



Better than ever

Two glorious estates
have been lovingly brought
back from the brink

TODAY sees the launch onto the market of one of Cornwall's best-kept secrets, the secluded, 246-acre Pengreep estate, between Gwennap and Ponsanooth in south Cornwall, which is for sale for the first time in its history, through joint agents Jonathan Cunliffe in Falmouth (01326 617447) and Lodge & Thomas in Truro (01872 272722). The agents quote a guide price of £7 million for the estate, which sits in its own woodland valley close to the towns of Truro, Falmouth and Redruth, and within seven miles of both the north and south coasts of Cornwall.

Its focal point is Grade I-listed Pengreep House, originally a farmhouse built in the early 18th century by the Beauchamp family, enlarged by them in the mid 18th century and further extended in about 1865 by John Williams, whose grandmother was a Beauchamp. Although the house dates from three



The interiors of Pengreep House are mainly 18th century and in need of some restoration



Left: Grade I-listed Pengreep Estate, in 246 acres of south Cornish countryside, is being sold for the first time in its history. £7m. Above: Pipewell Hall in Northamptonshire. £3.5m

main periods, its 1967 listing maintains that ‘this is a predominantly mid-18th-century house and as such is a fine and complete example, retaining three virtually complete rooms of its earlier phase and with good quality circa 1865 additions’.

When Joseph Beauchamp died in 1818, the property was advertised for lease as: ‘The mansion house of Pengreep, together with the coach house, walled gardens, beautiful ponds, pleasure grounds, plantations and about 120 customary acres of meadow land, with several cottages for servants or labourers: the whole in high order and condition and fit for the residence of a large and genteel family.’

This part of Cornwall had been a centre for mining since prehistoric times and 17th-century Gwennap was reputedly part of ‘the richest square mile in the world’. Successive generations of the Williams family were prominent owners of mines, smelting works

and quarries and John Williams’s wealth was reflected in the splendour of Pengreep House and its grounds. To the north-east of the house are the foundations of a large Victorian conservatory that once overlooked formal gardens, now a plantation of camellias, magnolias and rhododendrons.

Pengreep’s glory days were long gone when, in 1989, its present owner, Ben Mead, abandoned a career as a motorcycling journalist in London and returned to his Cornish roots with the aim of reviving the struggling estate. With Britain sliding into recession, the outlook at the time wasn’t great—a fact hammered home in 1990, when a serious gale felled almost 200 trees on the estate.

Undeterred, Mr Mead worked hands-on with a band of skilled Cornish restoration specialists on a systematic renovation of the entire property. Over the years, nearly all the estate houses have been re-roofed and weather-proofed, with ‘boring but important’ elements of infrastructure, such as drives, access, farm buildings, cattle tracks, drainage, private water supplies, ponds, waterfalls and sluice gates, being repaired or overhauled.

Pengreep House, which has starred as the location for television adaptations of several Rosamunde Pilcher novels, has been re-roofed in recent years, although the rest of the building needs refurbishing. It offers 10,000sq ft of living space on three floors,

including an entrance hall, three formal reception rooms, a wonderful old-fashioned kitchen overlooking the gardens and seven first-floor bedrooms, as well as six attic rooms and extensive cellars.

Other estate houses refurbished in 2015 include Snookers, the former billiard room, now a charming one-bedroom apartment, and the converted former coach house, now a two-bedroom dwelling; Pengreep Barton, a detached three-bedroom stone farmhouse,

has been partly refurbished. Ripe for conversion are the Fig House, a large detached brick building set in its own walled garden; the Georgian former stable block with its traditional bell tower; and the period four-bedroom Crosspost Farmhouse, which could be extended by integrat-

ing the adjacent stone barns.

The once magnificent gardens and pleasure grounds at Pengreep, which now await an avid gardener to re-tame the present ‘wild abandon’, include a two-acre walled kitchen garden with the remains of a series of heated greenhouses and a series of four stream-fed ponds—some two acres of water in all—that not only provide a romantic setting for the house, but contain naturally stocked brown trout and are a haven for herons, kingfishers, wild mallard, geese and other wildfowl.

As a Nuffield agricultural scholar, Pengreep’s owner was very much at home on the land, where he introduced modern methods of dairy farming and, from 2008 ➤

‘The Pengreep grounds now await an avid gardener to re-tame the present “wild abandon”’

Property market



Pipewell Hall is Grade II-listed, offers some 10,000sq ft of living space, and sits in 40 acres of landscaped gardens and parkland

onwards, established organic farming on more than 170 acres of level or gently sloping land. The farm is also enrolled in a Country-side Stewardship Scheme that underwrites the capital cost of renovating the estate's paddock fencing.

Over in Northamptonshire, the sale of elegant, Grade II-listed Pipewell Hall at Pipewell, near Kettering, Northamptonshire, recalls the exuberant architecture of the era of Sir Christopher Wren, who began building St Paul's Cathedral in 1675, the same year that William Herbert, 1st Marquess of Powis, built the Hall with stone taken from a Cistercian monastery suppressed by Henry VIII during the Dissolution.

Selling agent Simon Hawkesley of London-based Mallory Irvine (020-7101 0765) seeks 'offers in excess of £3.5m' for the restored, late-Jacobean house, originally built on an H plan of coursed squared limestone, with a fish-scale tiled roof and stone stacked chimneys, and set in some 40 acres of landscaped gardens, parkland and pasture. The principal manor of the hamlet of Pipewell,

it stands hidden by woodland on the edge of a conservation area to the north-west of Kettering and east of Market Harborough in neighbouring Leicestershire.

Owned by only five families since it was built, Pipewell Hall was acquired in 1921 by Samuel Janson Lloyd as a home for his 13 children. When he died in 1943, the house was inherited by his son, David Llewellyn Lloyd, inventor of the famous Lloyd stalking rifle and a *COUNTRY LIFE* 'National Treasure', who had a much smaller family and had the West Wing demolished as 'surplus to requirements' in 1949.

His wife, Evadne, shared her husband's passion for rifle-making and glamorous sports and, together, they went stalking at Glencassley in the Highlands in the autumn, skiing at Gstaad in the winter and motored to Monte Carlo for the Grand Prix in the summer. Neither appear to have had any interest in domestic matters and, when Evadne died in 2003, aged 91, Pipewell Hall was in a parlous state of disrepair. It was acquired the following year by the Baker family, the current

vendors, who, between 2007 and 2011, undertook a complete overhaul of the house. The works included lifting, repairing and re-laying the entire roof structure, installing a new central heating system, reconfiguring the kitchen area to create a magnificent kitchen/breakfast room, adding extra bathrooms, landscaping and more besides.

The hall now offers some 10,000sq ft of living space on three floors, including four main reception rooms, a veranda, study and the kitchen/breakfast room on the ground floor; the master-bedroom suite, three further bedrooms and bathrooms on the first floor; with four/five bedrooms and four bathrooms on the floor above.

It comes with five-bedroom Dormy House, currently split into two and let through local agents, a pretty gate lodge and a stable courtyard ideal for conversion to residential use. Outdoor amenities include a walled garden and swimming pool, plus an old tennis court, and the beautifully landscaped grounds, parkland and lakes provide the perfect backdrop to an idyllic wedding venue. 🍷