

North Staffordshire National Trust Association

Newsletter No. 112
Winter-Spring 2019

www.northstaffsnt.org.uk



At Ford Green Hall, Smallthorne

© Richard Clamp

Arrangements for Trips

Coaches now depart promptly from **Brunswick Street** at the front of the Jubilee Baths. **The car park on School Street is now short stay.** The nearest long stay car park is the public car park next to the Borough Arms Hotel. We do not pick up members en route.

Please send a separate cheque, with the event name on the reverse, and a stamped addressed envelope for each event applied for, even if it is with the same organiser. People wishing to sit together should complete one form.

Non-members travelling as members' guests pay an extra £2 for Coach Outings and £1 for car trips. If circumstances dictate they have lower priority booking.

Please make cheques payable to "North Staffs National Trust Association". Cheques are normally not cleared until after an event. We will give notice if we need to do otherwise.

Refunds on cancellation are possible only if there is a waiting list. Please do not find your own substitute travellers: people on the waiting list have priority.

The Committee reserves the right to cancel any event that is not viable.

The personal accident insurance arranged by the Association through the Trust does NOT cover members over 80 years of age. However, our public liability insurance covers members at any age.

Whilst participating in an event please make sure that you carry the organiser's mobile phone number from the booking acceptance form in case you get lost. Please DO NOT MAKE alternative arrangements to get home without first telling the trip organiser.

This Newsletter is published by North Staffordshire National Trust Association to provide members with information on the forthcoming programme, reports on recent events, and other membership issues. The text and images are copyright and may not be reproduced without the owner's permission. Any views expressed by individual contributors are their own and not necessarily of the NSNTA or the NT.

We are always delighted to welcome new members – see further details on the inserts in the centre of this Newsletter.

The editor welcomes items of direct relevance to Association activities, and thanks all contributors, with apologies for failure to acknowledge any, particularly if sent by post.

Copy and correspondence for the next issue, due for publication in April, should be addressed to newsletter@northstaffsnt.org.uk (01782 791360) by the **15th March** at the absolute latest (but earlier if possible!)

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Newsletter No. 112

Winter-Spring 2019 Programme

A Note From The Chair



This note comes to you from the Deep South, Wolverhampton, where our motto is "out of darkness cometh light". So, as we stand at "the gate of the year", peering into the darkness, I hope this new programme will encourage you to "tread gladly" towards the lighter nights and longer days.

The original title of Minnie Haskins' poem quoted above, was "God Knows". This is the reply to so many questions to be answered between now and May. These include, "What state will the country be in by the end of March?", "Where will we find another Jane Mayer?".

Whatever happens we will keep calm and carry on. If all the trips, talks and walks have an underlying theme it is Human courage, ingenuity and determination. Embrace change but don't be slow to learn from history.

There must still be light or hope in the world where even an ex banker and call centre manager can repent at leisure, albeit cruising.

It will be entertaining to have perspectives challenged. Rudyard Lake was described as "a place where history has not spoiled the present". A phrase not common in the National Trust.

Very Best Wishes for The New Year

Ralph.

Data Protection Policy

The North Staffordshire National Trust Association (NSNTA) is a non-profit voluntary organisation which endeavours to comply with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998, and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) of May 2018.

Personal data collected by us on membership forms, renewal forms and event booking forms will be limited to: names, addresses, email addresses and telephone numbers. It will only be used for: administration of membership, communication of information and organisation of events within and related to the NSNTA.

Personal data will not be shared with the National Trust or any third party, or to other members.

Membership lists are destroyed when 18 months old. Lists relating to specific events are destroyed when the event is complete.

Contact the Membership Secretary if you wish to view/amend/delete any of your personal data.

By providing personal data on our membership forms and event booking forms, you are consenting to this, our Data Protection Policy, and to our stated use of your personal data.

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In order to comply with the terms of GDPR and to improve security and privacy the following policies are being adopted with particular reference to the publishing of details of members organising events. Full leaders' postal addresses will only appear on the booking forms and not in the main text of the magazine, which will just carry email addresses and telephone numbers. The booking forms are included in Newsletters distributed to bona-fide members of NSNTA but will not be contained in copies of the Newsletter posted on the website. Access to back copies of the Newsletter on the website which contain leaders' addresses will be restricted by password, available to members on request.

Attendees of NSNTA events are advised that they may be included in group photographs for publication in the Newsletter or on the website, but they will not be named without their specific permission. If anyone does not want to appear in such photographs, please let the organiser or the editor know.

## *Forthcoming Events*

*All talks commence at 7:30 p.m. at the North Staffordshire Conference Centre (the Medical Institute), Hartshill Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 7NY unless otherwise stated.*

### **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January: Talk: Ray Perry – ‘The Life & Work of Rudyard Lake’**

Ray was born and bred in Stoke-on-Trent, starting his employment in a textile company and becoming U.K. sales manager. He then was involved in export sales both for a company and for himself. He formed Rudyard Lake Ltd and Rudyard Lake Trust and has been Chair of both organisations.

### **Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> February: Talk: Steve Booth – ‘The Golden Age of Stage-coaching’**

Steve is an ex-History teacher of many years’ experience and now the treasurer of Stone Historical and Civic society. He offers many talks ranging from the Duke of Sutherland to chimney sweeps and a major work on the link between Lidice in as it was then Czechoslovakia and the people of North Staffordshire.

### **Sunday 3rd March: Walk: Keele & lunch at the Sneyd Arms**

This is a varied and easy walk (with no stiles!) taking in open countryside to the west of Keele village, then the pretty parts of the university campus – (yes, they do exist!) - historic woods and lakes to the rear of Keele Hall.

I can offer you a choice of routes: as this is a figure of eight walk, you can either complete the full 5 miles or join us mid-way and take a shorter walk of around 3 miles.

We will meet at 10 am at the Sneyd Arms in Keele, and set off on the first loop through open countryside, with some fine views over towards the Wrekin, and glimpses of the old Newcastle to Madeley railway line. We’ll pass by the pub around 11am, when anyone who would like the shorter walk is welcome to join us. The group will then go down a lane behind the university, entering the campus along Clock House Drive, once the Sneyd family’s route to their very own racecourse.



We will then explore the lakes and woodland – there are many fine specimen trees and I hope to find spring flowers blooming. Our route takes us back through the modern parts of the campus to the Sneyd Arms for lunch at 1pm.

As ever, we welcome children and dogs on leads, at no charge. Five miles or three miles, no stiles, and no hills worth mentioning.

Suggested donation for the walk is £3.00 for members, £3.50 for guests.

Please book your place with Richard Adams, by email, or by post with an SAE.

### **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March: Talk: Bob Kermeen – ‘Mesopotamia to WW1’**

Bob was born and schooled in the Isle of Man. After university he was commissioned into the RAF in 1966. During 29 years of active service Bob gained a Master of Science degree in Operational Research and specialised in software engineering. For his expertise in war gaming he was awarded a Fellowship of the British Computer society. Bob retired as a wing commander in 1995 and became the senior RAF recruiting officer in the North West of England for 10 years.

Bob has published several books under the nom de plume of R.W.Kay:

A Nastia Game; Bin Laden’s Nemesis; Iraq’s retribution; The world is empty.

### **Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March: Coach Trip: Manchester: Elizabeth Gaskell House, Pankhurst Centre & Whitworth Art Gallery**

This will be a day out with a difference as our coach takes us into the Manchester suburbs to visit two fascinating residences that are off the radar of the more obvious tourist trails.

Elizabeth Gaskell House was the home of the author and her family from 1850 to her death in 1865 aged 55 years. The house is an elegant Grade II\* neoclassical villa situated in what was then a leafy suburb of bustling Manchester. Following the death of her mother when she was an infant Elizabeth was brought up in Knutsford by an aunt, the town later becoming an inspiration for her novel ‘Cranford’. Her books, mostly written at her Manchester marital home, included ‘Cranford’, ‘North and South’ and ‘Wives and Daughters’. The property is elegantly furnished with an attractive garden to the rear. Elizabeth and her husband, William, a Unitarian Minister, were interested in new scientific ideas and literature and they entertained the Wedgwoods, Darwins and Nightingales. Elizabeth was also a friend of Charlotte Bronte about whom she wrote a biography.

Just 10 minutes’ walk away is the Pankhurst Centre, the last permanent home of Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters Sylvia, Christabel and Adela and the birthplace of the suffragette movement in 1903. It is a Grade II\* listed building.

We will all have tea/coffee (included) at Gaskell House before splitting into two groups. Group 1 will have a guided tour at the House (there is a lift to all 3 floors)

whilst Group 2 will walk to the Pankhurst Centre for a guided tour there (all on the ground floor). At 12.15 Group 2 will return and everyone will have a buffet lunch; sandwiches, cake and a hot drink, (included) at the House. At 1.00 the groups will change over. At 2.15 we leave Gaskell House by coach, picking up Group 1 on the way for a 5 minute drive to the Whitworth Art Gallery for a self-guided tour. We will leave there at 4.30.

Depart Brunswick Street at 8.00am to return by 6.00pm.

Cost £32.00 (non- members £34.00) to include coach, driver's tip, tea/coffee & biscuits on arrival, guided tours of both properties, buffet lunch and NT donation.

**NB. Cheques will be cashed mid- February.**

Please apply to Jane Mayer including a cheque and SAE. Enquiries: Tel 01782 533476; email janemayeruk@yahoo.co.uk

**Tuesday 9th April: Talk: Hazel Griffiths, Cruise ship speaker – ‘Motion of the Ocean’**

Hazel tells the story of how she became a cruise ship speaker. She was originally a banker then managed a call centre. Is the life on board glamorous?

**Wednesday 10th April: Car Trip: Ford Hall Farm, Market Drayton & lunch**

Ford Hall Organic Farm, Tern Hill Rd., Market Drayton, Shropshire, TF9 3PS: One farmer, 8000 landlords – the first community-owned farm in England. Find out about this amazing venture and sample its delicious products on our visit to this unique North Shropshire organic farm.

After our arrival at 11.00am we shall have an introductory talk about the revolutionary farmer, the late Arthur Hollins, and his children, the fight to keep the farm going after Arthur's death and his organic methods which are still pursued. We shall then have a guided tour of the site where we shall see their methods first-hand, followed by lunch and what a marvellous lunch it will be! The luxurious Ploughman's Buffet will include a selection of the farm's own cold sliced meats, homemade pork pies and terrines, vegetable quiches, homemade chutneys and pickles, a selection of local organic cheeses and homemade soda bread (gluten free available). We shall also enjoy unlimited self-service access to tea and coffee during our visit. After lunch you might want to visit the Farm Shop which is packed full with a variety of locally sourced and organic products, local ales and beers and a range of products tailored to specific dietary requirements.

Meet at the farm by 11.00am (directions will be sent on receipt of application form).

Cost £19.50 (non-members £20.50) to include introductory talk, guided tour of the farm, lunch, unlimited tea/coffee and the usual donation to the National Trust.

**PLEASE WEAR APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR AND WARM, WATERPROOF CLOTHING AS WE SHALL BE WALKING OVER OPEN FARMLAND. THE FARM WILL ASSESS THE GROUPS ABILITIES ON THE DAY AND THE WALK WILL BE ORGANISED ACCORDINGLY.**

Please apply to Rose Wheat including a cheque and stamped addressed envelope by January 21<sup>st</sup>.

Enquiries: Tel: 01782 616113; email: [rose.wheat@virginmedia.com](mailto:rose.wheat@virginmedia.com) .

## *Advance Booking*

### **Thursday 23rd May Coach Trip: British Ironwork Centre, & Chirk Castle**

B.I.W. Ctr., Oswestry, is a mix of Art Sculptures and Experiences. The largest metal safari park with over 100 sculptures on display in the 90-acre grounds. There are two showrooms with an array of crafted items, cookware, furnishings, ironmongery and fine jewellery, as well as artist's displays. Also features Blacksmiths, Silversmiths. Floral Designer, and Potter / Ceramicist.



Tea/coffee & biscuit on arrival at 10 am. Tour of site followed by Lunch (cost included). Then 1-15pm we leave for Chirk Castle where our tour of the Castle & Gardens is self- guided. At 5-00pm after a tea/coffee (own cost) we return to Newcastle to arrive at 6-30pm.

Cost £25 (non-members £27). Depart Newcastle at 8:30.am.

Please apply to John Huson, including a cheque and menu choice and stamped addressed envelope. Enquiries: [johnhuson@gmail.com](mailto:johnhuson@gmail.com) Tel: 01782 393671.

## **Sunday 1st - Thursday 5th September 2019: Holiday in Constable Country and Rural Suffolk.**

Bookings have been very brisk for this exciting holiday and currently there is a waiting list for single rooms and only one double room left available.

If you would like to book this room or be put on a waiting list please contact Wendy Birch at Regent Travel direct, they will require a deposit of £75, refundable up to the end of January 2019. Wendy will be able to give you full details of the varied itinerary etc. or see/download the brochure on the website.

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### *Help*

After nearly four years in this role, Jane Mayer is seeking to retire as Events Co-ordinator in order to pursue other commitments. We are extremely thankful to her for her dedication to this activity, and are seeking someone who is willing to take on this responsibility. It is emphasised that the Co-ordinator is not expected to organise individual events, but to liaise with the various organisers to ensure a full and diverse programme is presented to the membership throughout the year. Past members of this post and others will be very willing to induct and assist anyone taking on this role.

We also thank the various organisers who continue to arrange such a varied and attractive range of activities. **We welcome more ideas** for future events: please pass on your suggestions. **If you are able to actually organise a visit as well**, even better still – **we really do need more leaders**: there are others experienced in arranging activities who are always willing to help and advise if required. Not sure? Why not team up with an existing leader organising an event to see what's involved?

**This Association depends on its members to exist, and without their contributions there would be no programme, so if you can help in any way please come forward so we can spread the load!**

Contact: Jane Mayer, [janemayeruk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:janemayeruk@yahoo.co.uk), 01782 533476, or any member of the committee.

## *Photographic Archives*

A reminder that Kay Williams, our archivist, has been managing a collection of photographic prints and other material dating back to the start of the Association. She would be grateful for some photos/leaflets from visits when she is not there herself; prints or digital images are equally acceptable. Kay's email for sending photos is williakay@gmail.com (note the spelling!) and her address for posting is 3 The Spinney, Madeley Heath, Crewe, CW3 9TB. Telephone 01782 751018.

The editor acknowledges and thanks the following for photographs included in this issue:- Richard Clamp, Janet Taylor, Chris Wain, David Morgan and other unknown contributors, with apologies for anyone omitted, and thanks also for any photos sent but not used. **We welcome photographs** for the Newsletter, particularly when the editor is not present at an event – please keep sending them in. Just a reminder that photographs taken on private or NT properties should not be used for commercial purposes, and should only be taken with permission of owners or trustees. Any photographs submitted will also be passed on to Kay for possible use in the archives, and may be used on the NSNTA website for record or publicity purposes. Copyright (which must be owned or obtained in writing by the submitter) is acknowledged for all images even if not stated in the magazine. Please contact the editor if more details of any item are required.

*Note: Only a selection of photographs available, and at a reduced size, are included in the magazine. It is hoped that a larger selection can be posted on the website in due course - look out for them, it might happen before the next Newsletter is published!*

## *Meet the Committee*

*From time to time we publish a résumé of members who have joined the committee. This time it is the turn of ...*

**Our new Treasurer, Huw Davies**, is a retired Chartered Accountant whose business clients ranged across North Staffordshire and North Shropshire. Upon retirement Huw and his wife Julia bought a property in France with a view to living there for much of the year, but after 13 years of ownership they are now firmly ensconced in Newcastle.



Having picked up a fair smattering of French over the years, Huw has now applied his mind to learning Spanish, which is sinking in, poco a poco !

His other interests are Rugby and Walking - he still plays for Stoke RUFC (for whatever team will have him), and regularly tramps the hills of Shropshire or the Peak District with a couple of his old accountancy cronies - a bit like the Last of the Summer Wine!

## *New Members*

We have pleasure in announcing and welcoming the following new members: Gillian Redford, Peter and Wendy Walley, David and Janet Hood, Liz and David Salmon, Judy Healey, Michael and Margaret Whitehurst, Nancy Evans, Bridget Speirs. This takes our membership to 358.

### *NT Membership Discount*

A reminder that a discount on the general National Trust membership subscription is available to eligible members – see Newsletter 110 or their website for more details.

## *Reviews of Recent Events*

### **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> August: Coach Trip: Blenheim Palace, Woodstock, Oxfordshire**

Coffee and cake on our arrival were very welcome after a long journey, then most of us opted to tour the magnificent state rooms. Their imposing proportions allowed for the display of numerous portraits, wonderful pieces of silver, collections of porcelain, and tapestries depicting the battle of Blenheim and other encounters in accurate detail.



In contrast to the colours of the furnishings and the soft hues of the tapestries were the startling, intensely blue art works by Yves Klein on special display. I enjoyed studying them and later visited the exhibition to learn more about the life and ideas of an artist previously unknown to me.



After lunch there were many choices for further exploration and I learned much about the battle of Blenheim from a detailed exhibition in a stable block. I understood for the first time the strategic significance of John Churchill's victory and why Queen Anne rewarded him to the tune of many thousands of pounds. This enabled him to build his great statement of power and glory! There was still time left to walk

around the terraces and along by Capability Brown's famous lake before tea and the journey home.

Many thanks to Rose for organising this enjoyable trip, which gave us the opportunity to visit this unique Palace.

*Anne Anderton*



## Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> August: Car Trip: Pitchford Hall, Shropshire

Our day commenced with a visit to The Riverside Inn at the nearby village of Cound for an excellent lunch, with 35 Members seated in the Conservatory overlooking a spectacular bend in the River Severn. What a pity that despite all of Ralph's best efforts at communication over many months, the management had such poor timing for their serving of the pre-booked meal.



We were greeted at Pitchford by family and friend guides and taken in small groups to view all the most interesting parts of the Hall and surrounding buildings. We saw the extensive renovations which were carried out by the new owners in less than 2 years including the West Wing of the Hall which has been converted into a 7 bedroomed holiday let. We saw the well out of which came the pitch which was used to preserve the Tudor timbers

of the building, (after which came the original name Pitchford) and learned that latterly it was done in red using ox blood.

For me one of the highlights of the day was our climb up the wooden steps to the Tree House, precariously balanced on an old, (very ancient!) lime tree with a hollow middle, just enough room for 6 of us to sit down and experience the peaceful countryside with the rustling of surrounding trees ....just like Queen Victoria did in the 1830s ! This is Shrewsbury's pride and joy and Pitchford is listed in Country Life magazine as one of the most beautiful historic houses in the UK. During World War 2 Pitchford was considered as a royal safe house.



After 25 years of being closed up, neglected and partly vandalised, Rowena Coulthurst (whose side of the family had been previous owners) and James Nason have set out on a challenging project to restore the Hall to its former glory and have begun the huge and costly task of re-acquiring some of the pictures and furniture which had been sold in the enforced sale of 1992.

Our day concluded with tea and special cakes in the Great Hall. Many thanks to Ralph for a wonderful day out.

*Richard Mayer*

## **Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September: Car Trip: Jodrell Bank, SK11 9DL**

It was a lovely sunny morning when 32 of us met at Jodrell Bank. As we arrived most of us went into the cafe for a welcome cup of coffee.

We were then met by the extremely knowledgeable head gardener. He guided us around the 35 acre arboretum, which Sir Bernard Lovell, having a passion for trees, had planted with native species. The gardener gave us fascinating facts such as:- Silver Birch live longer in cold climates, Bracket fungus was used to sharpen razors and Hornbeam burns hot enough to smelt iron, to mention just a few.

After an excellent lunch we had a very interesting talk on the Lovell telescope. It is a grade 1 listed building and is still the third largest radio telescope in the world. Our mobile phones had to be switched off, as their signal could have been detected, even if we had been standing on Mars. The telescope is now connected to telescopes all over the world. This acts as one powerful giant telescope. However still no sign of extra-terrestrial intelligence.



In the Planet Pavilion was a working model of the solar system and outside were numerous hands-on exhibits and information boards. After the school children had left, we had the chance to “play” on the interactive exhibits in the Space Pavilion. We learned about pulsars, black holes and the big bang theory.

Thank you Janet for organising such an interesting, informative and enjoyable day.

*Margaret Boggis.*

## **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September: Talk: Louise Adams – ‘A Century of Creative Ceramics’**

We were very pleased to attend the talk on Ceramic Design, as told through the eyes of Louise Adams, granddaughter to John Adams (1882 - 1953) co-founder of the famous Poole Pottery in Dorset. She gave a very personal account of her forbears, and what a talented family they seemed to be. Her grandfather at 13 years old was doing a 10 hour day, going from work to evening classes. He attended Hanley Art School and won one of the six scholarships to attend the Royal College of Art. He eventually co-founded Carter, Stabler and Adams,

making hand thrown and decorative ware. His son, also John, followed in his footsteps, going to the Royal College of Art, as did Louise. What talent, three generations, designing and working for some of our famous ceramic companies; T & R Boote, Minton, Crown Derby, William Adams, and, of course, Poole Pottery.

It was lovely to see photographs of all the various works they had done over the years, from ceramic plant labels to tableware, paperweights and one off designs. The family snaps put a real human element into the talk, which made it much more than what could have been a rather dry subject. Louise now lives in Stockton Brook, in the same house where she grew up. She loves to paint so now, together with her partner, is offering Art Classes etc. for anyone wishing to try, improve or just have fun. What a teacher, what a heredity. Thank you Louise.

*Julia Davies*

### **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> September: Car Trip: Canal Boat trip & Cromford Mill Derbyshire**

After a lovely scenic drive through Derbyshire we arrived at Cromford, which is part of the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site. We were 36 in all and we went aboard our boat *Birdswood*, built in 1938, for two hours cruise which was very relaxing. We were pulled by *Ted* who gently and quietly pulled us along the attractive waterway.

The boat was ably manned by volunteers and in groups of four we were invited to sit at the back of the boat where the cabin

was fitted with a cooker, fire and beds; very small but adequate. On alighting we enjoyed lunch at one of the cafes and looked forward to our guided tour of the Mills.

Sir Richard Arkwright from Bolton started his career as an apprentice wig maker but later chose the current site for cotton mill production because of the good year-round warm water from the Cromford Slough, which originated in the Wirksworth lead mines. It was the first powered Cotton Mill, built in 1772. He also built houses for his employees, mainly women and children, the youngest being seven years of age. He became a



very rich man but, in time the business suffered and he lost his patent. His son, Richard Arkwright Junior, made ten times as much money having gone into banking.

The Mills have undergone a major restoration. We enjoyed the film "The Arkwright Experience" which was very real-life.

Thanks to David Dumbelton for organising a lovely day out. The weather had been perfect.

*Anne Cooper*

### **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> October: Talk: David Skillen – The Royal Observer Corps in Peace & War**

David gave an excellent report on the Royal Observer Corps entitled forewarned is forearmed. He explained how important their role had been from World War 1 to the Cold War of the 50 s and 60s. He showed how they were part of an early warning system which gained great expertise in aircraft recognition which enabled strategic decisions to be made for our defence. The organisation was awarded the title Royal by Sir Winston Churchill as tribute to their work. It was they who had a hand in the arrest of Rudolf Hess as he crash landed in Scotland and how a system of underground bunkers would have had to be used in the event of a nuclear war.

He was authoritative, knowledgeable and enthusiastic for his subject and held the audience fascinated. He must come again.

*David Morgan*

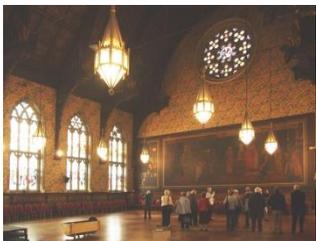
### **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> October: Coach Trip: Rochdale Town Hall and Smithills Hall Bolton.**

Magnificence and Memories: This trip was full of memories for me.



I have known Rochdale town hall for many years and Smithills Hall for even longer. Every other Sunday our family walked past it on route for tea with my aunt who lived opposite its Gates.

Grade 1 listed, Rochdale Town Hall is magnificent, built in the Gothic Revival style. Its foundation stone was laid by John Bright in 1866, and by its opening in 1871 its budget of £20,000 had octupled!!



However most Rochdale townspeople approved of it and today they remain proud of it. It is quite remarkable, regarded as one of the finest Victorian town halls in the country, very like a grand stately home!

After a substantial lunch there we travelled to the much older Smithills Hall.



There has been a building on this site since mediaeval times. The present one has been added to over the years, its current manifestation being largely black and white. Recently new housing has appeared in its surrounding Parkland, which distracts from its charms, but I was fascinated to see inside this intriguing building. Several families lived there but perhaps its most famous resident was George Marsh who, in 1555, was executed for

his religious beliefs and is commemorated in "Foxe's Booke of Martyrs". As he was led away he stamped his foot and his footprint is still there, protected by the glass panel.





Many thanks to Sue Till for organising this thoroughly enjoyable trip.

*Jenny Wright*

### **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October: Walk: Macclesfield Walk from Sutton Hall**

We set off for Macclesfield on a crisp and sunny morning and as we approached Macclesfield, we found ourselves driving through flurries of snow.

We met up at Sutton Hall, the 480-year-old former home of the Lucan family, (seat of the infamous Lord Lucan), a wonderful historic manor house, now converted into a pub with various atmospheric dining rooms and bar.

We set off at a very brisk pace and soon joined the Macclesfield Canal which initially ran through the outskirts of Macclesfield. Later, we reached a stretch of the canal in a cutting with extremely high stone walls on either side - quite an engineering feat. We then came across one of 6 Change or Snake Bridges on this canal. These were constructed where the towpath changes from one side of the canal to the other side, thereby enabling the horse to move over the canal without having to untie it from the boat – fascinating!



Having left the canal, we climbed a pretty steep hill, up through a wooded area which opened out above the local golf course. Here we were afforded some spectacular views of Macclesfield and the surrounding countryside, including Jodrell Bank Telescope, Tegg's Nose and Macclesfield Forest.

We eventually arrived back at Sutton Hall, where we enjoyed a tasty lunch with excellent company. The walk provided a contrasting and changing view of the Cheshire countryside, with some lovely villages along the way

Well done Peter for this very interesting walk and excellent lunch venue.

*Ann and Bob Winter*

## **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> November: Car Trip: Ford Green Hall, Smallthorne**

We were welcomed into the tea room of this 17<sup>th</sup> century grade II\* listed hall with tea, coffee and a selection of biscuits.



On a bright November morning we then split into 2 groups of 15 to be given firstly, a comprehensive and well researched guided tour of the inside of the hall, followed by an equally informative description of the outside of the building. Our excellent guide soon had his audience imagine themselves 400 years ago with vivid descriptions of the methods of day to day living, sleeping, working and eating. The hall was built for the Ford family in 1624 and it soon became clear to us that the primary requirement of the owners was to demonstrate their wealth and status in the community. Prolific use of oak, an expensive commodity in those days,

along with wattle and daub, was their message to the world. The front of the hall facing south to the main road was not short of glass windows (another very expensive commodity) but individual windows were small, connected by metal, due to the difficulty of producing large panes of glass. Wooden beams were connected by oak pegs rather than metal which would rust.

The preservation of food in those days was achieved using salt, sugar and spices, these being kept in locked cupboards due to their high value. Cooking was often done by the men in this environment, again a demonstration of wealth as the men's wages were more than women's.

We were shown the Grade II listed dovecote (is this a first?) again a status symbol; apparently the doves were kept as a ready source of food.

This little gem of a building belonging to Stoke-on-Trent City Council is operated as a museum by trustees, a project well worth supporting. Thank you to Jane for yet another successful visit.

*Richard Mayer*

## **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> November: Talk: Danny Wells – ‘The Victorians & the Christmas Season’**

Danny gave a fascinating and well researched insight into how our modern Christmas has evolved. We heard how medieval influences were seized upon by the Victorians to promote Christmas as the cultural anchor for a society which was changing from agricultural to urban, bringing with it all the problems of poor living conditions and social upheaval . The influence of Victoria and Albert of course helped enormously to promote the picture of home as an instrument of peace, duty and religious observation. His knowledgeable presentation showed how the theme of Christmas has been adapted, modified with the addition of carols, cards, Father Christmas, Christmas trees and a time to exhibit a social conscience.

He explained the influence of Dickens, Coca Cola and the Illustrated London News. It was a very interesting and revealing talk very well presented and illustrated.

### **More on Jodrell Bank**

When the Lovell telescope was first built, access was via steps in line with the tracks which supported the dish. One day Sir Bernard Lovell tripped as he descended and fell in front of the structure as it trundled towards him. Fortunately its speed was not great and he was not harmed, but amidst fears of “Sir Bernard run over by his own telescope” it was decided to rearrange the entry at right angles to the track.

Also about this time, prior to the US moon landing, Cape Canaveral had had a series of spectacular failures in attempting a rocket launch. A visitor from the States was viewing the telescope while the antenna was being changed. This involved pointing the dish downwards as the antenna was lowered to the ground on ropes and another lifted up. When the visitor asked what was going on he was told they were tracking the latest American moon rocket.

| <b>NSNTA Committee 2018-19</b>                                                       |                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ralph White<br>Chairman<br>ralph@ralphwhitedesign.com                                | Thyme Cottage, 20 Upper Green, Wolverhampton<br>WV6 8QH<br>01902 752833       |
| Rose Wheat<br>Vice-chairman<br>rose.wheat@virginmedia.com                            | 12 West Avenue<br>Newcastle ST5 0NB<br>01782 616113                           |
| <b>Richard Adams</b><br>Secretary and Membership Secretary<br>rjadams@doctors.org.uk | 79 Whitmore Road<br>Newcastle ST5 3LZ<br>01782 637183                         |
| <b>Huw Davies</b><br>Treasurer<br>huws.family@gmail.com                              | 2 Vicarage Crescent<br>Newcastle ST5 1NJ<br>01782 710952                      |
| <b>Jane Mayer</b><br>Programme Coordinator<br>janemayeruk@yahoo.co.uk                | 16 Shaldon Avenue, Stockton Brook<br>Stoke-on-Trent ST9 9PU<br>01782 533476   |
| <b>David Morgan</b><br>Talks Organiser<br>david.morgan467@outlook.com                | 7 Shefford Road<br>Newcastle ST5 3LE<br>01782 617467                          |
| <b>John Spriggs</b><br>Newsletter and Website<br>newsletter@northstaffsnt.org.uk     | Rose Villa, Bowers Bent<br>Standon, Stafford ST21 6SG<br>01782 791360         |
| <b>Roger Cartlidge</b><br>rogandshirl@hotmail.co.uk                                  | 3 The Mount, Scholar Green<br>Stoke-on-Trent ST7 3HY<br>01782 777513          |
| <b>Sue Corlett</b><br>sue.corlett@btinternet.com                                     | 24 The Covert<br>Newcastle ST5 4BL<br>01782 719075                            |
| <b>Cynthia Dumbelton</b><br>dumbeltoncynthia@gmail.com                               | 32 The Lea<br>Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8DY<br>01782 641765                          |
| <b>Marion Lycett</b><br>marionlycett@hotmail.com                                     | Millstone House, The Green, Bagnall<br>Stoke-on-Trent ST9 9JR<br>01782 502919 |
| <b>Sue Till</b><br>st.till@icloud.com                                                | 9 St. Vincent Mews, Meaford,<br>Stone, Staffs ST15 8GW<br>01785 811794        |
| <b>Bob Winter</b><br>robert.winter14@btinternet.com                                  | 15 Robinson Road<br>Stoke-on-Trent ST4 8ED<br>01782 642942                    |
| <b>NSNTA Archivist</b>                                                               |                                                                               |
| <b>Kay Williams</b><br>williakay@gmail.com                                           | 3 The Spinney, Madeley Heath, Crewe, CW3 9TB.<br>01782 751018                 |

## Summary of Winter/Spring Programme January to April 2019

### January

|                          |                                                     |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> | Talk: Ray Perry – ‘The Life & Work of Rudyard Lake’ |
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### February

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|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> | Talk: Steve Booth – ‘The Golden Age of Stage-coaching’ |
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### March

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|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Sunday 3 <sup>rd</sup> | Walk: Keele & lunch at the Sneyd Arms |
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| Tuesday 19 <sup>th</sup> | Talk: Bob Kermeen – ‘Mesopotamia to WW1’ |
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| Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> | Coach Trip: Manchester: Elizabeth Gaskell House, Pankhurst Centre & Whitworth Art Gallery |
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### April

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| Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> | Talk: Hazel Griffiths, Cruise ship speaker – ‘Motion of the Ocean’ |
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| Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> | Car Trip: Ford Hall Farm, Market Drayton & lunch |
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### Dates for your Diary

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| May 21 <sup>st</sup> | AGM & Speaker to be announced |
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| May 23 <sup>rd</sup> | Coach Trip: British Ironwork Centre, Oswestry & Chirk Castle |
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| June 13 <sup>th</sup> | Coach Trip: DH Lawrence Museum & Newstead Abbey, Notts. |
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| July 10 <sup>th</sup> | Coach Trip: Leominster & Croft Castle |
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| August 15 <sup>th</sup> | Coach Trip: Renishaw Hall & Sheffield |
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|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| September 1 <sup>st</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> | Holiday to Suffolk – fully booked |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

***This Newsletter (and previous editions) is available on the website.  
If required additional copies of booking forms can be printed  
using ‘Booklet’ printing for multiple pages.***