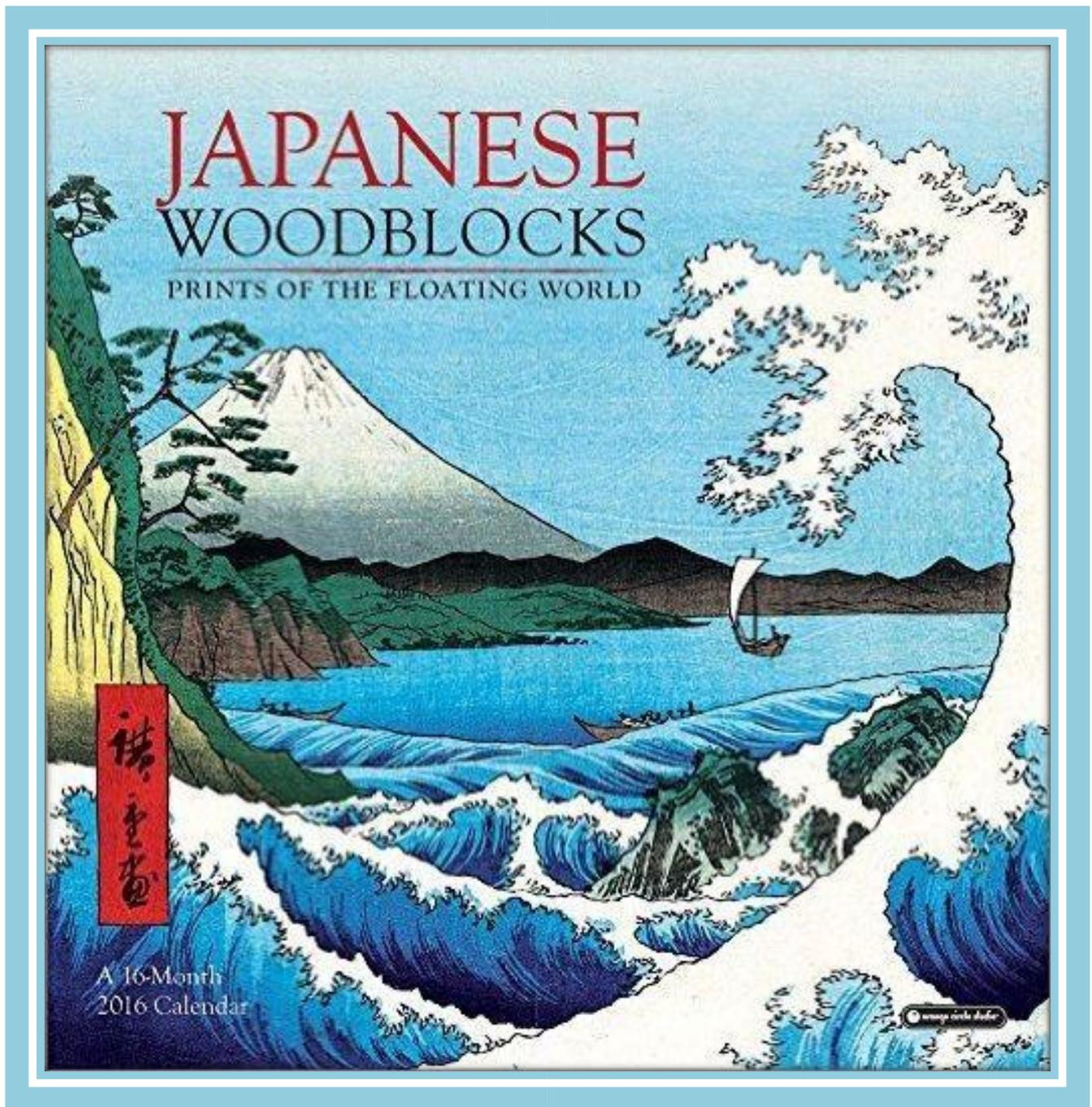


THE NORTH STAFFS NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION

Newsletter No. 103

WINTER & SPRING 2016

Our Web site-northstaffsnt.org.uk



Talk February 16th

Arrangements for Trips

Coaches depart promptly from **SCHOOL STREET**, Newcastle, behind the Jubilee Swimming Baths. Nearby there is long-stay parking. Should a member cancel a booking it is regretted that reimbursement is only possible if there is a waiting list. There will be a £2 per cheque handling charge. Members are requested not to find their own replacements. Non-members taking part in our trips pay an additional £2 for coach outings and an additional £1 for car outings. The committee has agreed that it is only fair that members should have priority when booking trips and holidays. It is not possible for the coach to stop at places other than School Street. The coach will not wait for members who are late, either at School Street or at other pick up points. Members are advised to take careful note of when or where they will be picked up. Anyone missing a coach will have no claim on the Association.

Cheques should be made payable to “The North Staffs National Trust Association”, they are not cleared until after an event. Please send a **separate cheque** and a **separate self-addressed envelope for each separate event** even when these go to one organiser. People wishing to sit together on a coach should use one booking form.

The Committee reserves the right to cancel any event which attracts insufficient bookings to make it viable.

The Association wants you to be able to enjoy events to the maximum, please consider whether you are capable of the physical demands of the event. Contact the organiser for a fuller description of the standing, walking or climbing, etc , involved. If you have any disability issues you should give the organiser notice. They will try to make helpful arrangements, but we cannot guarantee to do so.

In case of an emergency, or becoming separated from the party, you should carry a copy of the organiser’s mobile number from the booking acceptance slip and have someone use it a.s.a.p. It is not acceptable to have made your own alternative arrangements whilst the organiser and the police are still combing the local town and hospital.

SPECIAL NOTE Please note that the insurance carried by this Association through the National Trust does not provide personal accident cover for members aged over 80, or for children aged under 10. However, at any age you are covered

by our public liability insurance. Please ask a Committee Member for an explanation.

THE NORTH STAFFS

NATIONAL TRUST ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER 103

WINTER & SPRING PROGRAMME



A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to this new season of Talks, Walks and Coach Outings. I am sorry this Newsletter will appear after some of the early talks and visits have taken place.

Computer problems were to blame. I wish there was a really original excuse like one committee member came up with for being incommunicado recently.

Bats had nibbled his internet connection.

It is very encouraging that the talks have been so well attended and the trips booked up so early. The Committee and the Programme Organising Group hope you will enjoy the varied diet. However, if you are going on the salt trail walk, visiting the salt works and taking the sea air with Cynthia you might want to reduce your salt intake in readiness. This programme goes up to April 21st and the Halle Concert on the 13th May, but I have great eggspetations that the next Newsletter will appear after Easter. On April 12th we have a talk on the National Gardens Opening Scheme .This has been a difficult start to the year for them too. Daffodils over by Easter, early purple alliums ruined, still we might be smelling the roses 2 months early!



FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday 19th January: Talk at NS Conference Centre. 7.30pm. "The Royal Secrets of Spode". Ray Elks.

Ray will be taking us back nearly three centuries from Josiah Spode's apprenticeship in the pottery industry leading to one of the most important discoveries in the history of ceramics and then beyond, tracing the company's history from that time.

Through this period we will see how he established himself and his successors as purveyors of the finest ceramics to some of the most significant royal families and aristocracy across the world. We shall also hear of the more personal encounters and relationships that were forged during the past 240 years. Ray will illustrate his talk with examples of Spode products and memorabilia.

Thursday 11th February: Coach Outing to Singers Hill Synagogue and the Birmingham Back to Backs.

Singers Hill Synagogue is home to the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation and has been the focal point for Jewish worship and community life in Birmingham for 158 years. It is known as the 'cathedral' synagogue and was built in 1856. This outstandingly beautiful building was recently awarded the most improved place of worship by English Heritage and is a Grade II* listed building.

We will arrive at 10.45 we will meet initially in the children's synagogue for a talk by our guide, Stephen Newman, on the Jewish religion, food and culture and the history of Jewish community in the UK and in Birmingham. This is an interactive talk and Stephen welcomes any questions about Judaism and Jewish culture. We will then go into the main synagogue where we will be shown the scrolls which are the 5 books of Moses given to him by God on Mt. Sinai and which contain the 630 rules which give the basis for living. Dress code is smart casual; men only are requested to wear a head covering; a hat, cap or scarf.

At 12.30 we will take an easy 15 min. walk to the Birmingham Back to Backs, a NT property. Once there you can buy lunch at one of the many cafes and pubs. Unfortunately, as it is winter, there are no facilities for eating a picnic. We will be split into groups for tours lasting 1 ¼ hours staggered by 15 min. intervals. You will be given a ticket on the coach giving the time of your tour. Above the reception area is a small museum with a time line; you can visit this before or after your tour but you are requested not to congregate in reception except for 10 mins. before your tour as it is very small.

Court 15 is the last remaining group of Back to Backs in Birmingham. It was saved from demolition in the 1990s and since restored. Building started in 1802 and was completed in 1831. Originally 11 houses were here, each one room in depth, backing onto other terraced houses and each having 3 storeys. The inner courtyard had 4 privies for the use of the 20 or so families who lived in the 11 houses and which were emptied once a week! There were also 2 brew houses (laundries) for which the cooper boiler had to be filled manually. The tenants were artisans, some carrying out their trades from home eg. pearl button making, tailoring and the manufacture of glass eyes. Each of the 4 houses on the tour is furnished to represent a different period from the 1840s to the 1930s. Those houses fronting onto Hurst Street gradually became shops. The last occupants of the houses moved out in the 1960s and the last shopkeeper, George Saunders, a tailor, closed for business in 2002. Through Mr Saunders efforts the Back to Backs were preserved and then handed over to the NT.

NB. The 4 houses open to the public each have 2 very steep, narrow and winding staircases. If you feel unable to manage these there is a ground

floor only tour available with a video showing the upstairs. Please indicate on the booking form if you would prefer to join one of these tours. Depart School Street 8.45am. Leave Birmingham 4.15pm arriving Newcastle 6.15pm

Cost £18.00 (£19.00 for non -members) to include coach fare, driver's tip and synagogue entry fees. PLEASE BRING NT MEMBERSHIP CARDS. Please apply to Sue Corlett, 24, The Covert, Newcastle. ST5 4BL Tel. 01782 719075 enclosing a cheque and SAE.

Numbers limited to 48

Closing Date: 26th January

Wednesday 18th May: Coach Outing to Manchester. The Hallé Orchestra at the Bridgewater Hall

This year's visit is a real musical treat: a chance to hear the internationally acclaimed Hallé Orchestra in their Manchester home conducted by their eminent Music Director, Sir Mark Elder.

The concert features two great works dating from Dvořák's sojourn in America. His richly melodic and atmospheric 'New World' Symphony has always enjoyed enormous popularity. After its premiere in New York, the audience simply went wild and soon Dvořák collars, ties and walking sticks were all the rage! The Cello concerto with its wonderful melodies has never been out of musical fashion.

Concert Programme

Slavonic Dances

Cello Concerto

Symphony No.9, 'From the New World'

Sir Mark Elder conductor, Garry Hoffman cello



Following refreshments in the Hall on arrival, you are free to explore the city's many museums, art galleries and historical buildings or even do a little bit of shopping before the concert, which starts at 2:15 pm.

Did you ever wonder what the Romans did for Manchester? If so, you may like to join us on a leisurely walking tour (approximately 1 hour) and find out more! Our guide will be the ever popular Andrew Derbyshire and he will lead us from the Bridgewater Hall to the site of the Roman fort of *Mamucium*

and then into the canal basin of Castlefield where the Bridgewater and Rochdale canals meet. It is also where the first railway station in the world was built, although it is now part of the Museum of Science and Industry. Numbers on the walk are **strictly limited to 25** so early application is advised.

Depart School Street 9.30 a.m. and return for 5.30p.m. (subject to traffic) Cost £38 (£40 for non-members and friends) to include:

- * Best Centre Stalls seats (face value £30)
- * Concert programme worth £3.20 (subject to availability)
- * Refreshments on arrival
- * Coach travel and driver's gratuity

Additional £5 for optional guided walk (limited to 25 members)

Please apply to:

Mrs.P.Moore. 26 Parkway, Trentham ST4 8AG, enclosing a cheque and stamped addressed envelope.

Tel: 01782 657645

Note for late Edition of Newsletter delivered March 2016.

Although all places on the walk are now taken, there are some tickets remaining for the concert, because we made a block booking. If you would like to sight see or shop then go to the matinee concert after lunch , please contact Penny a.s.a.p.

Tuesday 16th February: Talk: NS Conference Centre 7.30pm.

Isabelle & Jeff Killicoat, 'Japanese Ukiyo-e'.

Ukiyo-e – pictures of the floating world – are woodblock prints which were aimed at the prosperous merchant class living in Edo (Tokyo) from the 17th to 19th centuries who were at the bottom of the social order. Many indulged in the entertainments of kabuki theatre, courtesans and geishas of the pleasure districts which are depicted in the prints and the term 'Ukiyo 'came to portray this hedonistic lifestyle.

The art of Ukiyo-e took the western world by storm in the 19th century and had a profound influence on many artists including the French Impressionists Degas, Manet and Monet, Post Impressionists such as Van Gogh and Art Nouveau artists including Toulouse Lautrec.

Isabelle and Jeff's talk gives a fascinating insight into life in Japan during this period and its effect on European art.

Wednesday 24th February: Car Outing: New Victoria Theatre, Basford, Newcastle-under-Lyme.

Visitors to the New Vic will know that it has recently had an extensive front of house refurbishment and is looking as fresh as when it opened nearly thirty years ago- I know, I can't believe the time either! We have arranged not only a guided tour of the public areas, auditorium and front of house but also of backstage, the workshops [costume, scenery etc] and rehearsal areas, if not in use.

The restaurant will be open from 10am onwards if members would like a coffee/tea before the tour begins [at own cost] and if anyone would like to stay for lunch afterwards [at own cost] the theatre will reserve tables for us if you indicate on the booking form that you would like to eat there. Car parking is available at the theatre and we will assemble by 10.30am near the booking office on the ground floor. The tour will last for approximately one hour to ninety minutes and questions will be welcome. The number of places is limited so please apply promptly.

Cost £7 [non-members £8], including the usual donation to the National Trust.

Apply to Rose Wheat, 12, West Avenue, Newcastle, Staffs, ST5 0NB. Tel: 01782 616113, enclosing a cheque and SAE.

Closing date: Monday 8th February.

**Tuesday 15th March: Talk: NS Conference Centre 7.30.p.m.
"The Seven Towns of North Staffordshire." Fred Hughes.**

Fred Hughes is a writer and local historian and has written several books on local history and heritage.

He has been a regular columnist for The Sentinel for the past 15 years. He is also a regular broadcaster on Radio Stoke.

Prior to 1910, Stoke on Trent was a collection of 6 towns, each with its own municipal council. After many years of local petitioning, the Government saw the benefit in having one local authority. The perceived benefits were both economic and administrative. Newcastle-under-Lyme was also invited to join with the 6 towns, but declined. What has happened since 1910? If

Newcastle-under-Lyme had joined the federation, what would have been the scene today? Is it still possible? What benefits would there be?

A fascinating presentation to take your mind off the other in/out debate.

Saturday 19 March 2016 – Walk: Rode Heath and the Salt Trail

This walk explores the countryside west of Rode Heath, including part of the Salt Trail, the route of a former railway which brought salt from Cheshire into the Potteries. The walk includes the opportunity for a pub lunch at the Broughton Arms, Rode Heath. Take the A50 north from the Church Lawton crossroads (junction of A50/A5011/B5077) – on entering Rode Heath take the A533 left towards Sandbach, and you will shortly see the Broughton Arms on the left. Please park in the larger car park just beyond the pub.

The walk starts at 10.30am at the Broughton Arms, Rode Heath

We will cross the canal east of the pub, then walk through woodland until we reach the Salt Trail, which provides a well-wooded pathway along the route of part of the former railway. For those with celestial leanings, the path is also marked by a series of posts indicating the relative distance of the planets from the sun. There are also warning notices of the need to take care with respect to rabbits. As we near the M6, which can be heard before it is seen, we cross farmland to reach the tiny village of Hassall Green and its intriguing church. From there we return along the canal towpath to the Broughton Arms. This is a fairly level walk, with about 6 stiles, and with some road crossings. Children and dogs are of course welcome, so long as the latter are kept on leads.

Cost: £2.00 for members, £2.50 for guests (all pay on the day – the correct change would be appreciated please). When booking please indicate whether you would like to lunch at the Broughton Arms so that they can be given an indication of numbers. The menu is extensive and prices reasonable (at time of going to press).

Book your place with Peter Wilson either by email to

peterwilsonendon@btinternet.com or by post to Greenbank, Church Lane,

Endon, Stoke-on-Trent, ST9 9HF (tel. 01782 502150). Postal bookings will not normally be acknowledged other than by email (if an email address is given).

Closing date Monday 14 March 2016.

Tuesday, 22nd March: Car outing to the LION SALT WORKS, Northwich CW9 6ES

(Plus Anderton Lift if you wish, see below). Tour at 2pm.

Discover Cheshire's salt making history. Re-opened early in the summer of 2015, this new visitor attraction has interactive exhibits and authentic heritage displays. We will take a guided tour on a journey through the life of the country's last traditional open-pan salt making site.

John Thompson Junior, a member of a family that had been making salt probably since the 18th century, started the Lion Salt Works when he built a salt pan in the coal yard of the Red Lion Hotel, Marston, in 1894. During the 20th century more efficient methods of extracting and refining salt were developed, and by 1960 the works was the only business in the country continuing to use the open pan process. The business closed down in 1986 when the West African markets, the major purchaser of natural salt, were lost because of the Nigerian Civil War.

In 2004 the Lion Salt Works was a candidate on the BBC's Restoration programme. The surviving buildings are designated by English Heritage as Grade II listed buildings. The specific buildings listed are the canal salt shed, the engine shed and pump house, the office in the works yard, and the pan sheds and stoves and the store shed behind the works. The buildings are registered as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and the site is recognised as an Anchor Point of the European route of Industrial Heritage.

Cost £10 (£12 for non members)

Please apply to Cynthia Dumbelton, 32 The Lea, Trentham, ST4 8DY enclosing a cheque and stamped addressed envelope. Closing date: 12th February.

In addition:- you may wish to extend your day in the area by visiting the Anderton Boat Lift (CW9 6FW) in the morning before arriving at the Salt Works. The Lift is an incredible edifice, perched on the banks of the River Weaver like a giant three-storey-high iron spider. It provides a 50-foot vertical link through two caissons between two navigable waterways: the River Weaver and our own Trent and Mersey Canal and is well worth seeing. Visit independently!

Tuesday 12th April: Talk: NS Conference Centre 7.30. p.m.
“The Yellow Book” The National Gardens Scheme. Graham and Judy White.

Have you seen the yellow “Garden Open Today “signs? Graham is a photographer and jointly Graham and Judy are the publicists for the Staffordshire, Birmingham and part of the West Midlands Gardens which open for charity. The Gardens Scheme is the most significant charitable funder of nursing in the uk. You will hear how the £2.6 million is distributed annually.

There are over seventy extremely varied gardens open in our area. Seven of them have been opening since 1927. New ones open each year. You will see images of fine planting and hear stories about the owners and the effort it takes to create a paradise. Like National Trust the NGS runs on volunteers, tea and cake!

Thursday 21st April: Coach Outing: A trip to Leicester. King Richard III Visitor Centre, the Cathedral and the New Walk Art Gallery and Museum.

Leicester was very much in the news in 2012 when the remains of King Richard III were found buried under what is now a car park but was formerly the site of the Grey Friars Abbey. Richard was killed at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 by supporters of Henry Tudor, the self- appointed

Henry VII, thus ending the 30 year Wars of the Roses. Richard was the last English king to be killed in battle and the last of the Plantagenet kings, who had reigned for 331 years. The remains were confirmed as those of Richard III by mitochondrial DNA taken from descendants of Richard's sister, Anne of York. The skeleton also displayed severe scoliosis of the spine, hence the description of Richard as a hunchback. There then followed an unseemly dispute between York and Leicester as to where his remains should be reinterred. Leicester won, despite a High Court action by distant relatives, the Plantagenet Alliance, and Richard was reinterred at Leicester Cathedral in March 2015 at a ceremony conducted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. We arrive at 9.45 at the King Richard III Visitor Centre where we will be divided into 2 groups; one group will go to the Cathedral opposite for a guided tour and a visit to Richard's tomb. The other group will have an introductory talk before going on a self-guided tour of the Centre. On the ground floor there is the story of Richard's life, his rise to power and the Wars of the Roses (Dynasty), followed by accounts of his death at Bosworth Field. On the first floor (there is a lift) Discovery unearths the story of the research, archaeology, science and painstaking analysis which led to the discovery and identification of his remains. Exhibits include a facial reconstruction and a replica of his skeleton with its multiple injuries and curved spine. Finally visitors can see the site of the burial. There is a café in the Centre and another next door to the Cathedral. Behind the latter is the ancient Guildhall dating from 1390 and a small exhibition depicting medieval Leicester. Both are free to enter. The first group will meet up in the foyer at 11.20 from where they will be taken for the cathedral tour and the second group will be brought back to the Centre at 11.00 for their introductory talk and tour. At 12.30 we will take a 15 minute stroll through the city centre to the New Walk Museum & Art Gallery. A map will be provided and we will meet in the Museum foyer at 2.15 which gives plenty of time for lunch (at own expense) in one of the many cafes and pubs on the way. Picnics can be eaten in the cathedral yard where there are benches and there is an outdoor area to the café at the Visitor Centre. Again we will be divided into 2 groups and given an introductory talk before wandering round the different galleries which include Ancient Egypt (with a

real mummy), an Arts and Crafts gallery with a wonderful collection of artefacts and furniture, the Dinosaur Gallery, the Lord Attenborough collection of Picasso ceramics, German expressionist paintings – the largest collection in the UK, the Victorian Gallery with works by Mallord, Turner, Degas and others and a Wild Space gallery which looks at biodiversity. There is a small café.

We will meet our coach at the rear of the building at 4.30 for our journey home.

Depart School Street at 8.00am and return for 6.30pm.

Cost: £30 (£31 for non- members) including coach, driver's tip, entry to the Visitor Centre and guided tour of the cathedral and NT donation.

Please apply to Jane Mayer, 16, Shaldon Avenue, Stockton Brook, Stoke on Trent. ST9 9PU.

Tel. 01782 533476, enclosing cheque and SAE. Closing

Date: Wednesday 23rd March.



End of Spring Programme Details.

No booking forms or booking details have been included because all the events are fully booked apart from The Halle Concert 13/5/16, where seats are still available . Please see page 6.

The GardenTeam at Biddulph Grange and the Tower provided from funds generated by North Staffs NT Association.



Reports on (Relatively) Recent Events

Sunday 23rd August: Car Outing to Abbeywood Gardens and Plant Fair, Delamere, Cheshire.

Despite a dire weather forecast the day started off hot and sunny and most of our party were able to view the gardens and spend their money before the rain finally descended.

Magnificent gardens like Abbeywood always leave me gasping with delight and jealousy; plant fairs always leave me with an empty purse as I vainly try to emulate the professional gardeners. Abbeywood was no different and I had to be restrained from turning the car into a miniature jungle! Delicious cakes and snacks were available in the cafe and the whole place was set amidst outstanding countryside. All in all it was a super Sunday out
Thank you Rose.

Wednesday 26th August: Coach outing to Fulneck Moravian Settlement and Oakwell Hall.

Fulneck Moravian Village promised to be an interesting trip and it did not disappoint. Our guides led us on an informative and entertaining tour around the settlement, described by Leeds City Council as a 'unique cultural gem'. From the grade1 listed church to the charming museum we learnt the history of this little-known Christian sect which continues to thrive to this day particularly in the field of education.

After lunch we visited Oakwell Hall, a splendidly preserved Jacobean house, largely untouched by the last four centuries. Once again we benefitted from an excellent tour of the building.

Our thanks must go to Pat Wilson who was able to add his own memories of Fulneck and to point out sites in the surrounding area associated with the Bronte family and especially with Charlotte's novel 'Shirley'.

Mick Wheat.

Tuesday 28th July: Coach Trip to Kenilworth Castle & Packwood House

The weather was fairly good as we headed for the leafy lanes of Warwickshire, but just as we disembarked at Kenilworth, the heavens opened. As we were divided into two groups, one to see the gardens first, the other to start with a tour of the buildings, those of us in the latter group thought we were lucky, until we realised that most of the castle buildings have no roof.

Fortunately we had a very enthusiastic and informative guide and soon forgot how drenched we were becoming, as he regaled us with gruesome stories about the castle's history. The Norman keep was, in 1266, held by supporters of Simon de Montfort, generally acknowledged to have been the founder of Parliament, against the besieging armies of Henry III. Although Henry took the castle, after a siege of nine months, the rebels were so admired for their fortitude that they were allowed to go free. Later Kenilworth was occupied as a palace by John of Gaunt.

The castle really came into its own whilst occupied by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who constructed additional buildings to accommodate Elizabeth I for a nineteen-day visit in 1575, including a gatehouse (which was until the last century occupied as a residence), and a tower which, on the top floor, included Elizabeth's private apartments. The tower was, like much of the castle, damaged during the Civil War, but within the last two years English Heritage have installed a series of staircases and viewing platforms, so that visitors can enjoy extensive views of the castle and surrounding countryside. Dudley had high hopes of becoming Elizabeth's consort which, as we know, came to nought, so his investment was in vain.

Dudley also laid out a formal garden, for Elizabeth's delight, which has recently been restored, and again we were given a very informative tour. The garden includes an elaborate aviary, where canaries sing melodiously as they did in the original, but even they were not enough to persuade the Queen to accept Dudley's suit.

Kenilworth was once considered to be one of England's most romantic ruins, and most of us felt that its charm had been enhanced by the works carried out by English Heritage. It certainly seemed to attract a good number of visitors, apart from ourselves, even on a day of uncertain weather.

In fact, by the time we left for nearby Packwood, the weather had improved greatly, and remained sunny and warm for the rest of the day. Packwood House was acquired in 1905, as a virtual ruin, by Birmingham industrialist Alfred Ash, whose son Baron Ash devoted much of his life (and fortune) to restoring and remodelling the house to its glory as an idealised Tudor manor house, during the 1920s and 30s. There had been many alterations over centuries, and Baron Ash restored the exterior to its Tudor style, and with sympathetic extensions added a long gallery and great hall. Ash was as fastidious a host as he was as the restorer of the house, and distinguished guests included Queen Mary. Most of us felt we would have enjoyed the comfort and hospitality of Packwood, and many could have happily lived there, which few would have said of Kenilworth. Packwood also has an interesting garden, dominated by a formal arrangement of clipped yew trees, known as “the Sermon on the Mount”, arranged in front of a single yew standing on a mound which is surrounded by a spiral pathway enclosed by yew hedges, having the effect of a maze. We all appreciated the care with which Shirley and Roger had planned and organised the day, which ran “like clockwork”. This was a truly enjoyable day out, in the best tradition of our Association.

Peter Wilson

Packwood by Kay Williams



Tuesday 15th September: Talk by Ray Johnson M.B.E. of The Staffordshire Film Archive.

There was a distinct buzz of excited chatter in the air as David Dumbelton introduced Ray Johnson who received a warm welcome from a full house. David had outlined Ray's areas of interest and expertise including philosophy and psychology but particularly his interest in all things local and his work for the Staffordshire Film Archive. Ray spoke on many topics, all accompanied by film, including the planning of the Model Farm at Shugborough (the first of its kind); Biddulph Grange and Gardens; Royal visits to the City; the history of Trentham Gardens; the role of the Spitfire in the Battle of Britain and a day in the life of London Airport.

Regarding Biddulph, emphasis was given to its time in the early part of the last century when in 1923 it became an orthopaedic hospital run by Lancashire County Council. He showed us recently discovered archive film of many patients from babies to young adults being treated for all kinds of medical problems particularly skeletal ones. They exercised in the gardens and beds were placed outside in the fine weather to aid recuperation.

Doctor Alun Davies, a founder member of the NSNTA, appeared in one of Ray's films shedding more light on this period.

The hospital came under local control after the formation of the NHS and finally closed in 1976 when the gardens fell into rapid decline and the lovely representations of Egypt and China were sadly vandalised. In 1988 The National Trust formed a Steering Group to lease and restore the gardens and with reference to the drawings of Edward Cooke (James Bateman's close colleague); various sale catalogue information and old photographs in Country Life magazine the gardens underwent a three-year restoration programme and opened to the public in 1991. We were also shown a promotional film about the restoration work with narration by Patrick Lichfield.

Ray said that he had produced some 90 DVD's for the Staffordshire Film Archive, mostly of the local area, and to conclude his illustrative talk we were shown a promotional film about Reginald Mitchell's Spitfire and its role in the Second World War including archive film of Spitfires in action over the skies of southern England during the Battle of Britain with appropriate music by William Walton.

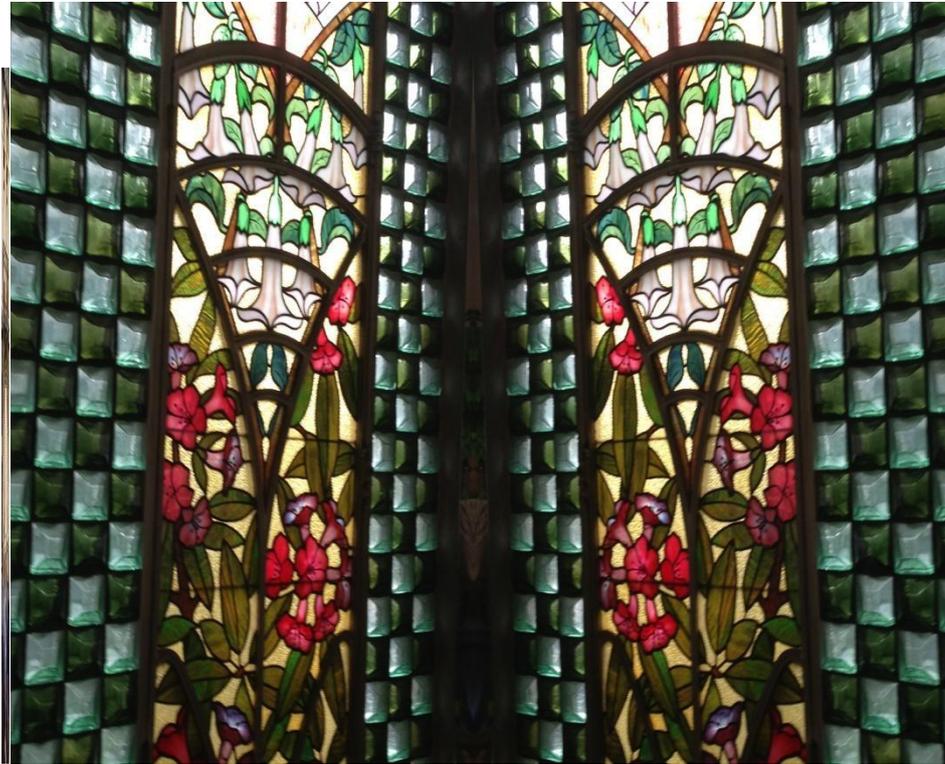
A most fitting end to the evening as the date of the talk (15th September 2015) was the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

Shirley Timmis

Thursday 24th September: Car Outing to Catton Hall.

On a glorious autumn afternoon we visited Catton Hall which few of us had previously been aware of despite its relative proximity to the Potteries. Katie Neilson, the current incumbent of the Hall, gave us a very informative talk before we started the tour, and it was good to relate this to the paintings and other objects we saw as we went around. We liked her informal approach, we were even allowed to sit on the furniture! Both she and her other staff whom we met, were very friendly and welcomed our questions and comments.

The Hall was very well-maintained with its beautiful architecture, paintings furniture etc., as was the surrounding parkland situated by the River Trent ,unlike anything we see in our part of the world. The tea was excellent: delicious sandwiches, cakes, scones and hot drinks and added to our enjoyment of the visit. Thank you Rose.



Previous Page : Stained Glass in Nancy. Maison Bergeret : Ralph White

ART NOUVEAU HOLIDAY IN NANCY, 2-6 OCTOBER 2015

Introduction by Cynthia Dumbelton, holiday organiser.

Having spent time with Eric Knowles on a Study Day at the Upper House last year I was inspired to visit Nancy and how lucky I was to get a group to join me on this venture. Here are some reports from our friends:

Friday, 2nd October

We could not have wished for a better day than the one on which we started our journey. We were split into two groups in order to board our train to Euston quickly and efficiently. In seemingly no time we were there, from where we wheeled our luggage to St.Pancras station to board the Eurostar to Paris.

Our train snaked silently and smoothly through the countryside; under the Channel Tunnel then on to Paris. There we alighted at the Gare du Nord

station which has a wonderful facade containing many statues and from where we walked to the Gare de l'Est station to catch the final train which would take us on to Nancy.

We were booked in at the Mercure Stanislas hotel which was conveniently situated for our holiday, being close to the beautiful Place Stanislas in the centre of Nancy.

Our evening meal - the only one which we all took together - was at the Brasserie Excelsior, a short walk from the hotel. The Brasserie was opened in 1911 and when we entered the dining hall, we were met by an exuberant triumph of Art Nouveau style at its most stunning where sinuous stems of ginkgo biloba, honesty and ferns seemed to wrap around us. We dined under the multi-branched chandeliers with their beautiful amber and green glass shades - a most wonderful experience.

We went to bed that night eagerly anticipating our first full day in Nancy.

Shirley Timmis

Saturday, 3rd October

Our busy day began with a short walk to the tourist information office where audio guides and audio guide maps were provided to enable us to view some of the architecture in the business district of the city.

I was in the first group to set-off. It soon became apparent that using the guides and maps whilst navigating the streets and keeping together as a group was no easy task so when David Morgan ably took charge of the map reading and guided us to each viewing point the situation became easier. We saw some spectacular architecture, metalwork and stained glass, all in the flowing Art Nouveau style inspired by nature. Our final pause on this

tour was outside the sumptuous Excelsior Brasserie, built 1910, saved from demolition in the 1970s and where we had dined the previous evening.

There followed a fairly long walk across town to reach the school of Nancy museum, arriving about noon. This building has a very pretty facade and is set in a lovely, tranquil, garden. Inside is equally impressive with what is said to be one of the finest collections of Art Nouveau in the world and complete room settings which display perfectly the varied skills of the artists involved. A most enjoyable and informative visit.

Following lunch in a nearby pub/restaurant, a short stroll took us to Villa Majorelle where we met-up with our young lady guide who took us around the outside and inside of the building, explaining in great detail the many unusual features. Again, we were overwhelmed with the architecture and artistic skill with hardly a straight line to be found.

At the end of the visit, those who needed to were able to take the local bus back to the hotel while others went on foot, making the most of the warm October sunshine.

Margaret Thorley

Sunday, 4th October

We made a fairly early start on Sunday, taking the very clean and comfortable local train to Luneville, to visit the impressive Chateau. For many years the town was the capital of the Lorraine region, which for a time operated as an independent Duchy, at other times becoming part of nearby Germany, and being now very much a part of France. Whilst Nancy has the feel of a large cosmopolitan city, Luneville retains the character of a typical French town, especially on a Sunday morning when nearly all shops and restaurants are closed.

The Chateau was built by Duke Leopold in its present form early in the 18th Century in the style of Versailles, perhaps because Leopold had married a daughter of Louis XIV. In 1729 the dukedom passed to Stanislaw, the dethroned King of Poland and father-in-law of Louis XV. Under Stanislaw, the Chateau became a centre of the enlightenment, hosting philosophers (including notably Voltaire), artists and writers.

The Chateau was seriously damaged by fire in 2003, and its restoration continues. We were able to see the completed parts of the central building, and although the rooms on show are not as yet fully decorated or furnished, there were many interesting items on view. Our guide pointed out with great pride a display of faience (earthenware) pottery, decorated in the Chinese style, but her pride abated a little when we mentioned that we came from North Staffordshire, which had produced some of the world's very finest bone china. Faience ware is still produced in Luneville. We were also interested to hear about the famous (possibly unique) "flying table" of Luneville. This was a circular dining table, the central part of which could be lowered into the basement kitchen, where various dishes could be placed upon it, and then wound back up into the dining room so that the no doubt lavish meal could continue without having to wait for footmen to carry the dishes upstairs.

After lunch (from flightless tables) we were able to tour the gardens, which were laid out as typically French formal parterres, enclosed by neatly clipped hedges, behind which were "bocages", where trees growing naturally provided an informal backdrop. Some of us visited various exhibitions, (including embroidery) linked with the Chateau.*

At about 4pm we returned by train to Nancy, having spent an enjoyable and informative day in Luneville, which had been organised for us by Sue Corlett, who was careful not to leave any of us behind.

Peter Wilson

***One of the exhibitions was the collection of a retired principal engraver at Baccarat Crystal. On the strength of once getting a job because I could distinguish Baccarat from Clichy formerly in the collection of King Farouk of Egypt, the cabinets were unlocked and I had thousands of pounds worth of historic glass pressed into my hands. I was terrified! (Ralph).**

Monday 5th October



Monday morning saw group members using their Nancy passes to visit the Musee des Beaux Arts, one of the many fine buildings on Stanislas Square. The 18th century frontage gave way to an ultra- modern extension, which was built on the foundations of the fortifications of the time that Nancy was under military control. Caravaggio,

Tintoretto and Rubens could be seen amongst the old masters, but for many people it was the late 19th and early 20th century paintings that proved to be the gems of the collection. Picasso, Dufy and Manet were represented but the Lorrain painters stole the show, with works by Jacques Majorelle, Victor Prouve and last, but not least, Emil Friant. His painting of La Douleur [Grief] particularly touched viewers and sparked discussion. Unfortunately this small reproduction cannot do it justice. The most remarkable part of the museum was however tucked away in the basement. This was the starkly lit display of 600 pieces of crystal and glass forming the world renowned Daum collection. It represents over 100 years of finely crafted designs from the Daum Works, which was founded with the inception of Art Nouveau and continues to produce the work of contemporary designers today. If I could have taken home a souvenir, it would have been one of these!



On Monday afternoon the group set off by bus with an English speaking guide to the Maison Bergeret. The slightly grim exterior belied the riot of light and colour of the interior from the huge stained glass window along the landing of the sinuous staircase. Gasps were heard on entering the Winter Garden with the glass panels of Daturas. The design and craftsmanship in joinery and metal work, featuring natural forms such as honesty and mistletoe, encapsulated many facets of Art Nouveau that we had been hearing about over the two previous days.

For the last item on the trip itinerary the rains descended, so out came the umbrellas and cagoules and, in one case, a plastic bag, anchored firmly on the head. Our guide led us, like Mary Poppins, to Le Parc de Saurupt. This was conceived as a suburban garden estate to be filled with Art Nouveau villas, but only seven were built of varying degrees of attractiveness. Nancy residents in the early 20th century obviously did not fancy the daily commute! There just remained a damp tram ride back to the centre of Nancy to complete our Art Nouveau journey and what a ride it had been! Thanks must go to Cynthia Dumbelton for all her prodigious research and organisation. Nancy was a revelation and our understanding and appreciation of Art Nouveau has increased exponentially!

Marilyn Vigurs

Tuesday, 6th October

The last morning gave us an opportunity to visit museums we had missed or to do some last-minute shopping in this beautiful city. We caught the TVG at noon for the return journey via Paris and onward towards home. All the journeys went smoothly and no railway inspector actually checked our rail tickets on any day! I wonder if we could have travelled free ? It had been a group of easy and appreciative people in an environment new to most of us. My thanks to all of you for allowing me to indulge a whim!

Cynthia

Tuesday 13th October: Talk by Steve Ragnall : "This Tempestuous and Inhospitable Shore"

Steve Ragnall is a maritime historian and author of note and graphically told us the story of Admiral Anson's circumnavigation of the world in the 18th Century.

George Anson was born at Shugborough in 1697 and being the second son he had to choose a career. He joined the Navy at the age of 15 and using the influence of his uncle The Earl of Macclesfield he received rapid promotions until in 1737 at the age of 40 he became an Admiral.

In September 1740 he set sail from Portsmouth with a flotilla of six ships led by his flagship The Centurion in a revenge mission to attack Spanish possessions on the coast of Chile and Peru. The intent was to set up several garrisons on the coast and to sink Spanish galleons having plundered their treasures. The early part of the voyage was beset with a series of disasters: in March 1741 severe storms were encountered around Cape Horn; spies had already forewarned the Spanish of the approaching flotilla and many of Anson's sailors and soldiers had died from typhus, consumption or scurvy. In June he finally made land and set up camp on an island off Santiago, Chile. It then took many weeks to reach the mainland at Valparaiso where he was joined by just two of his other ships. After three months recuperation and ship repairs Anson made his way to Acapulco and eventually Panama where he took over four Spanish warships and scuttled several others although he did release all prisoners.

In March 1742 after taking on more fresh water and supplies he headed across the Pacific to Manila although HMS Gloucester was falling to pieces and was set alight. After five months he made land at Tinian where he allowed his depleted and exhausted crews to recuperate. In November of 1742 he arrived in Macau, China and eventually negotiated with the Chinese

in Canton who allowed him to continue his mission. In early 1743 he intercepted the Spanish galleon *Nesta* about to return to Acapulco. HMS *Centurion*, with the loss of only two of its crew, easily overpowered the *Nesta* and plundered its vast riches. The Chinese allowed Anson to re-supply the *Centurion* and his other remaining vessels and he set sail for home with 'pieces of eight' and other treasures worth millions of pounds. This bounty was known as "The Prize" part of which was to be shared amongst the officers and crew when back home.

Finally, in June 1744, almost four years after he had left England he paraded his 'treasures' through London. Anson was a 'made man'. The price paid in human terms was very high with only 500 of the *Centurion's* original crew of 1,900 surviving and four of the original flotilla lost. The bounty or "prize" was duly distributed in accordance with tradition. Anson returned to live at Shugborough where some relics of his epic voyage can still be seen. He was in due course made First Lord of the Admiralty

FOOTNOTE: Amazingly one of the 'lost ships' HMS *Wager* made it home some two years later in May 1746 - six years after leaving England. However its surviving crew did not receive any share of the treasure as they had not been present when it was plundered!

Steve Ragnall's presentation of this epic voyage complete with appropriate sound and animation provided a most enjoyable evening for the large number of members and guests present.

Roger Cartlidge

Thursday 15th October : Coach Trip to Nostell Priory and The Hepworth Gallery, Wakefield.

The journey to Nostell was a little tedious. I don't think we ever got the bottom of the arguments about whether the driver mistook the route or was avoiding traffic congestion. This meant that this the delay and an event soon after our arrival meant that we did not really have time to let the glory of this Robert Adam and Capability Brown Masterpiece sink in. However, some of the first group of us to be admitted saw some of the house twice. This was because we had not penetrated far into the state rooms when the

fire alarm went off. We were all ushered out calmly to wait outside. My pipe dream of being able to tug and run with the tapestries or take a pair of Sevres vases into protective custody came to nothing when the trigger of the alarm was traced to the cellar and dealt with.

The furniture and the pictures are sensational, I can't wait to go back again. Our members remarked on how good all the guides were. I shall remember our tour's guides with affection for a long time, but the reasons may not have been obvious to most of the group. They were like Lettuce and Lovage. Once was interested in social history and very enthusiastic. The other, acting as sweeper up or corgi behind us was by my right ear and had a tighter grasp of the script. The corrections were dropped into my ear as we went along. However they were extremely kind to us and responded brilliantly when I asked an awkward question. In the eighteenth century the owner of the house married an heiress and spent the next thirty years converting her fortune into architecture and painting. One of the painters was Zucchi, he was married to Angelica Kaufmann, remarkable for being one of two female founders of the Royal Academy. If her husband had been employed for years here, where were her paintings? Apparently one of her most personal and autobiographically revealing pictures was not on the route of our planned tour. However, as a special favour we were allowed off piste and over the ropes to have a really good look. What a treat!

We had a lovely lunch in a huge wedding reception room. I don't know what it was originally, but we did not have long to dwell in a room you could not see out of and people weren't encouraged to look into. Rather like the decorators in 18th Century Nostell when his lordship died and her ladyship came into her own, we were parcelled back on the coach p.d.q.

We travelled as far as Wakefield to the Hepworth. This review is supposed to convey an impression of what it was like to be on the visit, a first class opportunity to be shown up as partial, prejudiced and ignorant.

I will never be able to match the ineffable style of our guides who wove a language I have only heard late at night on radio 3, but I know what I like. It was very special to see so many works and to be able to examine the ideas, materials, forms, patina and sheer engineering skill which created them.

We had time to let the pieces speak to us. Power, mass, elegance, beauty expressed in a cypher, an abstract. What a determined genius she was. In contrast, I will have to put in special measures to understand some of the Sir Anthony Caro pieces of metal deployed so “artfully”.

This monumental trip was conceived by Bob Winter, smoothed and brought to a fine polish by the Studio Assistants, the Wheat Partnership.



Members in Awe at the Hepworth Gallery.

Saturday 31st October: Walk; Endon & District

The walk, starting at the Plough at Endon (where we had been allowed to park) on a dry and still morning, took us fairly gently uphill on lanes between houses, and on field tracks, giving views of autumn colours at their best – just in time as it happened, the leaves mostly fell not long afterwards.

The route led via Brown Edge down to a most attractive length of the Caldon Canal, from where we viewed a Victorian former waterworks and pumping station, which was once an important part of the Potteries' water supply.

Continuing along the towpath through Stockton Brook towards Endon, passing the entrance to a short stretch of water branching off the main canal, now home of the Stoke Boat Club, we had time to stop and stare at a canal boat being winched out of the water, turned around (with two men aboard) and placed delicately and safely on supports on dry land.

From this point it was not far along the canal, and across some grassland, back to the Plough, which some walkers visited for lunch.

An interesting, varied and very colourful autumn walk. Thanks are due to Peter Wilson.

Georgina Pritchard

**Tuesday 10th November :Morning Car Trip To Toyota, Burnaston, nr Derby
Evening Talk : "My Favourite Rooms" by**

David Brown .

A note from the Editor. I owe an apology to the original authors of reports on this busy day's events. When the computer crashed most of the reports, which arrived as attachments, had been copied and saved to cut and pasted again, but these two reports, even the emails in which they appeared, have vanished. If we can trace the authors we can take steps to restore their contribution to the archives both physical and on line.

Meanwhile I will summarise the day.

Having passed the security vetting and succeeded in the postal lottery for the twenty places on this visit the members assembled for their pre tour briefing. There then followed an amazing exploration of this hi tech plant.

The skills of man and computer aided machine it takes to produce and develop vehicles are breath taking. No wonder there is demand for further visits. John Pedrazzini deserves the many thanks he received for arranging this visit which ran so smoothly. Privilege Visits like this are in high demand and Toyota, probably justifiably, dictate the terms. He navigated the route into the factory with great skill.

David Brown reached us for the evening talk after a great deal of navigating too. A family emergency took him miles away, but he was determined to fulfil his promise to us in spite of the stress of a nightmare journey. Having become unwell en route a lesser person would have cancelled, but David pressed on . He is now a Heart of England Board Member of the Historic Houses Association, but previously was Publicity Manager with the National Trust at Attingham . He was involved with the organisation and setting up of our association in 1981. However the subject of his talk was not the goings on of some of our still living founder members in their younger days but a glimpse of some of the spectacular houses to which he has had access over a long career. Some were never open to the public , some rarely, for paying guests or events. Some were ancient, one in particular is only a few years old. Some had been splendidly restored, others owners had had to cut the curtains according to the cloth available. The audience had fun deciding who had succeeded best in achieving comfort, warmth and access to drinks. There were many cream or yellow rooms and some choice of lime green wallpaper which could be called “brave”. Do you remember the all white one? No chance of being offered red wine coffee or chocolates there! The Programme Organising team were making notes and trying to persuade David to put in a word for us.

I am pleased to report that the next day David was restored to health.

The reports of The Trip to Media City And The Christmas Event at Keele Hall ,together with a list of the new members who have joined us ,will feature in the next edition of the Newsletter which will appear after Easter (2016) !



The signs were there six months earlier at Sezincote. The Hindu Goddess answered this supplicant's prayers at Keele Hall in December.

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We are still looking for a Newsletter Editor and Someone to liaise with our Web Hosts.

Spring Programme	
January 19 TH Tuesday	Talk : NS Conf. Centre :7.30 p.m. "The Royal Secrets of Spode" Ray Elks
February 11 th Thursday	Coach Outing : Singers Hill Synagogue & The Back to Backs (NT) Birmingham
February 16 th Tuesday	Talk :NS Conf. Centre: 7.30.p.m. "The Art of Japanese Ukiyo-e"* Jeff and Isabelle Killicoat
February 24 th Wednesday	Car Outing: Backstage Tour of New Victoria Theatre, Basford.
March Tuesday 15th	Talk: NS Conf. Centre: 7.30 p.m. The Seven Towns of North Staffs Fred Hughes
March Saturday 19th	Walk: Rode Heath & The Salt Trail
March Tuesday 22nd	Car Outing: The Lion Salt works, Northwich
April Tuesday 12th	Talk: NS Conf. Centre: 7.30. p.m. "The Yellow Book" Nat. Gardens Scheme Graham and Judy White
April Thursday 21st	Coach Outing: King Richard III Visitor Centre, Cathedral, Art Gallery, Leicester

Some Dates for your Diary

17 th May	AGM.Followed by "The Lost City of Stoke on Trent" by Matthew Rice
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June 11 th	Coach Trip to Jackfield Tile Museum & Ironbridge Gorge
June 22 nd	Car Trip to Wightwick Manor & Bantock House
July 6 th	Walk at Norton in Hales
July 13 th	Coach Trip to Coughton Court & Baddesley Clinton
July 21 st	.Car Trip to Eyam

