everybody and they were offered a voucher towards a future booking or a refund. And obviously we didn't know when we were going to reopen.

(45:11 - 45:23)

Nobody knew what was going on. And so it was just a case of sort of battling down the hatches to protect buildings and staff, obviously during the stay during this period. So obviously the government announced the furlough scheme.

(45:24 - 45:45)

So all of our housekeepers and quite a significant proportion of staff were basically placed on furlough. But we had to do regular building checks sort of once a week on each of the buildings. So a sort of a team of regional staff were sort of galvanised into doing that to make sure that the buildings were safe and there were no water leaks or whatever it was going on.

(45:45 - 46:02)

So those core staff were retained. And I think that was an important time for the fundraising team because, you know, everybody obviously was then at home. So we were having to sort of switch our focus to more donor support and donor care, just, you know, phoning them up for a chat.

(46:02 - 46:25)

And, you know, because a lot of people weren't getting out and things and maybe didn't have family. Meanwhile, we were able to carry on with the restoration. So there were certain, I think later on, I think as some of the rules were relaxed and things and the contractors at Fairburn Tower, as long as they did social distancing and that sort of thing, they were able to carry certain things on.

(46:26 - 46:38)

We were then able to sort of commence work again. And at Semaphore Tower as well, they were able to continue work, obviously closely following the rules. So there was, you know, limited people on site.

(46:38 - 46:58)

And obviously we cancelled all events and open days. Given that the majority of LAMOC's income comes through the bookings, it was, you know, we were receiving no income at all, apart from any donations that we were getting through, you know, friends' subscriptions or patrons' subscriptions. So obviously it was quite a difficult time for LAMOC.

(46:59 - 47:16)

Whilst the funds raised for the restoration project sort of currently on site were restricted and obviously very secure, the forthcoming plan or project to restore Calverley, we had to pause that. We all had to then adapt how to use Zoom and Skype. And that was all a new skill that everybody was learning at that time.

(47:16 - 47:32)

And instead of in-person events, which we'd been so sort of used to doing, we used to have, I think, very occasional seminar, if that. So we were changing everything to be online. So we were offering webinars and, you know, talking about the work because obviously everybody was sitting at home.

(47:32 - 47:52)

I was furloughed just for three weeks, but obviously, I suppose, so Tess was at home as well, thinking about, you know, personally, and obviously Sean was at home as well. So we were trying to cope with, you know, working and balancing that with homeschooling as well. So yeah, it was quite a sort of busy and intense time.

(47:53 - 48:07)

Yeah, we certainly learned new ways of doing things, which I'm sure, well, has stayed with us since the pandemic. So when we were the head office, we were actually allowed to sort of return to work. We did that as we're now sort of hybrid working.

(48:08 - 48:30)

So that means we can work at home two days a week or pro rata, you know, however many hours you work. And that we now do webinars and lots more online material. We regularly have sort of between 250 and sort of 700 people joining the webinars, whereas before we would never reach that number of people.

(48:31 - 48:52)

At the end of that year, Neil Mendoza had sort of completed his maximum nine-year term. So we were introducing our new chairman, Alan Leverwitz, and he was also a life patron, so a landmark as well, which all helps. So now moving to 2022, another sort of full tilt year for landmark.

(48:53 - 49:13)

So yeah, I think never before we'd had so many people sleeping under our roofs, our stone tile or thatched roofs at any one time. Yeah, over again to 93% or between 93 and 95% booked. So obviously housekeepers are sort of going in every changeover, so being really busy for them.

(49:13 - 49:39)

This year, Landmark was also voted the UK's number one holiday cottage provider by which, which was quite an accolade. So sort of outranking all our competitors from Airbnb to the

National Trust. So to 2025, in July, I was promoted to senior development manager within Landmark, sort of, I suppose, a recognition of how we're relying so much more on sort of legacies and gifts and wills and things.

(49:39 - 50:03)

And I suppose partly a recognition of my longer service. Yeah, I think, I mean, for me, it's just a sort of rubber stamp, I suppose, on, you know, I think this is certainly working within the fundraising team has probably been one of my most fulfilling roles within Landmark. I suppose a culmination of bringing all of the experience and contact that I've had with lots of people.

(50:04 - 50:25)

But yeah, I think with the legacy, side of things and gifts and wills, it's, you know, people are giving you something that they're not going to see, you know, the results of. So I think it probably makes it even more important gift. And I know lots of colleagues will say, well, how can, you know, how can you sort of work in that area? So it's more about, it's a celebration of life.

(50:25 - 50:50)

I think it's not about death, although, you know, that is ultimately what's going to happen. But it's just, you know, when I'm talking to people and finding out what their sort of wishes and aspirations and things for, it's a sort of affirmation of life and things I think I'd like to think of it as. So yeah, you know, it is very sad when somebody that you got to know over so many years does pass away.

(50:50 - 51:13)

But I feel that I'm, you know, fulfilling their wishes by making sure that, you know, Landmark carries on and, you know, that we were able to restore another building or whatever it is. So, you know, I'll get an inquiry, somebody's thinking about it. And I think, you know, to stress the point that actually every gift, you know, from £100 to £1,000 to £100,000, all are really, really important.

(51:14 - 51:35)

I think we have been left properties that have become Landmarks themselves as in part of the holiday portfolio. So examples are Miss Savory left us Elton House in Bath, Miss Perser left us the White House in Assen-Manslow in Shropshire. And then, and Princess Street in Spitalfields, which was left to us by Peter Lurwell.

(51:35 - 51:57)

And then there are other buildings, which probably people don't know quite so well. There's probably about 60 or so buildings that other people have left us that we now put long-term tenants into. My job now, partly, is to go and sort of see some of these buildings with colleague Simon and, you know, to speak to the owners to see what their wishes and aspirations for the buildings are.

(51:57 - 52:20)

And whilst none of us know what's going to happen charity legislation wise or, you know, what's going to happen in those, their lives. We sort of, you know, travel in the hope that if there is something left at the end that they haven't had to use it for other reasons that

maybe the building will come to Landmark and it, you know, maybe become a Landmark. Well, there never seems to be a shortage of buildings that need rescuing.

(52:21 - 52:50)

You know, some of the buildings that, you know, perhaps that we didn't think of as Landmarks, perhaps as sort of 1960s, 70s, 80s buildings are the Landmarks of the future. So a good example of a, you know, a 1980s architect designed building, you know, will be something of the future. And I hope that Landmark continues and, you know, that people will enjoy staying in them and enjoy learning about, you know, that particular era or that particular style of building.

(52:50 - 53:04)

I think as Sir John described it, an experience of a mildly elevating kind. And I hope that continues for many, many years to come, long after I've retired. Thanks for listening to this episode of the Landmark Chronicles.

(53:05 - 53:14)

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